

# **\*\* Shaar HaKnia - Gate of Submission \*\***

## ***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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Translator's Foreword:

The following is a translation of the sixth 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. The sixth gate deals with what Rabeinu Bachye regards as "the beginning of repentance" (ch.8).

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 August 2013 / Elul 5773 -

### ***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)

### **\*\*\* SHAAR HAKNIA - Gate of Submission \*\*\***

**from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart**

*by Rabeinu Bechaye zt'l*

(*Tov Halevanon*: Submission is the opposite of arrogance, that a person much habituates himself to be in lowliness of spirit and brokenness of heart, until he can eradicate this strange god which dwells in his heart. The masters of ethics already wrote, and the Rambam quoted them in his Shmonei Perakim introduction to Pirkei Avot: "Even though for all middot (character traits) it is proper for a man to go in the middle way. For example, to not be too hot-tempered nor too soft-hearted, not too stingy nor too generous, and likewise for all the character traits. When a man sees that he is tending too much towards one side, he should force himself to bend to the other extreme until his natural disposition stands on the middle way. The exception is arrogance, whereby one should not seek the middle way. Rather, one should tend himself always towards submission as much as possible. And

### \*\*\* INTRODUCTION \*\*\*

Since our previous discussion dealt with the duty to devote one's acts wholeheartedly to G-d alone, and arrogance in the acts devoted to G-d was found to seize the person more swiftly than any other potential damager, and that its damage to these acts is exceedingly great, I deemed pressing to follow the discussion with that which will distance arrogance from man, namely, submission.

And furthermore, because it is clear to us that submission is the root of servant hood, and this trait of submission alone is what separates a servant from the traits of master hood.

| (*Tov Halevanon*: that the servant submits to his master, since the primary matter of servant hood is that the servant submits to his master and does his will.

| *Pas Lechem*: For servant hood and master hood are two opposites, and a man cannot be deemed a complete servant of G-d if he is not utterly removed from the trait of master hood. And this is accomplished only through submission since "*submission alone is what separates a slave from the traits of master hood*")

And also to come to acknowledge that G-d is singular in this attribute unlike the creations.

| (*Tov Halevanon*: [the attribute] of master hood, in that He alone is divested of the trait of submission unlike any created being, that even though it may have some signs of master hood relative to that which is below it which submits to it, nevertheless it also has signs of servant hood due to its own submission to that which is above it. The only exception is G-d - it is not conceivable to attribute to Him any vestige whatsoever of the trait of submission. Therefore He is the Master of masters.)

As King David said: "Yours, O L-ord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty (in an absolute sense, unlike the creations which may have these attributes but only in a temporary or relative sense - TL) [for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O L-ord, and you are exalted as Head above all]" (Divrei hayamim 29:11), and "*For who in the heavens can be compared to the L-ord? [Who] among the mighty can be likened to the L-ord?*" (Tehilim 89:7).

Furthermore, it is the nature of this trait (of submission) to distance a man from the grandiose, from presumption, pride, haughtiness, thinking highly of oneself, desire for dominion over others, lust to control everything, coveting what is above one and similar outgrowths of arrogance.

| (*Pas Lechem*: i.e. besides that submission distances a man from arrogance as mentioned earlier, its nature is also to distance from "*grandiose, presumption, etc.*" He specified six terms. Coveting is not a type of arrogance, even though it is an outgrowth of it. In addition to arrogance the sum totals seven. In truth, each one of these certainly has a specific instruction [to combat it]. These correspond to the seven traits which our sages counted that a man becomes proud of. Therefore, they said that these traits are good for the righteous because they don't become arrogant in them. Corresponding to these seven, Shlomo said seven "vanities" (Koheles 1:2) "*Vanity of vanities, said Kohelet; vanity of vanities, all is vanity*" [vanities plural counts as 2, hence 1+2+1+2+1]

| *Tov Halevanon*: Submission is the bandage and medicine to excrete from a man the primary great poison hidden inside him, in his physical nature, and to expel from his insides the viper of his animalistic side - namely, arrogance, the head of all sicknesses of character traits, which requires one to bend himself greatly towards the ways of submission until he extracts this affliction from his heart)

It is now proper for us to clarify 10 things on the subject of submission.

1. What is submission?
2. How many divisions it divides into.
3. what brings to submission?

4. How should one conduct himself in it?
5. How one acquires it.
6. How the submitted should conduct himself.
7. When it is proper when is it not proper?
8. Does submission depend on good traits or the opposite.
9. If it is possible for a man's heart to contain submission and arrogance simultaneously.
10. benefits of submission in this world and in the next.

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 1 \*\*\*

#### - *What is submission*

Submission is lowliness of the soul, its bowing down and not thinking much of itself.

(*Pas Lechem*: "lowliness" refers to one who is low from the beginning. "bowing down" refers to one who was erect from the beginning. Likewise, when the soul feels in itself that it raised and elevated itself a bit, it will hasten to bow and lower itself. "not thinking much of itself" is relative to others. Understand this.)

It is one of the traits of the soul (that can be acquired - Rabbi Hyamson). When it becomes established in the soul, its signs will appear in the limbs. Among them: a soft tongue, a low voice, humility at a time of anger, little exacting revenge when one has the power to do so. It was said about a certain king who told a man who was convicted and a whip had already been brought [for punishment]: "I swear by G-d, if I did not feel such a strong anger against you, I would have exacted a severe revenge on you." Then he pardoned him. It is said of him that he would say: "I don't know of any sin of others which are greater than mine".

(*Pas Lechem*: "soft tongue" - he speaks soft words and supplications with every person. "humility at a time of anger" - even when he gets angry, he does not become brazen faced. This indicates he has acquired it a kinyan atzmi (in his essence). For when a person acts [with submission] at a time of non-anger, perhaps this is only incidentally by him, since even by arrogant people, sometimes one sees them acting humbly incidentally (temporarily). "little exacting revenge" - he said "little" even though it is proper for a man to completely avoid taking revenge as written: "Do not seek revenge" (Vayikra 19:18). Rather he said "little revenge" because of the example of the king that he brought, since certainly a king must show some revenge to instill fear, as Rabeinu Hakadosh exhorted us (Ketubot 103b) "cast bile...", only that he should be satisfied with little as in the story, that he had the whip brought to scare him which served as a "little revenge". "I would have exacted a severe revenge on you" - i.e. it was proper to exact a severe revenge on you according to your evil deeds. However, I am refraining from this since I sense in myself great anger, and anger stems from arrogance (see Shaarei Kedusha 1:2 - "arrogance and anger are the same trait, because a man becomes angry when his will is not being done..."). Therefore, I am abstaining from vengeance in order to break my anger and arrogance.

*Manoach Halevavos*: "who told a man who was convicted" - Since my anger was so strong on you, I will not exact vengeance on you so as not to give room to anger, which is an ugly trait, and so I do not acquire a bad disposition in my soul through this. On the contrary, I will habituate myself to good traits, namely, submission and refraining from exacting revenge when I have the power to do so.

"I don't know of any sin of others which are greater than mine" - some texts render "greater than my humility", which means: I don't know any sin which can outweigh and nullify humility on the day of judgment when the King of kings will put on scales the merits and sins [for each person, i.e. humility is a very great merit.]

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 2 \*\*\*

#### - *How many divisions it divides into*

The explanation of the divisions of submission is as follows. Submission divides into three categories.

(1) One category applies to human beings and many species of irrational animals. It is poverty of the spirit and patient bearing of harm it is capable of avoiding due to ignorance regarding the right ways to remove the harm. This sort of submission is found among foolish and ignorant people due to their little knowledge and weak understanding of their soul and its capacities. This is called submission in the way of common language only, but in truth, this is

merely spiritual poverty and blindness due to stupidity that has overcome the soul and prevents it from seeing what could further its welfare, as written *"For You have hidden their hearts from understanding; therefore, it cannot raise itself"* (Iyov 17:4).

*(Pas Lechem: He does not know and recognize his soul's esteem, which is greater in level than other creations. If he knew and recognized his soul's esteem, he would not submit and bear everything like now. Because since he regards himself as base, and his level is low in his eyes, he bears everything with a good countenance. He is like the peasant who bears the smoke of the stove which stings his eyes and does not wonder about this since he thinks little of himself and says to himself "why should a nobody like me care about things like this? Am I a prince or an important minister?"... The patient bearing that one sees in them is due to spiritual poverty. That their soul deems itself lowly and of little worth.*

*"therefore, it cannot raise itself" - since they have no intelligence, they don't recognize their soul's worth. Therefore they cannot raise their heart. Hence, their humility is animal-like humility.)*

Rather, true submission is that quality which comes into being after an elevation of the soul, after rising above being similar to the animals, with their base traits, and after it has elevated itself from being of similar traits to the lower class of men. This elevation stems from having greater wisdom than them, greater esteem of one's soul than them, and clear knowledge of which traits are good and which are base. When submission and lowliness comes after this elevation - then it is a praiseworthy trait. Otherwise, it does not enter into the category of good traits and qualities of the soul, but rather among the disgraceful traits. For its submission is like that of the animals (who bear suffering out of ignorance of what can rectify that pain - PL).

