

**** Author's Introduction ****

(with classic commentaries)

from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart

by Rabeinu Bahya ibn Paquda zt'l (originally published 1080 CE)

english translation by Rabbi Yosef Sebag

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

In translating this introduction, I heavily consulted the brilliant old-english translation by Rabbi Moses Hyamson O.B.M., the former chief Rabbi and head Dayan of England between 1911 and 1913. I have tried to add classic commentaries and adapt the translation based on those commentaries. Rabbi Yosef Sebag studied in various yeshivas under great Torah scholars such as Rabbi Dov Shwartzman zt'l (~2 years), Rabbi Nachman Bulman zt'l, Rabbi Nissan Kaplan (~5 years). He also completed a degree in physics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and was a research associate in nuclear physics for some time before heading off to yeshiva.

- Yosef Sebag, Jerusalem Sivan 5774 - June 2014

Abbreviations used in this translation:

MH - Manoach HeLevavos commentary by Rabbi Manoach Hendel (1540-1611)

TL - Tov HaLevanon commentary by Rabbi Yisrael Halevi (1700-1777)

PL - Pas Lechem commentary by Rabbi Chaim Avraham Hacoen (1740-1815)

ML - Marpe Lenefesh commentary by Rabbi Refael Mendel (1825-1895)

LT - Lev Tov commentary by Rabbi Pinchas Lieberman (1929-2005)

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by Rabeinu Bachye zt'l

Blessed be the L-ord, G-d of Israel, to Whom true Unity can be fittingly ascribed, whose existence is Eternal, whose beneficence is unceasing, who created all that is found as a sign of His Unity, who formed beings to serve as witnesses of His power and brought new things into existence to testify to His wisdom and great benevolence, as written *"one generation shall praise your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts"* (Ps. 145:4), and *"all Your works shall give thanks to You, O L-ord; and Your saints shall bless You; they shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power; To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, etc"* (Ps.145:10-12).

(Marpe Lenefesh: "true Unity" - i.e. He alone is truly One and there is no other unity like His. For all the things which we call "one" are only one in a borrowed and relative sense as will be explained in the Gate of Unity.

"whose existence is Eternal" - (1) His existence always was and always will be, therefore (2) He preceded everything, and therefore (3) He must also be the true Unity. For each of these three conditions imply the other two as will be explained in the Gate of Unity. See there and you will understand.

"who created all that is found as a sign of His Unity" - for all the creations are testimony and proof that He who created them is the true Unity, since behold, the entire creation is like one man and one house, where each part needs the other. If there were more than one creator, then there would need to be some non-uniformity and conflict in the creations, and it would not be interdependent as will be explained in Gate 1 ch.7

Pas Lechem: "one generation shall praise your works to another" - from this verse alone, we can only deduce that the wise must make known to the ignorant. But how do we know that even if all of us were wise men, we must still thank G-d? For this he brought the second verse, "all Your works shall give thanks to You (yoducha)". The word "yoducha" (give thanks to You) is a combination of two words, "yodu" and "lecha". For the matter of thanks, is for the beneficiary to tell his benefactor

that he recognizes his good, as written "give thanks to the L-ord for He is good" (Ps.107:1). 2
Afterwards, he explained the matter of thanks, in saying "*they shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom*", namely that the honor of Your sovereignty is different from that of flesh and blood, because a flesh and blood king has pleasure and benefit from his people, unlike G-d who needs nothing as mentioned earlier. Hence, we do not yet know if He wants that we examine His beneficence and thank Him for them. Therefore, he brought this verse "*to make known to the sons of man*", i.e. G-d's intent in creation was to make known to the sons of man, etc. And like the verse (Prov. 16:4) "the L-ord made everything for His praise" [Rashi there: "To testify concerning Him. i.e. that His work testifies concerning Him, about His mighty deeds"])

The greatest gift which the Creator bestowed on His servants, human beings, after bringing them out to full perception and complete (mature) understanding - is wisdom, which is the life of their spirit and the candle of their intellect; It brings them to the favor of G-d and saves them from His wrath in this world and the next, as Scripture says "*for the L-ord gives wisdom: out of His mouth comes knowledge and understanding*" (Prov.2:6); And Elihu said: "*but there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty that gives them understanding*" (Job 32:8); And Daniel said: "*He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding*" (Daniel 2:21), and "*I am the L-ord your G-d who teaches you for your benefit, who leads you by the way that you should go*" (Isaiah 48:17).

(*Manoach Halevavos*: "wisdom" - i.e. the intellectual soul. At first it is only a faculty and potential, to perceive and understand. But when a man strives to bring out his intellect from potential to actual, then his perception is complete and his understanding is perfect - only then G-d will impart on him a spirit from above, to enlighten and illuminate him with wisdom. This is what the author meant "*after bringing them out..*" i.e. then G-d grants him the wisdom, for "*for the L-ord gives wisdom..*" (Prov. 2:6). And in tractate Berachot (55a): "Rabbi Yochanan says, G-d grants wisdom only to one who has wisdom, as written 'He gives wisdom unto the wise' (Daniel 2:21)... Rabbi Avahu says: I learn this from the verse: (Ex. 31:6) 'and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom' ". This is the greatest good, that G-d shines on him the radiance of wisdom and understanding provided he strove to bring out his intellect from potential to actual, using the faculties and powers with which he was endowed at birth. [*Translator*: for more on this see *Derech Etz Chaim* by Rabbi Luzatto])

alternative explanation (applies to all human beings)

Marpe Lenefesh: that G-d endowed man in this structure and form, after he has grown up with mature faculties of perception and comprehension - with wisdom and understanding. Through wisdom, his spirit will vivify and the light of his intellect will illuminate him, but the fool walks in darkness. The *Manoach Halevavos* explained this differently. Let the chooser choose [which explanation fits better].)

Wisdom falls into three divisions.

The first division is the science of nature, called in Arabic, "*Al-Ilm al-tibi*". This branch of knowledge deals with the essential and incidental properties of material bodies.

The second division consists of the practical sciences, called in Arabic, "*Al-Ilm al-riazi*". These comprise arithmetic, engineering, astronomy, and music.

(*Pas Lechem*: such as mathematics for business, measurements, engineering. Astronomy is useful for navigating the sea. Music is also used to bring joy to human beings and dispel sadness. Unlike, the first division, namely, the wisdom of created things and the wisdom of theology which has no use for material matters. Their purpose is only for knowledge. And even though the wisdom of created things is needed for healing purposes, this is only a part of it...)

The third division, called in Arabic, "*Al-Ilm al-ilahi*". is the science of theology, which deals with the knowledge of G-d, knowledge of His torah, and other [spiritual] things, such as the soul, the intellect, and spiritual beings.

All these divisions of wisdom, and their respective branches, are gates which the Creator has opened for men through which they may attain [a comprehension] of religion and of the world. Only that some sciences are more needed for religious matters while others are more needed for secular interests.

The sciences whose use is closest to worldly matters is the science of nature, which is the lowest science (in worth and importance - *LT*) and the practical science, which is second (in quality and importance - *LT*). These two sciences

instruct on all the secrets of the physical world, its uses and benefits, its industries and trades and is conducive to physical and material well-being.

The science which is most needed for religion is the highest science - Theology. We are under duty to study it in order to understand and obtain a knowledge of our religion. But to study it in order to attain worldly benefits is forbidden. Our teachers said (Nedarim 62a): "[expounding the verse:] 'to love the L-rd your G-d, to hearken to His voice, and to cleave to Him' [This means] that one should not say, 'I will read Scripture that I may be called a scholar.' I will study [mishna], that I may be called Rabbi, I will study [Talmud], to be an Elder, and sit in the assembly [of elders]; but learn out of love, and honor will come in the end." And "Do [good] deeds for the sake of their Maker, and speak of them [words of torah] for their own sake. Make not of them a crown wherewith to magnify yourself, nor a spade to dig with" (ibid). And "'Fortunate is the man that fears the L-ord, that delights greatly in His commandments' (Ps. 112:1), R. Eleazar expounds thus: 'In His commandments' but not in the reward of His commandments. This is just what we have learnt. 'He used to say, Be not like servants who serve the master on the condition of receiving a reward; but be like servants who serve the master without the condition of receiving a reward.'" (Avodah Zara 19a).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "learn out of love" - out of love of G-d only. But other intents that a man intends in his service, be it material reward or even for [reward] in the next world - it will not be [favorably] accepted, for he is serving for his own benefit not for G-d, as will be explained in this book.

Manoach Halevavos: some want to explain this that it is not proper to have intent to receive reward in this world immediately after one did a mitzva (precept), like slaves who minister their master in order to receive immediate benefits, namely, daily food and drink, as a reward for their work. But if the master does not give this to them, they will not work for him. Likewise, some slaves are contracted for a fixed period and seek their reward immediately after the time period has passed. And if the master does not give it to them right away, they rebel against him. Rather, one should have intent to receive reward in the next world.

Alternatively, others want to explain that one should serve G-d out of pure love, and not have intent for any reward, not even for reward in the next world, and the honor will come indirectly, out of kindness from G-d. For, in truth, a man does not deserve anything on his own merits, because he already received reward [for his service] through the many benefits which G-d continually bestowed on him. This likewise seems to be the author's view based on his words in Gate 4 ch.4 and in Gate 10, and other places in this book.)

The avenues which the Creator has opened for the knowledge of His law and religion are three.

The first is a [sound] intellect which is free of any damage.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: G-d graced man with knowledge and understanding to know and understand His torah and to do His will, provided that his intellect is free from serious damage, namely, that it has not become erroneous or that it has not become ruined due to some brain damage. alternatively,

Lev Tov: that the intellect is free of any damage due to error or due to tending towards the lusts of this world (since "a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise" Exodus 23:8, hence the bribe of personal desire twists a man's mind until he sees only what he wants to see - Translator).

Pas Lechem: the intellect (which is rooted in the spiritual) is not something which can be harmed like physical things, which grow and decay. Hence, "free" means "removed and separated" (from desire) as the Onkelos renders the verse in Gen. 31:9)

The second, the book of His law revealed to Moses His prophet.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: this was explained in the Kuzari (maamer sheni ot 25,48,50). The summary of his words is as follows: a man cannot attain the favor of G-d or come close to Him except through His commandments. For He [alone] knows the measure, amount, time, and place of each commandment. Therefore, if we perform them as G-d commanded Moses, the divine presence will rest on our handiwork as was the case in the building of the Tabernacle despite that we do not understand their reasons and effects and that they are beyond our human logic... so too by the torah, we must listen and carefully follow that prescribed quantity and quality, how and with what we can do His will, namely, His law and religion. For otherwise, as with all the nations of the world which also strive, each man trying to come close to G-d in his own way, but he does not succeed. For no

prophet, seer, or [man with] divine spirit (ruach hakodesh) has appeared to them as is the case with the Jewish people when they would follow the torah and commandments properly as is known. Therefore, a man should not become "smart" against the word of G-d, as written (Prov. 21:30) "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel [that can succeed] against the L-ord". See also Gate 8 ch.3 part 4 where the author wrote similar words there.)

