

** Shaar Yichud HaMaase - Gate of Devotion to G-d Alone **

Gate #5 from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart by Rabeinu Bahya ibn Paquda zt'l

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Translator's Foreword:

The following is a translation of the fifth gate of one of the earliest of the classic mussar (ethics) works, "Duties of the Heart" by Rabeinu Bachya. The book has inspired many great men to walk in its ways and review it throughout their lives. The fifth gate deals primarily with purifying one's motives and the trait of "watchfulness" (zehirut) from the traps of the evil inclination.

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 Schwartzman 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

Abbreviations used in this translation:

ML - Marpe Lenefesh commentary

TL - Tov HaLevanon commentary

PL - Pas Lechem commentary

LT - Lev Tov commentary

MH - Manoach HeLevavos commentary

***** SHAAR YICHUD HAMAASE - Gate of Devotion to G-d Alone *****

from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart

by Rabeinu Bechaye zt'l

***** Introduction *****

(*Tov Halevanon*: After having demonstrated in the previous gate the ways of trust in G-d, and that trusting in any creation is foolish and useless, for it yields no benefit as derived through reason and through scripture - thus it is certainly proper to devote all our actions to G-d. This is the subject of this gate.)

Since the topic of our preceding discussion was placing one's trust in G-d, I deemed proper to follow with a clarification of the ways in which it is incumbent to devote all actions of religious service to G-d alone. For this leads to purification of thought and heart from mixtures of other intents which diminish the quality of the actions, and saves one from all sorts of embellishment and flattery to try to win the approval of other people, as Elihu said "I will show partiality to no one, nor will I flatter any man" (Iyov 32:21).

(*Pas Lechem*: when a man desires to embellish himself, namely, to appear good to his colleagues in his service to G-d, then, even though his motive is good, nevertheless, over time, through this he will come to the trait of flattery. Namely, that his motive in the service of G-d will be out of hypocrisy. The author calls hypocrisy with the term "flattery", because anything which is not "tocho kebaro" (inner being matching exterior appearance) is called in hebrew "flattery").

It is now proper to clarify six matters on the subject of devotion of actions to G-d:

1. What is devotion of actions to G-d?
2. What leads to it?
3. On which actions is devotion a duty?
4. Which things damage devotion?
5. Ways to distance from them until one can successfully devote all actions to G-d
6. To guard, protect and rule over one's thoughts

***** Chapter 1 *****

What is devotion of actions to G-d? It is the intent in all revealed or hidden acts in the service of G-d, to do them for His Name. To attain His favor only and not to do them to win the favor of other people.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: that a man should not have any intent when serving G-d, other than to do the will of G-d. Namely, that G-d said and one is doing His will. This itself is the reward and punishment, as written: "For his anger endures but for a moment; life results from His favor" (Tehilim 30:6). This was explained earlier in a few places. If a man has any other intent besides this, he is serving himself not G-d alone. He is like a bad servant who hopes for favors from his master.)

***** Chapter 2 *****

How can one come to devote all of his actions to G-d alone? Through ten matters.

When they are established in a man's heart, and he clarifies for himself that they are the pillars of his service and the roots of his actions, he will be able to fully devote his actions to G-d, and he will not turn nor hope to anyone else, nor have any other intent in them other than to do His will.

(Pas Lechem: "pillars of his service and the roots of his actions" - Some of these ten matters are like "pillars", namely, "foundations", which the building of the divine service stands on. While others are like "roots", which the trunk and the branches grow from, such as the second, ninth, and tenth. The others are like pillars which support the service so that it does not shift and crumble.

Marpe Lenefesh: i.e. through what, and which matters must first be established in oneself [before he can come to proper devotion]. He answered that they are 10 matters that must first be clearly established in one's heart. Afterwards, the outgrowth from them is that he will do all of his actions only "I'Shem Shamayim" (for G-d), and he will not turn his heart to anything other than G-d, nor will he hope to anything else, etc.)

- (1) To believe with a complete heart, the unity of G-d, as I explained in the beginning of this book.
- (2) Reflecting on the constant favors of G-d on oneself, as we explained (gate 2).
- (3) To take on oneself the duty to serve G-d, as mentioned (gate 3).
- (4) to realize the duty to place one's trust in G-d [alone] and not in the created beings.
- (5) To realize that help or harm is not in the hands of any created being without the permission of the Creator.
- (6) That it be equal to oneself whether people praise or scorn him.
- (7) To abandon trying to embellish oneself to others. (it is necessary to continuously abandon this since it is ingrained in one's nature to try to embellish oneself to others - PL)
- (8) To turn the heart away from worldly interests when occupied with matters of the next world.
- (9) To fear G-d (from doing evil, i.e. negative commandments) - PL) and feel embarrassed from Him (from not fulfilling His positive commandments - PL).
- (10) Whenever the yetzer (evil inclination, lower self) stirs an urge in one's heart, to take counsel from the intellect and follow it, and not to follow the yetzer.

(Marpe Lenefesh: Because the inclination of a man's heart is evil and entices him in every matter, small or big. Therefore, it is necessary for one to watch his affairs and consult his intellect, so that the yetzer does not lure him with trickery. Because the yetzer also lures people with logical claims, only that they are false, as the author will explain.)

*** Chapter 3 ***

The deeds that are perfected by devoting them to G-d alone while performing them are the acts of service whereby one hopes to find favor with G-d. These deeds are all the visible mitzvot (commandments) of the physical limbs. For it is possible to perform them without intent for G-d, such as to do them in order to appear important in the eyes of others, or to hope for their honor (in their presence - PL) and praise (outside their presence - PL).

(Pas Lechem: "in order to appear important [literally: to arm oneself] in the eyes of others" - from the term "armaments of war", i.e. like a warrior who girds weapons of war, that through them he appears honorable and important, and his awe is upon the weak. This is his intent, that through these deeds, he will be seen as important by other people.)

But for the duties of the heart, there can be no hypocrisy, nor expectation of honor, respect, or praise on account of fulfilling them since other people cannot look into one's heart. Therefore one's intent in fulfilling them is automatically only to the Watcher, namely, the blessed Creator alone, as written "I, the L-rd, search the heart, examine the reins.." (Yirmiya 17:10), and "the hidden things belong to the L-rd our G-d" (Devarim 29:28).

*** Chapter 4 ***

Three things damage one's devoting his act of service to G-d alone:

(Marpe Lenefesh: Through these three things will come loss and spoiling of his deeds, that undoubtedly, they will not be I'Shem Shamayim (for G-d alone). He will now explain them, one by one.)

- (1) Ignorance of G-d and His good.

(Pas Lechem: He does not understand His loftiness, blessed be He, nor His good traits..)

(2) Ignorance of G-d's mitzvot and His torah.

(3) Thoughts and suggestions the yetzer presents a man to endear to him this world and distance him from the path that leads to [his good in] the next world.

Explanation of the above three:

Ignorance of G-d causes lacking in the service because one who does not know his master will not serve him devotedly. Rather, he will only serve someone who he is familiar with and which he expects benefit or harm from.

Hence, if one who does not know G-d does an act of service, his intent will be to people that he is afraid of or that he hopes to get some benefit from. Therefore, he is serving people not He who created them, because he is ignorant of G-d's matter.

Similarly we can say for the idol worshipper, that ignorance of G-d is what brings him to this (he hopes to get benefit or protection from the idol). However, the idol worshipper is to be preferred over the flatterer (hypocrite) in the following four ways:

(1) In our times, there are no prophets which can perform miracles to clarify to the idol worshipper his faulty outlook. But the flatterer in G-d's torah (who performs the service of G-d to impress people, as above), there are grounds for a claim against him. For he undertook the commandments to serve G-d alone and undertook the prohibitions not to serve someone else (than G-d).

(2) The idolater worships something which does not rebel against G-d (sun, moon, stars). But the flatterer in G-d's torah worships a human being who rebels against G-d as well as one who does not rebel against Him.

(3) The idolater worships one thing alone, whereas for the flatterer, there is no limit to those he worships.

(4) The idolater's status is visible for all to see, and people guard themselves from him due to public knowledge of his denial of G-d's existence. But the flatterer's denial is not visible, and people trust in him. Therefore, he is more likely to damage them (influence them with his false beliefs) than the idol worshipper.

It comes out that the flatterer is the greatest disease in the world. He is called in our writings, the flatterer, the haughty, the enticer.

(*Tov Halevanon*: It is an evil sickness of which there is none greater. They will cast behind them all of G-d's orders and commandments of the duties of the heart which are concealed, and will choose, in exchange for them, visible religious service, which they fabricated from their hearts in order to show off their praise to the public. While for the commandments which do not bring them any benefit or honor - they will abandon them completely. And many of the masses take them as a proof and an example, and will hasten to do like them. Woe to their souls for they caused themselves evil.

"*the haughty*" - He becomes arrogant in seeking honor and a good name from people, and he is not embarrassed to make himself appear better than everyone and to justify himself before those bigger and better than himself.

"*the enticer*" - he entices people to believe in him and to follow him, like Yeravam ben Nevat, who sinned and caused others to sin.)

One who does not understand the commandments of G-d and His torah is not capable of devoting his acts wholly to G-d. For as he does not know the ways of service prescribed and their roots in the torah, much less will he understand how to perform them properly, namely, with wholehearted devotion to G-d. Because he is not sure whether he is in truth under duty to perform them. Nor does he know what is detrimental to wholehearted devotion in his service of G-d, even if he is knowledgeable of G-d and of His goodness, as our Sages said "an ignorant man cannot be pious" (Avot 2:5).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: since he is unsure if he is obligated in such and such a mitzva or not. And even if he does the service, it will be only by rote practice, and for ulterior motives, not I'Shem Shamayim (for G-d), like our sages said: (Avot 2:5) "A boor cannot fear sin nor can an ignorant man be pious"

Tov Halevanon: "all the more so, he does not understand how to complete them properly" - to

TEMPTATION OF THE YETZER HARA

(which is the third of the three things that damage [one's devoting his act of service] mentioned earlier - ML)

The temptations of the yetzer (evil inclination) divide into two categories:

- (1) Thoughts which cast doubt on truths and confuse his emuna (faith), so that he cannot do any religious act properly to G-d.
- (2) He comes in the way of arguments and proofs that his zeal and exertion in the service of G-d is neither a duty nor meritorious, and advises him to instead work for this world and its inhabitants.

*** Chapter 5 ***

INTRODUCTION TO THE YETZER HARA

I saw fit to clarify for you in this subject some examples (of the ways of the yetzer and his strategies - TL) which will teach [even] on things I do not mention in order that people will watch out for them, and so that their hearts will be complete with G-d. As the wise man said: "*Let the wise man hear and increase understanding*" (Mishlei 1:5).

(Tov Halevanon: "which will teach [even] on things I do not mention" - because there are many more snares, traps, and strategies of the yetzer on people which are too numerous to specify.

Marpe Lenefesh: These are examples and illustrations to learn to apply to other enticements of the yetzer because there is no end to his enticements. Therefore, who can possibly mention all of them?

Pas Lechem: "that people will watch out for them" - from these examples, people will learn and acquire for themselves the trait of "zehirut"/watchfulness.)

O Man! You should know that the great archenemy you have in this world is your own yetzer (evil inclination). He is interwoven in the forces of your soul and intertwined in the order of your spirit. He associates with you in the guidance of your physical and spiritual senses. He rules over the secrets of your soul and of what is hidden in your breast. He is your advisor in all of your movements whether visible or invisible that you wish to do. He lies in wait, watching your steps to lead you astray. You are asleep to him but he is awake to you. You look away from him but he does not look away from you.

He masks himself as your friend, and pretends to show love. He enters in your inner circle of close friends and advisors. From his gestures and signs it appears he is running to do your will but in fact he is shooting deadly arrows at you to kill and uproot you from the land of the living (Olam Haba - PL), as the verse speaks of one like this "like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death; so is a man who deceives his friend and says, 'Am I not joking?'" (Mishlei 26:18).

(Tov Halevanon: "You are asleep to him" - i.e. you are like one sleeping who does not think about his deeds and plans against you.

"deadly arrows" - arrows which are smeared at their tips with various deadly poisons and venoms, so that when they are shot in the flesh of a man, the wound can never heal and the man will die due to this wound.

Pas Lechem: "watching your steps to lead you astray" - this is the correct text version. Literally in each and every one of your steps, he lies in ambush to entice you after his will, namely that this particular step be with intent for something opposed to the will of G-d.

Marpe Lenefesh: "He is interwoven in the forces of your soul" - the yetzer is mixed in all of the forces in a human being's soul. Likewise, he is mixed and merged in the spirit of a man, and in his physical senses, namely - sight, hearing, smell, and touch. He is mixed in and associates with all of them, to steer them according to his will.

Examine closely the book Shaarei Kedusha to see what is the evil inclination. See there in detail. Fortunate is the eye which saw all its words. You will understand from there. (Translator: see there also for the difference between the soul (nefesh) and the spirit (ruach) in a human being)

"has control of the secrets of your soul..." - That which you think in your heart and in your thoughts, which is something concealed and hidden from all creatures - he rules over all of them, and can

"He is your advisor in all of your movements whether visible or invisible that you wish to do" - you think that your physical movements and invisible movements (thoughts, decisions, etc.) are according to your will. But you don't put to heart that in all of your movements, he counsels you according to his will. If you don't stand up against him to reflect on whether or not your ways are just - immediately you will fall into his net and be ensnared like a bird in a trap.

"to kill and uproot you from the land of the living" - from Olam Haba (the afterlife), since, behold, we see that he entices people from small things and builds up to big things, until he tells you "go and serve idols" (i.e. rebel against G-d). How many have gone off to evil ways, r"l, and it is all due to the enticements of the yetzer hara. Therefore scripture tells us to guard "very much" from him, as written (in the Shema - Devarim 11:16): "guard yourself lest your heart be enticed, and you stray and will serve other gods, and worship them" i.e. when you stray from the way of the torah, even for small things, eventually you "will serve other gods, etc." (ibid), and in the end: "then the L-ord's wrath be kindled against you", etc. (ibid) until finally, "you'll be swiftly destroyed from the good land" (ibid), like our Sages told us in books, and likewise we saw with our own eyes. Here is a quote from the "Magid" (angel) to the Beis Yosef (Rabbi Yosef Karo, sefer magid Parsha Vaera):

Yom Revii (Wednesday) at the time of mincha, while I was studying mishnayot: (The Heavenly messenger said in the Name of the Shechina:) Chazak v'Ematz (be strong and courageous) in my torah, and unify your heart to not separate your thoughts from my torah, my yirah, cleave to my nitzchi, my nekiyus, my sod, my oz, etc, my tiferet, my torah, my teshua, my teshuva, because that which you seek from the Holy One bb'H, that He guide you in the ways of His teshuva, these are the ways I am teaching you, i.e. these are the ways of His teshuva.

