

בס"ד

קונטרס עץ החיים

Kuntres Etz HaChayim

THE TREE OF LIFE

*A classic chassidic treatise
on the mystic core
of spiritual vitality*

by

**Rabbi Shalom DovBer Schneersohn
of Lubavitch**

Translated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

הועתק והוכנס לאינטרנט

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OVERVIEW

WORLDS IN TRANSITION

It is a world which none of us has ever seen. And in truth, it would be difficult for many of us even to picture what it was like. For when we speak of the *shtetl*, we mean far more than the actual physical environment. In the *shtetl*, Jewish life filled the atmosphere so powerfully that you could feel it in the air. The pulse of the community beat according to the Torah's rhythm.

As Russia prepared to enter the twentieth century, the Rebbe Rashab saw that world disappearing, but he wanted to insure that the transition from *shtetl* to city life and the entrance into an industrial society would not hollow away the Jews' inner spiritual vitality.

For this reason, in 5657 (1896), he founded *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*,¹ the central Lubavitcher *yeshivah*. He envisioned the *yeshivah* as a focal point for Jewish life throughout Russia, for the energy and enthusiasm stemming from this inspired environment of spiritual growth would ripple inside and out of the Jewish community.

The first students of *Tomchei Temimim* dedicated themselves to the spiritual purpose which the Rebbe envisioned for them, and within a few short years, the influence of the *yeshivah* was being felt everywhere in Russia. In one town, a rabbi ordained by *Tomchei Temimim* would change the direction of his entire community. In another

1. The founding of the yeshivah was announced during the *Sheva Berachos* of the Previous Rebbe, the 16th of Elul, 5657 (1897). The yeshivah went through several growth stages in its first years. The name *Tomchei Temimim* was given Simchas Torah, 5659 (1898).

village, a *yeshivah* student coming home for the holidays would inspire others to join him when he returned to the *yeshivah*. And in Lubavitch itself, the constant stream of visitors to the Rebbe was motivated by the sight of a growing community of young men invigorated by the light and energy of Chassidic teachings.

But the success of the *yeshivah* soon created a problem. There were students who were attracted to it because they saw in *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*, a bastion of traditional Jewish scholarship, a place where they would not be challenged by the inroads secular thinking was making in the Jewish community. Many of these students were not aware of — or had not fully grasped — the Rebbe Rashab's intent when he founded the *yeshivah*.

They wanted to go to *yeshivah* to study the *Talmud* and its codes; they were not interested in anything more.

The Rebbe was.

To clarify his purpose in founding the *yeshivah*, the Rebbe Rashab wrote *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*. The text was first printed in 5664, years after the founding of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*. In it, the Rebbe Rashab explains at length the purpose for Creation as a whole and the role of the Torah in bringing that purpose to fruition. He explains the proper approach to Torah study, and then gives specific directives with regard to the students' conduct in *Tomchei Temimim*.

A SECOND TRANSITION

In 5706 (1946), six years after the Previous Rebbe relocated the *Chabad-Lubavitch* center and *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* in America, he reprinted *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*. In his letter of introduction, he explains that the publication of the text was intended to emphasize that the transition from Europe to America was only geographic in nature, for "America is not different."

He states clearly that the advice given by the Rebbe Rashab in *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* was not only for his immediate time, but for all time. In particular, he addresses his words to *yeshivah* students, encouraging them to envision themselves as a source of influence, amplifying the spiritual consciousness in the communities in which they live. *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* would serve as a fundamental resource in this endeavor, for its focus on the Torah's G-dly core makes it possible to preserve and augment the spiritual heritage of the past while making the transition to a new framework of reference.

A TRANSITION IN PROCESS

The Rebbe would mention *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* frequently in his *sichos*. And on the Rebbe Rashab's birthday, 20 Cheshvan, 5751, the Rebbe patiently distributed a copy of *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* to every man, woman, and child in the Lubavitch community. This wasn't merely a sentimental gesture.

The world in which we live is in the midst of transition. We are moving from an industrial society to an information culture. Familiar signposts are disappearing, and new landmarks are taking their place. In a geographic sense, this transition is not as great as the two mentioned above. But its effect on our lives is perhaps more radical and encompassing. Faxes, word-processing, data bases, the Internet. Isn't our world far different than it was a number of years ago? And it will be far more different in the years to come, for the rate of change is increasing, almost going off the graph.

As the speed of this transition increases, the message of *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* is becoming more relevant. For the information society is continually pummeling us with far more data than we have ever had to process before, forcing us to focus more on the material plane and as a by-product, weakening our spiritual sensitivity. *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* hones us in on the purpose for our lives: to create a dwelling

place for G-d. And it concentrates our attention on the teachings of *Chassidus* as the medium to transform this ideal into actual life.

This spiritual awareness enriches our lives, making it possible for us to appreciate the spiritual dimensions of the changes happening around us. Armed with this inner strength, a chassid does not feel the need to retreat from the world in which he lives. On the contrary, he can embrace his environment, finding circumstances and situations in which every element of existence can be used for a spiritual purpose.

This approach leads to the ultimate transition, the coming of *Mashiach*. In this endeavor, *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* is also significant. For one of its goals was to impress *yeshivah* students to proudly bear the mantle of *chayalei Beis David*,² soldiers of the House of David, whose efforts are focused on transforming the world into an environment conscious of *Mashiach* and awaiting his coming.

I. THE TEXT'S THEMES

Kuntres Etz HaChayim, employs far more technical wording than many other Chassidic sources. There are extensive quotes from the *Zohar*, the *Etz HaChayim*, and other *Kabbalistic* texts, as well as passages from the *Talmud* and the *Midrash*. The Rebbe Rashab begins with an abstract Chassidic concept, proceeds to develop its practical applications, and then, on the basis of these theoretical constructs, gives direct, pointed advice to the students of the *yeshivah*.

The *Kuntres* begins with the theme of *dirah bitachtonim*, that our world be transformed into a dwelling for G-d. In such a world, the material plane will continue to exist, but it will see itself solely as a medium for the revelation of G-dliness.

This is made possible through the interplay of three Divine attributes: *Malchus* (sovereignty), *Ratzon* (will), and

2. See *With Light and With Might* (Kehot, N.Y. 5753).

Chochmah (wisdom). *Malchus* is the medium which brings into being a world which sees itself as a separate entity, for a king is never given absolute sovereignty over equals. It is only when there is a distance between him and his subjects that such a relationship can be established.

In the earthly realms, a nation feels the need for a king, and when they discover a person whose level is “from his shoulders up, taller than all the nation,”³ they grant him this position. In the spiritual realms, the sequence works in reverse. Because G-d possesses the attribute of *Malchus*, a framework of seemingly independent existence — entities that feel themselves separate and lower than Him — comes into being, allowing for this attribute to be manifest.

Ratzon, will, is a channel for the expression of the soul's inner thrust. When a person wants an object, he is entirely focused on his desire. From the person's standpoint, the object is significant only inasmuch as it fulfills his will.

In the spiritual realms, a world that is created from G-d's will would not see itself as a separate entity. It would exist only to express G-d's intent.

Thus the two attributes of *Ratzon* and *Malchus* bring about two diverse conceptions of existence. *Ratzon* makes the world a dwelling, a place where G-d's essence is revealed, and *Malchus* causes that dwelling to be in the lower worlds, in a realm which sees itself as separate from G-d.

These two motifs are interrelated and harmonized through the attribute of *Chochmah*, wisdom. For wisdom recognizes the gestalt of independent existence established by *Malchus* and yet is sensitive to the purpose expressed by *Ratzon*. This makes possible the synthesis of the two thrusts; that the independent existence brought into being by *Malchus* takes on the design of *Ratzon*, causing the world to become *batel*, and rise above the level of self-concern.

3. I Samuel 9:2, with regard to King Shaul, Israel's first monarch.

This *bittul* is established primarily through Torah study, an expression of G-d's *Chochmah*. For Torah study represents an advanced level of *bittul*. When a person studies the Torah, he has the potential to step entirely beyond the level of self. For the thoughts on which his mind focuses are not his own, but G-d's.

There is, however, a possibility for negative consequences even within Torah study. Since the Torah is enfolded in worldly affairs and operates with the framework of human logic, it is possible that a person will look at it as no more than a system of wisdom, forgetting about G-d, the Giver of the Torah. When the Torah is studied with such an approach, it can become "a potion of death," encouraging a person's self-concern. Instead of serving as a tool to bring about the refinement of the world and the person studying, the study of the Torah can inflate the person's ego and cause him to become more materially oriented.

For this reason, it is necessary for one's Torah study to include *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, the inner, mystic dimensions of the Torah, which focuses attention directly on the Torah's G-dly and spiritual core.

Kuntres Etz HaChayim goes to the mystic core of the issue. *Nigleh*, the revealed dimension of Torah law, reflects the dimension of the Torah which relates to our material world, while *P'nimiyus HaTorah* reveals the dimension of the Torah which transcends this framework. In the scheme of the *Sefiros*, the Oral Law, the fundamental expression of *Nigleh*, is identified with *Malchus*, the *Sefirah* which brings about the limited framework of existence of our world. This *Sefirah* is described as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is identified with the attribute of *Tiferes*, the *Sefirah* which reveals G-dliness which transcends our material framework. It is thus described as the Tree of Life. Adam's sin involved partaking of the Tree of Knowledge without first partaking of the Tree of Life.

The *Kuntres* then relates the above concepts to the themes of *yichuda tata'ah*, the lower unity, and *yichuda ila'ah*, the sublime unity. *Yichuda tata'ah* refers to the manner in which our world sees itself connected to G-dliness: the world exists and yet it is subservient to G-dliness. *Yichuda ila'ah* reflects an entirely different frame of reference; all that exists is G-dliness. There is no conception of independent existence.

Yichuda tata'ah is the gestalt which should prevail within our Divine service, firstly, because we have to be honest with ourselves and realize our spiritual level. And also, because this was G-d's intent when creating the world, that the material world should recognize and acknowledge G-dliness within its own context.

Nevertheless, *yichuda tata'ah* alone is not sufficient. For the positive dimension of *yichuda tata'ah* — its recognition of the limitations of our world — is itself its drawback. The *bittul* of *yichuda tata'ah* does not lift a person above our world's limited framework of reference. To refer to a classic Chassidic concept: a person whose Divine service is characterized by *yichuda tata'ah* is still in *Mitzrayim*, Egypt; he is bound by the limitations of worldly existence.

For this reason, it is necessary for a person to have a taste of *yichuda ila'ah*, an appreciation of a higher level of spiritual awareness. The experience of this elevated perspective weakens a person's material disposition and refines the coarseness of his body and his animal soul, mitigating his attraction to worldly concerns. And it strengthens the power of his G-dly soul, empowering it to overcome the body and the animal soul and refine them. Such awareness is encouraged by the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*.

The *Kuntres* continues to speak against the protestation of humility by people who say: "Who are we? What is our Divine service [worth]? [How can] we experience genuine love and fear of G-d? How can we approach *P'nimiyus HaTorah* when we are on such a low level?"

It explains that the very foundation of this approach is erroneous. The *mitzvos* of loving and fearing G-d are among the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah, whose observance is incumbent upon every member of the Jewish people. And G-d does not come with over-imposing demands to His creations. He asks of them only what is within their potential. Thus if one would say that it is impossible for every individual to attain the love and fear of G-d, how could he be commanded to express these emotions?

In truth, the *Kuntres* continues, love and fear are attainable by any and every individual. They are qualities inherent to every Jew. And it is through the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* that these attributes come within our grasp. In the early generations, the *Kuntres* explains, *P'nimiyus HaTorah* was hidden, for it was not an absolute necessity for our nation's spiritual welfare. But from the time of the *AriZal* onward, and particularly after the revelation of the Baal Shem Tov, it became "a *mitzvah* to reveal this wisdom."

The Rebbe Rashab then explains that he founded *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* with the intent of furthering that motif, giving students the opportunity to study *P'nimiyus HaTorah* with the same concentration as they usually devote to the study of *Nigleh*.

At this point, the tone of the *Kuntres* changes. The abstract, scholarly discussion becomes transformed into a direct, down-to-earth message from the Rebbe to the students of the *yeshivah*. The Rebbe states:

The young men with whom our association was founded knew the purpose of its establishment, and they chose and desired this [as their mission]. They eagerly accepted and carried out [the mission] of occupying themselves with *Chassidus*... They studied well, and, thank G-d, their efforts brought forth fruit and were crowned with success.

In the present time as well, there are many young men who follow this path and adapt themselves to this

ultimate purpose.... There are, however, many others who... lost sight of this ultimate purpose.... Over the course of time, there came and gathered new students for whom the concept of involvement in *Chassidus* was foreign to them. Not that they are opposed [to it], heaven forbid, it's just that *Chassidus* is an unknown for them. They came to study *Nigleh*.

This brought an unfamiliar atmosphere into the hall of study.... [This is also reflected in] their conduct. [It is obvious] that their main intent is to study *Nigleh*, and they study *Chassidus* only to fulfill their obligation....

Therefore, on this occasion, I want to make it known to you that this is not the purpose of our intent. Not at all.

Instead, the intent of the establishment of our association is for the study of *Chassidus*, for it is the essence of our lives, and this will grant vitality to your study of *Nigleh*. And this will make you and your study of the Torah pleasing to G-d, the Giver of the Torah.

In clear and precise terms, the Rebbe outlines — to the hour — the schedule he expects the *yeshivah* students to keep. He tells the students that anyone who does not uphold that schedule is benefiting from the *yeshivah* unjustly.

He counsels them against seeking to develop *chiddushim* (innovative explanations) for the sake of having feelings of accomplishment, and instead delineates clearly how a *Talmudic* passage should be studied, which commentaries to look into, and what their study goals should be.

And he concludes with a heartfelt prayer which reflects the intensity he invested in the *Kuntres*:

After all the above statements, I ask you: "Apply your hearts to all the words" stated in this text. May these words be upon your hearts at all times, for it is very

difficult for me to make these statements and repeat them continually. Therefore, have these words before your eyes at all times, so that they will not be forgotten by you. For they are your lives and the length of your days, and indeed, they will bring you eternal life.

I lift up my hands to G-d in prayer and in supplication. May it be G-d's will that the light of the Torah of truth which our ancestors, the holy and revered Rebbeim revealed, will be internalized within you.

A SIGNED CONTRACT

After the above lines, the Rebbe Rashab affixed his signature to *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*, something totally out of the ordinary for a text of *Chassidus*. The chassidim have always said that this indicates that *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* is a signed contract for the students of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*, and in a larger sense, for anyone whose life has been touched by the Rebbe and Lubavitch.⁴ In this *Kuntres*, the Rebbe Rashab expresses his commitment to the chassidim and he clearly outlines the manner in which he expects the chassidim to reciprocate.

II. PREFACES AND APPENDICES

When reprinting *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* in 5706, the Previous Rebbe added supplementary material which further clarified the Rebbe Rashab's intent and showed the relevance of the text to subsequent times. When reprinting the *Kuntres* in 5751, the Rebbe preserved the format introduced by the Previous Rebbe which included the following additions and appendices:

4. See *Sichos Elul 29, 5741* which explain that anyone who has learned from a person educated in *Tomchei Temimim* shares a connection to the *yeshivah*.

A) An introductory letter from the Previous Rebbe⁵

In this letter, the Previous Rebbe explains that the Rebbe Rashab wrote for his immediate time and for all time. Thus the Rebbe Rashab's advice serves as a beacon of light for all Jews, and particularly, *yeshivah* students.

This message can help challenge the approach that "In America, everything is different," i.e., the attitude that compromises can be made in the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos*. This, the Previous Rebbe argues, is an entirely wrong approach, for American Jewish youth possess a natural sensitivity to the Torah and its *mitzvos*. When a word is spoken from the heart, they respond.

Therefore, there is no need for false flattery and sugar-coated messages. American youth are looking for the truth, and spiritual leaders and educators have a responsibility to give it to them. In the future, students will ask: "Why didn't you tell us the truth,... in its entirety?... Why didn't you show us how to pray... how to study the Torah... how to observe the *mitzvos*?"

The Previous Rebbe also focuses on the role of a *yeshivah*, underscoring that it is not merely a place to prepare a student for a profession, how to be a Torah scholar, a rabbi or the like, but rather a place of education where a student is prepared to be a complete Jew in body, soul, and Torah.

B) A Preface, a Letter of the Previous Rebbe, Written in Tammuz, 5692

In this letter, the Previous Rebbe emphasizes the unique role which *yeshivah* students played within the Jewish community in previous years. The entire Jewish community looked up to the *yeshivah* students. Every day of the week, these students would eat at different homes. The families would look upon these days as beacons of light, inspiring them to a deeper commitment to spiritual growth.

5. The printing in 5706 also included explanatory notes and references from the Rebbe, who as the Previous Rebbe's son-in-law, headed Kehot Publications.

But, the Previous Rebbe continues, that environment has changed. Instead of the *yeshivah* students serving as a source of influence, they have become recipients of the popular culture.

The root of the problem is conformity, the perspective that everyone must act the same, that a *yeshivah* student must look and sound like all others instead of being unique and different. As a result, the *yeshivah* students are redefining their purpose. Studying Torah for G-d's sake, to know His will and His wisdom, is no longer sufficient; the study must lead to intellectual speculation of the highest order and impressive abstract analysis. Not surprisingly, this approach brings about a weakening of observance, as the students lose sight of what is holy, and what is mundane.

The scope of the problem increases as these students mature and assume positions as teachers and spiritual leaders, passing their weaknesses on to others. Our history is replete with evidence of the offshoots of such an approach: watered-down observance, ignorance of the Torah, and dwindling Jewish pride.

Kuntres Etz HaChayim provides an alternative to such an approach, directing a *yeshivah* student to the Torah's spiritual dimension and opening his heart to the love and fear of G-d. After studying *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*, the Previous Rebbe concludes, a person will

feel pained: how could he have passed [all] these years... without man's understanding.... He will recognize that it is *P'nimiyus HaTorah* that transforms the revealed dimension of the Torah into an 'elixir of life,' ... leading to the fulfillment of the positive commandments of the unity of G-d, and the love and fear of Him.... He will then establish a fixed time for the study of *Chassidus* and turn to G-d in *teshuvah*. And He will have mercy upon him.

C) Appendix A: Rabbi Chayim Vital's Introduction to *Shaar HaHakdamos*

In several places within *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*, the Rebbe Rashab makes reference to this classic *Kabbalistic* text. Since this text was not easily accessible to people at large, the Previous Rebbe included it as an appendix to *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*.

Rav Chayim Vital begins his treatise explaining that he is broken-hearted about the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* and the exile of Jewish people. He is tormented by the question: Why hasn't *Mashiach* come?

In resolution, he explains that the Divine service of the Jewish people has become permeated by self-concern. Nothing is done without the expectation of reward. The Torah has become an ax to use for profit, a means of earning a livelihood and enhancing one's reputation.

The study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* prevents a person from slipping into such an approach. For *P'nimiyus HaTorah* lifts a person above his material consciousness and puts him in touch with the spiritual core of our existence. In this manner, it lifts a person above self-concern. For when a person becomes conscious of the G-dliness that permeates our world, he will no longer be involved with his petty needs and wants.

In this manner, the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* foreshadows the coming of the Redemption. For in that era, this mindset will spread throughout existence. Even the Torah studied in the present era is considered materially oriented when compared to the spiritual awareness that will characterize that era. And thus our Sages state⁶ that the Torah of the present era is emptiness when compared to the Torah of *Mashiach*.

Nevertheless, the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* cannot exist on its own. Instead, it must be coupled with the study of *Nigleh*, the Torah's external legal dimension. Otherwise, such study would be like a soul without a body, spiritual energy without attachment within this material world. On the other

6. *Koheles Rabbah*, beginning of ch. 2, 11:8.

hand, the study of *Nigleh* without *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is like a body without a soul. Particularly in the era immediately before the coming of *Mashiach*, people who study *Nigleh* without *P'nimiyus HaTorah* prolong the exile.

Rav Chayim Vital notes that our Sages relate that before their deaths, Rabbi Yochanan⁷ and Rabbi Abahu⁸ were overcome with awe due to self-introspection. On the surface, they were both perfect *tzaddikim*, completely righteous men whose conduct was untainted. Why were they motivated to tears?

Because at the moment of utter truth, they became intensely aware of a level of soul — and a dimension of Divine service — which surpasses deed and action, to the extent that none of one's deeds are of consequence. The study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* makes one aware of this spiritual level and enables one to establish a connection with it.

Rav Chayim Vital then gives a historical perspective of the mystical tradition, explaining that, over the course of history, the numbers of those occupied in the knowledge of the *Kabbalah* have thinned. In the era preceding the coming of *Mashiach*, however, there will be a reversal of this trend, and there will be a profusion of those occupied in this wisdom. The deepest mystic secrets will be known to all, even to young children.

D) Appendix B: A Letter From the Rebbe Rashab

The Previous Rebbe also included a letter from the Rebbe Rashab in which he thanks G-d for enabling him to be sensitive to the changes affecting the young men in the Jewish community. For the study of worldly wisdom had pervaded the religious community; *yeshivah* students were reading secular books and were attracted to this approach. This tainted their study of the Torah and their approach to prayer.

7. *Berachos* 28a.

8. *Talmud Yerushalmi, Avodah Zarah* 3:1.

The peer pressure among youth began to run contrary to the spirit of the Torah. When young men would come together, they would encourage decadence. Even those who possessed Torah knowledge were affected; indeed, their Torah became poison within them.

Some of these people became rabbis and educators who, out of their own misunderstanding, perverted others. Anyone whose heart had been touched by the fear of G-d was pained by seeing people being led to a harmful place. These "spiritual leaders" removed their beards, rejected the teachings of the *Kabbalah*, and advocated leniency with regard to Torah law.

It became obvious that everything depends on the leaders of the educational institutions. Will they have the strength to oversee the students and implant faith and spiritual vitality within their hearts? This was the impetus for founding the *yeshivah*. It was intended to be a place for study, but more fundamentally, a place "where faith and the fear of G-d will be rooted in [the students'] hearts, to illuminate them with the light of knowledge, so that they would know G-d, and know what G-d demands of them, serve G-d, walk in His ways, that the light of the Torah and its *mitzvos* shine in their midst so that they will merit, and they will cause others to merit."

The *yeshivah* met success beyond all expectations. The students created a positive atmosphere which attracted others. The Rebbe Rashab concludes the letter with the wish that the Jewish community take upon itself the financial burden to support this spiritual undertaking.

E) Appendix C: A Letter From the Rebbe Rashab

The concluding letter in the *Kuntres* was written by the Rebbe Rashab several years after *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* was written. In it, the Rebbe Rashab explains the importance of the study of *Chassidus* and also the practice of *darchei haChassidus*, the unwritten norms of Chassidic conduct.

The Rebbe Rashab begins the letter by reiterating the importance of the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* as explained in *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*, stating: "A person does not fulfill his obligation to G-d by studying only the external dimensions of the Torah. For all the *halachos* of the Torah are encloded in material matters, and the G-dly light is not apparent... and it is possible to forget about the Giver of the Torah."

The letter goes on to explain that because the revealed aspects of Torah law are encloded in material matters, such study can lead a person to become self-oriented. *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, by contrast, inspires a person to the love and fear of G-d, enables his prayer and Torah study to be permeated by these emotions, and empowers him to refine his body and his natural soul.

This is, the Rebbe continues, particularly relevant in our times. Indeed, we see that *P'nimiyus HaTorah* was revealed in the present generations although the people of the previous generations were far more refined. Why? Because without the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, the spiritual darkness of our times and the low level of the souls would leave our people mired in material matters entirely.

From this abstract treatment of the subject, the Rebbe Rashab goes on to speak sharply of the dearth of genuine involvement in *Chassidus*:

There will be only one individual in a city who will be inspired to study *Chassidus*... and this too, only at select times, e.g., on *Shabbos* before prayer.... He will sit down alone, without a friend or companion and focus only on the external dimensions of the subject... He will glance at the texts..., and immediately afterwards, the concepts will depart from his heart without any influence on the service within his heart [prayer].

Even when a person will be inspired to pray, he will not have anything... to meditate upon and to be the subject of his prayers.

The Rebbe recalls the self-sacrifice the earlier chassidim made to draw closer to *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. And he speaks about the obligation the chassidim have to the Rebbeim. "With what," he asks, "are we *mekusharim* (bonded) to our Rebbeim if not in the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*?"

The Rebbe goes on to explain the need for a focus on "the service of the heart — prayer," that one's prayer be a process of personal change. The fundamental element in this process is meditation, thinking deeply about *Chassidus* during one's prayers. This will arouse the hidden love for G-d which every person possesses within his heart. And it brings about the refinement of a person's emotional qualities, that a person not be so concerned with his material affairs.

The Rebbe continues, highlighting the importance of using *Shabbos* as a time for prayer and spiritual advancement. It used to be, he explains, that on *Shabbos* even businessmen and craftsmen would take time out to *daven* at length. At present, this is a rare phenomenon. Moreover, even those whose lives center on the Torah *daven* with the *minyán* instead of spending hours in a concentrated, meditative prayer.

At the core of this, the Rebbe explains, lies a new preoccupation with self, and a definition of one's identity by the degree of financial success one can achieve. He calls for a focus on purpose: **"Was a person created to eat, drink, and to do business? Each one of us must labor to find his purpose in the world."**

A person was created to search for something higher. Every element of creation seeks to be included in what is above it. Man was brought into being to unite with G-dliness. And yet, young men today are not conscious of this purpose. Not only do they neglect Divine service themselves, they mock those who make an effort to dedicate themselves to prayer.

The reason for this approach, the Rebbe explains, is a lack in the study of *Chassidus*. If they would study *Chassidus* in the

desired way, their Divine service would also change, for one is dependent on the other.

In that vein, the Rebbe notes that several Lubavitch communities have established communal study sessions in the *Talmud* and its commentaries. While acclaiming the positive virtues of such efforts, the Rebbe clearly states that this is not the ultimate purpose. For the ultimate purpose of man, particularly in the era of *ikvesa deMeshicha*, the time when *Mashiach's* approaching footsteps can be heard, is *avodah*, Divine service.

Our Sages⁹ state that the world stands on three pillars: Torah study, *avodah*, and deeds of kindness. Our animal souls, i.e., our conscious selves, accept the performance of deeds of kindness. And they even agree to Torah study, for these activities do not disturb their fundamental thrust, it is only with regard to Divine service that there is a conflict.

In conclusion, the Rebbe Rashab requests that certain basic Chassidic norms be established within Lubavitch communities. First of all, *Chassidus* should be studied in *shuls*, even in small groups, or by *chavrusas*. For studying in public makes a statement and encourages others to join in these endeavors.

Also, a public *Tanya shiur* should be held between *Minchah* and *Maariv*, or directly after *Maariv*. The focus of the *shiur* should not be on the abstract, intellectual concepts which *Tanya* teaches. One should not seek to derive concepts from the precise wording used by the *Tanya* or other matters of this nature. If possible such study should be forbidden entirely. Instead the emphasis should be *avodah*, Divine service. Similarly, on Thursday night, Friday night (or *Shabbos* morning or *Shabbos* day), and *Motzo'ei Shabbos*, there should be classes in *Likkutei Torah* or similar texts. Every *maamar* should be studied at least twice, and some several times. It is also preferable that the chassidim gather together for study on another weekday night.

9. *Avos* 1:1.

Efforts should be made to raise the funds necessary to maintain these *shiurim*. The rabbi, the *shochetim*, the teachers, and young men involved in study should be obligated to attend these sessions and should be penalized if they fail to come.

On *Shabbos*, after *Minchah*, *Chassidus* should be delivered by heart by the rabbi or by one of the members of the community who is capable of doing so. He should prepare the material himself first and share it with the others in a manner which will enable them to understand. And words from the heart will enter the heart.

Similarly, chassidim should gather together on all Chassidic festivals for *farbrengens* at which they will inspire each other to advance in Divine service.

The Rebbe concludes the letter with a prayer that G-d should enable the chassidim to appreciate the ultimate intent of the Rebbeim, that the light of their Torah shine in the inner dimensions of our souls, and that we should merit the coming of *Mashiach*.

III. SELFLESS COOPERATION

Achdus, unity, was always one of the fundamental thrusts of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*. Intellectually, the *yeshivah* taught that all existence revolves around G-d's desire for a dwelling place in the lower realms. And the social climate of the *yeshivah* molded the students' personalities to focus on the manifestation of this purpose.

In such an environment, self is not important. Concern about one's own achievements is frowned upon. There is a higher purpose and a person's greatest possible individual attainment is to play an active role in the fulfillment of that purpose.

Such a motif was also evident in the translation of this text. Several individuals collaborated — Rabbi Eliyahu Touger translated the text; Rabbi Aharon Leib Raskin supplied notes

and research; Rochel Chana Schilder edited the text; Yosef Yitzchok Turner designed the layout and topography; and Rabbi Yonah Avtzon coordinated all of these efforts and prepared the text for publication. Nevertheless, there was never a sense of "I did this." The focus was always on the project as a whole and the message it would communicate.

It is our hope that the study of the text will spur a similar thrust among our readers and unite them in the objective which lies at the heart of all the teachings of *Chassidus*: revealing how our world is G-d's dwelling. May our efforts play a part in the achievement of this purpose, and help lead to the coming of *Mashiach* and the dawning of the Era of Redemption.

Sichos In English

Pesach Sheni, 5758

CHAPTER I

Kuntres Etz HaChayim ("The Tree of Life")

collected and based on the words of the Rebbeim,
our fathers *הק' זצוקללה"ה נייע זיייע*

(Given to the students of [Yeshivas] *Tomchei Temimim*,
may they live, in the month of Menachem Av, 5664 [1904])

“For a *mitzvah* is a candle, the Torah is light; and ethical admonishment the path of life.”¹ We must understand: What is the intent of [the expression] “the path of life”? Is there a path of life other than the Torah and its *mitzvos* mentioned previously?

[Also requiring explanation is] the analogy of a *mitzvah* to a candle, and Torah to light. At the beginning of his text, the *Shaloh* interprets the word *ner* as referring to a single candle, while the term *or* refers to a large bonfire. A similar thrust is reflected in our Sages’ statements (*Sotah* 21a):

Rabbi Menachem the son of Rabbi Yossi expounded: “For a *mitzvah* is a candle, the Torah is light.’ The verse used the analogy of a candle for a *mitzvah* and that of light for the Torah, teaching that just as a candle only offers protection for a brief period, so too, a *mitzvah* offers protection only temporarily. The Torah, [by contrast,] is described by the analogy of light. Just as the light offers protection forever, so too, the Torah offers protection forever.”

[There is, however, a distinction between the two sources. Our Sages interpret] *or* as referring to daylight. This is obvious from the continuation of the passage which speaks about the

1. *Mishlei* 6:23.

break of dawn. See also *Rashi's* commentary. This is not the same as the *Shaloh* [who interprets *or*] as a bonfire. Daylight is more powerful than even a great bonfire.

To understand the above, it is necessary to preface² the explanations given on the [apparent contradiction implied by the following verses]. One verse states:³ "Whatever G-d desired, He did," [which indicates] that the creation [of existence] stems from G-d's desire and will. And yet it is also written:⁴ "With the word of G-d, the heavens were created." And [our Sages] say:⁵ "The world was created with ten utterances," indicating that the creation stems from [G-d's] utterances and speech, and was not brought into being by will and desire alone.

To explain the above: It is known that every entity possesses matter and form. Matter refers to the actual body of the entity as it exists in general, for example, the heavens in general or the earth in general. Form refers to the configuration and picture of the entity, e.g., that the heavens are round, and the form in which they appear.

The matter of the entity is created through "the word of G-d," through the ten utterances of creation. Through the statement:⁶ "Let there be light," the light was created something from nothing. And similarly through the statement: "Let there be a firmament," the firmament was created something from nothing. The manner in which the firmament was formed, its image and its likeness, was brought into being through G-d's desire which is not at all revealed through speech or utterances. This is the intent of the statement: "Whatever G-d desired, He did."

[On this basis, we can also appreciate] the statement:⁷ "You made them all with wisdom." For an entity's form stems from the quality of wisdom, as reflected in [the words of the

2. See the *maamar* entitled *Ner Chanukah Mitzvah...* in *Torah Or*, and the *maamar* entitled *VaYakam Eidus BeYaakov*, 5700.

3. *Tehillim* 135:6.

4. *Ibid.* 33:6.

5. *Avos* 5:1.

6. *Bereishis* 1:3.

7. *Tehillim* 104:24.

blessing]:⁸ “who has formed man in wisdom.” For [G-d’s] will and [His] desire are drawn down through the medium of wisdom. In order for His will and His desire to have an effect among the created beings and their separate qualities — [for the created beings] are distinct in their form and image — [His] will enfolded itself in the attribute of wisdom.