The third, the tradition which we have received from our ancient Sages who in turn received them from the prophets, peace be unto them. The great Rabbi Saadia of blessed memory already discussed on this avenue to a sufficient extent.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. the oral law, which was received from generation to generation until Moses, as our Sages said (Pirkei Avot 1:1) "Moses received the torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua..." Because every commandment G-d gave to Moses was accompanied with an oral explanation and clarification. This is the oral law. And thus Moses transmitted it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, etc. For without an explanation we would not know how to do even one precept fully, i.e. to do it completely, such as Tzitzit, Tefilin, and likewise for all of the others. Then each person would explain the precepts in the torah according to his knowledge and understanding, and every Jew would have a different torah and a different religion. Therefore, our torah depends on the transmitted oral law which Moses received at Sinai and which was transmitted until it reached the place G-d chose [for His temple]. For there [in Jerusalem] are the true receivers of the oral tradition, the great Sanhedrin and the Kohanim (priests). Therefore, the torah says (Deut. 17:10-12) "you shall do according to the torah which they [the Sanhedrin] teach you. Be careful to do everything they instruct you to do...and the man which does not hearken unto the priest that stands to minister there before the L-ord your G-d, or unto the judge [of the Sanhedrin] - that man shall die"... And they also received from Moses all the great secrets which are known to true Kabbalists, and the amazing allusions, for it is all hinted in the torah. The torah is expounded in 4 ways (Pardes) as explained in the Zohar, Ramban, and the Alshich. The author was brief here for he relied on the words of Rabbi Saadia Gaon.)

Furthermore, the science of the torah falls into two divisions.

The first aims at the knowledge of the duties of the limbs (practical duties) and is the science of external conducts.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. knowledge of the laws in the torah and its halacha, generally and specifically, and to learn the forbidden and the permitted, and the actions which are obligatory.)

The second deals with the duties of the heart, namely, its sentiments and thoughts, and is the science of the inner life.

(*Tov Halevanon*: Their fulfillment or transgression are not known [to other people] for they depend solely on the heart and mind. None but G-d can observe them.)

The duties of the limbs likewise fall into two divisions.

The first consists of precepts which reason would have dictated even if the torah had not made them obligatory. The second, precepts received on the authority of Revelation which reason neither obligates nor rejects such as the prohibition of milk with meat, shaatnez (garments woven of wool and flax), kilaim (sowing diverse seeds together), and similar precepts whose reason for being prohibited or obligatory is unknown to us.

The duties of the heart, however, are all rooted in rational principles, as I will explain with G-d's help.

All the precepts are either positive commandments or negative commandments. We do not need to explain this for the duties of the limbs because these are universally known. I will, however, with G-d's help, mention of the positive and negative commandments of the duties of the heart to serve as examples of those not cited.

Among the positive commandments of the duties of the heart: to believe that the world had a Creator who created it from naught, that there is none like Him, that we acknowledge His Unity, that we serve Him in our hearts, that we reflect on the wonders of His works, that these may serve as evidences of Him, that we place our trust in Him, that we humble ourselves before Him, that we revere Him, that we fear and feel abashed when we consider that He observes our outer and inner being, that we long to do His will (alternatively, "that we yearn for His favor" - *PL*), that we devote our acts to His Name, that we love Him and those that love Him in order to come close to Him, that we

(Pas Lechem: "that we devote our acts to His Name" - that our deeds be devoted solely to G-d - to not mix them with some ulterior motive such as to aggrandize oneself through this or some other motive.

"in order to come closer to Him" - i.e. not with intent to receive some benefit from Him due to this.

Translator: We often use the term "His Name" instead of just Him because He is too beyond for us to talk about. But we can talk about His Name which means how He manifests Himself to us. This is explained in Gate 1)

Negative commandments of the duties of the heart are the converse of those just mentioned. Also included among them: to not covet, avenge, nor bear a grudge; as written *"you shall not avenge nor bear a grudge"* (Levit. 19:18).

(Pas Lechem: On coveting he did not bring a verse because it is a precept of Reason (i.e. it can be derived from reason) and therefore does not need a proof [from Scripture]. Unlike revenge and bearing a grudge which are not precepts of Reason. On the contrary, the Understanding resists them, and dictates that it is proper to be crooked with the crooked, and to return his evil to his head (Ps. 7:16). Therefore, he brought verses to show they are decrees of the King.)

Among them, that our minds not muse on [doing] transgressions, nor desire them, nor resolve to do them and other similar things which are hidden in a man and observed by none but the Creator, as written *"I the L-ord search the heart, I test the mind"* (Jer. 17:10) and *"the candle of G-d is the spirit of man, searching all the inner depths of the heart"* (Prov. 20:27).

(Tov Halevanon: even though technically only thoughts of avodah zara (idol worship) are punishable for dwelling about in one's mind, nevertheless, even for other sins, they are extremely damaging to the intellect and to the neshama (higher soul), as our Sages said (Yoma 29a): "thoughts of sin are worse than sin".

Pas Lechem: "muse, desire, resolve" - he outlined the preparation steps which lead to an act [of sin]. At first it is just thinking about the matter. And even though our Sages counted "thought" as one of the things which are not in a man's control, since thoughts pop up on their own in a man's mind. Nevertheless, there are two answers to this. Firstly, this was stated regarding the beginning of the thought's entering one's mind. Then it is only like a tiny spark that a man can easily extinguish. Hence, immediately, when he senses it, he can dismiss it and remove it from his mind and turn his mind to other things. However, if he does not dismiss it right away, then that spark will be fanned by a man's ruach (spirit) and will prolong for some time. This prolongation is called "hirhur" (musing) in the words of the Sages.

The second answer is that a man has the ability to not leave any room for these thoughts to arise, namely, by not allowing his mind to go idle in the first place - through the study of torah or engaging in work, as the Rambam wrote (Isurei Bia 22:21): "thoughts of lusts do not strengthen except in a heart devoid of wisdom". Behold, after the thought is fanned and prolongs in his spirit, this will correspondingly arouse the force of lust. And after he has lusted for it, he will hesitate a bit and deliberate whether or not to do it. Afterwards, he resolves to do it, and the matter will be held and pending in his mind until the time of the actual committing of the act of sin.

Marpe Lenefesh: "candle of G-d" - ... here is an excerpt from the Moray Nevuchim (Part 3 ch. 51): "behold I have explained to you that the understanding which G-d bestows on us - it is the connection between us and G-d. You have been granted free will in this. If you want to strengthen this connection, you may do so. And if you want to weaken it little by little until it is severed completely, you may likewise do so. This connection will only be strengthened if you employ it for love of G-d, and that your intent is to Him, as we wrote, and its weakening occurs when you set your thoughts to other than Him. [And even if you were the wisest man in divine knowledge, when you turn your thoughts to necessary eating or some other necessary occupation - you have already severed that clinging between you and G-d. You are not with Him then, and likewise, He is not with you. Because the relationship between you and Him is severed at that time..." End quote. see there more powerful words])

predecessors who lived after the [compilers of the] Talmud. They composed many works dealing with the precepts. In the expectation of learning from them the science of inward religion, I found, however, that all that they intended to explain and clarify fall into three categories.

The first, to explain the Torah and the books of the prophets, and this is in one of two ways, either explaining the words and subject matter, as did Rabeinu Saadya, of blessed memory, in his commentaries of most of the books on Scripture. Or to explain the language and grammar, grammatical forms and usages in all their varieties, as well as paying heed to accuracy of the text, like the books of Ibn Ganach, the Massorites, and their school.

The second, to compile the explanation of the commandments into summary form, such as the work of Rav Chefetz ben Yatzliach of blessed memory. Or of only the commandments which apply today such as Halachot Pesukot, Halachot Gedolot, and similar collections; or of special topics as the Geonim did in their Responsa on practical duties and in their decisions.

The third, to confirm our faith in the matters of torah in our hearts through logical proofs and refutation of heretics like the book of Emunot (of Rabbi Saadia), the Sharashei Hadat, the Sefer Mekametz and similar works.

(*Pas Lechem: "mekametz"* - (literally: gatherer) the book is called by this name because its author gathered together all the heretical views found in their nonsense and disgusting words, and then refuted them, demonstrating their foolishness, and exposing their foul stench, until everyone realized they are but wild dogs. And the Sages already said (Ketuvot 77a) "what is a mekametz? [Answer:] One who gathers up dog excrement.")

I examined these writings but failed to find among them a book specially devoted to the inner wisdom. I found that this wisdom, which is the duties of the heart, had been entirely neglected. No work had been composed, systematically explaining its roots and branches.

I greatly wondered about this, and thought to myself, perhaps this class of duties is not obligatory from the torah but is only an ethical obligation the aim of which is to teach us the proper and just way. Possibly it belongs to the class of extra practices that are optional, for which we will not be held accountable for them nor will we be punished for neglecting them. And therefore, our predecessors omitted to write a special book on them. I investigated the Duties of the Heart from Reason, Scripture, and Tradition (talmud, midrash, etc.) to inquire whether or not they are obligatory and found that they form the foundation of all the precepts, and that if there is any deficiency in their observance, no external duties whatsoever can be properly fulfilled.

(*Tov Halevanon*: Just like when the powers of the heart cease, the powers of all the limbs will likewise cease, because the heart is the root and power of the entire body, and from it the life [force] flows to all the other powers. So too, if the duties of the heart cease, the duties of the limbs become null and void.)

First the arguments from Reason. It is already familiar that man consists of body and soul. Both are among the benefits G-d has bestowed on us. One of these elements of our being is visible and the other is invisible. Therefore, we are accordingly under duty to render the Creator visible and invisible service. The outward service is the observance of the duties of the limbs such as praying, fasting, giving charity, learning the torah and teaching it, making a Sukka, waving a willow branch (on the festival of Sukkot), Tzitzit, Mezuza, Maake, and similar precepts whose performance is completed by the physical limbs.

Inward service, however, consists of the fulfillment of the Duties of the Heart such as: to acknowledge the Unity of G-d in our hearts, believe in Him and His torah, to undertake His service, that we revere Him and humble ourselves before Him, that we love Him, trust in Him, and give over our lives to Him, that we abstain from what He hates, devote our actions to His Name, that we reflect on the benefits He bestows, and similar things which are performed by the thoughts and sentiments of the heart but do not associate with activity of the visible limbs of the body.

(*Pas Lechem: "humble ourselves before Him"* - that we constantly display signs of humility as explained in the Gate of Submission.
"that we trust in Him" - for our livelihood and [other] needs.
"that we give over our life to Him" - if at some time, a man is struck with a fear of death due to some cause - he should not be too alarmed on this thereby weakening in his service of G-d. Rather, let him holdfast to the pillar of strength of his service and remove dread and fright from his heart by giving himself over to G-d, and saying to himself: "G-d will do whatever is good in His eyes".

"that we abstain from what He hates" - his intent is not on things which are specifically commanded as sins, but rather on things which we know that He hates, as the Rambam wrote regarding those things which are called "hated [by G-d]" (Pirkei Avot 1:17). And in the words of the wise man (Prov. 6:16) "six people G-d hates..".

"that we devote our actions to His Name" - that our activities are devoted only to Him, that there no other motives mixed in.

"reflect on the benefits He bestows" - to recognize them and their great value. So that we are not among the blind who "do not consider the work of G-d" (Isaiah 5:12) and who have no understanding in this, as he will explain in the Gate of Examination. Alternatively, (*Tov Halevanon*:) that one constantly reflects on the benefits of G-d towards him, how He bestows on him all good, in order that love and fear of G-d enter his heart.

"thoughts and sentiments (literally: put away in the heart)" - he specified two terms "thoughts and sentiments" since some of these things need to be greatly maintained in man's thoughts and contemplated in detail to the best of his ability and they need to be thought about constantly such as love, fear, humility, and trust. Therefore, he used the word "thought". Other things don't need to maintain constant thought such as faith in His torah. For, once his outlook has been firmly established, it is enough that it is "put away in the heart". Likewise, for "abstaining from what He hates", only when the opportunity for these things occur does one need to think about abstaining from them. But after this, why should he think about them? On the contrary, it is better to forget about them. Therefore he wrote "put away", that they are put away in his heart by force. Understand this.)

