

**** Shaar Ahavas Ha-Shem - Gate of Love of G-d ****

(with classic commentaries)
from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart
by Rabeinu Bahya ibn Paquda zt'l

english translation by Rabbi Yosef Sebag

Level: Intermediate

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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 Hacoheh (1740-1815)

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

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

Translator's Foreword:

The following is a translation of the tenth gate 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 this second revision, I added select commentaries and also checked/compared every sentence against the brilliant translation by Rabbi Moses Hyamson O.B.M., the former chief Rabbi and head Dayan of England between 1911 and 1913. The translator 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 Tevet 5774 - December 2013

***** Shaar Ahavas Ha-Shem - Gate of Love of G-d *****

from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart

by Rabeinu Bahya zt'l

***** INTRODUCTION *****

Since our previous discussion in the ninth gate dealt with clarifying the subject of separating from this world, and our intent in it was to unify the heart (away from the lusts of this world - *LT*) and free it for love of the Creator, and for yearning to do His will, I saw proper to follow with a clarification of the ways of love of G-d, because it is the purpose of all the steps, and the final stage in the levels of the men who serve G-d. I will begin, and I seek from G-d to help me.

It is proper for you, my brother, that you understand and that you know, that everything we previously mentioned of

the duties of the heart and limbs, and the volunteering of the soul (that the soul must volunteer on its own, and devote itself to Him, as already mentioned many times in this book - PL), they are all rungs and steps leading to this sublime matter, which is our intent to clarify in this gate. It is also proper for you to know that every duty and every good quality, whether it comes through reason, scripture, or tradition, are all steps and stages by which one ascends to this matter, and it is their ultimate purpose and destination. There is no level above it or after it.

Therefore, because of this, the prophet (Moshe), peace be upon him, placed it immediately after the unity of G-d, in saying: *"Hear, O Israel: The L-ord is our G-d; the L-ord is one; And you shall love the L-ord, your G-d..."* (Devarim 6:4), and he exhorted on it, and returned to it many times, as written: *"To love the L-ord your G-d, to hearken to His voice, and to cleave to Him"* (Devarim 30:20). The meaning of cleaving is: faithful love, and wholehearted devotion, as written: *"there is a friend who cleaves closer than a brother"* (Mishlei 18:24).

Frequently the torah places fear of G-d before love of Him, as written *"And now, Israel, what does the L-ord your G-d require of you, but to fear the L-ord your G-d, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him"* (Devarim 10:12), and it says: *"You shall fear the L-ord your G-d; and to Him shall you cling"* (Devarim 10:20). It is correct to place fear of G-d before love of G-d because [fear of G-d] is the final purpose and furthest end of abstinence, which in turn is the nearest level approaching the lowest level of love of G-d, and the first gate of its gates, and it is impossible for a man to reach it without preceding fear and fright of G-d. (fear is from far, while fright (pachad) is from close - PL)

And therefore, we have preceded the gate of abstinence, because it is impossible to establish love of G-d in our hearts if the love of this world is established there. But when the heart of the believer is empty from the love of this world and free of its lusts, out of recognition and understanding - the love of the Creator will establish in his heart, and it will be set in his soul according to his yearning to Him, and his recognition of Him, as written: *"In the way of Your judgments, O L-ord, have we waited for You [the desire of our soul is to Your Name, and to the remembrance of You]"* (Yeshaya 26:8) (hence, the souls of the perfect yearn to Him - PL).

It is fitting that we clarify of the subject of love of G-d seven matters:

1. What is the matter of love G-d?
2. How many kinds of love of G-d are there?
3. What is the path to it?
4. If it is possible or not for a human being to love G-d
5. matters detrimental to it
6. Its marks, through which it is identified in a believer
7. The practices of those who love G-d.

*** CHAPTER 1 ***

What is love of G-d? It is the longing of the soul - and its turning, on its own, to the Creator, so that it can cleave to His supernal light. For the soul is of an essence which is pure and spiritual, it tends towards spiritual things similar to itself. By nature, it removes itself from what is opposite to its nature, namely the coarse physical bodies.

When the Creator, blessed be He, bound the soul to this coarse physical body in order to test it, how it would guide the body (i.e. the test being whether the soul would be mindful and strengthen itself to guide the body or whether it would be lazy and be drawn after the body - PL). G-d aroused the soul to care for the body, and further its welfare, through the partnership and companionship which was naturally ingrained between them from the beginning of the development (of the body).

When the soul senses something which will benefit the body or further its welfare, she will turn in her thoughts to that thing and desire it, in order to secure for herself peace from the pains of the body and the external things (worries, drives) which pain the body. This is similar to the desiring of a sick man for an expert doctor who appoints a helper to (the doctor) so that the doctor can focus on him.

| (so too the soul thinks on things which are for the benefit of the body, so the body can be free to heal the soul which is love sick for G-d - ML, PL)

But when the soul (becomes complete and the intellect strengthens, then the soul - TL) senses, that there are matters which will increase light in her own essence and power in herself. (and that the body is only secondary to the soul - TL) The soul will then tend instead towards G-d, and will cling to Him in its thoughts, and in its imagination will ponder instead how to come closer to Him, and will desire to Him and long to Him. This is the highest level of pure love (of G-d).

But since the matter is so (that the soul also worries for the needs of the body), and the callings of the body are numerous, and its callings for that which will fill its lackings are constant, at all times, and all periods, (and potential problems of the body can happen at all times, one is not assured from them for even one second - *PL*) and the soul is not able to pause from thinking on all of this, because she has no tranquility and no rest without having peace from the ailings of her body (which always has a demand, lust, or worry) - therefore the soul became constantly distracted with the matters of the body from the things she loves which are fitting for her, and resemble her essence, through which are found her success in the abode of her tranquility (in the afterlife).

But when the light of the understanding penetrates to the soul, and it will reveal to her the disgrace of having turned to the body in love, and having been drawn after it in her thoughts, along with ignoring what will bring her salvation in both worlds - she will desist from this, and leave all of its worldly interests to the gracious Creator, and will turn in her thoughts to seek ways of her salvation from the great trap she is ensnared in, and by which she had been so greatly tempted. Then she will separate from the secular world and all of its pleasures, and will despise the body and its lusts.

| (*Pas Lechem*: "despise the body and its lusts" - either due to the baseness of the physical lusts or due to the pettiness of the body, that it is not worthwhile to expend effort for it and fulfill its lusts.)

Not so long after this, the soul's eyes will open, and her vision will clarify from the cloud of ignorance of G-d and His torah, and she will discern the truth from the false, and the truth of its Creator and Guide will be revealed to her.

