

**** The Gate of Trust - Shaar Habitachon ****

**from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart
by Rabeinu Bahya ibn Paquda**

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Level: Intermediate

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Translator's Foreword:

The following is a translation of the fourth gate of one of the earliest of the classic mussar works, Chovos Halevavos by Rabeinu Bahya. The book has inspired many great men to walk in its ways and review it throughout their lives. The fourth gate deals with what Rabeinu Bechaye regards as "the most necessary of all things for the service of G-d."

I have found that the gate must be read in its entirety otherwise one will not have understood anything properly. In translating this, I consulted with the classic hebrew commentaries and also the translations by Rabbi Moses Hyamson and Daniel Haberman. The translator has studied in numerous torah institutions including the renowned Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

- Yosef Sebag, Jerusalem Tamuz 5772/2012

***** SHAAR HABITACHON - THE GATE OF TRUST *****

from Chovos Halevavos - Duties of the Heart

by Rabeinu Bechaye zt'l

*** INTRODUCTION - benefits of trust ***

Since our previous discussion focused on the obligation to commit oneself to serve G-d, I saw fit to bring afterwards what is more needed than all other things for one who serves G-d - placing one's trust in Him for all matters, the reason being the great benefits this yields both in torah and in worldly matters.

The benefits in torah matters:

Among them, peace of mind, and trusting in G-d as a servant must trust in his master, because if one does not place his trust in G-d, he will place his trust in something else, and whoever trusts in something other than G-d, the Almighty will remove His providence from such a person, and leave him in the hands of the one he trusted, and he will be as it was written: "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters, to dig for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water" (Yirmiya 2:13), "They exchanged their glory for the likeness of an ox eating grass" (Tehilim 106:20), "Blessed is the man who trusts in the L-ord; the L-ord shall be his refuge" (Yirmiya 17:7), "Praiseworthy is the man who made the L-ord his trust, and did not turn to the haughty and those who turn to falsehood." (Tehilim 40:5), "Cursed is the man who trusts in man, who makes flesh his strength and whose heart turns away from the L-ord" (Yirmiya 17:5).

If he places his trust in his wisdom and tactics, physical strength and industriousness - he will toil for nothing, his strength will weaken, and his tactics will fall short of accomplishing his desire, as written "He traps the wise with their own trickery" (Iyov 5:13), and "I returned and saw under the sun, that the race does not belong to the swift, nor the war to the mighty; neither do the wise have bread, nor do the understanding have riches, nor the knowledgeable, favor; for time and fate will overtake them all." (Koheles 9:11), and "Young lions suffer want and are hungry, but those who seek the L-ord lack no good" (Tehilim 34:11).

If he relies on his wealth, it will be removed from him and left to someone else as written "He lies down rich, but there shall be nothing to gather; he opens his eyes, and his wealth is not" (Iyov 27:19), "Do not weary yourself to grow rich; cease from your own understanding." (Mishlei 23:4), "Should you blink your eyes at it, it is not here; for it will make wings for itself, like the eagle, and it will fly toward the heavens." (Mishlei 23:5), "so it is he who gathers riches but not by right; he shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end he stands dishonored" (Yirmiya 17:11).

Or, he will be prevented from its benefit as the wise man said "the Almighty will not give him the ability to eat from it" (Koheles 6:2), and it will be by him like a deposit that he guards until it reaches someone worthy of it, as written "For to a man who is good in His sight, He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner He has given an occupation to gather and to accumulate, to give to him who is good in G-d's sight; this too is vanity and frustration." (Koheles 2:26), and "he will prepare, but a righteous man will wear [them]," (Iyov 27:17). And it is possible that the money will be the cause of his destruction and ultimate downfall as written "There is a grievous evil that I saw under the sun; riches kept by their owner for his harm." (Koheles 5:12).

Another benefit for the one who trusts in the Almighty, is that his trust will lead him to the following:

- * to not serve other than G-d
- * to not hope in any man, nor expect from anyone (Micha 5:6).
- * to not work to win their approval.
- * to not flatter them (flattery means to tell a wicked person that he is righteous - Pas Lechem).
- * to not agree with them in what is not the service of G-d (ex. going to their time wasting parties - Pas Lechem)

- * to not be afraid of their matters.
- * to not be afraid of disagreeing with them (of not conforming to their ways - Pas Lechem; "to not be afraid if they quarrel with him and outcast him" - Marpe Lenefesh).
- * to be free of their favors, the burden of gratitude to them, and the obligation to pay back their favors.
- * if he rebukes them, he will not be afraid of slighting them.
- * he will not shy from humiliating them (so that his rebuke is effective - Pas Lechem).
- * he will not embellish their false ways (to them, but rather will denigrate it to them - P.L.)

As the prophet wrote: "But the L-ord G-d helps me, therefore, I was not embarrassed; therefore, I made my face like flint, and I knew that I would not be ashamed." (Yeshaya 50:7), "Do not fear them or their words" (Yechezkel 2:6), "And you, son of man, fear them not, and fear not their words" (Yechezkel 2:6), "fear them not, neither shall you be intimidated by them" (Yechezkel 3:9).

Another benefit: The trust in G-d will lead one to empty his mind from the distractions of the world, and to focus his heart to matters of service of G-d, and he will be similar in his peace of mind, tranquility of heart, and few financial worries to the alchemist, one who knows how to transform silver to gold and copper or tin to silver through skill and procedures, (note: this also involved some supernatural phenomena - see introduction to shaarei kedusha by Rabbi Chaim Vital. Modern day analogy of the alchemist would be one who owns a sophisticated counterfeit money machine) and the one who trust in G-d will have the following 10 advantages over the alchemist:

(1) The alchemist requires special materials to perform his operation, without which he cannot do anything. These materials are not found at all times and in all places. But for one who trusts in G-d, his sustenance is assured and can come through any means of all the means of the world, as written "And he humbled you, and allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna, which you knew not, neither did your fathers know" (Devarim 8:3). Because G-d can provide through any means at whatever time and in whatever place, as you know already from the story of Eliyahu and the ravens, or with the widow and the cakes and water, or the story of Ovadia with the prophets, who said "I hid among the prophets of G-d, 100 men, 50 in each cave, and I fed them bread and water" (Melachim 8:13), and "Young lions suffer want and are hungry, but those who seek the L-ord lack no good" (Tehilim 34:11), and "Fear the L-ord, His holy ones; for there is no want to those who fear Him" (Tehilim 34:10).

(2) The alchemist must perform acts and follow procedures without which he cannot successfully complete his goal. It is even possible that the fumes and odors will cause his death, along with the long work and great effort with them day and night. But one who trusts in G-d is assured against harm, and his heart feels secure against future (potential) bad things, and his sustenance comes to him peacefully, quietly, and calmly, as written "He causes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters" (Tehilim 23:2). (note: as to why this is not always true and bad things happen to good people or the opposite, all this will be explained later on).

(3) The alchemist does not trust others with his secret due to fear for his life. But one who trusts G-d does not fear any man on account of his trust, just the contrary it

is a source of honor, as King David said: "in G-d I trusted, I will not fear, what can a man do to me?" (Tehilim 54:12).

(4) The alchemist must either prepare one large quantity of gold and silver for long term needs or must prepare small batches for short term needs.

If he prepares a large quantity, all his days he will fear starvation that perhaps all the gold and silver will be lost in any number of ways (and he will be left penniless), and his heart will never quiet, nor will his mind be at peace due to fear of the king and of the people (finding his big stash of gold).

If he makes small batches for short term use, it is possible that he will not successfully perform the procedure at a time of great need, due to a failure in one of the means. But one who trusts in G-d, has strong peace of mind that G-d will provide for him at any time He wishes and in any place, just like He sustains the fetus in its mother's womb or the chick inside an egg, which has no opening to enter anything from the outside, and birds in the air, or fish in the sea, and the tiny and weak ant, while the mighty lion somedays cannot obtain food, as written "Young lions suffer want and are hungry, but those who seek the L-ord lack no good" (Tehilim 34:11), and "The L-ord will not starve the soul of the righteous, but the destruction [wrought by] the wicked will cast [them] down." (Mishlei 10:3), and "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his offspring begging bread" (Tehilim 37:25)

(5) The alchemist lives in anxiety and fear of everyone, from the greatest to the lowest of men as a consequence of his work, but one who trusts in G-d will be revered by great men and honorable people, even animals and stones seek to do his will as written in the entire psalm "He who sits..." (tehilim 91), and "In six troubles He will save you, and in the seventh no harm will touch you." (Iyov 5:19), until the end of the subject.

(6) The alchemist is not immune from sickness and disease which hinder his joy in being wealthy, and prevent him from benefiting from what he has and enjoying what he has acquired. But one who trusts in G-d, is immune from sickness and disease except as an atonement or to increase his reward, as written "Now youths shall become tired and weary, and young men shall stumble" (Yeshaya 40:30), "those who hope in G-d will renew strength" (Yeshaya 40:31), and "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but the L-ord supports the righteous" (Tehilim 37:17).

(7) It is possible that the alchemist will not be able to buy food with his gold and silver due to no food being available in the city at times, as written: "they will throw their money in the streets" (Yechezkel 7:19), and "neither silver nor gold will be able to save them" (Tzefania 1:18), but for one who trusts in G-d, his sustenance will not be blocked at any time or in any place, as written "in famine He redeemed you from death" (Iyov 5:20), and "G-d is my shepherd, I shall not lack" (Tehilim 23:1), and "They will not be ashamed in time of calamity, and in days of famine they shall still be satisfied" (Tehilim 37:19).

(8) The alchemist does not linger in one place too long due to fear that his secret will be discovered. But one who trusts in G-d is secure in his land, and has peace of mind in his place, as written "Trust in the L-ord and do good; dwell in the land and be nourished by faith" (Tehilim 37:3), and "The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell forever in it" (Tehilim 37:29).

(9) The alchemist's skills will not accompany him in the afterlife, they may only provide him, in this world, security from poverty and from needing other people. But for one who trusts in G-d, the reward for his trust will accompany him in this world and in the next, as written "one who trusts in G-d will be surrounded by kindness" (Tehilim 32:10), and "how great is Your goodness that you hid away for those who fear You" (Tehilim 31:20).

(10) If the alchemist's work is discovered, it will become a cause for his death, because his work runs contrary to the natural order, and the Director of the world will allow someone to kill him when he fails to hide his secret (G-d won't save him at a time of danger - Marpe Lenefesh). But for one who trusts in G-d, when his trust becomes known, he will be held in high esteem and honored by the public. They will feel blessed to be near him or to see him, and his presence will bring good fortune to the city and shield the people from troubles, as written "the righteous man is the foundation of the world" (Mishlei 10:25), similar to Lot in Tzoar (Bereishis 19).