I am certain that [even] the duties of the limbs cannot be performed properly unless they are accompanied by will of the heart, longing of the soul to do them, and desire of the heart to perform them. If it should enter our mind that we are under no obligation to choose the service of G-d and to yearn for it, then we would be exempt from the duties of the limbs for no act can be complete without the agreement of the soul. And since it is clear that the Creator has put us under obligation to perform the duties of the limbs, it would not be reasonable for us to suppose that our soul and heart, the choicest parts of our beings, should have been exempted from serving Him according to the extent of their ability, because their cooperation is required for the complete service of G-d. Therefore, it is clear that we are under obligation to perform outward and inner duties so that our service to the blessed Creator will be whole and complete, including both our inner and outer being.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. not only the inner duties depend on the heart, but even for all the duties of the limbs - their start and fulfillment are primarily from the heart... for one cannot do something with his limbs without first resolving in his heart to do it... Therefore, since we see that the duties of the limbs depend primarily on the heart, and hence the heart is the root of torah and service. If so, obviously, the heart by itself, even without the limbs, is also under duty of service according to its power and ability.

Marpe Lenefesh: One cannot do a religious deed until he first pictures in his mind and thinks in his heart that it is proper to do that religious deed, and [considers] how he will do it. Afterwards, he performs it with his limbs.

Pas Lechem: "(1) will of the heart, (2) longing of the soul, (3) desire of the heart" - first he mentioned plainly: "will of the heart", which means to resolve by one's will to do it. Afterwards, he specified two divisions. Corresponding to things which are "[physical] actions" such as building a Sukkah, [donning] Tzitzit, making a fence on one's roof, etc. he wrote "longing of the soul to do them". Corresponding to things which are not really [physical] actions such as prayer or study of torah, he wrote "perform them" since this term is more proper. After either of these two, namely, after (1) resolve of one's will to do it, he should arouse in himself a strong yearning and great desire to attain and fulfill it, as Rabbi Akiva said (Berachot 61b) "when will it come to my hand that I may fulfill it?"

After their obligation has become clear to me from the grounds of Reason, I said to myself "perhaps this matter is not written in the torah, therefore they refrained from writing a book which instructs on it and demonstrates it."

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. since they did not find it in the torah then it is not something obligatory. Either because G-d knows man's capabilities and this is impossible due to the great difficulty or perhaps due to some other reason. Hence, even though Reason obligates this, nevertheless, once the Torah was given we need only to follow what is written there.)

But when I searched in the torah, I found that it is mentioned frequently. For example (Deut. 6:5-6): "*you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might; And these words, which I command you this day, shall be on your heart*", and "*so that you may love the L-ord your G-d, and that you may hearken to His voice, and that you may cling to Him*" (Deut. 30:20), and "*to love the L-ord your G-d and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul*" (Deut. 11:13), and "*You shall walk after the L-ord your G-d and fear Him*" (Deut. 13:5), and "*you shall love your fellow as yourself*" (Levit.19:18) (which our Sages said includes the whole torah [Talmud Shabbat 31a] - TL), and "*now, Israel, what does the L-ord your G-d ask of you, but to fear the L-ord your G-d*" (Deut. 10:12), and "*Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*" (Deut. 10:19). And reverence for G-d and love for Him are among the duties of the heart.

(*Tov Halevanon: "with all your heart"* - behold the verse set torah and emuna (faith) as depending on the heart and soul. Once a man attains these, then it is possible for him to serve G-d "*with all his might*". For without love of G-d fixed in his heart and soul, a man will not do any further service.)

Regarding the negative commandments [of the duties of the heart], the torah wrote: "*nor shall you covet etc*" (Deut. 5:18), "*You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge*" (Levit. 19:18), "*You shall not hate your fellow in your heart*" (Levit. 19:17), "*and so that you do not seek after your own heart and your own eyes*" (Numbers 15:39), "*you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor fellow*" (Deut. 15:7), and many other similar passages.

Afterwards, the Torah reduced all [religious] service to the service of the heart and tongue in saying "*For this commandment which I command you today is not hidden from you, neither is it far off; It is not in Heaven...But the matter is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it*" (Deut.30:11). And in the other books of the prophets, they spoke extensively on the matter and mentioned it in several places. I do not need to mention them because they are numerous and well-known.

(*Tov Halevanon: "on the heart and tongue"* - after the Torah repeatedly exhorted on the heart which is the cornerstone of the Torah, it added a commandment on the tongue which is secondary to the heart, and which depends on the work of the heart and soul, as our Sages said (Shabbat 33b): "*the heart understands, the tongue articulates, and the mouth completes. And the well-being of the heart and soul depends on the tongue. If the heart and tongue are lacking perfection, the soul will likewise be lacking perfection, as Scripture says: "Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin"* (Eccles. 5:5). It is also well demonstrated in the wisdom of truth (Kabala) how [sins of] the mouth and tongue damage the soul.

Pas Lechem: "in your mouth and in your heart" - After Moshe Rabeinu reviewed and taught all of the Torah and the commandments, then, near the end of the Torah, he went on to encapsulate the entire service into these two things.)

After it had become clear to me that the duties of the heart are obligatory from the Torah and from reason, I searched the matter in the writings of our Sages. I found it to be even more explicit in their words than what is explained in the Torah and derived from reason. Some of them are stated as general principles such as "*G-d wants the heart*" (Sanhedrin 106b), and "*the heart and the eyes are the two agents of sin*" (Yerushalmi Berachos 1:5). Some of them in Tractate Avos, which there is no need to elaborate. I also found many in their traits and habits when they were asked about them as written regarding "*to what do you attribute your long life?*" (Megila 27b).

I found in the Torah regarding one who kills someone unintentionally, no capital punishment is incurred. Likewise, one who performs a sin unintentionally which if intentional would incur either capital punishment or the penalty of Karet (excision), the person had only to bring for them a sin-offering or an asham offering (as derived by the Sages - PL). All this is a clear proof that the essential condition of liability for punishment is the association of mind and body in a forbidden act, the mind by its intention, and the body by its movement.

So too our wise men said: "whoever performs a religious duty but did not intend to do it for the sake of G-d - he will not receive reward for it."

(*Tov Halevanon: even though they said (Sotah 22b) "one should always occupy himself in the Torah even shelo lishma (not devoted to G-d), since from shelo lishma (not devoted) comes lishma (devoted to G-d)". Perhaps it means that even so, one will not receive any reward for those mitzvot he did shelo lishma. Alternatively, perhaps, his reward is much less relative to the reward for doing a mitzva lishma, as our Sages said (Nazir 23b) "a sin lishma (devoted to G-d) is greater than a mitzva*

shelo lishma (not devoted)", which implies there is some reward for a mitzva shelo lishma. Hence, 9 according to this the author's words are not literal.)

And since the hinge and pillar of all deeds rests on the foundation of intention and hidden sentiment of the heart, a system of the duties of the heart should precede, by nature, a system of the duties of the limbs.

(Pas Lechem: "intention and sentiment" - intention refers to a man's intention at the beginning of the performance of a mitzva, namely, that he does it with intent that he has been commanded [by G-d] to do the mitzva. And what he thinks about during its performance with regard to the mitzva and its details, and that he has joy in doing it, the author called here *"sentiment"* (matzpunko).

Tov Halevanon: "precede, by nature" - ...one of the 5 "precedences" as is known in the science of logic - is called "precedence by nature". This refers to something whose nature does not need the nature of something else nor vice versa, even though neither preceded the other in time. For example, plants precede creatures by nature because the plant, namely, the growing power is needed by creatures, for they also need a growing power. But the "conscious awareness power" which exists in the nature of conscious creatures is not needed by the nature of plants (see the book Shaarei Kedusha to understand this - translator). So too by deeds, the duties of the limbs necessarily require the duties of the heart but the duties of the heart do not require the duties of the limbs.)

After it had become clear to me through Reason, Scripture, and Tradition that the inner science is indeed an obligation, I said to myself, "perhaps this class of commandments are not obligatory at all times and at all places, (i.e. only in Israel and only when the temple existed - *PL*) similar to shmita, yovel (jubilee year), and [temple] offerings".

But when I delved deeper into the subject, I found that we are obligated in them constantly, without pause, throughout our lives, and that we have no claim (excuse) whatsoever for neglecting them. This applies to such duties, for example, as acknowledging the Unity of G-d in our hearts, to serve Him inwardly, to revere Him and to love Him, to yearn to fulfill the commandments obligatory upon us, as Scripture says *"O my hope is that my ways are directed to observe Your statutes"* (Ps. 119:5); to trust in Him and surrender ourselves to Him (i.e. to trust in Him in all matters - *ML*), as written *"trust in Him at all times, pour out your heart before Him"* (Ps.62:9); to remove hatred and jealousy from our hearts, to separate from the superfluous worldly matters which preoccupy us away from the service of G-d - we are under constant duty in all of these things, at all times and in all places, every hour, every second, and under all circumstances, as long as we have life and reason.

(Pas Lechem: "we have no claim whatsoever for neglecting them" - i.e. we have no answer or excuse if we are negligent from this and abandon it.

"to serve Him inwardly" - the "service" which the author intends here is submission and shame, as he mentioned earlier. These are also called service as our Sages said (Sotah 5b) "humility is greater than all the sacrifices... as written 'the sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O G-d, You will not despise' (Ps. 51:11).

Tov Halevanon: "O my hope" - David beseeched that he will be successful in his ways to guard G-d's statutes at all times. These are necessarily the duties of the heart.

"to separate from the superfluous" - these are the material possessions and bodily pleasures which are not necessary for health of the body, service of G-d, or necessary livelihood.

Manoach Halevavos: "O my hope" (achalay) - he is bringing a proof regarding "yearning to do the commandments". For *"achalay"* is from the word "tocheles", and tocheles means yearning.)

The analogy of this is to a slave whose master charged him with two jobs. One in the house and the other in the field. The latter consisted of cultivating the ground and its care at definite periods and times. When those times are past or if he is unable to work there due to some thing which impedes him, he is then to be relieved of his responsibility for the work in the field. But he is never exempt for the work which he is commanded to do in the house, provided there is no impediment or other matter he must tend to. Hence, he is constantly charged to work the house when he is free to do so.

(Pas Lechem: "some thing which impedes him...no impediment or other matter" - In the work of the

field the impediment is due to some lacking in doing the work such as a flood, or bad weather, or a windy day where he cannot sow seeds, etc. But for the work in the house of the king, certainly all the necessary means for his work are prepared and before him, for there is nothing lacking in the palace of the king. Hence, the impediment inside the house refers to some human being which impedes him. Therefore, regarding the field, he wrote "*some thing which impedes him*" while for the house work he wrote "*no impediment*" (literally: not impeded by an impending agent) which refers to some human being which impedes him and does not let him do and toil in the work of his king. He wrote two expressions (1. no impediment or 2. other matter), referring to either a man which impedes him despite that he is free to work or alternatively that he is not free in the work of his king due to being busy with other matters he must tend to.)

Such too is the case for the duties of the heart which are always binding upon us. We have no excuse for their neglect, and there is nothing which impedes us in their fulfillment, except for love of this world, and lack of understanding in regard to our Creator, as written "*they do not consider the work of G-d*" (Isaiah 5:12).

(*Tov Halevanon: "love of this world"* - It is well known in the writings of chakira (rational inquiry) that love of this world and love of the next world are two opposites, and there is no possibility whatsoever for both to co-exist together.