When the soul understands His omnipotence, and His infinite greatness, it will kneel down and prostrate before Him, in fear, fright, and awe of His power and greatness, and she will not leave this state until the Creator will reassure her, and quiet her fright and awe - then it will drink from the cup of love of G-d, and will enjoy the bliss of being alone with G-d, devoting herself wholeheartedly to Him, loving Him, putting her trust in Him, and yearning for Him. She will have no other occupation than the occupation of His service, and no musings other than of Him and no thought other than of Him. She will not move any of her limbs except to do something which will gain His favor. She will not unbind her tongue except to recall Him, praise Him, thank Him, and laud Him out of love for Him and out of longing to do His will. If He bestows a benefit on her, she will thank Him. If He brings suffering on her, she will patiently bear it, and will only increase her love for Him and trust in Him (since He punished her for her sins in this world to spare her from the [harsher] punishments in the next world - *PL*), as said about one of the pious who would rise in the middle of the night and say:

"My G-d, You have starved me, left me without clothing, and set me in the darkness of night (he had no money for a candle - *PL*), and I swear by Your might and greatness that if You burn me in fire, I will only increase in love of You and joy in You. This is similar to what Iyov said: "Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him" (Iyov 13:15).

On this matter the wise man alluded to in saying: "a bundle of myrrh is my beloved unto me, between my breasts he shall rest" (Shir Hashirim 1:13), which our sages expounded this verse saying: "even though my beloved is causing me pain and bitterness like myrrh, 'He rests between my breasts' " (Shabbat 88b) (love of Him is stuck in my heart, since the heart is between the breasts - *PL*). Similarly the prophet (Moshe) said: "And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Devarim 6:5).

*** CHAPTER 2 ***

In how many ways is the love of G-d? I will answer this question as follows. The love of a slave for his master is in one of 3 ways:

1. The slave loves him because the master benefits him and shows kindness to him.
2. The slave loves him because the master frequently overlooks his transgressions, abundantly forgives him, and atones for his sins.
3. The slave loves him due to his great and exalted character, and reveres him for his inherent nobility - not out of hope [for benefit] nor out of fear [of punishment].

Analogously is the love of G-d by us.

1. Either we love Him due to his abundant kindness on us, and continuous goodness to us. Thus we will love Him out of hope for more future benefit.
2. Or we love Him due to His ignoring of our sins (to give us time to repent), forgiving our transgressions, in spite of our abundantly rebelling against Him and transgressing His commandments.
3. For some, their love of G-d is due to reverence of G-d Himself - His glory, His greatness and His exaltedness - this is the pure love of G-d, blessed be He.

The prophet (Moshe), peace be unto him, has already exhorted us in this [latter way] in saying: "*And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*" (Devarim 6:5).

His intent in saying "*And you shall love the L-ord, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your might*", is to correspond to the different types of people, with their different mindsets with respect to their giving of themselves versus not giving of themselves of their bodies, money, and honor. For some of them are prepared to give of themselves their body and money, but not of their honor, which they withhold. Others, are prepared to give of themselves their money and honor, but not their body. Others, still are prepared to give their body and honor, but not their money, as our sages said: "If it says 'with all your soul', why should it also say, 'with all your might (means)' and if it says 'with all your might', why should it also say 'with all your soul'? (Answer) Should there be a man whose life is dearer than his money, for him it says; 'with all your soul'; and should there be a man whose money is dearer than his life, for him it says, 'with all your might (means)'" (Talmud Berachot 61b).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Hence, it is our duty to offer to Him even the good He bestowed to us in the past (money), and to accept on ourselves even the harshest sufferings (of our body) for Him. If so, certainly, we should not love Him out of hope for future additional benefits or to be spared from suffering.)

One can also render the intent of "*And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*" (Devarim 6:5) to be referring to the three ways in which people love each other. This can be seen in the three types of friends.

1. One who volunteers towards doing the will of the one he loves with his money only.
2. One who volunteers towards doing the will of the one he loves with his body (by physically helping) or with his money.
3. One who volunteers towards doing the will of the one he loves with his money, body, and life, as the wise man said: "*Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*" (Shir HaShirim 8:7), and it is written about Yehonatan and David: "*for he loved him as he loved his own soul*" (Shmuel 20:17), and "*wonderful was your love to me, passing the love of women*" (Shmuel II 1:26).

Therefore, the prophet exhorted us in the love of the Creator, that it should include one's life, body, and money, that a man should volunteer all of these out of love of the Creator, and not be sparing in any of them in the fulfillment of the Creator's will. So our Sages said: "*with all your hearts' means with your two inclinations, the good inclination and [resisting] the evil inclination. 'With all your soul' means even if one has to give up his life. 'With all your means', means with all your money*" (Talmud Berachot 54a). They also said: "Do His will as if it were your will, that He may do your will as if it was His will. Nullify your will before His will, that He may nullify the will of others before your will" (Avos 2:4).

One can also explain the intent of "*And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*" (Devarim 6:5) to be referring to cleaving to the love of G-d inwardly, and to exhibit it outwardly, until the genuineness of the believer's love will be recognizable inwardly and outwardly, privately and publicly, in a way that it will be manifested uniformly and in the proper way, in the same amount and in the same level, as David said: "*my heart and my flesh cry out for the living G-d*" (Tehilim 84:3).

One can also explain the intent of "*And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might*" (Devarim 6:5) to mean that all of your love for anything besides Him and all of your efforts on behalf of someone besides Him be for His sake - to not associate love of someone else with the love of G-d, and if you love someone else, that it be in a way that He would be pleased with, so that this love is a branch of your love for Him. Therefore, he said "*with all*", with each of them (love G-d), as I explained in Gate 3 chapter 5 of this book regarding the intellectual urge.

*** CHAPTER 3 ***

What is the way to attaining love of G-d? I answer this question as follows:

This request is not possible for the seeker without many prerequisites. When the prerequisites are fulfilled, there will emerge from them the love of G-d. But one who has intent to it directly will not reach it.

The prerequisites which it is proper for the believer to first acquire in his soul are: two types of unity of heart, two types of humility, two types of spiritual accountings, and two types of examinations.

The two types of unity [of heart]:

- 1) Wholehearted acknowledgment of the Creator's unity.

(Lev Tov: That in every act that one does, there should be in his heart only one sole intent - to do this act for G-d, and to serve Him only for His honor's sake.)

The two types of humility:

1) Humility before G-d

2) Humility before the G-d fearing (who turn from bad), and those who choose in Him (who do good and choose His service - PL).

The two types of spiritual accountings:

1) To make a spiritual accounting with oneself on what one owes to G-d in return for His continuous benefits.