*(Pas Lechem: "This elevation stems from having greater wisdom..." - this elevation and departure from associating with the previous things, the soul obligates itself to undertake due to its superior wisdom over them and superior quality of soul.*

*"When submission and lowliness comes after this elevation - then it is a praiseworthy trait" - "submission" to G-d and "lowliness" in bearing [things He decreed].*

*Tov Halevanon: "after an elevation of the soul" - i.e. separating from its physical and from the lusts of its animal side.*

*"after rising above being similar to the animals" - above the base traits and pettiness.*

*"from having greater wisdom" - Not out of arrogance rather only out of wisdom and nobility of soul, it is disgraceful in his eyes the conduct of the low people, and attaching oneself with the contemptible.)*

(2) The second category - submission towards other human beings. If because they rule over him, such as a prisoner in the hands of his enemy, or a slave in the hands of his master; or because he lacks what they have and greatly needs what they possess such as a tenant to his landlord or a poor man who looks to the generosity of the wealthy man, or a student to his teacher, or a substantial loan that one is unable to repay and he must be submissive and lower himself before his lender, as written *"A rich man will rule over the poor, and a borrower is a slave to a lender"* (Mishlei 22:7).

To this category belongs the submission of one who knows about himself that he is falling short regarding the bounds (the torah set - PL) in matters of this world and the next, and is ignorant of the proper path. When he finds the prophet of his generation or righteous teacher or anyone else who preaches the proper path (as the sages said: *"accept the truth from whoever said it" - TL*), he will submit to him and lower himself before him (always, to serve and minister him and tend to his needs - TL), as our teachers said: *"serving (a wise man) is greater than learning by him"* (Berachos 7b), as written: *"Elisha ben Shafat who poured water for Eliyahu"* (Melachim II 3:11), it does not say: *"who studied by Eliyahu"* but rather: 'who poured water', this teaches that serving a Sage is greater than studying by him; and also: *"his (Moshe's) attendant, Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent"* (Shmos 33:11). Likewise the wise man said regarding the general masses: *"A rich man will rule over the poor, and a borrower is a slave to a lender"* (Mishlei 22:7).

*(Tov Halevanon: i.e. the verse is not referring only to a monetary borrower and a lender. Rather it is only a proverb on every thing whereby one person needs to associate with another person for some benefit.*

*"serving (a wise man) is greater than learning by him" - since "service", which is the trait of submission brings to all the good character traits, and learning [torah] is included in it.)*

This category of submission, proper though it may be, is not of universal character, since it does not apply to all human beings, nor does it apply at all times and in all places. Because, when the prisoner leaves his prison, or when the slave redeems himself, or the lender pays back his debt, or the student leaves his teacher's presence, or the poor man leaves the rich man's presence - it is no longer their duty to submit to them and to humble themselves and lower themselves before them.

(*Pas Lechem*: "since it does not apply to all human beings" - because there are many human beings in the world who never need [favours of] other people. Afterwards, he wrote that even those human beings who do need other people, this need does not last all of their days, for "*the prisoner...*", and "*the slave...*", and "*the lender...*", all this was corresponding to what he said "*at all times*". Afterwards, "*the student...*", and "*the poor man...*", corresponding to what he said "*in all places*". "*to submit to them, and to humble and lower themselves*" - "*to submit*" - to their command and to follow their discipline.  
"*to humble themselves*" - in heart.  
"*lower themselves*" - from the term "*to bow*" in practice, i.e. to grant them honor.)

(3) The third category: submission to the blessed Creator. This duty applies to all rational beings. They are obligated in it at all times and in all places. To this (category of submission) was our intent in this gate.

The submitted one is called in scripture: "humble", "low in his eyes", "modest", "broken", "low of spirit", "broken spirited", "crushed", "soft hearted", "weak in spirit", "broken hearted", "bowing spirit".

(*Pas Lechem*: these are the opposites of the seven terms of arrogance mentioned earlier [in the introduction].)

When we will speak of the term "submission", in general, our intent is only in this third category which is the highest degree of submission.

One who has reached this level, the path to nearness to G-d and [worthiness] to stand before Him is not far off (but one who has not will never get there under any circumstances - TL). He will be accepted by G-d and be pleasing to Him, as written "*The offerings of G-d are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O G-d, You will not despise*" (Tehilim 51:17).

(*Pas Lechem*: "*nearness to G-d...stand before Him...be accepted by G-d and be pleasing to Him*" - The intent of this three stage melitza (poetic phrase) is to allude to a peasant whose heart inspired him and he related to his friend saying: "aha my friend, oh how much my heart and soul longs and yearns to serve my king. Would that it were that he would allow me in the palace and that I could be among those who stand before him and minister unto him. But three obstacles prevent me. One, the road is exceedingly far away and unfamiliar to me. Two, even if G-d grants me and I will reach the palace courtyard, who knows if I will be accepted to be among those who stand before the king. Perhaps, they will immediately oust me forcefully and tell me that I am not fit and worthy for this. Three, even if perhaps I will be accepted and will stand to minister before him, how can I be sure that my service will be proper in his eyes and will be accepted and pleasing before him?"

His friend answered: "I advise you, lower your ego, and bow your pride. Then everyone you will meet on the way will have compassion on you and will help you go from city to city until you reach the destination (royal city) you wish to go. When you get there, it will be noticeable from your face that your goal and intent is not out of lust for royal feasts or desire for dominion over others. The truth will lead for you the way, that your motive and desire is solely to minister your king. Certainly you will be found just and acceptable for this. Likewise, if your service is done with submission and humility, undoubtedly you will be found proper and pleasing in the eyes of the king." The analogy is clear.

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 3 \*\*\*

- *In what does one submit*

The circumstances which will bring a person to submission and a lowly spirit after he has become proud are ten.

(1) When his physical strength wanes in its normal power of movement due to either sickness or frail temperament or weakening constitution and he becomes submissive due to this, and he pleases G-d and to human beings, as written *"And He submitted their heart with toil"* (Tehilim 107:12).

(*Pas Lechem*: *"And He submitted their heart with toil"* - i.e. from *"toil"* which means sufferings, their heart becomes humbled.)

(2) When he is smitten by troubles or suffers poverty and he now needs people whereby he previously did not need them, and he becomes submissive to them (specifically - *PL*), and his spirit becomes too broken to be arrogant in his situation (to everyone generally - *PL*), as written: *"And it will be that everyone who is left in your house, will come to prostrate himself before him for a silver piece and a morsel of bread"* (Shmuel 2:36).

(3) When someone who is better off than him, will manifest his kindness towards him, he will make himself submissive towards him, as written *"Many will entreat the favor of the generous man"* (Mishlei 19:6).

(4) One who must pay back his fellow a debt but is unable to do so, and makes himself submissive before him as written *"If you do not have what to pay, why should he take your bed from under you?"* (Mishlei 22:27).

(*Tov Halevanon*: In the previous chapter he brought the verse *"a borrower is a slave to a lender"* for this, because there he was speaking of the duty and that it is proper that the borrower be submissive. Here, however, he is speaking from the side of a cause which pressures him, submits his heart, and lowers his [arrogant] nature. Likewise for all the things in this chapter. Therefore he brought the verse *"why should he take your bed from under you?"*, which is a cause that breaks his heart.)

(5) One who is in the prison of his enemy - will make himself submissive towards him and his spirit will stoop low, as written *"They afflicted his foot with fetters; his soul was placed in irons"* (Tehilim 105:18), and *"if they be bound in fetters, and be held in cords of affliction; [Then He declared unto them their work, and their transgressions, that they have behaved themselves proudly. He opened their ear to discipline, and commanded that they return from iniquity]"* (Iyov 36:8).

(6) A slave who does not have the ability to redeem himself (purchase freedom) from the hand of his master and becomes submissive towards him as written *"Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters"* (Tehilim 123:2).

(*Tov Halevanon*: *"does not have the ability to redeem himself"* - and he sighs from the work and suffers from it.  
*"and becomes submissive towards him"* - so that he lightens on him his yoke.)

(7) When saddening troubles and disasters befall a man, his spirit will break and his heart will submit, as written *"And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be submitted"* (Vayikra 26:41).

(*Manoach Halevavos*: #2 earlier was referring to troubles or poverty through which he needs human beings and humbles himself to them. Here the author is referring to a trouble G-d struck him with, either through the system of nature or through the system of hashgacha pratit (divine providence) in such a way that human beings do not have the ability to save him from it, and through this, he will humble himself towards G-d, not to human beings.)

(8) When one makes a personal accounting and sees that he has rebelled against G-d despite G-d's goodness towards him, and how instead of praising Him for it, he has kicked. Then, he will become submitted, ashamed, and humiliated from the Al-mighty, as written *"O G-d, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to You, my G-d: [for our iniquities are increased over our head]"* (Ezra 9:6).

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. with the good itself that G-d has bestowed on him, he rebels against G-d, namely, with the physical limbs G-d granted him, the strength G-d gave him, the wealth G-d graced him with, and the like.)

(9) When the Creator rebukes him and humiliates him on having rebelled against Him, he will become submitted and terrified, as written on Achav *"Have you seen how Ahab has submitted himself before Me?"* (Melachim 21:29).

(10) When one senses the nearness of death, and the coming of his final day, and he contemplates the terror of death, and how he will be brought to trial and have to give an accounting, he becomes submitted and bowed down. He will think little of himself and will regret the passing of his days, and wasting of his life without having prepared provisions of good deeds to come before him for his journey to the next world, as written *"The sinners in Zion are afraid"* (Yeshaya 33:14).