Among the benefits of bitachon regarding torah:

One who trusts in G-d, if he has wealth, will be quick to fulfill his monetary obligations to G-d and to men with a willing and generous spirit. If he does not have wealth, he will consider that lack of wealth is among the favors from G-d to him, because he is exempt from the monetary obligations to G-d and men which wealth brings, and spared the mental distraction of protecting and managing it, as one of the pious used to say: "may G-d save me from dispersion of the mind". They would ask him "what is dispersion of the mind?" He would answer: "to own property at the head of every river and the head of every town." And this is what our sages referred to in saying: "the more possessions, the more worry" (Avos 2:7), and "who is wealthy? He who is content with what he has" (Avos 4:1).

One who trusts in G-d will receive the benefits of money, namely, his material needs, but without the mental distraction and constant worry of the wealthy, as the wise man said "The sleep of the laborer is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the satiety of the rich does not allow him to sleep" (koheles 5:11).

Another benefit, one who trusts in G-d will not lose his trust on account of having much wealth. He regards it as a deposit which he is ordered to use in specific ways, for specific matters and for a limited time. And if he stays wealthy for a long time, he will not become arrogant. He will not remind the poor of his charity gifts since he was commanded to give to them, and he will not seek their gratitude and praises. Rather, he will thank his Creator who appointed him as a means for doing good.

If his wealth is lost, he will not mourn or worry about the loss. Rather, he will thank his Creator for taking back His deposit, just like he thanked G-d when it was given to him. He will be happy with his portion, and will not seek to damage others. He will not covet other people's wealth as the wise man said "A righteous man eats to sate his appetite, but the stomach of the wicked shall feel want." (Mishlei 13:25).

Benefits of trust in G-d for worldly matters:

- * Peace of mind from the worries of this world.
- * Peace from the frenzy and drive to pursue the lusts of this world.
- * feeling calm, secure, at peace in this world, as written "blessed be the man who trusts in G-d, and G-d will be his refuge" (Yirmiyahu 17:7), and "For he shall be

like a tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves stay green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Yirmiyahu 17:8).

Among them, peace of mind from the need to travel to faraway journeys, which weaken the body, and hasten aging, as written "my strength has weakened from the journey, my life shortened" (Tehilim 102:24).

It is said about a novice ascetic who traveled to a distant land in search of a livelihood. He met one of the idolaters of the city where he arrived and said to him: "how completely blind and ignorant you are to worship idols!". The idolater asked him: "And what do you worship?". The ascetic answered "I worship the One Creator, the powerful, the provider, the One, the sustainer, and there's none like Him". The idolater countered "your actions contradict your words!" The ascetic asked "Why?", the idolater said "if what you say were true, He would have provided a livelihood for you in your own city, just like He provided for you here, and it would not have been necessary for you to trouble yourself to travel to a faraway land like this." The ascetic, unable to counter, returned to his city and reassumed his asceticism from that time on, and never again left his city.

Another benefit, peace of mind and body, due to sparing oneself from pursuing grueling jobs, and wearying occupations, avoiding work of kings - mingling in their culture and dealing with their corrupt servants.

But one who trusts G-d, selects among the different occupations one which is easy on his body, allows him to earn a good reputation, does not consume his mind, and is best suited for fulfilling his torah obligations and the principles of his faith, because the choice of occupation will neither increase nor decrease the income he will earn unless G-d decreed so, as it says "For it is not from the east or from the west, neither from the desert does elevation come. But G-d judges; He humbles this one and elevates that one." (Tehilim 75:7), and "He causes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters" (Tehilim 23:2).

Another benefit, minimal aggravation in one's business dealings. If one's merchandise does not sell, or if he is unable to collect his debts, or he is struck by illness, because he knows that the Creator is in charge of his life and knows best what is good for him, as written "Only to G-d should you hope, my soul, for my hope is from Him" (Tehilim 62:6).

Another benefit, joy in whatever happens to him, even if it is something difficult and against his nature, because he trusts that G-d will do only what is good for him in all matters, just like a mother has compassion on her baby in washing it, diapering it, and tying or untying it against its will, as David said "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child" (Tehilim 131:2).

Since I have tried to explain the benefits of trust in G-d for torah and worldly matters, I will now clarify seven topics on the matter of trust:

THE SEVEN CHAPTERS OF THE GATE OF TRUST

- (1) What is trust
- (2) The criteria for trusting someone
- (3) The factors which would obligate one to trust in G-d, and the obligation to

engage in a livelihood.

(4) When trust applies and when it does not

(5) The difference between one who trusts in G-d in earning a livelihood and one who does not.

(6) Obligation to refute those who promote delaying the service of G-d until reaching sufficient material prosperity.

(7) Things that damage one's trust in G-d, and a summary of the matter of trust.

***** CHAPTER 1 *****

- *What is Trust*

What is trusting (in someone)?

Peace of mind of the one who trusts. That one relies in his heart that the one he trusts in will do what is good and proper for him on the matter he has trusted him with, according to his ability and his understanding of what will further his good.

But the main factor, which leads one to trust in the one trusted, and without which trust cannot exist, is for one's heart to be confident that the one trusted will keep his word and will do what he pledged, and that he will also think to do what is good for him even on what he did not pledge out of pure generosity and kindness.

***** CHAPTER 2 *****

- *The criteria for trusting someone*

CRITERIA FOR TRUSTING ONESELF IN A HUMAN BEING

There are seven causes which make it possible for one to trust in a human being:

(1) Compassion, pity and love. When a man knows that his friend has compassion and pity for him, he will trust in him and be at peace with regard to troubling him with all of his matters.

(2) To know that his friend, besides loving him, is not forgetful or lazy in taking care of his needs. Rather, he knows that his friend is active and resolved to do it. Because if all of this is not clear, one's trust in him will not be complete, since one knows of his forgetfulness and laziness in attending to his needs.

But, when the one he trusts combines these two traits, great compassion for him and full attendance to his matters, he will trust in him without a doubt.

(3) He is strong. He will not be defeated in whatever he desires, and nothing can prevent him from doing the request of the one who trusts him. Because if he is weak, one cannot fully trust in him, even though it is clear that he is compassionate and active, due to being prevented from things in many matters. When one combines these three traits, trusting in him will be more fitting.

(4) That the one he trusts knows what is beneficial for him, both for his inner and outer life and also that none of the ways which benefit him or further his welfare are hidden to him. Because, if he does not know all of this, one will not be at peace in entrusting himself to him. But if he combines the knowledge of the ways which are beneficial to him, the ability to implement them, great attendance to them, and compassion for him, his trust will certainly be strengthened.

(5) That the one he trusts is under the exclusive care of him from the beginning of his existence, his growth, babyhood, childhood, youth, adulthood, old age until the end of his days. And when all this is clear to the trustee, he is obligated to be at

peace on his friend, and to rely on him, because of the many past benefits he already received from his friend and the constant favors he still presently receives. And this will obligate strengthening one's trust in him.

(6) All matters of the truster are entirely in the hands of the one he trusts, and no one else can hurt him, help him, benefit him, or protect him from harm, as a slave chained down in a prison is entirely in the hands of his master. If the truster were in the hands of the one he trusts in this manner, it would be more fitting to trust in him.

(7) That the person he trusts is absolutely generous and kind to those deserving and to those who are not deserving, and that his generosity and kindness are continuous, never ending and without interruption.

Whoever combines these traits, in addition to all of the previous traits has completed all the conditions for trust, and would obligate the person who knows this to trust in him, to be at peace internally and externally, in his heart and in his limbs, and to give oneself over to him, and to accept his decrees, and to judge him favorably in all his judgments and actions.

When we investigate these seven criteria, we will not find them at all in the created beings, but we find them all in the Creator. He is compassionate to His creations as written "The L-ord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and with much kindness" (Tehilim 103:8), and "Now should I not take pity on Nineveh, the great city, in which there are many more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well?" (Yonah 4:11), and that he does not absent Himself as written "Behold the Guardian of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Tehilim 121:4), that He is all-wise and invincible as written "He is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who hardened [his heart] against Him and remained whole?" (Iyov 9:4), and "Yours, O L-ord, are the greatness, and the might, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth [is Yours]; Yours is the kingdom and [You are He] Who is exalted over everything as the Leader." (Divrei Hayamim I 29:11) and "The L-ord your G-d is in your midst-a Mighty One Who will save" (Tzefania 3:17), and that He is with a person from his earliest beginning and growth, as written "Is this how you repay the L-ord, you disgraceful, unwise people?! Is He not your Father, your Master? He has made you and established you." (Devarim 32:6), and "I relied on You from birth; from my mother's womb You drew me;" (Tehilim 71:6), and "Did You not pour me like milk and curdle me like cheese?" (Iyov 10:10), and the rest of the conditions, that one's benefit or harm are not in the hands of men but rather, only in the hands of the Creator, as written "Who has commanded and it came to pass, unless the L-ord ordained it?" (Eicha 3:37), and "The grass shall dry out, the blossom shall wilt, but the word of our G-d shall last forever" (Yeshaya 40:8), and "people are like grass" (Yeshaya 40:7), and we have already explained this sufficiently in Gate 3 of this book (Gate of Serving G-d). And that his generosity and kindness is to everyone, as written "The L-ord is good to all, and His mercies are on all His works" (Tehilim 145:9) and "Who gives bread to all flesh, for His kindness is eternal" (Tehilim 136:25), and "You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing [with] its desire" (Tehilim 145:16).

But really, intellect can demonstrate that these 7 conditions exist in the Creator and not in the created beings, and therefore I have brought these verses from scripture only to remember.

When one clarifies this to himself, and strengthens his understanding of the true

kindness of the Creator, he will trust in Him, give himself over to Him, and leave his guidance to Him, not suspect Him in His judgments nor be upset by His choice for oneself, as David said "Quickly, they forgot His deeds; they did not await His counsel" (Tehilim 116:13), and "Fortunate are those who keep justice, who perform righteousness at all times." (Tehilim 116:3).

*** Chapter 3 ***

- introductions in bitachon and means to livelihood -

The introductions which when clarified and verified will bring complete trust in G-d are five.

FIRST INTRODUCTION TO BRING COMPLETE TRUST

To believe and clarify to oneself that all of the seven criteria (in previous chapter) which make it possible to trust in someone apply to G-d. And I have already mentioned them and commented on them from verses that came to me.

THE SEVEN CONDITIONS AS THEY APPLY TO G-D

One: the Creator has compassion on a man more than anyone else, and all compassion and concern that a man receives from human beings is really compassion from G-d, as the verse says "He will give you compassion, and cause others to have compassion on you and multiply you" (Devarim 13:18).