Strengthen yourself so that you do not part your thought for even a second from my torah and my yira. Annul from your heart all the hirhurim (urges, thoughts) which come to you from the yetzer hara, the serpent, the Samal (Satan). They put these in your heart to make you lost, to confuse/disorient you, to destroy you. And you - stand up against them. Annul them from your heart, let not their words enter your ears. Thereby, you will cause them to be lost and confused/disoriented, and you will destroy them. Their desire is in you but you will rule over them (a reference to Gen.4:7 "If you do well, you will be uplifted. And if you do not do well, sin crouches at the door, and to you shall be its desire. Yet you can rule over it")

That which you see that sometimes I speak to you but the words do not "happen", you know what the Sages said: "shema yigrom hachet" ("sin may cause" [the forfeiture of future good]). Furthermore, even if it does not cause, nevertheless, the hirhurim (thoughts) which enter your heart cause that my words do not happen and they also cause my words to stagger and I do not reveal to you all the words.

Therefore, be watchful and guard yourself from these hirhurim, and especially at the time of prayer, annul all these thoughts and unify your heart to my prayer and my service. It is necessary for you to not mesiach daat (become distracted) at all, because the moment you become distracted, your yetzer hara will make you lost, confuse/disorient you, topple you, destroy you, and cast you into the bor tachtis (depths of the pit).

Therefore, you must be constantly alert to his strategies. Do not be forgetful of him for even one second. Be always watchful of him, because zehirus (watchfulness) brings to cleanliness. And thereby, you will make him lost and will destroy him, confuse/disorient him, submit him under you. You must exert yourself exceedingly to not neglect your watchfulness of him for even one second. And especially during the time of Shema and prayer, to burn all hirhurim and machshevot betelot (useless thoughts) with the straw of keriat shema. And thus, you will become elevated and exalted. See and reflect that all the thoughts that a man ponders on his affairs, they do not increase, decrease, or annul in the least from what was decreed for him. Therefore, annul the hirhurim (thoughts/worries) from your heart.

(later on Parsha Bo) Friday night 4th of Shevat: "G-d is with you, etc. only cleave in me and in my yira and in my mishnayot. Do not part your thoughts for even one second because, I, I am the mishna (i.e. the Shechina) which is speaking through your mouth. I am the mother which

is chastising her child. Strengthen and cleave to me, because I and all of my legions are all around you. 7

And you are among us like a king with his army. If the eye had permission to see, you would see out as far as your eye could behold in every direction everything full of troops (angels) which were created from the breath of your mouth, when you toil in mishna. They are encamped all around you, and they surround my troops. And you are in their midst like a king in his army. And all of them proclaim and say 'give honor to the holy form of the King, because he is our teacher, etc.' Therefore, be careful for yourself in all your ways to be constantly clinging to me, and do not part your thoughts for even an instant from Me, and I will elevate you to exceedingly lofty levels...

Translator: The Vilna Gaon, who spent his life in almost total isolation toiling day and night in torah study, once asked a torah scholar to give him harsh words of rebuke. The scholar trembled "who am I to give words of rebuke to the Gaon of Vilna!?". "Please, I decree on you to do this", insisted the Gaon. The scholar opened his mouth and said "Hoy, Eliyahu, Eliyahu, you serve the Creator of the universe in a bounded circle, in the secrets of your chambers, and in your own 4 cubits of space. Go out, please, to the land of the living, to the world of action, and there stand up to the daily tests. There serve the Al-mighty from the stumbling and the traps of the yetzer hara lurking on every side. The Vilna Gaon burst into tears and said: "To do marvels, to walk on a tightrope stretched out over a raging sea - I am afraid." (from letters of the Chafetz Chaim pg.247)
I once heard from Rabbi Nissan Kaplan: "if you don't feel the war every day, then it means he got you already."

Among the strongest of his weapons which he will fire at you and wage war with you in your innermost being - is to try to cast doubt on things you deem to be true (through faith - *PL*), and to confuse what is clear to you (through reason - *PL*), and to confuse your mind with false thoughts and erroneous arguments, and to draw you away from what is for your benefit, and to cause you to doubt what is clear to you in your faith and religion.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: "to draw you away from what is for your benefit" - i.e. by putting bad thoughts in your heart constantly, so that through this you will be distracted from looking and thinking about what is for your benefit, namely, your torah and your faith.)

Pas Lechem: "your faith and religion" - "faith" corresponds to the duties of the heart, while "religion" corresponds to the duties of the limbs, which contain [physical] acts.)

If you will guard yourself from him, and have ready the weapons of your intellect to wage war with him, and deflect his arrows away from you, you will be saved and will escape from him with G-d's help. But if you leave your matters to him, and you are drawn after his will, he will not let up on you until he destroys you from both worlds, and uproots you from both lands, as written of one member of his legions: "For many are the dead that she has felled, and numerous are all her victims; Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death" (Mishlei 7:26-27).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: The proverb is referring to a promiscuous woman, and the lust for her and the seduction towards her is one branch of the strategies of enticement of the yetzer hara. The [hidden] meaning of a "promiscuous woman" is to apikorsus (heresy) and idolatry as the Talmud says (Avodah Zara 17a). The verse gives a double expression of death corresponding to death in this world and in the next.)

Therefore, let no other war distract you from his war, no battlefield from his battlefield, no sword of a distant enemy from the sword of the enemy which is at close quarters and inseparable from you. Let not the effort to repel the enemy who will not approach you without permission (of G-d) prevent you from repelling the enemy who approaches you without [needing] permission, since he exists within you.

(*Tov Halevanon*: Do not distract your mind by fighting any war besides the war of the yetzer.

Pas Lechem: Do not say that you are not free to fight with him due to being busy fighting with others, namely, human beings which harass you. Because his war is more necessary... Furthermore, if a man comes to damage you, certainly, he is not capable of damaging you unless he was given permission through the decree of the Creator. Unlike the yetzer which does not need permission

It is said of a pious man who met some men returning from a war against enemies, and they brought spoils after a raging battle. He said to them: "you returned from the small war with spoils, now prepare for the big war!" They asked: "which big war?" He answered: "the war of the yetzer and his legions".

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Rav Moshe Alshich wrote in parsha "Ki Tetze" similar to these words, see there. He concluded saying: "for two great and important reasons war with human beings is small compared to the war of the yetzer.

The first: war with humans is not in a man's hands, but rather it belongs to G-d since "Ha-shem Ish Milchama" (G-d is the Master of war) (Shmos 15:3) and without Him "no man shall lift up his hand" (Bereishis 41:44). But the war of the yetzer belongs to man, not to G-d, since "Everything is in the hands of G-d, except for fear of G-d" (Berachot 33b). Free choice is unrestrained, to whatever way one desires, he may pursue.

The second: One who wages war with his yetzer is like a young lad who approaches a city he does not recognize. Inside it is a seasoned warrior, trained in warfare from his youth, knowledgeable in all the roads and alleys of the city, since he dwelled there all of his life.

There are over 600 troops there who are all like slaves of that seasoned warrior and follow his orders, powerful warriors which do his will. The city is barricaded shut, with the seasoned warrior and his troops inside it. And behold, this young lad comes and bold-heartedly decides to wage war with the seasoned warrior and topple him and conquer the entire city, capture all of its inhabitants, and enslave them all to himself, and change their hearts to accept him as their master.

In truth, if a man does thus with his yetzer hara, this is the ultimate degree of mightiness, because this is like the lad who wages war with the seasoned warrior as above. And this is what our sages said (Pirkei Avot 4:2): "Who is mighty? He who conquers his yetzer, as it is written (Proverbs 16:32) "One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and one who rules over his spirit is more than one who captures a city", [a city] as above. (Translator: There the Alshich explains that the yetzer tov (good inclination) is like a young lad since it comes on a man only at Bar Mitzvah, while the yetzer hara (evil inclination) comes at birth. Therefore the yetzer hara is already seasoned and has established rulership over the 600+ troops which are the body's 248 limbs and 365 sinews when the good inclination comes. see there.))

Translator: If you ask, "what is this great war? I don't feel any major war?" To this the classic book "Path of the Just" writes in the introduction: "The Holy One Blessed be He has put man in a place where the factors which draw him further from the Blessed One are many. These are the earthy desires which, if he is pulled after them, cause him to be drawn further from and to depart from the true good. It is seen, then, that man is veritably placed in the midst of a raging battle"

And likewise, the Tanya explains with powerful words:

"the term 'Avodah' (service [of G-d], literally 'work') only applies on something that a man does with tremendous exertion against his nature (yegia atzuma neged teva nafsho), only that he nullifies his nature and will to the will of G-d, for example to strain himself in torah study or in prayer until his soul is totally exhausted, etc." - *Tanya Igeres HaKodesh 12*

And also in the *Tanya L.A. Ch.30*:

"It is indeed a great and fierce struggle to break one's passion, which burns like a fiery flame, through fear of G-d; it is actually a huge trial. Therefore, each person according to his place and rank in the service of G-d must weigh and examine his position as to whether he is serving G-d in a manner commensurate with the dimensions of such a fierce battle and test - in the realm of "do good," as, for example, in the service of prayer with kavanah (devotion), pouring out his soul before G-d with all his strength, to the point of exhaustion of the soul. All the while waging war against his body and animal soul within it which impede his devotion. It is a strenuous war to beat and grind them like dust each day before the morning and evening prayers. Also during prayer, he needs to exert himself with the exertion of the spirit and of the flesh, as will be explained later at length.

Any one who has not reached this standard of waging such strenuous war against his body, has not yet measured up to the quality and dimension of the war waged by one's evil nature which burns like a fiery flame, that it be humbled and broken by fear of G-d...

So, too, in the matter of one's occupation in the study of the Torah, to learn much more than his natural or trained desire and will, by virtue of an enormous war with his body. For one who learns

only a little more than his nature - this is but a small war, which has neither parallel nor any comparison with the true war of one's evil inclination which burns like fire; he is called utterly wicked (rasha gamur) if he does not conquer his inclination so that it be subdued and crushed before G-d." End quote. 9

Translator - it seems the point is that adhering to the torah requires enormous effort against one's nature. For example, the biblical commandments love your fellow as yourself, don't hate, do not covet, do not hurt others with words, to walk in His ways (which includes cultivating compassion, humility, wisdom etc.) - all these things require enormous work against one's nature.

It is a wonder, my brother, that for any enemy that one has, if one defeats him once or twice, he will back down from you and not consider waging war again, thinking your strength is greater than his, and he abandons thoughts of defeating you and overpowering you.

But the yetzer, is not satisfied with one battle or even a hundred battles, whether he has defeated you or you have defeated him. Because if he defeats you, he will slay you, and if you defeat him, he will lie in wait all of your days to defeat you, as our Sages said "do not believe in yourself until the day of your death" (Avot 2:4). He does not consider the smallest of the smallest of your matters as too insignificant a means of defeating you, in order that he will gain a step to defeat you on a higher matter.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: As the sages said (Avot 3:2) "one sin induces another sin", and (Shabbat 105b) "whoever breaks an object in anger is as if he worshipped idols... since today he tells you to do this and tomorrow that until he tells you to go worship idols".)

Therefore, it is proper for you to be on your guard against him. Do not fulfill the slightest of his requests. Rather, let it be big in your eyes the smallest of the smallest victory over him, or the least increase of your power over him, so that you will gain a step for defeating him on higher ground. For his lust [to destroy] you will soon return, but he will not be capable of standing up to you when you stand firm against him as written: "he will desire in you, but you will rule over him" (Gen.4:7).

(*Tov Halevanon*: Even though it appears at the beginning of your war against him that he is a mighty and powerful warrior, when you stand up to him with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, immediately, he will turn around and run away from you, and like our sages said (Shab.104a): "one who comes to purify himself is helped from above")

Therefore do not panic at his word despite his mighty armies, and do not fear him on account of his many helpers, because his primary intent is to make the false appear true, and his goal is to establish lies (as truth). How near is his downfall, how swift is his destruction, if you will realize his weakness! And as the wise man describes him: "there was a small city with few inhabitants, and a great king came and surrounded it, he built high towers (to conquer it), but a poor wise man from the city defeated him with his wisdom but no one remembered that poor man" (Koheles 9:14).

The analogy is as follows: a man is the "small city", because man is called a "miniature world", the man's limbs and organs, and the traits of the [lower] soul are the "few inhabitants". Because they are small relative to the greatness of his heart's continuous desires for the lusts of this world, and lack of ability to attain them (that the whole world and everything in it be his - ML). The yetzer is the "great king", due to his possession of many tactics, soldiers, and legions. Then he "surrounds it", because he encompasses all matters of a man, whether public or private. Then he "built high towers", which refers to the many bad urges, bad thoughts, and disgraceful incidents which he strives to slay a man with, as we will explain later in this gate, with G-d's help.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "bad thoughts" - they damage him, as our sages said: "thoughts of sin are worse than sin" (Yoma 21a). And even though a man is not punished for his thoughts, nevertheless, they damage his soul, and they are like snares on his footsteps to bring him to actual sins.

Pas Lechem: "the many bad urges, bad thoughts, and disgraceful incidents" - "bad urges", refers to thoughts of sin. "bad thoughts" to stray from the good. "disgraceful incidents" - he is given permission to set up incidents on a man to steer him away from the service [of G-d].)

And the "poor wise man" refers to the intellect, "poor", since its men and helpers are few as the verse continues "no man remembered this poor man...and the wisdom of the poor man was despised".

Despite [the man's] weakness, the text tells further of the yetzer's eager lust to wage war with a man, and how its power to injure him was easily removed because a little truth defeats much falsehood, just as a little light dispels much darkness.

From this analogy, there is to stir a person to wage war against the taavot (base desires), and to stand up to the yetzer with diligent exertion. Because we have seen that the yetzer is too weak to stand up against the Understanding, and how quickly he falls before it, as written "the evil ones bow before the good" (Mishlei 14:19).

(Marpe Lenefesh: See [Torat Moshe] by Rabbi Moshe Alshich on parsha Ki Tetze who explains the account of Ki Tetze to be referring to the war of a man with his yetzer, and how he can overcome it. See there amazing words.