2) To make a spiritual accounting with oneself for (what he owes G-d for - LT) G-d's hiding of his sins (from other people so that he will not be a disgrace in their eyes - PL), and withholding (punishment) from him for a long time, and His forgiving (those he repented on - TL).

The two types of examinations:

1) Reflecting on what happened to the early ones (of the miracles, wonders, and salvations of G-d - TL), by studying the books of the prophets, and the books of the early ones, as written: "I remember the days of yore; I meditate over all Your works" (Tehilim 143:5).

2) Reflecting on the world (nature), wherein one sees some of the wonders of the Creator exhibited in His creations. I have already clarified in this book, some general principles in this subject, according to my ability, what is sufficient for one who understands and intends for what leads to his deliverance and salvation in this world and in the next.

When one will fulfill all of these and combine them with abstinence from the pleasures and lusts of this world, and he understands the greatness of the Creator, His might and exaltedness, reflects how small is his own worth, how puny and lowly he is, and he comes to realize the great benevolence of the Creator on him, and His great kindness with him - then the love of G-d from the believer will come. It will come with a perfect heart and with genuine purity of soul, and with a longing for G-d that will be with exertion, zeal, and passion, similar to what was said: "With my soul have I yearned for You in the night" (Yeshaya 26:9), and "the desire of our soul is to Your Name, and to the remembrance of You" (Yeshaya 26:8), and "My soul thirsts for You" (Tehilim 63:2), and "My soul thirsts for G-d" (Tehilim 42:3).

And the most powerful things which aid in reaching this exalted level are:

* Great awe of G-d (of His greatness - PL)

* Dread of Him (dread of punishment for doing evil - PL)

* Fear of His commandments (fear of neglecting to do good - PL)

* A constant awareness that He contemplates your hidden and revealed, your inner and outer life, and that He is guiding you, and has compassion on you, and that He knows all of your thoughts and deeds which you did in your past and will do in the future, and that He has promised to you (reward for doing His service - LT), and has drawn you close to Him.

With all of this, you will not be able to refrain from turning to Him in your heart and in your inner being, with a pure heart and a perfect faith, and you will cling to love of Him, and trust on His compassion (in saving you from damages - PL), His great grace (in providing your needs - PL) and His mercy (for not exacting justice on a man for his sins - PL). You will not associate love of Him with love of anyone else. And He will not observe you and see in you fear of something else besides Him. You will never find Him absent in your thoughts, and He will never depart from being opposite your eyes. Your companionship will be in solitude, and He will dwell with you in the deserts. A place full of people will seem in your eyes as if it is not full (that their matters will not frighten you - shinui nusach), and a place empty of them will seem as if it's not empty. You will not feel lonely when they are gone nor worry in their absence (since you have no desire for them and don't need them - PL) You will always be rejoicing with your G-d, delighting to be with your Creator, seeking His favor, and longing for His visitation, as written: "The righteous will rejoice with G-d and take refuge in Him" (Tehilim 64:11), and the prophet said: "Yet, I will rejoice in the L-ord; I will jubilate in the G-d of my salvation" (Chavakuk 3:18), and David said: "G-d is my light and salvation, from who shall I fear?" (Tehilim 27:1), and the rest of the Psalm.

*** CHAPTER 4 ***

Is love of G-d within a human being's ability or not? I will answer this as follows.

There are three kinds of love:

1. That it is easy in the eyes of the lover to lose money due to his love, but not his body and life.

2. That it is easy in the eyes of the lover to lose money due to his love and also [to lose] part of his body, provided he will remain alive.
3. Love for which it is easy for the lover to give up his money, his body, and his life due to his love.

We find that Avraham our patriarch, peace be unto him, demonstrated his love of G-d in all these ways, in his willingness to give up his money, his body, and his life.

With his money: He would spend it in hospitality to the wayfarers, in order to give them knowledge of the Creator; what he told the king of Sodom: *"Neither from a thread to a shoe strap, nor will I take from whatever is yours"* (Bereishis 14:23), all this is proof of his generosity of soul and that money was light in his eyes (for his love of G-d).

With his body: In the brit mila (circumcision), he did not hesitate to fulfill it joyously on himself and on others.

His generosity in willingness to give up his life out of love of G-d, he demonstrated by his energy and zeal in the matter of [offering up] Yitzchak (who he loved like himself - TL) which showed his pure love of G-d, and the faithfulness of his heart in the service of G-d.

This is the highest of the levels of love of G-d. It cannot be reached by every human being because it is beyond the capacity of ordinary flesh since it runs against the nature of a man and is opposite to it.

(*Pas Lechem*: Since human nature is to guard one's life, which is the opposite of losing it. Hence, when one's soul offers to give up her life for the Creator, the human nature stands opposite it since this runs contrary to it.)

When it is found among exceptional individuals, it exists only due to the Creator's strengthening them and His helping them so that the evil inclination will not overpower them. This comes as a reward for their [great] exertion in His service and their fulfillment of the commandments of His torah with a faithful soul, perfect heart, and pure mind. Such were G-d's prophets and His elect and treasured ones. It is not possible for every human being to bear what we mentioned due to love of G-d, because nature and the evil inclination are against it. But the former two kinds are within the ability of most people provided they exert themselves to fulfill the prerequisites we mentioned in this gate.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "it exists only due to the Creator's strengthening them and His helping them" - except for Avraham, who reached this level without G-d's help because since the Creator tested him in this, certainly He did not help him to attain it)

(Even though love of G-d by willingness to give up one's life is a lofty level, nevertheless, the first two levels are also evidence of genuine love of G-d - LT) That which teaches that the first two kinds are evidence of genuine love of G-d in a person, we can see from what Satan said: *"Does Iyov (Job) fear G-d for nothing? Have not You made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions are increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now, [and touch all that he has, surely he will blaspheme You to Your face]"* (Iyov 1:9), which he meant: "he is like a merchant doing business with You, since with his love and fear of You, his price from you in return is honor and wealth of the world. But if You take away from him what You have bestowed on him and he remains in his piety with You - then he is faithful in genuine love of You". The Creator answered the Satan: *"behold, everything of his is in your hands..."* (Iyov 1:12). And then Satan did what you know from the text with his money and his children, and Iyov did not change, neither inwardly or outwardly towards G-d. He maintained his faithful love to G-d, as he said: *"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return [to the grave]: the L-ord gave, and the L-ord has taken away; blessed be the name of the L-ord"* (Iyov 1:21).