*(Pas Lechem: He will regret that many of his days have already passed for nothing, without benefit. And also his life wasted away, i.e. his natural strength has weakened without attaining anything.*

*Marpe Lenefesh: i.e. that a man submits himself on his own (by contemplating death). The author mentioned these ten causes through which a man becomes submitted, so that a man can choose the proper one, and not procrastinate submitting himself until terrible troubles and disasters befall him like the first cause (which is inevitable). Rather, let him submit himself by contemplating the eighth, ninth, and tenth. And likewise, he wrote this in the 3rd gate chapter 4 and in the gate of repentance chapter 6. See there and you will understand.)*

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 4 \*\*\*

*- how should one conduct himself in it*

In which matters is it a duty to conduct oneself with submission and lowliness? I say it is one's duty to conduct himself with submission in seven relations.

(1) In business dealings with his contemporaries, and in good conduct with his fellow human beings, as I will explain later. On this the verse says: *"despised and disgraceful is he in his own eyes"* (Tehilim 15:4).

*(Pas Lechem: "despised and disgraceful is he in his own eyes" - all of that Psalm speaks of the conduct of a righteous man with other human beings, [such as:] "works righteousness, etc.", "who does not slander with his tongue, etc.", "nor does evil to his friend, etc." Behold the psalmist attributed everything to: "disgraceful is he in his own eyes".)*

(2) When meeting those who are wise in knowledge of G-d and of His torah, or pious men who are near to G-d (who do good deeds - PL), as written: *"Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me"* (Tehilim 141:5), and *"The evil bow before the good"* (Mishlei 14:19).

*(Tov Halevanon: Let the righteous man crush me and the true prophet hurt me for all of his strikes and rebukes are a kindness.*

*Pas Lechem: i.e. I yearn that the righteous person will reprove me harshly and break the malice in my heart, and I will consider this a kindness.)*

(3) When one is praised for his good qualities, it is his duty to submit himself, and to reflect on previous sins and iniquities he committed, which the Creator knows about and yet keeps them secret, and holds back (retribution) from him so that he may repent from them. He should not rejoice in that his fellow men are mistaken about him (in considering him a righteous person - TL). Rather, let him mourn, since the Creator knows truly the wickedness of his deeds, and his neglect in fulfilling his duties to Him and from rendering thanks for His kindnesses, and he should submit in his heart as written: *"For I relate my iniquity; I worry about my sin"* (Tehilim 38:19).

*(Pas Lechem: "When one is praised for his good qualities, it is his duty to submit himself" - so that his spirit will not become proud, in that other human beings are praising him.*

*Tov Halevanon: "...and he should submit in his heart" - lest he will be punished a greater punishment due to other people praising him.*

*"as written: 'For I relate my iniquity; I worry about my sin'" - so too it is proper for this one to worry about his sins.)*

(4) If other people speak badly of him, he should submit himself to the Creator, and thank Him for having opened his eyes to a few of his many shortcomings in order to chasten him and rebuke him, so that he will repent to Him, as written *"He opens also their ear to discipline, and says so that they return from iniquity"* (Iyov 36:10).

*(Pas Lechem: "to chasten him and rebuke him" - To "chasten him" on things he knows are bad. To "rebuke him" to his face on things which he judges himself favorably. He wrote "to chasten him and rebuke him" corresponding to two aspects. One, so that he suffers from this, for the disgrace from other human beings is also considered sufferings (which atone). The second aspect "to rebuke him", i.e. to clarify to him through human beings that it is reprehensible, and that perhaps he was mistaken until now and thought there was nothing wrong with it.)*

(5) When the Creator bestows much good on him in this world, he should submit himself to G-d because of the heavy burden of gratitude he owes for them. He should also lower himself before Him out of fear (i.e. that he must fear - TL) that perhaps this good is for exacting retribution from him (i.e. punishment for his sins - TL). For when G-d sends great wealth to a person, it is for one of three reasons:

1. as a benefit granted by the Creator.

*(Pas Lechem: that the Creator intends in this to bestow good to him.)*

2. as a trial and a test to the person.

*(Pas Lechem: A "trial" in financial matters consists either of bearing a large monetary loss for the Creator, or it takes the form of abstaining from a large profit. For this, the author used a double expression...)*

3. for exacting retribution and to make him stumble.

*(Pas Lechem: Also in this, there are two aspects. One, the wealth becomes a means of exacting retribution from him for his sin, as the sages said regarding one who incurred a [divine] decree of death (Midrash Koheles Raba 5:18) - that he becomes arrested by the government or a bandit murders him, and G-d sends him wealth so that he will be murdered due to his money. Two, sometimes a man mortally stumbles because of his wealth such as Korach who become proud of his wealth and sinned.)*

Signs that the wealth is a benefit:

- \* If he is more occupied with fulfilling his duties to the Creator rather than with busying himself with his wealth.
- \* That the wealth causes him to increase his service of G-d.

*(Tov Halevanon: the more G-d benefits him, the more he will increase strengthening in the service of G-d out of fear lest the benefits be greater than his service.)*

\* He does not set his heart on this benefit and does not place his trust in it, but spends it on fulfilling his duties to the Creator.

*(Tov Halevanon: "he does not set his heart on this benefit" - he does not rejoice because of it.)*

This is similar to how Iyov described how he would spend his wealth, how he would spend it for fulfilling his duties to G-d, and how he would not place his trust in it, as written: *"If I put my hope in gold, and to jewelry I said 'my confidence'"* (Iyov 31:24).

Signs that the wealth is sent as a trial and test:

- \* That the wealthy man is more occupied in his worries with guarding and increasing his money and in fearing potential financial losses than he is with fulfilling his debt of gratitude to the Creator for it.
- \* That he has nothing but perpetual worry from it or from managing it.

Thus, the man is tested with the wealth and will need to give a judgment and an accounting (in the afterlife), of such a person it is said *"For all his days are pains and his occupation is vexation; even at night his heart does not rest (i.e.*



(Tov Halevanon: "Thus, the man is tested" - This is the sign of a test. That G-d tests him on how he will conduct himself with this benefit in the service of G-d.

Translator: G-d tests a person in areas that he is weak, as explained in Gate #4 ch.3, namely, that if a person consistently passes the tests in one area G-d will stop testing him in that area.)

Signs that the wealth is for exacting retribution:

\* That the wealthy man is so preoccupied with enjoying his money and deriving pleasure from it that he fails to pay his debts to the Creator and to his fellow man (such as tzedaka, maaser, good deeds - TL) that he owes on account of it, and from rendering thanks to his Benefactor (G-d). He does not feel that he is obligated to serve G-d on account of it, as the verse says: "And behold, joy and happiness, slaying cattle and slaughtering sheep, eating meat and drinking wine; 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die.'" (Yeshaya 22:13), and "And there are harp and lyre, tambourine and flute, and wine at their drinking feasts; and the work of the L-ord they do not regard, and the deed of His hands they have not seen" (ibid. 5:12). And this is a retribution disguised as a benefit.

(Pas Lechem: i.e. In truth, G-d's intent is for exacting retribution. Only that it appears to the eye as a benefit.)

But for the intelligent person, when good fortune comes to him and all his matters go smoothly according to his wish, he will submit himself, fearing that perhaps this wealth may have come from the Creator for exacting retribution from him, as written: "riches kept by their owner for his harm" (Koheles 5:12).

(Summary:

Manoach Halevavos: The sign that the wealth is a benefit, is that he is more occupied with fulfilling his duties to the Creator rather than he is occupied with his wealth. The sign that the wealth is a trial is the opposite of this, as he writes, "that the wealthy man is more occupied with guarding his money, etc. than with his duties to the Creator". However, nevertheless, he is also occupied in his duties to the Creator a bit. But the signs that the wealth is a punishment is that the recipient of the benefit is not at all concerned about "paying back the debts to the Creator, etc., and to praise his Benefactor, etc."

Alternative explanation:

Tov Halevanon: If he fulfills his debts to the Creator properly it is a sign of a benefit.

If he has no benefit from it, since he is perpetually worried about losing money and amassing more money and also is not fulfilling his debts to the Creator properly, it is a sign of a test. In the future he will give a judgment and accounting on whether he paid his debts to G-d. G-d acts with forbearance towards him, and leaves the money in his hand so that he repents and it becomes a benefit to him...

If he is only preoccupied with eating, drinking, and rejoicing in pleasures, it is a sign of a retribution, that he is eating the reward of his good deeds in this world to be destroyed in the next world.)

(6) When one reads the torah and the books of the prophets, and he sees the rewards and punishments set forth, and he becomes aware how much he has neglected to fulfill his duties to the Creator, he will realize that it is his duty to submit and lower himself before the Creator out of fear of His punishment, as written on Yoshiyahu "And it was when the king heard the words of the scroll of the Law, that he rent his garments" (Melachim II 22:11). The Creator then said to him "Because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the L-ord, when you heard what I spoke against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and have torn your clothes, and wept before Me; I also have heard you..." (ibid. 22:19).

(7) When one is involved in an act of service such as giving charity, prayer, or mitzva whether voluntary or obligatory, or in rebuking others, he should not have in his heart any pride or haughtiness, but rather should outwardly and inwardly submit himself and be lowly before the Creator. This act should be like nothing in his eyes compared to the magnitude of what is his duty to G-d which is many times more than that deed (therefore, on the contrary, he should submit himself for his service is little relative to his duty - TL), as written "With what shall I come before the L-ord, bow before the Most High G-d?...[He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the L-ord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your G-d? (i.e. submission to G-d who observes what is concealed in a man's heart - TL)]" (Micha 6:6).