"we don't understand the matter of our Creator" - due to the coarse physicality of the body which conceals the light of the intellect which shines from the soul.

alternatively,

Pas Lechem: we don't understand His greatness, His sovereignty over us, and His beneficences to His creations.)

I said to myself, "perhaps this class of commandments does not branch out to many commandments. Therefore, they abandoned them and did not compose a book specially devoted to them".

(*Pas Lechem: i.e. there is not enough material for a whole book. It was enough for them to insert pieces parenthetically in their words. A bit here and a bit there.)*

But when I investigated, on their number and derivatives, I found their derivatives to be exceedingly numerous until I thought that what David, peace be unto him, said "*I have seen a limit to all perfection, but Your commandment is exceedingly broad*" (Ps. 119:96) was referring to the Duties of the Heart. Because, the Duties of the Limbs are a known number, namely, 613. But the Duties of the Heart are exceedingly numerous until their derivative branches are countless.

(*Pas Lechem: "number and derivatives"* - "number" according to their names, as he wrote earlier such as "love", "fear", "trust", etc. The derivatives are the branches which branch out and offshoot, each to several branches and parts. It is like a Menorah (candelabrum), with parts and branches.

Tov Halevanon: "countless" - Everything physical is necessarily bounded in the three dimensions. Hence, necessarily it must be finite. For it is impossible to find in actual reality an infinite number of physical objects, as will be demonstrated through logical proofs (see Gate 1 ch.5). But "*your commandments are exceedingly broad*". The term "broad" here means infinite. For the Duties of the Heart cannot be encircled by any edge or boundary. For, they can offshoot, widen, and branch out indefinitely. And even though it is impossible for an actual physical thing to be infinite, it can nevertheless, potentially branch out infinitely. So too, for the Duties of the Heart, even though they depend on physical powers, they can nevertheless potentially branch out infinitely, since their number is unlimited. Understand this.)

I further said: "perhaps they are so clear and familiar to everyone, and every person clings to them that a book on the subject is unnecessary". When, however, I studied the conduct of human beings throughout the ages as recorded in books, I found that they are far from [the knowledge or practice of] this class of commandments, with the exception of some zealous individuals, special elect of them, according to what is recorded about them. But as for the rest, how much were they so in need of exhortation and instruction! And all the more so, for most of the people in our generation, who neglect even the commandments of the limbs, not to mention the commandments of the heart. And if any one of them is roused to devote himself to the study of the Torah, his motive in this is to be called a "wise man" by the masses, and to gain for himself a name among the great. And thus he strays from the way of the Torah

to things which will neither aid him in ascending spiritually, nor save him from spiritually stumbling. And he studies unnecessary things the ignorance of which he would not be punished, while he omits to investigate the roots of the religion and the foundations of the Torah, which he should not have ignored nor neglected and without the knowledge and practice of which, no commandment can be properly fulfilled. For example, regarding acknowledging the Unity of G-d, (the question arises) whether we are under duty to examine this by the light of reason or whether it is sufficient if we accept it by tradition alone, namely, that we declare like the simpleton and the fool that "G-d is One" without argument or proof. Or, if we are under duty to investigate through rational inquiry the distinction between true Unity versus relative unity, so as to distinguish [the Unity of G-d] from other existing unities which we call "one".

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: it seems the author's view is like that of Rabbi Saadia Gaon, that the Tradition is primary. And if one is of strong intellect, so that he can also delve into rational inquiry in order that his faith will be more firmly implanted in his heart through both tradition and rational proofs and together they will be perfect in his heart and mind - then he can tread this path [of rational inquiry], as will be explained in Gates 1 and 2. Here is an excerpt from the introduction of Sefer Emunot by R.Saadia Gaon: even though the Sages prevented us from this inquiry in saying "whoever inquires into four things, better had he not been born" (Chagiga 11b). Their intent was only if we abandon the books of the prophets and instead each person relies on his own intellect in trying to understand the first beginnings of time and space [first existence]. For whoever inquires in this way, perhaps he will find [truth], perhaps he will err. And until he finds [the truth], he will be without religion. And even if he finds [truth] it is possible that he will stray from it due to some doubt that will surface in his mind and he may lose his faith. Everyone agrees that one who goes in this manner is a sinner. But we, the congregation of Israel, investigate and rationally inquire what we received from the prophets, who were confirmed true prophets through signs and miracles, so that what we received from them in knowledge may become tangibly clear to us. Secondly, [we study this in order to know how to] refute those who come against us in Torah matters in the way of "know what to answer a heretic" (Pirkei Avot 2:14). See there at length.)

On this the believer is not permitted by our religion to remain in ignorance, for the Torah exhorts us on this in saying "*Therefore, know this day and consider within your heart, that the L-ord is G-d in Heaven above and on the earth below. There is none other*" (Deut. 4:39).

The same is the case for other commandments of the heart which we have mentioned already or will mention. The believer's faith will not be complete until he knows these duties and practices them. They are the inner science, the light of the heart, and the shining of the soul. On this Scripture says: "*Behold, You desired that truth be in the hidden places, and in the concealed part You teach me wisdom*" (Ps. 51:8).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: ...here is an excerpt from the Ibn Ezra "...he concluded in the end, that the complete knowledge is for a man to set in his heart until he has clarified through logical proofs that G-d is one, therefore Moses said 'Therefore, know this day and consider within your heart, that the L-ord is G-d in Heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is no other' (Deut. 4:39), and David said: 'And you, Solomon my son, know the G-d of your father and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing soul' (Chron. I 28:9), and 'knowing' means in the heart not on the mouth". end quote.

Pas Lechem: "*the light of the heart, and the shining of the soul*" - light refers to something which is luminescent by itself, while "*shine*" (noga) refers to something which reflects light that it received from something else, like the moon which reflects light it received from the sun. Therefore it is written (Isaiah 60:19) "The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you"... So too here, the author's intent is that wisdom enlightens the heart, and from the heart, radiance will flow to the soul. Hence, he wrote the shine (noga) of the soul.)

It is said of a Sage who would pass the first half of the day in the company of other people. But when he was alone, he would call out "O for hidden light", by which he referred to duties of the heart.

One of the wise men was consulted regarding a strange case on the laws of divorce. He replied to the inquirer: "you are asking on what will not harm you if you do not know it. Do you already know all that you are under duty to know of the commandments, and that you are not allowed to neglect, and that you should not be negligent of, that you turn to speculate on remote questions which will not avail you of any advancement, nor fix any crookedness in your soul. Behold, I swear, it has been 35 years that I have occupied myself with what is essential to the knowledge and practice of the duties of my religion. You are aware of my great in-depth study and the great library of books I possess. And yet, I have never turned my mind to the matter to which you have directed your attention and about

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. the question was remote and uncommon. Even though in the words of our Sages we find such questions such as "one who made an animal into a grave stone" (Tosfos Kesuvos 4b). This is because our Sages were already complete in the duties of the heart, and they also had the ability to deduce from the answers to these questions other laws which are common. Unlike this student which the wise man rebuked who did not reach this level.

Marpe Lenefesh: It appears there were two problems here. The question itself was remote. It was unlikely such a thing would ever happen, and the questioner asked this only to show off his wisdom and cleverness to the Rabbi. Secondly, the questioner was not on the level to be dealing with questions of marriage and divorce documents. For one must first acquire what he needs of good traits, Torah, and emunot... But one who turns the plate over, such as those who study Choshen Mishpat or Yoreh Deah while in the practical day to day commandments they do not know between their right and left.. Likewise, for the youths who study Talmud before knowing the Torah (five books of Moses) and wind up knowing neither, as the Maharal spoke of at length in his book Kenei Chachma, for one must teach a youth according to his capacity as the mishna says (Pirkei Avot 5) "Five year old for Scripture, ten year old for Mishna..."

Chasam Sofer parsha Bechukosai: This is in disagreement with the words of the Chovos Halevavos who warned against busying ourselves with remote questions such as laws of Gitin or the like and that all of our toil should be in practical things, and when such a strange question comes we can deal with it. Behold, I ask forgiveness of the pious author, but I disagree. This is not the proper path which G-d wants. Our Sages have set, and paved in the talmud many strange questions, and most of the talmud consists of such back and forth questions. For the Sages knew that knowledge of these things is the true wealth. And this is what brings a man to burning enthusiasm in fear of G-d and clinging to His great Name, provided that his intent should first be for G-d and Torah lishma. For if he toils in the Torah in these matters, he will come to cling to G-d. For one who clings to the Torah, clings to G-d. The laws he should cherish so that he will be able to do them when he has the opportunity, without needing to look it up...

Translator: Perhaps there is no contradiction, for the Chovos Halevavos also advocates delving as deep as one's mind can go in the sea of the talmud as he wrote above "You are aware of my great in-depth study" and as he explains in Gate 8 ch.3 way 5 that this is a duty from reason, etc. only that he should first focus this in-depth study on the practical parts of Torah which he needs to know.)

Another Sage said "I learned to purify my deeds for 25 years."

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. For twenty five years, I studied how to reach this trait, to purify my actions to G-d alone, without any other motive. This was my primary study and toil.)

A third Sage said "there is wisdom which lies hidden in the hearts of the wise, like secret treasure. If they conceal it, man cannot discover it. If they reveal it, man cannot deny the correctness of their words regarding it. And this is as Scripture says "*wisdom in the heart of man is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out*" (Prov. 20:5), i.e. wisdom is innate in a man's being, in his nature and faculties of perception, like water that is hidden in the depths of the earth. The intelligent and understanding individual will strive to investigate what is in his potential and inward faculties in order to discover and expose this wisdom, and will draw it forth from his heart, just as one searches for water that is in the depths of the earth.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*If they conceal it, man cannot discover it*" - if they will leave it thus, concealed in potential, a man cannot apprehend it. The intent is on a man himself. i.e. the matters of wisdom are not openly revealed in a man's heart, that he can apprehend them automatically, without contemplation, as is the case with that which is apprehended automatically by the senses. For example, something which is before him, he will apprehend it through his sense of sight automatically without effort. Likewise, for a sound which reaches his ears, it will be apprehended immediately by his sense of hearing. Wisdom, however, is concealed in potential, and will not be apprehended by him unless he strives to draw it out through the power of contemplation. This is what he meant, "*If they reveal it..*", i.e. excavate it from its hidden place through the faculty of reason, until it floats up and is revealed - then it will no longer be concealed to that man, that they are indeed just and correct words, and victorious in bringing a man to perfection. He said this

corresponding to the lazy people, that even if they are intelligent by nature, and they fool themselves saying perhaps the reason (the duties of the heart) are not revealed in their hearts is because they are not things needed for wholeness. Therefore, he wrote, let them test for themselves, through contemplation, and they will find the correctness of these words.

Translator: for this reason it is so important to study this book slowly and thoughtfully with the commentaries. Reading it fast in order to finish quickly will not affect a person in the least.

"*in his potential and inward faculties*" - for things which are still completely concealed, and he did not yet have any start in them, he wrote "*potential*". For things which he already had some knowledge and now they are absent from his mind until he recalls them, spreads them out, and expounds their parts, in order to derive wisdom and understanding from them - he wrote "*inward faculties*".)

I once asked a man who was considered among the Torah Sages concerning some of the topics we mentioned regarding the inner wisdom and he replied that on this and similar things, the tradition is sufficient to stand in place of rational inquiry.