This, however, refers to [the attribute of] wisdom which transcends the ten *Sefiros*, the power of *mah* in wisdom in which rests *Or Ein Sof*, G-d’s infinite light.

The source of wisdom in the supernal realms is “the dark light,”⁹ the vector of measurement, concerning which is applied the verse:¹⁰ “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand?” For through the attribute of wisdom was determined the measure of every created being, how and what it would be, according to G-d’s will and desire.

On this basis, we can understand the statements of the *Etz Chayim* that the unity of *Abba V’Imah* — [the supernal father and mother, the attributes of *Chochmah*, wisdom, and *Binah*, understanding] — is constant.

On the surface, since the life energy for the worlds is dependent on the word of G-d, [i.e., the attribute of *Malchus*, one might ask]: why is it necessary for there to be a constant union of the supernal father and mother?

On the basis of the above, it can be understood. For “You made them all with wisdom,” [i.e., from the attribute of wisdom] form is drawn down [to every one of the created beings]. This is alluded to by the verse:¹¹ וַאֲתָהּ מַחֲיֵה אֶת כּוֹלָם, “And You grant life to all.” The *Zohar* (the beginning of *Parshas Tetzaveh*, p. 179b) interprets this as meaning “The sublime light and the lower light are unified as one.” The *vav* [which begins the verse] represents drawing down [influence] from G-d’s desire and sublime wisdom to the attribute of

8. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 6.

9. *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 18b.

10. *Yeshayahu* 40:12.

11. *Nechemiah* 9:6.

speech, [*Malchus*,] which is referred to as אַתָּה,¹² so that [He can] “grant life to all.”

The reason why matter was created through utterances and speech instead of everything being created through G-d's desire and will alone, is that were this to be so, there would not be a revelation from nothing to something. Instead, the world would be entirely nullified; its existence [would not have been felt at all]. (It would have been like the world of *Atzilus*, or like the hidden worlds [above *Atzilus*] which are nullified entirely. They would not have become creations of the revealed worlds.) This would come as a result of receiving [influence directly from the attribute of] wisdom which is characterized by *bittul*, to the extent that “He and His life-force are one.”¹³

Instead, the essence of the revelation of *yesh*, [seemingly independent existence,] comes about through G-d's speech. As it is written:¹⁴ “He commanded and they were created.” “Commanded” refers to the commandments of the king.

(It is possible to explain that the concept of a commandment applies only with regard to a person who is uplifted and has sovereignty and dominion, as reflected by the verse:¹⁵ “The word of the king is dominion,” for he commands and decrees. The parallel to this in the spiritual realms is the sublime attribute of speech, the attribute of *Malchus*.)



[This is implied by the verse:]¹⁶ “Your Kingship is a kingship over all worlds,” for “there is no king without a nation.”¹⁷ The attribute of *Malchus* represents the quality of upliftedness and distance, i.e., that [the higher spiritual attributes] will not shine forth and be revealed, only the

12. [For this word refers to the letters from א to ת. The ה refers to the five organs of speech, or alternatively, to breath which is necessary for speech.]

13. *Tikkunei Zohar, Hakdamah* 3b.

14. *Tehillim* 148:5.

15. *Koheles* 8:4.

16. *Tehillim* 145:13.

17. *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VahaEmunah*, ch. 7.

attribute of *Malchus*, which is [described with the analogy of] merely a name.¹⁸ (“The word of G-d” becomes [en clothed] within the inner dimensions of the created beings, for it is the active force within the activity, the ray of G-dliness which actually brings the created beings into existence, as explained in other sources.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the fact that [G-d’s] speech brings [the worlds] into existence comes about because of the uplifted and exalted dimension of *Malchus*.)

[To explain by analogy, take] the word of a king. The fact that a king’s word and his command have an effect within his country results from his uplifted and exalted quality, that he rules and has dominion over [his subjects].²⁰ There is a parallel to this motif in the spiritual realms. The fact that [the worlds] are actually brought into being by [G-d’s] speech is because of the quality of exaltedness possessed by *Malchus*. Thus the essential power to create stems from the exaltedness of *Malchus*,²¹ and it is with this power that the creation is brought into being through G-d’s speech.

The reference to [*Malchus* as] a name appears to me to relate to the letters of sublime speech, for a name involves letters.

Or it is more likely to explain that the name refers to the encompassing light that shines from [His] exaltedness which represents the fundamental force that brings [existence] into

18. [The intent is that a name refers to the aspect of a person that relates to others. For when a person is alone, he does not require a name. Accordingly, a name does not reflect the essence of a person’s qualities, merely the way they are perceived. The person’s essence remains self-contained, never truly expressed to others.]

19. [And as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VahaEmunah*, ch. 1, this creative force is present within the created beings and maintains their existence. If it would depart from them, their existence would cease entirely. This would cause one to think that *Malchus* involves closeness and connection.]

20. [A king’s commands reflect the manner in which he extends himself outward and relates to his subjects. But even when he extends himself, he still retains a certain aspect of distance, as reflected in the fact that his directives are given as commands and orders to be dutifully obeyed, rather than suggestions which one accepts voluntarily. And it is precisely because they are issued as commands that they are obeyed.]

21. See the additions to *Torah Or*, the beginning of *Parshas Vayakhel*, and the *maamar* entitled *HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem*, 5700.

being. And G-d's speech is the ray from His name that [actually] brings [existence] into being.

[This is implied by the expression:]²² "His name is exalted alone." Even His name is exalted [above creation]. It is only "His glory" [which is "upon the earth and the heavens."]⁶

This [is the intent of saying that the creation is] *yesh meiyin*, "something from nothing." The source of the life energy drawn down into the worlds is *ayin*, nothingness.²³ For it is only a ray, [merely] a name. From this comes the revelation of *yesh*, [seemingly independent existence].

The ultimate intent of the creation *yesh meiyin* is for the *yesh* to be subjugated to the *ayin*. This is the ultimate intent of the creation of the worlds, for "the Holy One, blessed be He, desired that He possess a dwelling in the lower worlds,"²⁴ that the lowly creations become a medium and resting place for His presence and become a dwelling for Him. [This implies] that they must be characterized by *bittul* (self-nullification) [that will be so thorough] that they are capable of becoming a medium and a dwelling for Him, and through them G-d's light will shine on the earthly plane. [It is written:]²⁵ "As the beauty of a man [is expressed] when he dwells in his home," [i.e., it is in a person's home that his essential qualities are revealed]. Similarly, with regard to G-d, He desired "a dwelling in the lower realms," that G-dliness be revealed on this material plane — that the glory of G-d be revealed in this realm just as it is revealed in the spiritual realms, as will be manifest in the Era of the Redemption when "they shall see eye to eye [the return of G-d to Zion]."²⁶ (For the essential revelation will come in the Era of the Redemption. In

22. *Tehillim* 148:13.

23. [In many sources, it is explained that the creation is described as coming *yesh meiyin*, "something from nothing," because the source for the creation is too transcendent to be perceived by our material senses. We cannot grasp it, and therefore refer to it as *ayin*, nothingness.

Here, the *maamar* is explaining that the immediate source for the creation is being described as nothingness, because when compared to the levels above it, it is of no substance. It is merely a ray and a name, and not an entity of substance.]

24. *Tanchuma, Parshas Naso*, sec. 16, cited in *Tanya*, ch. 36.

25. *Yeshayahu* 44:13.

26. *Ibid.*, 52:8.

microcosm, however, there can be a foreshine [of this revelation] to every individual within his soul and within his portion of the world, as explained in other sources.)

This [future revelation] is dependent on our lifelong task. The Divine service of the present era will bring about the revelations of the Era of the Redemption. [The motif is described as follows: "Today to perform them,"²⁷ tomorrow to receive the reward for them."²⁸ And it is one who labors on the days before the *Shabbos* who will eat on the *Shabbos*.²⁹

Every Jew has a portion in the World to Come.³⁰ Therefore every Jew must bring about his own self-nullification, *bittul hayesh*, and draw down the revelation of the light of G-d in his portion. This involves drawing down "Whatever G-d desired," into what "He made in heaven and earth;" i.e., for every [one of the created beings] possesses a form and a design that stems from G-d's will and His desire. This generates the potential for the *yesh* that stems from [G-d's] speech to be nullified.

[The connection between our Divine service and the concept of form, referred to as צירי or צורה is reflected in the fact that] the term יצירה, "forming," is used with reference to the Jewish people [coming into existence], as it is written:³¹ "The one who formed you, O Israel." This grants the potential for [Israel] to "struggle with angels [and men and prevail]."³² And for this reason, it is written:³³ "And G-d, the L-rd, formed man," employing the full name of G-d.³⁴ For the form is drawn down from G-d's desire [as expressed through the medium of] the sublime *Chochmah*. (Note the explanation of this concept in the series of *maamarim* entitled *BeShaah*

27. *Devarim* 7:11.

28. Cf. *Avodah Zarah* 3a.

29. *Ibid.* [The *Talmud* is referring to the analogy which compares the present era to the days of the week, and the Era of the Redemption to the *Shabbos*. One who prepares during the present era through Divine service will partake of the revelations of G-dliness in that future time.]

30. *Sanhedrin* 10:1.

31. *Yeshayahu* 43:1.

32. *Bereishis* 32:29.

33. *Ibid.*, 2:7.

34. I.e., both the name *Havayah* and the name *Elokim*.

SheHikdimu, 5663, and [in particular, the explanation of] the life energy that is drawn down from the attribute of *Chochmah* in the *maamar* entitled *VehaChochmah Taoz LeChacham*.)

The word וייצר, "formed," in the above verse is written with two *yuddim*, because the form with which man is endowed is drawn down from a very high source. As it says in the *Adra Rabbah* (p. 141b), the writing of וייצר with two *yuddim* involves the mystic secret of *Atika Kadisha* and the mystic secret of *Za'er Anpin*. (And as stated in the text *Panim Meiros* in the name of Rav Chayim Vital, *Atika Kadisha* formed *Za'er Anpin* in its image.) Therefore the primary concept of *bittul hayesh* applies with regard to man. For in order for the *bittul* to affect the *yesh*, it must be drawn down from a very high source. See the explanation of this concept in *Likkutei Torah*, the *maamar* entitled *Shuvah Yisrael*, ch. 3.

Synopsis: The *mitzvos* are described with the analogy of a candle and the Torah with the analogy of light. A preface is made that the creation of matter stems from [G-d's] utterances and speech, while the creation of form stems from His desire and will as they are en clothed in His *Chochmah* (wisdom). The revelation of *yesh* (seemingly independent existence) comes from speech. (Speech is identified with the concept of a name.) The ultimate intent is that [the *yesh*] should be *batel* (nullified) to *ayin* (nothingness). This is possible because of the form which is drawn down from [G-d's] desire and will.



CHAPTER II

On the basis of the above, we can understand the verse:³⁵ "For a *mitzvah* is a candle, and the Torah is light." The attribute of *Malchus* is associated with night, [following the

35. *Mishlei* 6:23.

pattern,]³⁶ “at first darkness,” for *Malchus* involves a withdrawal of light, and [thus it is] uplifted as explained above. This leads to the creation *yesh meiyayin* and a dimension of darkness.

It is through the Torah and its *mitzvos* that the revelation that exists in *Atzilus* is drawn down and brought to shine within the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. [This enables] also these realms to be [permeated] by the *bittul* and unity with the *Or Ein Sof* that exists in *Atzilus*, as is stated in *Torah Or*, in the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *Ki KaAsher HaShamayim HaChadashim*.

This [process is alluded to in the expressions]:³⁷ הלילה הזה ליל שמורים “This night is a night of guarding,” i.e., that in the night, there can be a revelation of the quality of *זה*, which refers to revelation as it is written:³⁸ זה א-לי ואמרו “This is my G-d and I will glorify Him,” i.e., an actual revelation of G-dliness. Note the explanation in *Likkutei Torah, Parshas Vaeschanan*, with regard to the verse: “For a *mitzvah* is a candle, and the Torah is light.”

For the *mitzvos* are referred³⁹ to as the 248 limbs of the King, while the Torah is referred to as the head and the intellect, for “the Torah emerged from *Chochmah*.”⁴⁰ The light and the life-energy of the soul is revealed in the brain, and from the brain the life-energy intended for every organ is transmitted.⁴¹ The head is thus an intermediary which draws down [life-energy] from the soul to every organ. [Similarly, in a spiritual sense, Torah study serves as an intermediary, as indicated by] our Sages’ statements:⁴² “Great is Torah because it leads to deed,” and⁴³ “the study of the Torah is equivalent to [the observance of all [the *mitzvos*]. For this reason, the analogy of a candle, i.e., the revelation of a particular ray, is

36. *Shabbos* 77b.

37. *Shmos* 12:42. [The wording of the verse is not quoted exactly.]

38. *Ibid.*, 15:2.

39. *Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun* 30.

40. *Zohar*, Vol. 11, p. 62a.

41. [See *Tanya*, ch. 51.]

42. *Kiddushin* 40b.

43. *Shabbos* 127a.

used to describe the *mitzvos*, while the Torah is described with the analogy of light, a general revelation equivalent to all the particulars.

It is possible to explain the difference in our Divine service between the *mitzvos* which stem from *Za'er Anpin* and the Torah which stems from *Chochmah* as follows: There are two levels of love.⁴⁴ The first is love that is prompted by distance. [It is prompted by] a person meditating on the concept that all the worlds are merely a ray and a glimmer of *Or Ein Sof*, as implied by the verse:⁴⁵ "Your sovereignty (*Malchus*) is sovereignty over all the worlds." [Implied is that the life-energy for all the worlds comes from the attribute of *Malchus*, and *Malchus* itself is merely a ray and a glimmer of *Or Ein Sof*, as explained above with regard to the concept of a name.] Moreover, as indicated by the phrase:⁴⁶ "A king, his name {alone} is called upon them," and the expression:⁴⁷ "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever," [what is drawn down to the worlds is merely a glimmer of a ray].⁴⁸

44. Two levels of love: Within each of these levels, there are many different sub-categories. Therefore, there is no contradiction in the fact that in other sources, the variation between these two levels of love and the nature of the meditation which leads to them are described slightly differently.

With regard to the explanation of several of these levels of love, see ch. 16, *Kuntres HaAvodah* ch. 4, *Sichas Simchas Torah* 5668, 5676 (*Sefer HaSichos Toras Shalom*). There are also explanations of the different types of love in the *maamarim* entitled *Chachilei Einayim* in *Torah Or* and *Toras Chayim*. See also the letter sent by the Previous Rebbe in 5691 to Anash in Bilguria which is printed in *Kuntres HaAvodah*.

45. *Tehillim* 145:13. [We have translated the verse according to its context within the *maamar*.]

46. See *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 13, liturgy beginning אדון עולם [implied is that it is the "name of the King" which is called — extended outward to — the King's subjects.]

47. *Pesachim* 56a. [In *Chassidus* it is explained that the word *baruch* implies extension, drawing influence down to a lower level. This expression indicates that it is only "the name," a ray, of "His glorious kingdom," the attribute of *Malchus*, which is drawn down to the worlds.]

48. [I.e., *Malchus* ("His kingdom") itself is merely a ray, and what it is drawn down into the worlds is merely a glimmer of *Malchus*, thus "a glimmer of a ray."]

[This process of withdrawal made it possible⁴⁹ for the existence of] worlds that are characterized by limitation and restrictions that bring about time and space. This [framework] brings into being the seven heavens and the earth with its four directions, and it defines space, which has six aspects, the four compass directions, up and down, and [time, which also is structured in six,] the six millennia of existence, which reflect the six sublime *middos* [emotional qualities].

[These qualities] bring about a multitude of divisions within every individual: both division with regard to time itself, and division with regard to every created being itself. For every created being is circumscribed and limited in the time and space [which it has been granted].

The source for these six aspects in this material realm is the six attributes [which exist] in the spiritual realms, i.e., the six sublime *middos*. They are also the source and root of time. As is well known, [even before creation,] there existed “an order for time,” [i.e., the six *middos* from which all time is derived].

[These six *middos*] are all *batel* to the *Or Ein Sof* to the extent that they are not significant at all, as implied by the verse:⁵⁰ “Greatness and might... are Yours, O G-d.”⁵¹ Implied is that the entire concept of space — both space in the physical sense and its spiritual source — is *batel* to the *Or Ein Sof*.

This is indicated by [G-d’s words]:⁵² “There is a place with Me,” i.e., that place is negated to Him. For before G-d, neither the concept of time or space applies, for they are both creations that were brought into being *meiayin liyesh*, and they are characterized by limitation.

This is the intent of the expression:⁵³ אֱלֹהִים אֶחָד “G-d is one.” [The א of] אֶחָד, one, stands for אֵין אֵין, G-d’s infinity; He is

49. [For had there not been such a process of withdrawal, it would be impossible for a limited world to come into being from His transcendent infinity.]

50. *I Divrei HaYomim* 29:11.

51. [I.e., the verse mentions qualities which parallel the emotional attributes of *Atzilus* and explains that they are all “Yours, O G-d,” i.e., nullified to Him.]

52. *Shmos* 33:21.

53. *Devarim* 6:4.

אלופו של עולם, “L-rd of the world.” The ח is numerically equivalent to eight, referring to the seven heavens and our physical earth. And the ד is numerically equivalent to four, referring to the four directions of our world. The eight, the heavens and the earth, and the four, the four directions of the earth, are all *batel* before Him. For all entities are of absolutely no importance at all in His presence.⁵⁴

When a person will meditate on all these concepts — how [all existence stems from] a mere ray and is of no comparison to G-d’s essence at all, and is of no significance whatsoever— this will fire and charge his soul with flames of yearning and thirst to become one with the essence of the *Or Ein Sof*, as implied by the verse:⁵⁵ “Whom do I [seek] in the heaven? [aside from being] with You, I have no desire on earth.” “The heavens” refer to spiritual pleasures; “earth” to physical pleasures. And yet one does not seek this at all. For everything is merely a ray that is of no comparison to Him. All of his desire and will is focused on being one with His essence.

The second level of love is love [which flows] like water. It is not characterized by excitement and thirst; on the contrary, it is exemplified by the complete and utter *bittul* that results from the revelation of *Or Ein Sof* on this physical plane as in the spiritual realms. As it is written:⁵⁶ “You have been shown to know that G-d (י-ה-ו-ה, *Havayah*) is the L-rd (א-ל-ה-י-ם, *Elokim*); there is nothing else aside from Him.” For “*Havayah* and *Elokim* are all one”;⁵⁷ the revelation of *Or Ein Sof* actually shines on this physical plane until [it is consciously felt] that in truth there is nothing aside from Him and the time and

54. *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 11b.

55. *Tehillim* 73:25.

56. *Devarim* 4:35.

57. [*Havayah* refers to those aspects of G-dliness associated with revelation, while *Elokim* refers to those dimensions associated with limitation. By saying “*Havayah* and *Elokim* are all one,” one implies that even those factors which appear to conceal and veil G-dliness manifest His presence (see the *maamar* entitled *VeYadaata*, 5657, translated as *To Know G-d* (Kehot, N.Y., 5753) Such a realization enables a person to appreciate that G-d’s presence is everywhere.]

space of this physical realm is not bound by the [ordinary] limitations of time and space.

[To cite an example:] In the *Beis HaMikdash*, the concept of space was above the limitations of space, as reflected by the fact that the measure of the *Aron HaKodesh* was not included in the total measure [of the span of the *Kodesh HaKadoshim*].⁵⁸ For in the *Beis HaMikdash*, the *Or Ein Sof* shone in overt revelation, as [implied by] the verse:⁵⁹ “Certainly G-d is manifest in this place,” as explained in another source. [This manifestation of G-dliness] caused the truth to be revealed as it is — that even physical place is not limited by the boundaries of space.

Similarly, with regard to the concept of time, our Sages state:⁶⁰ The Holy One, blessed be He, showed Adam, the first man, generation after generation, and the leaders of those generations. He showed him the entire span of the six millennia [of existence] in a short time. This is an example of how time exists above the boundaries of time, just like in the *Beis HaMikdash*, place existed above the boundaries of space.

In truth, similar concepts apply with regard to the world at large, except that with regard to the world at large, [G-dliness is] hidden and concealed, and this light is not perceived. Therefore the limitations of time and space prevail. In truth, however, there is nothing that can bring about concealment before Him, and the *Or Ein Sof* shines in actual revelation on this earthly plane as well. Therefore there is no [true] concept of [independent] existence or limitation.⁶¹

58. *Yoma* 21a. [The *Kodesh HaKadoshim* was 20 cubits wide. The *Aron HaKodesh* was placed lengthwise in this chamber and it was two and a half cubits long. There were ten cubits to one side of the *Aron*, and ten cubits to the other side. And still the length of the *Aron* itself did not increase the measure of the chamber.]

59. *Bereishis* 28: 16.

60. *Avodah Zarah* 5a.

61. [I.e., from G-d's perspective, the restricting influences brought about by the name *Elokim* do not bring about concealment. The situation can be compared to a teacher who sees the depth of his own understanding in the limited concepts which he communicates to a student. Moreover, the teachings which he communicates enable the student to ultimately gain this understanding as well. See the *maamar* entitled *VeYadaata* mentioned above.]

When a person feels the closeness and revelation of *Or Ein Sof* within his soul, he no longer feels thirst or flames of fire at all. Instead, his personal identity is totally nullified.

This quality is described with the analogy of water which cools and quenches the heat and fire. For since the person's identity is totally nullified, as a natural consequence the warmth of the natural fire in his G-dly soul and the thirst [for G-d] which burns like a flame will be cooled. See the discussion of these concepts in *Biurei Zohar, Parshas Tazria* on the statements of the *Zohar* [Vol. III], p. 49a, on the verse:⁶² "Sprinkle upon them water from the sin offering."

To cite a parallel: The love of a son for a father. When [the son] desires to come close to [his father], but he is still somewhat removed, his love is obvious. It is [not contained within] his heart [but] expressed [openly]. [He will] shout, "Father, Father," with great excitement and yearning. When, by contrast, he is actually together with his father, his heart is permeated with love and yet, it does not become apparent, nor is it expressed outside the heart, for it is not characterized by activity or thirst at all. Instead, it is identified with closeness and essential connection. Therefore it is described with the analogy of water which cools fire. It is called *ahavah bitaanugim*, "the love of delight," as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 9.

This [type of love] is reflected in the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayer which is recited silently. The *Pesukei DeZimrah* prayers arouse the love which burns like tongues of fire. For the person is still far from the King as it were. During *Shemoneh Esreh*, by contrast, it is as if he stands [directly] before the King and tells Him, "Blessed are You." "Blessed" implies a transmission of influence, i.e., he draws down G-d's unity to the physical plane, that as he exists on this plane, he should be in a state of *bittul*. To express this [spiritual quality], our Sages ordained [the recitation of the prayer] *Modim*, "We thankfully acknowledge You..." This reflects a state of *bittul* as explained in other sources, as indicated by the bows

62. *Bamidbar* 8:7.

[performed when reciting] this prayer. Therefore it is recited in a hushed tone.

A person can attain this level of love and *bittul* through occupying himself in Torah study, for “the Torah emerged from *Chochmah*” which is described by the analogy of water. For as is well known,⁶³ *Chochmah* is *koach mah*, the power of *mah*, the quality of absolute *bittul*, the quality of love which is like water, which is drawn down from the level of *Chochmah*. Thus it is brought forth by the Torah which “emerges from *Chochmah*.” For as [the Torah] exists on this earthly plane, the *Or Ein Sof* actually rests within it. The proof is that even as it exists in the physical plane, it is not bound by the limitations of place or time. As reflected by [our Sages’ statement:]⁶⁴ “Whoever occupies himself with the study of the laws of a burnt offering is considered as if he brought a burnt offering.” Therefore, through being occupied in Torah study, the level [of *Chochmah*] is drawn down in our souls.

Similarly, [in one’s daily Divine service,] after one reaches this level of love and *bittul* in the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayers, a person must seek counsel with regard to his soul in order for this aspect and level to be permanently affixed in his heart throughout the entire day so that it will not falter. For we see that after the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayers, the person’s feelings will return to their original state.

The study of the Torah and its *halachos* is the proper approach [that enables this purpose to be accomplished]. Although they are encloded in material entities, for example, agricultural matters and festivals, they involve the ultimate unity and connection with G-d, as stated in other sources. For with regard to this quality, the study of the Torah is equivalent to the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayers. It is possible for a remnant of the *bittul* experienced in the *Shemoneh Esreh* prayers to be established permanently and implanted in a person’s heart so that it will never falter throughout the day during his involvement in Torah study. All of this is explained

63. [See *Tanya*, ch. 3, *et al.*]

64. *Menachos* 110a.

in *Likkutei Torah*, in the *maamar* entitled *Ushavtam*, the *maamar* for *Hoshaanah Rabbah*, ch. 3. See also *Torah Or*, the *maamar* entitled *Vichol HaAm Ro'im Es HaKolos*.

In general, this is the difference between the *mitzvos* and the Torah. The *mitzvos* lead to the love that is like the flames of fire described above. For the *mitzvos* are related to the aspects of time and space. (It is possible to explain that they have their source in the 248 limbs of *Za'er Anpin* which is the source for the qualities of space and time.) Therefore their effect in our Divine service is to lead to this level of love, through the meditation on the nullification of time and space. This implies that space and time exist, both in a physical and spiritual sense, but they are *batel* to the *Or Ein Sof*. This leads to the love which is like flames of fire.

The Torah, by contrast, is above space and time. As a consequence of the revelation of *Or Ein Sof* on this physical plane, time and space are absolutely *batel*. This is the true oneness and connection which is established through the Torah as mentioned above.

This is the intent of the phrase "the candle of *mitzvah*." As our Sages mentioned in the conclusion of the tractate of *Sotah*, a *mitzvah* protects merely for a short time, i.e., [it is under the restrictions] of time, relating to the first level of love. The Torah, by contrast, is light that protects for all time, relating to the second level of love.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that drawing down light to the [dimensions of existence] which are characterized as] *yesh* and darkness is accomplished through the Torah, which is associated with *mochin*, the aspects of intellect, which is a general ray. The *mitzvos* are, by contrast, the "limbs of the King," particular rays. The *mitzvos* lead to the love which is like flames of fire, while the Torah leads to the love which is like water.

[The chapter] also explains the meditations which lead to these loves and [the parallels to these levels] in

prayer: [that the love which is like flames of fire relates to the] *Pesukei DeZimrah* [prayers, while the love which is like water relates to the] *Shemoneh Esreh*.



CHAPTER III

After the preface of the above, we have to understand the meaning of the phrase in the verse cited above: "the path of life."

It is written:⁶⁵ "And you shall place (ושמתם) these words of Mine..." Our Sages (*Kiddushin* 30b) divide the word *VeSamtem* (ושמתם) as *sam tam* (סם תם), meaning "a perfect drug," stating that the Torah is an elixir of life. [The passage continues:] "I created the *yetzer hara*, and I created the Torah as a condiment for it." Similarly, *Eruvin* 54a explains that G-d "gave the Torah to Israel as an elixir of life for the entire body, as it is written:⁶⁶ 'It is healing to all his flesh.'"

The expression "an elixir of life" can be explained on the basis of the *Zohar*, Vol. III, the beginning of *Parshas Chukas*, p. 179b, commenting on the verse: "And this is what shall be done to them [so that] they live":

When a person encounters the potion of death, unless the elixir of life is mixed together with it, he shall surely die. [This is alluded to] by the phrase: "And this (וזאת) is what shall be done to them [so that] they live."

[They will not die,] because the elixir of life is mixed together.... For this reason, "And this is the Torah (וזאת התורה)...."⁶⁷

65. *Devarim* 11:18.

66. *Mishlei* 4:22.

67. *Devarim* 4:44. [I.e., the Torah serves as an elixir of life, preventing them from dying.]

To explain: *Malchus* which is referred as תאז comes into being from the attributes of *Gevurah*. Therefore it is referred to as “a potion of death,” as the *Zohar, Parshas Behar*, [Vol. III,] p. 110b comments with regard to the verse: “Dwell in the land, and nourish faith.”⁶⁸ Therefore it is necessary to mix “the elixir of life” together with it, i.e., to draw down the level of *Za’er Anpin*, which is called “the tree of life.” This is the concept of “the elixir of life,” that it transforms the attributes of *Gevurah* to good.

We are forced to say that the transformation and sweetening of the attributes of *Gevurah* from being “a potion of death” to “an elixir of life,” has an advantage over “an elixir of life” alone. To cite a parallel: A radish salad which is fried with honey is sweeter than honey itself.

This is the fundamental quality which a potion possesses — to transform and sweeten the attributes of *Gevurah*. The same Hebrew word *sam*, סם, is also used to describe medication, for the intent [of medication] is to heal a sick person. And similarly, the Torah uses the term *sam* to describe fragrance, as in the verse:⁶⁹ קח לך סמים, “Take fragrant spices....” For spices revive the soul, drawing down new energy, which enable all of the [soul’s] powers to be renewed and strengthened with new life energy as explained in other sources.

This [process] reflects the refinement of the Tree of Knowledge, which is the “potion of death”; when it becomes purified, it becomes elevated to a higher plane. To cite a parallel: the refinement of [the sparks that fell from] the world of *Tohu*, concerning which it says:⁷⁰ “And he reigned... and he died.” [The refinement of these sparks leads to] an ascent above the level of the realm of *Atzilus* which is identified with the realm of *Tikkun*.

68. *Tehillim* 37:3.

69. *Shmos* 30:35.

70. *Bereishis*, ch. 36. [This source speaks of the kings of Edom. In *Kabbalah (Likkutei Torah LehaAriZal*, on verse), it is explained that this passage refers to the *Sefiros* of *Tohu* which fell from their spiritual heights and brought into being the material elements of our existence.]

This is the intent of the creation of the *yetzer hara*, that it be sweetened by the condiment of the Torah which is called the "Tree of Life" and an "elixir of life." Therefore [the *yetzer hara*] is described as being "very good."⁷¹

With regard to the Tree of Life, it is explained in the *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 37b, that the source of the influence comes to *Za'er Anpin* from *Arach Anpin*, from where long life is drawn down. See the *Mikdash Melech* who states in the name of the *Tikkunei Zohar* as follows: "This is the intent of the verse:⁷² 'Long life is at its right hand.' For the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah and the seven *mitzvos* ordained by the Rabbis are 620 pillars of light from *Kesser*."⁷³ Similarly, the *Adra Rabbah*, p. 129a, states that the path diffuses into 613 pathways that separate in *Za'er Anpin*. Thus the source of the influence [invested] in the Torah comes from *Arach Anpin*. And in *Parshas Behaalos'cha*, p. 152a, [the *Zohar*] states: "*Knesses Yisrael*⁷⁴ — this is the body for the soul... The soul — this is *Tiferes Yisrael*⁷⁵ which is the Torah itself. The soul of the soul is *Atika Kadisha*."⁷⁶

This parallels the interpretation offered by *Likkutei Torah*⁷⁷ on the verse:⁷⁸ "When you will listen to the voice...." [בְּקוֹלִי, translated as "to the voice," can also be rendered as "within the voice."] "The voice" is identified with *Za'er Anpin*, "the voice of Yaakov."⁷⁹ "Within the voice" refers to the *Or Ein Sof* which is encloded in the voice, i.e., the *Or Ein Sof* which is encloded in the Torah. For the Torah is identified with *Za'er Anpin*, and within it, is encloded the level of *Kesser*.

71. *Bereishis Rabbah* 9:7. [The *yetzer hara* is described not only as "good," but also as "very good," i.e., a higher quality of good that can only be achieved through the transformation of darkness.]

72. *Mishlei* 3:16.

73. [*Kesser*, כֶּסֶר, is numerically equivalent to 620.]

74. [Identified with the *Sefirah* of *Malchus*.]

75. [Identified with the *Sefirah* of *Tiferes*, and in a general sense, with the totality of *Za'er Anpin*.]

76. [The inner dimensions of *Kesser*.]

77. *Re'eh*, p. 22d ff.

78. *Devarim* 13:19, et al.

79. Cf. *Bereishis* 27:22. [Yaakov is also identified with *Za'er Anpin*.]

This concept is alluded to in the *Talmudic* passage⁸⁰ which speaks of reciting a blessing before Torah study. [As mentioned above, blessing is associated with drawing down influence. The intent of reciting a blessing before Torah study is to] draw down influence from the *Or Ein Sof* of *Kesser* to the Torah as it exists within *Za'er Anpin*, thus [making the Torah] a "Tree of Life" and "an elixir of life."