Then the Creator said to Satan: *"Have you considered My servant Iyov, that there is none like him on earth, a wholehearted and upright man, that fears G-d, and shuns evil? And he still holds fast his integrity, though you moved Me against him, to destroy him without cause"* (Iyov 2:3). And Satan answered: *"Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has will he give for his life; But put forth Your hand, and strike his flesh and bones, and he will curse You to Your face"* (Iyov 2:4). What Satan meant was: "many people will give up their money, their wives and their children, in order to keep their own bodies unharmed. But the genuineness of Iyov's love for You can only be demonstrated when he is tried and tested in his own body and flesh, through pains inflicted on him, and which he will resent".

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: even though a son is dear to his father, as before with Avraham, here it is not the same, since to slaughter him with his own hands like Avraham, that is equivalent to sacrificing oneself, but for Iyov, the Satan killed his children without his knowledge, and he merely accepted the

Then the Creator answered Satan: *"Behold, he is in your hand; but spare his life"* (Iyov 2:6). Satan then did as he said of afflicting Iyov's body, and Iyov bore it patiently and did not change in his faithfulness and good heart to G-d, in saying to his wife: *"You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. What? shall we receive good at the hand of G-d, and shall we not receive the bad?"* (Iyov 2:10).

Thus the genuineness of his love and his purity of heart to G-d was demonstrated to he who doubted it, in his bearing the loss of his money and the suffering of his body, and he did not condemn the judgment of G-d, and even said in answer to his friends: *"Though He slay me, yet will I hope in Him"* (Iyov 13:15).

Hence the Creator praised him for this, and did not praise his friends for rebuking him, as written: *"the L-ord said to Eliphaz the Teimanite, My wrath is kindled against you, and against your two friends: for you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Iyov has"* (Iyov 42:7).

You can observe that the Creator associated two righteous men with Iyov and brought them up as examples in saying: *"though these three men be in its midst - Noah, Daniel, and Iyov - they would save themselves with their righteousness, says the L-ord, G-d"* (Yechezkel 14:14). And afterwards G-d restored to Iyov his prosperity as written: *"the L-ord restored the prosperity of Iyov"* (Iyov 42:10).

Such too were the sentiments and conducts of the early pious ones who were subjected to trials, such as Daniel in the lion's den and his three companions in the fiery furnace, the ten martyrs, and those who conducted themselves as them.

(*Tov Halevanon*: those tests are not comparable to the test of Avraham, because the tests of other pious ones came from other human beings' wickedness and free will on them, and G-d helped those pious ones to stand up to the test, and sanctify His Name. Sometimes G-d even performed miracles for them. But in the test of Avraham, however, G-d Himself tested him, and Avraham himself stood up to the test on his own, without help, out of his great piety.)

The prophet (Moses) exhorts on us to attain this degree of love in saying: *"And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might"* (Devarim 6:4).

Nevertheless, if one strives always to reach the degree of love of G-d motivated by hope for benefit or fear of punishment in this world and in the next world, which is in the ability of most human beings to attain, the Creator will strengthen and help him, on the genuine love, which springs from reverence of the greatness and exaltedness of the Creator, which is beyond the ability of flesh, as the verse says: *"I will cause love to those that love Me (i.e. help them to love Me beyond their natural ability - LT); And those that seek Me diligently shall find Me"* (Mishlei 8:17), and *"But he who sins against Me harms his soul; [all who hate me, love death]"* (Mishlei 8:36).

(*Pas Lechem*: since it is difficult on the nature of a man to reach this level without divine help, and through coming to purify oneself on his own by reaching the first level, G-d will help him to reach this second level...and when exerting to reach the first level, one should have intent to not remain there and be satisfied with it, but rather he should have intent that through it, G-d will help him to reach the second level, which is that G-d's will is more primary to you [than your own will], and that you are more joyful in fulfilling it, than you are joyful in fulfilling your own will.)

*** CHAPTER 5 ***

The things detrimental to the love of G-d are exceedingly numerous.

Among them, that a man falls short in fulfilling the prerequisites from which the love of G-d emerges.

Among them, the things detrimental in the previous gates, which we have explained earlier in this book, and it is not necessary to repeat them, so that the matter does not become lengthy.

Among them, hatred of those who love G-d, and love of those who hate Him, as written: *"Should you help the wicked, and love them that hate the L-ord?"* (Divrei Hayamim II 19:2), and it says: *"...justify the wicked"* (Yeshaya 5:23), and *"He that justifies the wicked, and he that condemns the just, [even they both are an abomination to the*

L-ord]" (Mishlei 17:15), and *"Those who forsake the Torah praise the wicked"* (Mishlei 28:4), and *"He that says unto the wicked, you are righteous; [him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him]"* (Mishlei 24:24).

*** CHAPTER 6 ***

The signs of genuine love recognizable in one who loves Him:

* Abandoning every unnecessary thing that distracts him from the service of the Creator. (since unnecessary things distracts one away from the service of G-d, therefore he abandons them - PL)

* That signs of fear and awe of G-d is visible on his face, as written: *"that His fear may be before your faces, that you sin not"* (Shemot 20:20).

There are two kinds of fear of G-d:

1. Fear of G-d's punishment and trial. This person fears G-d only out of fear of what will bring him suffering and ruin, because if he were assured against the suffering, he would not fear G-d. Of such a person, our sages said: *"let us be concerned lest he come to serve out of fear"* (Megila 25b). This type of person is falling short in the levels of the fear of G-d, and this is what our sages warned us against in saying: *"Be not like servants who minister unto their master for the sake of receiving a reward"* (Avot 1:3).

One of the pious would say: "I would be ashamed before G-d to serve Him for receiving reward or to avoid punishment, whereby I would be like a bad servant, that if he fears or hopes for reward - he will do his duty, but if not - he will not do it. Rather, I serve Him because it is befitting to do so."

The second type of fear is awe inspired by His glory, exaltedness, and almighty power. This awe never parts from a man for all the days of his life. It is the highest of the levels of the G-d fearing, which are mentioned in the books which deal with this topic. It is the introductory path to pure love, and the painful (burning - TL) yearning. Whoever reaches this level of fear of G-d, will not be frightened by anything nor fear anything besides the Creator, as one of the pious would tell over on a G-d fearing man which he found sleeping in the wilderness. He asked the man: "are you not afraid of lions, that you sleep in a place like this?". The man answered: "I would be ashamed before G-d, if He saw me afraid of other than Him".

(it must be the man got lost or the like and wound up in a dangerous wilderness, because one who deliberately goes to a dangerous place is a reckless fool, and the sages forbid one to put himself in danger and rely on a miracle - R.Yaakov Emden zt'l, *Translator*: Perhaps he was given special permission from G-d.)