I said to him: "This applies only to those who lack the ability to inquire due to low powers of perception and weakness of understanding, such as women and children, or feeble minded persons (*Translator:* women used to be much less educated than in our times). But a man who has sufficient power of intellect and perception to attain certainty on the truth of (what he received from - *PL*) Tradition, and he neglected to investigate this due to laziness or due to holding in light esteem the commandments of G-d and His Torah - certainly he will be punished for this and he sins for having neglected them.

(*Pas Lechem:* i.e. for his laziness and light esteem he will be punished. In addition to this, he sins for neglecting to inquire into these things.)

This matter is similar to [the following illustration]. An officer was charged by the king to receive money from the officials of his kingdom. The king gave him special instructions to count the coins, weigh them, and verify their quality. The officer was sufficiently intelligent and skilled to fulfill all that the king had commanded him. But the royal servants cunningly befriended him with words until he trusted in them. They brought the money to him and assured him that it was correct in amount, weight, and quality. He believed them and was too lazy to verify for himself the truth of their words thereby transgressing the king's orders. When the matter reached the king, he ordered that the money be brought before him. When the king questioned the officer as to the total count and weight of the money, he could not answer. Though the amount of money may have been correct, the king condemned him for having been lax in his command in relying on the words of the servant in something he could have obtained certainty for himself. Only if he was not skilled enough to make an accounting, would he not have been found guilty for relying on the servants.

So too, if you were not capable of grasping this subject with your reasoning faculties, as is the case regarding reasons for received commandments (such as *shatnez* etc. - *PL*), then your excuse for refraining from this inquiry would be valid. Likewise, if your mind falls short and your perception is too weak to understand it, you would not be punished for your neglect, and you would be considered like children and women, who accept it from the Tradition. But if you are a man of intellect and understanding, who is capable of obtaining certainty on what you have received from the Sages and prophets regarding the roots of the religion and the pivots of the deeds, you are then commanded to use your intellect until you comprehend the matter so that it will be clear to you from both tradition and Reason. But if you ignore this and are negligent in it, you will be considered as falling short in your duties to the blessed Creator.

(*Pas Lechem:* "*if your mind falls short and your perception is too weak*" - On matters of *emuna* (faith) such as the Unity or the Eternity, or the like, he wrote "*your mind falls short*", i.e. to grasp their logical proofs. On the other things of the inner duties such as placing one's trust in G-d, giving over oneself to Him, and devoting one's acts to Him, and the like, which stem from recognizing the greatness of G-d and of His beneficence, on this he wrote "*your perception is too weak*".

"*the roots of the religion and the pivots of the deeds*" - I already explained earlier that His Unity, and His Eternity, and the faith in prophecy and the like, are the roots of the religion, and from them it sprouts. For the other things in the inner science such as love, fear, trust, giving over oneself to Him, it is correct to call them "*pivots of the deeds*". For on them all the deeds pivot around and the purpose of all the deeds is to love Him, fear Him, and give our lives over to Him.)

This will be explained in two ways.

(*Tov Halevanon*: The author will now clarify from the Torah and prophets that one who refrains from rational inquiry on the roots of the Torah and instead relies solely on the tradition is negligent (poshea) and like one who is falling short in fulfilling the duties the Creator placed on him.)

Firstly, from what Scripture says *"if there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between affliction and affliction...and you shall do according to the sentence which they declare to you"* (Deut. 17:8-10). If you examine what subjects are included in the first verse, you will find they are things which need to be detailed, distinguished, and discussed by the method of Tradition, and not by that of logical demonstration from Reason alone. You can see, the verse does not include matters which can be attained through Reason. For he did not say, for example, "when you have a question on the Unity of G-d"; or regarding the Names and attributes of the Creator, or as to any of the roots of the religion, such as the service of G-d (i.e. whether or not it is proper to serve G-d - *PL*), trusting in Him, submission before Him, devoting activities to Him, purifying conduct from the damage of detrimental things, repentance from sins, fear and love of Him, being abashed before Him, making a spiritual accounting, and similar duties which can be fulfilled through reason and recognition. He did not say to accept them on the authority of the Torah Sages and to rely only on the Tradition. On the contrary, Scripture says in regard to these to reflect on them to your heart and to apply your intellect on them after having first accepted them from the Tradition, which covers all the commandments of the Torah, their roots and branches. You should investigate them with your intellect, understanding, and judgment, until you will sift the truth of it from the false [notions], as written *"therefore, know this day and consider it within your heart, that the L-ord, He is G-d"* (Deut. 4:39).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: *"between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between affliction and affliction"* i.e. this verse mentions three things, which are things whose explanation we cannot know except through the Torah Sages who received their explanation from Sinai, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, the verse specified these three. But if the entire Torah were included in this statement, why did the Torah mention only these three? Let it say either a blanket statement [such as "a commandment"] or let it also include a precept of Reason.

Tov Halevanon: Even though among the commandments of the limbs, there are also some commandments which Reason accepts, and on these the Sages said (Eruvin 100b) "even if the Torah were not given, we could have learned modesty from the cat, honesty from the ant, chastity from the dove.." But this is not from logical proofs. Rather it is from the aspect of mussar (ethics). Likewise, the details of monetary pleas cannot be known through Reason alone. This is unlike the Duties of the Heart where all of them can be demonstrated by clear logical proofs, and there aren't any derivatives of them which cannot be demonstrated by logical proofs. And likewise we have been commanded to inquire specifically on them - not to rely [solely] on what the Sages will tell us from Tradition.

Pas Lechem: *"to return them to your heart"* - this means the entering of the matter in one's heart. Afterwards, on contemplation of it, he wrote *"and to apply your intellect in them"*.

"inquire with your intellect, understanding, and power of discernment" - inquire with your intellect on the general matters. Then use your understanding and power of discernment to discern the roots from the branches, and contemplate the roots to discern with your comprehension which branches stem out from them.)

Likewise, we will say regarding all that we are capable of grasping by Reason, as our Sages said (Rabbi Yishmael's 7th rule of expounding the Torah) "if anything included in a general proposition is made the subject of a special statement, whatever is proclaimed of that special statement is not to be understood as limited to itself, but is applied to the whole of the general proposition". Knowing the Unity of G-d is but one branch of the topics which can be understood by Reason. And as it is our duty to use this method on this topic (of G-d's Unity), it is equally our duty to do so with all of them.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. just like G-d commanded us to inquire on the matter of the Unity, despite that we received it by tradition and that it is explained in the Torah.)

The second argument is drawn from Scripture says: *"Have you not known? Have you not heard, that the everlasting God"* (Isaiah 40:28). It says *"known"* which implies knowledge from rational proofs, and afterwards *"heard"* which implies from the Tradition. And likewise, *"Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?"* (Isaiah 40:21). The prophet preceded mentioning knowledge from rational proof to knowledge which

is from received tradition. And likewise Moses, our teacher, said: "Do you thus requite the L-ord, Oh foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father who acquired you? Has He not made you and established you? Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you." (Deut. 32:6). This is a proof to what we mentioned, that despite that the Tradition should be preceded by nature, for the students must learn it first, nevertheless, it is not right to rely solely on it for one who is able to comprehend it by the method of rational demonstration. It is therefore proper, that everyone who is capable of this, is under duty to investigate with his intellect and to bring logical proofs of it by the demonstration which deliberate judgment would support.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "the Tradition should be preceded by nature" - i.e. Rational inquiry requires the Tradition. For it is impossible to find without the [guidance of the] Tradition. Without the Tradition, it is highly unlikely that a man will grasp the roots of Judaism by reason alone. Tradition guides a person on the intellectual journey - to which bend to turn in his rational inquiry. But the tradition alone can be without inquiry for the weak minded and women. Behold, the tradition on existence of G-d and His Unity, and other fundamental principles precede by nature to the commandments of the Heart, which are the bringing of rational proofs on their truth.)

(*Pas Lechem*: "for the students must learn it first" - i.e. in the days of youth before their understanding becomes strong so that they do not remain in those days without faith. Therefore, one must then rely on the Tradition. Also, from a different reason, one must precede the Tradition and that it be the foundation of his faith, whether or not he understands it and his reason agrees with it. Because if one starts from his own understanding and makes it his foundation, namely, that which he agrees with he accepts and that which he disagrees with or cannot grasp, he rejects. G-d forbid for us to go in this way, for this is the path which the philosophers tread, who wound up ruining the world and themselves. And that which he wrote earlier that the inner wisdom precedes by nature, the answer is that there he was referring to [intent of] deeds while here he is referring to faith.)

After I had become convinced that the commandments of the heart are indeed obligatory, and that, on grounds we mentioned, we are obligated in them, I found that these duties had been neglected and that no book had been composed specifically on them. I contemplated on the condition of low observance of them from my contemporaries due to their inability to comprehend them, and hence, all the more so, were they unable to perform them or toil in them. I was stirred by the grace of G-d to inquire into the inner science.

(*Pas Lechem*: "toil in them" - i.e. to make them one's business, namely, to expound their topics and to speak of their roots and branches.)

I also noticed from the practice of our Sages, and from their sayings that we have received, that they were more zealous and engaged in their personal duties than in developing inferences of laws and remote, doubtful questions.

(*Pas Lechem*: Doubtful because they are strange matters, not found in the words of the Tradition, and therefore need many logical constructs, premises and deductions. Therefore, a man cannot render a definitive answer and say "accept my reasoning". In truth, we find many of the great Rabbis end off their responsa in a doubtful tone in saying 'thus it seems according to my humble opinion'.)

Their efforts were first spent on determining the general principles of judgment, to make clear what is permitted and what is forbidden.

(*Pas Lechem*: "general principles of judgment" - i.e. monetary cases. He preceded these to "permitted/forbidden" things because most questions can be derived from them, for they are the cornerstone of the Torah. Therefore, he used the term "general principles" by them, since their rulings are based on many general principles such as "hamotzi mechavero.." or the principles of "migo", and many similar things.)

Afterwards, they busied and strove to clarify their active obligations and inward duties. If a strange case came before them that belonged to the class of inferences from existing laws, they investigated it at the time it was presented to them, and deduced the law from the principles known to them. But they never troubled their minds for these things before this for they regarded secular matters lightly.

| (*Tov Halevanon: "they regarded secular matters lightly"* - i.e. acquiring a name and seeking honor)⁶

And when they needed to render a ruling on that matter, if the ruling was clear to them from the Tradition transmitted to them by the prophets, they would rule on that basis. If it was a question which required expounding the Tradition, they would investigate it with the light of reason. If they all agreed together, they would give a ruling. But if there was a disagreement on the ruling, they would rule according to the majority opinion, as written by the Sanhedrin (Talmud Sanhedrin 88b): "when a question was posed to them, if they had a tradition on it, they gave the decision right away. If they differed, they took a vote. If the majority ruled the thing was clean, it was declared clean. If the majority ruled it unclean, it was declared unclean. This was according to the principle they received 'the decision follows the majority'". They composed in Tractate Avot, the traditions of the moral principles and ethical standards of the Rabbis as taught by each of them in his time and place.

| (*Tov Halevanon: "the moral principles and ethical standards"* - i.e. when they mentioned the chain of tradition from Sinai, they mentioned of each of the receivers what he innovated of moral principles. But they did not at all mention their chidushim (novel ideas) in questions of dinim (monetary laws) which they expounded in their rational inquiry.)