[Then the Torah becomes] a *sam*, a medication, and *Arach Anpin* is referred to as the doctor, for the source for healing comes from this level. This is [alluded to by the fact that when rearranged the first letters of] the phrase:⁸¹ כי אני י-ה-ו-ה רופאך, "For I am G-d your Healer" forms an acronym for the word *Arich*, אריך. And from the level of *Arich*, "Your health (ארכתך)⁸² will speedily sprout forth."⁸³ This is [also alluded to in the blessing from the *Shemoneh Esreh* associated with healing which states:] "Grant consummate healing (ארוכה) and remedy...."⁸⁴

[The explanation of the above is that] sickness comes from *kelipas nogah*. The transformation of darkness to light and the bitterness of *kelipas nogah* to sweetness is accomplished through the light that transcends the spiritual cosmos (*Seder Hishtalshelus*).

To explain the above, it is written:⁸¹ "All of the disease which I placed upon Egypt, I will not place upon you, for I am G-d your Healer." The *Talmud* (*Bava Metzia* 107b) states: "Disease, this is *marah*."⁸⁵ Disease is the source of sickness, and the source of all sickness is *marah*.

This can be elucidated as follows: It is written:⁸⁶ "For the lips of a strange [woman] drip honey... but her end is bitter (*marah*) as wormwood." The *Zohar* (Vol. II, *Parshas Vayakhel*, p. 203b) explains that this refers to *kelipas nogah*. Similar

80. *Nedarim* 81a.

81. *Shmos* 15:26.

82. [I.e., ארכתך shares the same letters as *Arich*.]

83. *Yeshayahu* 58:8.

84. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 54.

85. [Within the context of the *Talmudic* passage, *marah* refers to the gall bladder, but the Hebrew word *marah* also means "bitterness."]

86. *Mishlei* 5:4.

concepts are also stated in the *Raya Mehemna, Parshas Naso*, p. 124a which states:

Since Israel was together with the mixed multitude,⁸⁷ everything was from the Tree of Good and Evil⁸⁸ (see *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 26a). Of this, half was sweet from the right vector, and half was bitter from the left vector.

When the mixed multitude caused Israel to sin, it was as if it was all from the vector of evil. And the water was all bitter like the renowned bitter tree. This is indicated by the verse:⁸⁹ "They came to Marah."

Thus bitterness is associated with the evil in [*kelipas nogah*].

(From the statement: "When the mixed multitude caused Israel to sin, it was as if it was all from the vector of evil," it would appear that bitterness is the total wickedness associated with the three impure *kelipos*. Nevertheless, it can be explained that the intent [of the quote] is the evil in *kelipas nogah*. For [the mixed multitude] did not cause the Jewish people to sin with regard to matters that are forbidden entirely, but rather with regard to permitted matters that were unnecessary, merely [motivating them to] indulge the desires of their souls, as it is written:⁹⁰ "The rabble which was among them craved with desire and the Children of Israel once again..."⁹¹ Thus it involves the evil of *kelipas nogah*.⁹² This is the concept of מר, bitterness.

מר is numerically equivalent [to 240], twice 120. 120 refers to the 120 permutations of G-d's name אלהים, that [become the source for] "other gods" in the realm of *kelipas*

87. [The *eruv rav*, the mixed multitude of foreign peoples who ascended from Egypt together with the Jews. See *Shmos* 12:38.]

88. [The Tree of Knowledge.]

89. *Shmos* 15:23.

90. *Bamidbar* 11:4.

91. [I.e., it was the lusting of the mixed multitude which influenced the Jewish people.]

92. [For their desire did not involve forbidden matters, but rather fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic (*loc. cit.*:5).]

nogah.⁹³ When these are joined with the 120 permutations in the realm of holiness, מר, bitterness, severe attributes of *Gevurah*, are brought into being.

Nevertheless, this quality of evil reflects how *kelipas nogah* is included in the three impure *kelipos*. For *kelipas nogah* as it exists on its own accord involves a mixture of good and evil. An example of the means of expression [*levushim*] of *kelipas nogah* as they exist on their own accord is eating permitted food for the sake of maintaining [the health of] the body, but without an intent for the sake of heaven, but also not with the intent of fulfilling one's desires, as explained in *Tanya*, the beginning of ch. 7.

Thus the *levushim* of *kelipas nogah* itself involve a mixture of good and evil, and when a person eats food for the sake of heaven — i.e., to serve G-d with the energy from the food — the good becomes refined from the bad and is included in the realm of holiness.

When, by contrast, a person eats to satisfy the desires of his [animal] soul, [the spiritual potential of the food] becomes included in the three impure *kelipos*, and at that time, it is utterly evil. Nevertheless, it does not resemble the utter evil of the three impure *kelipos* which cannot be transformed and elevated to holiness. [The spiritual potential of this food], by contrast, can be transformed and elevated together [with the person] when he returns to the service of G-d, because the food is permitted.

According to this, it is understood that the means of expression of *kelipas nogah* themselves can also be called bitter and [identified with] the evil of *kelipas nogah*. {This is the disease which is the source of sickness.} Thus when a person eats for the sake of the desires of his soul like "the rabble [who]... craved with desire," this is like the evil of *kelipas nogah* being included in the three impure *kelipos*, which are identified with sin and transgression as will be explained.)

93. [Rearranging the letters of a Hebrew word reflects a diminution and permutation of its spiritual potentials. There are 120 possible permutations of the five letters of the name א-ל-ה-י-ם. When these potentials are reflected in *kelipas nogah*, they give rise to the source for the worship of other gods.]

This relates⁹⁴ [to the continuation of the discussion] in the chapter of *Tanya* cited previously — that *kelipas nogah* includes both good and evil, and in the world of *Asiyah*, it is predominantly evil, and there is only a small amount of good intermingled with it. From this [constitution] is drawn down the desire for physical pleasure from permitted entities. This also is forbidden by the Torah; [i.e., not the activity itself, but] the desire for it. For [performing such activities] for the sake of indulging one's desires [violates] one of the Torah's prohibitions.

In this vein, the *Sefer HaChinuch* (the conclusion of *Parshas Shelach*, *mitzvah* 387) lists the commandment⁹⁵ not “to follow after your heart and eyes” [as one of the 613 *mitzvos*], [interpreting it as] “not pursuing the desires of this physical world.” In the conclusion [of its discussion of the issue, that text] states:

Similarly, one who follows [after] his eyes, i.e., he pursues the desires of this world... without having a productive intent in mind... but merely to satiate his soul with pleasure... transgresses this prohibition.

In a similar fashion, the *Rambam* (*Sefer HaMitzvos*, negative commandment 47) writes: “We have been adjured neither ‘to follow our hearts... nor our eyes,’ this is promiscuity... i.e., not to be drawn after physical desires and occupy our thoughts with them.” This thrust is also reflected in *Tanya*, ch. 12, which states that a person “who willfully thinks [about sinful matters] is called wicked.” And [Rabbeinu] Bachaye (in the beginning of *Parshas Kedoshim*) elaborates about this matter at length.

On this basis, [we can explain] the verse (*Mishlei* 18:1): “One who sets himself apart seeks desire.” For a person who seeks [material] desire is set apart [from G-d]. See also the comments of [*Bereishis*] *Rabbah*, *Parshas Lech Lecha*, ch. 41, on

94. **This relates:** With regard to the discussion of the desire for permitted entities, see also *Kuntres U'Mayon*, discourses 1 and 2, and the *maamar* entitled *Zocharnu*, 5701.

95. *Bamidbar* 15:39.

the verse:⁹⁶ "Please separate from me..." The *Midrash* states: "The verse does not say 'distinguish,' it says 'separate,'" implying that one who is separate is far worse than one who is distinct.

[The word *nifrad* (נפרד, "one who sets himself apart")] shares the etymological root [as the word *pared* (פרד, "mule")] as in the phrase⁹⁷ "like a horse and like a mule." (It appears [that the explanation is] that הַבְּדִלָה, distinction, also exists in the realm of holiness, as it is written:⁹⁸ "And the *paroches* shall create a distinction for you...", and it is written:⁹⁹ "And he set aside Aharon to consecrate him as holy of holies." These [two instances] represent the distinction between holiness and that which is most holy. There is also a distinction between holiness and the mundane. See the discussion of these concepts in *Torah Or* in the *maamar* entitled *Vilo Yikora Od Shimcha Avram* and the *maamar* entitled *Vehivdilah HaParoches Lechem*, in *Parshas Lech Lecha*.

It is possible to explain that *havdalah*, "distinction," refers to the difference between holiness and the realm of *kelipas nogah*. While *nifrad*, "separate," refers to the evil in *kelipas nogah*, as indicated by the verse:¹⁰⁰ "All the workers of iniquity shall be dispersed."

[Based on this explanation, the use of this root in the verse:]¹⁰¹ "And from there, they separated (יִפְרְדוּ)" is somewhat difficult to understand. For this refers to distinctions within the realm of holiness, those that exist between the four camps of the *Shechinah*, the four beasts in the Divine Chariot, and the three worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, as is well known.

It is possible to resolve [this difficulty] by explaining that the term *havdalah* is primarily used when distinguishing a higher level which is distinct and elevated from a lower level,

96. *Bereishis* 13:9.

97. *Tehillim* 32:9.

98. *Shmos* 26:3 [In the *maamar*, the words of the verse are quoted in a slightly different order than they appear in the Torah.]

99. *I Divrei HaYomim* 23:13.

100. *Tehillim* 92:10.

101. *Bereishis* 2:10.

for example, the distinction between the Holy of Holies and the Sanctuary, or the distinction between holiness and the mundane, while *nifrad* is used to explain how the lower levels are set aside from the higher ones.

In truth, the proper approach can be explained based on the verse:¹⁰² “Your Torah is in my intestines,” i.e., David praised himself, [saying] that everything in my intestines was ingested according to the ways of the Torah and its pious paths of conduct, as Rabbeinu Bachaye mentions in the source cited above.¹⁰³ And with regard to this approach, it is said:¹⁰⁴ “A righteous man eats for the satisfaction of his soul.” Certainly, these concepts apply with regard to other desires.

(In *Torah Or, Parshas Chayei [Sarah]*, in the *maamar* entitled *Yigalei Lan Taamei*, it is explained that “A righteous man eats [for the satisfaction of his soul]” refers to eating on *Shabbos*, when it is not necessary to refine [and elevate one’s food], while the Divine service of “refining” [the food we eat is alluded to in the continuation of the verse:] “And the bellies of the wicked shall be lacking.” Nevertheless, within the context of the present discussion, even the Divine service of refining [the food we eat] can be associated with “A righteous man eat[ing]....” This understanding is also reflected in the *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 240a.) This is [the spiritual counterpart of] eating ordinary food according to the strictures required for consecrated foods,¹⁰⁵ as explained in the *maamarim* entitled *Vilo Yikora...* and *Vehivdilah...* cited above.

And when a person refrains from excess [indulgence], [employing] only what is necessary to maintain his body and his health — and moreover, he does this for the sake of heaven, so that he will have the strength to study and pray —

102. *Tehillim* 40:9.

103. *Parshas Kedoshim*.

104. *Mishlei* 13:25.

105. [There are many restrictions that apply with regard to eating the food which is consecrated, for neither the food, nor the person eating it may be in a state of ritual impurity. There were certain pious men who observed these restrictions even while partaking of ordinary food. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Tumas Ochalin* 16:12.]

he is in truth distant from evil. Eating in this manner will not lead him to any evil. On the contrary, it will increase his vitality in holy matters. [This can be explained through] the well-known interpretation¹⁰⁶ of the verse:¹⁰⁷ “[Man does not live on bread alone;] instead, he derives his life from every expression of the mouth of G-d,” for then the food becomes refined, and becomes included in the realm of holiness.

When, however, a person does not refrain from excess indulgence — even when he does not seek to satisfy the lusts of his soul, but merely does not refrain from indulgence in them (and thus he also derives pleasure from them, although he does not seek his pleasure and his desires) — [his conduct is undesirable]. [This applies even when he] is involved in matters that are not in excess, but he eats them without thinking, without any intention for the sake of heaven. [In such an instance,] the very material and physical nature of the food, which involves both good and evil, leads him to desire to fulfill his own desires while eating, whether while eating his very necessities, or while eating in excess, in which instance, [his conduct] is utter evil as explained above, and it violates a Scriptural prohibition.

On this basis, we can understand the verse:¹⁰⁸ “For the lips of a strange [woman] drip honey....” The desires of this world are compared to honey, for at first they are sweet. Ultimately, however, they will lead to bitterness. We see this [in the narrative of the people who lusted after meat] in *Parshas Behaalos’cha*. First they “craved with desire”¹⁰⁹ and ultimately, [the meat which they had desired] became “repulsive.”¹¹⁰ The ultimate fate of “the honey [which] drip[s from] the lips of a strange [woman] (זרה) is that it becomes repulsive (זרא), i.e., “her end is bitter,” biting like a two-edged sword. This reflects

106. See *Likkutei Torah*, the *maamar* entitled *Sheshes Yomim*, sec. 2, and the *maamar* entitled *ViShavachti Ani*, 5702.

107. *Devarim* 8:3.

108. *Mishlei* 5:4.

109. *Bamidbar* 11:4.

110. *Ibid.*:20.

the interpretation of [זר, translated above as “repulsive,” which] *Rashi* cites. [As he comments,] Rabbi Moshe [*HaDarshan*] interprets the term as meaning “sword.”

This is the concept of disease (מחלה), for the root חולה also has the implication of sweetness as in the phrase:¹¹¹ “Because of the sharpness..., it is sweet to him.” Similarly, the *Targum* uses the root חלי to connote sweetness in its translation of the verse:¹¹² “Should I withhold my sweetness?”, the verse:¹¹³ “What is sweeter than honey?”, and the verse:¹¹⁴ “It was sweet in my mouth like honey.” Similarly, *Shabbos* 109b uses this root to connote sweetness when speaking of “a sweet esrog,” as does *Megillah* 7b in the expression: “I sent him some sweets.” Thus the term reflects an intermingling of good and evil. Because of the good within it, it contains sweetness. And because of the evil, it is bitter and refinement is necessary to extract the good from the evil and for the evil to be rejected. When, however, this process of refinement is not undertaken, it leads to utter evil.

In a similar vein, *Vayikra Rabbah*, *Parshas Metzora*, 16:8, comments on the verse:¹¹⁵ “And G-d shall remove all sickness from you.” “This refers to the *yetzer hara* which is initially sweet, but ultimately bitter.” And the *Matanas Kehunah* explains that חולי, “sickness,” is interpreted as above, i.e., that it can also connote sweetness. Thus initially it is sweet, but ultimately, it is bitter.

The latter point can be interpreted in two different fashions: According to its simple meaning, that the *yetzer hara* advises a person that [following its lures] will bring him sweetness, but his ultimate fate will be bitter like wormwood. Or alternatively, that the punishment is not visited on the person immediately, and so at first, [following] the *yetzer hara*

111. *Avodah Zarah* 39a.

112. *Shoftim* 9:11.

113. *Ibid.*, 14:18.

114. *Yechezkel* 3:3.

115. *Devarim* 7:15.

is sweet, as it says:¹¹⁶ “Stolen waters are sweet,” but ultimately, when the punishment comes, bitterness ensues.¹¹⁷

To explain the above: As stated previously, מר is numerically equivalent to twice 120, referring to two different sets of the 120 permutations of G-d’s name *Elokim*. For there are 120 permutations of the name *Elokim* in the realm of holiness. The first 72 permutations represent attributes of *Gevurah* that have been sweetened,¹¹⁸ while the last 48 permutations represent severe attributes of *Gevurah*. When an additional 120 permutations [of the name *Elokim*] from the realm of *kelipas nogah* are joined to [the 120 permutations of the realm of holiness] to receive nurture from them, they become severe attributes of judgment bringing about renunciation, annihilation, and destruction.

On this basis, we can understand our Sages’ interpretation (*Devarim Rabbah*, *Parshas Re’eh*, 4:3, *Eichah Rabbah* 3:40) of the verse:¹¹⁹ “It is not from the mouth of the Most High that good and evil emanate”:

From the day on which the Holy One, blessed be He, declared:¹²⁰ “Behold, I am setting before you today life and goodness...,” goodness has not been granted to those who work evil, nor evil to those who perform good. Instead,... goodness has been granted to those who perform good.

Thus a person who follows his *yetzer hara* draws evil and death to himself. Thus even if at the outset, [the *yetzer hara*’s counsel] is sweet, ultimately, it is bitter.

In this vein, on the verse:²² “And G-d shall remove all sickness from you,” our Sages comment: “It is your option

116. *Mishlei* 9:17.

117. [I.e., according to the first interpretation, the sweetness is the lures promised by the *yetzer hara*. According to the second interpretation, the sweetness refers to the sweetness experienced immediately after listening to the *yetzer hara*, for the punishment will not be visited upon the person immediately.]

118. [I.e., the positive dimension of those attributes of severity is revealed.]

119. *Eichah* 3:38.

120. *Devarim* 30:15.

that sickness not affect you."¹²¹ And on this basis, we can understand the verse:¹²² "And if you certainly heed the voice of G-d... all of the disease with which I afflicted Egypt, I will not afflict you." Egypt refers to physical desire; i.e., disease is identified with *kelipas nogah*. "If you certainly heed the voice of G-d...," this will lead to "I will not afflict you" with the disease of *kelipas nogah*. So too, the *Midrash Rabbah* states: "'And G-d shall remove all sickness from you.' This refers to the *yetzer hara*."

In this light, we can interpret the verse:¹²³ "This is the concept of evil which G-d gave to mankind to cause travail." "Evil" refers to the *yetzer hara*, as it is written:¹²⁴ "The inclination of man's heart is evil." With regard to this, it is said:¹²⁵ "the Creator of evil," and "Behold, I am setting before you... evil."¹²⁷

[The word] לענות, [translated as "cause travail,"] can also be interpreted as "to answer." The *yetzer hara*, the wicked angel, shall answer *Amen* against its will,¹²⁶ i.e., a person will come to "love G-d... with all your heart,"¹²⁷ interpreted by our Sages¹²⁸ to mean "with both your desires." [Even the *yetzer hara* will be transformed into a positive force.]

Synopsis: [This chapter begins by explaining] that the refinement of the Tree of Knowledge [which is associated with] "the potion of death" is through the medium of the Torah, "the elixir of life," i.e., through the *Or Ein Sof* which transcends the spiritual cosmos which is encloded in the Torah.

The "elixir of life" heals the evil of *kelipas nogah* which is described as "bitter" and "disease." Disease

121. [ממך, translated in the verse as "from you," can also mean "dependent on you."]

122. *Shmos* 15:26.

123. *Koheles* 1:13. [The literal meaning of the verse is different.]

124. *Bereishis* 8:21.

125. *Yeshayahu* 45:7.

126. *Shabbos* 119b.

127. *Devarim* 6:5.

128. *Berachos* 54a.

also [shares a connection] with sweetness, for *kelipas nogah* possesses good.

[The chapter] explains the means of expression (*levushim*) of *kelipas nogah* as they exist on their own accord, as they are included in holiness, and as they are included in the three impure *kelipos*. ([In that context, it] explains the difference between *havdalah*, "distinction," and *nifrad*, "separate.")

Two interpretations are given for the statement that initially, the *yetzer hara* is sweet, but ultimately, it is bitter.



CHAPTER IV

The remedy for the above [difficulties] is the Torah, as it is written:¹²⁹ "It will serve as remedies for your navel," and¹³⁰ "It will be a cure for all your flesh." For in contrast to "the lips of a strange [woman which] drip honey... but [whose] end is bitter as wormwood,"¹³¹ the Torah is described¹³² as being: "sweeter than honey and a honeycomb," and its end is not bitter, heaven forbid.

See also the statements of Rabbeinu Bachaye, *Parshas Toldos* on the verse:¹³³ "A man familiar with hunting," and [concerning] the opposite of that, Yaakov, who is described as "an artless man, dwelling in tents,"¹³⁴ i.e., "the tents of Torah study." [See also his statements] at the beginning of *Parshas Yisro*, in which he writes [concerning the phrase:]¹³⁵ "'To save you from a foreign woman,' undesirable faith is compared to a strange woman who ultimately destroys a man, as it is

129. *Mishlei* 3:8.

130. *Ibid.*, 4:22.

131. *Ibid.*, 5:4.

132. *Tehillim* 19:11.

133. *Bereishis* 25:27.

134. *Ibid.*

135. *Mishlei* 2:16.

written: 'her end is bitter.'... Nevertheless,... this can be corrected through [desirable] speech."

This is alluded to in our Sages' statement (*Bava Metzia* 107b): "Disease (מחלה), this is the gall bladder (*marah*)... All of these can be nullified by bread [dipped] in salt, and a pitcher of water."

"Bread" refers to the Torah as will be explained, "salt" to *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, [the Torah's inner, mystic dimension,] as explained in *Likkutei Torah* in the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *Vilo Tashbis Melech*, and "a pitcher of water" to the Oral Law which is referred to with the analogy of water. These nullify and cure the "disease."

To explain the above: The Torah is referred to as bread, as it is written:¹³⁶ "Come partake of My bread," which alludes to the Torah. And it is written:¹³⁷ "Bread satisfies the heart of man." The term used for man, אנוש, implies weakness, as reflected in the verse:¹³⁸ "The heart is more deceitful than all things, and it is weak (אנוש)...." "Bread satisfies the heart of man," [i.e., the weakness in man,]¹³⁹ and strengthens it, giving it the power and the force to conquer with regard to his animal soul. For the Torah is called strength, as it is written:¹⁴⁰ "G-d will grant strength to His people." It endows the G-dly soul with strength and power, [enabling it] to overcome the material nature and the coarseness of the body and the animal soul, and thus "[to] enable a prisoner to escape from captivity."¹⁴¹

Therefore the Torah is called "bread." For bread connects and bonds the vitality of the soul to the limbs of the body and strengthens it, drawing down additional life energy for the soul. [Indeed,] when a person does not eat, the vitality which is encloded in the limbs of his body is weakened; it is

136. *Ibid.*, 9:5.

137. *Tehillim* 105:15.

138. *Yirmeyahu* 17:9.

139. [I.e., the G-dly soul which is referred to as "a young, weak lad."]

140. *Tehillim* 29:11.

141. Cf. *Yeshayahu* 42:7.

reduced and withdraws. And by eating, he draws down additional energy from his soul for the vitality which is encloded in his body. This strengthens its power.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the "bread of the Torah." It draws down added vitality to the G-dly soul which is encloded in the animal soul, and empowers it, enabling it to overcome the material nature of the body and the animal soul.

[This is possible,] because "the Torah emanates from *Chochmah* (wisdom), and with *Chochmah* rests the *Or Ein Sof*.¹⁴² The external forces¹⁴³ can derive their nurture only from the seven emotional qualities, [for] they are [paralleled by] the seven emotional qualities of *Tohu*. [This motif does not apply] with regard to the attribute of *Chochmah*. Thus it is written:¹⁴⁴ "They will die, but without *Chochmah*." For *Chochmah* is above the breaking of the vessels of *Tohu*.

For this reason, sin does not extinguish [the light of] the Torah. For [negative forces] have no nurture and dominion on this level. Therefore, drawing down the attribute of wisdom through the Torah endows the G-dly soul with strength. [Simultaneously, the Torah] weakens the power of the animal soul, for the Torah is called:¹⁴⁵ "strength and crippling," "strength" for the G-dly soul, and "crippling" for the animal soul. For the animal soul has its source in the broken vessels of the realm of *Tohu*. The Torah, by contrast, emanates from the level of *Chochmah*, [and it is written:] "They will die, but without *Chochmah*." Therefore, it weakens the strength of the animal soul.

These concepts are reflected in our Sages' statements (*Shmos Rabbah*, *Parshas Shmos*, 5:9) which explain that G-d's voice [which emanated from Mount Sinai] had two dimensions: life for the Jewish people, and death for the wicked. Since the source of the souls of the Jewish people is

142. [See the note to *Tanya*, ch. 35.]

143. [The source for the life-energy of the realm of evil.]

144. *Iyov* 4:21.

145. *Ibid.* 12:16. [Our translation fits the context in which the verse is used in the *maamar*.]

from *Chochmah*, the Torah granted them life and additional power. The animal soul, however, is the very opposite. Therefore, it is negated by the Torah.

This is also reflected by our Sages' statement:¹⁴⁶ "If the rogue [the *yetzer hara*] encounters you, draw him to the house of study. If he is like a stone, he will be dissolved." Even if his heart is as hard as a stone, it will be dissolved. The analogy is that when water passes drop by drop over a stone, even though the stone is hard and the water is soft, ultimately the continuous flow of the water will make an impression on the stone.¹⁴⁷

The above is particularly true since the source [of the Torah] is from the level of *Kesser*, as implied by the verses:¹⁴⁸ "And these words which I command you..." and¹⁴⁹ "I am G-d, your L-rd." *Kesser* (כתר), [though a positive potential], shares the same letters as the word *kareis* (כרת), meaning "cut off." [For the awesomeness of its light will destroy all negative forces.] From [this level] is drawn down [the potential for] "all your enemies [to] be cut off,"¹⁵⁰ i.e., the evil of the animal soul will be cut off. It will perish and become transformed into good, [for] it too will become *batel* to G-dliness.

[On this basis, we can understand the implication of] the verse:¹⁵¹ "Or let him take hold of My strength;¹⁵² let him make peace with Me. He will make peace with Me." [Noting the redundancy in the verse,] our Sages comment:¹⁵³ "Whoever occupies himself with the Torah generates peace in the heavenly company and peace in the earthly company."

"Establish[ing] peace in the heavenly company" refers to the bonding between *Or Ein Sof*, the source of emanation, and the Ten *Sefiros* of the realm of *Atzilus*. This is accomplished

146. *Kiddushin* 30b.

147. [Note the story concerning Rabbi Akiva, *Avos DeRabbi Nasan* 6:2.]

148. *Devarim* 6:6. [The *maamar's* intent is that the word these verses use for I, *Anochi* (אניכי), is identified with the level of *Kesser*.]

149. *Shmos* 20:2.

150. *Michah* 5:8. [There is a printing error in the Hebrew text.]

151. *Yeshayahu* 27:5.

152. See the *maamar* entitled *Heichaltzu* and its explanation in *Likkutei Torah*.

153. *Sanhedrin* 99b.

through the level of *Kesser* which is an intermediary between the source of emanation and the existence which has emanated. From this peace, additional strength and power is drawn down to the G-dly soul whose source is from the level of *Atzilus*.

“Establish[ing]... peace in the earthly company” refers to [the spiritual dynamic in which] *Malchus* of *Atzilus* serves as *Kesser* for the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. This establishes a connection and a bond between *Atzilus* and the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, causing the light of *Atzilus* to shine into these realms.

This weakens the power of the animal soul. For the shining of the light of *Atzilus* into the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah* nullifies [the self-conscious dimension of] these realms. [For] the twelve cattle of *Beriah*¹⁵⁴ are the root and source of the animal soul. [Thus when the self-conscious dimensions of these potentials are nullified by the light of *Atzilus*,] the animal soul is also nullified. This reflects the bonding of the G-dly soul and the animal soul, causing the animal soul also to be *batel* to G-dliness.

This explains how the Torah serves as a cure for disease, as our Sages state (*Kiddushin* 30b), the Torah is “an elixir of life,” and they say: “I created the *yetzer hara*, and I created the Torah as a condiment for it.” And as explained above, all [of the sicknesses caused by *marah*] are negated by eating bread in the morning, [i.e., in analogy, by studying the Torah]. For sickness comes from *kelipas nogah* from which is drawn down the evil desires of the animal soul. The Torah, however, weakens the animal soul, destroys the evil within it, and creates peace within the G-dly soul and the animal soul, enabling the animal soul also to be *batel* to G-dliness.

See also the conclusion of *Avos DeRabbi Nasan*, ch. 16, which states that for the *yetzer hara*, there is no way for it to be corrected except through the words of the Torah. (And the *Chidah* in his *Kisei HaRachamim* writes:

154. [These refer to the twelve fundamental characteristics of that realm, reflecting twelve different divisions within holiness, as reflected by the twelve tribes.]

Although there are techniques to subdue [the *yetzer hara*], e.g., to be genuinely humble, to attain a rightful measure of fear of heaven, and the like, these only protect a person from being snared by it. Through the study of the Torah, one corrects the *yetzer hara* itself and makes it good.

This is our Sages' intent in their statement: "I created the *yetzer hara*, and I created the Torah as a condiment for it." Just as a condiment makes food fit to eat, so too, the Torah corrects the *yetzer hara*, making it good.

This is the intent of the statement: "For the *yetzer hara*, there is no way for it to be corrected except through the words of the Torah," i.e., for the *yetzer hara* itself, to make it good, the only way is through the words of the Torah.

The words of the interpretation of a wise man are gracious. [This relates to] the concepts stated previously with regard to establishing peace within the earthly company.)

[As a proof-text, the passage from *Avos DeRabbi Nasan* cites the verse:]¹⁵⁵ "If your enemy is hungry, feed him bread... and G-d will repay you," and comments: "Do not read *ישלם לך*, 'repay you,' but rather *ישלים לך*, 'have him [the animal soul] join you.'"

In a similar vein, *Rashi*, in his commentary to the verse, identifies the "enemy" as "the *yetzer hara*," and explains as follows: "If he is hungry and tells you to satisfy him through sins, take yourself to the house of study, and feed him the bread of Torah... 'G-d will repay you,' will *ישלים לך*, establish peace between you and him, so that he will not overcome you." (Above, *ישלים לך* was interpreted as referring to a higher rung [of Divine service], to make the *yetzer hara* itself good.)

155. *Mishlei* 25:21.

The *Talmud* (*Sukkah* 52a, and *Rashi's* commentary) [interprets] "feed him bread (לחם)" [differently, drawing on the connection] between לחם and מלחמה, "war," and states: "unsettle him through the wars of the Torah."

A similar interpretation is found in *Likkutei Torah*, in the *maamar* entitled *Ko Sivorchu*, sec. 2, commenting on the verse:¹⁵⁶ "Gird your sword on your thigh, man of might" which explains [that לחם] refers to the war (מלחמה) of Torah. In this vein, *Shabbos* 63a interprets that phrase as referring to the words of the Torah. And *Bereishis Rabbah* (the conclusion of ch. 21) states: "And our Rabbis say: 'the sword of Torah,' as it is written:¹⁵⁷ 'A two-edged sword in their hand.'"

For this reason, the Torah was given on Mount Choreb. As *Shmos Rabbah* (*Parshas Pekudei*, the conclusion of ch. 51) states: "Why [is it called] Choreb (חורב)? Because upon it was given the Torah which is called "a sword" (חרב), as it is written: "The exaltation of G-d is in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hand." In a similar vein, *Shabbos* 89b states that the mountain [was named] Choreb because [from there,] "desolation (חורבה) descended."

The explanation of a two-edged sword is [that the Torah brings about two different types of restraint]: not to lower oneself into worldly desire, nor to come to pride, as stated in the *maamar* entitled *ViAni Nasati Lecha Shechem Echad* in the *Hosafos to Torah Or*.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that the remedy for sickness is the Torah which is called bread. [The Torah] endows the G-dly soul with strength to overcome the body and the animal soul. [It explains that Torah study establishes] strength in the heavenly company and strength in the earthly company, being a source of strength to the G-dly soul and crippling to the animal soul.



156. *Tehillim* 45:4.

157. *Ibid.*, 149:6.

CHAPTER V

The Torah is the true remedy for the above sickness, not only weakening it and diminishing its strength, but also removing it and causing it to depart entirely. For it is in the power of the Torah to transform the essence and the nature of the animal soul to good as explained above. Nevertheless, we find that on the verse:¹⁵⁸ "This is the Torah which Moshe placed [before the children of Israel]," our Sages (*Yoma* 72b) comment: "If a person merits, [the Torah] becomes an elixir of life for him. If a person does not merit, it becomes a deadly poison."

On the surface, this is an incredulous statement: How can the Torah which is the source for healing, and "a tree of life to those who hold fast to it,"¹⁵⁹ become deadly poison, not only serving as a source of healing, but rather, becoming the direct opposite.

To understand this phenomenon, we must preface the teachings of the *Midrash Rabbah* (*Bereishis*, ch. 19), on the verse:¹⁶⁰ "And they sewed fig (תאנה) leaves." Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai comments: [They chose the] leaves which brought grief (תואנה) to the world." This follows the opinion stated by Rabbi Nechemiah (*Berachos* 40a) that the Tree of Knowledge was a fig [tree].

Explanation is necessary. The Oral Law is compared to a fig tree, as it is written:¹⁶¹ "He who plants a fig tree will eat its fruits." And our Sages state (*Eruvin* 54a): "Why are the words of the Torah described with the analogy of a fig tree? A fig tree produces fruit throughout the entire time that a person pays attention to it (i.e., it does not produce its fruit only at one time; instead, today, some, tomorrow, some. At any time, it is fitting to partake of it). The same concept applies to the words of the Torah. Whenever a person meditates upon them, he will find value in them."