Rabbi Mendel Weinbach zt'l said: "The Imerei Tal brings the Zohar of how important it is to learn torah b'simcha (with joy). the yetzer tov and yetzer hara are not static forces. They're capable of growing in power. It all depends whether you do a mitzva b'simcha and thus increase the power of the yetzer tov or ch"v find diversions of the yetzer hara and do that b'simcha and give him power" (from ohr.edu/2154).

THE ENTICEMENTS OF THE YETZER

1 - NO LIFE AFTER DEATH

The first matter the yetzer will try to cast doubt in your mind, and will try to convince you is that the soul cannot exist without a body, and that the soul perishes along with the body, and has no existence after the death of the body. He uses imaginative arguments, which don't hold if a man contemplates them, and the purpose of this is to induce you to pursue the temporary pleasures, and fleeting desires, and so that you adopt the outlook of the group of men which the verse describes "let us feast and drink because tomorrow we will die" (Yeshaya 22:13). If you take counsel with your understanding on this, you will distance from this outlook with clear proofs which the early ones already brought (see Kuzari maamar 5 siman 12 and our commentary there - TL) and which are mentioned in the words of the prophets.

(Pas Lechem: "the soul cannot exist without a body" - i.e. that the soul came to existence simultaneously with the coming into existence (formation) of the body, and that it cannot exist without the body. Not like our sages said on the verses in Bereishis 7:4 and 8:7 and the verse "Let the earth bring forth living creatures" (1:24) and the verse in Divrei Hayamim 4:23, and in many Midrashim that the souls preceded the world.

Tov Halevanon: "the purpose of this is to induce you to pursue the temporary pleasures" - i.e. in this, the physical nature of man tends quickly towards adopting [this view] because it is an excuse to pursue bodily pleasures...

2 - NO G-D

When the yetzer abandons hope of casting doubts in your mind on this, he will attempt to cast doubt on the [existence of the] blessed Creator. He will tell you that the world is neither new nor created. It was never different from what it is now nor will it ever be any different, and there is no existence which is more fitting to be (called - PL) a creator than a created (being), and no one is under duty to serve anything since everything is ancient and has existed eternally.

(Tov Halevanon: it is impossible to create something from nothing, rather everything exists because the universe existed eternally in one form or another. Thus one will refrain from serving G-d...

Marpe Lenefesh: that the universe never ceased existing, that it is eternal, and likewise will never cease to exist. Therefore, nobody created the world and one is not under duty to serve anything.

Translator: "there is no existence..creator than created" - for only a true Unity can be Eternally existing, namely, that which is absolutely One, no parts, properties, limits, borders, definitions, etc. etc. as explained at length in Gate 1.

If he comes to you with this claim, return to your understanding and it will show you the fallacy of this claim from the discussion of the first gate of this book, and prove to you that this world has a Creator who created it from nothing.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Really you can deduce through reason that the universe has a Creator, as explained in the first gate, since even a small pebble cannot possibly create itself, all the more so for this entire vast universe.

Translator: It is not relevant to ask "what brought G-d into existence?", because He is the framework of existence, or more precisely, He is the Existence itself as explained in the first gate.)

3 - FALSE GODS

When he gives up trying to make you doubt these matters, he will try to confuse you with matters of associating G-d, such as the beliefs of the dual gods, or the three god belief of the Christians, or the naturalists, or the beliefs of the foolish worshippers of the stars, according to their various views. When it will be clear to you that the Creator is one and eternal, according to the introductions of the beginning of this book, all of these doubts will leave you.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*naturalists*": (literally "men of descendants") Who believe that the creator fathered another divinity. You already know who these people are. Alternatively, the intent is to the scientists (who believe that everything has a materialistic, naturalistic explanation - *MH*).

Tov Halevanon: "*naturalists*": these are the sorcerers and necromancers. "*worshippers of the stars*" - who make offerings to the heavenly forces (angels, etc.), such as in Yirmiya 7:18. This group is better than the previous cases (the atheists), as explained in the Kuzari that the atheist philosophers are worse than the worshippers of the stars. And likewise this is the way of the yetzer to bring down a person from level to level. So too the entire matter mentioned on this [here is in this order].)

4 - YOUR RELIGIOUS SERVICE IS POINTLESS

When he gives up trying to mislead you in these matters, he will try to entice you regarding the duty to serve the Creator, saying "the service from the servant to the master is only when the master needs it. Since the Creator does not need His creations, and does not lack anything, therefore your service to G-d has no reason and no purpose. But when you examine with your understanding, in the previous Gate of Reflection, regarding the beneficence of G-d towards us, and in the "Gate of the Obligation to assume the service of G-d" due to this (see Gate 3 ch.2 and ch.4 - *TL*), then this doubt will disappear, and you will obligate yourself in the service of G-d.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*does not need His creations, and does not lack anything*" - He does not need nor lack anything that would need to be completed through our service. He doubled the expression "does not need" and "does not lack" because it is impossible from both perspectives. If from the perspective that all of us are His creations, and since He created us from absolute non-existence, if so, we and everything we have, and everything that results from our power is all given to us from His hand and from His power it came to be... Therefore how is it possible to claim that He needs us? For this the author wrote "He does not need His *creations*". Secondly, besides that we are His creations, needs of any kind does not apply to Him because He lacks nothing. Corresponding to these two he wrote: "therefore your service to G-d has no reason and no purpose".)

5 - TORAH'S AUTHENTICITY

When he gives up trying to entice you in these ways, he will try to cast doubt on the matter of prophecy and the prophets, the torah and the principles of its authenticity and necessity.

(*Pas Lechem*: "*on the matter of prophecy*" - whether or not there is such a thing as prophecy. "*and the prophets*" - even if there is prophecy, it is doubtful whether or not there are human beings, who are all of coarse physical bodies, that are suitable for the prophecy to rest on them.

"*the torah and the principles of its authenticity and necessity*" - the true principles which it depends on (see the 13 principles compiled by the Rambam).

"*and necessity*" - if it is necessary from a logical perspective that the torah be given from G-d [to man], because the giving of the torah is something which is logically necessary.

Translator: - many aspects of the natural world on our planet appear to have been designed with vast wisdom and ability. Since man is the star here, and this Intelligence is hiding from us, it follows logically that some sort of communication should exist for Him to explain to us what this enigma is all about. This leads us to the first and foremost book on prophecy, the source and basis of most religious belief on our planet...

But if you stand up against him with your intellect, and fight him using the argument from the third gate of this book, all of these doubts will disappear from your heart. The fact of prophecy, the necessity of the torah and the sending of a prophet, and the ways in which the torah stirs [a person's heart to serve his Creator - PL] will be established as truths.

(Pas Lechem: "sending of a prophet" - it was necessary to send a [human] prophet, that through him the torah would be given to human beings. Likewise, the sending of the other prophets, each in his era, to strengthen it and safeguard it.)

6 - ORAL LAW IS NOT ESSENTIAL

When he gives up on this matter, he will try to cast doubt on the Tradition (the oral torah - PL). He will tell you that what reason obligates and what the written torah obligates are both true, but what the Sages said is not essential and its acceptance is not obligatory.

(Tov Halevanon: "what reason obligates" - i.e. what reason obligates regarding the Unity of G-d, reflecting on His good, and serving Him. Likewise for other commandments which reason obligates and abstinence from (excessive) physical pleasures, in addition to what the torah writes - it is all truth.)

But if you examine with your understanding, you will see that the rational laws as well as the scriptural laws are both greatly in need of the tradition. Because not one of them can be fulfilled completely without the tradition.

For rational laws: without the boundaries and explanations of the oral torah regarding amount, kind, time, place, and other circumstances, it is impossible to derive the laws from logic alone. Similarly for scriptural laws, without an explanation from the oral torah on how to read it properly, the meaning of the words, its explanation and that of its derivatives, it will not be completely understandable from the verses alone. Therefore our Sages taught "with 13 attributes the torah is expounded.." (Beraita of Rabbi Yishmael) and "the tradition is a boundary to the torah" (Avot 3:13).

(Tov Halevanon: "with 13 attributes the torah is expounded" - these are all traditions, except for the "kal v'chomer" (major to minor logical inference) which a man can deduce on his own since reason obligates it. But the "hekesh", the "binyan av", and the other attributes, according to Rashi (in Sukkah 31a) a man is not allowed to deduce on his own but rather must have received it from the tradition...

Pas Lechem: "explanations of the oral torah regarding amount, kind, time, place, and other circumstances" - As an example, "marital relations" is among the rational matters since reason mandates that it is necessary for the survival of the human race. Likewise, promiscuity and excessiveness is evil and very damaging. However, it is not in man's power to determine the correct "quality", i.e. which woman is permitted and which is not. However we found in the tradition the boundaries, whether in "amount", namely the "onah" which the sages set for each [type of] person, and this also includes the "time", and likewise the "kind" which are the "sheniyot l'arayot" (secondary forbidden [incestual] relations not specified in the torah). The "place" here means in a modest place and to refrain from it b'achsanya or in a holy place or a place near holy books or tefilin.)

Furthermore, the torah itself, refers us to the tradition for its details as written "If a matter eludes you in judgment,..then you shall rise and go up to the place the L-rd, your G-d, has chosen; And you shall come to the Kohanim, to the judge who will be in those days, and you shall inquire, and they will tell you the words of judgment." (Devarim 17:8-9), and "And the man who acts intentionally, not obeying the priest who stands there to minister the L-rd, your G-d, or to the judge that man shall die" (Devarim 17:12).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: The torah itself tells us that whenever we have any doubt in a torah matter, we 13 should go to ask the Kohanim in the temple, because they are the pillars of the tradition. The explanation of the torah never left them from Moshe until then, since they are free to toil in the torah due to being supported from the priestly gifts.

Pas Lechem: Behold, the torah punishes by death to one who rebels against the tradition. Therefore, it must be that it is primary and not a "higher measure of piety" [i.e. non-essential].

Tov Halevanon: The torah was stricter with matters of the oral law than matters of the written torah. Since one does not incur the death penalty except on specific, known capital offences. But the Zaken Mamre ("rebellious elder" - a scholar who disobeys a decision of the supreme beit din in Jerusalem, which the above verse is referring to), incurs the death penalty for even one detail of a torah mitzva ruled by the supreme Beit Din. And according to the Rambam, even for a part of a mitzva d'rabanan (Rabbinical law) he also incurs the death penalty.)

When you understand all of this, the doubts will leave, and it will be clear to you that [in addition to] the knowledge derived from reason and the scriptures, the oral tradition [is also indispensable].

7 - NO REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IN THIS WORLD

When he gives up trying to entice you in these ways, he will try from the aspect of reward and punishment. He will claim that the course of events in the world does not follow the lines of justice because if there were justice in this world, the wicked would not prosper, and the righteous would not suffer, as one whom we mentioned in gate 4 (end of ch.3) of this book said.

(*Pas Lechem*: To believe in astrological fate or that the world was abandoned to chance. People are confused about these things as explained in the Moray Nevuchim and the book "Haemunot".)

But when the understanding will show to you the justice [of divine wisdom] in both of these ways as we introduced in the Gate of Trust, these doubts will vanish, and your heart will be at peace from this confusion.

8 - NO REWARD AND PUNISHMENT IN THE AFTERLIFE

When the yetzer abandons the hope of overcoming us in these topics, he will try to cast doubt on us regarding the reward and punishment in the afterlife. He will try to confuse and distort this on us, due to the little mention of it in the torah and the little apparentness in it.

(*Pas Lechem*: There is little explanation of it in the torah, and the torah did not mention it much. And even this small amount is not clearly apparent, and is not revealed openly nor explicitly explained for all to see. This is what the author meant by "little apparentness in it".

Tov Halevanon: Even the places which mention the afterlife do not explicitly explain it and what it is, but rather only hint to it briefly, such as the matters of Karet (cutting off) as our sages expounded (Sanhedrin 4b) [on the verse in Bamidbar 15:31: "Because he has despised the word of the L-ord, and has broken His commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him"] (the double expression "cut off" in hebrew refers to "cut off" in this world and "cut off" in the next world. And likewise as on the verse (Devarim 5:15): "[Honor your father and your mother, as the L-ord your G-d has commanded you;] that your days may be prolonged", they expounded in Kidushin 39b that it is referring to the day which is totally prolonged (i.e. the eternity of the afterlife)

But if we examine what there is in the books of the other prophets (besides Moshe Rabeinu) on this matter [which is mentioned explicitly], for example "[And the dust returns to the earth as it was,] and the spirit returns to G-d, Who gave it" (Koheles 12:7), and "I will give you a place among these who stand here" (Zecharia 3:7), and "How great is Your goodness that You have laid away for those who fear You" (Tehilim 31:20), and "no eye has seen O G-d besides you, who prepares for those who wait for Him" (Yeshaya 64:3), "your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the L-rd shall gather you in" (Yeshaya 58:8) (i.e. the gathering in of his soul in Olam Haba with the light of the glory of G-d - TL). When we study these and many more other similar verses in addition to what our Sages taught us in this, and with what our reason tells us, our souls will be at peace, and will be assured of the inevitability of reward and punishment in the afterlife.

9 - PREOCCUPY IN SECULAR INTERESTS

When the yetzer abandons hope of trying to make us doubt in all the previous matters mentioned, he will try to make us lazy in the service of G-d, and will try to preoccupy us in our secular interests - eating, drinking, dressing, riding, and to derive enjoyment from other physical pleasures.

(Pas Lechem: "(1) to preoccupy us in our secular interests - eating, drinking...etc, and to (2) derive enjoyment" - he specified two evils. One, through being stuck in these things and wasting his time in them, he will be preoccupied and without any time for the service [of G-d]. On this, he wrote "to preoccupy us, etc". The second, deriving enjoyment from physical pleasures - they themselves destroy a man's heart, and inflate his mind to kick (be ungrateful) like a wild cow. On this, he wrote: "to derive enjoyment".)

And when we listen to him regarding eating, which we cannot exist without, he will make superfluous things that are secondary to food appear so embellished, and rejoicing and pleasure so charming that we will envy kings and their ministers, strive to live like them, adopt their practices, and go in their statutes, in pursuit of physical enjoyments.