The reports of the men of the Talmud regarding their teachers, are enough to demonstrate the depth of their wisdom and great toil in purifying their deeds. For instance (Berachot 20a): "Said R. Papa to Abaye: How is it that for the former generations miracles were performed and for us miracles are not performed? It cannot be because of their [superiority in] study, because in the years of Rab Judah the whole of their studies was confined to Nezikin (the mishna order of monetary damages), while we study all six Orders...And yet when Rab Judah drew off one shoe, rain used to come, whereas we torment ourselves and cry loudly, and no notice is taken of us! He replied: The former generations used to be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of [G-d's] Name; we do not sacrifice our lives for the sanctity of [G-d's] Name", and (Avodah Zara 17b): "*he who only studies the Torah, is like a man who is without a G-d, as it is said (Chronicles II 15:3) 'Now for long seasons, Israel was without the true G-d'. Hence, Torah study must be combined with acts of kindness*".

| (*Tov Halevanon: they did not set their attention to investigate strange questions, before these would be needed practically. Only in monetary laws, since this is very common and relevant, and is very necessary for the welfare of the world, as they said (Avot 1:18) "on three things the world stands, on justice, truth, and peace". But for other orders, they would not investigate too much on derivative laws.*

| *Marpe Lenefesh: "the depth of their wisdom"* - that their primary wisdom and toiling was only in delving into and purifying their deeds - that all their deeds be l'shem shamayim [devoted to G-d].

| *Manoach Halevavos: "offered up their lives"* - the explanation is not that they literally gave up their lives to die as martyrs, for we do not find that Rab Judah ever did so. Rather, the explanation is that all of their thoughts and aims in their minds and souls, and their trust in all matters - was only on G-d.

| *Tov Halevanon: they would cleave very much to love of G-d until they no longer cared about loss of money or personal honor in regard to things which touched on the honor of G-d ... as we see there on how Rabbi Ada bar Ahava could not restrain himself until he rose up and did what he did.*

| *Pas Lechem: "Hence, Torah study must be combined with acts of kindness"* - behold, even for practical Torah study one should not spend all of his time because one must also leave over time for actual good deeds. All the more so, one should not spend his time with strange questions which would never have any relevance.)

Thus it became clear to me that all the roots of deeds which one intends for His Name are founded on purity of heart and mind and singleness of mind. Where the motive is tainted, good deeds, however numerous and diligent, are not accepted; as Scripture says "*even when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil*" (Isaiah 1:16). And, "*but the matter is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it*" (Deut. 30:14), and "*give Me your heart, and let your eyes keep My ways*" (Prov. 23:26). And our wise men have said: "*if you give Me your eyes and heart, I know that you are Mine*" (Yerushalmi Berachos 1:5); and Scripture says "*you shall not wander after your hearts and after your eyes*" (Numbers 15:39), and "*with what shall I come before the L-ord and bow myself before G-d on high? Shall*

I come with Olah offerings?" (Micha 6:6), and the answer given was *"He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the L-ord demands of you; but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your G-d"* (ibid 6:8); and *"but let him that glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the L-ord doing kindness, justice, and righteousness"* (Jer. 9:23). The explanation is that a man who glories should glory in comprehending G-d's ways, recognizing His beneficence, reflecting on His creation, realizing His might and wisdom, as manifested in His works. All these verses which I have brought are proofs on the obligatory character of the commandments of the heart and the discipline of the soul.

(*Tov Halevanon: "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean"* - washing and cleaning is referring to cleanliness of heart and mind, namely, that he removes from his heart the lust for sin, and from his mind, the thinking of them, until he resolves in his heart to desist from them, as Scripture says "tear your hearts and not your garments, etc." (Yoel 2:13), which means renouncing sin and removing it from his heart. This is the main component of repentance as is known.

"but the matter is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart" - hence, all deeds depend on the intent of heart.

"with what shall I come before the L-ord... Shall I come with Olah offerings?" - behold, certainly, the proper repentance for sins of the limbs is known, as our Sages said (Yoma 86a): "there are three types of atonement..." and the repentance of each type is explained. Likewise an Olah offering atones for [bad] musings of the heart as our Sages said (Vayikra Raba 7:3). The question here was with what can he bow his heart and straighten its crookedness. Should he come with Olah offerings? Can the Olah straighten his heart to the service of G-d from now on, just like it can atone for [bad] musings of the past? The answer was *"He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the L-ord demands of you; but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your G-d"*, i.e. That G-d desires only wholeness of the heart, and wholeness of (temimus) sentiment and mind to His service.)

You should realize that the aim and value of the duties of the heart is that our exterior and interior be equal and consistent in the service of G-d, so that the testimony of the heart, tongue, and limbs be alike, and that they support and confirm each other instead of differing and contradicting each other. This is what Scripture calls *"tamim"* (innocent/perfect), in saying: *"You shall be perfect with the L-ord your G-d"* (Deut. 18:13), and *"Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations"* (Gen. 6:9), and *"he who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart"* (Ps. 15:2), and *"I will give heed unto the way of integrity..I will walk within my house with a perfect heart"* (Ps. 101:2).

On the other hand, one whose inner [being] is not consistent with his outer [life] is condemned by Scripture, as written: *"his heart was not whole with the L-ord, his G-d"* (Kings 11:4), and *"but they flatter Him with their mouths and lied with their tongues. For their heart was not steadfast with Him"* (Ps. 78:36).

It is well known, that whoever exhibits conflicting or contradictory behavior in word or deed - people do not believe in his integrity and have no confidence in his truthfulness. Likewise, if our exterior conflicts with our interior, if our heart's intent conflicts with our words, if our physical activities are not consistent with the convictions of our soul - our service to our G-d will not be whole, for He will not accept from us fraudulent service, as written *"I cannot [bear] iniquity with assembly"* (Isaiah 1:13), and *"For I am the L-ord, Who loves justice, hates robbery in a burnt offering"* (Isaiah 61:8), and *"if you offer a blind [animal] for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Bring it now to your governor. Will he accept you, or lift up your face"* (Malachi 1:8), and *"Behold, to obey is better than a peace-offering; to hearken (is better) than the fat of rams"* (Samuel 15:22).

(*Marpe Lenefesh: "It is well known.."* - this matter also applies to human beings. If a man tells his fellow one thing and does the opposite, or sometimes like this and sometimes like that - the fellow will not trust his integrity and word since he contradicts himself. All the more so, that G-d, for who everything is revealed, will not accept fraudulent service, namely, if one does the commandments with intent for personal gain or for any other [improper] motive.)

Hence, one commandment, according to the heart and intent with which it is performed, can outweigh many commandments, and likewise one transgression can outweigh many transgressions. Even the thought to do a commandment and the yearning to do it out of reverence for G-d, despite that one was unable to actually perform it, may, nevertheless, outweigh many commandments performed without this reverence, as G-d said to David: *"because it was in your heart to build a house for My Name"* (Chronicles II 6:8), and *"then the G-d fearing men spoke to one another, and the L-ord hearkened and heard it. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the L-ord and for those who thought upon His Name"* (Malachi 3:16), and our Sages expounded the last

words (Shabbat 63a): "what is meant by 'thought upon His Name?' - [answer:] "if one intended to fulfill a commandment but was prevented from doing it, it is accounted to him as if he had done it." 18

(Pas Lechem: "according to the heart and intent" - according to the joy of heart to do it and the intent to G-d. Likewise for sins, according to how much joy he has in doing it, as written "those who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the perversity of evil" (Prov. 2:14), and according to the intent, whether he does the sin due to lust or to anger G-d (rebel), r"l.

"thought upon His Name" - according to the Sages, the intent of the words "thought upon His Name", is that he thought to do a commandment for His Name. Then, even if he was prevented from doing it, it is accounted as if he did it, for a pure thought to G-d also makes a [good] impact in one's soul.)

When these arguments from Reason, Scripture, and Tradition dawned on me, I began to train myself in them, and I undertook on myself the task of knowing and practicing them. The discovery of one principle revealed another related to it, which in turn led to a third, until the matter became broad and it was difficult for me to retain it always in mind. I feared that I might forget what I had already thought out, and that what had become solid shaped in my mind might dissolve, especially since in our times there are so few helping on this wisdom. I decided to compose a book on them which would include their roots and surrounding divisions, and much of their derivatives; and so I would always urge myself to know them and obligate myself to do them.

Where my practice was consistent with my words, I thank G-d who helped me in this, and taught me His ways. But where my practice was inconsistent with my words and fell short of attaining this, I blame and rebuke my soul, and argue with it, so that from the standard of righteousness set forth in this work, my soul might realize its own iniquity, and from its standard of justness, its own deviation, and from its uprightness, its own perverseness, and from the perfection there taught, its own short-comings.

(Marpe Lenefesh: (an alternative interpretation is that the last sentence refers to G-d not to the book, hence) Man does iniquity but G-d does to him righteousness, man deviates from G-d, but G-d does to him good and uprightness, man perverts his ways, and G-d rectifies him, man falls short in his deeds, while G-d is perfect in His deeds. When a man puts these ideas to heart always, he will not run away from G-d.)

I saw proper to make the book one of permanent value, a hidden treasure, a lamp to illuminate men's paths and teach them the path in which they should go. I hoped that the book would be of still greater use to others than to myself, and of greater beneficial instruction to others than to my own benefit of fulfilling my wish.

I said to myself that I will compose a book on this subject that would be systematically divided according to the roots of the duties of the heart and the inner commandments; be comprehensive and adequate to the matters, point out the good and right way; serve as a guide to the customs of the earlier Sages and the discipline of the pious; awaken men from their senseless sleep; delve in detail into the depths of this wisdom; recall to men the knowledge of G-d and of His Torah, promote the salvation of the soul; encourage the observant, stir up the negligent, set the eager on the right road, straighten the early, guide beginners and show the way to the perplexed.

(Pas Lechem: "straighten the early" - he who has strong enthusiasm and yearning to serve G-d, and due to this he mixes up the order, preceding things which must be done later. In truth, this is a major detriment in the service of G-d. This book will straighten him, i.e. direct him in the straight path and the proper order of steps.

"show the way to the perplexed" - many people are confused in many matters of service, and they are not capable of clarifying and deciding which way to turn, and which road to take. This book will teach them which is the proper path to choose.)

But when I thought of proceeding to carry out my decision to write this book, I saw that a man like myself is not fit to compose a work like this. I estimated that my strength was insufficient to properly divide its parts, the subject appearing too vast to my eyes, my knowledge too inadequate, and my intellectual faculties too weak to grasp the topics. Furthermore, I am not proficient in the subtleties of the Arabic language which it would need to be in, due to this being the easiest language for most of my contemporaries to grasp. I feared that I would be toiling at a task which would only serve to demonstrate my deficiencies and that I would thus be exceeding proper bounds of discretion. I therefore, told my soul to retract the thought and to draw back from what it had resolved on.

(Pas Lechem: "to properly divide its parts" - I do not have the strength to divide the matters of the

inner wisdom, that the matter be properly presented. For this is the chief aim of [rational] inquiry into something - to clarify what is its nature, and on what pillars does it rest on, and what are its roots, branches, and derivatives, as mentioned earlier.

"I would thus be exceeding proper bounds of discretion" - it is a proper trait for a man to recognize his place, and to restrain his desires from doing something beyond his power, for that would be like haughtiness.

"retract (lit: return) the thought..draw back" - he doubled the expression for this is human nature.

When something is fixed in a man's thoughts for a long time and afterwards he regrets and wishes to retract from this thing, the immediate decision to retract is called "return" (chozer). However, since the thing was fixed in his imagination faculty for so long, the thoughts overpower him. A thought seizes him every time it enters his heart to persuade him to do that thing. A man must then draw it back and remove it from his heart, and dismiss it from his mind by force. This is the meaning of the double expression "return...draw back". Understand this.)