MORE SIGNS OF ONE WHO GENUINELY LOVES G-d

* Another sign (of love of G-d) is that in fulfilling G-d's will, it is equal in his eyes, if people praise him or scorn him when, to please the Creator, he bids them on doing good or refraining from evil.

* Another sign, that he is willing to give up his life, body, money, and children to do the will of the Creator, as written *"For Your sake are we slain all the day long;"* (Tehilim 44:23).

* Another sign, that he always has the name of G-d on his tongue, in praise, thanksgiving, and psalms, as written: *"And my tongue shall utter Your righteousness, Your praise all day long"* (Tehilim 35:28), and *"my mouth shall be filled with Your praise"* (Tehilim 71:8), and he will not utter the name of G-d in vain, in falsehood, or in a curse.

A vain oath means to utter an oath idly, without need and without necessity such as when not being forced by a Beit Din (court). A false oath is an oath that the court obligates a person in the course of business rulings and he swears falsely.

Out of honor for G-d, one is obligated to guard from everything that might lead to making an oath in the name of the blessed Creator, whether to confirm truth or refute false, and all the more so to confirm false or refute truth, as written: *"He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not taken My name in vain and has not sworn deceitfully"* (Tehilim 24:4), and *"to fear this glorious and awesome Name, the L-ord, your G-d"* (Devarim 28:58), and *"But unto you that fear My Name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings"* (Malachi 3:20), and our sages said: "this refers to men who are afraid of uttering G-d's Name unnecessarily." (Nedarim 8b).

In a curse: They are the curses, insults, blasphemies, in which the Name of G-d is uttered. This is a great disgrace for a believer. Common people already permitted themselves on this until they have reached the ultimate in disgrace, and their intent in this is to emphasize their provocations and increase and aggrandize their insults, and they are similar in this to what the wise man said: *"It is as sport to a fool to do wickedness"* (Mishlei 10:23), and *"on his orphans and his widows He shall not have mercy, for all of them are hypocrites and evil doers, and every mouth speaks obscene language"* (Yeshaya 9:16), and *"The tongue of the righteous is choice silver"* (Mishlei 10:20).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: it is obvious from many sources that the prohibition of uttering G-d's name in vain does not differentiate whether it is in Hebrew or any other language in the world. Likewise it is obvious that it doesn't matter whether it is the Tetragrammaton or any other (Kinuyim) substitute name.)

* Another sign: That he makes a condition before promising to do something and says: "G-d willing", even when the matter is to be done very shortly, This is due to two things: One, out of fear of the swift coming of his death and he will not be able to fulfill what he promised. Two, because he does not know if it was decreed by G-d that he should carry out the promise.

* Another sign: That he straightens people and teaches them the path to the service of G-d, whether with soft words or with harsh words, according to what is needed for the time and place, and according to the class and level of the people, and that he does so to everyone, from the great men down to the men of the shuk (market), as the wise man said: *"a wise man will hear, and will increase in learning;"* (Mishlei 1:5), and *"To give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion"* (Mishlei 1:4).

It is proper for you to know, my brother, regarding the merit of the believer, that even if he reaches the furthest extreme in the rectification of his soul in its devotion to G-d and came near to the prophets, in their good traits, praiseworthy conduct, zeal in the service of G-d and pure love of Him, it is not like the merit of one who leads people to the good path, and straightens the wicked to the service of G-d, because his merits multiply according to their merits, every day and at all times. (their merits will be attributed also to him - PL)

The analogy of this is to two merchants who came to a country. One of them profited from the merchandise in his hand ten times the original value (of 10 gold coins), bringing to a total of one hundred gold coins.

The second merchant profited only two times his original value, but he brought many types of merchandise (worth 5,000 gold coins), bringing a total of ten thousand gold coins.

Therefore, the profit of the first merchant, even with his profiting 10-fold amounted only to 90 gold coins, while the second merchant profited 5000 gold coins even though he profited only two-fold.

Likewise, my brother, if one rectifies only himself, he will have a small merit. But if one rectifies himself and many other people, he will have his merit multiplied according to the merits of all the people who he rectified to G-d, as our sages said: *"Whoever brings merit to the masses will not come to any sin"* (Avot 5:18), and our sages said: *"Moshe was righteous and caused the multitude to become righteous, the merit of the multitudes is attributed to him, as written 'he performed the righteousness of G-d and His judgments with Israel'"*, and the wise man said: *"But to them that rebuke shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon them"* (Mishlei 24:25), and *"The law of truth was in his mouth - and turned many away from iniquity"* (Malachi 2:6), and *"those who bring merit to the multitudes will be like the stars forever and ever"* (Daniel 12:3).

(Translator: *"he will have his merit multiplied"* - but if a person focuses only on rectifying others, and does not rectify himself, then his merit multiplied is like zero x 100 = zero. See also Michtav M'Eliyahu vol.3 pg.32)

Therefore, the Creator commanded us to rebuke those that fall short in the fulfillment of their duties, as written: *"you shall surely rebuke your fellow"* (Vayikra 19:17), and our sages taught: "until when is it one's duty to rebuke? Rav said: 'until he curses you', Shmuel said: 'until he assaults you' " (Erechin 16b), and it is said: *"He that rebukes a man shall find more favor afterwards than he that flatters with the tongue"* (Mishlei 28:23).

* Another sign (of love of G-d) is joy and delight in one's merits, not out of pride or arrogance but out of rejoicing in them (because he drew close to G-d - ML), while mourning and grieving over his sins, repenting and regretting them as David said: *"Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they did not keep Your Torah"* (Tehilim 119:136).

* Another sign: That he prostrates himself at night and fasts by day, if he is able to do this, because prayer at night is purer than prayer by day for several reasons:

1. A man is more free (from his affairs) during the night than he is during the day.
2. the cravings of the body for food and drink are quieter at night than they are by day.
3. Pause from social interaction with other people, such as being visited by a friend, or a neighbor who wants to converse with him, or a lender claiming payment from what is due to him.
4. At night, the senses have tranquility from the numerous sensations, because he does not see things that distract him, nor hear things that interrupt (his thoughts).

5. Being saved and distanced from flattery, due to the few number of people who are awake at night with him, while during the day, it is possible that he will not be able to spend any time in solitude.
6. He is better able to commune with G-d in thinking of Him, and being in solitude with Him, at a time when every lover communes with the one who loves him and every desirer is alone with the one who desires him, as written: *"My soul yearns for You in the night"* (Yeshaya 26:9), and *"By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loves"* (Shir Hashirim 3:1).