- How one acquires it

The manner to acquire the trait of submission and the way to facilitate its acquisition is for one's thoughts and reflections to be set on seven topics:

(*Pas Lechem*: "thoughts and reflections" - thoughts refers to simple thought, while reflection refers to [deeper] contemplation.)

(1) The root and origin of his existence is from a putrid drop (of human seed) and blood, after they became foul and stenchful. Afterwards, he was nourished from blood of tumah, all the days of his stay in his mother's belly. Afterwards, he exited, and was weak and fragile in body and limbs. Then, he advanced from stage to stage until most of his years have passed. Afterwards, he will become ill from old age until he completes his days (dies).

One of the wise men would say on this matter: "I am amazed at how one who has passed through the pathway of urine and blood two times can be proud and haughty?" Contemplating this or similar things regarding the nature of man necessarily brings humility, as king David said: "O L-ord, what is man that You should regard him, the son of man, that You should consider him?" (Tehilim 144:3), and "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble" (Iyov 14:1), and "But I am a worm and not a man" (Tehilim 22:7), and "How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is but a maggot?" (Iyov 25:6).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: As our sages said: (Avot 2:1) "Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin. Know from where you came...")

(2) When one contemplates the severity of the tribulations that befall a man in this world such as hunger and thirst, cold and heat, sickness, accidents, worries, which one has no assurance against until death. When an understanding person puts all this to heart, and he realizes how weak he is, how limited and helpless he is from protecting himself from all of this, he will recognize his predicament. He is not only similar to a prisoner in this world, but he truly is a prisoner! And so he will humble himself like the humbling of a prisoner who is placed in a dungeon, and who has no strategy or ability to free himself without his master's consent, as written: "May the cry of the prisoner come before You" (Tehilim 79:11), and "Bring my soul out of prison" (Tehilim 142:7).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Not that he is like a prisoner as an analogy or metaphor, but rather he is actually a prisoner. Since, behold, we can see that he is incapable of averting all the accidents, sicknesses, etc. which suddenly befall a man. If so, he is not in control of himself and not able to choose for himself just like a prisoner.)

(3) When one considers his fleetingness, and the swift coming of death, and the abrupt cutting off of his desires and aspirations at that time. He must leave all of his possessions, and abandon hope that he can take with him any of them as provisions or that any of them will be of use to him when he is in the grave. The countenance of his face has already dimmed (in his illness before death - *PL*), its appearance darkens. And his flesh (after death) will bring up worms, decay and putrid liquid. The signs of his physical beauty vanished and an increasingly rotten odor will exude from him, (until he will smell so awful that it will seem - *PL*) as if he had never washed or scrubbed or put on a good fragrance. When he puts this or similar considerations to mind, he will feel humble and lowly. He will not become arrogant. His heart will not arise and become high and proud, as written: "Withdraw yourselves from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for in what is he to be esteemed?" (Yeshaya 2:22), and "men of low degree are but vanity, and men of high degree are but a lie; were they to be put on a scale, together they would equal nothing" (Tehilim 62:10).

(4) When one contemplates on the service he owes to G-d for the benevolent goodness and abundant kindness bestowed on him, and he considers how much he has neglected the precepts and fallen short in their observance, both those which reason mandates and those which the torah commands, and how his pleas and excuses will be cut short when the day of reckoning comes (i.e. the day of death - *TL*) and he will be full of regret on the great day of assembly (i.e. the future great day of Judgment - *TL*). Then he will be submitted and his spirit will be broken, as written "For lo, the day comes, glowing like a furnace, and all the audacious sinners and all the perpetrators of wickedness will be stubble. And the sun that comes shall burn them up so that it will leave them neither root nor branch, says the L-ord of Hosts" (Malachi 3:19), and "who can endure the day He comes" (Malachi 3:2).

(Translator: "The future great day of Judgment" when all who ever lived will be resurrected to stand

trial and also to watch everyone else's trial, the latter G-d does to show everyone that He judged 11 each and every person fairly.

*Marpe Lenefesh: "his pleas and excuses will be cut short"* - there in the next world, he will have no pleas and no excuses. Likewise, regret [and repentance] will not help at that time.

*"he will be full of regret"* - then he will regret the disgraceful deeds he did while alive when he will be punished for them. Then too, he will see the reward for the righteous and the punishment to the wicked and it will pain him, and his regret will not help since (Avodah Zara 3a) "One who toiled on Friday (this world) will eat on Shabbat (next world); but one who did not toil on Friday, what will he eat on Shabbat?"

(5) When one contemplates the greatness of the Creator and His infinite might, who observes one's outer and inner life. When one fixes his mind on this great theme and considers what our sages report regarding the impressive and awesome presence of the pious sages in previous generations, for example "he (Rav Sheshes) gazed his eyes on him and the man (died and) became a pile of bones" (Berachos 58a), or as it was said of Yonatan ben Uziel: "when he would expound the torah, any bird that would fly over him was instantly burnt."

And there is no doubt that the prophets were greater than them, and you will find that the prophets' strength melted and they bent their knees and prostrated themselves when they were visited by angels, as written by Daniel, Yehoshua, and many like them. And you will find in the books of the prophets that the angels bow and prostrate themselves before the Creator, as written *"the hosts of the heavens bow to You"* (Nechemia 9:6), and *"Behold, He does not trust His servants and He casts reproach upon His angels"* (Iyov 4:18), and *"in His temple does every one speak of His glory"* (Tehilim 29:9), and *"And one cried unto another, and said, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the L-ord of Hosts'"* (Yeshaya 6:3).

*(Marpe Lenefesh: "When one contemplates the greatness of the Creator and His infinite might" - How can one picture in his mind and put to heart the greatness of the Creator? When one fixes his mind on this great theme, namely, the great and wondrous awe on the sages and pious ones of the early generations and [even] the later ones. How great was their deeds! They were capable of resurrecting the dead and of killing whoever they wanted (by mere words), as reported in the Talmud and the zohar in numerous places. Likewise it is known of the wonders that the Arizal did, and likewise his disciples, and many others. When one then compares the greatness of these sages with that of the prophets such as Eliyahu and Elisha and other famous ones, and we see that the prophets were seized with fear and trembling when they were visited by angels (see Megila 3a), and as mentioned in the zohar when Moshe ascended to the spiritual worlds. If so, "what is man that You consider him?" (tehilim 8:4) How could he raise his head and be proud before an omnipotent and awesome King loftier than everything, and even while He is observing him always in his outer and inner life.)*

And when one reflects what is manifested to our intelligence in what He created, such as the sun, moon, stars, the celestial spheres, and the earth and all that is in it such as minerals, plants and animals - this should be sufficient for anyone who has understanding and intelligence, as written *"How great are Your works, O L-ord! Your thoughts are exceedingly deep; A brutish man knows not; [neither does a fool understand this]"* (Tehilim 92:6), and *"all the nations are as nothing before Him"* (Yeshaya 40:17), and *"all the inhabitants of the earth are as nothing"* (Daniel 4:32).

When an understanding man considers his significance relative to all of humanity, and the significance of humanity relative to the earth, and the earth relative to the lunar sphere, and the lunar sphere relative to the cosmos, and that everything relative to the greatness of the Creator is as nothing, he will be humbled in his soul and will lower himself before the Creator, as written *"[when I contemplate Your sky, the moon and the stars..] What is man that You should be mindful of him?"* (Tehilim 8:5).

(6) When one reads the books of the prophets and he sees the great punishment meted out to the arrogant and proud and also G-d's great protection over the humble and the lowly. Regarding the arrogant and proud it is written: *"The lofty eyes of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the L-ord alone shall be exalted on that day"* (Yeshaya 2:11), and *"For the day of the L-ord of Hosts shall come upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon everyone that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low"* (Yeshaya 2:12).

Regarding both types, it is written: *"The L-ord lifts up the meek: He casts the wicked down to the ground"* (Tehilim 147:6), and *"Though the L-ord be high, yet has He respect unto the lowly: but the proud He knows from afar."* (Tehilim 138:6), and it is said about the lowly *"the humble shall inherit the land"* (Tehilim 37:11), and *"the L-ord has*

anointed me to bring good tidings to the humble" (Yeshaya 61:1), and "With the lofty and the holy ones I dwell, and with the crushed and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the crushed" (Yeshaya 57:15), and "Before destruction comes pride, and before stumbling [comes] a haughty spirit" (Mishlei 16:18), and "Before ruin, a man's heart becomes haughty, but before honor there is humility." (Mishlei 18:12).

(Tov Halevanon: "The lofty eyes of man shall be humbled..." - Our sages said: "whoever becomes arrogant, it is as if he pushed against the 'heels' of the Divine Presence, since it is written, 'The whole earth is full of His glory'. Says the Holy One: 'I and he are not capable of dwelling together...' (Berachos 43b). This is what the verse means: "the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the L-ord alone shall be exalted on that day". When the arrogant who push against the heels of the Divine presence are destroyed.

"The L-ord lifts up the meek: He casts the wicked down to the ground" - it is clear from this verse that the arrogant are called "wicked".