158. *Devarim* 4:44.

159. *Mishlei* 3:18.

160. *Bereishis* 3:7.

161. *Mishlei* 27:18.

Similar concepts are stated in the *Bamidbar Rabbah* (*Parshas Naso*, ch. 12, p. 48d) which states: "Why is the Torah compared to a fig tree? Because [the fruits of] most trees are harvested at one time, while that of a fig tree is harvested a little at a time." (For this reason, there is no obligation to set aside [*pe'ah* from a fig tree], as stated in the *mishnah*, *Peah*, ch. 1: "A general principle was stated with regard to *Peah*: "[*Peah* must be set aside] from any [produce] which is eaten... and harvested at one time." [The latter phrase was included explicitly for the purpose of] excluding fig trees, for they are harvested little by little.) Similarly, [the *Midrash* continues with regard to] the Torah. "Today, one learns a little, the next day, a lot. For it cannot be studied in a year or two. Concerning this it is said:¹⁶¹ 'He who plants a fig tree...'"

And the *Talmud* (*Berachos* 57a) states: "When a person sees a fig tree in his dreams, [this is an omen that] his Torah study will be preserved." ([The above stems from the fact that] a fig tree is an analogy for the attribute of *Malchus* (Sovereignty), and *Malchus* is identified with "the mouth, it is called the Oral Law.")¹⁶² Since the Oral Law is described with an analogy of a fig tree, how could it possibly be said that the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree?

The concept can be explained as follows: The *Zohar* (Vol. I, p. 221) [identifies] the Tree of Life with the attribute of *Tiferes* (Beauty) and the Tree of Knowledge with the attribute of *Malchus*, commenting on the verse:¹⁶³ "And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat" [as follows]:

When the Holy One, blessed be He, created Adam,... He desired that he cling to Him so that he would be found in unity with one heart, in the place of singular unity, so that there would be no change, nor transformation forever. This is intimated by the

¹⁶² *Tikkunei Zohar*, the *Tikkun* beginning *Pasach Eliyahu*.

¹⁶³ *Bereishis* 3:6.

verse:¹⁶⁴ "And the Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden."

After they swayed from the path of faith and left the singular tree, the one which is sublime above all other trees, they came to cling to the place of change...

(The *Mikdash Melech* states: "This is what Rav Chayim Vital wrote in *Parshas Emor* with regard to this: 'The secret of the Tree of Knowledge is the feminine attribute.' Based on this, we can comprehend the statement of the *Zohar, Bereishis*, that the sin was that they did not eat from the Tree of Life before eating from the Tree of Knowledge, or that they did not eat from them both together.)

...one which changes from color to color, from good to bad, and from bad to good. They descended downward, clinging below to a place [which is characterized] by numerous changes....

Then [man's] heart was changed, becoming like that attribute, [changing constantly,] sometimes to good, sometimes to bad, sometimes to mercy....

The Holy One, blessed be He, told man: "You abandoned life, and clung to death. Life, as it is written: 'The Tree of Life in the midst of the garden.' It is called 'life' for one who clings to it will never taste death at all.

"You, [however,] clung to the other tree, certainly death is before you, as it is written:¹⁶⁵ "Her feet descend to death." And it is written:¹⁶⁶ "I find a woman more bitter than death." Certainly, you have

164. *Ibid.*, 2:9.

165. *Mishlei* 5:5.

166. *Koheles* 7:26.

clung to the place of death, and abandoned the place of life....

[This caused a change in all existence.] For when [the other created beings] saw that Adam bowed down to that place and clung to it, all of them were drawn after him, and this brought death upon the entire world.

This caused man to change to several colors, at times to strict judgment, and at times to mercy.

The *Zihorei Chamah*¹⁶⁷ explains that *Malchus* is identified with the Tree of Knowledge because of its enclothing in *Metatron* ([an angel] in the World of *Yetzirah*) who is called "The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," i.e., from its half-way point and below, it is evil because of the *kelipos* which are attached to it. It is also called the Tree of Death, because the enclothing in *kelipah* brings death to the entire world. Heaven forbid, however, that *Malchus* itself [should be identified with death,] for it is [one of the attributes] of *Atzilus*, and is [identified] entirely with life and goodness.

[One might ask:] The verse: "Her feet descend to death" [is identified with the level of *Malchus*, apparently indicating that *Malchus* shares a connection with death], means that its outgrowths and derivatives descend and enclothe themselves in death. (The intent is [to] contrast [*Malchus* with] *Tiferes* which is referred to as "the Tree of Life." Even the outgrowths [of *Tiferes*] do not descend and enclothe themselves in death.) Note the *maamar* entitled *Lachein Emor* in *Torah Or* with regard to the level identified with "the Holy One, blessed be He." [It is explained — that] even a ray and the glory of this level cannot enclothe themselves [in death]. The level identified with "the Holy One, blessed be He" is the attribute

167. See a similar explanation in *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26, quoted in ch. 11.

of *Tiferes* as is explained with regard to the concept:¹⁶⁸ “the Holy One, blessed be He, prayed.”

[The *Zihorei Chamah* continues:]

On this basis, we can understand the statement: “Certainly death is before you.” [G-d was telling Adam:] Since you are connected with death, it is certainly “before you,” as it is written:¹⁶⁹ “Sin crouches at the opening.”

“When... Adam bowed down to that place...,” i.e., to that place [*Malchus*], and did not desire the attribute of *Tiferes*, and indeed, separated it from the attribute of *Tiferes*, taking grain from its owner, enclothing it in the Tree of Death. Then “All of them were drawn after him, and this brought death upon the entire world.”

These statements raise a question: What is the sin in clinging to the attribute of *Malchus*? [*Malchus*] is one of the holy *Sefiros*, one of the attributes of *Atzilus*! [Indeed,] the *Sefer HaBahir* as quoted in the *Pardes, Shaar HaKinuim*, ch. 4 states; that the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to endow the Patriarchs with this attribute and they refused it, as alluded to in the verse:¹⁷⁰ “The stone which the builders spurned.” And David was a medium for this attribute, [and David is not associated with death. On the contrary,] we say:¹⁷¹ “David, King of Israel, is alive and endures.”

Also, the statement of the *Zihorei Chamah* that [Adam] separated *Malchus* from *Tiferes* requires explanation. The *Zohar* states that Adam refused the attribute of *Tiferes*. Where, however, is it stated that [Adam] separated the two, heaven forbid? We find that the Patriarchs “refused the attribute of *Malchus*.” They did not, however, separate it from the other attributes. Why is it said in this context that when Adam

168. See the conclusion of the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *BeSha’ah SheHikdimu* in *Likkutei Torah*. Note also the second *maamar* entitled *Ardah Na*, ch. 24, in *Toras Chayim*.

169. *Bereishis* 4:7.

170. *Tehillim* 118:22.

171. The *Kiddush Levanah* prayers (*Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 239).

attached himself to the attribute of *Malchus*, he “separated it”? Also, the statement of the *Zihorei Chamah* “taking grain or son away from its master or her husband, enclothing it in the Tree of Death” implies that the two clauses [— “taking grain...” and “enclothing it...”] are dependent one on the other. This requires explanation.

Synopsis: Questions are raised with regard to our Sages’ statement that the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree. [This is difficult to understand, because] the fig is used as an analogy for the Oral Law [which is identified with the attribute of *Malchus*].

And [a question is raised with regard to the statement that] the sin of Adam, the first man, involved his attaching himself to the attribute of *Malchus* and separating it from the attribute of *Tiferes*.



CHAPTER VI

The [above difficulties can be resolved] based on the following statements quoted from the *Zohar*, Vol. III, *Parshas Chukas*, p. 182b:

Rabbi Shimon said: “Certainly, one who takes the position of death alone (see the comments of the *Zohar* [Vol. III] at the beginning of *Parshas Chukas*, p. 179b, quoted previously), to him can be applied the phrase:¹⁷² ‘In all of his labor which he will perform beneath the sun.’

“What is meant by ‘beneath the sun’? I would presume the intent is the moon. When a person attaches himself to the moon without the sun, ‘his labor’ is certainly ‘perform[ed] beneath the sun.’ This is [the

172. *Koheles* 1:3.

nature of] the first sin of the world (i.e., the sin committed by Adam, the first man. The Tree of Knowledge is identified with *Malchus* which is referred to as the moon. [Adam] separated [*Malchus*] from the Tree of Life which is identified with the sun.)

“This is the intent of the verse:¹⁷³ ‘What advantage is there to man’ — i.e., to Adam, the first man — ‘in all of his labor which he will perform beneath the sun.’”

To explain: It is written:¹⁷³ “Like the sun and its shield are *Havayah Elokim*.” This refers to the attributes of *Tiferes*, in which is vested the name *Havayah*, and *Malchus*, which is identified with the name *Elokim*. They are like “the sun and its shield.”

[One should not infer that there is any division between these two dimensions of G-dliness.] In truth, they are all one. It is true that the name *Elokim* is the medium which causes the world to have a consciousness of *yesh*, and to see itself as a separate entity. This comes about because there is a veil and a curtain [creating an apparent separation between the world and its spiritual source. This separation is created through] the attribute of *Malchus* which functions through distance and upliftedness, as explained in *Likkutei Torah*, the explanation to the *maamar* entitled *Mi Maneh*, sec. 1. Similarly, the *Pardes* (*Shaar HaKeilim*, *Erech Peroches*) writes that the *Peroches* is called *Malchus*, for *Malchus* is a “partition screening.”¹⁷⁴

As explained above, the material dimensions of our existence (the *chomer*) comes from G-d’s speech, the attribute of *Malchus*. This [extends the influence of G-dliness to lower frames of reference,] causing G-d to be “King over nations,”¹⁷⁵ i.e., a ray of His [magnificence] is drawn down to Amalek and to the idolators as stated in the *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 96a. This is the intent of the verse,¹⁷⁶ “Her feet descend to death,” [i.e., the

173. *Tehillim* 84:12.

174. Cf. *Shmos* 35:12.

175. *Tehillim* 47:9.

176. *Mishlei* 5:5.

“feet,” the lower extensions of *Malchus*, “descend to death,” convey influence to the realm of evil].

[Influence could not be conveyed to these levels from the name *Havayah* directly.]¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, [the source of] all of this influence is the name *Havayah*. For *Havayah* is the force which brings existence into being, not *Elokim*. Although it is written:¹⁷⁸ “In the beginning, *Elokim* created,” the intent is that the name *Elokim* serves as a medium for the power of the name *Havayah*. [This is necessary, because] *Elokim* is the attribute of concealment that makes possible [the impression of] independent existence. The name *Havayah*, by contrast, is a revelation of the unlimited dimension of *Or Ein Sof*. From that level, it is impossible for independent existence to arise. This can happen only through the name *Elokim*.

[Although the medium of *Elokim* is necessary,] the actual creative force is the name *Havayah*. Moreover, the name *Elokim* does not bring about concealment for the name *Havayah* at all. [On the contrary,] the name *Havayah* shines forth through [the medium of] the name *Elokim*.¹⁷⁹ It brings about concealment only for the created beings [preventing] them from feeling [G-d’s] light. In truth, however, it is not [a medium of] concealment, as is well known and explained in several sources.

This is the *mitzvah* of [appreciating G-d’s] unity, [as alluded to in the verse]:¹⁸⁰ “And you shall know today, and resolve within your heart, that *Havayah* is *Elokim*,” i.e., that in truth, the name *Elokim* does not bring about concealment or veil the name *Havayah*, as explained at length in other places.¹⁸¹ Therefore, all existence is truly of no significance

177. [For the revelation of the name *Havayah* would not allow for the existence of a frame of reference that does not recognize G-dliness.]

178. *Bereishis* 1:1.

179. [I.e., for G-d Himself — and ultimately this will be realized by the created beings as well — the name *Elokim* is a medium of revelation, not concealment. It conveys the revelation of the name *Havayah* to levels to which it could otherwise not descend.]

180. *Devarim* 4:39.

181. See the *maamar* entitled *VeYadaata*, 5657 (referred as *VeYadaata* of Moscow) [translated and published as *To Know G-d*]. With regard to the contents of this chapter, see *Sichos Simchas Torah*, 5672 (*Toras Shalom*), sec. 6ff.

before Him, and the worlds and the created beings are utterly *batel*. They are like the radiance of the sun as it exists within the sun which has absolutely no sense of individual existence to the extent that one would never refer to the light as existing there. Similarly, with regard to the created beings, since the light of *Havayah*, the source which brings them into existence, shines upon them through the medium of the name *Elokim*, they are within their source at all times. Therefore, their existence is utterly *batel*, as explained in *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VebaEmunah*, ch. 3, and explained in the subsequent chapters. See also the treatment of these concepts in the *maamar* entitled *Vayidaber... Es Kol HaDevarim*, 5664.

This is the intent of the phrase "G-d is One" [in the *Shema*].¹⁸² [Implied is, as our Sages state:]¹⁸³ "[Attesting to] His sovereignty in the higher realms and the lower realms." [The *ches* of the word *Echad* ("One," אחד) is numerically equivalent to eight, and the *daled*, to four. Implied is that G-d's oneness permeates the seven heavens and this earthly realm (eight) in all its four directions.] Even after the seven heavens and the earth with its four directions have been brought into being by the name *Elokim*, their existence is *batel* and they are utterly unified with the *Or Ein Sof*, just as [the potential for their existence] was utterly *batel* and unified with the *Or Ein Sof* before they came into existence. (The latter level reflects the level "He and His name alone" which is explained in other sources.)

Similarly, after all the created beings came into existence, they are also *batel* and unified in an ultimate manner with *Or Ein Sof*. For in truth, "I am first, I am last, and aside from Me, there is no *Elokim*."¹⁸⁴ The phrase "there is no *Elokim*" can be interpreted to mean that the concealment brought about by the name *Elokim* has no effect and in truth, all is utterly *batel*.

When a person meditates on the above and deepens his thought about it, he will lose all sense of self-consciousness and material preoccupation. When he concentrates on this

182. *Devarim* 6:4.

183. *Berachos* 13b.

184. *Yeshayahu* 44:6.

idea thoroughly, [understanding] that in truth the name *Elokim* does not conceal, the revelation of *Or Ein Sof* shines forth, and the worlds are *batel* in their source as the radiance of the sun is *batel* within the sun itself, and he develops a feeling for this concept within his soul (i.e., through the concentration and intense focus of his knowledge on the concept, it resonates thoroughly within his consciousness), in truth, he loses all self-concern and material preoccupation. Instead, he becomes possessed by an all-encompassing longing [for G-d] that nullifies entirely all foreign desires, as implied by the *Targum* of the phrase¹⁸⁵ כלה שארי: "My flesh is consumed." This follows the interpretation of *kallah* (כלה) in the *maamar* entitled *Shir HaShirim in Likkutei Torah*.

All of the person's will and desire is to be included in the essence of the *Or Ein Sof*. [He desires] that there be a revelation of the *Or Ein Sof* on this physical plane, that the truth should be revealed and evident as it is, as it will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption, concerning which it is written:¹⁸⁶ "And the glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see together that the mouth of G-d has spoken." [For in that era, it will be openly revealed and evident to all [people] that everything is G-dliness, and that all existence is *batel* to Him.

This state of *bittul* reflects the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, [the sublime unity, the awareness that] all existence is of no importance before Him. The perspective of the *bittul* of *yichuda tata'ah*, by contrast, is that the name *Elokim* conceals [G-dliness] for [the created beings]. This is [an expression of His might that although in truth the light of *Havayah* shines to the created beings through the medium of the name *Elokim*, He hides and conceals Himself so that [He] will not be perceived by them. This causes the created beings to experience themselves as independent entities (a *yesh*), as explained in *Tanya* (*loc. cit.*).

The awareness and the meditation appropriate to the level [of *yichuda tata'ah*] is that although [the created beings] feel themselves as independent entities, there is a G-dly force

185. *Tehillim* 73:26. [See also *Rashi's* commentary to the verse.]

186. *Yeshayahu* 40:5.

which brings their existence into being, and there is a G-dly light which gives life to every individual [created being] at all times. [That being], however, does not perceive the G-dly force which brings him into existence, nor the [G-dly] light and life-energy which is within him.

For were the being to perceive the G-dly force which brings him into being, he would not perceive himself as an independent entity at all. Similarly, were he to appreciate that the light and life-energy within him is G-dliness, he would be even more *batel*, like the sublime angels who perceive the existence of their life-energy [and are aware of its G-dly source. This spurs their *bittul*,] as explained in other sources.

Nevertheless, the fact that a created being does not perceive [the G-dliness that encompasses him] does not prevent him from knowing without a doubt that this is true, and understanding intellectually in a thorough way that there is a G-dly force which brings him into being and endows him with life, as it is written:¹⁸⁷ "From my flesh, I will perceive G-dliness," as explained in another source.

Through undertaking such meditation with intense concentration, a person can come to a love for G-d; he will no longer desire the material and physical things of this world, but instead, he will seek the G-dliness contained within.¹⁸⁸ Whatever he does, his intent will be for the sake of heaven, i.e., he will seek the G-dly intent within that action.

Nevertheless, [this pursuit] will not be [controlled] entirely by [a commitment to] Divine service [to the extent] that his personal will is nullified entirely. Since his Divine service and his meditation focuses on the Divine force which brings into being individual existence, it leaves room for such existence. How then could such Divine service lead to the nullification of one's individual identity entirely?

Such [self-nullification] is possible only when prompted by the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, [the sublime unity] which

187. *Iyov* 19:26.

188. [Thus the person is not withdrawing from worldly involvement, but rather focusing his involvement on the G-dliness that is encloded within the world, and not the material dimensions of its being.]

focuses on the *Or Ein Sof* that transcends enclothement in existence which has a sense of self, i.e., a level [of G-dliness] that does not allow for the existence of entities who have a sense of self, because [transcendent G-dliness] is overtly revealed as explained above. Due to this [revelation], all existence is of no significance at all before Him.

[The effect produced in our] Divine service is an utter and complete nullification of self-consciousness (*yeshus*) [to the extent that] one's physical acts are no longer physical at all; they are expressions of G-dliness, for the person has no connection to self-consciousness at all, as explained in other sources.

The Divine service inspired by *yichuda tata'ah* (the lower unity), by contrast, places man in connection with his self-consciousness (*yesh*), and his deeds are ordinary physical deeds. It is just that he is not drawn after the physical and the material, i.e., he does not lust after material desires. He involves himself in such activities out of necessity, and his intent is for the sake of heaven. He also desires the revelation of G-dliness. [That desire can be explained in terms of the expression:]¹⁸⁹ "to love G-d, your L-rd,... because He is your life."¹⁹⁰

Synopsis: [This chapter begins with] the preface that the creation comes from the name *Havayah* as communicated by the medium *Elokim*. The *mitzvah* of unifying [G-d] [involves realizing that] *Havayah* and *Elokim* are all one.

The *bittul* of the sublime unity is that the name *Elokim* does not conceal at all. Thus all existence is utterly *batel* within the *Or Ein Sof*.

The *bittul* of the lower unity is that it is G-dly energy which brings into being and grants life to a self-conscious entity (a *yesh*).



189. *Devarim* 30:6.

190. [I.e., the love for G-d is inspired by the awareness that He grants us life. Thus the love does not eclipse man's identity. On the contrary, it is dependent on it.]

CHAPTER VII

Divine service stemming from the approach of *yichuda tata'ah* is "the measure of all men." For the Divine service of most of the souls of the present era centers on the *bittul* of *yichuda tata'ah*. This is the goal to which their efforts must be devoted, and they must endeavor that this true service be performed in a genuine manner. There are very few for whom the service of *yichuda ila'ah* is truly relevant. In general, "men of ascendancy are few,"¹⁹¹ particularly in the present generation.

Nevertheless, as stated in *Tanya*, ch. 14, everyone should "fix times to cultivate counsel within his soul [so that] he will despise evil" and similarly, with regard to the other side of the spiritual spectrum, "to delight and rejoice in G-d."

And in ch. 41, the *Tanya* states:

A person should never separate himself from the community at large. Therefore he should intend to [focus on] the unity of G-d and cling to Him, the source of his G-dly soul and the source [of the souls of all Israel].... Although for this intent to be genuine within [a person's] heart,... [he must have "great love" within his heart]. Nevertheless, every person should train himself in this intent....

Note [the full explanation of the concept] in that source.

On the surface, this passage requires explanation. Why should a person labor to train himself to reach a small degree of appreciation or an image (— although this image is not entirely genuine, i.e., his heart does not truly desire this,¹⁹² this is not merely a flight of fancy —) of this level of Divine

191. *Sukkah* 45b, *Sanhedrin* 97b. [*Tanya*, ch. 10, explains that this title is conveyed upon these individuals, because they transform evil into good and make it ascend to holiness.]

192. [I.e., according to the person's conscious feelings, this is not a true desire as evidenced by the fact that it ceases and is replaced by the desire for worldly things. When, however, we speak about what that person genuinely desires — i.e., the inner feelings of his G-dly soul — this is what he truly seeks, as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 42.]

service and this [higher] unity, since this is not his true level? For everyone should recognize his own level.¹⁹³

[This difficulty can be resolved based on] the *maamar* entitled *BaChodesh HaShelishi* in *Torah Or* which explains that it is necessary for every individual [to experience] the Divine service [stemming from the awareness] of *yichuda ila'ah*. For with the Divine service [stemming from the awareness] of *yichuda tata'ah* alone, a person may fall from his rung [in Divine service] and become entirely self-conscious (a *yesh*). The Divine service [of such a person] focuses on the G-dly energy which brings into being self-conscious existence (*yesh*) and enclothes itself in the *yesh* of the worlds and the created beings, the spiritual potential which enables G-d [to] "reign over nations,"¹⁹⁴ i.e., the ray of His energy which is drawn down to the forces of evil to give them life as explained above.

In particular, [this is true] because all the veils and concealment stem from the concealment brought about by the name *Elokim*, i.e., the 120 permutations¹⁹⁵ of the name *Elokim*. For from the last 48 permutations, nurture is also granted to the lands of the children of Cham. (Note the explanation in the *maamar* entitled *Ner Chanukah* and its explanation in *Torah Or*.)

Because of this [orientation], this path of Divine service involves several obstacles and snags because of the material nature and the *yeshus* of the world as a whole and that of [the person's own] body and animal soul in particular. More particularly, this involves concealment that stems from the powers of evil which create obstacles and snags.

[This is possible, because a person on this rung of Divine service has not nullified his own *yeshus* entirely, and he shares a connection to the *yeshus* within the world at large. Therefore his soul does not have the potential to confront all of the challenges and obstacles mentioned above and overcome them. On the contrary, the material and physical nature of his

193. See *Kuntres HaAvodah*, ch. 7 [which explains this imperative].

194. *Tehillim* 47:9.

195. See the notes to ch. 3 where this concept is explained.

body and animal soul, and all of its elements overcome him, veil his soul even more, and cause him to be drawn after them without having the potential to escape.

In particular, this applies when the person's soul has not been purified from sins. (The Hebrew word for sin, עון, shares an etymological connection to the word עיון meaning "crookedness," i.e., the person makes his path crooked. This applies also with regard to the use of permitted matters for purposes other than the sake of heaven.)

As a result, "my strength has failed because of my sins."¹⁹⁶ The power of the soul becomes weakened, creating a veil of separation, as it is written:¹⁹⁷ "Your sins... separate [between yourselves and G-d]." They prevent a person from ascending and, on the contrary, compel him to descend.

For these reasons, it is necessary that everyone labor to come to the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah* which [is prompted by an awareness of] the *Or Ein Sof* which transcends the structure of the worlds. When compared to this level, all the worlds and the created beings are of absolutely no importance whatsoever; their existence is entirely *batel*. Thus from this level, [G-d] cannot [as it were,] be "King of the nations." This is explained in the *Zohar* (Vol. II, p. 96a) [which speaks of the names of G-dliness as branching out into different paths and thus giving nurture to the worldly set,] "with the exception of the unique and distinct name," the name *Havayah*.

From this level, [there is no room for the existence of negative factors,] on the contrary, "all workers of iniquity will be dispersed."¹⁹⁸ All the obstacles and challenges that are created by the *yeshus* of the world, and which stem from the *kelipah* and *sitra achra* are totally nullified because of the revelation of this light. For this reason, this Divine service empowers and strengthens the soul, and weakens the power of the body, enabling [a person] to overcome the material orientation and coarseness of the body and the animal soul.

196. *Tehillim* 31:11.

197. *Yeshayahu* 59:2.

198. *Tehillim* 92:11.

Although this Divine service is not genuine, i.e., the person has not [really] attained this level [of spiritual awareness, it is not entirely foreign to him]. For he understands the essence of the matter thoroughly. [Intellectually, he appreciates that] in truth *Havayah* and *Elokim* are all one, that the name *Elokim* does not veil or conceal the name *Havayah*. Instead, the revelation of the name *Havayah* shines through the medium of the name *Elokim*. Thus all the created beings in [the world] are utterly *batel*, as the radiation of the sun is *batel* within the sun itself.

The person has the potential to broaden his knowledge and understanding of this concept and to comprehend it thoroughly. And through deepening his knowledge of this concept and connecting his [thought] with it, he will be genuinely aroused within his heart at that moment. He will desire [to be part] of this unity and this *bittul*. Although this feeling is not entirely genuine [— for he has not refined himself to the point where this desire is continuous], to a limited extent, his heart genuinely desires this. [For his feelings are] abetted by the natural love for G-d that exists within the heart of every Jew as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 41.

Thus at least at the moment [of contemplation], the person's *yeshus* becomes *batel*. Similarly, throughout the day, whenever he remembers this level of unity and this *bittul*, this will cause his *yeshus* to be nullified in truth at that moment. Although [his personal state of *bittul*] is not entirely genuine, [as evidenced by the fact] that it ceases and he returns to a state of *yeshus*, nevertheless, at the time of contemplation, he is on the level of *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*.

[These tastes of the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*] make it possible for the person's Divine service on the level of *yichuda tata'ah* to be genuine. For [the taste of] the *bittul* [of *yichuda ila'ah*] weakens the material disposition and the coarseness of his body and his animal soul, and [his attraction to] all his worldly concerns. And it strengthens the power of his G-dly soul, empowering it to overcome the body and the animal soul and subjugate them and refine them.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that although there are few who share a genuine appreciation of the Divine service of *yichuda ila'ah*, nevertheless, it is imperative that every Jew endeavor [to at least taste this spiritual rung]. For at the moment that [he contemplates this level], he has a genuine desire for it.

[This is necessary, because when a person's] Divine service [is motivated solely] by *yichuda tata'ah*, he can easily fall from his spiritual level. For his meditation centers on the Divine energy that enclothes itself in the *yesh* [of our material existence], and the ray [of Divine light] that is drawn down [even] to the forces of evil. Divine service of this nature does not nullify [the person's] *yeshus* entirely.



CHAPTER VIII

[I]n order to experience such a taste of *yichuda ila'ah*,] we were commanded to observe the *mitzvah* of reciting the *Shema* twice daily, in the morning and in the evening. The fundamental [requirement] is [that a person focus his] concentration during the recitation of the first verse [for that proclaims G-d's oneness. He must realize how] His oneness¹⁹⁹ [permeates] the seven heavens and the earth,²⁰⁰ and the four directions of this earth.²⁰¹

Our Sages²⁰² conclude — and this is cited in the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim*, sec. 61) — “Since you have established His Kingship in the higher realms, in the lower realms, and in all four directions, [nothing further is required].”

199. [Alluded to by the *alef* of the word *echad*.]

200. [Alluded to by the *ches* of the word *echad*.]

201. [Alluded to by the *dalet* of the word *echad*.]

202. *Berachos* 13b. [The wording quoted in the *maamar* differs slightly from that of the standard text of that *Talmudic* passage.]

Even a person who has not attained the level [where this unity has permeated his understanding], is obligated to perform this *mitzvah*. From this, we can infer that it is within the capacity of every Jew to accept upon Himself G-d's unity and oneness. ([This is reflected in] the wording of *Seforim*:²⁰³ "The *mitzvah* of the recitation of the *Shema*... in it, we accept upon ourselves His unity, His oneness, His sovereignty, that He is our G-d, and that He watches over [every dimension of existence]." It is obvious that the concentration [required] should not be merely a superficial gesture without any [inner] connection to [the person praying], for that would not be considered concentration. Instead, the intent is to accept G-d's unity upon himself, that he should be *batel* and at one [with Him].)

This reflects the concepts explained above, that every person can understand and comprehend His unity, and can meditate upon it. By connecting his knowledge to this concept, he will nullify his *yeshus* entirely at that time, becoming one with G-d's unity, at the level of *yichuda ila'ah*.

These efforts will not be totally genuine [— for the person will not be able to maintain this connection]. Nevertheless, it is genuine at that moment, and [afterwards,] at every time that he recalls it.

This obligates everyone to strain himself and to attain this [rung]. Although the true service appropriate to [the person's] level is the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah*, he is obligated to attain the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, so that his Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* will be perfect, and that he will not slip from his level [of commitment], heaven forbid. On the contrary, [this will] enable him to increase strength, power, and intensity so that his Divine service will be perfect. Without [the appreciation of] this *bittul* and this unity, it is impossible for his Divine service to be complete.

This is the intent of the verse:²⁰⁴ "I am G-d, your L-rd, who took you out of the land of Egypt." Egypt, *Mitzrayim*, refers to the *meitzarim*, boundaries and limitations, that stem from the

203. See *Chinuch*, *Mitzvah* 420.

204. *Shmos* 20:2.

body and the animal soul. These constrain the soul, holding back and restraining its Divine service [and its] connection to G-dliness. On the contrary, they cause it to descend and be drawn after them, as explained above. And as explained above, *Mitzrayim* is also identified with physical desire. For a person to leave Egypt, [he needs the influence of] "I am G-d your L-rd." [Each of the three terms referring to G-d in the above verse indicates a different level of G-dliness.] "I" (*Anochi*) [refers to the level which] can be called "I," the very essence of the *Or Ein Sof*. [From that level, influence is] drawn down to the level of *Havayah*. For the name *Havayah* refers to [the manner in which] *Anochi*, the essence of *Ein Sof* contracts itself and enclothes itself in the four letters of the name *Havayah*. [And then the verse goes on to teach] *Havayah* (G-d) is *E-lohecha* ("your L-rd"), that [all existence is] *batel* on the level of *yichuda ila'ah*. This brings about a spiritual "exodus from Egypt."

When, by contrast, this [type of service] is lacking, even when a person carries out the service of *yichuda tata'ah*, it is impossible for there to be an "exodus from Egypt." The Divine energy [upon which one is focusing] grants life to the existence of *yesh*, and enclothes itself in the *yesh* to grant it life, and a ray of this is drawn down to the seventy archangels [who govern the spiritual makeup of this material world]. Hence, when a person carries out this [lower level of] Divine service, he has a connection to the *yeshus* and to the material orientation of the body and the animal soul, and all that is involved with it. Therefore, through this level of service, he cannot leave the boundaries and limitations of the body and the animal soul.

True, the Divine service on this level involves utilizing all material entities only for the sake of heaven. [Nevertheless, it has an intrinsic limitation.] Even when this Divine service is genuine, i.e., the person does not desire any of the material entities [for their own sake], only for what is necessary for the existence of his body, and his intent will be for the sake of heaven and not for the sake of his own satisfaction, he will not have abandoned his own *yeshus* entirely. His *yeshus* will

not have been nullified. He will only have attained the level of *bittul hayesh*.²⁰⁵ His *yeshus*, his individual identity will still be important for him.

[Moreover, he will still have a connection to physical desire.] For example, while eating, he will appreciate the taste and the pleasure against his will. (For it is only perfect *tzaddikim* whose Divine service is actually on the level of *yichuda ila'ah* who do not feel any physical taste and pleasure from any material entities.

This concept is explained in other sources with regard to the *mitzvah* to take pleasure in *Shabbos*²⁰⁶ through eating and drinking. For [on *Shabbos*], [the satisfaction one feels] is G-dly delight and not physical delight. This concept is reflected in the verse:²⁰⁷ "A righteous man eats for the satisfaction of his soul.")

[When, by contrast, a person feels material pleasure,] this brings about a temporary [spiritual] descent, and he requires more effort to drive out the effects of this feeling.