Prayer at night is praised in the holy scriptures, such as: *"At night I remembered Your name, O L-ord..."* (Tehilim 119:55), and *"At midnight, I rise to give thanks to You..."* (Tehilim 119:62), and *"I rose before the dawning of the morning, and cried out"* (Tehilim 119:147), and *"My eyes preceded the watches to speak of Your word"* (Tehilim 119:148), and *"at night I was opposite You"* (Tehilim 88:2), and *"Arise, cry out in the night, Pour out your heart like water before G-d"* (Eicha 2:19), and many more like this.

I have already prepared some strong words, which rebuke and shame the soul, so that it be stirred in the service and aroused to pray at night. These are in the Hebrew language, and I called it: "Rebuke" (Tochecha). Afterwards, I have appended to these some poetic words in Hebrew of praise and thanksgiving to G-d and request of forgiveness and supplications, soft words, which arouse the heart of the reader, and stir his nature, and I called it: "Request" (Bakasha). I appended them at the end of this book, for one who wishes to recite them as prayers at night or by day.

One who would like to take on himself this matter should do as follows: He should recite the "Rebuke" sitting down after having read some known religious songs or others (if one composes his own praises according to his will - TL), and then to stand up and in a bowed posture, to read the "Request" until the end, and then to kneel and say whatever supplications he wishes, and after that Psalm 119 and the Shir Hamaalot Psalms (120-134), until the end. If one would like to say different prayers or use any other order, he may do so. I merely suggested the ideal conduct in it.

The main thing, my brother, is the purity of soul and intent of heart while you are offering up the prayer, and that you recite it slowly, and likewise for the things near it (the things before and after it - LT). Let not your tongue hurry before your heart, for a little of it with your heart in it is better than a lot of it with the swift movements of your tongue and a heart devoid of it.

One of the pious would say: "do not praise empty praises, meaning, empty of having your heart in it. Rather, it should be with your heart in it, as David said: "With my whole heart have I sought You" (Tehilim 119:10), and *"I entreated You with all my heart"* (Tehilim 119:58), and *"my heart and my flesh cry out for the living G-d"* (Tehilim 84:3).

* Another sign: Joy and gladness in G-d and in knowing Him, and longing to find favor with Him, delighting in love of Him, clinging to His torah, compassion on those who fear Him, as written: *"I am a friend to all who fear You and to those who keep your precepts"* (Tehilim 119:63), and *"All who seek You shall exult and rejoice"* (Tehilim 40:17), and *"I have rejoiced in the way of your testimonies, as much as in all riches"* (Tehilim 119:14), and *"Your testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart"* (Tehilim 119:111), and *"Yet, I will rejoice in the L-ord; I will jubilate in the G-d of my salvation"* (Chavakuk 3:18).

*** CHAPTER 7 ***

The good practices of those who love G-d (i.e. that result from love of G-d - TL) are too numerous to enumerate. Nevertheless, I will mention of them a few that occur to me.

These men know their G-d (which is the head of all knowledge, as in Divre Hayamim 28:9 'know the G-d of your father and serve Him' - ML) (see Gate 1), and they recognize what He wants from them (and why He brought them to this world - ML, alternative: that He desires in human beings, i.e. He chose them (humans) to serve Him - PL), and that He guides them, maintains them and provides for them, and that everything religious or secular which He gave them permission and free will to do is still under His control and bound by His rule.

(Marpe Lenefesh: even though man has free will, nevertheless, every matter, secular or religious, is in His hand and under His authority regarding whether the matter will be successfully carried out or not. Therefore, they placed their trust in G-d in all of their matters.)

It has become clear to them and they believe that all of their affairs and movements proceed according to the decree and desire of the Creator. Therefore they no longer prefer to be in a different situation than the one they are in, and they trust in the Creator, that He will choose the best and most proper situation for them.

When it became clear to them from the torah, that G-d exhorts them on fulfilling the mitzvot (precepts), commands

them to choose the service of the Creator (such as *"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursè, and you will choose life"* (Devarim 30:19) - *ML*), and warns them to avoid choosing after bodily pleasures, but rather abstain from them - they chose to follow what He wants, namely, to long for Him, to yearn to do His will in their hearts and inner being. In their hearts and souls, they ceased yearning for this world and its enchantments, but they hope to receive help and strength from Him in order to achieve their ambition in His service, and to complete the work they have chosen in fulfilling His commandments.

For what they have accomplished, they will praise and thank G-d for it, and G-d will praise them for their efforts and choice. And for what they were not able to accomplish of their ambitions, due to their weakness in reaching it, they excuse themselves before G-d (in prayer and explain their impediments in this - *PL*), and will resolve to do it when they will be more capable. They hope to the time when the Creator will help them to do it, and they will beseech Him on this with a pure soul and a faithful heart. This is their greatest desire, and final wish from G-d, as David said: *"My hope is that my ways be established, to keep Your statutes"* (Tehilim 119:5). And the Creator will praise their choice of His service, even if they are prevented from fulfilling the acts, as He said to David *"Since it was in your heart to build a house unto My name, you did well that it was in your heart"* (Melachim 8:18).

In their hearts and minds, they abandoned matters of this world, and care of their body's welfare, except for what is necessary and urgent, due to its pettiness by them, and insignificance in their eyes. They concentrate their hearts and souls to their religious matters and to the service of G-d, due to His glory and exaltedness. Their bodies are on earth but their hearts are in the heavens. Due to the knowledge of the greatness of G-d in their hearts, they serve Him as if they were with the holy angels in the highest heavens.

The [physical] lusts have melted away from their hearts, and the desire for pleasures has been uprooted from them, due to being replaced with the yearning for the Creator's service and their love of Him.

The fire of the evil inclination has extinguished from their hearts, and its heat is gone from their thoughts due to the magnitude of the light of divine service which has engulfed them, similar to a candle in the presence of the light of the sun. They are humbled by awe of their G-d. They confess their shortcomings before Him. They bore their shoulders to His service, not caring about any losses (incurred in matters of this world - *TL*)

When coming in contact with them, they seem shy, but when one speaks with them, their wisdom will appear. When one asks them something, they seem knowledgeable. When they are sinned against, their humility will appear.

When you look at them, their faces appear radiant, and if you could peer in their hearts, you will see a broken heart to G-d. In His word they are resident, but in worldly matters they are desolate.

(Marpe Lenefesh: in conversations of the everlasting G-d they are full of all wisdom and knowledge, because that is their primary occupation and residence, but in worldly matters, it is the opposite. They know nothing, as if the world is desolate without inhabitants. They don't even know the picture on a coin.