*(Pas Lechem: "And when we listen to him regarding eating" - i.e. to have intent for enjoyment in the necessary eating, from this he will embellish to us the superfluous things.
"strive to live like them" - in their great [desire of] heart.
"adopt their practices" - to rule over the masses.
"go in their statutes" - the pursuit of physical enjoyment is constant and habitual, a statute that cannot be broken. Like the necessities are for the masses.*

Marpe Lenefesh: "he will make superfluous things that are secondary to food appear so embellished" - i.e. the yetzer embellishes to a man to run after the superfluous and the enjoyments which are the causes of all iniquities and all sins, as this is written at the end of the first gate and in the gate of abstinence, "that it is the El Zar (strange god) in the body of a man. see there.)

When the yetzer observes our desire and willingness in this, he will say:

(Pas Lechem: when the yetzer sees that we desire and want in this. He said "desire" which means "yearning" for them, before we attain them, and "willingness", i.e. delighting in them after attaining them.)

"Girdle your loins, bare your arms, O enticed man, exert with all your strength, O seduced man, to serve this world, and to serve its people, and you may attain some of your desire in it. Do not toil in matters of the next world. Rather, only in things which will help you in this world, to find favor among the people and the leaders, from kings to the rest of the people."

*(Pas Lechem: "Girdle your loins, bare your arms" - i.e. tighten your belt and roll up your sleeves so that the clothing does not encumber you in swift movements. It is a phrase of encouragement to move to action.
"O enticed man" - now that I have found that you are like a friend and brother to me, being that you are enticed from my words, if so, why are you acting sluggishly and not [eagerly] pursuing my matters.)*

"Don't exert your mind in any field of wisdom except those which will bring you honor from the public and favor in the eyes of the great men of your generation, the leaders, rulers, or anyone who occupies a high position. This includes the knowledge of languages, the essentials of prose, fundamentals of grammar, music, charming riddles, amazing parables and unusual sayings. Try to frequently meet with charismatic people, and be knowledgeable of cultures to be able to converse with all types of people and won't sit silent and be considered a fool and a simpleton. Leave the other wisdoms because their work demand is high but their practical benefit is low."

(Pas Lechem: "to converse with all types of people..." - that you become knowledgeable of all worldly matters. And then, when you are among a group of people who converse in their matters, you will also be able to converse with them and will not be forced to be silent and regarded as a fool, etc.

Tov Halevanon: "considered a fool and a simpleton" - in that you don't know of the things happening

But if from the beginning we did not open a door to the desires and satisfy their wants (i.e. we do not leave any path or entrance to the yetzer - *TL*), nor accustom ourselves to indulge in superfluous things and chase after them, but instead we reply to the yetzer that we have no need for the superfluous things and that we already have enough mental anxiety in working to obtain what we need. If G-d sends us extra income without our having to trouble our heart or straining our mind for it, we will spend them in the right and proper manner as duty dictates. And if this does not happen, we will be satisfied with the basic necessities, and won't require more than this, then the [power of the] yetzer will be broken and smitten.

But if we listen to the yetzer in these things (to pursue the [physical] enjoyments - *ML*), we will descend step by step until he has brought us to hopeless destruction in this world and in the next.

All these example illustrations were on the first kind of enticements, which the yetzer uses to cast doubt on a man who is weak in wisdom and in the knowledge of G-d and of His torah.

SECOND KIND OF TEMPTATION OF THE YETZER

| (*Tov Halevanon*: these are the two kinds of enticement brought at the end of chapter 4 of this gate. Until now was the first kind. From now on the second kind.)

10 - TOPPLING THE WISE PERSON

But if a man is wise in understanding of G-d and His torah, the yetzer will strive to damage and confuse his wisdom and actions by objections and arguments from whichever side he can - from reason, scripture, and tradition. He will bring spurious proofs whose premises are not true and whose conclusions do not necessarily follow.

| (*Tov Halevanon*: It is known that through two ways a [logical] proof is established. One, through true premises. Two, through conclusions that necessarily follow. i.e. if there is a foundation of premises which are undoubtedly true, then when the premises are combined with each other, the conclusions that are drawn from them must undoubtedly follow... a spurious and faulty proof is due to either one of the premises is not true or that the conclusion does not follow these premises on proper consideration. This is what the author wrote that for the proofs of the yetzer, neither the premises are true nor do the conclusions follow.

| *Pas Lechem*: For example, if we start with the premise that Reuven is taller than Shimon and Shimon is taller than Levi. Then the conclusion that necessarily follows is that Reuven is taller than Levi. However, it is possible that the premises are not true, that Reuven is not taller than Shimon or that Shimon is not taller than Levi, and the conclusions are automatically null and void. The second example, if we establish that Reuven loves Shimon and Shimon loves Levi, and we want to draw the conclusion that Reuven loves Levi. Even though the premises are true, the conclusion does not necessarily follow.

| *Pas Lechem*: "*rash/hasty proofs*" - which suddenly grab the heart of a man, and are impressed on his mind before he can calmly deliberate it. Like a man in a panic, who is frenzied and rushed.)

If your intellect is sharp and your wisdom is strong in analyzing and defending and debating a position, you will see the various fallacies in the proofs of your yetzer, and the truth will become clear to you. The correct view will be apparent to you, your knowledge will be freed from doubts and your actions, from confusion.

| (*Pas Lechem*: that you are wise and know the ways of proofs, which ways they are headed, then automatically you will know how to guard yourself from their fallacies when you contemplate them and see that they do not tread on the path of truth.)

But if your knowledge and ability in this is deficient (in the ways of proofs - *PL*), his enticements on you will be (increasingly - *PL*) stronger. He will overcome you more frequently. His ruling over you and surrounding you in your outer and inner life will become more imperative because he comes to you with wisdom, and leads you using proofs which your mind relies on. If your understanding has become seduced by him, he will let up from you, and it will help

him work against you, because you rely on your mind when you have doubts, and trust its reasoning when some matter is not understood by you.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "his enticements on you will be (increasingly) stronger" - at first he comes with an argument of "maybe". Afterwards, he strengthens on you to establish his view as truth.
"more imperative" - you will accept his view with great imperative.
"because you rely on your mind when you have doubts" - you will rely on him. You think that this is not the acts of the yetzer since he has infiltrated in you with wisdom.

Pas Lechem: "his enticements on you will be increasingly stronger" - this is referring to the simple enticements mentioned earlier (for enjoyments). And on his overpowering a man by arguments and proofs, he wrote: "and will overcome you more frequently". After he has habituated your mind with the arguments and proofs, they will be more prepared and readily available to invoke on you one after the other.

"His ruling over you" - he will rule over you to entice you to do disgraceful acts, and surround you with the hardship of the lusts of the world.

"in your outer and inner life" - i.e. in your actions and in your thoughts.

"he will let up from you" - he will let up on you and leave you a bit, since he no longer needs to strain himself on you because your intellect has become evil and stands in his place to entice you and help him.

Marpe Lenefesh: When your mind is seduced to believe his advice, then your intellect will depart from you, i.e. the intellect/conscience was given to a man to guide him to the just path, and the yetzer will divert it from you to help him do all the things G-d considers abominations with support of reason. Therefore our sages said (Pesachim 49b): "[Greater is the hatred wherewith the amme haaretz (ignorant Jews) hate the torah scholar than the hatred wherewith the gentiles hate Jews...It was taught:] He who has studied and then abandoned (the Torah, hates the torah scholar) more than all of them."

And when the yetzer has overcome you, and rules you with the aid and support of your understanding, now, by deceiving you (away from the good - *PL*) and representing in your eyes falsehood (false imaginations to attract you to evil - *PL*) in the form of something demonstrated [as true], he will transfer you from this level, which was near to truth, and where falsehood was still concealed, and descend you to a lower level, where there is less truth and more falsehood.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "which was near to truth, and where falsehood was still concealed" - the falseness was not visible there, only the truth was visible and the falsehood was concealed inside it.
"and descend you to a lower level" - where the falsehood is more visible, and from level to level until you will be confident in yourself and will believe in that which is complete falsehood.)

And thus, he will not cease to lower you from one level to the next, until he will bring you to the level where the truth is completely concealed, and there is complete falsehood. And he will uproot you from this world, and topple you from the levels of reward in the next world. And your wisdom will become an evil for you (in this world - *TL*), and your intellect, the cause of your destruction (in the next world - *TL*), as written "Hoy! They are wise in their eyes, and think they are understanding" (Yeshaya 5:21), and "they have rejected the word of the L-ord; and what wisdom is in them?" (Yirmiyahu 8:9), and "For the ways of the L-ord are just, and the righteous do walk in them; but transgressors do stumble therein" (Hoshea 14:10).

(*Pas Lechem*: "Hoy! They are wise in their eyes" - the wise man said: He who thinks himself wise is a fool. Because one who is truly wise does not think of himself as a wise man.
"they have rejected the word of the L-ord; and what wisdom is in them?" - from this verse one can recognize and test himself. If he senses that his wisdom has led him to evil, certainly it is not true wisdom.
"For the ways of the L-ord are just...etc" - Perhaps a man will think that he will not be punished for this since his wisdom has deceived him and he is unintentional in this. On this he answered that it is not so, because no one will err except he who seeks to err and desires in it so as to be liberated through it (i.e. to go after the vanities of this world), because "the righteous will certainly walk in the ways of G-d while the sinners themselves will stumble in them" (Hoshea 14:10).

On this the Talmud says (Bava Basra 14b): "Moshe wrote and he who wants to err will err" -

specifically *"he who wants to err"*, i.e. no one will err except he who wants to err and seeks excuses for doing so.

Manoach Halevavos: The ways of G-d and His torah are just. But they correspond to those who learn them. The righteous who learn them will go in them, like their way and justness. But the sinners will stumble more in learning the wisdom of the torah. For their wisdom will be a cause for their harming themselves. (Translator: The Vilna Gaon brings the analogy that torah is compared to water. Just like water causes good plants and bad plants (weeds) to grow, so too the Torah causes whatever is in a person's heart to grow, whether it is good or bad.)

Marpe Lenefesh: *"and topple you from the levels of reward in the next world"* - i.e. even if you are a torah scholar and toil in mitzvot - you will not have any reward in the next world when you heed to the yetzer that all your actions be not l'Shem Shamayim (for G-d), as will be explained. You will be like Doeg and Achitofel or the like, and the apikorsim in every generation who have no portion in the next world despite that they were big Chachamim (sages),... through the torah they became wise men to commit evil.)

It has been said that when wisdom is used in the proper way (to attain through it the favor of G-d - *PL*), it is a cure for all illnesses (of the soul - *PL*), but if one sways from its proper path, then it becomes an all-encompassing disease without cure and without medication.

(*Pas Lechem*: through this swaying away, a man is prepared to do all sin and iniquity whether inwardly or outwardly.)

On this, the torah is compared to fire as written *"Is not My word like fire?"* (Yirmiyahu 23:29), because it enlightens the eyes, as written *"the commandments of the L-ord are pure, enlightening the eyes"* (Tehilim 19:9) and *"Your word is like a candle to my feet, and a light to my path"* (Tehilim 119:105). But anyone who turns away from its proper path, it burns up with its fire, as written *"by fire G-d will exact judgment"* (Isaiah 66:16), and *"on the wicked He will rain fiery coals"* (Tehilim 11:6), and *"Should I say; I will not mention Him, and I will no longer speak in His Name, but this was in my heart like a burning fire"* (Yirmiyahu 20:9).

(*Tov Halevanon*: One benefits from fire if he is far away and it enlightens the eyes. But if one gets close and clashes with it, it burns. So too for wisdom, it is beneficial in being like a candle to the feet of the torah and the religion. Then the light is sweet and good to the eyes of the intellect. But it burns those who enter it to damage and extinguish the flames. On this it says *"do not stray after your hearts"* (Bamidbar 15:39) and in the end they will inherit Gehinom (where he is punished by the fire of the torah itself - *PL*).

"but this was in my heart like a burning fire" - Lest you think that one who is very close to the torah also gets burned even if he is good. On this he brought this verse to teach that, on the contrary, closeness from torah and yira (fear) is the level of the prophets. The torah only burns those who stray from its paths.)

Therefore, be careful that your steps not stray from the path of the forefathers and the path of the early ones towards a new path you have devised, and be careful to not rely on your intellect nor to take counsel only with yourself. Do not reason on your own. Do not distrust your forefathers in the tradition they bequeathed to you as to what is good for you. Do not reject their advice in what they taught you because none of the plans you can think of were not previously known and (all of - *PL*) their good and evil consequences were already weighed.

(*Pas Lechem*: *"nor to take counsel only with yourself"* - nor with other people of the same level as you who are also enticed by their yetzer lest they lead you astray. (i.e. get a wise Rav) Take counsel on how to wage war with the yetzer and to avoid his traps. This is for turning from evil. *"Do not reason on your own"* on how to sustain the yoke of G-d's service . This is for doing good. (as in the verse in Tehilim *"turn from evil and do good"*). *"Do not distrust your forefathers..."* - that you inherited falsehood. *"Do not reject their advice in what they taught you"* - in what they taught us as to how to wage war with the yetzer. These are the fences they enacted to distance from his traps.)

According to your reasoning, you may be impressed by the advantages which your plan brings at the beginning, but

the long term negative consequences which the plan will bring are hidden to you. In your short sightedness, you will see its initial benefits but not its error and eventual damage. And the wise man said "do not remove an ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers" (Mishlei 22:28), and "listen my son to your father's instructions" (ibid 1:8), and it is said of one who condemns the ways of his forefathers (who sees himself more righteous than his forefathers - TL) "a generation clean in its own eyes, and yet are not cleansed of their excrement" (ibid 30:12), and "there is a generation that curses its fathers" (ibid 30:11) (i.e. his forefathers are primitive in his eyes and he abandons their torah - TL), and "the eye that mocks a father, [that scorns obedience to a mother will be pecked by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures]" (ibid 30:17).

(*Pas Lechem*: You think that this thing is just, and it is possible that it truly is good in the beginning, but its end will be evil and bitter. Hence with your little yishuv daat (clear-headedness), you grasp its beginning but not its end.

Tov Halevanon: "a generation clean in its own eyes, and yet is not cleansed of their excrement" - he sees himself more pure and clean than the early generations and seeks actions to become more righteous than them. But in truth, he is not even clean of the filth and waste of nursing babies. i.e. he transgresses sins that are known even to the [talmud torah] school children.)

However, if you see fit to take on yourself additional duties, what you can, beyond what is required, then, provided you are fulfilling those that are obligatory and that your motive is love of piety, and after your understanding has [examined it and] agreed, and that it is far from lusts - then the resolution is good.