Two: none of the ways which benefit a man are unknown to the Creator. This is logical, since man is one of His handiworks, and none can know better what hurts, harms, or heals something better than the one who made it. If this is true for human inventions which do not really create anything new, but rather merely change the form of an existing thing, since to create a new form from nothing is impossible to man, but He who has created from nothing the essence of man, his form, materials, anatomy, Certainly, He is all-wise who knows which matters benefit or harm man in this world and in the next, without a doubt, as written "I am the L-rd your G-d who teaches you for your benefit, who guides you in the proper path" (Mishlei 3:12), and also "G-d rebukes the ones He loves, and like a father to a son He desires in" (Mishlei 3:12).

Three: the Creator is the strongest of all the strong. His word reigns supreme and nothing can reverse His decree, as written "Whatever G-d wants, He does" (Tehilim 135:6), and "so shall be My word that emanates from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, unless it has done what I desire and has achieved the purpose for which I sent it." (Yeshaya 55:11).

Four: He watches over and directs the lives of all men, He does not leave over any of them nor ignore any of them. None of their matters, small or great are hidden from Him, and no matter can distract Him from seeing other matters, as written "Why should you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, "My way has been hidden from the L-ord, and from my G-d, my judgment passes"?" (Yeshaya 40:27), and "Do you not know-if you have not heard-an everlasting G-d is the L-ord, the Creator of the ends of the earth; He neither tires nor wearies; there is no fathoming His understanding" (Yeshaya 40:28).

Five: No created being has the power to benefit or harm himself or any other person without the permission of the Creator. If a slave has more than one master, and each one has the power to help him, it is not possible to put one's trust in only one of them, since he hopes to benefit from each master. And if one master can benefit him more than the others, he will trust proportionally more in him, even

though he also trusts in the others. But if only one of the masters can benefit him or harm him, certainly he will put his trust only in this master, since he does not hope for benefit from the other masters. Similarly, when a man feels that none of the created beings can benefit him or harm him without the permission of the Creator, he will stop being afraid of them or of hoping for their benefit, and he will trust in the Creator alone, as written "Do not trust in princes, In mortal man, in whom there is no salvation" (Tehilim 146:3).

Six: That one realizes the abundant good G-d bestows on a man, and that he brought him into existence out of abundant and pure benevolence and kindness, without man being worthy of this, nor because G-d has any need for him, but only out of generosity, benevolence, and goodness, as we explained in the gate of reflection of this book, and like King David said "Many, O L-ord my G-d, are Your wonderful works which You have done, and Your thoughts which are toward us: they cannot be reckoned up in order to You; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Tehilim 40:5).

Seven: That one clarifies to himself that all things in this world, whether purposeful or accidental have predetermined limits which cannot be increased or decreased from what the Creator has decreed, whether in amount, quality, time, or place. It cannot be numerous if the Creator decreed it few, nor few if the Creator decreed it numerous, nor come late if decreed to come early, nor come early if decreed to come late. And if something appears to be contrary to this, really, it was already pre-decreed with foresight, only that all decrees [are implemented through] causes and means, which in turn have causes and means.

One who does not understand the matters of this world thinks that a new cause will force a change in matters which in turn cause more changes (present events constantly reshape the future). But really, a single cause is too weak to force a change by itself, as we see one grain of wheat can cause to grow 300 stalks, which each contain 30 grains, so one grain would have produced around ten thousand stalks. Can one hide the fact that one grain by itself is incapable of producing this amount? (needs other causes such as water, nutrients, sunlight, air etc.) And likewise for other grains that one plants, and likewise we can say for a man or an animal from a drop of semen, or a huge fish from a tiny egg.

To busy oneself in trying to bring early what the Creator decreed would come later, or to try to delay what was decreed to come early, or to try to make numerous what was decreed to be few or to try to diminish what was decreed to be numerous in worldly possessions, unless it causes strengthening of His service or accepting His torah, reflects lack of clarity and foolish misunderstanding in the good way He runs the world (it is like a person inside a moving train pushing the wall to make the train move faster - Madregos HaAdam). The wise man has already hinted at this in his saying "everything has a time and moment under the sun" (Koheles 3:1), and afterwards he mentions 28 matters, as he says "a time to be born, and a time to die..", until "a time for war and a time for peace", and also "a time of reckoning and disaster will reach them all" (Koheles 9:11), and "If you see oppression of the poor and deprivation of justice and righteousness in the province, wonder not about the matter, for the Highest over the high waits, and there are higher ones over them." (Koheles 5:7). The ways of judgment of the Creator are too deep, hidden and lofty for us to understand part of them, and all the more so to understand their general principles. And the verse already says: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts [higher] than your

thoughts" (Yeshaya 55:9).

SECOND INTRODUCTION TO BRING COMPLETE TRUST

(2) To know and clarify that the Creator is watching him, and neither one's private nor public life is hidden from Him, nor his innermost being or outer appearance, and whether one's trust in Him is with a complete heart, as the verse says "G-d knows the thoughts of the heart, that they are vain" and "the depths of the heart, He understands" (Mishlei 24:12), and "You alone know the hearts of all men" (Melachim I 8:39).

When this is clear to the truster, it is not proper for him to claim that he trusts in G-d with his lips, without trusting in Him in his heart and thoughts, whereby he would be in the category of he who the verse says "with their mouths and their lips they honor Me, but their hearts are far from Me" (Yeshaya 29:13).

THIRD INTRODUCTION TO BRING COMPLETE TRUST

(3) That a person trusts in G-d alone for the things he is obligated to trust in (the things that one should not trust in G-d will be explained later), and not to associate Him with anyone else by trusting in Him and one of the created beings because then his trust in G-d will be invalidated in that he associated someone else with G-d. You know what was said about Asa, despite all of his piety, when he relied in the doctors as written "during his illness, he did not seek help from G-d, but only in the doctors", and he was punished for this. And the verse says "Blessed is the man who trusts in the L-ord; the L-ord shall be his refuge" (Yirmiya 17:7). And it is known that one who appoints two or more men to do a task, the matter spoils. All the more so, for one who trusts in G-d and man, that his trust in G-d will be ruined (since he equates G-d with something relatively puny - Tov Halevanon).

Furthermore, this will be the strongest factor for denying him the object of his trust, as written "cursed is the man who trusts in men... and turns his heart away from G-d" (Yirmiya 17:5).

FOURTH INTRODUCTION

That one is very careful and makes a great effort to fulfill what the Creator required of him in His service, to do his mitzvot and to guard oneself from what He has forbidden, just like he seeks that the Creator agrees to do with him in that which he trusts Him, as our sages said "make His will your will so that He will make your will His will, nullify your will to His will so that He will nullify the will of others to your will. And the verse says "Trust in the L-ord and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed" (Tehilim 37:3), and "G-d is good to those who hope in Him, to one who seeks Him" (Eicha 3:25).

But, If one trusts in G-d and rebels against Him, how foolish is he, how weak is his intellect and his understanding. For he can see in this world that if an employer appoints a man to do something or refrain from doing something and the man disobeys the instruction, this will be the strongest factor in the employer's refusing to fulfill his side of the deal. All the more so, for one who disobeys the commandments of G-d, for which G-d Himself testified that one who trusts in Him and disobeys Him will have his hopes foiled and his trust will be considered false. Rather, he will be like that of who it is written "For what is the hope of the flatterer who deceives, when G-d casts off his soul?" (Iyov 27:8), and "Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, offer up to idols, and follow other gods that you know not. And will you come and stand before Me in this house, upon which My name is called, and say, 'We are saved,' in order to commit all these

abominations? Has this house upon which My name is called, become a den of thieves in your eyes? I, too, behold I have seen it, says the L-ord." (Yirmiyahu 7:9-11).

FIFTH INTRODUCTION

A person should clarify to himself that every new thing that happens in this world after Genesis occurs through two ways:

One: The decree of G-d and His will that the matter should come to exist.

Two: Intermediate causes and means - some close, some far away, some revealed, some hidden, all of which rush to bring into existence what was decreed, doing so with G-d's help.

An example of the categories of causes: Consider the act of drawing water from a deep well using a wheel and a bucket. The wheel and the bucket are the close causes. The far away cause is the man which harnessed an animal to the mechanical contraption with its pulleys and gears, whose turning brings the water up from the depths of the well. The causes which are in between the man and the bucket are two: the animal and the mechanical contraption which turn the wheel with the rope harnessed to the animal. If any of the causes were to fail, the matter for which they were designed would fail.

Similarly for other actions which go out to existence, they do not come through the actions of men, but rather, come through the decree of G-d, and His providing the causes which bring the matter to completion, as written "And to Him are deeds counted" (Shmuel 2:3), and "Who is great in counsel and mighty in carrying it out, for Your eyes are open to all the ways of mankind, to give everyone in accordance with his ways and in accordance with the fruit of his deeds" (Yirmiyahu 32:19), and "it was a cause from G-d" (Melachim 12:15). And if the causes were blocked, none of the actions which normally bring this matter into existence will succeed.

When we examine the need for a man to seek and exert himself to complete his needs, we can see with our own eyes that for one who needs food, if one serves him proper food, if he does not exert himself to eat it by lifting the food to his mouth, chewing it, etc., he will not break his hunger. Likewise for someone thirsty, who needs water. And all the more so, if he has no food prepared, until he needs to exert himself through milling flour, kneading, baking, etc . And more so, if he needs to buy the food and prepare it. And even more, if he has no money to buy them and will need great exertion to earn the money or to sell how much he needs from the objects he uses or his other possessions, or the like.

WHY MAN MUST WORK FOR A LIVELIHOOD

There are two reasons why G-d required of man to exert himself to pursue a livelihood.

(1) Divine wisdom required the testing of man in the service of G-d or rebellion against Him. Therefore, G-d tests man with what demonstrates his choice in this - needs and lacking of external things such as food, drink, clothing, shelter, and sexual relations. G-d commanded man to pursue them through the available means in specific ways (ex. without theft) and specific times (ex. not on Sabbath). (note: G-d knows already what each person will choose, the purpose of testing man is so that the man will not have excuses - Zohar).

What G-d has decreed that man will attain, man will attain fully after the completion of the available means.

That which has not been decreed to come after the completion of the means will not come, and the external means will be withheld.

Through this process, his free choice of whether he served G-d or rebelled against Him will be demonstrated through his choice and intentions, and the man will then deserve either reward or punishment, regardless whether or not he completed the act.

(2) If a man were not forced to exert himself in seeking a livelihood, he would rebel and chase after sin, and he would ignore his debt of gratitude to G-d for His goodness to him. As written: "And the harp, and the lyre, the timbrel, and flute, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the L-ord, neither consider the work of His hands" (Yeshaya 5:12), and "Yeshurun became fat and kicked..and he abandoned G-d who made him" (Devarim 32:15), and the sages said "it is good the study of torah with working for a livelihood because the toil in both removes thoughts of sin, and all torah study without work will in the end be abandoned and bring to sin". And all the more so for one who has no share in either torah or work.