Pas Lechem: "and the L-ord alone shall be exalted on that day" - Behold the verse ties the exaltedness of G-d to the lowliness of man, implying that pride of man is contrary to His greatness, and it is considered loathsome by Him.)

(7) When one observes the changing of people's situations in this world, the swift changing of governments and rulers, and the passing of people from one condition to another, and the fall of one nation promoting the rise of another, while the end of all is death, as written "Like sheep, they are destined to the grave; death will devour them" (Tehilim 49:15), he will submit and will not pride himself on any worldly possessions, and he won't place his trust on any matter of them, as written "Praiseworthy is the man who made the L-ord his trust, and did not turn to the haughty and those who turn to falsehood" (Tehilim 40:5).

Tov Halevanon: "people's situations" - i.e. how honor and greatness does not last long. Rather everything changes, the proud are brought low and vice versa.

"the swift changing of governments" - not only for small scale greatness, but even for great countries.

"the end of all is death" - even during the time of a country's success, the success is not on an individual level, since every individual goes to his place and to the depths of a pit.

If a man's mind is never empty of these seven matters we mentioned, he will always be humble and lowly. Humility will cling to his nature and will not separate from him. When he clings to humility, all the snares of arrogance, haughtiness, and pride will keep far from him, as we mentioned. He will be saved from sin and from stumbling as written "and that His fear may be before your faces, that you sin not" (Shemos 20:20). And our sages said: "Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin. Know from where you came and where you are going and before Whom you are destined to give account and reckoning. From where have you come? - from a putrid drop. Where are you going? - to a place of dirt, worms, and maggots. Before Whom are you destined to give account and reckoning? - before the supreme King of kings, the holy One, blessed be He" (Avos 3:1).

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 6 \*\*\*

- How the submitted should conduct himself

The manners of conduct, which are proper for the submitted person to adopt, are ten.

(1) Knowledge of G-d, and of His good attributes, and the higher qualities He bestowed on man over other living creatures, as written "You give him dominion over the work of Your hands; You have placed everything beneath his feet" (Tehilim 8:7).

(Tov Halevanon: i.e. the submission should not be out of poverty of spirit, due to ignorance of one's soul, but rather after an elevation of spirit, from rising above being associated with the animals, as written in chapter 2.)

When one recognizes the infinite greatness of the Creator and His exalted omnipotence and supreme wisdom, he will submit to Him and become humbled before Him. And he will learn from the verse: "Do not glorify yourself before a king" (don't be arrogant by showing your honor before a king - TL) (Mishlei 25:6) and draw the inference - how much more so before the King of kings, and the Master of masters, who is exalted beyond any likeness or comparison, as Chana said: "There is none as holy as the L-ord, For there is none like You" (Shmuel 2:2).

(*Pas Lechem*: "the infinite greatness of the Creator and His exalted omnipotence and supreme wisdom" - these three things correspond to the three attributes ascribed to the Creator (in the Amida prayer), namely "HaGadol" (the great), "HaGibor" (mighty), "veHaNora" (the awesome). Hence, "the infinite greatness" corresponds to "HaGadol", "exalted might" corresponds to "HaGibor", and "supreme wisdom" corresponds to "HaNora", as written by Shlomo (Kings 3:28): "and they held the king in awe: for they saw that the wisdom of G-d was in him".

Translator: See Jewish Meditation by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan page 113 for some powerful meditations to do when saying these three attributes.)

(2) He should know the duties ordained by the torah and those which reason teaches us. He should read G-d's torah, and gain understanding in the wisdom derived from reason, the written law, and the oral law (talmud) so as to learn from there the conditions for humility, and the areas where it applies.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. in which circumstances is humility proper. This is similar to what he explained in chapter 10 of the third gate that sometimes one must don the trait of arrogance.)

(3) To cultivate a broad heart (forbearance -TL) and ability to bear patiently words and deeds one hates, [and do so] for the Creator's sake, as written "*If I repaid the one who did evil to me, Or have plundered him who without cause was my enemy*" (Tehilim 7:5), and "*Do not say, 'As he did to me, so will I do to him; I will repay the man according to his deeds'*" (Mishlei 24:29), and our sages taught (Gitin 36b): "those who are insulted, but do not retaliate, who hear themselves humiliated and do not respond, serve (G-d) with love and rejoice [even] in suffering, on them the verse (Shoftim 5:31) says: "those that love Him will be like the sun when it goes forth in its might". The sages refer to this as "*Ma'avir Al Midotav*" (lets offenses pass and is forgiving).

(*Tov Halevanon*: "*cultivate a broad heart*" - this refers to the trait of savlanut (forbearance) for one who has a narrow heart is not able to bear any thing.

"*If I repaid the one who did evil to me*" - i.e. if I repaid with evil even to those people who did to me evil, even though human nature tends to make one take revenge from those who distress him.

Manoach Halevavot: a "broad heart" is the opposite of "*tzarut halev*" (lit: narrow of heart) and "*kotzer ruach*" (impatience of spirit), that one cannot bear any hardship or something hateful to him. He said one should cultivate a broad heart to bear that which is the will of G-d, even though one deems it hateful.)

(4) He should do good to others, speak well of them, judge them favorably, not speak of their faults, forgive them when they speak badly of him, even if they do not deserve this, as written "*Even in your thoughts, do not curse a king*" (Koheles 10:20) (i.e. even if no one hears, do not speak badly of a person - TL), and "*You let loose your mouth for evil, and you accustomed your tongue to deceit, you slandered your own mother's son*" (Tehilim 50:19). Regarding forgiving others who speak ill of him, the verse says: "*and Miriam and Aharon spoke of Moshe*", and then "*the man Moshe was exceedingly humble*", i.e. (the intent of the verse is to teach that - PL) he had forgiven them. Likewise, the wise man said: "*Also take no heed on all words that are spoken*" (Koheles 7:21), and adds "*For your heart knows that many times you too cursed others*" (Koheles 7:22).

And our Sages taught (Taanis 25b) that Rabbi Eliezer once (in a time of drought) became Chazan (cantor) and offered 24 supplications for rain and there was no response. Afterwards, Rabbi Akiva became Chazan and said only: "Our Father, our King..." and his prayer was accepted. A heavenly voice proclaimed "not because the latter sage was greater than the former, but only because he was 'Ma'avir Al Midotav' (lets offenses pass and is forgiving) while the former does not behave thus."

And it is said of a pious man who passed by an extremely foul smelling carcass of a dog. His disciples said to him: "how foul-smelling is this carcass!". He answered them "how white are its teeth!" And they regretted on having spoken disparagingly about the carcass.

If it is improper to speak disparagingly of a dead dog, all the more so for a living human being. And if it is proper to praise the carcass of a dead dog for the whiteness of its teeth, how much more so, according to this, is it a duty to praise a human being endowed with intelligence and understanding. His intent was to rebuke them, to not habituate their tongues to speak badly, as this will enter their nature.

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. certainly it is not reasonable to hold that speaking negatively about an animal's carcass is reprehensible, since the carcass has no perception and hence no pain from this. Rather, it

was "to not habituate their tongues...". And likewise, for the opposite, when speaking of its positive aspects...)

Likewise, when one habituates his tongue to speak good, it will become part of his nature, as written "*He who does not habituate/slander with his tongue*" (Tehilim 15:3), and it says regarding the opposite of this "*Your tongue devises mischief, [as a sharpened razor, working deceit], You love all devouring words*" (Tehilim 52:4), and "*What does it give to you, what does it increase unto you, O deceitful tongue?*" (Tehilim 120:3), and "*The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow him up*" (Koheles 10:12)

(*Pas Lechem*: "*You love all devouring words*" - this expression teaches that the matter [of speaking badly] becomes an acquired temperament - to love all corrupt speech, and the acquisition occurs through habit.

"*What does it give to you...*" - since there is no benefit whatsoever from this, therefore it must be occurring only through habit.)

(5) There should be humility in all his worldly matters, whether they are public or private. In speech and in deed, when he is active or resting, his interior should not contradict his exterior, nor his hidden matters contradict his revealed matters. Rather his behavior should be weighed, proper, harmonious, and consistent - all going in the spirit of submission and humility to G-d and also towards human beings. This should be in accordance with each person's merits (their wisdom and fear (reverence) of G-d - TL) and the good he benefits from them in religious and secular matters, as written "*Good is the man who is gracious and lends, who conducts his affairs with discretion*" (Tehilim 112:5). And our sages said: "be humble in spirit before all men" (Avos 4:12), and "Be submissive to an elder and courteous to the young" (Avos 3:12).

(6) That one's esteem be high and one's desire great for matters of the next world, that it should not be sufficient for him whatever comes his way, and he should not consider that what he does is enough. Rather, his good deeds, service, and efforts should be little in his eyes. He should always strive to reach a higher level, as the verse says of Yehoshafat "*And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the L-ord*" (Divrei Hayamim II 17:6), and let one always complain to himself that he is not doing enough of his torah duties to G-d and men. And he should seek help from G-d, and strengthen to add in the service and in good deeds, as written "*I pray that my ways be directed to keep Your statutes*" (Tehilim 119:5).

(*Tov Halevanon*: That his spirit be esteemed in his eyes, and his soul be high, i.e. that he is a baal taava (insatiably desirous) for matters of the next world, that he always yearn to attain more and more acquisitions in matters of the next world. Because, if his spirit is lowly in his eyes and his soul is meek in matters of the next world, it will be sufficient for him a little good deeds and service and he will tell himself 'who am I that I should raise my heart to go in the matters of the Tzadikim?')