Translator: perhaps this explains the author's statement in Gate 4: "the deer to trap snakes")

Love of G-d has filled their hearts. They have no desire for joining the conversations of men, nor do they derive any pleasure therein. They are disgusted by corrupt ways, and chose the choicest paths,

In their merits, sufferings go away, and the rains fall. In their merits man kisses the ground (the earth produces food and men are happy), since they refrained themselves from lewdness, retracted their hands from all treats, and their souls have fled from forbidden things, and because they went in the good and righteous path. They reached exalted levels for bearing a short time (the few dozen years allotted to man in this world), profited in both worlds, combined both goods, and achieved two distinctions, as written in the psalm: *"Praiseworthy is the man who fears G-d..."* (Tehilim 112), until the end.

What is wondrous in their matters, is that (since their clinging to the Creator is so strong that - *TL*) the commandments which the Creator has commanded them in seem few in their eyes compared to their duties to repay Him for the good He bestows on them, and compared to the exertion, devotion, bearing, and patience which they took on themselves in order to cling to the Creator, as I will now explain.

According to how the sages counted the commandments of the Creator, the total number was found to be 613. Of these, 365 are negative commandments, to not do, 65 of them are commandments for the congregation but not for the individual. Further, some of them are positive commandments whose fulfillment depends on time, namely, they apply at certain times but not at others, such as the Sabbaths, festivals, fast days. There are also commandments

which apply only in the land (of Israel) such as the offerings which an individual is obligated in, the teruma, ~~the~~ tzaaser (tithes), and the offerings of the festivals, or the like. Some commandments depend on other things, and are only obligatory when the things are found, but if they are absent one is exempt from them, such as the mitzva of Brit Mila (circumcision) for one who does not have a son, or pidyon haben (redeeming first born male) for one who has no first born male, and the mitzva of making a roof-fence for one who does not own a house, or honoring father and mother for an orphan, and others like this.

When they counted the commandments, they said: "we will not count in the negative commandments because merely refraining from them is their performance and the fulfillment of their obligation". Such service of G-d seemed too insignificant in their eyes, and their service seemed little to them due to their desire and longing for reaching the favor of G-d. Therefore they sought positive commandments of the limbs for individuals which apply at all times, places, and circumstances. They did not find any precepts that fits this except reading the torah and studying the commandments, as the verse says: *"These words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart; And you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and speak of them.."* (Devarim 6:6). And the prophet (Moshe) exhorted on this a second time in saying: *"You shall teach them to your sons, speaking of them, when you sit in your house and when you walk on the way and when you lie down and when you rise up"* (Devarim 11:19).

And all of this seemed too small in their eyes due to what they perceived of their duties of service and deeds to the Creator. So, they served the Creator with rational precepts (not prescribed in scripture - RMH), special disciplines, and good spiritual customs. In their pure hearts to G-d, they appended to the known commandments and they learned from the ways of the prophets and the regiments of the pious ones, how to seek the favor of G-d by them, and obtain His acceptance of them - these belong to the duties of the heart, which was our intent to clarify their fundamental principles and to speak of their divisions in this book. This is the wisdom hidden in the hearts of the wise and concealed in their interior. If they speak of them, everyone will see that they are correct in them, because all intelligent men can testify that these things are true and just.

By it they reached the lofty heights and the precious levels in the wholehearted service of G-d, in love of Him with a faithful love, with their heart and soul, body and means, as the prophet, peace be unto him, exhorted in saying: *"And you shall love the L-ord your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might"* (Devarim 6:5). Men of these levels are nearer than all other men to the level of the prophets, the pure ones, and the pious one, which scripture has termed them: *"those who love G-d"*, and *"those who love His Name"*, and on them it is said: *"That I may cause those that love Me to inherit substance"* (Mishlei 8:21).

And if, my brother, you desire to be one of them, and to be included in their class - abandon the superfluous things of this world and avoid them. Be contented with taking only your [necessary] food from them. Train yourself to do without the superfluities. Lighten the burden of the affairs of this world from yourself, and free your mind from thinking deeply in them. Hasten to do the things necessary for you with your body only, but not with your heart and will, just like one who drinks a bitter medicine, who drinks it with his mouth, not with his desire, and he abhors the drinking itself, but he allows himself to bear its bitterness in order to cure himself from the illness. Likewise, should be the worldly needs in your eyes. (i.e. his intent in drinking is not for enjoyment but rather to remain alive, so too one's intent in all eating and drinking should be to remain alive - TL)

You know, my brother, that your mental exertions about your secular matters will not add anything to your livelihood in the least [because this is pre-determined by G-d]. So too, minimal exertion and zeal in them will not decrease your allotted portion in the least. Your mental distraction in them will prevent you from thinking in what will benefit you in your torah matters and in the Creator's commandments, which are in your hands, and that you undertook to toil in them all the days of your life. Thus you will wind up losing in this (religious) without gaining from the other (secular).

Therefore desire for yourself that which furthers your salvation and peace in your religious and secular life. Apply your mind to stand with all your strength to [perpetuate] the wellspring of your way of life.

(several interpretations:

Manoach Halevavos: "wellspring" - habit and custom that a person habituates in is like a wellspring, that once it is opened, it flows constantly, without interruption. i.e. put your mind, heart, and attention on this - that it "stands", and does not cease - this wellspring of your good conduct, that you have forced yourself to habituate in.

Or, apply your mind on this, will all your strength, that the wellspring of your evil conduct stands, as written (Bereishis 8:21) *"the inclination of a man is evil from his youth"*.

Marpe Lenefesh: put your mind like an iron pillar against the wellspring, i.e. evil habit, which is like a flowing wellspring, and that this be with all of your strength.)

Precede zeal before yourself for matters of your end (the hereafter). Appoint understanding as your king, humility as your deputy, wisdom as your guide, and abstinence as your close friend. Proceed slowly and thoughtfully in acquiring the good traits, according to how your matters allow you to bear. Beware of taking on too much, or too quickly, without moving gradually, lest you become lost, because too much oil in a candle is a cause to extinguish its light.

Beware of becoming neglectful, lazy or lax. Let one level of zeal follow with another level of zeal, and one level of endurance with another level of endurance. Strive to follow each level of good traits, with the next higher level which is near it. Do not neglect checking your heart and making a spiritual accounting always. Engage in the in-depth study of this book, read it, review its matters, and memorize its roots. Investigate its deductions always. You will reach through it to the pinnacle of exalted and treasured qualities, and the utmost of the noble traits that are pleasing to G-d. Straighten yourself with it and then straighten others with it.