It was because of compassion for man that G-d has forced him to be occupied with matters of this world and the next for all of his days, and not to seek that which is not necessary and cannot be understood with his limited intellect, such as matters of what was before the creation and of the final end, as the wise man said "He has made everything beautiful in its time; also the [wisdom of] the world He put into their hearts, save that man should not find the deed which G-d did, from beginning to end." (Koheles 3:11).

WHEN G-D REMOVES THE BURDEN OF EARNING A LIVELIHOOD FROM A MAN

If a man strengthens himself in the service of G-d, resolves to fear Him, trusts in Him for his religious and secular matters, steers away from reprehensible things, longs for the good midot (character traits), does not rebel in tranquility nor turn towards leisure, does not follow his evil inclination, is not enticed by the witchery of this world - the burden of earning a livelihood will be removed from him, since the two reasons mentioned above no longer apply to him, namely, to test him on his choice and to see if he will rebel during prosperity. His livelihood will come to him without effort or difficulty, according to his needs, as written "G-d will not bring hunger to the righteous" (Mishlei 10:3).

If one asks: Behold we see some tzadikim which must work very hard to earn a livelihood while many people who rebel against G-d live a good life in comfort? The answer to this was already addressed by the prophets and the chasidim (extremely pious). One of them said "You are right, O L-ord, when I contend with You, but I will argue with You. Why has the way of the wicked prospered, all who deal with treachery have peace?" (Yirmiyahu 12:1), and another "Why do You show me iniquity and look upon mischief; and plunder and violence are before me; and the one who bears quarrel and strife endures." (Chavakuk 1:3), and "Therefore Torah is slackened, and justice does not go out forever, for a wicked man surrounds the righteous; therefore, justice emerges perverted." (Chavakuk 1:4), and "[You are] of eyes too pure to behold evil, and You cannot gaze upon iniquity. Why should You gaze upon traitors, be silent when a wicked man swallows up one more righteous than he?" (Chavakuk 1:13), and another one said "Behold these are wicked, yet they are tranquil in the world and have increased wealth." (Tehilim 73:12), and "But for naught I cleansed my heart and bathed my hands with cleanliness" (Tehilim 73:13), and another said "And now we praise the bold

transgressors, those who work wickedness are built up, they tempt G-d, and they have, nevertheless, escaped." (Malachi 3:15), and many more like this.

But the prophet refrained from giving an answer because each specific case has its own particular reason. Therefore Moshe Rabeinu commented on this in the torah saying (Devarim 29:28) "the hidden things belong to G-d" ..and "the Rock, His deeds are perfect for all His ways are just" (Devarim 32:4).

WHY THE RIGHTEOUS SOMETIMES SUFFER

Nevertheless, I would like to clarify the matter to some extent.

The possibilities why a tzadik is prevented from obtaining his livelihood without effort and must instead be put through the system of efforts and tests is as follows.

1. A previous sin for which he is now obligated to pay for. "the tzadik will pay in the land" (Mishlei 11:31)

2. As an exchange to pay him more good in Olam Haba. "to benefit you in your end" (Devarim 8:16)

3. To demonstrate his good acceptance of difficulty in the service of G-d, so that other men will learn from him, as you know from the story of Iyov.

4. Due to the wickedness of his generation, G-d tests him with poverty or sickness to demonstrate his piety and service of G-d despite them, as written "Indeed, he bore our illnesses, and our pains he carried them" (Yeshaya 53:4).

5. Due to his not standing up for G-d's torah and exacting justice from men of his generation, as you know from the story of Eli and his sons, as the verse says "And it will be that everyone who is left in your house, will come to prostrate himself before him for a silver piece and a morsel of bread" (Shmuel 2:36).

WHY THE WICKED SOMETIMES PROSPER

Sometimes G-d sends good to the wicked for the following reasons:

1. A previous good deed he did, to pay him in this world, as written "And He repays those He hates to their face, to destroy them" (Devarim 7:10) which the Onkelos renders: "He pays those He hates their good deeds during their lives to destroy them".

2. As a temporary deposit, until G-d gives him a righteous son who is worthy of it, as written "he prepares but the tzadik will wear it" (Iyov 27:17), and "For to a man who is good in His sight, He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner He has given a preoccupation to gather and to accumulate, to give to him who is good in G-d's sight; this too is vanity and vexation of spirit." (Koheles 2:26).

3. Sometimes the money is the greatest cause of his evil (in the next world) or death (in this world), as written "There is a grievous evil that I saw under the sun; riches kept by their owner for his harm." (Koheles 5:12).

4. Sometimes it is to give him time to repent and become worthy of it.

5. His father did good and it is fitting to benefit him in the merit of his father, as said to Yehu ben Nimshi "four generations of your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel" (Melachim II 10:30), and "He who walks innocently is righteous; fortunate are his sons after him." (Mishlei 20:7), and "I was young, and have aged,

and I have not seen a righteous man forsaken and his descendants seeking bread." (Tehilim 37:25).

6. Sometimes it is to test those who are deceptive or have an evil interior. When they see the wicked prosper, they quickly stray from the service of G-d and hasten to win the favor of the wicked and to learn from their actions. In this way it will be clarified the pure men to G-d and will be demonstrated who was faithful to G-d in bearing at a time when the wicked rule and persecute him. He will receive reward from the Creator for this, as you know of the story of Eliyahu and Isabel or Yirmiyahu and the kings of his generation.

CHOICE OF OCCUPATION::

Since it has been clarified the obligation for a man to pursue the means for a livelihood, now we will clarify that every man is not required to pursue every possible means.

Some occupations require little effort such as shopkeeping or light work with the hands such as sewing, writing, contracting businesses, hiring sharecroppers or workers, supervisors.

Some occupations require hard physical labor such as tanning, mining iron or copper, smelting metals, heavy transport, constant travel to faraway places, working and plowing land, or the like,

For one who is physically strong and intellectually weak, it is fitting to choose an occupation among those that require physical exertion according to what he can bear.

He who is physically weak but intellectually strong should not seek among those which tire the body but should instead tend towards those who are light on the body and that he will be able to sustain .

Every man has a preference for a particular work or business over others. G-d has already implanted in his nature a love and fondness for it, as He implanted in a cat's nature the hunting of mice, or the falcon to hunt smaller birds, the deer to trap snakes. Some birds hunt only fish, and likewise, each animal species has a liking and desire for particular plants or animals, which G-d has implanted to be the means for its sustenance, and the structure of its body and limbs is suited for that thing. The long bill and legs of a fish catching bird, or the strong teeth and claws of the lion, horns of the ox and ram, while animals whose sustenance is from plants do not have the tools to hunt and kill.

Similarly you will find among human beings character traits and body structures suited for certain businesses or activity. One who finds his nature and personality attracted to a certain occupation, and his body is suited for it, that he will be able to bear its demands - he should pursue it, and make it his means of earning a livelihood, and he should bear its pleasures and pains, and not be upset when sometimes his income is withheld, rather let him trust in G-d that He will support him all of his days.

INTENTIONS WHEN WORKING FOR A LIVELIHOOD

And he should have intention when occupied with one of the means of earning a living to fulfill the commandment of the Creator to pursue the means of the world, such as working the land, plowing and sowing it, as written "And G-d took the man

and placed him in Gan Eden to work it and to guard it" (bereishis 2:15), and also to use other living creatures for his benefit and sustenance, and for building cities and preparing food, and to marry a woman and have relations to populate the world. (see gate #9 for more details on this)

He will be rewarded for his intentions in heart and mind to serve G-d whether or not his desire is accomplished, as written "If you eat from the toil of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you" (Tehilim 128:2), and our sages of blessed memory said "Let all your actions be for the sake of Heaven (to serve G-d)" (Avot 2:12).

In this way, his trust in G-d will be intact, undamaged by the toiling in the means to earn a livelihood, as long as his intention in heart and mind is for the sake of Heaven (to do the will of G-d that the world be populated and built up).

One should not think that his livelihood depends on a particular means and that if these means fails, his livelihood will not come from a different means. Rather, trust in the Almighty, and know that all means are equal for Him. He can provide using whatever means and at any time and however He so wishes, as written "for with the Lord there is no limitation to save with many or with few" (Shmuel I 14:6), and "But you must remember the Lord your G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant which He swore to your forefathers, as it is this day." (Devarim 8:18), and "Not by military force and not by physical strength, but by My spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." (Zecharia 4:6).

***** Chapter 4 *****

- *When trust applies and when it does not*

The concerns for which the believer is obligated to trust in G-d are of two categories. (1) matters of this world, and (2), matters of Olam Haba (afterlife). And matters of this world subdivide to two divisions.

(1) matters of this world for the benefit of this world. (2) matters of this world for the benefit of the afterlife.

The matters of this world for the benefit of this world subdivide to three parts:

(1) what is beneficial for the body only.

(2) what contributes to one's maintenance or enable one to gain wealth, and various possessions.

(3) what is beneficial for one's household, wife and relatives, for his friends and enemies, and for those above and below him among the various classes of people.

Matters of this world that will secure benefit in Olam Haba subdivide to two parts. (1) duties of the heart and limbs which relate to oneself only, and whose actions do not result in benefit or damage to others.

(2) duties of the limbs which cannot be performed without association with others, whether the partner is active or passive. For example, giving tzedaka, acts of kindness, teaching of wisdom, instructing others to do good or to refrain from evil.

Matters of the afterlife subdivide to two parts.

(1) The reward that is deserved.

(2) That which is a special kindness which the Creator bestows to the pious and to the prophets in Olam Haba.

THE 7 CATEGORIES TO TRUST IN

Therefore all things for which one trusts in the Creator fall into 7 categories:

(1) matters of the body alone.

(2) matters of one's wealth and means of earning a livelihood.

(3) matters of one's wife, children, relatives, friends, and enemies.

(4) duties of the heart and limbs which only benefit or damage oneself

(5) duties of the limbs which affect others as well, whether benefiting or harming.

(6) reward in the afterlife according to one's conduct in this world.

(7) reward in the afterlife from the Creator in the way of kindness on His treasured ones and those that love Him, as written "How great is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You" (tehilim 31:20)

Since I have explained the introductions through which it is possible for one to place his trust in the Almighty, it is proper for me to follow them with an explanation of the proper way of bitachon in each of the seven categories, through which one should trust on G-d and on something beside Him.

PROPER TRUST IN MATTERS OF THE BODY

For the first category, matters of the body alone, these are: his life and death, his income for obtaining food, clothing and shelter, his health and illness, his traits. The proper way of trust in the Almighty for all matters of these is to submit oneself to the course the Creator has decreed for him in these matters, and to place one's trust in G-d and to know that none of these matters will come to be unless it was previously determined by G-d that this would be the most proper situation for his matter in this world and in Olam Haba (the afterlife), and ultimately the greatest good for him, and that the Creator has exclusive, total control over all of these matters. No created being has any possibility to exercise any control except through His permission, decree, and judgment. And just like one's life and death, health and sickness, are not in the hands of others, so too, one's livelihood, clothing and other bodily matters are not in their hands.