(7) That his deeds be little in his eyes, and that he should complain to himself over his shortcomings in the fulfillment of his religious duties to G-d and to his fellow men. He should pray to G-d for help and strength. For the sake of G-d, he should put aside all haughtiness, and renounce personal pride and dignity while he is performing any religious service, whether he is alone or among a crowd of people. As the verse said about Aharon, in his exalted status (as head priest), "*And he shall lift out the ashes*" (Vayikra 6:3). The Creator obligated him to take out the ashes every day in order to lower and remove pride from his heart. And similar to this by king David: "*and she saw the king David leaping and dancing before the L-ord; and she despised him in her heart*" (Shmuel II 6:16), and the rest of the matter, and also "*I will speak of your testimonies before kings, and will not be ashamed*" (Tehilim 119:46).

(*Pas Lechem*: In the previous section, he wrote from the aspect of raising and lifting oneself to a higher level than the one he is currently in. Here, he is writing from the aspect of mourning for his shortcomings and beseeching help from the Creator.)

(8) He should be contented with whatever means of livelihood present themselves, and with whatever he finds, because he regards himself (i.e. his lower soul which lusts for gratifications - PL) as insignificant and of little worth. He should accustom himself to abstain from gratifying bodily desires in order to be free to pay his duties to G-d for His many favors and great goodness towards him, as David said "*I will run the way of your commandments, for You will free my heart*" (Tehilim 119:32).

(*Pas Lechem*: Earlier in the psalm, King David wrote: "my soul clings unto the dust...", "my soul

melts away for heaviness..", "remove from me the way of falsehood...", i.e. the way of physical lusts, and after he said all of these things and curtailed his desires, he then said that through this his heart will be free to "run the way of Your commandments")

(9) To exact vengeance from the wicked for the honor of the Creator. Let one not be enticed on account of his own practice of forgiving others in matters that only affect himself to also forgive them in matters of G-d, or to forgive those who speak against His prophets, or his pious and treasured ones. Likewise, let one not conduct himself in his personal way of forgiving others, when he sees a man oppressing another man. Rather, he should come to the rescue of the oppressed and help to free them from the hands of their oppressors, as written "*O house of David, thus said the L-ord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor*" (Yirmiya 21:12), and "*I broke the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth*" (Iyov 29:17).

He should teach others the service of G-d, rebuke them and make them feel ashamed. He should exhort them on the good, and warn them on the evil forcefully and by word of mouth to the extent of his ability, and be swift to exact the punishment G-d commanded to administer to one who is guilty. He should not be humble or lowly in this, as written by Pinchas: "*Then Pinchas stood up and exacted justice, and the plague was stopped. It was accounted for him as a merit for generation to generation forever*" (Tehilim 106:30).

(10) He should speak little and in a low voice. He should laugh little. He should seldom take an oath in the name of G-d even if what he swears is true. No falsehood should come out of his lips. He should not sit in the company of men engaged in laughter and idle talk, nor delight in the worldly things ignorant people delight in. He should act like this out of submission and lowliness of spirit, not out of arrogance and pride as the prophet said "*I sat not in the assembly of merry-makers, nor did I rejoice; because of Your hand I sat alone, for You filled me with indignation*" (Yirmiya 15:17).

(*Tov Halevanon*: "not out of arrogance" - [an example of arrogance:] not wishing to associate himself with those "lesser" than himself.)

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 7 \*\*\*

- *When it applies and when it does not*

The signs by which true submission is verified in a humble person are five.

(1) When he is intensely angry towards someone who reviled him, whether in word or deed, and he rules over his spirit, and forgives, despite that he has the ability to take revenge, and instead forgives him out of humility and lowliness - this attests to true submission.

(2) When he is struck with a severe financial loss, or some calamity occurs to one of his loved ones - if his calmness overcomes his shock, and he humbly accepts the Creator's decree, and justifies the Divine judgment - this attests to good submission and to his lowliness before G-d, as the verse tells of Aharon when Nadav and Avihu were killed (by a heavenly fire): "*And Aharon was silent*" (Vayikra 10:3), and David said: "*Be silent to G-d and wait patiently for Him*" (Tehilim 37:7), and "*Therefore the wise shall keep silence in that time*" (Amos 5:13).

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. at bad times, he will be silent and will not be questioning of G-d's ways.)

(3) When a deed he does becomes generally known, whether it is good or bad.

If it is a good deed and he is praised for it, he belittles the deed to the one who praised him, and he will consider in his thoughts that the deed is small and lacking in quality to be acceptable to the Creator due to his being obligated to do deeds many times more than this. And he will say to the one who praised him: "stop my brother, because compared to my sins, it is like a spark of fire (trying to extinguish) the sea, and even if it is worth something, how can I know if it is saved from the things which nullify a mitzvah (as described in Gate #5), and that the Creator will accept it from me, and will not return it to me, or throw it back into my face?, as written: "When you come to appear before Me, who requested this of you, to trample My courts?" (Yeshaya 1:12), and "*You shall no longer bring vain flour-offerings, it is smoke of abomination to Me*" (ibid 1:13).

(*Pas Lechem*: "return it to me, or throw it back into my face" - When a gift sent to a king is not accepted by the king, he returns it to the sender, and perhaps in his anger towards him, he may even throw it to his face.")

All the more so, if the praise is false, that he must reject it, and say to the speaker: "My brother, it is bad enough that I am lacking in fulfilling my obligations to the Creator, do not add to my discredit the iniquity of accepting praise for something I have not done, for I am aware of my sins and iniquities better than you are, as David said: 'For I know my transgressions..' (Tehilim 51:5).

If people speak of bad things he did (which are true):

He will admit his failings and will not seek false excuses to absolve and justify himself, as Yehuda said: "She has been more righteous than I" (Bereishis 38:26), and he won't attempt to shame the speaker and make him out a liar, nor condemn him for having exposed him, rather, he will say to him: "my brother, the amount of bad things you have observed in me is little compared to what you don't know about me and which the Creator has for so long kept hidden. If you knew the full extent of my bad deeds and transgressions, you would flee from me, fearing that the punishment of the Creator which they merit, would befall you too, as a poet once said: "if my neighbors could smell my sins, they would run away and keep far from me", and as Iyov said: "*Did I, like men, cover my transgressions, to conceal my iniquity in my hiding place?*" (Iyov 31:33).

If the bad thing that was said of him was false, he should say to the person who reported it: "my brother, I am not amazed that the Creator has saved me from doing that which you accuse me, since He has bestowed upon me so many benefits. What really amazes me, is that He allowed to remain concealed what is far worse and more reprehensible than that which you have told over about me. Stop my brother, and be concerned for your merits, that you do not lose them without your noticing it. For it is told of a pious man about whom someone spoke badly of, that when he heard of this, he sent a basket full of the choicest fruits of his province to the one who spoke badly of him and wrote to him: 'I have been notified that you sent me an offering of your merits, and I am sending you this gift in return' "

Another pious man once said: "Many people will come on the day of judgment, and when they are shown their deeds, they will find in the book of their merits, good deeds that they did not do, and they will say: 'we did not do these things'. They will be answered: 'they were done by someone who spoke badly of you'. Likewise, at that time, those who spoke badly of others will find that some of their merits will be missing, they will seek them, and will be told: 'you forfeited them when you spoke of this or that person'".

Similarly, some people will find in their book of sins, sins they did not do, and when they will protest saying "we did not commit these things", they will be told "these were added to the list of your misdeeds for having spoken of this or that person", as written: "*And return to our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom, their reproach with which they reproached You, O L-ord*" (Tehilim 79:12). And on this scripture warns us: "*remember what the L-ord your G-d did to Miriam on the journey*" (Devarim 24:9).

(4) When G-d bestows a special benefit on him such as exceptional wisdom and understanding, or great wealth, or honor from the ruling king, or other things like this which people commonly take pride in and become haughty on account of, and yet one remains in his humility as before and even increases in humility and lowliness before G-d, and honors and benefits other people, as written by Avraham who said: "*I am but dust and ashes*" (Bereishis 18:27) when the Creator praised him saying "*how can I hide from Avraham what I intend to do*" (Bereishis 18:17). And Moshe and Aharon said "*we are nothing*" (Shmos 16:7), and David said: "*I am a worm and not a man*" (Tehilim 22:7). (If one acts like this), it will clarify his interior and affirm his submission is true. The wise man said of this matter: "*If the spirit of the ruler rise up against you, leave not your place; for gentleness pacifies great offenses*" (Koheles 10:4).

(5) When the humble man rebukes himself, exacts the Creator's justice upon himself of his own initiative, and voluntarily submits to it, even though no human authority has the power to enforce it - this points to his true humility before G-d as well as his lowliness and submission to Him, as written: "*We have trespassed against our G-d, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land*" (Ezra 10:2), and "*they gave their hand to send away their wives*" (Ezra 10:19).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. he rebukes himself just like it was proper for the Creator to rebuke him, doing so before the Creator's punishment strikes him. Through this, he confesses and mourns his bad deeds and repents from them before the Creator's punishment strikes him. This is like the first group mentioned in Gate#6 (Gate of Repentance) chapter 6. see there.)