{When, instead, he possesses even a very slight [experience of] the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, even when he feels the taste and the pleasure of the food (for his spiritual rung is that of *yichuda tata'ah*, although *yichuda ila'ah* is intermingled with it), it does not cause him to descend [spiritually], for it is not of that great concern to him.²⁰⁸ To cite a parallel, it is explained in other sources²⁰⁹ with regard to the concept

205. [As explained above, *bittul hayesh* implies that a person retains a sense of individual identity, but dedicates himself to G-d's service. This is a lower level than *bittul bemetzius* when the person transcends his individual identity entirely.]

206. The *mitzvah* to take pleasure in *Shabbos* — See the explanation of this concept in *Torah Or*, in the beginning of the *maamarim* of *Parshas Chayei Sarah*, and in the *maamar* entitled *Lo Sivari Eish* in *Derech Mitzvosecho*. Note also the *maamar* entitled *BiEtzem HaYom Hazeh* in *Toras Chayim*, secs. 10-11.

207. *Mishlei* 13:25.

208. [I.e., what brings about the descent is not the satisfaction itself, but the excitement and desire it produces. When a person has tasted *yichuda ila'ah*, he will never become overly concerned with physical desire.]

209. Explained in other sources — See the *maamar* in *Torah Or* entitled *VaYomer... Ledaas Tov ViRa* and the *maamar* in *Toras Chayim* entitled *ViHaNachash Hayah Arum*. [These *maamarim* touch on many of the themes mentioned in this *Kuntres*.]

“knowers of good and evil,”²¹⁰ that the intent is [that the awareness of evil in the sublime realms is] not firm knowledge and inner feeling. [Similarly, a person who has tasted *yichuda ila’ah* will never have inner feeling for material matters again.}] Thus even if a person’s Divine service is genuine on the level of *yichuda tata’ah*, he has not left the constraints of his *yeshus* entirely.

In truth, when a person has not tasted the *bittul* of his *yeshus* that stems from *yichuda ila’ah*, it is impossible for the Divine service on the level of *yichuda tata’ah* to be genuine, for he has not negated his desire for material entities. Even if he has nullified his desire during the time of prayer, this is merely a superficial impression. When he is confronted with a material entity, he forgets about this *bittul* — or cannot control himself. This refers to having a desire for material entities which he needs, and also for those which are unnecessary. Certainly, while he is involved with a material entity, e.g., while he is eating, he derives satisfaction and pleasure from it. If so, he is surely confined [within *meitzarim*, a figurative Egypt].

Thus the Divine service of *yichuda tata’ah* alone, lacking [any taste of] the *bittul* of *yichuda ila’ah* is bound and limited by the confines of the body and the animal soul. The person has certainly not left behind his *yeshus* entirely. Therefore, the *yeshus* and the material orientation of the body and the animal soul hold him back and impede his Divine service, causing him to descend lower and lower.

Synopsis: [This chapter] continues the explanation that it is only through [a taste of] *yichuda ila’ah* that [a person’s] Divine service in *yichuda tata’ah* will be complete and he will be able to depart from the confines of the body and the animal soul.



210. *Bereishis* 2:5.

CHAPTER IX

On this basis, [we can understand] the practice of the inhabitants of Jericho who would connect [the verses of] the *Shema*,²¹¹ i.e., they would not interject [the phrase *Boruch shem kevod...* between] the verses *Shema* and *VeAhavta*. For through the acceptance of [G-d's] unity on the level of *yichuda ila'ah*,²¹² they would subdue the *sitra achra*, and transform darkness to light, since they would have no attachment to this [lower] level at all. This brings about the complete nullification of the person's *yeshus*; his material orientation is obliterated entirely.

Boruch shem kevod... ("Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever"), [by contrast, reflects, *yichuda tata'ah*, how] "G-d reigns over nations,"²¹³ i.e., [the gentile nations] have a source of nurture at the lower and final levels within this quality.

Similarly, within Divine service, a person on this level has a connection to *yeshus*, for it is impossible for him to nullify his *yeshus* entirely. Thus [focusing on this level] leads a person to be drawn after *yeshus*.

[Despite the advantages of the approach of *yichuda ila'ah* expressed by] the inhabitants of Jericho, the *halachah* does not follow their view. For the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* is necessary to refine the body and the animal soul. For the Divine service of *yichuda ila'ah* does not refine [these materially oriented entities], but rather nullifies them²¹⁴ (like

211. [See *Pesachim* 55b-56a which explains that the inhabitants of Jericho would read the *Shema* in prayer as it is stated in the Torah, i.e., they would say the verse *VeAhavta* directly after the verse *Shema*, without including the phrase *Boruch shem kevod...* This ran contrary to the desires of the Sages who had instituted the recitation of that phrase. The *maamar* explains that their conduct, though improper, was based on a spiritual rationale, the desire that their love for G-d be an expression of *yichuda ila'ah*.]

212. [The spiritual intent on the verse *Shema*.]

213. *Tehillim* 47:9.

214. [I.e., through the Divine service of *yichuda ila'ah*, the body and the animal soul have no influence on the person's conduct, but the nature of the body and the animal soul itself is not changed. Through the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah*, by contrast, the perspective of the body and the animal soul itself changes, and

eating on *Shabbos* which does not involve the refinement of the foods). There is a tremendous advantage to the service of refinement, because the source for the body and the animal soul is higher than the source of the G-dly soul. Therefore, [their refinement] contributes an added [dimension] of light and life-energy to the G-dly soul [as can be inferred from the verse:]²¹⁵ "Many crops [are reaped] with the power of an ox." And for the sake of receiving this added dimension, the soul descended into the body.

This task of refinement involves *yichuda tata'ah*. This is the reason why the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* is necessary. [This Divine service] must, however, include a taste of *yichuda ila'ah*, for [only] then will the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* be genuine, i.e., the person will not seek physical pleasures, nor will he be drawn after his *yeshus* with regard to excess indulgence. Indeed, even his involvement in necessary [material activities] will be for the sake of heaven. [Moreover,] the sense of personal identity which he must feel because of this activity will not have a negative effect upon him, heaven forbid.

{A person of understanding can appreciate that this does not represent an utter nullification of the person's individual will, i.e., that he negates the very nature of the desires of the animal soul. That would be Divine service on the level of *yichuda ila'ah*, i.e., the total nullification of his *yeshus*, that the very essence of his personality should be *batel*. In this instance, by contrast, [the point is that] the person does not have a conscious desire [for material things], i.e., he will not actually desire them (and needless to say, he will not act on [this desire]), because he has already weakened and humbled his animal soul.

[The above concepts are alluded to in] our Sages' statements (*Pesachim* 56a) with regard to the phrase *Boruch shem kevod...*

within the context of their own gestalt, they appreciate the advantage of G-dliness.]
215. *Mishlei* 14:4.

[The recitation of *Boruch shem kevod...* in a hushed tone can be described with] an analogy of a king's daughter who smelled the spices of a cooked dish. If she would ask [for it], it will be embarrassing. If she would not ask for it, she will feel pain [because of her thwarted desire]. [So] her servants began bringing it to her in secret.

The "daughter of the king" refers to the attribute of *Malchus*, "sovereignty," as is well known within the context of the explanation of the verse:²¹⁶ "Rejoice and celebrate, O daughter of Zion," and within the context of the explanation [of our Sages' statement]:²¹⁷ "Avraham our Patriarch had a daughter." For a daughter is an analogy for the attribute of *Malchus*. "Smelling the spices of a cooked dish" refers to the pleasant aroma that arises from the task of refinement [accomplished] through *yichuda tata'ah*. For the spices of the cooked dish refer to the sharp and pungent spices that remain in the bottom of a pot.

This relates to the concepts explained in *Tanya*, ch. 27, with regard to the verse:²¹⁸ "Make me delicacies," that there are two types of delicacies: foods that are [naturally] pleasant tasting and sweet, and foods that are naturally bitter or sour, but which are spiced and prepared [until they are flavorful].

These are analogies for two types of pleasure [which G-d receives]:

a) the utter nullification of the *sitra achra* through the Divine service of the righteous [motivated by their] *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*; and

b) the subjugation of the *sitra achra* through the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah*, i.e., the refinement of the animal soul. This is the type of pleasure that one receives from a bitter substance that is spiced and prepared.

216. *Zechariah* 2:14. Note the explanation in *Torah Or* in the second *maamar* which employs this verse as a title.

217. Cf. *Bava Basra* 16b. Note the explanation in the *Ramban's* commentary to the Torah (*Bereishis* 24:1) and in the *maamar* entitled *VeHaShem Beirach* in the *Tzemach Tzedek's Or HaTorah*.

218. *Bereishis* 27:4.

This is alluded to with the analogy of the king's daughter who desired the spices of the cooked food, i.e., the pleasure that comes from [the task of] refinement. For this reason, a descent is necessary until an entity which is a *yesh* is brought into being and life-energy is drawn down to the seventy archangels. [In this environment,] the work of refinement will take place.

[The analogy continues:] "If she will ask [for it]" — i.e., if she will allow herself to be drawn and extended into this framework — "it will be embarrassing" — for through this [descent], life-energy will be drawn down to the *sitra achra*. For they have a source of nurture at the lower and final levels within this framework, as explained with regard to the concept: "A snake is wound around his ankle."²¹⁹ [Such a descent] involves "embarrassment."

"If she will not ask for it, she will feel pain," because the advantage that results from the task of refinement is great. [Therefore,] "her servants began bringing it to her in secret," i.e., it was ordained that *Boruch shem kevod...* be recited in a hushed tone.

It is also possible to explain that the expression "in a hushed tone" refers to the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, as it says²²⁰ "the [Shemoneh Esreh] prayers are recited in a hushed tone," a "still small voice,"²²¹ which reflects genuine *bittul* as is well known. [The intent is that] the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* should have the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah* intermingled within it. In such an instance, there will be no nurture [granted to the external forces], and the task of refinement will be carried out effectively, as explained above. (This also [reflects] the unity of the names *Havayah* and *Elokim* which is the unity between *yichuda ila'ah* and *yichuda tata'ah*.)

From the above, we can conclude that *yichuda tata'ah* without *yichuda ila'ah* cannot be truly genuine. [Moreover,] no

219. Cf. *Berachos* 30b. See the *maamar* entitled *Vayashkaim Lavan*, sec. 6, in *Torah Chayim*, and note also the conclusion of the *maamar* for *Acharon Shel Pesach*, in the series of *maamarim* entitled *VeHechrim*, 5631.

220. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXXV, p. 192ff.

221. Cf. *I Melachim* 19:12.

matter which form it takes, the person does not depart from the *yeshus* [encouraged] by the body and the animal soul. For the person shares a connection to this *yeshus*. Therefore, the *yeshus* will overcome him and cause him to descend and [even] fall from his level [of Divine service]. For the *yeshus* and material orientation of the body and the animal soul cause him to descend. [The rationale is that] this level — both within the Divine power [which brings the world into being] in the spiritual realms and within the G-dly soul on this earthly plane — shares a connection with the *yesh* and enclothes itself in it. Therefore, there is the possibility that there will be a powerful expression of *yeshus* to the extent that it draws down the soul. This is the concept of the exile of the *Shechinah* in the spiritual realms, [which is paralleled] by the exile of the soul on this material plane.

[To prevent this,] at least a taste of the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah* is necessary. Then [the person's] Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* will be genuine, and he will not fall from his spiritual level. On the contrary, he will overcome the body and the animal soul, humble them, and refine them. When the two [modes of Divine service] are combined together, they are desirable, for then there is [an expression of] both *yichuda ila'ah* and *yichuda tata'ah*.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that the Divine service of *yichuda ila'ah* is [characterized] by an [all-encompassing] *bittul*. *Yichuda tata'ah* [involves the task of] refinement. Its advantage is [reflected by the verse]: "Many crops [are reaped] with the power of an ox."

[The chapter also] explains the example of the daughter of a king, i.e., [the *Sefirah* of] *Malchus*, who smelled the spices of a cooked dish, i.e., the task of refinement. [Her servants] brought it to her in secret, [reflecting the intermingling of] the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah* [in the task of refinement associated with *yichuda tata'ah*].



CHAPTER X

On this basis, [we can understand] the passage from the *Zohar* (*Parshas Chukas*) cited previously (ch. 6):

One who takes the potion of death alone, to him can be applied the phrase:²²² "In all of his labor which he will perform beneath the sun."

What is meant by "beneath the sun"? I would presume the intent is the moon. When a person attaches himself to the moon without the sun....

["Attach(ing) oneself to the moon without the sun"] refers to attaching oneself to the attribute of *Malchus* without [the influence of] *Za'er Anpin*. *Malchus* is one of the *Sefiros* which are entirely holy. Nevertheless, because it is the source for the *yesh*, and from it is drawn down the potential for G-d to be "King over nations,"²²³ i.e., the external forces have a source of nurture from this level, [by attaching oneself to *Malchus*,] one is considered as attaching oneself to "the potion of death." For this [approach] will lead to the strengthening of the external forces, [enabling them] to overcome the light of holiness.

Instead, there must be a unity between the sun and the moon, drawing down light from the level of *Za'er Anpin* — a level which has no connection to *yeshus* and which does not allow any nurture to the external forces, heaven forbid. On the contrary, this level leads to the nullification of the *yesh*. For "before Him, everything is of no significance at all." And thus "all workers of iniquity shall be dispersed"²²⁴ because of this light. [When this light is revealed, the external forces] will not [be able to derive] any nurture even from the attribute of *Malchus*. [On the contrary,] although [*Malchus*] will enclothe itself in these [lower levels], it will bring about a refinement of them.

222. *Koheles* 1:3.

223. *Tehillim* 47:9.

224. *Ibid.*, 92:10.

Similarly, [with regard to the parallel within our] Divine service, when a person attaches himself to the rung of *yichuda tata'ah* alone, without any influence of *yichuda ila'ah*, he will fall from his rung, because he shares a connection with *yeshus*. Thus the *yeshus* overpowers him and causes him to descend.

Instead, a person must [combine the approach of] *yichuda ila'ah*. When this [is accomplished], even when he is enclothed in the animal soul to refine it through the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah*, he will not fall from his spiritual level. On the contrary, he will refine the animal soul.

[On this basis, we can understand the continuation of the passage from the *Zohar*:] "This is [the nature of] the first sin of the world, [i.e., the sin committed by Adam, the first man]. Adam's sin was that he attached himself to the level of *Malchus* alone, and rejected the level of *Tiferes* which is referred to as "the sun of *Havayah*,"²²⁵ i.e., he did not desire the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, to be nullified like the radiance of the sun within the sun itself. Instead, "his labor" was "perform[ed] beneath the sun," i.e., with the attribute of *Malchus* alone. For this reason, he fell among the *kelipah* and *sitra achra*.

This explains his attachment to the Tree of Knowledge. For the Tree of Knowledge refers to the attribute of *Malchus* whose "feet descend to death,"²²⁶ to give life to the seventy archangels. When he attached himself to the Tree of Knowledge without [the influence of] the Tree of Life, *Za'er Anpin*, "he attached himself to death," for this enables the external forces to prevail.

This is implied by the statements of the *Zohar* in *Parshas Vayechi* [cited in ch. 5]: "Certainly death is before you, as it is written: 'Her feet descend to death.'" Although it is stated that death is merely "before you," for it is only the feet [of *Malchus*] which "descend to death," nevertheless, concerning this it is said: "You abandoned life, and clung to death." For when *Malchus* is taken alone, it is natural for the external forces to prevail. Therefore, the influence of the Tree of Life is

225. Cf. *ibid.*, 84:12.

226. *Mishlei* 5:5.

also necessary. As the *Mikdash Melech* states in the name of Rabbi Chayim Vital, Adam should have first eaten from the Tree of Life, or he should have eaten from both Trees together, so that there would be a congruence of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. When this is accomplished, even the Tree of Knowledge will not provide a source of nurture for the external forces. On the contrary, it will refine them.

Then the level of *Malchus* becomes "a living G-d and eternal King."²²⁷ An advantage is granted to it because of the work of refinement. [This will be revealed] in the era of the Redemption when *Malchus* will be [granted prominence, as implied by the verse:]²²⁸ "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband."²²⁹ For as explained in the *Maamarei Zohar, Parshas Chukas*, when the potion of death is transformed into life, it is the ultimate of good and life.

This is reflected by David who was a medium for the attribute of *Malchus*, who would bind *Malchus* together with *Tiferes*, as implied by his words:²³⁰ "And you shall say: 'May it be so throughout life.'" "So," כה in Hebrew, is a reference to *Malchus*. "Life," חי, is a reference to the level of *Za'er Anpin*. ["And you shall say" can be interpreted as a charge to] connect and interrelate these two spiritual qualities. [When this is accomplished,] *Malchus* is called "the living G-d."

This spiritual service is alluded to by the phrase:²³¹ "David, King of Israel, lives and endures." (See also the explanation of the expression: "And you shall say: 'May it be so throughout life'" in sec. 2 of the *maamar* entitled *Sos Tasis in Likkutei Torah*.)

227. *Yirmeyahu* 10:10.

228. *Mishlei* 12:4.

229. [In the present era, *Malchus*, identified with the woman, is a recipient, and is the lowest of the Ten *Sefiros*. In the era of the Redemption, the transcendent source of *Malchus* will be revealed and it will become a primary source of influence, "the crown of her husband."]

230. *I Shmuel* 25:6.

231. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 239.

Adam, the first man, by contrast, attached himself to the level of *Malchus* alone without [the mitigating influence of] *Tiferes*. Accordingly, *Malchus* [became] “a potion of death.”

This is the intent of the passage from the *Zihorei Chamah* [cited in ch. 5, which speaks of Adam] “taking grain from its owner, enclothing it in the Tree of Death.” By “taking grain away from its owner,” he separated it, allowing for self-concern and separation, causing a greater enclothing in the Tree of Death. This leads to a strengthening of the external forces, which is identified with the exile of the Divine Presence, as explained above. See also the statements of the *Tikkunei Zohar*, at the beginning of *Tikkun* 66: “When G-d was one above the differences between good and evil.” Instead, *Malchus* should be fused with *Tiferes*, as King David fused [*Malchus*,] *koh*, with [*Za’er Anpin*,] *chai*.

These concepts are also reflected in our Sages’ statement (*Sanhedrin* 38b) that Adam extended his foreskin. For the source for the concealment of the foreskin is drawn down from the name *Elokim*. For as explained above, when the name *Elokim* is separated from the name *Havayah*, complete and utter concealment and hiddenness is drawn down from this. This is [the implication of Adam] extending his foreskin, that he drew down the concealment of the foreskin by separating [the name *Elokim*,] the source of all concealment from the name *Havayah* which is described with the analogy of the sun.

This is also the intent of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in [the passage from] the *Midrash Rabbah*²³² [cited in ch. 5] that the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree. The fig tree refers to the level of *Malchus*. [Adam] took the fig, i.e., he attached himself to the level of *Malchus*, “without its owner.” He separated *Malchus* from *Tiferes*. Through this he brought grief and wailing to the world. For this resulted in the strengthening of the external forces which caused death.

Therefore when Adam returned to G-d in *teshuvah*, it is written:²³³ “And they sewed fig leaves.” [Commenting on that

232. *Bereishis Rabbah* 19:6.

233. *Bereishis* 3:7.

phrase,] the *Midrash Rabbah*¹¹ quotes Rabbi Yitzchak [who explains that G-d rebuked Adam, telling him]: “You ruined your deeds. [Now] take a thread and mend.”

“You ruined your deeds,” by separating the Tree of Knowledge [from the Tree of Life]. “Take a thread and mend”: “sew fig leaves,” i.e., join the fig tree, the Tree of Knowledge, with the Tree of Life, i.e., fuse together *yichuda ila’ah* with *yichuda tata’ah* as explained above, so that the *bittul* of *yichuda ila’ah* will be intermingled even [within the Divine service of] *yichuda tata’ah*. This will endow it with life and goodness.

Synopsis: [In this chapter,] the question regarding [the sin of Adam, the first man,] is answered. Adam’s sin was that he attached himself to *Malchus*, *yichuda tata’ah* without *Tiferes*, *yichuda ila’ah*. [King] David, by contrast, fused together *Koh*, (*Malchus*.) and *Chai*, (*Za’er Anpin*). For there should be a fusion of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life.



CHAPTER XI

It was explained above with regard to *yichuda ila’ah* and *yichuda tata’ah*, that *yichuda tata’ah* must also include [a taste of] *yichuda ila’ah*. If not, [*yichuda tata’ah*] is considered as “the place of death,” because the external forces have a hold [from where they can derive nurture] and a person will fall from his spiritual rung, heaven forbid.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the study of the Oral Law which is compared to a fig tree. [For,] as stated by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai in the *Midrash Rabbah* and Rabbi Nechemiah in the *Talmud*, the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree.

This is a baffling statement: How can the Oral Law be described as the Tree of Knowledge? Nevertheless, [we do find that] the *Raya Mehemna*, *Parshas Naso* (p. 124b), explains that the Oral Law is the Tree [of the Knowledge] of Good and Evil.

[The intent,] however,²³⁴ is not that the Torah itself is the Tree [of the Knowledge] of Good and Evil, heaven forbid. Instead, [the intent is] that it enclothes itself [in that framework].

These concepts are explained in [*Tanya*,] *Iggeres HaKodesh*, [Epistle 26,] which focuses on that passage from the *Raya Mehemna*, stating that the laws of the Torah are enclothed in material concerns, [e.g.,] “one who exchanges a cow for a donkey...,”²³⁵ and “two people are holding on to a garment...”²³⁶ Similarly, [all other concepts in] Torah law involve material concerns.

When a person studies these laws, he is thus involved in material entities, and it is possible for him to remain a *yesh*, a [self-concerned] entity, and for him to forget G-d, the Giver of the Torah, and to forget [that the Torah] is G-d’s wisdom and will.

For [the Oral Law] does not resemble the Written Law in which the G-dly light is more cogently felt. The Written Law has not enclothed itself that thoroughly in material garments, as reflected in the passages that state “And G-d spoke...,” and “And G-d said...” And many of the passages conclude: “I am G-d.”

The Oral Law, by contrast, is enclothed in material concerns which veil and conceal the [G-dly] light. While studying, a person feels only the material object with which he is involved and the material wisdom that is involved with it. [As such,] he is very far from G-dliness. In particular, [this is true,] because the entire purpose of the Oral Law is to refine [the material world. For that reason,] all of Rabbi Yehudah’s study was in the Order of *Nezikin* [Damages],²³⁷ and it was enclothed in false arguments²³⁸ to refine the truth from falsehood. Similarly, with regard to the laws of permitted and forbidden articles, [our challenge is] to make a distinction

234. However: With regard to the concepts that follow, see also the *maamar* entitled *Eleh Toldos Noach* in *Toras Chayim*.

235. *Bava Metzia* 100a.

236. *Ibid.*, 2a.

237. *Berachos* 20a, *et al.*

238. [I.e., a student has to take into consideration the false claims a litigant might make.]

between the forbidden and the permitted, and between the impure and the pure. Thus [the Oral Law] actually enclothes itself in the garments of good and evil. Therefore it is called the Tree [of Knowledge] of Good and Evil, because one who brings about the refinement enclothes himself in the garments of the substance being refined. [Indeed,] it is for this reason that it is referred to as “the one who brings about the refinement.”

For the above reasons, it is necessary that one’s involvement in Torah study [be motivated] by love and fear [of G-d]. As the *Tikkunei Zohar* states:²³⁹ “Torah study that is not [motivated] by love and fear does not fly upward, and it cannot arise and come before G-d.”

On the surface, [this statement] is puzzling. Why can’t this Torah study “arise and come before G-d”? It is absolute holiness, [for it is G-d’s] wisdom and His will. Why can it not rise up before Him? Because it is enclothed in material matters and matters that concern good and evil. Thus when a person studies [this subject matter] without the love and fear [of G-d], the garments of good and evil become attached to his Torah study and are drawn after it. For this reason, [the Torah study] cannot rise up to G-d, and instead, remains in this material realm.

[To avoid this difficulty,] the study of the Torah should be permeated with the love and fear of G-d, as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 39. [When this is accomplished,] the person will study the Torah *lishmah* as explained in *Tanya* there. [*Lishmah* literally means “for its own sake.” Within the context of this discussion,] the term means performing the *mitzvah* to fulfill G-d’s will. More particularly, as explained in *Tanya*, chs. 5 and 41, the intent is to connect one’s soul [to G-d] and establish unity through [the knowledge of] the Torah. To quote ch. 41:

This is the reason why at the beginning of the morning blessings, our Sages ordained the recitation of the phrase “O my G-d, the soul You gave me is pure... You

²³⁹ *Tikkun* 45; see *Tanya*, ch. 40.

will ultimately take it from me..." Therefore, I will now give it over and return it to You, to unite with Your oneness, as it is written:²⁴⁰ "To You, O G-d, I lift up my soul," by connecting my thought with Your thought and my speech with Your speech through the letters of the Torah and the prayers.

Through this process, he unites the root and source of his soul, the level of *Malchus*, and makes it one with G-d, as it is stated in *Tanya*, ch. 45: "Moreover, there is another direct path before a person, to occupy himself with the Torah and *mitzvos lishmah* by [utilizing] the attribute of Yaakov our Patriarch." And as that chapter concludes:

To arouse and to draw down from there abundant mercies on all the souls and on the source of *Knesset Yisrael* to lift them up from their exile, and to unite them within the sublime oneness, *Or Ein Sof*, on the level of kisses... i.e., the connection of the speech of man with "the word of G-d,' i.e., the *Halachah*,"²⁴¹ and similarly, binding [our] thought to [His] thought."

This also brings about the refinement and the elevation of the *halachos* themselves from the garments of the Tree of [the] Knowledge of Good and Evil. [This same motif is reflected in the statements of *Tanya*,] *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26, on the statement of the *Raya Mehemna* cited above [which emphasizes] that a person's primary service and the essence of his involvement in the Torah and its *mitzvos* is to elevate sparks of G-dliness, as it concludes the discussion of this concept:

Every word of Torah, in particular, a word of *halachah*, is a spark of the *Shechinah*, which is G-d's speech,²⁴² as the *Gemara* states:⁶ "the word of G-d,' i.e., the *Halachah*." [This reflects] the mystic secret of *Malchus*

240. *Tehillim* 25:1.

241. *Shabbos* 138b, *et al.*

242. [The *Shechinah* is identified with the *Sefirah* of *Malchus*, and *Malchus* is referred to with the analogy of speech.]

of *Atzilus* which enclothes the *Chochmah* of *Atzilus*. [They are both] enclothed within *Malchus* of *Yetzirah*, and, because of the breaking of the vessels [of *Tohu*], they descended into *kelipas nogah*.

[When a person clarifies a *halachah*, he elevates these sparks. This is reflected in] the statement of the *Gemara*:²⁴³ "The Holy One, blessed be He, says: 'Whenever anyone occupies himself with [the study of] the Torah, I consider it as if He redeemed Me and My children from among the nations of the world.'"

All this applies with regard to the study of the Torah *lishmah*, i.e., that one studies with love and fear in which instance, one's study of the Torah will be *lishmah*, in order to fulfill G-d's will and elevate the attribute of *Malchus*. For [*Malchus*] is the actual word of *Halachah* which the person studies which was enclothed in the garments of [*kelipas*] *nogah*. [Similarly, this intent involves aspiring] to elevate the spark of one's G-dly soul and to elevate them both and to unite them in G-d's oneness.

When, however, a person studies the Torah without love and fear of G-d, and as a result, his study is not *lishmah* — and as [*Tanya*,] ch. 39, states, that the intent in "not *lishmah*" is not only when one studies with an undesirable intent,²⁴⁴ but when one studies without any intent²⁴⁵ — [one's study] cannot ascend and stand [before G-d], because the garments of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil are attached to it, causing it to remain on this plane.

Synopsis: [In this chapter,] the question [asked at the outset] is resolved. For the Oral Law [described by the analogy of] a fig tree, is called the Tree of Good and Evil, because it is enclothed in material entities and its purpose is to carry out the task of refinement.

243. *Berachos* 8a; cf. *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 281a.

244. *Tanya*, *loc. cit.*, gives the example of studying in order to gain honor.

245. I.e., one studies out of habit, as *Yeshayahu* 29:13 states: "Their fear to Me has become like a conventional human precept" (*ibid.*).

Therefore, without the love and fear of G-d, [one's Torah study] cannot ascend. This applies even when his intent is not undesirable.



CHAPTER XII

[The paradigm explained above with regard to the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah* also applies with regard to the study of the Oral Law.] With regard to the Divine service of *yichuda tata'ah*, it was explained that although [*yichuda tata'ah*] also involves *bittul*, nevertheless, without at least a taste of *yichuda ila'ah*, the person will fall from his level and become attached to the Tree of Death.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the study of the Torah. When a person studies the Oral Law *lo lishmah*, without any particular intent, and without love and fear [of G-d], i.e., without involving the Tree of Life which is the love and fear [of G-d, his Torah study will not elevate him spiritually. On the contrary,] because of its enclothement in the garments of material concerns, and because his entire occupation is with material entities — even the information and understanding in which he is involved is material in nature — and particularly if it has already enclothed itself in the garments of good and evil, i.e., what is forbidden, [as well as] what is permitted, this [study] will lead a person to *yeshus* and self-concern. He will fall from [his spiritual rung], and ultimately, he will study with an undesirable intent, for his own self-interest, e.g., to enhance his honor, so that he be considered a scholar and the like, or to use as a medium for earning a livelihood, as Rav Chayim Vital writes in his introduction to *Shaar HaHakdamos*, one of the eight sections of [his classic work, *Etz Chayim*]. To quote:²⁴⁶

246. [Because of the relevance of the *Shaar HaHakdamos*, when the Previous Rebbe published the Hebrew text of this *maamar*, he also published the *Shaar HaHakdamos* as an appendix.]

In particular, in the present age, when because of our many sins, the Torah is considered as an axe with which man can chop,²⁴⁷ students of the Torah study in order to earn a [financial] reward and receive extra comforts. [Also, their intent is to be] among the heads of the academies and to become judges of Rabbinic courts so that their reputation will spread throughout the land. Their deeds resemble those of the generation of the dispersion,²⁴⁸ who built a tower with its head in the heavens. The motivating factor for the deeds [of that era] was [also self-aggrandizement], as the verse testifies:²⁴⁹ "Let us make a name for ourselves."

Thus the *Zohar* (*Parshas Bereishis*, p. 28b) comments on the verse:²⁵⁰ "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth": "There are five categories within the mixed multitude and from the three categories within them is²⁵¹ called "the group of mighty men," referred to in the verse:²⁵² "The mighty men of yore, the men of devastation." They come from the side about which it was said:²⁵³ "Let us build for us a city and a tower... and let us make a name²⁵³ for ourselves," building synagogues and houses of study. They place Torah scrolls in [these buildings] with a crown upon them without the proper intent, only to create [a reputation for themselves].

247. [I.e., a vehicle with which to earn a livelihood, cf., *Avos* 4:5.]

248. [I.e., the people dispersed after the building of the Tower of Bavel.]

249. *Bereishis* 11:4.

250. *Ibid.*, 2:1.

251. From the three categories within them: This is the wording in the manuscript copy of the *Etz Chayim* and the printed text of *Shaar HaHakdamos* (Jerusalem, 5669) and the *Etz Chayim* (Warsaw, 5651). Seemingly, the proper wording would be "The third category within them is...."

252. *Bereishis* 6:4.

253. [The *Shaar HaHakdamos* is employing a double meaning, for the word שׁוֹמֵר in Hebrew, can mean both "name" or "reputation," and "devastate."]

With regard to such people, it is said in the *Gemara*:²⁵⁴ It would have been preferable for those who occupy themselves with the Torah without the proper intent to have had their embryos overturned, so that they would never have emerged into this world.

[Thus when a person studies with a selfish intent,] that intent, which stems from [the forces of] *kelipas nogah*, enclothes itself in his Torah study. The Torah becomes exiled within the *kelipah* for the moment until he repents. Surely, this applies if his soul has not been purified and his body and soul are sullied with the sins of youth and evil thoughts. These soiled garments enclothe the Torah [he studies] and cause it to descend into the depths of *kelipah*, heaven forbid.

In such an instance, the Torah he studies becomes an actual potion of death, because of:

a) the essence of those garments. The Torah girds itself in very thick sackcloth, and it is in exile in the midst of the *kelipos*, heaven forbid; and

b) because of the person's *yeshus*. When his Torah study is motivated by personal interest, and particularly when it is affected by soiled garments, he becomes filled with self-concern because of his Torah study, [and he becomes possessed by] much pride and conceit. He becomes very coarse and materially oriented, in both a spiritual and physical sense. {His *yeshus*, the concept that he is very important in his own eyes, motivates him to seek satisfaction in mortal pleasures (whatever is within his grasp).}

This is the direct opposite of the true approach to the study of the Torah which must be characterized by *bittul*. For the essence of the attribute of *Chochmah* of holiness is *bittul*.