If one's emuna (faith) is clear, that his matters are given over to the decrees of the Creator, and that the choice of the Creator for him is the best choice, nevertheless, it is one's duty to pursue means which appear to be beneficial to him and to choose what seems to be the best choice under the circumstances, and the Almighty will do according to what He has already decreed.

An example of this: Even though a man's end and number of days depend on the decree of the Creator, nevertheless, a man must pursue means to survive such as food and drink, clothing, and shelter according to his needs, and he should not leave this to the Almighty, and think: "if the Creator has predecreed that I will live, then I can leave my body without food all the days of my life, and I will not go through the hassle of earning a livelihood". Likewise, one should not put oneself in danger while trusting on the decree of the Creator, drinking poisonous drink or to go battle lions or other dangerous animals without necessity, or to cast oneself into the sea or into fire, or other similar things that a man is not sure of them and puts himself in danger. And the verse has already cautioned us in saying "You shall not try the Lord, your G-d, as you tried Him in Massah." (Devarim 6:16), because one who does this will lose either way.

Either he will die, and it will be considered as if he killed himself, and he will be

held accountable for this just as if he had killed another man and even though his death in this fashion was a decree of the Al-mighty. And we have already been commanded not to murder another human being in any form in the verse "do not murder" (shmot 20:13). And the closer the murderer is to the murderer, the more the punishment should be severe, as written "on pursuing his brother with a sword, corrupting his mercy" (Amos 1:11). And similarly the punishment for one who kills himself will undoubtedly be very great.

This is like a slave whose master commanded him to guard a place for a fixed time, and warned him not to leave the place until his messenger will come. When the slave saw that the messenger was late in coming, he abandoned his post, and the master became furious at him and punished him severely. Similarly, one who causes his own death (by doing dangerous things) moves out of the service of G-d and into rebellion against Him, by putting himself in mortal danger.

This is why you will find Shmuel say (to G-d) "And Samuel said, "How shall I go? For, if Saul hears, he will kill me." And the L-ord said, "You shall take a heifer with you, and you shall say, 'I have come to slaughter (a sacrifice) to the L-ord.'" (Shmuel I 16:2). And this was not considered a lack of trust in the Al-mighty, and the answer from G-d to him shows that his zeal in this was appropriate, and He answered him "You shall take a heifer with you, and you shall say, 'I have come to slaughter (an offering) to the L-ord.'" (Shmuel I 16:2), and if this were considered a lack of trust G-d would have answered him "See now that it is I! I am the One, and there is no G-d like Me! I cause death and grant life. I strike, and I heal, and no one can rescue from My Hand!" (Devarim 32:39), or something similar, as He answered Moshe when Moshe claimed "But I am slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Shmos 4:10), answering him "Who gave a man a mouth? Who makes a man mute or deaf, seeing or blind". And if Shmuel, with his perfect righteousness was not lenient in putting himself in a tiny risk of danger, and even though he would be doing so by the command of G-d, as He commanded him "Fill your horn with oil, and come, I shall send you to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, for I have seen for Myself a king among his sons" (Shmuel I 16:1), all the more so for someone not commanded by G-d, that this would be considered reprehensible.

(The other possibility) is that he will survive with G-d's help, and he will lose his merit and reward, as our sages on this matter (Shabbat 32a): "a man should never put himself in danger thinking that a miracle will be performed for him, because maybe no miracle will be done for him, and even if a miracle is done for him, his merits are reduced". And Yaakov our forefather said "I am not worthy of all Your kindnesses" (Bereishis 32:11), to which the targum explains: "my merits have diminished due to all of Your favors and kindnesses."

PROPER TRUST IN MATTERS OF EARNING A LIVELIHOOD

What we have explained for matters of life and death, also applies to the duty to pursue means for health, food, clothing, shelter, good habits and distancing from their opposite - (to engage in them) even though one holds firmly and convincingly to the belief that the means to these things do not help at all in attaining them, rather, it is through the decree of the Creator, then, when a farmer must plow his field, clear it from weeds, and to sow it and water it, if water is available, let him trust in the Creator to make it fertile, and to protect it from plagues, to increase and to bless the crops. And it is not proper to leave the land unworked and unsowed and to trust G-d and rely on His decree that it will grow fruit without being sown first.

And likewise workers, merchants, and contractors are required to pursue their livelihood while trusting in G-d that money is in His hands and under His control, and that He guarantees to provide a man (as the verse "who gives sustenance to all flesh" - PL) and pays him with whatever means He wishes. One should not think that the means can benefit or harm him in the least.

If one's livelihood comes through one of the means he worked on, it is proper for him not to trust in this source, rejoice in it, hold of it, and turn his heart to it, because this will weaken his trust in the Almighty. It is improper to think that this source will be more beneficial to him than what was predecreed from the Creator. Instead of rejoicing for having pursued and engaged in it, he should thank the Creator who provided for him after his labor, and that He did not make his work and struggle result in nothing, as written "If you eat the toil of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and it is good for you" (Tehilim 128:2).

One of the pious said: "I am amazed of he who gives to another what the Creator decreed he would receive, and afterwards reminds him of the favor he did, and seeks to be thanked for this. And I am even more amazed by one who receives his livelihood from another who has an obligation to provide for him and then (the poor man) thanks, praises and submits himself before him."

If the money does not come through the means one has worked on, it is possible that the money allocated to him for the day has already reached his hands or that it will come through other means.

However the case, it is proper for him to engage in the means of earning a livelihood and not to be lax in pursuing after them, provided they are fitting to his personality, body, principles, and situation as I previously explained. And he should trust in G-d, that He will not abandon him, neglect him, or hide from him as written "The Lord is good, a stronghold on a day of trouble- and He knows those who trust in Him" (Nachum 1:7)

PROPER TRUST IN MATTERS OF HEALTH AND SICKNESS

Similarly, we will say regarding health and sickness. A man should trust in the Creator in this, while working on maintaining his health according to the means which naturally promote this, and to fight sickness according to the normal ways, as the Creator commanded "and he must heal him" (Shmos 21:19). All of this, without trusting in the means of health or illness that they could help or hurt without the permission of the Creator.

And when one trusts in the Creator, He will heal him with or without a means, as written "He sends His word and heals them" (Tehilim 107:20). It is even possible that He will heal him through something that is normally very harmful, as you know from the story of Elisha and the bad water, that he healed their damaging properties with salt (Melachim II 2:19), and similarly "And G-d showed him a tree and he tossed it into the waters" (Shmos 15:25), And the midrash tanchuma there explains that this was a bitter, oleander tree. Another example, "let him smear crushed figs on the boils, and he will heal" (Yeshaya 38:21). And you already know of what happened to the pious king Asa when he trusted in the doctors, and removed his trust in G-d regarding his illness, the sharp rebuke he received for this. And the verse says: "For He brings pain and binds it; He wounds, and His hands heal."

(Iyov 5:18).

MORE ON PROPER TRUST IN MATTERS OF EARNING A LIVELIHOOD

For the second category, the matters of man's possessions, means of financial gain, types of business dealings, whether in commerce, a trade, travel, property rentals, banking, work of kings, treasurers, contracting, writing work, other types of work, going to faraway deserts and seas, and other similar things, from what people toil in to amass money, and indulge in luxuries. The proper way of trust in the Almighty for this is to engage in the means which G-d has made available to him for earning his livelihood, and to obtain what is sufficient for him of this world.

And if the Creator has decreed for him more than this, it will come to him without work or effort, provided he trusts in the Almighty for it and does not excessively pursue the means nor trust in them in his heart.

And if the Creator has not decreed for him more than his sustenance, even if all those in heaven and earth were to try to increase it, they would not be capable by any way or by any means. And when one trusts in G-d, he will find peace of mind and tranquility of spirit, because G-d will not give over his portion to someone else, nor send to him earlier or later than the time He decreed for it.

PROPER TRUST FOR THE WEALTHY

Sometimes the Creator directs the livelihood of many men through one man. This is in order to test the man whether he will serve G-d or rebel against Him. And G-d will place this to be among the man's most difficult tests and sources of temptation (Pas Lechem commentary: the Creator will make this strongest means to test him, that the man will be tested in this more than all other tests, because the magnitude of the test is according to the greatness of the temptation of the evil inclination, and certainly the temptation of the evil inclination in this is exceedingly strong, to close one's hand from providing for the poor and destitute, and to not be concerned about giving their needs, thereby diminishing his wealth, as written in Devarim 15:9: "Guard yourself lest there be in your heart", and he will be tempted to amass wealth - TL).

For example, a king who provides for his army and servants, or ministers, those close with the king, important officials, all of who are surrounded by their slaves, servants, workers, wives, and relatives, and those who attempt to amass money for them through good or bad means.

And the foolish among them will err on three fronts.

(1) In acquiring wealth, he will use corrupt and evil means to take what the Creator has decreed he will take. And if he had sought after his wealth with proper means, he would have reached his desire, and both his religious and secular affairs would have succeeded, and he would not have received any less from what the Creator had decreed for him.

(2) He thinks that all the money that reaches him is for his own use. He does not understand that the money is divided into three parts: one part, for the food he needs for his own body alone, and this is something G-d assures to all living creatures until their last day. The second part, for the food of others, such as his wife, children, servants, employees, and the like.

This (extra money) is not promised by G-d to all people, but rather only to a privileged few, and under special conditions, and this opportunity presents itself at certain times but not at others, according to the rulings of the Creator's system of kindness and justice. Third, money to hold on to. This is money which has no benefit for the man. The man guards it and accumulates it until he bequeaths it to another or that he loses it. The foolish person thinks that all the money decreed for him by the Creator is for his own use and food and physical upkeep, and he spends much energy and effort, and it is possible that he is amassing wealth for the next husband of his wife, or for the one who murders him, or for his greatest enemy.

(3) The third error is that he provides money to others as the Creator decreed this would happen through him, but he reminds them of his favors as if he were the one who provided for them and did them a kindness, and he expects them to thank and praise him richly, and that they serve him, and he becomes arrogant, haughty, and uplifted of heart. He neglects to thank G-d for the kindnesses which he had the privilege of distributing. He thinks that if he did not give this money to them, it would remain by him, and that if he did not provide for them they would not have any money. But really, he is the poor man, who will toil for nothing in this world and will lose his reward in the next world.

The wise man conducts himself in the three ways according to the proper path for his torah and for his worldly pursuits, and his trust in what is in G-d's hands is greater than his trust in what is in his own hands because he does not know if the money in his hand is meant for his own benefit or meant for the benefit of others. And he will receive honor in this world and good reward in the Olam Haba (afterlife), as written in the psalm (112) "Halelu-ya praiseworthy is the man who fears G-d.." until the end of it.