Through these situations and others similar to them will be fulfilled the signs of [true] submission to G-d and humility from the submitted and whether their heart is faithful in them.



\*\*\* CHAPTER 8 \*\*\*

- does submission depend on good traits or the opposite

Is submission secondary to other moral qualities or are other moral qualities secondary to it? I answer this as follows:

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: which depends on which? Is it due to a man possessing the other moral qualities that he can come to the trait of submission, or no, that submission is primary, and through it, he can come to the other moral qualities?)

It is well known to us, that the first prerequisite for the service of G-d is for one to divest himself completely from the trait of masterhood and leave it to G-d alone and that he accepts on himself all the traits of slavehood to the Creator.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: all the while that one has not shed completely all the traits of masterhood, arrogance, and grandeur, then how can he possibly serve G-d, since he is also a master and is therefore not fit to serve another?)

Because slavehood and masterhood are interdependent, one cannot exist without the other. A man cannot be called a slave if he does not have a master, and a master is not fit for this title until he has a slave. Neither one can precede the other whether by title or by relationship, similar to a buyer and a seller.

Hence, a human being's service of G-d can only exist when he assumes all the traits of slavehood, namely submission and humility before Him, shedding from himself all traits of masterhood, namely, self-glory, honor, splendor, pride and the like.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "a man cannot be called a slave..." - The term "slave" here refers to a slave acquired with money as he says afterwards regarding a buyer and a seller. The reason is that for this type of slave, the term "slave" applies completely, and he has no trace whatsoever of masterhood because of the principle "whatever the slave acquires belongs to the master" (Pesachim 88b). Likewise, his master is a complete master. Because if this master was himself also acquired by a second master, then his slave would also belong to the second master. And it is known that the slavehood status of created beings is similar to that of slaves acquired with money, as written: "Do you thus give back to G-d, Oh foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father who acquired you? Has He not made you and established you?" (Devarim 32:6). Hence the term "master" cannot possibly apply to a man since it is not conceivable for a man to own a slave because he himself is already acquired by "the most high G-d, possessor of heaven and earth" (Bereishis 14:19) and therefore "whatever the slave acquires belongs to the Master". )

One of the wise men said: "Grandeur is the garment of the Creator. Whoever wishes to come into His presence in this garment will be pushed out. David said: "*The L-ord reigns; He is clothed in majesty*" (Tehilim 93:1).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: All the worlds and levels from above to below are all garments to the Ein Sof (infinite essence of G-d). They are His praise and grandeur... Hence it is not proper for a human being to don the garment of his blessed Master.)

PROOF THAT SUBMISSION IS FIRST AND FOREMOST

The believer cannot acquire [extra] piety until he [first] discharges his [basic] obligation, as written "*Has the L-ord as much desire in burnt offerings and peace-offerings, as in obeying the voice of the L-ord? Behold, obedience is better than a peace-offering*" (Shmuel 15:22).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: A man must first discharge the primary and obligatory duty, namely, to fulfill all the commandments of G-d and afterwards he can add on to this, as he wrote earlier (Gate 5 ch.5), "these extra acts are not accepted until one first fulfills the obligatory duties".

*Pas Lechem*: One cannot truly ascribe any [extra] piety to a believing Jew before he first discharges

his basic duty, i.e. it is incorrect to ascribe to him any extra measure [of piety] whatsoever before he first discharges his obligation in the obligatory duty.)

And he cannot succeed in fulfilling the [basic] duty until he undertakes the service of the Creator.

(*Pas Lechem*: Because if he does not have a strong mental picture of his servanthood fixed in his mind, why would he obligate himself in the service?)

And he cannot succeed in undertaking the service of the Creator until he first designates G-d alone with all the traits of masterhood and divests them from himself for His sake.

And he cannot succeed in this until he undertakes all the conditions of slavehood.

And he cannot succeed in undertaking the [conditions of] slavehood except through training to submit himself to G-d, and to humble himself and lower himself before Him, as we explained.

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. by habituating himself in submission and lowliness, etc. And since there is no extra piety before discharging his primary duty, and the discharging of the primary duty depends on picturing slavehood on himself (that he pictures that he is a servant of G-d), and slavehood depends on submission, if so, behold, submission precedes all good qualities, and all of them are secondary and stem from it.

He specified three terms "*submit himself*", "*humble himself*", and "*lower himself*". "*Submit himself*" due to G-d's greatness, "*humble himself*" due to G-d's benefits, both are in the heart, while "*lower himself*" is in action.

Translator: Interestingly enough, the first halacha in the shulchan aruch (code of Jewish law) in the Rama brings the verse "*I have set G-d before me always, He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved*" Tehilim 16:8". The Chafetz Chaim explains this verse as follows (from Shem Olam part 2 ch.10): "the general principle, is for every good person to contemplate always how H-shem's presence fills the world, and that he is standing before G-d to do His will. This is what is meant by 'shivisi H'..', that 'I have constantly contemplated that I am standing before G-d to do His will', and this is what G-d said to Avraham - "Walk before Me and be Perfect.." (Bereishis 17:1), which means contemplate always that you are standing before Me." End quote.)

Hence, it follows that all moral qualities are secondary to the trait of submission, which is the head (in importance - *PL*) and beginning (in time - *PL*) of all of them. And it follows logically from this, that no piety can possibly exist in one whose heart is devoid of submission to G-d or has in it any trace of arrogance or pride.

Therefore the beginning of repentance is lowliness, humility, and submission, as the verse says: "*If My people, who are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, [and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hearken from Heaven, and will forgive their sin...]*" (Divrei II Hayamim 7:14), and "*They have submitted themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance*" (Divrei Hayamim II 12:7).

(*Pas Lechem*: since they have submitted themselves, I will not destroy them because submission is the beginning of repentance, and the beginning is half of the whole, and certainly they will complete their repentance.)

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 9 \*\*\*

- if it is possible for a man's heart to contain submission and arrogance simultaneously

Can submission and pride co-exist in the heart of the believer? I answer this as follows:

There are two categories of pride:

(1) A man's pride in his body (such as if he is tall, of good form and appearance - *TL*), and its conditions (such as his strength, beauty or the like - *TL*), or in all things that further his body's well being (such as his clothing, houses or other possessions - *TL*).

(2) A man's pride in his spiritual qualities - the wisdom used and good deeds he performed in the service of G-d.

Any pride which stems from bodily things distances submission from the heart. It is impossible for both to co-exist simultaneously since they mutually repel each other. For if a man takes pride in any secular thing, what brings him to this pride is:

\* belittling the Source of this good (G-d)

\* downplaying the value of this good

\* little consciousness of how swiftly it can be taken from him or leave him.

Rather, he will consider it that he himself is the creator of his good fortune, that he has acquired it with his own strength and ingenuity, as written about Sancheriv *"by the strength of my hand I have accomplished"* (Yeshaya 10:13), and about Nebuchadnezar *"Is this not the great Babylon, which I built for a royal palace with the strength of my power and for the honor of my glory?"* (Daniel 4:27), and Pharaoh *"My river is my own..."* (Yechezkel 29:3), and you already know what swiftly followed their boastful proclamations - the destruction of their kingdom and their land.

Pride in spiritual qualities divides into two categories, one reprehensible and one praiseworthy.

The reprehensible one - that a person prides himself on his wisdom or a righteous man on his good deeds. This causes the wisdom and righteousness to become magnified in his eyes (he thinks his wisdom and righteousness is much - TL), so that he is satisfied with what he has already accomplished, and thinks that it is enough for him the good reputation and praise he has achieved from his fellow men. This will cause him to look down on others, despise them, and speak badly of them, to belittle the wise men of his generation in his eyes, and glorify himself in the shortcomings and ignorance of other people. Our Rabbis of blessed memory call this: "one who seeks honor by putting down others (has no share in the world to come)". One like this will never be submitted nor humble.

(*Pas Lechem*: "This will cause him to look down on others", due to their little wisdom "and despise them", due to their deeds which he deems reprehensible. These two are in the heart. And afterwards, "and speak badly of them" which is verbally.)

The praiseworthy one - the pride of the wise man in his wisdom or of the righteous man in his good deeds when it is an expression of his gratitude to the Creator for helping him greatly on them, and of his joy in them. When it causes him to improve and continue exerting himself in them, and to be humble to his colleagues, happy with their success, and concerned for their honor (if he sees their honor will be slighted, he will quickly rectify the matter - PL). To not reveal their failings and to speak good of them (against one who speaks badly of them - PL). To love them and judge them favorably, and to be careful of their honor (that they don't receive saddening things due to him - PL). All of his own good deeds will seem few in his eyes, and he will always exert himself to increase them. He will be humbled by his inability to reach his longing in them (his heart will be broken and mourning that he is unable to attain the wisdom and good deeds according to his desire - PL). He will lower himself before someone who he hopes will help him to increase in them. He will be grateful to G-d for having graced him with qualities and thanks Him for helping him to reach exalted levels.

This kind of arrogance (aggrandizing) is not detrimental to submission and does not repel it. The verse says of Yehoshafat *"And his heart was uplifted in the ways of the L-ord"* (Divrei Hayamim II 17:6), just the opposite - such pride helps humility and increases his submission as written *"In the wake of humility comes fear of the L-ord, riches, honor, and life"* (Mishlei 22:4). (humility leads to fear of G-d - ML)

### \*\*\* CHAPTER 10 \*\*\*

- *benefits of submission in this world and the next*

The benefits of submission in matters of this world and the next world are six things, three of them refer to matters of this world and three to matters of the next world.