As is well known, the difference between the *Chochmah* of holiness and the *Chochmah* of the forces of evil is that the *Chochmah* of holiness is characterized by *bittul* as reflected by Moshe's statement:²⁵⁵ "What are we?"

254. *Berachos* 17b. [The exact wording of the *Talmudic* passage differs slightly.]

255. *Shmos* 16:7,8.

Whoever possesses greater wisdom is more *batel*. For whoever is closer [to G-d] has less of [a sense of self-importance].²⁵⁶ The wisdom of the forces of evil, by contrast, is characterized by *yeshus*. [Therefore Yisro is described²⁵⁷ as] “the priest of Midian.” For Yisro personified the level of *Chochmah* of *kelipah*, the opposite of Moshe. [Therefore, it was] through [Moshe] that he was corrected. For Midian refers to *madon*, strife and controversy, separation that stems from *yeshus*, as is well known and explained in other sources.²⁵⁸

Thus a person who occupies himself in Torah study, G-d’s wisdom, should be characterized by a complete sense of *bittul*. The very study of Torah itself should bring about *bittul*, for [the Torah] is G-d’s wisdom. [Moreover,] the Torah must be acquired through austerity and a minimum of pleasure as the *Mishnah* states in the chapter entitled *Shanu Chachamim*.²⁵⁹

[In contrast,] a person who becomes controlled by *yeshus* and self-concern through the study of the Torah is the very opposite. This comes about because the light of holiness [encloded in the Torah] is very concealed and hidden within the soiled garments, and exiled within them. It thus serves as a “potion of death” for the person, instead of [being revealed] as the true light of the *Chochmah* of holiness.

[This is indicated by our Sages’ statement:]²⁶⁰ “Whoever says ‘I possess Torah alone,’ does not even possess Torah.” For [his study] is not Torah. This refers to a person who studies the Torah without the love and fear [of G-d]. (For

256. [The reference is to the interpretation of the statement (*Zohar*, Vol. I, 11b): “All that are before Him are as nothing,” by *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 2. There the Alter Rebbe explains that as the intimacy of one’s position “before Him” increases, one is compelled to feel a corresponding increase in feelings of selflessness and *bittul*.

257. *Shmos* 18:1.

258. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Heichaltzu*, 5659 [English translation, *On Ahavas Yisrael* (Kehot, N.Y., 5756)].

259. *Avos*, ch. 6. [This chapter is not actually a chapter of the *Mishnah*, but rather a collection of *Beraisos* added so that there are six chapters studied between Pesach and Shavuot. The sixth *beraisa* of that chapter mentions “a minimum of pleasure.” None of the *beraisos* specifically mentions “austerity.”]

260. *Yevamos* 109b.

concentration in prayer²⁶¹ is included in the category of *gemilus chassadim*, as *Rashi* states in his gloss to the chapter *Mafnin* (*Shabbos* 127b, entry *hani bihani shai'achi*.)

As a consequence, such people are not able to grasp the true light of the Torah, and they cannot appreciate the true intent of the *halachah*, as it is written with regard to King David:²⁶² "And G-d is with him," [interpreted by our Sages²⁶³ to mean]: "The *halachah* follows his opinion in all situations." The reason the *halachah* follows his opinion is that "G-d is with him." And this is possible because he was *batel* to G-dliness.

[To cite a parallel, our Sages²⁶⁴ state that] the *halachah* was decided in favor of the School of Hillel [rather than the School of Shammai, because the School of Hillel] were "accommodating and self-effaced." Their *bittul* made them mediums through which the true light of the *halachah* could shine.

Similarly, [for every individual,] in order to appreciate the ultimate intent of the Torah, one must be *batel*. [Only] then is one a medium in which the truth can shine as it is.

261. Concentration in prayer: The conceptual flow can be understood on the basis of the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *Vilo Tashbis Melach* in *Likkutei Torah*. To quote:

Our Sages state: "Whoever states 'I possess Torah alone,' does not even possess Torah." Instead, Torah must be [coupled] with deeds of kindness." Certainly, [the term] "deeds of kindness" must be understood in its literal sense, for "the ultimate [purpose] of wisdom is *teshuvah* and good deeds" (*Berachos* 17a) and when a person studies, but does not observe, it is preferable that his embryo overturned" (*Yerushalmi, Berachos* 1:2). Nevertheless, concentration in prayer is also included in [the category of] deeds of kindness, as stated in the *Gemara* and in *Rashi's* commentary.

The conclusion of the quote: "Instead, Torah must be [coupled] with deeds of kindness," is not found in the *Talmud* (*Yevamos* 109b). It is possible to explain that [it is added] on the basis of the *maamar* entitled *Ki Tishma Bikol*, sec. 3, which relates: "Our Sages state: 'Whoever states "I possess Torah alone...."' The literal meaning is that one should occupy himself with Torah study and deeds of kindness... which refer to *mitzvos* in general." Note also *Yevamos* 105a, *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 5.

262. *I Shmuel* 16:18, 18:14.

263. *Sanhedrin* 93b.

264. *Eruvin* 13a.

{For this reason, my soul reacts with disdain when I see some young men (who seek to be accepted [in the *yeshivah*]) and who have studied Torah extensively. Nevertheless, in stature, in appearance, and in the way they feel, they are like simple workmen. The Torah has not instilled its spirit within them at all, causing them to show any measure of refinement.

The reason is that they regard their studies just like a physical task ([to be performed] to earn their upkeep, or so that they will become preachers and sermon-givers) without sensing the G-dliness involved. And certainly, their conduct is not without reproach. Can studying in this manner be called Torah? Will such students be able to appreciate the true [intent of the *halachah*]?

[Instead, one's study of the Torah] must be preceded by the love and fear of G-d which, as explained above, reflects the unity and connection between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge. Then [one studies] the Torah of truth, as [study] should be. This brings about refinement, [for this study is considered] "as if you redeemed Me and My children...."²⁶⁵ It elevates [the sparks of G-dliness] and unites them in His oneness as explained above.

In one's [individual] Divine service, [the approach of] *yichuda tata'ah* alone may cause a person to descend and fall, and [moreover,] on its own accord, it is not considered true service unless it is coupled with the *bittul* of *yichuda ila'ah*, as explained above. This same motif applies — and indeed, more powerfully so — with regard to the study of the Torah. Studying without any intent, and without the love and fear [of G-d], will lead to study which is actually for one's personal intent, causing one to cling to the Tree of Death.

When, by contrast, one studies with the love and fear [of G-d], then one will study *lishmah*, for the sake of the Torah itself. Then the Torah becomes "the Torah of life."

On this basis, we can understand the use of the fig tree as a metaphor for the Torah. For the fig tree represents the Tree

265. *Berachos* 8a; cf. *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 281a. [Note the previous chapter where this quote is explained.]

of Knowledge, for the Oral Law which is the attribute of *Malchus* en clothed itself in the garments of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the forbidden and the permitted. When a person acquires [knowledge of the Oral Law] without the Tree of Life, i.e., without the love and fear [of G-d], without the intent *lishmah* (i.e., he studies without any intent), he separates [the Torah from its G-dly source], and causes it to descend, as stated in [the passage of] the *Zohar, Parshas Chukas*, cited above²⁶⁶ with regard to "his labor which he will perform beneath the sun,"²⁶⁷ that he separates the attribute of *Malchus*. Similarly, with regard to the study of Torah [with the approach] described above, he separates it [from its G-dly source], and causes it to descend, [making it] a potion of death." Instead, one's Torah study has to be joined with the Tree of Life so that it will be "an elixir of life."

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains how ultimately, when one studies [the Torah] without the love and fear [of G-d], because of its en clothement in material matters, it can lead to having an intent that is truly undesirable. It becomes a "potion of death," for through the study the person becomes proud and more physically inclined.

[The chapter also contrasts] the *Chochmah* of the forces of evil [which is characterized by] *yeshus* and the *Chochmah* of holiness [which is characterized by] *bitul*. Then "And G-d is with him," [interpreted by our Sages to mean]: "The *halachah* follows his opinion in all situations." He will be able to focus on [G-d's] ultimate intent.



266. Chs. 6 and 14.

267. *Koheles* 1:3.

CHAPTER XIII

Behold [the expression] “the Tree of Life” refers to *P’nimiyus HaTorah*, the inner dimension of the Torah, as stated in [the passage from] the *Raya Mehemna, Parshas Naso*, [cited above]: “Since in the future, the Jews will taste the Tree of Life which is the *Sefer HaZohar*.” *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*,²⁶⁸ explains that the term “the Tree of Life” refers to “the inner dimensions of the Torah and its *mitzvos*.”

To explain: The Written Law is referred to as “the Tree of Life” because it does not enclothe itself in material garments to the same degree [as does the Oral Law]. (For [the Written Law emanates] from *Za’er Anpin*.) And in [the Written Law], G-dly light can be sensed as explained in ch. 11.

Similarly, *P’nimiyus HaTorah* has not enclothed itself in material garments, for instead, it speaks of spiritual matters including the chainlike progression of spiritual existence and G-dly subjects. Moreover, the conceptualization and the comprehension of these matters is spiritual and in [this type of thought], the G-dly light can be felt. Its entire intent is to know G-d and to come to love and fear Him, as the *Shaloh* writes in his *Masechta Shavuot*, p. 183b,²⁶⁹ with regard to the study of Torah *lishmah*:

The words of Torah that involve research, knowledge, and comprehension [of G-d Himself] should be studied in order to know His name and His greatness, and the hidden secrets of His *mitzvos*. Then the person’s heart will be roused to fear Him and to love Him.

This is reflected in the blessing *Ahavah Rabbah*²⁷⁰ which states: “Enlighten our eyes in Your Torah, cause our

268. Epistle 26.

269. This is the page number in the Amsterdam and Frankfurt d’Main printings. The quote is in the section entitled *Ner Mitzvah* in the entry beginning *Boruch... BiTorah lishmah*.

270. [*Ahavas Olam*, according to the text used in *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 45.]

hearts to cleave to Your *mitzvos*, and unite our hearts to love and fear Your name."

The above is particularly [true in the light of] the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov which were endowed to us as an inheritance by our fathers, the holy Rebbeim, who revealed and explained the greatness and the magnificence of G-d and all the dimensions of G-dliness which lead to the love and fear [of G-d]. [They] taught us to know G-d and how to serve Him with love and with fear as is fitting, and [showed us] the paths which lead to this, as explained in *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, *Kuntres Acharon*, the passage entitled *Lehavin MasheKasuv B'Etz HaChayim*:

The knowledge of the existence of the chainlike progression of spiritual existence is also a great and elevated *mitzvah*. On the contrary, it surpasses all of them, as it is written:²⁷¹ "And you shall know today....," and "Know the G-d of your ancestors."²⁷² And this leads to [service with] a perfect heart.⁵

See also what is written with regard to this matter in *Likkutei Torah*, in the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *Lo Tashbis*. Note the statements there in chs. 4 and 5.

{I also found a genuine manuscript (— I am not sure whether it is from the Mittlerer Rebbe {— this is most likely —} or the *Tzemach Tzedek*²⁷³) which says:

"The statements of G-d are flawless; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him,"²⁷⁴ those who bring them out will find life;²⁷⁵ i.e., true life, eternal life, he will see [his portion of] the World to Come in his

271. *Devarim* 4:39.

272. *I Divrei HaYomim* 28:9.

273. [Subsequently, in *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. II, the Rebbe Rashab wrote: "In *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*, I wrote that it is most likely that the manuscript is from the Mittlerer Rebbe. Afterwards, I contemplated the matter and it appears to me that the manuscript is from the *Tzemach Tzedek*.]

274. *II Shmuel* 22:31.

275. Cf. *Mishlei* 8:35.

lifetime,²⁷⁶ and delight in G-d,²⁷⁷ in the service within the heart, i.e., in prayer, and in true deeds of kindness.}

Thus it is *P'nimiyus HaTorah* which is the Tree of Life, which is the revelation of G-dliness, which leads to "a perfect heart," i.e., the love and fear [of G-d] which is the essence of our occupation with the Torah and its *mitzvos*.

For this reason, the essence of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* was revealed in these later generations. Thus *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26, quotes the *AriZal* as stating that it is in these later generations that it is permitted — and indeed, it is a *mitzvah* — to reveal this wisdom. For in the earlier generations, this was not necessary. They were totally righteous men [whose souls] stemmed from high [spiritual] rungs. Because of the tremendous power of their souls, they possessed genuine love and fear [of G-d] and studied the Torah *lishmah*. [To attain these levels,] they did not require the revelation of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. [Therefore these teachings were hidden, for] "It is the glory of G-d to conceal a matter."²⁷⁸ In [these] later generations, by contrast, the souls do not stem from such high rungs, and [the spiritual potential of our] hearts has diminished. Therefore, it is a *mitzvah* to reveal [this wisdom].

In each successive generation, the revelation of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* becomes even more necessary so that [it becomes possible] to know G-d and [experience] love and fear of Him. Since the spiritual level of the souls have descended and they have become more materially oriented, and there are a multitude of veils and concealment, [were it not for the revelation of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*,] even those who cling to the Torah would not know G-d, and would not [experience] genuine love and fear [of Him].

276. Cf. *Berachos* 17a.

277. Cf. *Yeshayahu* 58:14.

278. *Mishlei* 25:2.

For love and fear are dependent on the knowledge and comprehension of G-dliness. How is it possible to love something when you do not know what it is? Similar concepts apply with regard to the fear [of G-d] as explained in *Reishis Chochmah, Shaar HaYirah*, ch. 1. As explained in *Tanya*, ch. 3, love and fear are generated from the intellectual attributes, *Chochmah, Binah*, and *Daas*. For this reason, these intellectual attributes are called mothers and the source for the emotions.

In ch. 12 it was explained that without the love and fear [of G-d], the study of the Torah could also become a potion of death. Therefore, in G-d's kindness to us, He revealed to us the *Zohar* which had been hidden since the death of Rabbi Shimon so that it would be revealed in the later generations, as it is written in the *Tikkunei Zohar*: "And some people will sustain themselves on the lower plane from your composition [the *Zohar*] in the later generations, in the end of days." And in each subsequent generation, in His kindness, G-d has revealed the light of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* through His faithful servants.

Accordingly, it is a *mitzvah* and an obligation for each and every one to study *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. The fundamental aspect of our Torah study should be to know what is forbidden and what is permitted and the laws of ritual impurity and purity in order to refine the world as stated in *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26, and in *Kuntres Acharon*, the passage entitled *Lehavin MasheKasuv B'Etz Chayim*. We must amplify our study and observance of all the 613 *mitzvos* in actual practice in thought, speech, and deed, for they relate to the worlds of *Beriah, Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, facilitating the task of refinement carried out there. Nevertheless, there is a duty which is both a *mitzvah* and an obligation: to study *P'nimiyus HaTorah* as stated in the source in *Iggeres HaKodesh* cited above: "It is a great and lofty *mitzvah*, which indeed surpasses all of them."

A person who does not study *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is liable for his soul, for even if he occupies himself with Torah study, he will fall from his spiritual level as explained above.

Not only will he not carry out the task of refinement, on the contrary, he will....²⁷⁹

Certainly, this applies to someone who does not desire this study, but rather [to devote himself] solely to the study of *Nigleh*, the revealed, legal dimension of the Torah. He attaches himself to the place of death as stated in the passage from the *Zohar*, *Parshas Vayechi*, cited above.

For it is through the study of [*P'nimiyus HaTorah*] alone that a person will merit the light of life. [Indeed,] it is "the Tree of Life," and the medium which will bring a person to the love and fear [of G-d]. And [then], he will "live in them,"²⁸⁰ i.e., his Torah study will enable him to carry out the task of refinement and elevate his soul — and even the source of his soul — and unite them in His oneness. This is the intent of our Sages' statement:²⁸¹ "All of these [forms of disease] can be nullified by bread [dipped] in salt." Salt, an analogy for the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, is necessary, as stated in ch. 4.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that the "Tree of Life," the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, is not encloded in material garments; its intent is to attain the knowledge of G-d and to reach the love and fear [of Him].

[*P'nimiyus HaTorah*] is revealed essentially in the later generations when the souls are on lower levels, and the concealment [of G-dliness] has increased.

279. [Rather than state explicitly the negative consequences that will result from the lack of such study (for doing so would encourage these consequences), the *maamar* leaves the matter to the reader's understanding.]

280. Cf. *Vayikra* 18:5.

281. *Bava Metzia* 107b, cited in ch. 4.

Whoever does not study [*P'nimiyus HaTorah*] is liable for his soul. Certainly this applies with regard to a person who rejects this study.



CHAPTER XIV

Based on the above, we can understand the passage in the *Zohar* at the beginning of *Parshas Chukas* with regard to the verse:²⁸² “And this (תורת) is the Torah which Moshe placed” that was quoted at the outset.²⁸³ By saying תורת, using a *vav*, the Torah indicates that the intent is to unite the Torah with the Holy One, blessed be He. (Note the entire passage as quoted there.)

תורת refers to the *Sefirah* of *Malchus* which comes into being through the influence of the attributes of *Gevurah*. See also the statements in *Likkutei Torah* in the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *Zos Chukas HaTorah*, sec. 3, with regard to the concept that the [Red] Heifer derives its nurture from the left vector. For the Heifer refers to the attribute of *nukvah* of *Nogah* that receives nurture from the ox which is on the left side.²⁸⁴ This is the intent of the *mitzvah* of the Red Heifer: to correct this [undesirable flow of influence].

The attributes of *Gevurah* allow for the possibility of nurture from the external forces (as explained above with regard to the Oral Law, which is identified with the attribute of *Malchus* which enclothes itself in the garments of good and evil. Thus there is the possibility of a descent taking place); therefore, [*Malchus*] must be connected through the medium of the *vav* to the Tree of Life. This will bring about the sweetening of the attributes of *Gevurah*, and their

282. *Devarim* 4:44.

283. See ch. 3.

284. [In the vision of the prophet Yechezkel (ch. 1), the ox-like creature was seen as being on the left. This is because its spiritual source is the attributes of *Gevurah* which stem from the left vector.]

transformation from bitter to sweet, causing them to be identified with life and goodness.

On this basis, we can understand the verse “And this is the Torah which Moshe placed,” and why it states “And this” (וזה), using a *vav*, [alluding to] the connection of the Tree of Knowledge to the Tree of Life. This also enables us to understand our Sages’ statement:²⁸⁵ “If a person merits, [the Torah] becomes an elixir of life for him. “Merit[ing]” refers to the joining of the Torah to the Tree of Life, i.e., that his involvement in Torah study should be characterized by the love and fear [of G-d], and [that his study should be] *lishmah*. This is achieved through the study of *P’nimiyus HaTorah* as explained in ch. 13. [Then] the Torah becomes an elixir of life for him.

If, by contrast, a person does not merit, i.e., he does not attach [his Torah study] to the Tree of Life, for he does not study *P’nimiyus HaTorah* and thus does not possess the love and fear [of G-d], he will study without any intent, without the love and fear [of G-d], and thus he will not study *lishmah*. This study will become a potion of death for him, heaven forbid, for he will descend. He will become preoccupied with his self, his [ego] will become inflated, and he will become very materially oriented as explained above at great length. This is particularly true when he studies after blemishing the covenant,²⁸⁶ heaven forbid, in which instance, [his Torah study] descends in the depths of *kelipah* and actually attaches itself to the tree of death.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains our Sages’ statements: a) “And this (וזה) is the Torah,” that וזה is written with a *vav*; and b) “If he merits, the Torah becomes an elixir of life.” This is the fusion of *Malchus* and *Za’er Anpin*, [the union of] the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, which is carried out with the love and fear [of G-d] and [which involves study] *lishmah*.

285. *Yoma* 72b; cited in ch. 5.

286. [A euphemism for undesirable sexual conduct.]

[This is prompted] by [the study of] *P'nimiyus HaTorah*.



CHAPTER XV

In addition to the reasons for the necessity for studying *P'nimiyus HaTorah* mentioned in ch. 13 — i.e., that it leads to the love and fear of G-d — this study also benefits the study of *Nigleh*, the revealed dimension of Torah law, for *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is the soul of the external legal dimensions of the Torah, as stated in the *Zohar*, Vol. I, *Parshas Bereishis*, p. 26b, commenting on the verse:²⁸⁷ “And from there it becomes divided.” [The *Zohar* states:]

Four who entered the *Pardes*:²⁸⁸ One entered via the *Pishon*, i.e., “the mouth of he who reviews Torah law.”²⁸⁹ One entered via the *Gichon*, these are the allusions [of the Torah].²⁹⁰ The third entered via the *Chidekel* (חִדְקֵל), a name which can be divided into the words *chad* and *kal* (חד and קל) meaning “sharp and light,” referring to [the Torah’s] language which is pointed, and easy to [express] in *Derush*.

287. *Bereishis* 2:10.

288. *Chagigah* 14b. [The word *Pardes* (פִּרְדֵּס) literally means “orchard.” Within the *Talmud* and the *Kabbalah*, this term is understood to connote mystic experience and knowledge.

This same term is also used as an acronym to refer to the four basic approaches to Torah study: *Pshat*, the comprehension of the simple meaning; *Remez*, the allusions the Torah contains; *Derush*, the non-literal homiletical understanding of the Torah; and *Sod*, its mystic knowledge.

The passage from the *Zohar* refers to both of these understandings of the term.]

289. [The Hebrew word פִּישׁוֹן can be divided into פִּי meaning “mouth” and שׁוֹן, the root of the word שׁוּבָה, meaning “review.” The study of Torah law relates to the approach of *Pshat*.]

290. [I.e., the approach of *Remez*.]

The fourth entered via the Euphrates, which is the mind.²⁹¹

Ben Zoma and ben Azzai who entered via the husks (*kelipin*) of the Torah were stricken by them. Rabbi Akiva entered via the mind; about him it is said:⁷ "He entered in peace and departed in peace."

(The *Mikdash Melech* explains that the expression "the husks of the Torah" refers to "the meaning of the Torah as it is expressed in the *halachos* and the *derashos*. Rabbi Akiva, by contrast, entered via the mind, i.e., [the Torah's] mystic secrets. This can be understood..."; note that text.)

The entire passage from the *Zohar* should be contemplated, including its conclusion on p. 27b, [referring] to the verse:²⁹² "And G-d took the man..."; see the comments [of the *Mikdash Melech*] on this.

Thus the external dimensions of the Torah, its revealed portion, can be termed the garments of the Torah, and *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is its soul. Just as the soul conveys life to the body, so too, *P'nimiyus HaTorah* conveys vitality to the external dimensions of the Torah. Thus when a person studies *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, he will feel vitality in his study of *Nigleh*; he shall "live in them."²⁹³ And when the study of the Torah is infused with vitality, it is directed toward the proper intent.

When, by contrast, a person does not study *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, his study of *Nigleh* is like a body without a soul, like a dead body without any vitality. Therefore, his intent for which he studies is also not desirable.

This [concept] is also reflected in the statements of the *Tikkunei Zohar* (*Tikkun* 30):

We have learned: On the verse:²⁹⁴ "And the spirit of G-d hovered over the waters," it was asked: What is meant "the spirit..."? Until those who make the Torah

291. [Relating to the approach of *Sod*.]

292. *Bereishis* 2:15.

293. *Vayikra* 18:5.

294. *Bereishis* 1:2.

dry (יבשה) — [for] they do not desire to apply effort to the wisdom of the *Kabbalah* — retire....

For without *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, the Torah becomes parched, without light and energy. For the vitality stems from *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. See also what the *Zohar*, Vol. I, *Parshas Bereishis*, p. 33a, states with regard to the word (יבשה) "dry land": "Why is it called 'dry land'? Rabbi Yossi says: 'It is written:²⁹⁵ לחם עני "the bread of poverty," yet is pronounced לחם עוני, "the bread of oppression."'"

Similar concepts are found in the *Tikkunei Zohar* (*Tikkun* 20) which states: "'Dry land,' i.e., it is dry and impoverished, i.e., before the union. Afterwards, it is written:²⁹⁶ "And G-d called the dry land, 'earth,'" for it became filled with influence from the level of *yesod*." See also the statements of the *Kehilas Yaakov*, entry *Yabashah*.

The concept is explained thoroughly in the Introduction by R. Chayim Vital to the *Shaar HaHakdamos* which was cited above. [This text] is filled with the blessings of G-d, with holy words, fitting to the one who authored them. This introduction was also published in the Warsaw printing of the *Etz HaChayim*. (Since both the *Shaar HaHakdamos* and that printing of the *Etz HaChayim* are not that popularly available, I will also reprint this Introduction.²⁹⁷ It is fitting that it be accessible among you and that you deliberate over it thoroughly, [for] you will find good [in it.]

This is the concept of "the path of life,"²⁹⁸ which refers to *P'nimiyus HaTorah* which is the Tree of Life. And when [one possesses] "the path of life," then one can draw down "the candle of *mitzvah* and the light of the Torah"¹⁷ as explained above in ch. 2. For through the Torah and its *mitzvos* we draw down the revelation of the *Or Ein Sof*. When a person possesses "the path of life," he "lives in them," his

295. *Devarim* 16:3. [The intent is that although the word is pronounced as if it possesses a *vav*, it is not written with that letter.]

296. *Bereishis* 1:10.

297. To facilitate access to this text, it was printed as an appendix in the Hebrew publication of *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*.

298. *Mishlei* 6:23. [See chs. 1 and 2 where questions are raised concerning this verse.]

involvement in the Torah and its *mitzvos* [is characterized by energy and vitality].

Synopsis: [This chapter] adds that *P'nimiyus HaTorah* is like the soul to the external dimensions of the Torah which can be compared to the body. [*P'nimiyus HaTorah*] endows [the external dimensions of the Torah] with vitality.

[When one possesses] “the path of life,” *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, then he can draw down “the candle of *mitzvah* and the light of the Torah.”



CHAPTER XVI

This is²⁹⁹ an appropriate place — and it is a necessity — for me to draw attention to a matter concerning which many err, and which is a major cause of damage, [leading to] a lack of Divine service with love and fear. For people will say: “Who are we? And what is our Divine service [worth]? [How will] we experience genuine love and fear? How can we ask this of ourselves since we are on such a low level?”

When these people study about the love and fear of G-d, they consider it as an external matter, something that is entirely above them. Because of their own low [spiritual] level and the elevated plane of the love and fear of G-d, they do not think of demanding this of themselves. They do not see any connection between themselves and these matters.

This is an error. For we have been commanded by the Torah to fulfill the *mitzvos* of loving and fearing G-d. For they are among the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah,³⁰⁰ whose observance is incumbent upon every member of the Jewish people.

299. With regard to the contents of this chapter, see also the note to ch. 2, and *Kuntres HaAvodah*, chs. 3-4.

300. See Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvos*, positive *mitzvos* 3, 4, 5;) and the *Sefer HaChinuch* (*mitzvos* 418 and 432).

Indeed, a person must reincarnate until he observes every one of these *mitzvos*.³⁰¹

The Holy One, blessed be He, does not come with over-imposing demands to His created beings.³⁰² He asks of them only what is within their potential. Thus if one would say that it is impossible for every individual to attain the love and fear of G-d, how could he be commanded to express these emotions?

We are forced to say that every individual has the potential to attain love and fear [of G-d]. [The protests to this] could be accepted as true if we were speaking about a love [of G-d] resembling that of Avraham, and a fear [of G-d] resembling that of Yitzchak,³⁰³ and [the emotive qualities expressed by] other perfect *tzaddikim*. For who would be so presumptuous to try to attain such peaks?! (Nevertheless, even regarding these levels, no person is free from the obligation [to attain such heights — and moreover, he has the potential to do so], as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 44, with regard to the level of Moshe. Certainly, this applies with regard to the Patriarchs.)

The love and fear [of G-d are attainable by all], because there are several levels and rungs within these emotions. Each one of these qualities subdivides into an infinite number of echelons, [appropriate] for every person according to his level, (i.e., according to his degree of comprehension).

{For in truth, every individual possesses a natural and essential love [for G-d] within his soul. For every soul is “an actual part of G-d from above,”³⁰⁴ emanating from the ten sublime *Sefiros*.³⁰⁵ This is an inheritance which we have received from our ancestors.³⁰⁶ Nevertheless, this love must be brought from a concealed state into revelation. This is accomplished through knowledge and meditation.

301. *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 39 (see *Sefer HaGilgulim*, ch. 4).

302. *Avodah Zarah* 3a.

303. [Avraham serves as the paradigm of love, and Yitzchak, the paradigm of fear.]

304. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

305. See *ibid.*, ch. 3.

306. See *ibid.*, chs. 18, 44.

This is the intent of the commandment with which we have been charged, that the love for G-d be revealed within our hearts. In this, there are many levels depending on one's knowledge and comprehension, and the extent to which a person must labor in meditation. (See the comments concerning this in the *Siddur*, in the note regarding *Tikkun Chatzos* and also in *Tanya*, ch. 42.) This depends on the level at which the soul is rooted in its source.}

[The existence of these different levels is reflected in the interpretation offered by] the *Zohar*³⁰⁷ for the verse:³⁰⁸ "Her husband is known in the gates (שערים)": "This refers to the Holy One, blessed be He, who is known (with understanding and comprehension) and who clings (in love) to each person according to what he assesses (משער) within his heart," as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 44.

The love of G-d refers to the soul being drawn in love toward Him, and desiring to cling to Him, because of its comprehension of the greatness and magnificence of G-d. For just as it is a natural tendency of the soul to be drawn to an entity which it perceives as good and pleasant, so too, when a person meditates on [the greatness of G-d, he will be stirred to loving Him].

[More particularly, when he thinks of] the awesome exaltation of *Or Ein Sof*, how [Or Ein Sof] permeates all the worlds and transcends all the worlds, and contemplates the particular levels of this, sensing their spiritual and refined nature, and he understands, grasps, and meditates about these concepts with concentration, attaching his thoughts, his soul will be drawn to G-dly light, and will desire to cling to it.

[He will be stirred to more powerful feelings] when he grasps and meditates on the fact that [the G-dly light which relates to the worlds] is only a ray which cannot be compared to the essence, for [the essence] is far more wondrous and magnificent than it; indeed, all existence is of no importance before Him. The awareness of the wondrous and magnificent

307. Vol. I, p. 103a.

308. *Mishlei* 31:23.

nature of *Or Ein Sof* will arouse the love within his soul. He will be drawn to cling to the essence of *Or Ein Sof*; this will be his desire. He will not seek any other material or spiritual entity, only G-d alone. (This concept is reflected in the interpretation³⁰⁹ of the verse:³¹⁰ "I do not desire [to be] with You," [not to seek all the revelations of G-dliness that are with Him, but to desire His essence alone].

As explained at length in *Tanya*, [ch. 44], there is a dimension of love [for G-d] which is shared by every Jewish soul, [for] it is an inheritance which we received from our ancestors. This is the love identified with the verse:³¹¹ "My soul desires You." [As *Tanya*, *op. cit.*, explains:]

Because You, G-d, are my soul and my true life, I desire You; i.e., like a person who desires life, the life of his soul; [e.g.,] when he is weak and overburdened, he desires that his soul be revived within him. Or like a person who goes to sleep, who desires that his soul be revived within him when he awakens. So too, I desire *Or Ein Sof*, my true life. And [I] desire to draw it into my inner being through the study of the Torah when I arise from my sleep at night, for the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one....

A great and more extensive love than this is also hidden within the soul of every Jew, for it is an inheritance from our ancestors, as described in the *Raya Mehemna*:³¹² "Like a son who strives for the sake of his father and mother, because he loves them [even more than his own self].

This is the love described at the conclusion of [*Tanya*,] ch. 10. It is possible to explain that this also reflects the second

309. *Likkutei Torah*, *Tazria*, p. 20a; *Sefer HaMitzvos LehaTzemach Tzedek*, p. 138a.

310. *Tehillim* 73:25.

311. *Yeshayahu* 26:9. [The interpretation in *Tanya* is based on the understanding of the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 67a.]

312. *Parshas Ki Seitzei*, Vol. III, p. 281a.

level of love described in [*Tanya*,] *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 18, entitled *Ma Yafis* which speaks of:

The love and the desire with which the soul yearns for, loves, and craves to cling to G-d, "to be bound up in the bond of life."³¹³ This closeness to G-d is very precious for it;³¹⁴ it desires this and it is very difficult for it to be removed from Him.

This [love] also stems from the fact that [G-d] is our Father as the continuation of that text explains. It is also possible to explain that the love described [in the Epistle] in *Iggeres HaKodesh* relates to the concepts explained in *Tanya*, ch. 20, except that in [ch. 20,] the emphasis is on will, while in [*Iggeres HaKodesh*], the emphasis is on love.