When I then decided to relieve myself of the burden of this undertaking and give up my plan of composing this work, I again suspected my soul of having chosen tranquility, to dwell in the abode of laziness, in peace and quiet. I feared that perhaps this decision to abandon the project stemmed from the lust for pleasure, and that this is what had inclined me to the way of peace and tranquility, to decide to abandon this in order to sit in the company of laziness.

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. other things besides service [of G-d]. Since, by defeating me in this indolence, automatically the power of lust will lead me to laziness, similar to the principle (Pirkei Avot 4:2) "sin drags more sin")

I knew that many great works were lost due to fear, and many losses were caused by concern. I remembered the saying: "it is part of prudence not to be overly prudent". I told myself, if every person who ever composed a good work or who ever taught the upright and proper path had waited until all his wishes were fulfilled, no person would have ever uttered a word after the prophets, whom G-d had chosen as His agents and strengthened with His divine help. If every person who had wished to attain all good qualities but was unable to attain them, had abandoned whatever he could attain of them, then all human beings would be devoid of all good and lacking all excellencies. They would have been perpetually pursuing after false hopes, the paths of righteousness would have been desolate, and the abodes of kindness would have been abandoned.

(*Pas Lechem*: "many losses were caused by concern" - ... just like I also had "the abodes of kindness would have been abandoned" - for according to this logic, a man would also abandon doing any acts of kindness towards his fellow and bestowing good according to his capacity. For he would say to himself: why should I do kindness to my fellow since I don't have the ability right now to do a full and complete kindness as is my wish. Therefore, I will wait and hope to when I will be very rich. Then, I will bestow great kindness on my fellow according to my wish to fully fulfill his desire.)

I understood that while men's souls lust greatly to attain evil ends (worldly pleasures and benefits - TL), they are sluggish to toil in the pursuit of what is noble. They are lazy in seeking the good, and always walk in the paths of laughter and rejoicing.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "laughter and rejoicing" - to this man's nature tends, due to his composition and inherent lust which stems from his physicality (the body), as Scripture says: (Job 11:12) "man is born as wild donkey's colt".)

If a vision of lust appears to them and beckons to them, they invent falsehoods so that they may turn to it. They bolster up its arguments to make its deception seem upright, to strengthen its lies, to make firm its looseness. But when the light of truth invitingly shines before them, they make up idle pretexts to refrain from turning to it. They argue against it, declare its courses misleading and contradict its assertions, so as to make it appear inconsistent and thus have an excuse to part from it. Every man's enemy is between his own ribs. Unless, he has an aid from G-d, a rebuker always ready for [rebuking] his soul, a powerful governor, that will harness his soul with the saddle of service, and will muzzle it with the bridle of righteousness, strike it with the stick of discipline; and when he resolves to do good, he should not delay, and if his heart entices him to a different path, he should scold it and overpower it.

(*Pas Lechem*: "they invent falsehoods" - i.e. even though at first appearance, its evil and bitter end is

visible. Nevertheless, they invent for themselves false pretexts to embellish the thing they lust for 20 and cover up its evil, such as in the eating of the Tree of Knowledge, whose evil was apparent to them, since, behold, they were warned by the word of G-d of a punishment of death. But when the serpent (thoughts of evil - Rabbi Uziel Milevsky zt'l) showed them its beauty and desirableness, and then built up excuses and covered up its evil, as written "you will not die, for G-d knows..." (Gen. 3:4). Their hearts enticed them and they were seduced by his words.

"make firm its looseness" - it is the way of falsehood to join together things which in truth do not logically follow. It then tricks the person with imaginations and joins the false premises to draw spurious conclusions.

"enemy between ribs" - this the lusting soul (nefesh bahamit/animal soul/evil inclination), whose source is in the liver which rests in the abdomen, between his ribs.

"a rebuker always ready...powerful governor" - this is the Understanding, that it be standing and ready always to rebuke the soul. Corresponding to the excuses and false claims of the soul, he wrote that his Understanding should be *"ready"* to deduce and clarify the truth, for all rebuke means "clarification of the matter". Corresponding to the strengthening of the soul with its lusts, he wrote *"powerful governor"* which stands against it and overpowers it.

"harness his soul with the saddle of service" - *"saddle"* is the belt which one harnesses the load to the donkey.. corresponding to the soul's fleeing from the service in doing good, he wrote *"harness, etc"*. This splits to two parts. That which is between man and G-d, he wrote *"harness it with the saddle of service"*, while corresponding to that which is between man and his fellow, he wrote *"muzzle it with the bridle of righteousness"*, i.e. muzzles its mouth with the muzzle of righteousness to turn it to the good.

On the aspect of refraining from evil, namely, the soul's tending to evil, he wrote "strike it with the stick of discipline".

"he should not delay" - for another [later] time, lest the soul will overpower him and topple him with laziness..

Marpe Lenefesh: (quoting the Alshich) Each and every believer has daily times when he is stirred from the sleep of his foolishness and wants to separate himself from now on from the vanities and lusts of the world, and to load on himself the yoke of Torah and mitzvot, day and night. But immediately, the yetzer (evil inclination) greets him telling him, "it's good. you see well, but why so fast? You will collapse. When will you take care of your home and your numerous business activities? First, work hard for a few days to finish your occupations then you can return to this... But this is just a ploy to wait until he has cooled down and eventually his motivation disappears altogether. Thus he acts all of his days. Therefore, Solomon wrote: "lazy one, until when will you lie down?" (Prov. 6:9). He did not write "[until when will you] sleep" [but rather "lie down"] for he already awoke from his sleep.. do not listen to him, rather hold fast to the service of G-d immediately. Do not slacken and be strong as a lion to do the will of your Father in heaven, and you will succeed in your business also.. see there.

"and if his heart entices him to a different path he should scold it and overpower it" - i.e. if while he has an opportunity to do good, his heart entices him to turn to a different matter in order to distract his mind and detour him from that good activity, he should scold it, and if it strengthens over him, he should likewise strengthen himself against it and overpower it.)

Therefore, I found myself obligated to force my soul to bear the task of composing this book, and resolved to expound its topics with whatever language or analogy would make the matters readily understandable. Among all the duties of the heart, I will only mention those which suggest themselves to me, and will not trouble to expound all of them, so that the book will not be too long. I will, however, cite among the things necessary for the clarification of each of its roots in the section allocated to it. And from G-d, the true Unity, may I receive aid. On Him, I place my trust and to Him I ask to teach me the right path which He desires, and which is pleasing and acceptable to Him, in word and deed, in inner and outer conduct.

(Pas Lechem: i.e. according to what we said earlier, that the nature of the soul is to instill laziness in a man, and to prevent him from a good activity, therefore, I saw myself obligated to direct and force my soul against its will to bear the strain...etc.

"aid me...teach me" - I will receive aid from G-d in terms of strength and I place my trust on Him to enlighten my mind. These correspond to the two problems he mentioned earlier *"my strength was insufficient"* and *"my knowledge too inadequate, etc."*)

When my deliberation was complete, and I finally resolved to write it, I laid its foundations. I built it on a basis of ten principles, which cover all of the Duties of the Heart and accordingly divided the book into ten parts, each part

designated for one principle, discussing its scope and divisions, the things it depends on, and the things detrimental to it.

I propose to take the most direct (easiest) method of arousing, teaching, and instructing, using language clear, direct, and familiar, so that my words will be more easily understood. I will refrain from deep language, unusual terms, and the arguments in the way of "defeat" (nitzuach), which the logicians call in arabic "Algidal", and likewise for remote inquiries which cannot be resolved in this work, for I only brought such arguments as are satisfactory and convincing according to the methods proper to the science of theology.

(*Tov Halevanon: "defeat"* (nitzuach) - It is known that the science of logic divides into three methods nitzuach (defeat), raya (proof), and mofet (definitive proof). Nitzuach (defeat) is when one cannot decide on either of the two views definitively, only that one view has more and stronger questions and claims which can be raised against it than the other view. The view which has fewer and weaker questions against it will prevail over the other view, and it is proper to follow that view even though it may also have some questions which can be raised. The "proof" (raya) is where one view has many questions and claims which can be raised against it while the other view has no claims against it. Certainly, it is proper to uphold it. This is better than nitzuach (defeat). Because here there are no claims and questions against it from the aspect of rational inquiry, but nevertheless, perhaps his inquiry was somehow flawed [for example, due to lacking certain information]. The "mofet" (definitive proof) is that which is impossible to refute in almost any way whatsoever, similar to the miracles of the prophets which were openly visible to the senses [at that time]. Behold, science is divided into three divisions: theology, nature, mathematics. It is known that for most of the science of theology, it is impossible to bring a "raya" (proof), and all the more so, a mofet (definitive proof). For due to the enormous depth and awesomeness of this science, and the limitations of human intellect, it is almost impossible to establish a clear view which is without any doubts. But they can be clarified in the way of Nitzuach (defeat), and a few of its topics through "raya" (proof) which are close to being mofet (definitive proof). For the science of nature, on the other hand, which is not as deep, one can explain much of it in the way of raya (proof), and some even from mofet (definitive proof). But the science of limudit which is the science of mathematics and geometry, all of its matters are clarified through mofet (definitive proof). This is what the author wrote that not all rational inquiry is found as mofet (definitive proof), but as nitzuach (defeat) or rayah (proof).)

As the philosopher said "it is not proper to seek of every inquiry a conclusion in the way of mofet (irrefutable proof), since not every topic in rational inquiry can be demonstrated to this extent. Likewise, we should not be satisfied in the science of nature with the method of 'sufficient' (since a full "raya" proof can be achieved). Nor in the science of theology should we strive to apprehend with the senses or draw comparisons with physical phenomena."

(*Pas Lechem: for it is impossible to explain things in theology using our physical senses or to explain it through a familiar analogy, because it is exalted above and beyond all [physical] senses and comparison. It has no connection whatsoever with these things.*)

Nor should we require logical demonstration of the first principles in nature (i.e. why the nature of this is like this and the nature of that is different, for this is how G-d created them -LT). Nor should we require logical demonstration of the first demonstrations of the first principles (the axioms of logic such as that the all is greater than the part, or that the diagonal of a right triangle is longer than the side -LT).

If we carefully avoid these things, it will be easier for us to achieve our aims. If we do not do so, we will stray from our subject, and it will be difficult for us to achieve our intended purpose.

Since this work is of theological character, I have refrained from the methods of demonstration usual in the sciences of logic and mathematics except in the first gate, where possibly the subtlety of the inquiry compels resort to these methods.

I have drawn most of my proofs from propositions which are accepted as reasonable and these I have made clear by familiar examples about which there can be no doubt. I supported them with what I found written in Scripture and afterwards with the words of tradition received from our Sages. I quoted also the pious and wise of other nations whose words have come down to us, hoping that my readers' hearts would incline to them and give heed to their wisdom, as for example, the words of philosophers, the ethical teachings of the ascetics, and their praiseworthy customs. Our Rabbis have already said regarding this (Sanhedrin 39b):

"One verse says: 'after the ways of the surrounding nations you have done' (Ezek. 11:12), while in another verse it says [in contradiction] 'after the ways of the surrounding nations you have not done' (Ezek. 5:7). How can this be reconciled? As follows - their good ways you have not copied; their evil ones you have followed."

Likewise, the Rabbis said (Megila 16a): "whoever says a wise thing, even among the gentiles is considered a Sage". They also said regarding bringing analogies to make difficult concepts easier to understand: "he taught it by signs and explained it by analogies" (Eruvin 21b); and the wise man said: "*to understand a parable and figure, the words of the wise and their riddles*" (Prov. 1:6).