WHY THE MASSES ARE FORCED TO WORK ENORMOUSLY

There are some classes of people who busy themselves to acquire money and become wealthy only for the love of being honored by other people, and to make a name for themselves, and no amount of money is ever enough for them. This is due to their ignorance of the real causes which bring honor in this world and in the next. The reason they make this error is because they see the masses which honor the wealthy, but really, this honor is only due to their desire for what they possess and to try to get some of what is in their hands.

If only the masses thought about and understood that the wealthy do not have the capability nor the strength to give or to hold back except to someone to whom the Creator decreed it so, they would not hope to anyone besides G-d, and the masses would find worthy of honor only he who the Creator has distinguished with praiseworthy qualities (due to his piety), for which he is worthy of the Creator's honor, as written "Those who honor Me, I will honor" (Shmuel I 2:30).

And because the masses were foolish in honoring the wealthy, the Creator added to their foolishness in the causes of their desire (to toil a lot so that perhaps they will also become wealthy and will also receive honor - Marpe LeNefesh commentary). And they fell into great effort and tremendous toiling all of their days, and they abandoned what they were obligated to work at and pursue, of their duties to the Creator, and to thank Him for the good He bestows on them, and their requests for

money would have undoubtedly been closer to them in this way, as written "long life is in its right, in its left wealth and honor" (Mishlei 3:16), and "wealth and honor is from You" (Divrei hayamim 29:12).

There exists among those who seek wealth, one who reaches all his heart's desire through the means we mentioned. Sometimes through an inheritance or the like, and he thinks it is due to the means, and without them, he would not have received anything, and he praises the means and not the Cause.

How similar is he to a man in the desert, thirst weighing on him, he finds unpure water in a pit, and becomes full of joy. He quenches his thirst, and then moves a bit further, and finds a well of pure water. He regrets on what he did previously, of drinking and quenching his thirst from the unpure water.

So too, for the man who became wealthy through a certain means. If this means would have been withheld, he would have attained it through a different means, as we explained and as the verse says: "nothing can prevent G-d from saving, whether through many or through few" (Shmuel I 14:6).

PROPER TRUST IN TIGHT FINANCIAL TIMES

And the proper way for one who trusts in G-d, when his livelihood is withheld for some day is to say in one's heart: "He who took me out (from the womb) to this world at a fixed time and moment, and He did not take me out earlier or later, He is the One who is withholding my livelihood for a fixed time and fixed day, because He knows it is for my good."

Likewise, when one's livelihood comes very exactly, no more than the amount for basic food, it is proper for one to reflect in his heart and tell himself: "He who prepared my sustenance in my mother's breast, in my beginning, according to my need, and what was sufficient for me every day, until He replaced it for me with something better, and (the milk's) coming exactly did not damage me at all, so too I will not be damaged now at all, by His sending me my food in the limited, exact amount, until the end of my days.

He will be rewarded for this, as the Creator told our ancestors in the (Sinai) desert, whose matter was in this way: "The people shall go out each day and gather what they need for the day" (shmot 16:4), and "go and call out to the ears of Jerusalem and say 'you went after Me in the desert, a barren land..'" (Yirmiyahu 2:2).

Likewise, if one's livelihood comes through one cause and not another cause, one place and not another place, one man and not another man, let one say in his heart: "He who created me in a certain form, shape, composition, and measure and not another, for my purpose and benefit, He chose that my livelihood come through ways according to my purpose and benefit, and not through other ways." And, "He who took me out to this world at a fixed time, and through two specific people, and not through other people of the world, He chooses for me my livelihood from a specific place and through a specific man, He made him the means to my livelihood for my benefit", as written "G-d is righteous in all His ways" (Tehilim 145:17).

The explanation of the third category, matters of one's wife, children, household members, relatives, friends, enemies, acquaintances, those of higher or lower class, the ways of trust is as follows. A man is either one of two possibilities:

either he is with his family and relatives or he is a stranger (alone).

PROPER TRUST FOR ONE LIVING ALONE

If he is a stranger, let his companionship be with G-d during his time of loneliness, and trust in Him during his period of being a stranger. And let him contemplate that the soul is also a stranger in this world, and that all people are like temporary residents here, as the verse says "because you are strangers and temporary residents for Me" (Vayikra 25:23). And let him think in his heart that all those who have relatives here, in a short time, he will return a stranger, alone, neither relative nor son will be able to help him, and none of them will come with him (to the grave). (see Gate 8 chapter 3 way 30 for a powerful discussion of this)

And afterwards, let him contemplate that as a stranger, he is freed from the heavy burden of duties and responsibilities towards them. He should consider this to be one of the kindnesses of the Creator to him, because if he needed to pursue matters of this world for providing for his material needs, his exertion would be lighter without a wife and children, and their absence is peace of mind for him and it is good. And if he is concerned about his interests in the next world, his heart will certainly be less cluttered and clearer at the time he contemplates it

And therefore the ascetics would leave their relatives and homes and go to the mountains, in order to focus their hearts in the service of G-d. Likewise, the prophets, during the era of prophecy, would go out from their homes in solitude to fulfill the service of the Creator on them, as you know from Eliyahu with Elisha, which it is said of him "twelve pairs of oxen were before him, and he was with the twelfth" (Melachim I 19:19). And when Eliyahu hinted to him a small hint (to come with him), he understood him and said "Let me kiss my father and mother, and I will come with you", and afterwards, "and he went after Eliyahu and served him".

It is said about one of the ascetics, who traveled to a country to teach its inhabitants the service of G-d. He found them all dressed in the same manner and adorned in the same way. Their graves were near their homes, and he did not see among them any women. He asked them about this and they answered him: "the reason we are all dressed alike is so that there's no noticeable difference between a rich man and a poor man, and the rich man will not come to arrogance for his wealth, and the poor man will not be embarrassed of himself, and so that our matter above the earth should be in our eyes like our matter below the earth.

It is said of one of the kings that he would mix with his servants, and there was no noticeable difference between him and them, because he would conduct himself in the way of humility in his dress and adornments. As to the reason why the graves of our dead are near our homes, they said, this is so that we encounter them and be prepared for our deaths, and that we prepare our provisions for the afterlife. As to what you noticed that we separated ourselves from women and children, know that we prepared for them a city near here. When one of us needs something from them, he goes there, does what he needs, and returns here. This we did because we saw how much mental distraction, great loss, and great effort and work there was when they were among us, and the great clarity of mind, in separating from them, to focus on matters of Olam Haba and be repulsed by matters of this world. And their words found favor in the eyes of the ascetic, and he blessed them and commended them on their matters.

PROPER TRUST IN SOCIAL MATTERS

If the one who trusts in G-d has a wife, relatives, friends, enemies, let him trust in G-d to be saved from them. He should try to fulfill his duties to them and to do their will, to be at peace with them, to refrain from harming them, to try to promote what is good for them, to be faithful towards them in all matters, to teach them that the service of G-d will be beneficial for them in torah and in worldly matters, as written "and you will love the L-ord your G-d..", and "do not hate your brother in your heart". Do not do this because you seek favors in return from them, or to benefit from them, or because of love of their honoring and praising you. And do not try to rule over them, but rather for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah of the Creator, and to guard his covenant and commandments over them. Because one who tries to help them and has his intention on one of these things we mentioned above, he will not obtain what he wants from them in this world, he will tire himself for nothing, and he will lose his reward in the afterlife.

But if he does these things for the service of G-d only, the Almighty will help them to repay him in this world, and to put his praise in their mouths, and to see him in high esteem, and he will reach the great reward in the Olam Haba, as the Almighty said to Shlomo "also what you did not ask, I will give you, also wealth and honor" (Melachim 3:13).

But the ways of trust in G-d in dealing with those above him or below him in the classes of men is as follows. The proper way to act when one needs to ask something of someone above or below him is to trust in one's G-d, and to consider them means of obtaining it, just like one makes the working and sowing of the land a means of obtaining one's food. If G-d wishes to support him through it, He will make the seeds sprout, grow, and multiply, and one does not thank the land for this, but rather, he thanks the Creator only. And if the Almighty will not desire to supply him through it, the land will not sprout, or it will sprout but be struck by a plague, and one does not blame the land.

So too, when he seeks something from one of them, it should be equal in his eyes whether the person he asked is weak or strong, and he should trust in G-d for its completion. And if it was completed through one of them, let him thank the Creator who carried out his desire, and thank the person through whom it was carried out for his good heart towards him, and that the Creator brought his benefit through him, and it is known that the Creator does not bring good except through the tzadikim (righteous), and it is rare that a loss comes through them, as the sages said "merit occurs through the meritorious and guilt through the guilty" (Bava Basra 119b), and the verse "No wrong shall be caused for the righteous, but the wicked are full of evil." (Mishlei 12:21). And if his request is not carried out through them, one should not blame them, and not consider it due to their being lax in it, rather he should thank the Almighty who chose what is best for him in this, and praise them according to his knowledge of their efforts to fulfill his will, even though the matter was not completed according to his and their will. Similarly, one should act with his acquaintances and friends, his business associates, employees and partners.

Likewise, if someone higher or lower than oneself requests one to do something for them, one should try to do it wholeheartedly, and try honestly to do the matter, if one is capable of doing it and if the person who asked of him is someone that it is fitting for him to expend effort on his behalf, and after this, he should trust in the Almighty for its completion. If G-d completes it through him, and makes him the

cause for benefiting another, let him be grateful for this. And if G-d withholds this from him, and he is not capable of doing it, he should not blame himself, and he should inform the person that he was not lax in it provided that one indeed personally expended effort for it.

But for one's enemies, those jealous of him, those who seek to harm him, he should trust in G-d and bear their contempt, and he should not treat them back in the same way. Rather he should pay them back with kindness, and to try to benefit them as much as possible, and to remember in his heart that only G-d has the ability to benefit or harm him.

If his enemies cause him harm, he should judge them favorably and suspect that it is due to himself or his past deeds from his bad start in life towards G-d. He should plead to the Almighty and seek from Him to atone for his sins, and then his enemies will become his friends, as the wise man said "when G-d is pleased with a man's way, even his enemies will make peace with him" (Mishlei 16:7).

PROPER TRUST IN THE FREE WILL TO SERVE G-D

The explanation of the fourth category, matters of duties of the heart and of the limbs which only benefit or harm oneself, for example, fasting, prayer, sukkah, lulav, tzitzis, observing the sabbath and the holidays, refraining from sins, and all of the duties of the heart whose performance does not involve others, and whose benefit or harm is limited only to oneself, without affecting others, the proper way of trust in all of them to the Almighty, I will explain, and I ask the Almighty to teach me the truth, in His mercy.