Do not hope that you will reach this without having freed your mind of the worries and distractions of this world, even if you abhor them (it won't help as long as you worry for them and distract your heart on them - TL), just like it is not possible for a drunkard to heal himself from his craving for wine until he is completely free from it. One of the pious would say: "if we were truly ashamed of the Creator[*'s presence*], we would not be speaking of love of the Creator, so long as we are drunk from the wine of love of this world" (i.e. the troubles of this world and its lusts which our hearts tend to love - TL).

Therefore, endeavor, my brother, let your mind be free of this world when your body is free of its affairs. Because when your body is in solitude, your soul should also be in solitude. For it is still possible for the mind to be absorbed in worldly affairs even when the body is free from them and is at rest from engaging in them.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. even if you are in solitude in a special chamber, it won't help in the least if your mind is tied to the affairs of this world, etc. Rather you need along with this also "spiritual solitude", i.e. that you reflect on matters of the next world, G-d's torah, closeness to G-d, or the like of spiritual things... until you habituate yourself that your body is free of its affairs, and even the opposite - that you free your body from itself, i.e. your heart contemplates on G-d all day long - [as long as you didn't reach this,] you have still not arrived.)

Check yourself in this always, my brother, and strive to keep the lusts of this world far from your heart. Replace them with matters of your end and duties of your heart. Ponder them in your thoughts always, you will attain through them that the Creator will be pleased with you. His face will shine upon you, and He will accept your good deeds, forgive your sins, and you will find favor in His eyes, as written: "*I love them that love Me; And those that seek Me diligently shall find Me*" (Mishlei 8:17), and "*those who honor Me shall I honor, and those who despise Me will be disgraced*" (Shmuel 2:30).

I saw proper for the completion of your benefit and instruction, my brother, that I summarize the main topics of the matters of this book into ten Hebrew stanzas, where each one contains a summary of each of the gates, and according to the order of the book. I conclude my book with them in order that they serve you as a reminder, so that you can memorize them and set them in your heart and mind, day and night, when you rest or are active, so that you will not cease to investigate the matters of this book and remember its fundamental principles.

When you are involved in an act of service, these phrases will remind you to devote your heart wholly to G-d in it. If you are involved in a secular work, they will remind you of your spiritual accounting. If you are in some trouble in a worldly matter, they will remind you of trusting in G-d. If it will be in a situation which brings to arrogance and haughtiness, they will remind you of submission. If your heart is free, they will remind you to reflect on the favors of G-d on you. If you are in a situation of physical joy or pleasure, they will remind you to abstain from the pleasures of this world. If you are involved in some matter where you are rebelling against G-d, they will remind you on repentance. If you are neglecting your torah and faith, they will remind you to cling to the service of G-d. If you are engaged in declaring G-d's Unity, they will remind you that your declaration should be wholehearted.

And likewise they will remind you during your recital of prayers, musings of your heart, bridling your tongue, binding of your senses, ruling over your lusts, restraining your limbs, checking your thoughts, weighing your deeds against your knowledge, and the rest of what I have discussed in this book of good conduct, and higher ethics.

May G-d teach us and you the way to His service in His mercy and greatness, Amen.

These are the ten stanzas:

Which include the topics of the gates of this book. One stanza per gate.

(Meter: Yated, two Tenuot, Yated, two Tenuot, Yated and Tenuah in the first half of the stanza, and likewise repeated in the second half.)

(Unity of G-d) - My son, devote your unique soul wholly to its Rock, when you declare the Unity of the One G-d who formed you.

(Reflection) - Examine, investigate, and contemplate His wonders, and let understanding and the law of righteousness be your girdle.

(Service) - Fear G-d, and guard His testimonies and laws always, so that your steps shall not stray.

(Trust) - Let your heart be confident and assured, trusting in G-d, the Rock, that He will be your help.

(Devotion) - With a pure heart do His laws for His sake, and exalt no human being in your generation.

(Submission) - See, that the end of a creature is to the dust, be lowly for sand, and dirt will be your dwelling place.

(Repentance) - Let the speech of your understanding contend against your folly, and repent from the brazen of your heart and [evil] inclination.

(Accounting) - The ways of G-d, in just and proper judgment, search with wisdom in your thoughts and inner being.

(Abstinence) - Remove from your heart the childish and adolescent, and do not desire the desires of your youth

(love of G-d) - In your yearning, you will see the face of the everlasting G-d, and your unique soul will commune with your Rock (you will merit Ruach Hakodesh - ML)

(Marpe Lenefesh: ...therefore he did not mention anything of love of G-d since one who has attained all the levels, undoubtedly has also love of G-d, but if he lacks even one of them, it is not possible for the love to exist, as was explained in Gate 3 chapter 3.)

(Translator's Note: I did not translate the Rebuke (Tochecha) and the Request (Bakasha) appended to the hebrew version, due to the highly poetic nature and the allusions to verses in the Tanach. I recommend learning it in hebrew if possible.)

(here's an excerpt by Rabbi Yaakov Emden on the conclusion of this book zt'l written some 200 years ago, from the Masoret Yisrael edition of this book: "In this gate, the author was brief, relying on what he already mentioned in the gate of reflection. There are three primary causes on love of G-d:

1. when a man reflects on the great kindness that the Creator has brought him to existence, after he did not exist, and guarded him from all the many harmful things, until G-d also graced him with an intellect which shines on him more than the light of the stars if he uses it as He commanded and instructed him.

2. Not only did G-d create him from nothing, but He also endowed him with a holy soul, of Divine origin, and through this also established man's eternal existence.

3. G-d granted us increased qualities, exalted greatness, and immense favor in exclusively giving to us the holy, perfect torah, that through it we are called "sons to G-d" (Devarim 14:1), and He made us the treasured people of all the nations, and through it we are hoping for the redemption, etc.....

The sign of the truth of these things are from two faithful, visible, witnesses:

One, our situation and survival in this long exile, which the Creator fulfilled His promise: *"But despite all this, while they are in the land of their enemies, I will not despise them nor will I reject them to annihilate them, thereby breaking My covenant that is with them, for I am the L-ord their G-d"* (Vayikra 26:44)...

Two, the matter of our land, because from the day we went out of it, no nation was able to dwell in it, it was like a woman whose husband went on a faraway trip, and she waits for him, and the verse *"I will make the Land desolate, so that it will become desolate [also] of your enemies who live in it"* (Vayikra 26:32), tells us it is guarded for us...all these are clear signs that our hope is not lost and

G-d's love has not left us, and on this eternal love is based Shir Hashirim, and just like G-d loves us a strong love, *"Torrents of water are not able to extinguish the love"* (Shir Hashirim 8:7), so too it is our duty to show our powerful and complete love, like *"As water reflects a face back to a face, so one's heart is reflected back to him by another"* Mishlei 27:19...)