When I accepted to undertake the task of composing this book on the divisions of the duties of the heart, I set my mind to select those which were most comprehensive and which would lead to the rest.

I set their chief root, and great foundation to be the wholehearted acceptance of G-d's Unity. Afterwards, I examined which of the duties of the heart are most fitting to be joined to the [wholehearted acceptance of the] Unity of G-d. I fully realized that as the Creator is the true Unity, and is subject to neither essence nor incident (this will be explained in Gate 1 - TL), it is impossible for us to grasp Him from the aspect of His glorious essence (to contemplate what He is - TL). We are therefore forced to know and grasp Him from the aspect of His creations. This is the topic of the second treatise, the Gate of Examination of G-d's works. I therefore made this examination the second root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

I then reflected on the sovereignty belonging to the true Unity, and what service is correspondingly due to Him from His creatures. I therefore set the assuming of His service as the third root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

(Tov Halevanon: "*sovereignty*" - in that He is our king, our Master, our Maker, and how can we greet His face and assume His service)

It then became clear to me, what is proper regarding the true Unity, that as He alone rules all things and all the benefits and harms we receive come from Him and are under His permission, we are in duty bound to put our trust in Him and to surrender ourselves over to Him. I therefore made Trust in G-d as the fourth root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

(Pas Lechem: "*under His permission*" - regarding the benefits, he wrote "*from Him*", while on the harm, he wrote "*under His permission*". For the harm does not come from Him. Therefore, it is only correct to say that it comes with His permission, namely, that He did not prevent it.)

Afterwards, I pondered on the conception of absolute Unity, that as G-d is unique in His glory, has nothing in common with anything, nor resembles anything else, we must therefore join to this that we serve Him alone, and that we devote all activities to Him, since He does not accept worship which is associated with other than Him. Therefore, I placed the devoting of acts to G-d as the fifth root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

(Tov Halevanon: "*associated*" - i.e. if in the service of G-d, a man has some other motive combined with serving G-d, G-d will not accept it.)

Afterwards, when my thoughts continued pondering as to what we owe to the true Unity regarding proclaiming His glory and greatness. Since there is none like Him, therefore we decided to join to this - humbling ourselves before Him to the utmost of our ability. Hence, I made Humility/Submission the sixth root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

(Tov Halevanon: "*humility*" - that we realize our petty worth compared to Him.
Marpe Lenefesh: we are obligated to proclaim His exaltedness and greatness, and this entails humbling ourselves before Him.)

When I reflected on what happens to human beings, that they neglect and fall short of what service they owe to the blessed Creator, and the path with which they can rectify their crookedness and shortcomings, namely repentance and beseeching for forgiveness, I therefore placed Repentance as the seventh root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

When I sought to grasp what our inner and outer duties to G-d truly are, and realized that it is impossible for us to fulfill them until we bring ourselves to an accounting on them before G-d and are meticulous in this, I made the spiritual accounting the eighth root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

When I meditated on the matter of the true Unity, I saw that the wholehearted acknowledgement of His Unity cannot possibly endure even in the soul of the believer, if his heart is drunk with the wine of love of this world and he inclines to the material pleasures. But if he strives to empty his heart and liberate his mind from the superfluities of this world and separate himself from its luxuries, only then will he completely accept G-d's Unity and rise to its level. I therefore set Abstinence as the ninth root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

Afterwards, I inquired on what we are obligated to the blessed Creator, who is the goal of all our desires and the purpose of all our hopes and with whom all things begin and end, and as to what is due to Him from us in regard to the love of His favor and fear of His retribution, the former being the highest good and the latter being the greatest evil, as Scripture says "*For His anger is only a moment; in His favor is life; Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning*" (Ps. 30:6), I therefore placed love of G-d as the tenth root of the general principles of the duties of the heart.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "all things begin and end" - He made our soul, and when it will separate from the body, it will return to Him, like Scripture says: "[then the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and] the spirit shall return to G-d who gave it" (Ecles. 12:7). Then, from Him the good person will receive the greatest good and the bad person, who inclined to the corrupt ways, will receive the greatest evil.
Marpe Lenefesh: "all things begin" - with this intent [of love] - all the service of G-d begins.)

After I arrived at these principles by Reasoning, I searched our Scriptures and traditions and found them indicated in many places. I will explain each of them in their respective treatise with G-d's help. I named the book, with a title which reflects my aim in writing it. It is called the Instruction of the Duties of the Heart.

My goal in this book is to obtain wisdom for myself and at the same time, to stir the simple and the negligent among the followers of our Torah and those who have inherited the precepts of our religion, by bringing sufficient proofs which reason can testify as to their soundness and truth and which will only be disputed by the hypocritical and false people, because to such people truth is a burden on them (for the light of their intellect has been extinguished by the sea of their lusts and enjoyments - *TL*) and their desire is to make things easier on themselves. I will not trouble myself to answer them because my purpose in this book was not to refute those who dispute the fundamentals of our faith. My aim is rather to bring to light what is already fixed in our minds and embedded in our souls of the fundamentals of our religion and the cornerstones of the Torah. When we arouse our minds to ponder them, their truth becomes clear to us inwardly and their lights will illuminate even our exterior.

The following is an analogy for this: An astrologer entered the courtyard of his friend and divined that there is a hidden treasure in it. He searched for it and found masses of silver that had turned black due to a crust of rust which had formed on it. He took a small portion, scrubbed it with vinegar and salt, washed and polished it until it had regained its original luster, splendor and shine. Afterwards, the owner [of the courtyard] gave orders that the rest of the treasure should be treated so.

My intent is to do the same with the hidden treasures of the heart, namely, to reveal them, and demonstrate their shining excellence, in order that anyone who wishes to draw close to G-d and cling to Him may do the same.

When, my brother, you have read this book, and comprehended its theme, take it for a remembrance. Bring your soul to a true judgement. Ponder it over, develop its thoughts. Cling it to your heart and mind. If you find an error in it, correct it; any omission, complete it. Have intent [when reading it] to follow its instruction and guidance. Do not have the aim of acquiring a name or to gain glory through its wisdom. Judge me leniently if you find any mistake, flaw, or whatever other shortcoming in its topics and words. For I hurried to compose it and did not tarry because I feared that death would overcome me and prevent me from my goal of completing it. You know how weak is the power of flesh to attain anything, and how deficient is man from fully grasping (the depth of something - *PL*), as Scripture says: "*Surely the sons of men are vanity; the sons of men are a lie; if they go up in the scales; they are altogether lighter than vanity*" (Ps. 62:10). I have already confessed from the outset on my insufficient strength. Let this admission atone for the errors and flaws in it.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "bring your soul to a true judgement" - behold since a man is biased on himself, it is unlikely that he will admit his own flaws and lackings and therefore will not judge himself correctly, as our Sages said (Shabbat 119a): "a man cannot see a fault in himself" - unless he habituates himself in much in-depth analyses and separation from worldly matters.

Pas Lechem: Do not be enticed by the evil inclination which desires to impede you, so that you continue conducting yourself in the same way you have done until now. He tries to befriend you with all sorts of false excuses. Rather judge your soul a true judgment and confess to its error and perverseness.)

You should know that all the Duties of the Heart and all disciplines of the soul, whether positive or negative, fall within these ten roots which I have composed in this book, just like many of the commandments fall under the precepts of *"love your fellow as yourself"* (Levit. 19:18), and under *"he did no evil to his fellow"* (Ps. 15:3), and under *"turn from evil and do good"* (Ps. 34:15).

Fix them to your mind. Return them to your thoughts continuously. Their derivatives will be made known to you, with G-d's help, when He will see your heart desiring in them and inclining to them, as written: *"Who is the man who fears the L-ord? Him will he instruct in the way that he should choose"* (Ps. 25:12).

(Pas Lechem: "return them to your thoughts" - since, by human nature, it is impossible to keep them continuously clinging in his thoughts, without any interruption, therefore he concluded and said that nevertheless, return them to your thoughts continuously.)

I saw fitting to conclude the introduction of this book with a wondrous parable, which will stimulate you to study its content, and arouse you to realize the special importance of this class of commandments over the others, as well as the difference between the level of the physical, philosophical, and linguistic wisdoms to the level of the wisdom of the Torah. Try to understand this parable when you read it. Recall it to your thoughts. You will find what you seek with G-d's help.

A king distributed balls of silk to his servants to check their intelligence. The industrious and sensible one sorted from the balls of silk allotted to him and selected the best quality ones. He then did the same with the remaining ones until he divided all of his portion into three grades - fine, medium, and coarse. He then made from each grade the best that could be done with it and had the material done by skilled craftsmen into expensive garments of various colors and styles, which he wore in the presence of the king, selecting garments suitable to the occasion and place.

The foolish among the king's servants used all the balls of silk to make that which the wise servant had made with the worst sort. He sold it for whatever he could get for it, and hastily squandered the money in good food and drink or the like.

When the matter came to the king, he was pleased with the deeds of the industrious and sensible one, drew him closer, and promoted him to a position of one of his treasured servants. The deeds of the foolish servant were evil in his eyes, and the king banished him to the faraway desert lands of his kingdom to dwell among those who had incurred the king's anger.

Likewise, the blessed Al-mighty gave His Torah of truth to His servants to test them. The thinking, intelligent man, when he reads it and understands it clearly, will divide it into three divisions. The first is the knowledge of fine spiritual themes, namely, the inner wisdom, such as the duties of the heart, the discipline of the soul and will obligate his soul on them always. Afterwards, he will select the second portion, namely, the practical duties of the limbs, doing each one in its proper time and place. Afterwards, he will make use of the third division, the historical portions of Scripture, to know the various types of men and their happenings in historical order, and the events of past ages and their hidden messages. He will use every part according to its proper occasion, place, and need.

Just like the industrious servant provided skilled craftsmen's tools in order to carry out his intentions in the manufacture of the silk of the king, so too, in each of these divisions, the intelligent man will use the help of the practical sciences, the science of logic, the science of language, etc. which he will employ as introductory to the science of theology. For one who is not knowledgeable in them cannot recognize the wisdom of the Creator in nature, and will not know the physical workings of his own body, much less for what is outside himself.

The foolish and distracted person when he occupies himself with the Book of G-d, uses it to learn riddles of the ancients or the historical accounts. He hastens to apply it for worldly benefits and will bring arguments from it to justify pursuing worldly pleasures, abandoning the way of abstinence (from the superfluous), going in his own way, and following the views and wishes of each type of person he meets, as written *"he shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray"* (Prov. 5:23).

(*Pas Lechem*: "to justify pursuing worldly pleasures" - such as the fools adducing proofs that it is proper to pursue wealth from the forefathers who were all wealthy. Or they bring proofs that the important ancients would pursue excessive sexual relations, as we find by David who had eighteen wives or Solomon who had a thousand wives. But these fools do not realize that we are blind, and we have no understanding whatsoever of the ancients and what was their true motives in their activities which appear strange to us. We must not adduce any proofs from them to be lenient but rather to be stringent.)

Examine, my brother, this analogy. Ponder it in your thoughts. Deduce from the Book of G-d what I have called to your attention. Seek help in this by reading the books of Rabeinu Saadiah Gaon (*Emunot V'Deot* -TL) which enlighten the mind, sharpen the understanding, instruct the ignorant, and arouse the lazy.

(*Translator*: "Examine, my brother, this analogy" - see the Marpe Lenefesh commentary for a mystical interpretation.)

May the Almighty teach us the way of His service, as His anointed one beseeched Him: "*You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; in Your right hand bliss forevermore*" (Ps. 16:11).