Any action of service of G-d or of sin which is performed by a man must include three stages. (1) the choice in heart and mind. (2) The intent and agreement to do what he chose. (3) The effort to complete the act with his physical limbs and to bring it into actuality.

For that which is not beyond one's control, like the choice of service or sin, or intent and agreement to carry out the choice, the trusting in G-d would be a mistake and a foolishness, because the Creator left free choice in our hands whether to serve Him or rebel against Him, as written "and you shall choose life" (Devarim 30:19). But to bring the act into existence, He did not leave in our hands, but made it depend on outside means which sometimes are available and sometimes not.

If one trusts in the Almighty in the choice of service and thinks to himself: "I will not choose nor intend to do anything in the service of the Creator, until He chooses for me what is best", he has already strayed from the straight path, and tread his feet away from the proper way, because the Creator has already commanded us to choose in matters of His service, and to intend and make efforts towards it, with complete, wholehearted resolve for the sake of His great Name, and He has informed us that this is the proper way for this world and the next.

If the means are available, and one is capable of completing the service which he had previously chosen to do, he will receive the great reward for choosing service, for the intent to do it, and for completing the actions with his physical limbs. And if one is prevented from completing the actions with the physical limbs he will receive reward for the choosing and intent to do, as we previously explained, and similarly for punishment of sins.

The difference between service of G-d and secular matters in this world, regarding trust, is as follows. For secular matters, it was not revealed to us the way in which some means are better or worse than other means, and the way in which some means are more harmful than other means. We do not know which profession is best for us to obtain money, health, and general good. Nor do we know which business sector, which place to travel, or which other worldly means will be successful if we pursue them.

Therefore it is incumbent on us to trust in the Almighty that He will help us choose and carry out what is good for us, provided we apply ourselves and plead to Him to arouse in our hearts to make the good and proper choice for us.

But the service of G-d is not like this, because G-d has already taught us the proper ways for it, commanded us to choose it, and gave us the ability to do it. And if we plead to Him in choosing it, and trust in Him that He will reveal to us the proper path, we will be mistaken in our words and foolish in our trust, because He already taught us the proper way which will be good for us in this world and the next, as written "G-d has commanded us to fulfill all of these statutes, to fear the Lord, our G-d, for our good, all of our days. And for the reward in Olam Haba "we will be rewarded, if we are careful to observe" (Devarim 6:25).

Furthermore, in secular matters, sometimes a good means changes to become a bad (ineffective) means and vice versa, while for service of G-d and transgression it is not so, matters of good and evil do not switch positions and never change.

However, what is fitting to trust in G-d for matters of service is in the implementation stage, after the first stage of choosing it with a full and faithful heart, and after the second stage of resolving and making efforts to do it with a pure heart, and with intent to do it for the sake of His great Name. On this we should plead to Him to help us, and guide us, as written "guide me in Your truth and teach me" (Tehilim 25:5), and "guide me in the path of Your commandments" (Tehilim 119:35), and "I have chosen the way of faith, I have clinged to Your torah, G-d, do not.." (Tehilim 119:30), and "do not remove from my mouth any word of truth because I have hoped in Your laws" (Tehilim 119:43).

All these verses prove that the psalmist's own choice was in the service of G-d, and he prayed to G-d for two things. (1) To focus his heart and strengthen his choice in the service by distancing the distractions of the world from his heart and eyes, as he said "unify my heart to fear Your name, uncover my eyes that I may gaze at the wonders of Your torah" (Tehilim 119:18), "turn my eyes away from seeing frivolity" (ibid, 119:37), "turn my heart towards Your torah" (ibid, 119:36), and many more. (2) To strengthen his limbs in the completion of the acts of service. This is what is said "guide me in the path of Your commandments" (119:35), "support me and I will be saved" (119:117), and many more like this. And I will explain which factors help and harm these things, and the proper path in it, with G-d's help.

PROPER TRUST IN DOING COMMANDMENTS WHICH AFFECT OTHERS

The fifth category, physical obligations whose help or harm affect others, such as charity, maaser (tithes), teaching wisdom, commanding others to do good and to refrain from evil, returning deposits, guarding secrets, speaking and doing good, honoring parents, bringing the wicked back to G-d, educating others as to their ultimate good, to have mercy on the poor, and to bear their contempt when arousing

them to the service G-d, and to stimulate them to hope for reward, and to fear punishment.

The proper way of trust for this, is for one to keep in mind all these and similar acts, and choose to do them, and make efforts according to what we previously explained in the fourth category, regarding the duty to choose to pursue the single goal of becoming closer to G-d, not for acquiring a name or honor among men, not to receive reward from men, not to rule over them, and afterwards to trust in G-d in the stage of completing the acts which one had intent to do, as G-d desires him to do.

In all of this, one should be careful to hide his deeds as much as possible from those who do not need to know. Because in being hidden, his reward will be greater than if he had been known. And that which one cannot hide, let him remember the general principle which we explained, namely, that help and harm is not from the created things, without the permission of the Creator.

When the Creator makes available a mitzva (commandment) to a person, he should think that this is an act of kindness from the Creator to him. And one should not rejoice if other people praise him for doing it, and one should not desire their honor for it, since this will bring him to become haughty in his actions, and his heart and intentions towards G-d will be ruined, and his actions will be lost and he will lose his reward. I will explain this later on in its proper Gate with G-d's help.

PROPER TRUST REGARDING REWARD

The explanation of the sixth category, regarding the reward in this world and the next, which one merits for his actions in this world, is divided into two parts. (1) Reward in this world only. (2) Reward in the next world only. Sometimes one merits reward in both for one act. And this was not explained to us clearly, but the Creator guaranteed general reward for general service, but He did not specify the details of reward in this world for each act of service like He did regarding the punishments in this world, for example, He specified which actions warrant death by stoning, burning, beheading, or strangulation, or 40 lashes, death (through G-d's providence), premature death, monetary fines - two fold, four or five fold, monetary damages - ox, pit, tooth, fire, damaging a man, embarrassing, slander, and others similar. But the reward for the afterlife, the prophet did not explain anything because of several reasons.

Among them, the form of the soul without a body is foreign to us, and even less known is what the soul would take pleasure in or suffer in. However, this was explained to he who understood such things, as He spoke to Yehoshua (kohen gadol) "I will let you walk among these (angels) that stand" (Zecharia 3:7), and this was not for when his soul was connected to his body, rather G-d was hinting to him what would happen after death, where the soul would return in the form of an angel in its simple and pure form, when it stopped using its body, and it was purified and radiant when its deeds were good in this world.

Another reason is that the explanation of reward and punishment in the next world was received from the masses by the prophets, and derived by the sages, and it was left out of books as was much of the explanation of commandments left out because they relied on its transmission through the oral tradition.

Another reason is that the people were on the side of foolishness and ignorance (when they left Egypt), something not covered up in the verses, and the Creator conducted Himself with them like a father who has mercy on his small son, when he wants to discipline him slowly and gently, as written "Yisrael is a youth, and I loved him" (Hoshea 11:1). When a father wants to educate his young son about the wisdom with which he will attain exalted levels, and the youth is not capable of understanding them at that time, if he tries to entice him, saying "bear the hard discipline and learning, in order that you later reach the great levels", the son would not be able to bear this, and would not listen to his father, because he does not understand them.

But if he entices him with what is pleasurable right away, whether food, drink, fine clothing, a nice wagon, or the like, and he tells him of what will cause him immediate pain such as hunger, nakedness, spankings or the like, and he reassures him on what he promised him with observable proofs, and true, visible testimonies, it will be easier for the son to bear the exertion of discipline and endure its work.

And when he becomes a young man and his intellect strengthens, he will understand the intent of the discipline he was put through and turn towards them, and the sweetness of the early rewards which he ran towards would diminish in his eyes. This kind of education was a kindness toward him.

Similarly, the Creator encouraged his people with rewards and scared them with immediate punishments because He knew that after they would be settled in the service, their foolishness regarding reward and punishment would wither away and their intent would turn to G-d only. And in this way, we can explain all of the physical forms used to describe the Creator in scripture.

Another reason, is that a man is not worthy of the reward of Olam Haba through his good deeds alone. Rather he merits the Olam Haba from the Al-mighty due to two factors, after he has done good deeds in this world. (1) That he teaches other people the service of G-d, and he guides them to do good, as written "they who bring merit to the public will be like the stars forever" (Daniel 12:3). And also, "those who rebuke will enjoy, and on them will come a good blessing" (Mishlei 24:25). And when the man will combine the reward for those who he brought merit, with the reward for his own good deeds, and the reward for the faith in his heart and his acceptance of G-d's will, he will be worthy of the reward of Olam Haba from the Creator.

(2) The second factor is kindness from the Al-mighty, and generosity and goodness, as written "to You, G-d, is kindness, for You pay a man according to his deeds" (tehilim 62:13).

The reason for this, is that even if a man's good deeds are numerous like the sand of the sea, it would not weigh enough to cover even one goodness the Creator had bestowed on him in this world (see Gate#7). All the more so, if he has any sins, and if the Creator will exact judgment on him for his obligation of gratitude, all of his actions will be cancelled, and sunk by the smallest favor the Creator has done for him, and that which the Creator owes him will not amount to anything, except through pure kindness from the Creator to him.

But the punishment in both worlds is true and through justice, and it is a debt a man is obligated to pay. Only that G-d's kindness overpowers it in both worlds, as

written "to You, G-d, is kindness, and the compassionate One will atone for sin, and will not destroy" (tehilim 78:38).

Another reason, is that a good deed is divided into two parts.

(1) Those hidden from a man, and visible only to the Creator, like the duties of the heart, and those similar to them.

(2) Those visible in the limbs.

The Creator rewards the visible actions of the limbs with visible reward of this world. And He rewards for hidden deeds with hidden reward, which is in Olam Haba. Therefore, King David, spoke of this in words which reflect this matter, as written "how great is Your goodness which You hid away for those that fear You" (tehilim 31:20). And likewise, the way of punishments for hidden and revealed deeds, is like that of reward.

The proof for this is as follows. G-d has guaranteed to His people for the service which can be seen in the limbs reward which is visible in this world. This is explained in parsha "If you will go in My ways.." (end of Vayikra) . And similarly, He guaranteed to them on the visible sins, visible punishment for them in this world, because the masses are held accountable for (exacting justice from) the revealed deeds only, not for the hidden deeds. This is what is meant "the hidden things are for G-d, but the revealed things are for us and our children, forever" (Devarim 29:28). And the verse says "if the people will turn their eyes from the acts of this man and his family, I will turn My face to this man and his family" (Vayikra 20:4).

But the hidden sins of the heart, their judgment belong to the Creator in this world and in the next. Therefore, He did not include an explanation of the retribution in the next world.