(*Pas Lechem*: "far from lusts" - Since sometimes the stringency is a ploy of the yetzer in order to satisfy through this another desire such as the lust for honor and [to receive] praise for this, or the like. Therefore he said that one must examine himself in this if it is remote from his lusts.)

You will receive reward for this and are not deviating from the way of the forefathers. Because they already said "make a fence for the torah" (Avot 1:1), and "why was Jerusalem destroyed? Because they pursued the letter of the law, and did not go above and beyond the letter of the law" (Bava Metzia 30b), and "says Rav Huna - he who only occupied himself is as if he had no G-d, for it is said: 'Now for long seasons Israel was without the true God' - What is meant by 'without the true G-d'? - It means that he who only occupies himself with the study of the Torah, it is as if he has no G-d" (Avodah Zara 17b).

And one of the pious would say "he who does no more than his duty is not doing his duty". But these "extra" acts are not accepted until one first fulfills the obligatory duties.

(*Pas Lechem*: It appears to us that the author's intent in this is that whoever performs his deeds only within the bounds of the torah is not fulfilling his duties. Rather one must be stringent and add to the obligation... And the verse which says 'without the true G-d', the intent is that he does not put to heart to fence himself [with stringencies] in order to not come to stumble in the mitzva itself. This is the intent of the "additional" [things].

If so, he is not mindful that G-d is described with the attribute "the G-d of truth". The intent of the word "truth" is eternity and permanence. Therefore the sages said: "the seal of the Holy One is truth" (Shabbat 55a), and just like He is permanent, so too His words are permanent. Likewise the blessing on the shema "He is permanent (kayam), etc. and His words are kayam (permanent/everlasting)". Understand this.

"he who does no more than his duty is not doing his duty" - i.e. the extra is not secondary. Rather it is primary for one who needs it, just like the duty itself. This is what the sages said (Yevamos 109b): "Whosoever says that he has only [an interest in the study of the] Torah, does not even have torah [study]"... Nevertheless, one should not precede the extra to the duty itself because "these extra acts are not accepted until one first fulfills the obligatory duties".)

Our Sages already permitted us, and even [sometimes] obligated us to add on to the commandments, as they said (regarding friday evening) "one must add from profane to holy" (Yoma 81:2). Other examples are additions to fasts, prayer, charity, and refraining from the unnecessary permitted foods. They also warned us against taking an oath in G-d's Name, even for the truth, and from talking excessively even if the words are free of falsehood, and from discussing the affairs of other people, even if the words are not derogatory. Likewise, to refrain from lavishly praising

someone even if it fitting, and to not speak bad or be disgusted by those who are falling short in fulfillment of their duties even if they deserve it, and many more things like this.

(*Manoach Halevavos*: "To refrain from lavishly praising someone even if it fitting" - Our sages taught (Arachin 16a): "He that blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted as a curse to him?", since from the praise, there will come derogatory remarks. Because there is no man who does not have enemies who hate him and are jealous of him, and when they hear the praise, they will speak bad of him...

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: The Ramban wrote (on Devarim 6:18) that all the good conducts, even though they are not [explicitly] mentioned in the torah, the torah nevertheless exhorts us on them, as written there: "And you shall do that which is right and good" - that everything which is good in the eyes of G-d and man, you are under duty to do it all, see there. Likewise he wrote on the verse (Vayikra 19:2): "You shall be holy", that this is a commandment on a man to be holy and pure in all of his conducts and traits. That he should be entirely holy. He then went to explain the good conducts, see there. He ended off: "even though these enactments are Rabbinical, the main intent of the verse is to exhort us in this, to be clean, pure, and separated from the masses of men who dirty themselves with superfluous and ugly things".)

It is proper for us to now bring some examples of the second type of enticements of the yetzer which one can learn to apply to other matters and to guard oneself from them with G-d's help when he understands them. Because necessarily, every good thing has corresponding bad things which can spoil it. Therefore, one who understands the things that damage good deeds will be capable of guarding himself from them. But one who knows only the good deeds, and does not know the things which can damage them will end up with nothing due to the abundance of damaging things which will beset him.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. there is no good thing which does not have a corresponding damaging thing which can ruin and spoil that good thing. And the more good something is, the more quickly it can become spoiled. Similar to silk clothing which can be ruined with a bit of oil or a stain...unlike coarse cloth..)

One of the pious would instruct his disciples: "learn the bad things first to avoid them, and afterwards learn the good things and do them, as written '*Plow for yourself a furrow and do not sow upon thorns*'" (Yirmiyahu 4:3).

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai would say regarding the falsification of weights and measures (Bava Basra 89b) "woe to me if I say, woe to me if I don't say; if I say - perhaps the swindlers will learn from my words, if I don't say - perhaps the swindlers will say that the Sages are ignorant of our tricks.", the question was raised: "did he speak of them or not?", and concludes "he did speak of them", relying on the verse "*for the ways of the L-rd are right, and the righteous shall walk in them, while the wicked shall stumble on them*" (Hoshea 14:10).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: From here is a proof that one need not refrain making known and publicizing the various types of incitements of the yetzer on a man. And we need not worry lest people may learn from these things to deceive others.)

EXAMPLES OF THE SECOND KIND OF TEMPTATION OF THE YETZER

11 - STRIVE TO FIND FAVOR WITH HUMAN BEINGS

We have already mentioned in this gate regarding the ways in which the yetzer tries to cast doubts in a man's mind. If he is not successful in raising such doubts, he will attempt the method of arguments and proofs in order to revoke the truths of his faith. When you stand up to his superficiality and the weakness of his proofs and he is not capable of standing up to you, nor of annulling what you know to be clear and true of the matters previously mentioned in this gate, he will return to flatter you and mislead you in regard to yourself.

He will say to you: "How I rejoice for you on your good faith and devoted heart to G-d. You have already reached a degree of piety which others in your generation have not been able to reach (i.e. you are among the just and pious - *ML*), and you have already thanked G-d sufficiently for His goodness and kindness to you. Now it is proper for you to also work to pay your debts of gratitude to your fellow men. Because you already know that they are means to your benefit and harm, and it is clear also that when they like you, you will be honorable in their eyes. But if they are angry

with you, you will incur losses. Therefore, endeavor in things that will please them and that will find favor in their eyes, as our Sages said: "One who is pleasing to his fellow men, is pleasing to G-d. [But one who is not pleasing to his fellow men, is not pleasing to G-d]" (Avos 3:10).

(Pas Lechem: The matters of your benefit must come through human beings since a man is social by nature. You are also liable to be damaged by them if you are not loved and considered important in their eyes.

"endeavor in things that will please them" - (1) that your deeds will please them, namely, some favor and benefit that you do to them. (2) And on self-embellishment before them without benefiting them he continued: "and that will find favor in their eyes".)

Answer the yetzer:

"What will I benefit from finding favor with someone who is weak like me, who does not have the ability to help me or harm me (see gate of trust), and the verse says: 'Withdraw yourselves from man whose [life] breath is in his nostrils, for by what should he be esteemed?' (Yeshaya 2:22). And even if it were my duty, how could I possibly find favor with all my contemporaries when I don't even have the ability to find favor with the members of my own household?!"

"And the proofs which you brought from the words of our Sages does not imply that one needs to try to find favor in the eyes of everyone. Rather this is like the case of the wise man that left in his will a command to his son: 'My son, to find favor with the public is not in your ability. Instead try to find favor with the Creator and He will grant you favor with the public, as written "When G-d finds favor in a person's ways, He will cause even his enemies to make peace with him" (and all the more so everyone else - TL) (Mishlei 16:7).

And likewise, when you see a man whom everyone, young or old, praises him and finds favor in his deeds, it is a proof that G-d has implanted love of him in their hearts, and established a good name for him on their tongues. The Creator does not do this for those He hates. And this is a clear and powerful proof that the Creator is pleased with him. But that a pious person should exert himself and strive so that others will praise him due to his service of G-d - this is not the way of the pious.

(Pas Lechem: Just like if one's enemies make peace with him, it is a sign that G-d is pleased with him, so too if the public loves him, without any exertion on his part, it is a sign for this. Hence, the intent of the sages teaching ("One who is pleasing to his fellow men, is pleasing to G-d") is only as a sign. And the sign is only valid if there is no exertion on his part.

"And this is a clear and powerful proof that the Creator is pleased with him" - because love of good simply because it is good, not because of any enjoyment or benefit received - this is something found only in virtuous men. However, in this case, all the public praises and loves him. Then, certainly this is not a natural love and must be from [divine] providence.)

Therefore, be careful of this or similar things among the enticements of the yetzer toward you. Because he will try to lead you in this until he topples you in the trap of (the trait of - PL) flattery.

(Marpe Lenefesh: this is the complete flatterer, who worships human beings. He is like the idol worshipper, as written earlier in chapter 4.

Translator: Nevertheless, Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt'l would say that you should make every effort to try to make people like you because this makes you into a better person. It is not a contradiction to here. The intent of the author is that your motive should be to serve G-d when doing this, not to try to obtain some benefit from people, as the author brought in the Gate of Trust ch.4 category 3: "The person, whose motive in fulfilling their wishes is one of the [reprehensible] motives we mentioned above, will not obtain what he wants from them in this world. He will tire himself for nothing, and will lose his reward in the afterlife. But if his sole motive is to serve G-d, the Al-mighty will help them to make a return to him in this world, and G-d will place his praise in their mouths and they will hold him in high esteem, and he will reach the great reward in Olam Haba.." see there)

And on his praising you, answer him: "what is this that you are congratulating me on? Is it because I know my duties to G-d? Just the opposite - because I know my duties to G-d, there is grounds for a claim against me, namely, that I am not acting in accordance with my knowledge.

And even if I were doing enough according to my knowledge of my duties to G-d, would this be enough of an

expression of gratitude to the blessed Creator for even the smallest benefits He bestows on me? And what is the measure of my days relative to the measure of the days of the universe? Even if it were equal to the age of the universe, it would not be enough time for me to recount all the favors G-d has bestowed upon me. How much less then is it possible for me to repay my debts of gratitude to G-d for them? (since even to recount all of them, all the days of the universe does not suffice. All the more so, to repay for them with service - TL) And scripture has already said: "All flesh is like grass, and all its kindness is like the flower of the field" (Yeshaya 40:6), and our Sages said "If I am not for myself, who is for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" (Avos 1:14).

(Marpe Lenefesh: "All flesh is like grass" - Like a flower of the plants of the field which wilts and dries up swiftly, so too are human beings.

"all its kindness is like the flower of the field" - the kindness that a human being does is like a flower which blossoms and swiftly withers and falls from the fruit and does not endure. So too the deeds of human beings do not endure. And if so, how can a man be haughty?

Pas Lechem: All kindness that a man does to his Creator is insubstantial, like the flower of the field which is charming to the eye but has nothing substantial in itself.

Tov Halevanon: "If I am not for myself, who is for me?" - These words are directed to the understanding. (Not to the yetzer.) If I don't watch over myself using my understanding to stand up against the arguments and lusts of the yetzer, who will help me? For the free will is granted to me and there is no outside help.

"And if I am only for myself, what am I?" - even if I were free from the yetzer in my mind (as the Talmudic saying for emancipation (Gitin 85b): "you are for yourself"), and I could serve G-d according to my knowledge, "what am I", would this be enough of an expression of gratitude to the blessed Creator, etc., as he wrote above.

"And if not now, when?" - This is corresponding to what he wrote: "what is the measure of my days, etc.", i.e. since all the days of a man and even all the days of the universe do not suffice for the due service, if so, if one wastes one second from the service of G-d, when can he ever repay this?)

12 - TO LOVE BEING PRAISED AND ACQUIRING A GOOD NAME

(Pas Lechem: In the previous case, he spoke of the yetzer's enticements to a man, that from today on, he will do his deeds with intent to receive benefit from human beings, and that it is sufficient what he did until now to have intent for the service of G-d. Now, he comes to entice him that he can continue to have intent for the service of G-d, only that he should reveal his deeds and not conceal them (so that human beings will also observe him - TL). Thus he will gain from this praise of people and it will not damage his service of G-d in the least.

Manoach Halevavos: In the previous case, he spoke of the need to pay back his debts to human beings. That since he has payed back his debts to G-d sufficiently, according to the yetzer, he should endeavor to pay his debts to human beings, and to do deeds for their benefit alone which are not related to the service of G-d. Thus, they will love him and honor him. Here, the yetzer abandoned this. He tries instead to induce him to do the service of G-d in such a way that human beings see him so that he attains honor and a good name.)

When the yetzer gives up trying to entice you in this way, he will try to entice from the angle of love of praise and of acquiring a good name in this world. He will say to you:

"I rejoice at your service of G-d with good trust, in that you have placed all your matters to Him, and have freed your heart from [the thought] that any created being can possibly benefit you without G-d. Now you are truly trusting in G-d wholeheartedly. It is not proper for you to conceal from people the high degree of piety you have attained. Rather it is proper now that you have ruled over your inclination and overcome your base desires to show your piety to others, and to reveal your heart to them. In this way you will be honored by them in this world, and will have good name and a good remembrance among them, as the verse says: "I will give them in My house and in My walls a memorial and a name, better than sons and daughters" (Yeshaya 56:5). It also says: "I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the land" (II Shmuel 7:9). Additionally, so that they will learn from your deeds, and you will receive reward for them. Hence, don't hide your deeds from them except those things that cannot be shown to people. Therefore, you will receive honor and a good name in this world and good reward in the next".

(*Pas Lechem*: "you have ruled over your inclination" - forced yourself to steer from the traps of evil² "and overcome your base desires" - to sanctify yourself also with the permitted things, namely, the trait of chasidut (extra piety). And since it requires great strengthening to distance from the permitted, he wrote "overcome".)

Answer him: "what will I benefit from praises of people, and from a good name among them, when I know that I am lacking in my obligations to the Creator? What benefit can I have from their honor and esteem, when they are incapable of helping me or shielding me from harm? In this regard, aren't they like plants and animals (who cannot benefit or harm me without G-d's decree as explained in gate 4 - *ML*). And maybe if I have these intents in my deeds, I will not find favor in their eyes. Rather, they will see me as a flatterer and I will become an object of disgust and contempt, and the result will be that I will lose my good deeds in that I did not have intent to G-d and will also fail in what I had hoped to attain from people in this world.

(*Pas Lechem*: "I will lose my good deeds in that I did not having intent to G-d" - I will lose my deeds regarding the reward of the next world. Because any intent, whether a little or a lot, which strays a little bit to something other than G-d is necessarily a form of hypocrisy and ruins the reward, even though his primary act was for the service of G-d.)