Synopsis: [This chapter] proves that it is within the potential of every individual to attain love and fear [of G-d], for these are included within the 613 *mitzvos* which everyone is obligated to fulfill.

[The chapter] explains several levels of love which are inherent traits within our souls and relates that we are obligated to express [these levels of love] through knowledge and meditation.



CHAPTER XVII

Behold all of the levels of love [of G-d] are very easily accessible for a person. For, in essence, he possesses them all inherently within his soul. All that is necessary is for him to bring them out into revelation within his heart. This is a possible task for each and every individual, each one according to his own potential, as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 44. To bring this hidden love from concealment into revelation in

313. *I Shmuel* 25:29.

314. Cf. *Tehillim* 73:28.

one's heart and mind is not wondrous, nor distant.³¹⁵ On the contrary, "the matter is very near to you — in your mouth and in your heart — to perform it."³¹⁶

With regard to material matters, we see that we have a natural attraction to good and exemplary things. And so, when a person sees something which is good and contemplates its goodness, he is aroused with love for that entity. Similar concepts apply with regard to a person of whom he has never heard before. When he becomes familiar with him and appreciates his positive qualities, he will love him and desire to come close and cling to him.

Similar concepts apply with regard to spiritual matters. When a person knows and appreciates the positive and exemplary dimensions of G-dliness — how [G-d] permeates all the worlds, transcends all the worlds, and how all existence is of no significance whatsoever before Him as stated in ch. 16, he will be aroused to a love and a desire to cling to Him. Knowing [G-d] refers to studying, learning about these matters, and afterwards meditating about the concepts and thinking about them in depth. When a person contemplates such matters and thinks about them in depth, he will be aroused to a genuine love and a great yearning. His soul will be drawn to Him, [desiring] to cling to Him through involvement in the Torah and its *mitzvos*. He will seek to separate himself from all matters that are not related to G-d and to His Torah, i.e., all material matters. His desire will be only to cling to Him.

There are several levels in the nature and the quality of the love and the yearning to cling to Him, and the distance [the person will feel] from material entities. [The level of the person's love] will depend on the nature of his knowledge and his comprehension, and the manner in which he contemplates and thinks deeply. The more he knows and comprehends, and the more he contemplates and thinks deeply, the greater and more genuine will be the love which he attains.

315. Cf. *Devarim* 30:11.

316. *Ibid.*:14.

Certainly, labor is necessary to know and comprehend these matters. And unquestionably, [the process of] contemplating and thinking deeply requires effort and time. As *Tanya*, ch. 42 states, one must labor with one's soul so that he does not consider the effort burdensome, for [to attain this love,] he must exert himself, thinking deeply and contemplating the greatness of G-d consistently, for extended periods of time. For even with regard to material entities, unless a person binds his thought to an entity, he will not be aroused to love for it, as stated in *Likkutei Torah*, in the second explanation to [the *maamar* entitled] *VeYadaata*. Therefore, [when speaking of the love of G-d], certainly effort, and [sustained] deep thought and contemplation is necessary, but with effort, [this love] can be attained.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that through exerting oneself in the knowledge [of G-d], and in contemplation and thinking deeply about such matters, it is very easy to arouse the love [of G-d].



CHAPTER XVIII

A preliminary step [is necessary: to create an appropriate setting] for the comprehension and knowledge of G-dliness, and particularly, so that the contemplation will be grasped and remain attached within one's mind, [so] that the person can become bonded with it and be aroused with love. In order to be an appropriate medium for this, a person must bring about a general refinement of the material orientation of his body so that it will not create concealment for the powers of the soul. This involves two [different] activities:

a) constraint — [restraints] with regard to eating, drinking, and other pleasures, to minimize one's [involvement] in physical pleasure even with regard to simple matters to whatever degree possible, using only what is necessary to maintain one's life and health.

This is within the potential of every individual, to actually hold himself back, not to eat so much, and similarly to restrain himself with regard to other pleasures, not to indulge in them, for example, not to take pleasure strolls and the like.

This applies even when one does not occupy oneself with Torah study during this time. For the restraint itself, that the person holds himself back from doing what his heart desires to subdue the *sitra achra*, shatters the material orientation of his body (provided the person does not occupy himself with another material concern that his natural soul desires at that time; and certainly when he does not occupy himself with frivolity or jests, heaven forbid), as stated in *Tanya*, ch. 27: "Similarly, if he muzzles his mouth [and refrains] from speaking matters which his heart craves."

Certainly, this applies if he occupies himself with Torah study at that time, as explained in *Tanya, ibid.*: "For example, he desires to eat, and delays his meal for an hour or less, and occupies himself with Torah study at that time." Similarly, if he desires to take a pleasure stroll, and instead occupies himself with Torah study at that time.

b) breaking oneself — crushing one's ego in the manner described in *Tanya*, ch. 29. This involves laboring with one's flesh, crushing the body's [material tendencies], to subdue it, as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 42.³¹⁷

These are preparatory steps to make oneself a medium that is able to comprehend and contemplate [spiritual concepts] and be aroused to the love and fear [of G-d].

The love³¹⁸ implied by the verse:³¹⁹ "My soul desires You," is also very easily attainable. [A person] should contemplate

317. [The intent is not crushing the body entirely, for the elevation and refinement of the body is one of the fundamental thrusts of *Chassidus*, as explained by the Baal Shem Tov in his renowned teaching on the verse (*Shmos* 23:5): "When you see the donkey of your enemy collapsed under its burden" (see "*The Making of Chassidim*," p. 23ff.). Instead, the intent is merely to crush the selfish tendencies and material orientation of the body.]

318. On the surface, the proper place for the following section is the conclusion of the previous chapter. Contemplation of this matter is still required.

319. *Yeshayahu* 26:9.

how *Or Ein Sof* is the life of the world at large, and the person's own life. When he thinks deeply about this, he will be aroused with a genuine love and a great yearning for G-dliness. He will genuinely desire that G-dly light be revealed overtly for him. This desire [will motivate] him to study Torah, for this will bring about such a revelation within his soul. For the Torah is G-d's wisdom and His will, and "the Torah and G-d are one,"³²⁰ as explained above in ch. 16, based on *Tanya*, ch. 42.

Certainly, there are many different levels and rungs of love and yearning, [for] this also depends on the nature of a person's comprehension and the depth of his thought. But in general, the concept is "neither wondrous, nor distant,"³²¹ but rather within the potential of each individual to attain, each person according to his level, one more, one less. [Moreover, there is an incremental effect.] At the beginning, [the love] is small, [but] afterwards, it grows and increases.

Synopsis: [This chapter] emphasizes that as a preparation for the knowledge and comprehension [of G-dliness], one must refine the body through privation and breaking oneself. [The chapter also] explains the love associated with the verse: "My soul desires You."



CHAPTER XIX

Similar concepts also apply with regard to the attribute of **S**fear. It is also an inherent quality, hidden within the heart of every Jew. [For every Jew fears] rebelling against the Holy One, blessed be He, King of kings.

[This quality] must also be brought out from concealment to revelation through meditation. [A person should]

320. See *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 24a; Vol. II, p. 60a; *Tanya*, ch. 4.

321. Cf. *Devarim* 30:11.

contemplate the greatness of the *Ein Sof* and His sovereignty, that [He is] sovereign over all the worlds,³²² the spiritual and the material. For He fills up all the worlds.... And yet, He ignores all the higher and lower realms and manifests His sovereignty over His nation Israel, and particularly over each individual [Jew]. [For]:

G-d stands over him,³²³ [though] “the entire earth is full of His glory,”³²⁴ He looks at him, and inspects his reins and his heart, [to see] if he is serving Him as is fitting.

Therefore, one must serve Him with awe and fear, as one stands before a king. One should think deeply about this [concept].

Note the concepts in their source, *Tanya*, ch. 41, and see also ch. 42 which states:

Behold any Jewish person, whoever he may be, when he meditates on the above for a lengthy period each day, [contemplating] how the Holy One, blessed be He, fills the higher realms and the lower realms, the heavens and the earth. And in actual fact, “the entire earth is filled with His glory,”³²⁵ and He scans, looks, and checks his reins, his heart, and all of his deeds and speech; and He counts all his steps. This will cause fear to be established within his heart for the entire day, when he will again meditate even with a superficial reflection,³²⁵ at any time, or moment, he will turn

322. Cf. *Tehillim* 145:13.

323. Cf. *Bereishis* 28:3.

324. *Yeshayahu* 6:3.

325. Trans. Note: [With regard to this quote from *Tanya*, the Rebbe wrote: At first glance it would seem that there is no compelling evidence as to whether “at any time or moment: is connected to the earlier clause (“when he will again meditate... even with a superficial reflection *at any time or moment*”), or whether it is connected to the following clause (“*at any time or moment*, he will turn away from evil and do good...”).

However, since “any time or moment” is mentioned in ch. 14 with regard to a person’s ability to become a *Beinoni*, and the Alter Rebbe explains there that this phrase refers to his thought, speech and deed, it follows that here, too, “at

away from evil and do good³²⁶ in thought, speech, and deed....

Thus through arousing the fear [of G-d], the person will be untainted in turning away from evil and doing good, so as not to rebel before the eyes of His glory, heaven forbid, as stated in *Tanya, op. cit.* Moreover, his involvement in the study of the Torah and the observance of the *mitzvos* will [possess the advantage of being] the toil of a servant, performed to carry out G-d's will, and not for his own satisfaction at all. Instead, [his intent should be] to fulfill G-d's will and generate satisfaction for his Creator, as [our Sages said:]³²⁷ "It brings Me satisfaction that I spoke, and My will was done." The person will also derive pleasure from this,³²⁸ i.e., he will derive pleasure from G-d's pleasure. Thus his service will be carried out with happiness as explained in other sources.

{This quality, [Divine service] for the sake of generating satisfaction for G-d, is also reflected in the love [described with the analogy of a son who exerts himself on behalf of his parents as explained in [*Tanya*,] chs. 10 and 41.³²⁹ There is, however, a distinction between [the motivations of] love and fear. With regard to love, the individual feels pleasure; he derives personal satisfaction from the unity of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His *Shechinah* in the lower realms. With regard to fear, by contrast, the person's service is characterized by a more encompassing *bittul*. He is not at all concerned with his own satisfaction (for he does not express this dimension of selfhood either). He is satisfied because pleasure is generated in the spiritual realms and this brings him pleasure.

any time or moment" relates to the following clause — "he will turn away from evil and do good, in thought, speech and deed."

326. Cf. *Tehillim* 34:15.

327. *Toras Kohanim, Rashi, Vayikra* 1:9.

328. With regard to the differences in the levels of pleasure mentioned here, see the more lengthy explanation in the *maamar* entitled *Acharei* (*Shabbos Parshas Re'eh* in the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShanah* 5666).

329. [And mentioned in ch. 16 above.]

There is a higher rung: that the person feels pleasure because of the fact that the unity of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His *Shechinah* has been achieved in the lower realms. In this instance, [he feels] the sublime pleasure itself. For the servant is so identified with his Master that he is one entity with Him. Therefore [he feels] the pleasure expressed in the spiritual realms as his own pleasure. }

Thus both love and fear are necessary [for complete Divine service], as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 41.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains that every Jew also possesses innate resources of fear [of G-d]. They must be revealed through meditation. Fear causes a person to be perfect in turning from evil and doing good, and endows his occupation with the Torah and its *mitzvos* with the advantage of the toil of a servant.



CHAPTER XX

We have been commanded concerning the above: To exert ourselves in meditation and deep contemplation about these concepts [until] we are aroused to the love and fear [of G-d]. They are the wings [which elevate]³³⁰ our involvement in the Torah and its *mitzvos*. Everyone must earnestly take to heart that it is within his potential to attain the love and fear [of G-d] (through contemplation and deep thought), whether to a limited or great extent. [Each person] is obligated in this matter, whether because of the requirement to fulfill these *mitzvos*,³³¹ or because of his obligation to observe the Torah and its *mitzvos* in general which [is possible only] when motivated by [love and fear]. Thus he is obligated to exert himself and ultimately, [if he perseveres] he will attain these attributes.

330. See *Tanya*, ch. 40.

331. [I.e., the *mitzvos* of love and fear whose observance is incumbent on every individual.]

When he studies concepts relevant to the love and fear [of G-d] in *Chassidus*³³² (— or in truth, whenever he studies any G-dly concept that is relevant to a particular quality —), heaven forbid, that he should think that the concepts are not relevant to him and his Divine service, for he is not on that level. This is absolutely false. It is a complete mistake which causes him not to apply himself in his Divine service. [For such an approach will cause him to consider] his occupation in the Torah [and its *mitzvos*] and his Divine service as two separate matters, and [thus] neither of them will be at all genuine.

[When is a person's knowledge genuine?] When he *davens* with a concept which he has learned once, twice, and a third time and contemplates and thinks deeply about the matter [until] he is aroused to the love and fear [of G-d].

Even if at the outset he will have only a small taste of the good, he will increase, proceed, and ascend from level to level, "progressing steadily."³³³ When his soul will be illumined with the light of love and fear, he will ascend from his low and ignoble level, subduing his natural tendencies, and ascend to a higher rung.

As stated in ch. 16, "there are those who err and [with mistaken humility,] think: how can we demand love and fear from ourselves? [We know] our low [spiritual] level." This is a wrong approach. On the contrary, their low spiritual level comes as a result of their lack of love and fear. When they will attain love and fear, they will ascend to [higher] levels.

As explained above, because a person loves G-d and desires to cling to Him, he will distance himself from those entities which are opposed to G-dliness. For the entire conception of love is that it is a movement and a transition from one's initial place to [another]. [In this context,] this means that a person will move away from [involvement] with material and physical concerns and draw closer and cling to G-dliness, as explained in other sources.

332. [The *maamar* refers to *Chassidus* with the classic term *divrei Elokim chayim*, "the words of the living G-d" (alternatively, "the living words of G-d").]

333. Cf. *Bereishis* 12:9.

Certainly, this will cause his love [for G-d] to be a source for his performance of good deeds and his fear [of G-d], a source for his turning away from evil. This will also include subduing one's natural potentials as explained in ch. 4 with regard to the prohibition against following one's eyes and heart. And it includes the performance of good deeds based on fear in the manner of a servant as explained in ch. 19.

[In contrast,] when a person lacks the Divine service of love and fear, he is truly on a low and ignoble level. He is drawn after the animal soul and wants and desires all material things, and is drawn after them. For [after all], what will prevent this from happening? "A man is born like a wild donkey";³³⁴ his natural qualities are inherently strong, and they have a prior claim [to the person's behavior].³³⁵ It is only through the love and fear [of G-d] that a person can ascend from this low and ignoble rung, and cause his involvement in the Torah and its *mitzvos* to be as desired. And this is the path which will enable him to ascend from one spiritual level to another.

The outcome of all the above is that every person must demand from himself the service of love and fear and must exert himself [for this purpose]. At the outset, [he must labor] intellectually to comprehend these concepts well. And then he must contemplate and deepen his thought until he will elevate himself and attain these levels, each person according to his individual measure. This will initiate an upward spiral which will enable him to ascend level after level, rung after rung.

Synopsis: [This chapter develops] the conclusion that every individual is obligated to exert himself to arouse his love and fear [of G-d]. Through love and fear, he will ascend from his low rung, level after level.



334. *Iyov* 11:12.

335. [For the G-dly soul does not completely enter a person until the time of *Bar* or *Bas Mitzvah*. Thus until then, the person's natural soul has developed its hold on the person's character and tendencies.]

CHAPTER XXI

Behold, based on all the concepts explained above, you should know and understand the urgency and the necessity for the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, and how it is the essence of our lives. [It is true that] during the day, more time must be devoted to the study of *Nigleh*, the revealed [dimension of] Torah [law] for the sake of bringing about refinement, as explained in ch. 13 above, based on *Iggeres HaKodesh*.³³⁶ But this itself — that one's involvement in the Torah should be desirable and directed toward the ultimate intent — comes about through involvement in *P'nimiyus HaTorah*.

[*P'nimiyus HaTorah*] must create the setting for the study of *Nigleh*. Without it, the study of *Nigleh* will not be desirable, nor properly directed. Instead, the person will stumble and fall. For it will cause him to become a *yesh* and a self-concerned entity. And his downward spiral will continue until he becomes attached to the Tree of Death, heaven forbid.

When, by contrast, he occupies himself with the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, and thus establishes a connection to the Tree of Life, as explained in chs. 13-15 in particular, then his study of *Nigleh* will become a potion of life.

Synopsis: [This chapter reemphasizes] the necessity for the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*.



CHAPTER XXII

And now, it is incumbent on me to advise you of the purpose for the establishment of our association.³³⁷ Let it

336. Epistle 26.

337. [The Rebbe Rashab composed *Kuntres Etz HaChayim* for the students of] *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*, [the Lubavitcher *yeshiva*, in particular. This] is the "association" to which he is referring.

[Although the concepts explained in the initial portion of the *maamar* are of general relevance, they were specifically intended to impress the students of the

be known that our association was not established merely for the purpose of supporting young men and enabling them to study the Torah. In other words, the goal of our association is not merely to augment and increase the study of *Nigleh*.³³⁸ Instead, the goal of our association is that the young men who study the Torah's revealed, legal dimension should be [G-d-]fearing Jews whose [connection with] G-d and His Torah is sound.³³⁹

We have already explained our ideas in another source (in the Epistle beginning "With thankful acknowledgment to G-d for all the good..."³⁴⁰), elaborating on the factors which motivated the founding of this association. For we had seen the Torah girding itself in very thick sackcloth,³⁴¹ for those who were occupied [in its study] were studying for utterly selfish motives, and many of the young men who were studying the Torah did not possess the fear of heaven at all. They and their Torah study are mired in the place of death, heaven forbid. And this evil is not sufficient; they compound its damage by becoming rabbinic authorities among the Jewish people, thus they "cast down many corpses,"³⁴² may G-d protect us from them.

For this purpose, we were motivated to found an association to support young men who occupy themselves in Torah study, to protect them from harmful forces. And to endeavor to the fullest extent possible to implant within them — with G-d's help — an inner feeling for the awe of G-d and the love of Him, that they should know what they are studying (— i.e., they are studying G-d's wisdom —), that

yeshivah with the importance of studying *P'nimiyus HaTorah* and laboring in prayer to attain the love and fear of G-d. In this final section of the *maamar*, the Rebbe addresses the students of the *yeshivah* directly and gives them clear directives concerning their study and daily conduct.]

338. [See also *Sefer HaSichos 5689*, p. 75, where these concepts are discussed.]

339. [See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIV, p. 316ff., where these concepts are discussed.]

340. This Epistle is printed as an appendix to the Hebrew text of *Kuntres Etz HaChayim*.

341. Cf. *Sanhedrin* 101a.

342. Cf. *Mishlei* 7:26. *Rambam*, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 5:4, refers to this phrase in describing a "student who is not worthy of rendering *halachic* judgments and does so."

they should know why they are studying, and that they should derive vitality from their study of the Torah. [They should realize] that the “path of life” which leads to these goals is the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* as explained above.

Therefore, we have established that, as a fundamental necessity, every [student] should study *Chassidus* for a significant time each day. [A student] will be expected to devote more time to the study of *Nigleh*, for this is appropriate as explained above. And he will be supervised to insure that he studies much of the *Talmud* and its commentaries,³⁴³ in a desirable manner as will be explained. Nevertheless, the fundamental core [and purpose] is the study of *Chassidus*, that the students should know G-d and as a result be aroused to the love and fear of Him as explained above.

We have established a minimum, that every student will study *Chassidus* for at least four hours every day. (This represents approximately one-third of the time of the student's daily Torah study. With regard to this, note the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *Lo Tashbis* in *Likkutei Torah*, ch. 8.³⁴⁴ I heard explicit [instructions] from my revered father, the Rebbe, that during the week, one third of the time one devotes to Torah study should be directed to *Chassidus*, and two-thirds to *Nigleh*.)

Synopsis: [This chapter states] the purpose of our association [— *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* —]: to study the Torah with inner feelings of love and fear [of G-d]. The path to accomplish this involves the study of *Chassidus* for a fixed time every day. (During the week, one-third [of the time one devotes to Torah study should be directed to] *Chassidus*, and two thirds [to] *Nigleh*.)



343. [The reference is to the Hebrew term ת"ד which is an acronym for the words *Gemara*, *Peirush Rashi*, and *Tosafos*, meaning *Talmud*, the commentary (i.e., *Rashi's* commentary) and *Tosafos*.

344. *Likkutei Torah*, *Vayikra*, p. 5c.

CHAPTER XXIII

Behold, the young men with whom our association was founded knew the purpose of its establishment, and they chose and desired this [as their mission]. They eagerly accepted and carried out³⁴⁵ [the mission] of occupying themselves with *Chassidus* according to the schedule mentioned above. They studied well, and, thank G-d, their efforts brought forth fruit and were crowned with success.

In the present time as well, there are many young men who follow this path and adapt themselves to this ultimate purpose. They are proceeding and advancing. There are, however, many others who, over the course of time, lost sight of this ultimate purpose. To a large extent, this happened because over time, there came and gathered new students for whom the concept of involvement in *Chassidus* was foreign to them. Not that they are opposed, heaven forbid, it's just that *Chassidus* is an unknown for them. They came to study *Nigleh*.

This introduced an unfamiliar atmosphere into the hall of study, [and there began to be a sense] that the fundamental purpose is for the study of *Nigleh*, and the study of *Chassidus* is of secondary importance, heaven forbid. [This is also reflected in] their conduct. [It is obvious] that their main intent is to study *Nigleh*, and they study *Chassidus* only to fulfill their obligation.

And as a natural corollary, it is understandable that they and their Torah are not at all fitting to the ultimate intent for the study of the Torah or for their spiritual level. Therefore, on this occasion, I want to make it known to you that this is not the purpose of our intent. Not at all.

Instead, the intent of the establishment of our association is for the study of *Chassidus*, for it is the essence of our lives, and this will grant vitality to your study of *Nigleh*. And this will make you and your study of the Torah pleasing to G-d, the Giver of the Torah.

345. Cf. *Esther* 9:23. [Note also the Chassidic discourses focusing on this verse.]

Synopsis: [This chapter explains that] there are some who err with regard to the purpose [for the establishment of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*]. Therefore [that purpose — the study of *Chassidus* —] is made known to them.



CHAPTER XXIV

As you can see, we have taken it upon ourselves, *bli neder*, to meet all your needs, and we are willingly and happily making an effort to do this, so that your hearts and your minds will be free to occupy yourselves with the Torah and Divine service. Nevertheless, if a person does not fulfill the terms of this notice and study *Chassidus* four hours each day, he should know that he is receiving benefit from us unjustly.

Synopsis: [This chapter emphasizes] that whoever does not keep the fixed times of study [established by the *yeshivah*] derives benefit unjustly.



CHAPTER XXV

The reinforcement and the nurture of every quality comes through establishing a fixed schedule. This is particularly true with regard to the study of *Chassidus* for there are special times which are appropriate for this study, and there are times when this study is necessary.

In general, it is preferable to study *Chassidus* at two [different] times during the day. The most appropriate time to study *Chassidus* is in the morning before prayer when the *loven haelyon* is revealed.³⁴⁶ This quality is aroused in the morning

346. [Literally, the sublime whiteness, referring to an abundant revelation of *chesed*, Divine kindness.]

which is associated with Avraham, [and the attribute of kindness,] as explained in *Torah Or*, in the *maamar* entitled *VaYashkeim Lavan BaBoker*.

At this time, the [*yeshivah* students] should study at least two hours. At 7:30, after putting on *tefillin* and reciting the *Shema*³⁴⁷ and after drinking tea,³⁴⁸ they should gather together in the large study hall. (They should not study in their private quarters or in other places, but instead should gather in the large study hall as is done when studying *Nigleh*.) They should study for at least two hours straight, until 9:30. And if it is possible for them to begin at 7:00 so that they will not recite their prayers after the set time,³⁴⁹ it is preferable.

Those who study on their own, should group together so that five, six, or more students will be studying the same subject. My intent is not that only one of these five should read, and the others should listen, but that they should all read and study on their own. They should not, however, study

347. [The *Shema* should be recited before studying for two reasons:

a) it is possible that since the students will *daven* later, they will recite the *Shema* in the prayer service after the time set aside for it, the end of three seasonal hours;

b) since the recitation of the *Shema* is a Scriptural commandment, it should be fulfilled before eating or drinking.

Tefillin should be put on before reciting the *Shema*, because it is improper to recite the *Shema* without wearing *tefillin* (*Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 25:1). At present, there are many who will recite the *Shema* in the morning without putting on *tefillin*, basing their conduct on *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Shelach*, 5712, where the Rebbe explains — with regard to reciting the *Kerias Shema Katanah* before the *Korbanos* — that this passage may be recited without putting on *tefillin*, for putting on *tefillin* afterwards has a retroactive effect on one's conduct beforehand. There is not, however, a specific directive from the Rebbe that it is not necessary to put on *tefillin* before eating.]

348. [Although it is forbidden to eat before prayer (see *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 89:5), leniency is granted when, because of health reasons, a person is unable to concentrate without eating before prayer. If, however, eating and/or drinking will help one concentrate in prayer, it is permissible. Since the *yeshivah* students will be reciting their prayers at a later hour, they were given license to eat and drink beforehand, so their hunger will not disturb their concentration on prayer.

In this context, the chassidim have always referred to the advice given by the *Tzemach Tzedek* to his daughter-in-law when her doctors advised her to eat early in the day: "It is better to eat in order to pray, than to pray in order to eat" (*HaYom Yom*, entry 10 Shvat).]

349. [I.e., before four seasonal hours of the day have passed.]

separate topics. Instead, each group should study one subject and they should discuss their understanding of the matter together.

Every group should study on a separate table so that the subjects will not be confused. And the members of each group should have ample space so that they will be able to study in pairs so that they will not confuse each other. They should review every *maamar* that they study once or twice as is necessary. For it is impossible to appreciate the truth of a concept from a single reading. When, by contrast, [a person studies it] a second or a third time, he will be able to appreciate the truth of the concept, and it will become internalized and comprehended.

Those who listen to [the *shiurim* of] the *mashpiim*, *Rashbatz*³⁵⁰ and *Rim*,³⁵¹ should listen while [looking on] in the text. The students should listen carefully to the lessons delivered and afterwards review alone [the lessons] they heard. At least, two students should review together, going over the lessons carefully. If there is anything that they do not remember or do not understand, they should ask the *mashpia*.

And the very young students who are beginning and who do not have a background in *Chassidus* should study with *Ram* from Zembin.³⁵² He should explain the subjects to them, and teach them to comprehend them thoroughly until they have grasped them. Afterwards, they should review the subjects in pairs. Behold, I am appointing *Rik* Seligson³⁵³ to monitor the time when [every student] comes to the study sessions for *Chassidus*. *Rik* is obligated to come to the study hall at 7:30 [a.m.] to see that all the students are in attendance. He should

350. The name is an acronym for Reb Shmuel Betzalel ben Shalom Shabtie Sheftel. His biography is printed in *HaTamim*, Vol. I, p. 67ff. [English translation, *Links in the Chassidic Legacy* (SIE, N.Y., 5757)].

351. The name is an acronym for Reb Michael Bliner of Neville. His personal history is mentioned in the notes to *Toras Shalom*, p. 39.

352. The name is an acronym for Reb Moshe of Zembin, one of the chassidim of the Rebbe Maharash. He was a student of Reb Avraham of Zembin and a colleague of Reb Shmuel Gronem Esterman. He passed away in Shvat, 5675, in Lubavitch.

353. Reb Yaakov Kopil Seligson, the son of Rav Avraham Seligson, who was called the *Motz* (*Moreh Tzedek*, a term used to refer to the local rabbinic authority). He was the Rav in Lubavitch in the time of the *Tzemach Tzedek*.

write down those who are missing in a register. (And during the times when *Rik* is involved with his *esrogim* business, I will ask the *mashgiach*, *Razav*³⁵⁴ to monitor this.) When the students are studying [by themselves] in the manner described above, *Ram* of Zemin and *Rik* should oversee their study.

The second fixed session [for studying *Chassidus*] should be at night, because *Chassidus* should be studied at night. The students should study from 9 until 11. Those who go to sleep before 11 should begin studying before 9, so that they study for at least two hours straight. [Their study] should be supervised by *Razav*. He shall define which students cannot study until this late, and when they should start their study of *Chassidus*. *Rik* should watch and see that [the students] follow the directives set out by the *mashgiach*. The study at night should follow the same pattern as in the morning. All of this is in addition to the study of *Tanya* which is carried out between *Minchah* and *Maariv*.

Those students who are indolent with regard to the study of *Chassidus* will be punished according to the degree of their indolence. And [a student] who does not devote himself to the study of *Chassidus* will be banished from our association entirely.

Those who rise early in the morning should study *Chassidus* for the entire time before prayer.³⁵⁵ For in general, before prayer, nothing aside from *Chassidus* should be studied. For there is enough time during the day to study *Nigleh*. [Those who] rise early and study *Chassidus* may compensate for this time by reducing their study of *Chassidus* at night (provided this will fit the measure of time mentioned above). But they must also study some *Chassidus* at night. For it is necessary to study *Chassidus* at that time.

354. Rav Zev Wolf (5608-5670), the son of Reb Moshe Avraham Levitin, the son-in-law of Rav Gershon Ber of Faher.

355. [With regard to the study of *Nigleh* before prayer,] see *Rashi* (*Berachos* 5b), entry *semuch* and the explanation to the *maamar* entitled *Torah Tzivah* in *Likkutei Torah*, sec. 4. In contrast, with regard to the study of *Chassidus*, see the *maamar* entitled *Tachas Ashar Lo Avadita* in *Likkutei Torah*. See also the gloss of *Melo HaRoim* to *Berachos*, *op. cit.*

And the day of *Shabbos* should be totally devoted to the study of *Chassidus*.³⁵⁶ In general, it is important to treasure the time on *Shabbos* and use it to study the Torah, and not to use the time for useless matters. [In truth,] even during the week, one should be careful about these things, but in particular this applies on the holy *Shabbos*, for “the day is sanctified unto G-d our L-rd.” It is given to the Jewish people to be satiated and to delight in His goodness.

Taking pleasure strolls on *Shabbos* is undesirable. For the only [material pleasure the Torah] permits on this [holy] day is to sleep slightly more than every other day,³⁵⁷ and to take delight in food and drink.³⁵⁸ And this is permitted only when a person’s intention is to honor the *Shabbos*, i.e., he should feel that this is being done for the sake of the honor of *Shabbos*, and [during this time,] he should be affected by the awe of *Shabbos*. The [all-]encompassing *bittul* which characterizes the *Shabbos* should affect him. (As is known,³⁵⁹ *Shabbos* [is distinguished] by the ascent of the external dimensions of the worlds as well. Every entity ascends to the sublime realms. In particular, this is brought about through the prayers of the *Shabbos* [which] elevate the soul. For as is well known, the prayers of *Shabbos* and the meals of *Shabbos* are related to each other.) But to waste the time of *Shabbos* on useless matters is a great sin. In particular, this applies to taking strolls on *Shabbos*, for then everyone is strolling, and it is impossible that one will not be affected by evil. A person who guards his soul should stay far away from this.

Synopsis: [This chapter explains that] the time which is most appropriate for the study of *Chassidus* is in the morning before prayer. The time when this study is necessary is at night.

356. [See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, p. 53. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim 5635*, Vol. II, p. 568.]

357. [See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 281:1.]

358. [*Ibid.*, 242:2.]

359. See *Derech Mitzvosecha*, the section entitled *Mitzvas Achilas Kadshei Kedoshim*.

[It elaborates on] the schedule for the study [of *Chassidus*] and how that study should be carried out. [It concludes by emphasizing how] the day of *Shabbos* should be totally devoted to *Chassidus*, and how one should carefully use one's time on *Shabbos*.



CHAPTER XXVI

Other words for [our]G-d. The *Shaloh* (p. 181a)³⁶⁰ quotes the *Midrash* that a person who establishes fixed times for Torah study is considered as one who “forsakes the Torah.”

The *Shaloh* questions that statement, noting that “establishing fixed times for Torah study” [is a positive quality]. [Indeed,] the first quality about which a person will be asked [when he appears before the Heavenly tribunal is: Did you establish fixed times for Torah study?] (The *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Berachos*, ch. 9, by contrast, states that a person who studies Torah at fixed times abrogates [G-d's] covenant. [The apparent contradiction between these sources can be resolved based on] the statement of the [*Babylonian*] *Talmud*, *Sanhedrin* 99b, [which censures severely] someone who studies Torah only at appointed times.³⁶¹)

[In this light,] it can be explained that [the *Shaloh's*] intent [when referring to a person who fixes times for Torah study] is that he is precise to keep those fixed times, and does not add to them, for he regards the matter as a burden.