For matters of this world:

(1) That one is happy in his portion. Because for one whom arrogance and pride have entered in him, the entire world and everything in it is not enough for his needs due to his inflated heart and due to his looking down with contempt on the portion allotted to him (he thinks he deserves much more - PL). But if he is humble, he does not consider himself as having any special merit, and so whatever he attains of the world's goods, he is satisfied with it for his sustenance and other needs. This will bring him peace of mind and minimize his anxiety. He will eat what is available and wears and dwells with what he can find. Due to his submission, even the minimum of the world's goods is enough for him. But for the arrogant - the entire world will not satisfy his lacking due to the pride of his heart and arrogance, as the wise man said: *"A righteous man eats to sate his appetite, but the stomach of the wicked shall feel*

(*Pas Lechem*: "peace of mind and minimize his anxiety" - peace of mind due to not desiring more than he attained and "minimal anxiety" from losing what he has because even if he loses some, he will be satisfied with the remainder.  
"the stomach of the wicked shall feel want" - whatever indulgences he fills his belly with will induce him to desire other things better than those, and there is no end to the matter...)

(2) The humble man can bear it when troubles befall him or when reverses in his affairs occur to him due to his lowliness and humble spirit.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "due to his lowliness and humble spirit" - whatever befalls him, does not appear to him to be a decline from his level which is lowly in his mind.)

But for the proud man, his fear will be great (when troubles are near - *PL*) and his ability to bear will be little when hit by troubles because his soul is proud, his heart is haughty, and he is dissatisfied with his matters, as written by one who was in this way: "How have you fallen from heaven, oh morning star? You (*Nebuchadnezar*) have been cut down to earth, You who cast lots on nations" (Yeshaya 14:12).

(3) The humble man will find more favor in people's eyes. He is beloved by them, and will easily fit in with them and adopt their customs.

It was already said on a king who would hasten his steps when walking. He was asked about this and answered: "because it keeps me away from the way of pride, and also so I arrive more quickly to my destination"

A wise man was asked: "How were you able to become accepted as head of your entire generation?" He replied: "Because I never met one of them that I did not see in him a quality in which he is greater than me. If he was wiser than me, I concluded that he must be more G-d fearing than me since his wisdom is greater than mine. If he had less wisdom than I have, I considered that on the day of Judgment, he will be held less accountable than I, because my transgressions were committed with knowledge and intent while his were committed in error.

If he was older than me, I would reason that his merits must be greater than mine since he came into the world before me. If he was younger, I thought that his sins were fewer than mine. If he was equal to me in age and wisdom, I would tell myself: maybe his heart is more devoted to G-d than mine, because I know of my past sins, but I don't know of any that he committed. If he was wealthier than me, I would think that due to his wealth, he likely served G-d more than me, in doing charities and helping the poor. If he was poorer than me, I would consider that he was more low and humble than me due to his poorness, and he is better than me. Due to this, I never ceased to honor all of them and humble myself before them."

(*Tov Halevanon*: "If he was wiser than me, I concluded that he must be more G-d fearing than me" - and that is the purpose of it all, and this is all of a man as written "the fear of G-d is his treasure" (Yeshaya 33:6), and our sages, of blessed memory, said: (Kidushin 40b) "study [of torah] is greater for it leads to action"  
"since his wisdom is greater than mine" - and as they said (Avot 3:17) "without wisdom there cannot exist fear [of G-d])

Similarly, our sages taught "judge every man favorably" (Avos 1:6), "receive every person with a cheerful countenance" (Avos 1:15), and "Be very, very lowly of spirit" (Avos 4:4), and "One should always be flexible as a reed and not unyielding as a cedar. This is why the reed has merited to have made from it a quill to write a Sefer Torah, Tefilin and Mezuzot" (Taanis 20b).

(*Manoach Halevavot*: "This is why the reed" - i.e. to allude that submission is a great root to torah, and one who adopts it is beloved by G-d. Therefore, we write with it a Sefer Torah...)

(4) The fourth benefit, which is for matters of the afterlife, is that the humble person is nearer to attaining wisdom, since he is drawn to the Sages (his heart is drawn to their words - *PL*), he submits to them, and frequently goes to them, as written: "He who goes with the wise will become wise" (Mishlei 13:20). Our sages of blessed memory said: "Let your house be a meeting house for the sages; sit amidst the dust of their feet and drink in their words thirstily"

(Avos 1:4). G-d will help him to attain wisdom as written: *"The humble will He guide in justice: and the humble will He teach his way"* (Tehilim 25:9). But for one who has a proud heart, true wisdom will never endure in him, and he will never reach the goal of clear knowledge. For he feels too important to go to the wise men and torah sages, as written *"The wicked, through the pride of his countenance will not seek..."* (Tehilim 10:4).

(5) The humble man hastens to do his religious duties with diligence and zeal. He does not become arrogant because he fulfills them, and does not take lightly any of them as our sages said: *"Be as scrupulous about a light precept as of a grave one"* (Avos 2:1). But one who is proud procrastinates from doing the service, due to his high heartedness and inflated spirit. He does not sense this until he falls and becomes low, as written: *"Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your rule shall come down, even the crown of your glory"* (Yirmiya 13:18), and *"Six things the L-ord hates, and the seventh is an abomination of His soul; Haughty eyes..."* (Mishlei 6:16).

(*Tov Halevanon*: He who makes himself proud is hated by G-d and G-d reduces him to even less than his true level. This is like the allusion in the Midrash (Bereishis Raba 65:11) "an analogy to a province who would call themselves 'the giantons of the king'. A woman who had a midget son arrived to some place and said 'my son is a gianton'. They replied to her: 'to you he seems like a gianton but to us he seems like the midget of the midgets.'" (end of midrash). At first they said she had a midget son, and since she said he was a gianton, they reduced him more than his true status and said he is among the midget of the midgets.)

(6) The service of the humble man is acceptable to G-d, as written: *"The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit; [O G-d, You will not despise a broken and crushed heart]"* (Tehilim 51:19). His sin is quickly forgiven if he repents from it, as written: *"He who conceals his sins will not succeed, but he who confesses and abandons [them] will obtain mercy"* (Mishlei 28:13), and *"When men are cast down, then you shall say, There is lifting up; and He shall save the humble person"* (Iyov 22:29).

## FINAL WORDS

These ten roots (i.e. chapters - *ML*) of submission will clarify for you, my brother, the remaining qualities of this important, supremely lofty virtue, which I have not mentioned in this gate. Remember therefore what I have called to your attention concerning this virtue. Place it before your eyes. Ponder it always. Strive to acquire it. Be constantly checking it with your soul and faculties (always sense and check if it is still with you - *PL*). Seek the help of G-d in this. Plea to Him for it, in order that you be drawn closer to Him and attain His favor. Perhaps He will (heed your request - *PL*) and straighten you to this virtue, thereby preparing for you the path to Him, as the pious would ask after their prayers: "O G-d, keep my tongue from evil and my lips from deceit. Help me to be silent in the face of derision, and let my soul be like dust to everyone."

(*Pas Lechem*: "Plea to Him for it, in order that you be drawn closer to Him, and attain His favor" - beseech the virtue of submission from the Creator, and your intent should be to attain it in order that through it you will draw closer to the Creator and will obtain His favor.)

Be on guard against the imaginations of your heart, and enticements of the yetzer (evil inclination) towards you that would mislead you to haughtiness, arrogance, pride, lust for ruling, self-glorification and domineering. The wise man already exhorted us as to the right road a man should take in this world in saying: "Two things have I asked of you... Remove far from me vanity and lies: [give me neither poverty nor riches]; give me my daily bread. [lest I become sated and deny, and say, 'Who is the L-ord?'] Or lest I become poor and steal]" (Mishlei 30:7-9).

(*Pas Lechem*: "be on guard against the imaginations of your heart..." - because if a man lets loose the imaginations of his heart, automatically the evil inclination will entice him to pride and haughtiness.)

Wake up my brother! Do not evade from healing the sickness of pride from your soul and your traits with the medicines I have taught you. Let not your observing of the masses' neglecting the healing their souls from this disease stop you from doing so, in saying to yourself: "I will share the same fate as them". Because, if a blind man finds the potions which can benefit and heal him if he applies them, it is not proper for him to procrastinate using them and say "I will share the same fate of my blind friends". Anyone who heard him saying such a statement would scorn his words and ridicule his reasoning.

According to this, examine your soul, and exert yourself with all of your might to promote its well-being. Do not neglect what will benefit you in this world and in the next, lest you die without fulfilling your longing for exalted spiritual levels which you are capable of reaching, as the wise man said: *"The desire of a lazy man will bring about his death, for his hands refuse to labor"* (Mishlei 21:25), and *"By the fields of a lazy man, I passed and by the vineyard of a man without sense. And behold, thistles had grown all over it; nettles had covered its surface, and its stone fence had been torn down"* (Mishlei 24:30), and the rest of the matter.

| (*Pas Lechem*: "your longing for exalted spiritual levels" - certainly it is in the nature of man to long and yearn to attain exalted spiritual levels)

May the Al-mighty teach us the path to His service, in His mercy and kindness. Amen.