It is said of one of the kings of Israel who was asked: "how did you like the (torah) reading of the Chazan? His voice was pleasing and he was an expert in the chanting of the cantillation notes." The king answered them: "How could I like his reading. He was reading it only so that it would be pleasing to me, and to find favor in my eyes. But if he had intent for pleasing the Creator alone - then it would have been pleasing to me".

We can likewise say about all those leading the congregation in prayers, and the chazanim who compose new piyutim (liturgical prayers), whose intent is to find favor in the eyes of men and not of G-d - that their prayers are not acceptable to the Creator.

Answer him further: "Maybe, if I receive honor in this world for my deeds, nothing of my reward will be left in the next world, because I received it already in this world".

It is said of one of the pious who entered a market to buy something. He came to one of the shops to buy it and the shopkeeper's neighbor told the shopkeeper: "give in to him, and do his will since he is a pious scholar". The pious man answered him: "Thank you but I don't need special treatment. I came to buy with my money, not with my torah knowledge". He refused to buy from that shop, and instead went to another shop where he was not recognized (since it is forbidden to benefit from the torah - *TL*).

(Answer the yetzer also:) "And that which you brought from the verse: 'I will make for you a great name..', this is just like the other things people aspire to in this world, such as wealth, honor, which the Creator bestows on His servants when His wisdom deems this proper, as written "And I have also given you that which you have not asked for, both riches and honor" (Melachim 3:13), and also "long life is in its right, to its left, wealth and honor" (Mishlei 3:16). But the pious do not intend for any of these things in their service, rather their sole intent is for the Creator who bestows good to who He wishes, among his servants or others, believers or non-believers, as His wisdom dictates, as written "wealth and honor is Yours" (Divrei HaYamim 29:12).

(Answer further:) "And what is this world? (since the benefit from honor is only in this world - *TL*) Even if my name becomes known to the whole world, what is the measure of my days? Even if my name does go out to part of the world, certainly my memory will reach an even smaller part, and even then it will fade away after a short time and be forgotten as if it had never existed. And scripture says: 'The sons of men are but vanity, and men of distinction are a falsehood; were they to be put on a scale, together they would equal vanity' (Tehilim 62:10), and 'his breath leaves, he returns to his dust' (Tehilim 146:4), and 'there is no memory of the early ones' (Koheles 1:11)."

"Therefore, for me to trouble myself for this world, and put my thoughts in it, is clear pettiness and a disgraceful mistake on my part. It is told of one of the pious that asked his friend: 'have you achieved equality?', he answered 'on what?', he replied 'is it equal in your eyes whether you are honored or insulted?'. He answered: 'No'. He said: 'if so, you have not yet arrived. Keep trying, maybe you will reach this level, because it is the highest of the levels of the pious, and the most desirable of qualities.'"

(*Translator*: Here is an excerpt from the book Shaarei Kedusha by Rabbi Chaim Vital (Part 4 Gate 3) on the trait of "equality" :
...After a man has merited to the clinging (of his thoughts to G-d), he will merit to the secret of

'equality', and if he merits the secret of 'equality', he will merit to the secret of 'meditation', and after he has merited to the secret of 'meditation', he will merit Ruach HaKodesh, and from this to prophecy, which means, he will prophecy and say over future events.

And on the matter of "equality", Rabbi Avner said to me: A wise man, among the misbodedim (meditators) came to me seeking that I accept him among the meditators. The master said to him: "blessed are you my son to G-d, your intentions are good. However let me know if you reached the level of 'equality' or not." He answered: "Rebbi explain your words." He said "For two men, if one of them honors you and the second insults you, are they equal in your eyes?"

He answered: "no my master. Because I feel pleasure and contentment from the one who honors me, and pain from the one who insults me, but I don't bear any grudge against him."

He answered "My son, go in peace, because as long as you haven't reached 'equality' until your soul does not feel the honor from someone who honors you, nor the embarrassment from someone who shames you, you're not prepared to have your thoughts tied with the supernal when you come and meditate. Go and humble more your heart in truth until you have reached 'equality', then you'll be able to meditate."

The matter of equality, comes through the clinging of one's thoughts to G-d, blessed be He. Because the clinging to G-d causes that man not look at others' honoring him, nor at their shaming him. He will also not be worried about forces of evil.

You can see when G-d was with [King Shaul], and Shaul's thoughts were clinging to Him, he removed the sorcerers from the land, and similarly, he did not care when the evil men insulted him when he was coronated as king over Israel (Shmuel I 11). But when G-d left him, he transformed into a different person. He went after the sorcerers (Shmuel I 28:7), and also he became furious with anger on the righteous Kohanim which did not sin against him and he spilt their blood for nothing...And if so, a man must first do a great humbling in order to merit the hisdabkus (clinging to G-d) and this comes through fulfilling the mitzvos with all his strength. And also to cling absolutely to the trait of humility, that his eyes should be below and his heart above.)

13 - ENDLESS WORRIES AND DISTRACTIONS OF THIS WORLD

When the yetzer gives up trying to entice you in these ways, he will try to ruin your [religious] deeds by distracting your mind with this world and its people and with your extensive desires so that you forget your final end.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: He will cause your mind to always worry and think on this world, and from where will come your livelihood and desires, so that you forget your end. Not only that, but even at the time you want to pray or learn torah, he will put in your heart every which way he can [to distract you] as will be explained.)

When he sees that you wish to turn your attention to matters of the next world, such as during prayer, whether obligatory or voluntary, or when you study the torah or some other wisdom related to emuna (faith) or mussar (ethics), he will confuse you and distract your thoughts with secular matters, such as thoughts of merchandise, buying and selling, profit and loss. He will say to you: "you should be happy that now you have some free time, an opportunity which will not return due to your many business dealings. Now, think about your business partner, and make an accounting of what he owes you and what you owe him, and how much you have collected of your debts, and how much is due to you. Consider which financial means of gaining livelihood are suitable to you and which are not. Reflect on which matters brought you satisfaction and which made you regret, and if you have a court case against someone, review in your mind all of your claims and all of his claims against you, and all the ways you can outsmart him when the case is brought to court."

So too, if you have money [to invest], or sheep and cattle, or land for sowing, or you have a job to do for the nobleman or a commoner, or you need to make an accounting with either, or if you owe debts which you are unable to repay, or you have friends which you must watch over and think about, he will bring one of these to your mind when you turn to devote some time to matters of service of G-d. This is to distract you and ruin your deeds. Because when you do them, you are ready in body but distracted in mind and spirit.

(*Pas Lechem*: The reason the yetzer is successful in his plan and is able to distract you is because

while doing these things, namely, prayer or torah study, you were ready in body; i.e. you prepared²⁴ only the limbs of your body but did not prepare for this your heart and mind. If you had mustered them for this completely, there would not have been any opening for the yetzer to enter in your heart/mind.

Marpe Lenefesh: Why was he able to put in your mind all these things? Because you recite your prayers without kavana (intent) of your heart. But if you would pray with all of your kavana, to understand every word that comes out of your mouth - none of this would happen to you.)

If he does not distract you with one of the things mentioned previously, he will remind you of riddles, or other subjects which require much thought. If a man is among those who play dice or chess, or the like, he will bring him to picture as if the game is arranged before him and he needs to think about which moves to make, and which strategies to use to win the game.

14 - DISTRACTING WITH GOOD DEEDS

If a man will escape from all that we mentioned previously, and belongs to the men of wisdom and understanding (becomes a talmid chacham), the yetzer will bring to his attention a difficult matter of wisdom, and he will distract him with questions and answers, with difficulties and solutions, and he will show him which matters he missed and which he should have investigated more. He will also show him how much he still has to learn in this wisdom so that he makes a personal accounting and resolves to learn it. This way, the yetzer will distract him in all his acts of service of G-d, and will cause him much more damage than gain.

(Marpe Lenefesh: Even though he will think, during the time of prayer, on doing mitzvot and good deeds or to answer (Talmudic) difficulties, which are good things, nevertheless, the loss, namely that he ruined his prayer with outside thoughts is a greater sin in his hand and outweighs all of what he gained, and our sages said (Shabbat 10a): "Torah and Tefilah each have their own time"...as in the Shulchan Aruch: "prayer is in place of the temple korbanos, therefore one must be careful that it is like a korban with kavana, to not mix it with other thoughts just like improper thoughts can invalidate a korban", see there)

(Due to all of these distractions) it is possible that he will do the service of G-d but be outside of it, and that his thoughts are always distracted in some other secular interest. It may even be that he will seek forgiveness from G-d with his tongue, all the while eagerly rushing in his mind and spirit to rebel against Him (i.e. greatly desiring something prohibited - PL).

On this one of the pious said: "this kind of seeking forgiveness requires seeking forgiveness". And he pleads to G-d with his limbs, but turns from Him in his heart and thoughts, similar to the verse: "These people come near to Me with their mouth and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is nothing but acts of rote" (Yeshaya 29:13), and "But then they would flatter Him with their mouths, lying to Him with their tongues; Their heart was not sincere with Him" (Tehilim 78:36).

(Pas Lechem: "(1) seek forgiveness...(2) And he pleads to G-d" - it appears from the movement of his limbs that he is truly pleading but his heart and thoughts turn from Him. In both ways, his external contradicts his internal. From the first way, where he was seeking forgiveness for the past while [internally] preparing himself to sin in the future. From the second way, where he pleads and seeks some matter, but one who pleads must cleave his thoughts to the One he is pleading to and to find favor with Him... and promises to be faithful.. but here his heart is not with G-d.)

If you will wake up then and make an accounting with your soul and say to yourself: "How could I conduct myself towards the Creator in a way that would be improper for me to conduct myself with His creations when I need something from them, or likewise, for them to act towards me when they need something from me?

Because, if I went to borrow something from someone, and I asked him for the thing with my lips but my heart was against him, if he noticed this, he would be disgusted and repulsed by me. All the more so, that he would not grant me my request. And certainly, even more so, if he knew that I were planning in my thoughts not only things which would not find favor with him but rather even things which would make him angry with me. Surely, his hatred for me would be greater and his refusal more appropriate. And certainly, I would act in this same way towards someone who asked me to borrow something and if I knew his thoughts, just like the Creator knows what is in my heart.

Therefore, how then while [standing] before my Creator could I not feel ashamed? How can I expect to please Him with my conduct when I would not want a weak, created being like myself to conduct himself thus towards me, and which a fellow weak, created, and dependent creature like myself would likewise not be pleased to find in me, as it is written "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush:[therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their punishment they shall be cast down, says the L-ord]" (Yirmiyahu 8:12)."

Then the yetzer will be smitten.

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: In the Orchos Chaim of the Rosh siman 47: "have intent in your prayer. For prayer is the service of the heart. If your son spoke to you not from his heart, would it not anger you? What will you do, putrid drop, before the King of the Universe, the Holy One, blessed be He. Are you not like a slave charged with an important job, for his own benefit, who then corrupts it? How then can you stand before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He... if you cannot do this for the entire prayer, at least do not lack this for the first blessing of the Amida and for the Shema because one who did not have intent in these did not fulfill his obligation."

In the Shl"A (Mesechet Tamid p.ner mitzva): "Let one reflect in his mind, if he were to speak before a flesh and blood king and between his words, he would speak other nonrelated things, certainly, he would be liable for his head to the king. And behold, for the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, thoughts are just like words, "for the L-ord searches all hearts, and understands all the plans of the thoughts" (Divrei Hayamim 28:9). Therefore, what is the difference if one interrupts with other thoughts or other words during the prayer?"

Translator: Rabbi Beniyahu Shmueli, a famous Rosh Yeshiva and Kabbalist in Jerusalem, wrote on Parsha Vaetchanan: How should our prayers appear? Rabbi Avraham Cohen of Tunis wrote in his book "Millel L'Avraham" about a holy rabbi who heard about a circus which came to the city, and that in the circus show there is an amazing acrobat who walks on a tightrope stretched out between two mountains and over a river. The Rabbi said: "I am going to watch". The pious people wondered "what does the Rabbi want with the circus?" Afterwards, the Rabbi answered: "I watched the face of the acrobat, and I saw how he focuses all of his thoughts in this walking. Because he knows that the danger of falling is imminent every second and were he to turn his thoughts to something else, immediately, he would fall to the depths and be no more. At that time, I learned mussar that when a Jew prays, he is under duty to focus all of his thoughts with total kavana for the prayer. If not, he will fall.")

15 - CONCEAL YOUR RELIGIOUS DEEDS COMPLETELY

When the yetzer gives up trying to entice you in this way, he will try to entice you from the angle of distancing from flattery, and he will say to you: "you cannot possibly serve G-d with a perfect heart until you distance yourself completely from flattery whether it is a little or a lot. And to distance yourself from flattery towards other people requires completely hiding all of your deeds from them, and showing them the opposite of what is in your heart.

(*Pas Lechem*: Since if you merely conceal them, perhaps they will ponder you and realize that you conceal your deeds. Then they will investigate and examine to know them. Therefore, you must be smart and show others the opposite of what is in your heart. Thus, they will think you are one of the simple people and will not ponder you at all. Then, you will be successful in concealing your deeds and will not become known.)

Therefore, when you pray, be brief, and let there be no appearance of desire or striving in them. When you learn wisdom, do so in seclusion so that none but the Creator knows. Let no good trait in you become apparent. Show others laziness and heaviness in the service of G-d so that your name will not go out and you will lose your reward. Do not instruct others to do good nor rebuke them against evil. Do not show your wisdom nor teach others, and let there be no sign of fear of Heaven on you, and no sign of being a servant of G-d so that others will not honor you on account of this. In order that your zeal in hiding your deeds to people is complete, mix with and befriend all the different classes of people. Adopt their customs and walk in their ways regarding laughter and laxness in words of truth.

(*Tov Halevanon*: i.e. let everything be equal in your eyes, and do not differentiate on them, lest they consider you pious, and give you a reputation for being an ascetic and a pious man, whereby you will lose your reward.)

Do not guard so much from lies and oaths. Join them in their feasts and drinking parties, in their riddles, in their excessive indulgences and abundant laughter. Speak of people, and speak of their faults. To summarize, avoid all things that will bring you a reputation for asceticism."

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: i.e. to abandon flattery completely. The intent is to not do any good things before people. Hence, he abandons the service of G-d because of the praises of people, so that they do not praise him for it. He is fleeing from a small fire, namely, the trait of flattery, and into a big fire, namely, he will abandon all good deeds one by one.)