[To make a comparison:] The *mishnah*, *Berachos*, ch. 4,³⁶² speaks of making one's prayer “fixed.” The *Gemara*³⁶³ interprets this as referring to someone who considers his prayers as a burden. For prayer which is considered as a burden can never be [an entreaty] for mercy and supplication. Nor can it rightly be called prayer, for the entire purpose of

360. In his tractate *Shavuos*, ch. *Ner Mitzvah*, entry *HaYom HaZeh*, *Yom Mattan Torah*.

361. [I.e., instead of studying continuously (*Rashi*).]

362. *Berachos* 28b.

363. *Ibid.*, 29b.

prayer is the intent within the person's heart and his inner feeling. And when a person regards his prayer as a burden, his intent is the direct opposite.

Similar concepts apply with regard to Torah study: Since he regards it as a burden, it is not considered as Torah study. In particular, this applies with regard to the study of *Chassidus*. If a person regards it as a burden, it will never bring about any change [within his personality]. For the entire point of this study is the feeling of G-dliness involved.

Instead, the study of *Chassidus* must be with will and desire. [When motivated by such an intent,] [a person] will not be miserly regarding the time he studies. He will realize that by studying *Chassidus*, he will gain with regard to the study of *Nigleh*. For he will be able to comprehend more in a brief amount of time than another colleague could in a longer period.

(It is far easier to arouse oneself to study *Chassidus* with desire and energy than to motivate oneself to study *Nigleh* in such a manner. For one is [obviously] studying a G-dly subject, and with even a small degree of connection to the subject which one is studying, one will discover vitalizing energy within it. For since this [study] is [identified] essentially with the Tree of Life, as stated in ch. 13, it is easier to derive vitalizing energy from it.

[The students] should study out loud. For vocalizing [one's study] arouses the concentration of the heart and increases the energy one feels in study.)

This will be the touchstone: When [a student] is not that precise about the schedule [and is willing to devote himself to the study of *Chassidus* more than what is required of him,] this will show that [the student] cherishes *Chassidus*, and it will have an effect on him, illuminating his soul with the light of life.

Synopsis: [This chapter emphasizes that a student] should not consider the study [of *Chassidus*] a burden. He should not be precise about keeping the schedule

[paying his dues, as it were, without going beyond its limits].

(It explains that it is easier to derive vitalizing energy from the study of *Chassidus*, and [states] that [*Chassidus*] should be studied out loud.)



CHAPTER XXVII

Behold, the unfamiliar atmosphere [mentioned in ch. 23] “has conceived and has given birth to darkness,”³⁶⁴ allowing an approach to study that is totally undesirable to creep into the house of study. The greater sages of the earlier (ראשונים) and later (אחרונים) generations abhorred this approach to study and set themselves apart from it with the ultimate of disdain and distance. All of those who study the Torah as they should are extremely careful not to stumble [onto this undesirable path].

The desirable approach to study should have as its objective to know the subject which one is studying with thorough and developed knowledge, without trying to develop *chiddushim* (innovative explanations) or to build intricate [conceptual] structures. Instead, [the intent] is to know the subject being studied.

(When one of the students whose approach is undesirable will honestly take stock of his spiritual state, he will find that his ultimate desire is to develop *chiddushim* and to become a contributory influence with regard to the subject being studied. {In doing so, he makes the *halachah* a recipient of the influence of his folly. Woe is he; may G-d protect us.})

[These students] have a desire — indeed, a powerful desire — for study, but their desire is only that they develop *chiddushim*. This is the desire which they take to their study.

And if they cannot develop a *chiddush*, their desire for study will abate. One of two results will ensue. Either they

364. Cf. *Shmos Rabbah* 15:22.

will focus on another subject, hoping to develop a *chiddush* in that area, or their [egocentric and] impure desire will emerge and motivate them to speak and think of *chiddushim* that are utter foolishness that no ear will hear.)

[Instead, a student] should be a recipient from the *halachah* which he studies, and should not try to convey influence to it. (And ultimately, he will receive honor from his studies, when he develops true *chiddushim*. This, however, is possible only when one develops a genuine knowledge of the *halachah*.)

Synopsis: [This chapter] emphasizes that the ultimate purpose of knowledge is to know the concepts [as they truly are], and not to try to develop *chiddushim*, innovative explanations.



CHAPTER XXVIII

In a simple sense, the knowledge [about which we are speaking is] to comprehend the *halachah*, [understanding] *Rashi's* interpretation [of the relevant passages], [and] knowing the simple meaning without fooling oneself. [A student] should understand the motivating principles and rationales for the positions of every *Tanna*³⁶⁵ or *Amora*,³⁶⁶ and appreciate the dialectic give and take in the *Talmud*, with its questions and resolutions.

He should know what were the motivating reasons for the *halachah*, why it generated this question, and what new concept was introduced by the resolution. [He should understand] whether the resolution negated the principle which motivated the questioner entirely, or whether it accepts [the question's] motivating principle, but diverts the question, [either] by showing that in truth, it is not a question, or by

365. [Sage of the *Mishnah*.]

366. [Sage of the *Gemara*.]

developing a new insight regarding the *halachah*, explaining it in a more comprehensive manner, and by so doing, removes the question. Thus he must know what is the intent of the *halachah* once the resolution has been offered.

In general, [a student] must keep in mind the order and connections between the questions and their resolutions, for sometimes a concept is changed because of questions. This is particularly true when questions are asked of two *Tannaim* or *Amoraim* who differ, and it is necessary to keep in mind the order [of the give and take between them]. For the resolutions [often] furnish new insights with regard to the essence of the approach of each of the Sages, [revealing] their motivating principles and rationales.

[Similarly, a student must understand] the dialectic reasoning of the *Gemara* with regard to a law stated in the *Mishnah*, understanding the simple meaning and the intent of the *Mishnah* as [developed] through the situations presented by the *Gemara* and [grasping] the new insights it brings out. In general, he should know all the particulars of a *Talmudic* passage, having a clear knowledge of all the particulars of each opinion and its motivating principle. Each motivating principle should be clearly defined and they all should be ordered in his [mind], each one having its place.

After [the student] has completed [studying] the entire passage from the text, he should review it by heart (speaking it over), [reviewing] every opinion, the questions raised concerning it, the resolutions offered, and the conclusions reached.

These should all be grasped thoroughly in [the student's] mind. He should not consider it wearisome to review the subject by heart several times in the above manner until it is grasped comprehensively.

After the interpretation of the subject according to *Rashi's* commentary is clear and graphically understood and comprehended within his mind, he should study the interpretation *Tosafos* offers to the passage. He should analyze whether *Tosafos* are further clarifying the subject according to the explanation offered by *Rashi*, [augmenting his commentary]

with explanations, or providing a more particular breakdown of the subject. It is necessary to understand which new insights their commentary uncovers.

Sometimes they take a different perspective than *Rashi*, and explain the passage according to their understanding. Sometimes the difference in perspective relates to the entire passage, and sometimes it involves only one particular. Since [the student] has grasped the passage thoroughly, it will not be difficult for him to comprehend the matter, nor will he be confused because of the difference in approaches and explanations. He will be able to explain that according to *Rashi*, the passage can be understood in this manner, while according to *Tosafos*, it can be understood in another fashion.

It is common for *Tosafos* to raise questions from other *Talmudic* passages. Thus at times, it is necessary to check that source to understand the question they are raising. And when *Tosafos* presents a *pilpul* (dialectic analysis) concerning a subject with regard to the passage at hand — and certainly, with regard to other passages — much composure is necessary. To understand the subject, [a student] must focus his mental energy on knowing the [fundamental] intent [of *Tosafos*], the rationale motivating their reason. Afterwards, [he must know] the question they are raising with regard to this rationale, and [why] they come to a new rationale or a deeper understanding of the first rationale itself.

[Having mastered the flow of thought, the student] should then review the *pilpul* by heart until it is clear and structured in his mind, and comprehended thoroughly. And he should appreciate the new insight their *pilpul* gave to [the understanding of] the passage as a whole.

Synopsis: [This chapter] explains the manner of studying the *Gemara*, [*Rashi's*] commentary, and *Tosafos*.



CHAPTER XXIX

When a student has a good and powerful intellectual potential, and a broad-minded outlook, he can study in a deeper manner; for example, [he can] analyze the wording of the *Mishnah*, focusing on [what would appear to be] the most succinct wording, what appears to be extra — perhaps even an extra word — and the order of the *Mishnah*. When [a student] thinks deeply about all these matters and labors with deep thought, he will find several new insights concerning the clarification of the *Mishnah's* intent. In this manner, he can derive several laws.

Nevertheless, a person must be very careful and cautious that [his study] follows the path of truth. Because [when making such deductions], one's path may deviate, and one may follow a crooked way that will cause one to forfeit all [the benefit of] one's study, heaven forbid. Instead, it would have been preferable that the person's embryo had been overturned,³⁶⁷ as will be explained.

This approach requires much effort, effort with one's soul and effort with one's body, straight thinking, and a steady connection. Most of all, it requires that one desire the truth. The ultimate purpose of such study should be [to fulfill the *mitzvah* of] concentrated Torah study

A person whom G-d graciously endowed with a good intellectual potential should study according to his capacity. Nevertheless, as explained above, he should not seek to develop novel explanations, but instead to engage in concentrated study. He should seek the truth and weigh out every idea thoroughly in his mind.

According to my conception, this approach to study is most appropriate with regard to [the study of] the *Mishnah*. For [the *Mishnah*] reflects a concise and precise [choice of wording] that follows lengthy and extensive research. After the lengthy *pilpul* of the Sages with regard to the Oral Law, our

367. Cf. *Jerusalem Talmud, Berachos* 1:2.

holy master³⁶⁸ [condensed] all the extensive discussions and included them in the words of the *Mishnah*. And the concise words of the *Mishnah* encompass all of the lengthy explanations which have been clarified and properly elucidated. The wording used — [indeed,] every word — is exact, fitting the true intent of the subject.

With regard to the *Gemara* and the explanation of the *Mishnah*, by contrast, I am not sure if carefully analyzing the choice of words is a desirable approach to study. Certainly, the choice of wording is very precise. Nevertheless, since the goal is the dialectic give and take and the *pilpul*, to raise a question and offer a resolution, the essence of the study should highlight the focused analysis of the subject. Unquestionably, the wording and the choice of terms should be considered thoroughly. Nonetheless, this is not the essence of the deeper study of the *Gemara*.

(The statement that we must analyze carefully the wording and the [choice of] terms applies only when one has studied the subject thoroughly, and has clarified and properly elucidated the matter with concentrated thought. [When that is completed,] when he reviews [the subject's] wording and analyzes it, he will certainly find positive points. Nevertheless, even then, he must use extra care and weighted thinking so as not to put unwarranted focus on a concept which is not fundamental. Certainly, [this applies if one's approach] is not genuine.)

The essence of the matter is to concentrate and to deepen one's understanding of all subjects. [Whenever one encounters] a statement [of our Sages] or a particular rationale, one should not think that all there is is the obvious understanding of the matter. Instead, one must understand that every concept contains several levels of depth.

Nevertheless, a person who does not possess a broad intellectual potential and whose mind cannot extend itself greatly should content himself with the obvious understand-

368. [This is the expression used to refer to Rebbe, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, the author of the *Mishnah*.]

ing [of the subject], [following] the approach outlined in ch. 28 with regard to the comprehension of the simple meaning [of a passage]. [A student] should not labor to obtain an objective that is beyond his capacities. For he will merely waste his time and will not accomplish his goal (or he will err and fool himself, heaven forbid) unless he is directed by a teacher or master who will show him the depth the subject contains.

If, however, a person possesses the intellectual potential to attain a deep understanding, he must deepen his perception of all matters, establishing a firm bond between his intellect and knowledge and the subject of the statement [of our Sages]. [Inevitably,] he will find within it depth, and he will uncover new insights into that statement which he did not think of beforehand. He can expand that [perception of] the depth and identify its particulars and explain them. (Not only is the above possible for such a student, he must study in such a superior manner. The expression "he can" is used with regard to the subject, i.e., the subject — as well as the student — contains the potential for [in depth study].)

Similarly, he should deepen his understanding of every dialectic give and take in the *Gemara*, concentrating and digging deeper into the questions, the resolutions, and the entire discussion. Indubitably, there will be questions raised with regard to certain matters that according to the obvious understanding of the subject do not appear ambiguous. And yet, when he analyzes the subject carefully, questions will arise with regard to the approach of the inquirer or that of the one who offers the resolution, or with regard to the fundamental point of the concluding judgment. He will exert himself to resolve [the questions he raised]. All of this will be done in an authentic manner with genuine thoughts.

When he completes the study of the entire passage, and it is clear and ordered in his [mind], he should deepen his understanding of the motivating principles of the passage in general. He should clarify and analyze the matter with concentrated thought and see if all the particulars fit. For every particular contributes to the clarification of the others.

This can lead to much sharpening [of one's ideas] and *pilpul*, in particular with regard to the deep *halachos* contained in the *Gemara*.

The person should be both sharp and questioning, and patient and seeking resolutions,³⁶⁹ for both these approaches are necessary. As explained in *Shaarei Orah*, in the *maamar* entitled *BeChof Heh BeKislev*, sec. 56, when a sharp and questioning person is committed to the truth of the Torah, his level surpasses that of a patient person who seeks resolutions [to difficulties]. (See the commentary of Rabbeinu Asher to *Horios* 14a which explains that Rabbi Zeira, [although described as being "sharp and questioning"], was also able to make conclusions based on a passage and derive decisions reflecting *halachah*. Nevertheless, he came to those decisions on the basis of *pilpul*. (This interpretation is also given by *Shaarei Orah*.)

Rabbah bar Masnah, by contrast, [is described as "patient and seeking resolutions"] for he would wait and analyze. [Nevertheless,] he was also sharp and learned in *pilpul* as *Rashi* explains. Thus he also would analyze the subject and plumb to its depth. Nonetheless, the depth to which one can reach through *pilpul*, through a dialectic give and take, using questions and resolutions, is far more advantageous as explained in *Shaarei Orah*, chs. 54-56).

The above, however, [is true] only when the *pilpul* is true, and the conceptual flow is structured. (See the *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Horios* 3:8, and the commentary of the *P'nei Moshe*, entry *kodem lipilpulin*. When a person has a strong intellectual potential, and the *pilpul* is also structured in an ordered fashion, then he will be "patient and seek resolutions," and reach a conclusion that reflects the *halachah*.

(This is true only with regard to a *pilpul* based on truth. [Such a *pilpul*] can also be structured in an ordered fashion. When, however, a *pilpul* is false at its core, it will also be disordered, and one will not be able to arrive at a conclusion

369. [See the conclusion of tractate *Horios* which contrasts these antithetical approaches to Torah study.]

that reflects the *halachah*, as will be explained³⁷⁰ in the name of the *Maharal* of Prague.)

[A student] should focus intently on the analyses of *Rashi's* commentary, for as the *Shaloh* writes in his tractate *Shavuos*, p. 181b, "concealed in each and every statement of *Rashi* are wondrous dimensions." With his pure and simple language, [*Rashi*] prevents a person involved in analysis from making an error, [averts the possibility of] doubt arising, and resolves several questions without them being asked, because of the simplicity of the language used. For his wording has been clarified and assessed carefully. Therefore everyone with an adroit intellectual potential should carefully analyze *Rashi's* wording. [Needless to say,] one must do so using straightforward thinking and a careful process of examination on the basis of truth as explained above.

Similarly, one must study *Tosafos* in a proficient manner. Note the statements of the *Shaloh*, in his section *Torah SheBaal Peh*, p. 417a,³⁷¹ with regard to manner and order in which *Tosafos* should be studied.

If G-d has endowed [a student] with an extra dimension of knowledge and understanding, he should look into the text *Darchei HaGemara*, authored by Rabbi Yitzchak Kampanton. There he will find satisfaction, and an effective path to study the *Talmud* and its commentaries. Some of his statements have been quoted by the *Shaloh*, pp. 412a-413b.³⁷² Nevertheless, the path of study which he recommends requires straightforward thinking and a very powerful intellectual potential. It is acquired with much composure and great patience.

The *Shaloh*, p. 413b, writes:

Know my sons, may their Rock and their Redeemer guard them, that a person who studies *halachos* every day requires knowledge and understanding to

370. See ch. 31.

371. This is the conclusion of the section entitled *Torah SheBaal Peh*.

372. This is in the section entitled *Torah SheBaal Peh, Klallei Iyun*.

comprehend [them]. He should conceive intellectually of the depth of the subjects, grasp each and every matter in a fundamental way, and make use of the discipline of *pilpul* wisely. For there is no [limit to] the value of *pilpul*, [provided] the *pilpul* is true, and each of those [arguing opposite positions] will acknowledge his adversary's words if his position proves correct. Through such a process, [one receives] a broader [understanding] of the subject with G-d's help, [for] He aids those who come to purify [themselves].

After analyzing the simple meaning of the *halachah*, [a student] should review the *halachah* out loud, with happiness. Although the *Zohar*, *Parshas Bereishis*,³⁷³ explains that our Sages' statement:³⁷⁴ "If a word is worth a *sela*, silence is worth two," applies even to the words of Torah; i.e., "your heart should not be hasty to utter a word before G-d."³⁷⁵ This means that when a person stands before the Divine Presence — i.e., when he is occupied with Torah study or prayer — he should not hurry to speak. Instead, he should speak clearly and properly. On the term:³⁷⁶ וְשִׁנְנֵתָם, "And you shall teach them diligently," our Sages comment³⁷⁷ that the review that one does orally should reflect a review within one's heart. Only afterwards should the words be pronounced out loud. On the verse:³⁷⁸ "They are life to those who express them," our Sages comment:³⁷⁹ "to those who express them orally."

373. P. 2a.

374. *Megillah* 18a.

375. *Koheles* 5a.

376. *Devarim* 6:7.

377. See the *Sifri* to that verse.

378. *Mishlei* 4:22. [We have translated the verse according to its interpretation by our Sages, rather than give its literal meaning.]

379. *Eruvin* 54a.

Synopsis: [This chapter] outlines a course of study for a person with a developed intellectual potential. [It] reaches the conclusion that a careful analysis of the wording used is more appropriate while studying the *Mishnah*. While studying the *Gemara*, by contrast, one should [focus more on] concentrated analysis of the subject matter.

[The chapter emphasizes the importance of] being both “sharp and questioning, and patient and seeking resolutions.” [It also speaks of the importance of] carefully studying the wording used by *Rashi*.



CHAPTER XXX

And [for] you cherished children,³⁸⁰ I have explained the general approach to the desired path of study. This is what we seek from your studies, each one according to his level. The essence of the matter is to know every subject within its context in a genuine manner, for all the particular elements and all the distinct factors to find their place in a structure, so that all these particulars and factors will be clear [to the student].

The above is also true with regard to the study of the works of the *halachic* authorities. One should know thoroughly all the contrasting perspectives on the laws taken by the *halachic* authorities who differ. [A student should have a clear picture in his mind,] knowing the opinion of every *halachic* authority, his motivating rationale and reason, and the different laws that are derived as a consequence of that approach. Everything should be thoroughly clear in your minds.

Do not hurry to collect much wealth, i.e., do not hurry to study a lot, [lest] you know not even a little. Instead, collect

380. [This passage is directed to the students of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*.]

[knowledge] little by little [until it amasses to] a large amount.

Whenever you study a law, bide time over it until you know it thoroughly with all its particulars, and with the different opinions concerning it. Speak over every subject out loud with its particulars and with the different opinions in an ordered fashion. In this manner, the subject will become registered within your minds as explained above.

Synopsis: [This chapter] communicates the [proper] approach to study — [continuing] the previous explanations — with regard to [studying the works of] the *halachic* authorities.



CHAPTER XXXI

Be very careful with regard to your souls, [lest] you become [involved] in an undesirable [approach to] study. Do not associate with those whose fundamental intent in their studies and in their contemplation is to develop new insights and build intricate conceptual structures, for by and large their new insights are empty and false. Satirically, one might say that they are developing new insights that were not even revealed to Moshe our teacher.

For every new insight to be developed by an experienced sage was revealed to Moshe at Sinai.³⁸¹ As such, the sage is only revealing what is hidden, not developing an insight that is entirely new. Note the explanation of this concept given by the *Shaloh*, p. 192a,³⁸² commenting on the phrase:³⁸³ "Grant us our portion in Your Torah."

A student whose approach is undesirable, by contrast, develops concepts that are truly new, that were never revealed

381. See *Mehillah* 19b; *Yerushalmi, Pe'ah* 2:4; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 252.

382. This is contained in his tractate *Shavuos*, in the chapter entitled *Torah Or*, entry *Maalas lomdeha*.

383. *Avos* 5:20.

to Moshe at Sinai. Instead, their foundation is false, [for the students] do not know the actual *halachah* at all. This is the practice of the majority. They do not know the simple meaning of the *halachah* within its context, because they don't pay any attention to this matter at all. [Instead,] their desire to develop new insights does not allow them to concentrate on the subject itself; they seek only a new insight.

As is well known, the *Zohar*, Vol. I, 4b-5a, explains that a person who develops a true and genuine new insight in *Nistar*, the Torah's hidden, mystic knowledge, brings about the formation of a new heaven, and [that by developing such a new insight] in *Nigleh*, the Torah's revealed, legal realm, one brings about the formation of a new earth. If, however, one develops new concepts that are not genuine, a false heaven and earth are formed, and energy is added to the *sitra achra*. Certainly, a person who issues a *halachic* judgment based on such a [false] insight can be considered as one who slays souls, heaven forbid.

Everyone whose heart is touched by the fear of G-d should distance himself further than a bowshot from those who develop new insights based on falsehood and who build conceptual structures based on empty and false *pilpulim*, [so that] he does not learn from their conduct. As the *Shaloh* writes, p. 181b, with regard to empty and false analyses and *pilpulim*, even when [the author of such *pilpulim*] also conveys very many true concepts, if there is even one untrue concept mixed in together with them, that slight trace causes the entire [composite] to be forbidden. "Who can calculate [the magnitude] of this sinful act, to pervert the words of G-d and the Torah of truth!" Similarly, in several other places in his holy text, he warns severely against such conduct.

The *Gaon*, the *Maharal* of Prague, in his text, *Derech Chayim* on [*Pirkei*] *Avos*, [expresses similar concepts] in his commentary on the *mishnah* 6[:6], which speaks of the 48 attributes through which the Torah is acquired. After explaining all of these attributes, the *Maharal* takes to account the Torah scholars of his age, and cries out in a bitter voice over the empty *pilpulim* [in which students are involved]. He

explains that the reason why some students do not have a clear awareness of the *halachah* and why they must research every law and judgment, is that the false [foundation] at the very beginning [of their study] ultimately leads to crookedness and ruin. For they begin to involve themselves in a facetious *pilpul* about the *halachah*, knowing [in their own hearts] that they are not speaking genuinely. They reveal Torah insights which are not true. And they say: It is necessary to express cleverness.

This, heaven forbid, shall not be among the Jewish people: to argue cleverly on false premises and to waste time on false matters. For the Torah is a Torah of truth. How could a person think of such conduct?! Instead, it is fitting for a person to tear his heart over the perversion of truth into falsehood, and the declaration that it is necessary to express cleverness.

Their thought — that this will lead them to genuine sharp thinking and true *pilpul* — is unfounded. For falsehood will never lead to truth, for [the two] do not resemble each other at all. [In a true *pilpul*,] the questions and the resolutions are of another nature entirely. So how could one shift from such a path to the path of truth. Indeed, the very opposite is true. [Through such “cleverness,”] the person will habituate himself to falsehood and become foolish rather than wise.

If one argues that [such analyses] will sharpen one’s intellect, it is preferable for him to study a profession or humor to sharpen his intellect. For then, he will not be perverting the Torah [and deviating] from the *halachah* or “conceiving aberration and giving birth to falsehood.”³⁸⁴ In particular, this applies when the student himself knows that he is not speaking truth; he is intentionally lying. All of his deeds follow falsehood, and his deeds are also false. [The *Maharal* continues,] extensively [decrying this path].

Genuine *pilpul* is possible only when first one knows the simple meaning of the *halachah* guilelessly, in a

384. Cf. *Tehillim* 7:15.

structured manner, using straightforward terms as explained with regard to the first path mentioned above.³⁸⁵ Afterwards, if G-d has graciously endowed a person with a capable intellectual potential and broad-minded thought processes, he may delve into a *pilpul* concerning the subject following the guidelines of the second path mentioned above.⁵

{This is the intent of [the *Maharal* in the passage from] *Derech Chayim* cited above, that first, one should study the *Mishnah*, and then the *Gemara*, which includes a *pilpul* of the concepts mentioned in the *Mishnah*. In this manner, one profits in that even if one does not comprehend the *pilpul* [of the *Gemara*], he will retain at least the straightforward *halachic* ruling. (He should not, however, issue a *halachic* ruling based on [his understanding of] the *Mishnah* alone.)

Similar concepts apply with regard to the comprehension of the concepts within the *Gemara*. First, he must know the body of the passage. Only afterwards should he delve into *pilpul*. In addition, the *pilpul* should be genuine, and it should be structured to lead to a *halachic* ruling, i.e., studying with the intent of reaching a conclusion that reflects the *halachah* as explained above.⁵

The student will profit from this in that even if he does not reach a consummate appreciation of the *pilpul*, he will nevertheless retain the comprehension of the passage itself. And if doubts will arise [in his understanding] in the initial phases of the *pilpul*, since the particular elements of the passage are clear in his [mind, he can rest assured] that ultimately, he will come to a comprehensive appreciation of the subject. Or he should consult a *Rav*, who will resolve his doubts and enable him to thoroughly grasp [the subject]. }

If, however, a student will begin with *pilpul* before he has a genuine appreciation of the subject in the above manner, as a natural consequence, the *pilpul* will be false, and he will waste his time with ersatz thoughts. Moreover, his sin is too great for him to bear, for he is perverting truth into falsehood and revealing teachings of the Torah in a manner that does

385. [See ch. 29.]

not follow the *Halachah*. He is dismal, and his Torah is dismal. His lunacy will rest in the grave with him, and ultimately, he will be required to give a reckoning because of this. [Such students] acquire as a heritage a double [portion of] *Gehinnom*. May G-d protect us from them.

Synopsis: [This chapter emphasizes that a student] should protect himself from empty and false *pilpulim*. A genuine *pilpul* is possible only after one achieves an ordered comprehension [of the subject].



CHAPTER XXXII

And you, dear children, search your souls with a relentless search; perhaps you will find “a root flourishing with gall and wormwood”³⁸⁶ that will lead to the undesirable approach to the study [described above]. If even a slight [propensity to that approach is found], destroy this evil from your midst, and let the Torah of truth be in your mouths.

It will be the responsibility of the *Mashgiach*, the *Razav*, to thoroughly investigate whether any of the students are studying in the undesirable manner described above, [and] to obliterate this evil from our house of study, that it be neither seen, nor found.³⁸⁷ He should oversee and endeavor that your studies be carried out in the desired manner. The directors of our fellowship are obliged to join him in this endeavor at his request, so that they will not be responsible for the wrongdoing [of the students].

I am certain that when the students take hold of the Tree of Life by studying *Chassidus* with desire and zeal, in a short time, they will all consider the study of *Chassidus* of primary

386. Cf. *Devarim* 29:17.

387. [This phrasing is used with regard to the prohibition against possessing *chametz*, leaven, on Pesach. There is a thematic connection between the two, for feelings of pride and self-concern, the spiritual counterpart of the prohibition against *chametz*, lie at the heart of the undesirable approach to study described above.]

importance, and will internalize its concepts thoroughly. They will also study *Nigleh* in the desired manner; they will desire and carry out G-d's will. The Torah of truth will direct them and illuminate their souls with the light of the Life of all life.

Synopsis: [This chapter] enjoins to remove [all traces of] the undesirable approach to study, and [states] that the study of *Chassidus* will assist in this.



CHAPTER XXXIII

At this point, I would also rouse you to study *Kuntres HaTefillah*³⁸⁸ which was published previously. ([And the study should follow] the general principle of studying for the sake of application. When a person studies without the intent of applying what he studies, it is preferable [that his embryo had been overturned]).³⁸⁹ A student must conscientiously appreciate that every subject which he studies can be relevant to him, that the matter depends on him, and that he is obligated to endeavor to reach these levels. Just as in chs. 16-20, it was explained that [everyone can attain] love and fear [of G-d], so too, with regard to every concept which one studies: one must seek to discover what one can take and apply in one's own Divine service. One should not fool oneself, neither with false humility, nor with exaggerated self-esteem, aspiring to a higher level than one's own. [The concept that study must be carried out with the intent that it be applied] is a point of general relevance; all study must be carried out with this intent. We are not concerned with fools.)³⁹⁰

388. *Tract on Prayer* (English translation, Kehot, N.Y., 5752).

389. *Jerusalem Talmud, Berachos* 1:2. [The concluding phrase is in brackets for it is not found in the original text, since the Rebbeim minimized the use of severe language in his text to whatever degree possible.]

390. Cf. *Bava Kamma* 85a.

Heaven forbid that a person who sees himself fit to apply effort in developing his concentration in one of the two approaches explained in [*Kuntres HaTefillah*]³⁹¹ should be indolent in pursuing this, for it is a matter on which his soul depends. Moreover, [if this is not done,] his Torah study is not worth anything; on the contrary, [it becomes a source for negative energy], as explained in chs. 11-12.

A person should not reassure himself with false words,³⁹² saying: "Who am I? How can I?" For G-d created man forthright,³⁹³ and generously endowed him with wisdom and knowledge. It is within his potential to reach the desired levels of Divine service. All that is necessary is hard work and effort.

A person who has not studied [these subjects] and does not know how to pray with concentration, should at least have in mind the meaning of the words he recites, as explained in *Kuntres [HaTefillah]* with regard to the Divine service of the youth.³⁹⁴

In that text, there are also several points of advice on how to attain genuine Divine service. It should be a fixed practice to study that text once every two or three months. It is preferable that all [the students] should study the text at the same time and speak about it, reinforcing each other. See the explanation of the advantage of [working together as a harmonious unit in one's Divine service] in the *maamar* entitled *Heichaltzu*.³⁹⁵

Synopsis: [The chapter] charges [the students] to study *Kuntres HaTefillah* (with the intention of applying that study), and to endeavor to advance in the Divine service of prayer according to one of the paths explained in that text.

391. See chs. 9-10 of that text.

392. Cf. *Shmos* 4:9.

393. Cf. *Koheles* 7:29.

394. See ch. 14 of that text.

395. Chs. 7,10.

After all the above statements, I ask you: “Apply your hearts to all the words”³⁹⁶ stated in this text. May these words be upon your hearts³⁹⁷ at all times, for it is very difficult for me to make these statements and repeat them continually. Therefore, have these words before your eyes at all times, so that they will not be forgotten by you. For they are your lives and the length of your days,³⁹⁸ and indeed, they will bring you eternal life.

Lift up my hands to G-d in prayer and in supplication. May it be G-d’s will that the light of the Torah of truth which our ancestors, the holy and revered Rebbeim revealed, will be internalized within you. May it illuminate your souls, bringing happiness to the heart of the Sublime Man³⁹⁹ (as the *Shaloh* writes, p. 193a⁴⁰⁰). Then we will see desirous results from our labor and your labor, the labor of the Torah, as it is above the sun, joining together the sun and the moon.⁴⁰¹

*These are the words of your friend, who
genuinely loves you, and desires your life,*

Shalom DovBer



396. [Cf. *Devarim* 32:46. By employing this phrase, the Rebbe was more than borrowing Biblical phraseology. The phrase cited relates that after addressing the Jewish people on several occasions for more than a month before his passing, and charging them to advance in their Divine service and not to falter, Moshe appeals to them: “Apply your hearts to the words”; take what I have said to heart; do not consider it merely as an abstract matter.]

397. Cf. *Devarim* 6:6.

398. Cf. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 107.

399. [I.e., G-dliness as manifest in the *Sefiros* of the world of *Atzilus*.]

400. This is in his tractate *Shavuos*, ch. *Torah Or*, the portion beginning *Ommam nirah li*.

401. [The source for the Rebbe’s statements is the *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 223b (explained in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5669, p. 210; 5670, p. 190; 5689, p. 219). The concept of work “above the sun” is a contrast to *Koheles* 1:9: “There is nothing new under the sun.” The *Zohar* explains that “under the sun,” i.e., within the context of our material existence, there is nothing new. But “above the sun,” in the Torah’s spiritual framework, there is the potential for new growth.

The union of the sun and the moon refers to the union of *Za’er Anpin*, associated with the sun; and *Malchus*, associated with the moon; as explained in previous chapters.]