If you listen to him in this, slowly without noticing, you will wind up losing even your faith. But if you answer him: "you have already helped my enemies by waging war with me, by your cunning planning to destroy my strength and promote my downfall. How could I flee from a small fire towards a big fire? I have tried to flee from love of recognition and honor in order to not embellish myself towards people, and you are instructing me to embellish myself to them by leaving the service of G-d!"

(i.e. two evils, to embellish myself to them in leaving the service of G-d - TL, with the excessive things, laughter, and the other things mentioned - PL)

Pas Lechem: "slowly without noticing, you will wind up losing even your faith" - This is the way he snares people with his traps. After confusing you in the good, he will topple you into the light bad, and from the light bad to the heavy bad, and from the deeds to the faith, until he eventually brings you to kefira (denial of G-d). And since he comes slowly in stages, and especially since the initial enticement appeared good in your eyes, therefore you did not even notice your downfall. "you have already helped my enemies..." - since in this enticement, the yetzer disguises and enclothes himself as if he is a loving friend, as if he is the good inclination, and that he is coming to help a man against the evil inclination. Therefore, a man should tell him: I recognize that you have not come to help me, but rather to help my enemy, the yetzer hara. You, like him, are waging war against me.)

"Rather, the religious deeds which it is proper for me to conceal are those which can be done (wholly - PL) from beginning to end without knowledge of people. But to pray with the congregation, to instruct others to do good, to rebuke others from evil, the study of wisdom, doing acts of kindness, or the like - it is not right to neglect and abandon them due to concern for flattery (i.e. out of concern that I will appear to be a servant of G-d so that people will praise me - TL). It is my duty to do them with intent to G-d. If people praise me or honor me for this, my reward will not be diminished in the least because while doing them, this was not my goal."

It was already said: when you do a good deed that others know about, and you want to know if your motives (are proper), test yourself in two ways.

(1) Examine what reward you hoped to receive, and from whom you intended to receive it. If from G-d, this is good. If from anyone else, it is not good.

(*Pas Lechem*: Even though the sages said: "do not do a mitzva in order to receive a reward" (Avos 1:3). However, [here] his intent is for reward which is acceptable to G-d, namely, that "a mitzva leads to another mitzva...[and the reward of a mitzva is a mitzva]" (Avos 4:2), or likewise the motive "[One thing I ask of the Lord]...to behold the pleasantness of the L-ord" (Tehilim 27:4) through this deed. Understand this.)

(2) To consider, if you were alone (and no one were observing you besides G-d - TL), would you still do this deed in the way you did it? If the answer is yes, your deed is wholly devoted to G-d. Continue doing more like these. But if it would be less than this, stop doing it until (you sense - PL) your heart has become more purely devoted to G-d. Then the yetzer will be smitten. (when you tell him that you do not need to be concerned for flattery of people after testing yourself with these two things - TL)

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: If you were alone by yourself, would you have also done this? If yes, then you can do more deeds like this one even in front of people and it will not damage you. If no, that your heart is not yet whole so much, it is better to refrain from it, and not to do a fraudulent thing with bad motives.)

16 - WORSHIP YOURSELF

If the yetzer will not find a way to entice you in these ways, he will try to outsmart you with a subtler approach, namely, through the ways of reward and punishment in this world and the next. He will say to you: "behold, you are among the pious of the Creator, and His treasured ones. A person like you is surely worthy of reward in this world and in the next. You must exert yourself according to your abilities (in the service of G-d - TL), maybe you will earn the reward through your good deeds and your zealous pursuing of the service of G-d with a good heart and with great joy. Set the reward before your eyes, and work your hardest to reach it, because this is the greatest success and joy, as king David said: "A light is sown for the righteous, and for the upright of heart, joy" (Tehilim 97:11).

If you listen to him and you rely on his words, he will topple you by making you worship hidden association (G-d and something else - TL), namely, self-worship, in that you exert yourself in things that will bring you selfish pleasure and joy, and that will repel from you worries and despairs. If it were not for your hopes for these, you would deny the constant favors G-d bestows on you and not obligate yourself to serve Him on account of them. And furthermore, you don't see that it is befitting to serve G-d (even without these benefits) due to His greatness, infinite power, and the manifestations of His wisdom. On this the Sages said: "do not be like servants who serve their master in order to receive reward, but like servants who serve their master without [the condition of] receiving reward" (Avos 1:3).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Your worship is for yourself, so that you obtain this world and the next. And if not, you would not serve G-d with a complete heart.

"in that you exert yourself in things that will bring you selfish pleasure and joy" - you only do those things that bring you joy.

Pas Lechem: "self-worship" - You serve yourself since all of your aspirations are to benefit yourself. Behold you are both the worshipped and the worshipper. This is evident from *"that you exert yourself in things that will bring you selfish pleasure and joy"*, "pleasure" in the hope for reward, and "joy" in being saved from punishment, and *"that will repel from you worries and despairs"*, "worries and despairs" also corresponding to these two things.

"If it were not for your hopes for these" - you revealed your attitude that were it not for the hopes of reward, you would not be zealous and would not see yourself under duty in this. Hence, you are a denier of the beneficence of G-d. In addition to this, you revealed your understanding that you don't know the greatness of G-d, and that it is fitting to serve Him, due to His power, etc.

"due to His greatness, infinite power, and the manifestations of His wisdom" - the author included in this the three attributes (in the Amidah prayer) *"Hagadol, Hagibor, Ve'Hanora"* - on *"Hagadol"* (the Great), he wrote *"due to his greatness"*. On *"Hagibor"* (the Mighty), he wrote *"infinite power"*. On *"Hanora"* (the Awesome), he wrote *"the manifestations of His wisdom"*, that when a man contemplates His wisdom (exhibited in nature), he is very amazed, and is in awe of Him, as it is written by Shlomo (Melachim 3:28) "and they held the king in awe, for they saw that the wisdom of G-d was in him".)

17 - G-D's DECREE VS. FREE WILL

When the yetzer gives up trying to entice you in the ways mentioned, he will hurl you in a sea of doubts regarding necessity and righteousness (predestination and free will).

(*Tov Halevanon*: Whether all of a man's matters must necessarily follow only the decree of G-d or whether they depend on the righteousness and the deeds of human beings, as discussed at length in the gate of trust.

Pas Lechem: "necessity" - Whether a man is forced in his deeds, without any free will. According to this outlook, there is not one righteous person in the world, because the righteousness is not attributed to him.

"righteousness" - Or he performs his deeds through his own desire and free will, and therefore *"righteousness"* can be attributed to him.)

When he sees you lax in the service [of G-d], and turning towards the path of sin, he will try to convince you of the matter of necessity with powerful arguments drawn from Scripture and Tradition, in order to give you excuses, and he will say to you:

"If the Creator wanted you to serve Him, He would force you and make you zealous in this, for only what He decrees

can occur. How can you stand up against His decrees or defeat His judgments? You can only do what He decreed on you to do, because all things occur through the Creator's decrees as written 'I am G-d who does everything' (Yeshaya 44:24)."

(*Tov Halevanon*: If G-d wanted you to be a Tzadik (righteous person), He would have compelled you in this.

Pas Lechem: "He would force you and make you zealous in this" - for some act of service which you want to refrain from doing, he will tell you that if the Creator wanted you to do this, He would force you to do it. And on some act of service which you do lazily and sluggishly, he will tell you that G-d would have made you zealous in it...

Pas Lechem: "How can you stand up against His decrees or defeat His judgments?" - he specified two parts corresponding to things between man and G-d and things between man and his fellow man. Corresponding to sins between man and G-d, he wrote "against His decrees", i.e. G-d decreed and this thing came to be, therefore I was compelled to do the sin. Corresponding to sins between man and man, he wrote "defeat His judgments", that G-d sentenced that person to suffer on that matter through you. Therefore, you were forced to cause him pain.)

But if he sees you engaged in secular matters and occupations, he will tell you (the opposite): "be careful of laziness (of heart - PL) and sluggishness (of limbs - PL). Don't rely on anyone but yourself, because good and evil are in your hands and success and failure in accomplishment depends on you. Therefore, exert yourself with all your strength and work with all your ability and you will succeed in obtaining your desires of this world. Guard from damaging things with all your strength and you will be saved from them, as the wise man said "Thorns and snares are in the way of the crooked; whoever guards his soul will keep far from them" (Mishlei 22:5), and "A man's folly perverts his way" (Mishlei 19:3), and "from your own hands this came" (Melachim 1:9). And so the yetzer turns around the argument, sometimes he comes with necessity and divine decree and sometimes with justice and free will according to what he deems fitting for him to entice you (to evil - PL) and weaken you (to good - PL).

But if you wake up and put to heart what our Sages said "everything is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven" (Berachos 33b), you will exert yourself in religious matters in the way of someone who understands that according to his own actions in them will be his reward and punishment, as written "He repays a man for what he has done; he brings upon him according to his ways" (Iyov 34:11). And in secular matters, you will conduct yourself with the conviction that all of your movements and the course of your matters are bound to the decree of the Creator, and you place your trust on G-d on all of them, as written "Cast your cares on the L-rd and he will sustain you" (Tehilim 55:23).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: see the gate of trust chapter 4. There you will find peace of mind (an explanation) so that these two things are not contradictory.

Tov Halevanon: He spoke of this at length in the fifth chapter of Gate 3. There he demonstrated that the foundation of faith is to believe that regarding things which are related to yira shamayim (fear of G-d, i.e. moral issues), free will is in a man's hands. While for things related to worldly matters, everything is bound to the decree of G-d.. only that it is beyond the power of our minds to grasp the depths of this secret and its full explanation.

18 - WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW

When the yetzer gives up trying to entice you in this way, he will come from a different angle. He will say to you: "that which you desire to fulfill of the service of G-d and to do it wholeheartedly for Him, you can do so after some time in the future. Even if you only have one day of life remaining, and you fulfill the service of G-d properly then before your death, you will have already earned everlasting reward and be saved from punishment. Don't you know the ways of repentance, and that the Creator will accept your repentance if you only serve Him wholeheartedly as is fitting and proper."

However, return to the correct argument, and answer him: "how can I wait until the last day of my life when I don't know when is the last day of my life? I would be similar to the story of the servant who trusted his king would never expel him all of his life, and then went off after the indulgences of this world, until the service of his master became a burden on him. Behold, suddenly he was summoned before the king to give an accounting and judgment on his work, and he did not have any answers or excuses and was sentenced to be expelled from the service of the king

and from all of the king's cities. He left the king's presence poor and sorrowful in that all the time of his service to the king, he did not earn even one thing, when he could have done so. Thus he remained for the rest of his days, poor and destitute, sighing and miserable, full of sorrow and despised by all until the day of his death.

19 - INSTILLING ARROGANCE IN YOU

When the yetzer gives up trying to entice you in the ways we mentioned, he will try to do so by inducing in you haughtiness and pride and diminishing your humility.

(*Tov Halevanon*: He will entice you to adopt the trait of arrogance.

Pas Lechem: If he does not succeed in inducing in you arrogance, he will try nevertheless to diminish your humility.)

He will say to you: "you have reached the exalted levels, which the pious and righteous reached through your faithful heart and perfect deeds in the service of G-d. You are unequaled in your generation and singular among your contemporaries. It is proper for you to show your superiority over them, by being disgusted by them and despising them. Recall their faults, publicize the wickedness in their hearts, shame them and rebuke them for it, until they are humiliated and repent to G-d, and feel regret for their past. Thereby, you will follow the conduct of the prophets, as written "Son of man, describe the temple to the people of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their sins." (Yechezkel 43:10).

(*Tov Halevanon*: "You are unequaled in your generation and singular among your contemporaries" - All human beings in your era are not worthy of you. All of them were created only to serve you and you give life to all of them through your religious deeds.

Pas Lechem: "by being disgusted by them" - due to their little faith, "and despising them" - on their bad deeds. Both of these are in the heart. After this he will progress to the same two divisions verbally: "Recall their faults", corresponding to their bad deeds, and "publicize the wickedness in their hearts", corresponding to their little faith. And since the bad deeds reveal the wickedness in their heart, he specified that first.

"shame them and rebuke them for it" - shame them generally by telling them "be ashamed of your evil ways". Afterwards, rebuke them in the details to explain to them logically the disgrace of their deeds.

Translator: Perhaps this also applies to every head of household, or business, etc.)

If you answer him: "how could I be disgusted and shame someone whose matters towards G-d in heart and mind I do not know? If externally he appears reprehensible, perhaps his inner being is not like his outward appearance. If the prophets shamed and rebuked their generation, they did this with the permission of the Creator who looked into their hearts and corrupt interior. But it is beyond my powers of wisdom and understanding to know what is in the hearts and the minds. Perhaps their inner heart which is disgusting in my eyes is much better than their outer appearance, and I don't even know it. Perhaps, their inner heart is better than mine in the eyes of the Creator.

And even if his appearance is bad, it is possible that the reason is because he is ignorant of his obligations to the Creator. Therefore he is more pardonable than me, because my knowledge is greater than his. For the Creator claims from a man only according to the extent of his wisdom. Therefore, I am more deserving to be considered reprehensible for my shortcomings in the Creator's service, despite my knowledge, compared to this man whose shortcoming is due to his ignorance. He rebels against G-d due to ignorance (of the greatness of G-d - *PL*) and error (in the correct deeds - *PL*), while I rebel against Him knowingly and deliberately.

It is possible, that the bad in him is revealed and visible while the good is hidden and concealed. For me it is the opposite. Therefore, he is more worthy of G-d's mercy and forgiveness than me. One merit of him outweighs many merits of mine, because no one observes it except G-d and no one praises him for it nor gives him any honor. But for me, it is the opposite. For my external appearance appears better than his.

Similarly, regarding sins, because one sin by me is equal to many sins by him since my sin is concealed and hidden, while his is visible and public. And due to other people shaming him for it, his punishment will be reduced, while for me, my reward is diminished due to my good deeds being known. He will be left with the full reward of his deeds in the next world, and will reduce his punishment for sin in this world due other's belittling him over his sins. As for me, I will be left with the full measure of my punishments in the next world.

| (*Tov Halevanon*: Which is exceedingly more bitter and evil than any punishment imaginable in this³⁰ world.)

Furthermore, if I exert my mind to search for the flaws of others and examine their bad traits, this will prevent me from examining my own flaws and lackings, which is something more useful for me, and for which I am more responsible for. My condition is like that of a sick man whose illness distracts him from the illnesses of others, and the healing of himself from the healing of others. Thus the yetzer will be smitten and broken before you.

| (*Marpe Lenefesh*: As the sages said (Sanhedrin 19a): "first correct yourself, then correct others".)

20 - INCITEMENT DURING PROSPERITY OR DIFFICULTY

If the yetzer's arrows do not hit you in what we mentioned, he will wait in ambush for you during your times of prosperity or times of difficulty.

When things are going according to your wish, he will say to you: "this is the fruit of your efforts, strategies, and wisdom. Therefore exert yourself more on your secular matters so that your success will perpetuate and you will reach a higher level. Receive these days with joy and enjoy them because soon you will be called by name (to die), and you will be forced to answer and will go to the darkness of the grave, a place where there is no wisdom, no movement, no pleasure, and no pain." He will even bring proofs of this from what the wise man said: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you are going" (Koheles 9:10) (but really, this verse refers to acquiring torah and good deeds not worldly things - TL).

| (*Tov Halevanon*: "no pain" - these are the words of the yetzer. But in truth, our sages said (Berachos 18b): "The worm is as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living". But he will tell you: "you do not need to be concerned about that time, rather, only about the time you are on the face of the earth".)

In your times of difficulty, he will bring to your mind the good life of the wicked, and the success of the nonbelievers, as written "The tents of bandits prosper, and those who provoke G-d are secure" (Iyov 12:6). He will say to you: "the difficulties you are going through are due to your having clinged to the service of G-d and His commandments. You are not capable of handling this due to the unbearable load and remote goal. If you had unloaded this from your heart and rested from it, you would have had joy from your situation as you see by the wicked. You can see from what scripture says: "with those near Me, I will be sanctified" (Vayikra 10:3), and "Only you did I love above all the families of the earth; therefore, I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2), and many more like this.

| (*Tov Halevanon*: "unbearable load and remote goal" - it is with extreme difficulty that a man can escape from all sin. Hence, he is constantly being punished by them.
"due to your having clinged to the service of G-d" - i.e. if you did not take on yourself the way of chasidut (piety) and perishut (asceticism), G-d would not have been so meticulous with you. You can see from what scripture says: "with those near Me, I will be sanctified" (Vayikra 10:3), that to those close to Him, He demonstrates His justice, and is more exacting with them.

| *Pas Lechem*: You are not capable of doing everything completely, since the goal is impossible to reach.)

21 - DIFFICULTY IN DOING GOOD AND PLEASURE IN DOING BAD

When he sees that you have taken on yourself to do something of the service of G-d, he will exaggerate its demands and attempt to scare you in order that you abandon it.

If you intend to fast, he will say to you: "be careful, this will weaken you and make you sick and prevent you from doing your secular and religious matters".

If this is regarding a voluntary prayer at night, he will attempt to convince you that sleep is more healthy than eating, and it guards and strengthens your health more than food and drink.

If this is regarding giving charity, he will picture in your mind financial destitution and put poverty before your eyes, and remind you of the suffering of poverty and lacking. Similarly with all the types of mitzvot and acts of kindness,

(*Tov Halevanon*: "he will picture in your mind financial destitution - He will remind you of many people who lost their wealth, and will picture vividly in your mind their suffering, until your heart refrains out of fear.

"put poverty before your eyes" - he will picture before you and imagine you as if you are walking naked and barefoot, begging for food, that this will happen if you lose your money.)

But if the thought of sin enters your mind, he will inflate (in your imagination) the pleasure it will bring and will try to make you forget its punishment and encourage you to do it (this time - PL) and tend towards it (that your heart tends and flames to do it in the future - PL).

Whenever you sense this, or similar to it, reply to him: Of all the suffering that came to me in the past, there is no trace of it left. It quickly passed and vanished, and the reward is mine forever. It will never fade nor end. One who fasts during the day and eats at night, is the same as if he didn't fast. His strength will return and his reward is reserved for him. And similarly one who rises for part of the night, and then sleeps, his alertness will return as if he never rose early, and the reward for his rising early and prayer will remain forever. And for the matter of charity, I have already explained this amply in the gate of trust.

For the matter of sins, you must put to your heart and contemplate in your mind how swiftly the worldly pleasures fade away afterwards, whether they are permitted or forbidden, and then you will remain with the disgrace and punishment due to them in this world and in the next. Thus the yetzer will be smitten before you and you will be zealous in doing good and sluggish towards all disgraceful acts.

(*Tov Halevanon*: "whether they are permitted or forbidden" - i.e. when the pleasure passed, then the permitted or forbidden are equal to you, and you have no more pleasure from the forbidden than from the permitted.)

22 - SADNESS IN DOING GOOD AND PLEASURE IN DOING BAD

When he will lose hope in enticing you in these ways, and you succeed in doing the religious activities which you undertook to do, he will strive to put worry in your heart (for future dangers - PL), and perpetuate in you a state of sadness (for past losses - PL). This is in order that you regret the good acts you did in the past, so that you will lose your reward and so that the Creator will not accept them.

But if you did a bad deed, he will strive to put joy and delight in your heart so that you will strengthen in this and be eager to do it again.

(*Pas Lechem*: that you rejoice and enjoy the sin, and delight in the past for your striving to attain it.)

If you sense his deception, and stay alert for his many traps, you will guard from them and be helped from G-d to be saved from them. But if you do not sense his deception, he will knock you down and empty his arrows on you suddenly, as written "until an arrow pierces his liver" (Mishlei 7:23).

(*Pas Lechem*: "If you sense his deception" - in that he places worry and sadness in your heart, "and stay alert for his many traps" - that he traps you by placing joy in your heart when doing a sin. "he will knock you down suddenly" - from the good deeds. "and empty his arrows on you" - his arrows refers to bad deeds.)

23 - WEAKEN TORAH STUDY

If you stand up to him despite all of this, and he will not be able to entice you in what we mentioned, he will try to remove you from the study of wisdom (torah). If he sees in you a zeal to study wisdom, he will say to you: "isn't it enough for you to know the torah as much as the great men of your generation (i.e. the important lay men, who are not wise in torah but are still considered wise due to their knowledge in other fields - PL)?

Don't you know that the torah is endless and has no final objective? Put your aspiration in knowing the elementals of faith and the foundations of the torah, and then learn what will make you esteemed with people, such as music and

poetry, the depths of grammar, proverbs and famous sayings. Leave over the study of Jewish laws and the disputes of the sages in them. Do not enter into the study of the fundamentals of logical demonstration, comparisons, proofs, examining cause and effect, the connection between concealed wisdom and revealed wisdom, and other ways of reasoning because these subjects are deep and subtle. Rely on those who know the explanations of the tradition, even in matters which you can attain clarity through your own efforts, just like you rely on them for those matters which you cannot do so.

(Marpe Lenefesh: "the elementals of faith and the foundations of the torah" - it's enough for you to study the main fundamental things such as Chumash, or the like, and halachic summaries.

Tov Halevanon: "the study of Jewish laws and the disputes of the sages in them" - i.e. why should you exert yourself in the omek iyun hadinim (depths of talmudic investigation), and to decide with your reasoning between the disputes of the sages, and to insert your head between great mountains. What will you know that they didn't know?

"the connection between concealed wisdom and revealed wisdom" - the wisdom of the reasons of mitzvot (Talmud), the wisdom of nature (science), astronomy, and other well known wisdoms, - all of them are connected and linked to the concealed wisdom, namely, the wisdom of Kabbala and inquiry. [Since they are all the handiwork of One Creator, therefore, they all originate from one wisdom, as written in the gate of reflection, ch.1 - ML])

24 - JEALOUSY AND ARROGANCE

If you don't listen to him, and you exert yourself and strengthen yourself, he will shoot you with arrows of jealousy towards your friends. If they have acquired wisdom which you do not possess, you will begrudge them and look for faults in them. You will denigrate them and speak badly of them, as if they plundered your understanding and stole your wisdom.

If your wisdom is greater than theirs, he will try to make you look down on them on account of your superior understanding, and hate them due to their ignorance, and that you show this feeling to the common people. You will become haughty, and praise yourself for your wisdom until you claim that you know more than you do. In your inflated spirit, you will think you know everything and don't need to learn more. [When teaching,] you will be annoyed when others raise a question on your words. You will increasingly consider yourself a wise man. You will seek to honor yourself by exposing the ignorance of others, and glee in embarrassing your peers. Eventually, you will be divested of all the ethical teachings from the torah Sages regarding G-d and His torah.

If the yetzer's intentions to entice you in this angle of torah wisdom do not succeed, he will attempt to entice you from the angle of torah commandments. When you do a commandment of G-d, he will aggrandize and inflate it in your eyes, and make you haughty over it, and make the people of your generation appear contemptible in your eyes, so that it will be easier to be disgusted by them, and to humiliate and shame them, while really it is possible that in the eyes of G-d they are better than you.

If one of your peers is greater than you in some aspect of the service of G-d, and his acts are greater than yours, and he tries harder than you to come close to G-d. The yetzer will incite you against him and say: "any zeal by your peers in the service of G-d highlights your own deficiencies. Because, if it were not for this man, you would be in the eyes of men and G-d the most righteous of your generation. Denigrate him, envy him, hate him, seek out his faults, wait for his transgressions, watch for his mistakes and publicize them as much as you can, and belittle him for them. If you can spread false rumors about him to lower his esteem in the eyes of the public, do so."

Then answer him: "How could I be repulsed by someone who G-d loves, and denigrate one who the Creator deems praiseworthy. Is it not enough that I am lazy in not doing the service of G-d as zealously as him, that I must also hate one who serves G-d? This is certainly no way to repay the Creator for what I owe Him. Rather, it is my duty, out of love of G-d, to love those who love Him, and out of honor of G-d, to honor those who honor Him, as written and he honors those who honor G-d" (Tehilim 15:4). And you already know what happened to Miriam, as written: "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moshe.." (Bamidbar 12:1), and what happened to Korach and his followers in envying Moshe and Aharon due to their closeness to G-d.

*** Chapter 6 ***

Regarding watchfulness and guarding of one's thoughts, it is proper that you do not neglect watching over your thoughts, reflections, and musings of your heart. For most of the deterioration and rectification in deeds is due to nothing else but these and varies according to their deterioration and rectification.

As the verses say: "Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life" (Mishlei 4:23), and "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Bereishis 8:21), "For I know their imagination.." (Devarim 31:21), "for the L-rd searches all hearts, and He understands all the imaginations of the thoughts of every creation; [if you seek Him, He will be found to you, and if you forsake Him, He will abandon you forever]" (Divrei Hayamim 28:9), "Rather,[this] thing is very close to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may do it" (Devarim 30:14), "And now, O Israel, what does the L-rd, your G-d, demand of you? Only to fear (revere) the L-rd, your G-d" (Devarim 10:12), and fear (reverence) is in the heart, reflections, and thoughts. Therefore, my brother, strive that all of your actions be devoted only to the blessed Creator, so that your exertion will not be for nothing, and your efforts not for falsehood, as written "Why should you weigh out money for that which is not bread and your toil without satiety?" (Yeshaya 55:2).

(*Marpe Lenefesh*: Like one who does many undertakings and difficult jobs until he profits some silver and gold. Likewise, one who works hard in the field or the vineyard, and in the end has nothing to eat and be satiated due to various mishaps that G-d sends. Then all of his exertion and toil was for nothing, and his efforts for falsehood. So too, for one who does his religious acts not "I'Shem Shamayim" (for G-d). His exertion will be for nothing and naught, and he won't receive reward since his intent was for something else. Likewise, they said in the talmud (Yoma 72b): "Rava said to his disciples: 'I beseech you, do not inherit a double Gehinom'" (i.e. work hard in this world and earn Gehinom in the next)

Do not neglect what I have aroused you to. For I have collected for you in this gate all the roots of the things detrimental to activities devoted to G-d, and from each root sprouts almost endless branches.

Therefore, you must guard from them to the utmost of your ability. Maybe then your acts will be complete before G-d and devoted wholeheartedly to His Name, and will then be pleasing and receive acceptance from the Creator. Conduct yourself in the service of G-d as you conduct yourself in your worldly affairs, where you choose the best option you can find and which will be far from potential damages, clean from falsehood, and clean of confusions. Since you do all this for this fleeting world, all the more so that you should do this many times over for matters of your final, permanent existence, and for what will bring you closer to G-d.

(*Pas Lechem*: Because the final reward is coming close to G-d, and likewise in this world, since G-d is far from the wicked...)

Strive with all of your strength that your deeds be pure even though they will be fewer. For it is better than if you exert yourself to do many acts which are not pure. Because a small amount of pure is much, while a large amount of not pure is little and useless. And all the more so, that your work, small and insignificant as it is, should not be impure (intention - TL) before G-d.

(*Tov Halevanon*: As they said explicitly: (Orach Chaim 1:64) "*better a small amount with (kavana) intent than much without intent*". Even though it is small in quantity, it is large in quality and shine)

Be careful that the matter of your deeds to G-d won't be like that of a certain careless bird which the verse speaks of, which lays an egg on the ground and sits on it to warm it, whereby other living creatures damage the egg and no chick hatches from it, as the verse says: "For she leaves her eggs on the ground, and she warms herself on the earth. She forgets that a foot may crush them, and the beast of the field may trample them. [She is hardened against her young ones as though they were not hers; though her toil is in vain, she has no fear]" (Iyov 39:13-16), and the rest of the matter.

The wise man already praised a creature who has the opposite trait. It is industrious and hardworking for its interests in this world. He commanded us to observe it and learn from it, even though it is the weakest of the vermin, saying:

"Go to the ant, lazy one! observe its ways and become wise; she prepares her bread in the summer; [for she has no chief, overseer, or ruler; she gathers her food in the harvest. O lazy one, how long will you lie there; when will you get up from your sleep?]" (Mishlei 6:6-9)

Behold, we have discussed a small part of a large matter. Let it not seem excessive in your eyes, and don't be discouraged by it. For according to the value and importance of a matter will be the corresponding potentially detrimental things.

(*Pas Lechem*: i.e. lest, G-d forbid, you become discouraged from the service due to seeing my words and how many mishaps it is liable to and needs to be guarded from. On this, he countered - on the contrary, due to this you should cling to the service, because this is evidence of its great value, "For according to the value and importance of a matter will be the corresponding potentially detrimental things")

The value and importance of our investigation in this book is not unknown by he who understands. May G-d, in His mercy, place our portion among those who are complete with Him, and who endeavor for the sake of His great Name, Amen.