Another reason is because the reward and punishment mentioned in the torah, speaks only of the rewards in this world and the punishment for people of this world. And since Yehoshua (kohen gadol) was in the mystical world of angels, G-d told him, "I will let you walk among those who stand here" (Zecharia 3:7). Because this is the way of inspiring to good and scaring from bad - that it be fitting for the time and place. Make sure you understand this.

Another reason is that for the supreme reward in Olam Haba, the matter is nothing more than clinging to G-d, and drawing near to His divine light, as written "your righteousness will go before you, the glory of G-d will gather you in" (Yeshaya 58:8), and "the wise will shine like the radiance of the firmament" (Daniel 12:3), and also, "to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him" (Iyov 33:30). And no one can reach there except he who the Creator finds favor in, and the favor of the Creator is the root of the reward, as written "his anger is a moment, life is in His favor" (Tehilim 30:6). And there are hints in parsha bechukosai which refer to favor from the Al-mighty, this is what is written "My soul will not be disgusted by you" (Vayikra 26:11), and "I will turn to you and be your G-d and you will be My people" (ibid, 26:9).

TRUST IN G-D REGARDING REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

For these matters, one should trust in G-d that He designates reward for the righteous in this world and in the next for the service and that He will fulfill His promise. And likewise, that He will pay punishment for those deserving of it. This is incumbent on the believer, and trust in G-d for this matter is an essential part of

our faith in G-d, as written, "and he believed G-d, and it was considered a merit" (Bereishis 16:6), and "had I not believed to see the goodness of G-d in the land of life" (tehilim 27:13).

It is not proper for one to trust in his own good deeds, and assure himself that he will receive reward in this world and the next due to his good deeds. Rather, he should make efforts to thank G-d and be grateful for His constant kindnesses to him, not for hope of future reward that he will merit for his deeds. Rather he should trust in G-d only after trying his best to pay his debt of gratitude for His great kindness towards him, as our sages have said "Do not be like servants who serve their master in order to receive reward, rather be like servants who serve their master even if they would not receive reward, and let the fear of Heaven be upon you" (Avos 1:3)

One of the pious said "a man will not be worthy of the reward of Olam Haba due to his actions, if one takes account what he is obligated to the Creator for His kindness to him. Rather only as a kindness of the Almighty. Therefore do not trust in your deeds." And King David said of this "to You, G-d, is kindness, for You pay a man according to his deeds" (tehilim 62:13).

TRUST IN REWARD FOR THE TREASURED ONES

The seventh category - the special kindness of the Al-mighty reserved for His chosen and treasured ones in Olam Haba with many good things which we cannot imagine, the proper way of trust in G-d is as follows: To exert oneself in the means which bring one to the levels of piety that merit this special kindness from G-d. This entails conducting oneself in the traits of the ascetics who loath worldly pleasures, and to uproot from oneself the love and desire for them and to replace this with the love of the Creator, and to devote oneself to Him, to delight in Him, to hide away from the masses and the vanities of this world, and to follow the ways of the prophets and the pious, and to trust that the Al-mighty will show him favor as He did with them in the afterlife.

IDENTIFYING REAL TZADIKIM

But one who trusts in this without good acts - he is a fool and a simpleton. He is like the one of whom it was said "he acts like Zimri and seeks the reward of Pinchas" (Sota 22b).

Some signs of those who have reached this exalted level are: (1) teaching servants of G-d on the service. (2) Bearing and accepting in times of trial and difficulty. (3) That nothing takes precedence over fulfillment of the commandments of G-d, as we see by the test of Avraham (bereishis 22:1), or of Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya and the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:13), or Daniel in the lion's den (Daniel 6:13), and the 10 martyrs.

WHO IS WORTHY OF BLISS IN THE AFTERLIFE

He who chose death rather than transgressing in the service of G-d, or poverty over wealth, sickness over health, suffering over tranquility, and submits to the justice of the Creator and desires His decree - he is worthy of the kindness of the Creator in the bliss of Olam Haba, of which it is written "And whereof no one had ever heard, had ever perceived by ear, no eye had ever seen a G-d besides You perform

for him who hoped for him" (Yeshaya 64:3), and "How great is Your goodness that You have hidden away for those who fear You" (tehilim 31:20).

*** Chapter 5 ***

The differences between one who trusts in G-d and one who does not with regard to the means for earning a livelihood, I say, are seven:

(1) One who trusts G-d accepts His decrees in all matters, and thanks Him on good as well as bad, as written "G-d gave, G-d took back, blessed be His Name" (Iyov 1:21), and as written "I will sing of mercy and judgment to You" (tehilim 101:1), which the sages explained "if kindness, I will sing, if justice I will sing" (Berachos 60b), and they said: "a man is obligated to bless on the bad just like he blesses on the good" (Berachos 64a).

But one who does not trust in the Almighty celebrates on the good as written "the wicked celebrates on attaining his desires..." (tehilim 10:3), and he becomes angry with G-d on the bad as written "when hunger comes, he becomes angry and curses his king and his G-d, turning to above.

(2) One who trusts in the Almighty has tranquility of spirit and a heart at ease regarding bad decrees, knowing that the Creator will guide them for his good in this world and the next, as King David said "Only to G-d should you hope, my soul, for my hope is from Him" (Tehilim 62:6). But one who does not trust in G-d is in a state of constant anguish and perpetual worry, sorrow, and sadness, which never leave him, whether in good times or in bad times. In good times, because he is minimally satisfied with his current situation, and yearning to add on, to increase, and to amass. In bad times, because he hates it. It is contrary to his desires, nature and traits. So too, the wise man said "all the days of the unsatisfied are evil, but a good heart is a constant party" (Mishlei 15:15)

(3) For the one who trusts in G-d, if he engages in the means for earning a livelihood, his heart will not rely on them, and he will not hope to receive help or harm from them without the will of G-d. Rather, he engages in them as part of his service of G-d who commanded us to maintain and develop the world. If these means will bring him income or save him from loss, he thanks G-d alone for this, and he won't love and cherish the means more for this, nor rely on them more. Rather, his trust in G-d will strengthen, and he will come to rely on Him and not the means. And if the means do not succeed, he knows that his livelihood will come to him when G-d wants, from whatever way He wants. And he will not be disappointed in the means because of this, nor abandon employing them in his service of G-d.

But he who does not trust in G-d, engages in the means because he trusts they will benefit him and protect him from harm. If they are profitable, he will praise them and himself for his efforts, and he will become attached to them and won't turn to other means. And if they are not profitable, he will abandon them and reject them, and lose interest in them, as written "Therefore he sacrifices to his net, and he burns incense to his trawl, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food" (Chavakuk 1:16).

(4) The one who trusts in G-d, when he has more money than he needs, he will spend it in a way which pleases the Creator (charity, etc.) with a generous spirit and a good heart, as written "everything is Yours, and from Your hand we have given to You" (Divrei Hayamim I 29:14).

But for one who does not trust in G-d, the entire world and everything in it is not enough for what he thinks he needs. And he prefers to save his money rather than fulfill his obligations to the Creator and to other men, and he does not feel any guilt about this, until all of his money is lost and he is left without it.

(5) He who trusts in G-d engages in the means of this world to prepare supplies for his ultimate end, and needs for his afterlife. And what appears to him a livelihood which allows time for torah study and worldly pursuits, he will engage in it. But a livelihood which will bring loss of torah observance or to rebel against G-d, he does not engage in, so as not to bring on himself sickness instead of health.

But one who does not trust in the Almighty, trusts in the means, and relies on them, and he won't distance himself from any of them, and he will engage in good means as well as bad means, and he won't think about his final end, as the wise man said, "the wise man fears and avoids evil" (mishlei 14:16).

(6) The one who trusts in G-d is loved by all types of men, and they feel at ease with him, because they feel secure that he will not harm them, and their hearts are not worried from his wrath, and not worried of their wives or their money, and he also is not worried about them because he realizes that his benefit or harm is not in the hands of created beings. Therefore, he is not afraid of their harm, just like he does not hope in their benefit. And when he is assured from them and they are assured from him, he will love them and they will love him, as written "he who trusts in G-d will be surrounded by kindness" (Tehilim 32:10).

But he who does not trust in G-d, has no true friend, because he is always coveting others, and jealous of them, and he thinks that any good that reaches others is a loss to him, and that their livelihood is taken from his own, and any lack he has is due to them, and that others are capable of helping him to obtain his desires, and if some harm comes to his money or his children, he will attribute it to them, and that they are capable of removing the harm and problems from him, and since his thinking is based on these principles he will loath others, and slander them, curse them, and hate them. And he is the disgusting one in both worlds, as written "a crooked heart will not find good" (Mishlei 17:20).

(7) The one who trusts in G-d will not mourn if his wishes are denied, or if he loses something he loves, and he will not amass what is available, and is not concerned beyond his daily needs, because he does not think about what will be tomorrow since he does not know when his life will end. And he trusts in G-d to lengthen his days, and to provide for him during his life, and he is not joyous nor sad about the future, as written "do not delight in tomorrow because you don't know what could be born today" (Mishlei 27:1), and Ben Sira said "do not anguish about tomorrow because one does not know what today could bring, perhaps tomorrow the problem will be solved, and one had anguished on a world that is not his" (Sanhedrin 100b). Rather, his worry and sadness is on his lacking in his obligations to G-d, and he tries to pay what he can of them, whether in public or private, because he thinks of his death and the coming of his last day, and the fear that death may come suddenly increases his efforts and zeal to prepare provisions for his end, and he won't care about preparing for this world, and this is what was said "repent one day before your death" (Avos 2:10). They explained on this "repent today, perhaps you will die tomorrow, therefore let all your days be in repentance, as written "at all times let your clothing be clean" (Koheles 9:8).

But one who does not trust in G-d, mourns greatly when struck with difficult times, or when denied his wishes or the things he loves. He tries to amass much wealth of this world, as if immune from transience, and the fear of death has left him, as if his days are unlimited and his life will never end. He does not think about his end, occupied only with this world, unconcerned about his torah study, provisions for the hereafter, and his eternal abode. And his confidence in the length of his days in this world will be a means to perpetuate his material desires and a reason for his little desire in matters of the afterlife.

When the rebuker rebukes him or the teacher teaches him saying "how long will you avoid thinking about preparing provisions for your final journey and for matters of your eternal abode?"

He will answer "when I have enough money for my needs and for the needs of my wife and children until the end of our days. When I will have some peace of mind from my worries of this world, then I will take time to pay my debts to the Creator, and will think about preparing provisions for my final end."

***** Chapter 6 *****

I saw to demonstrate the foolishness and error in this way of thinking in 7 ways. I will reveal the greatness of their mistake, and if our words prolong, this is because there is much to shame and rebuke proponents of this outlook.

(Let us demonstrate by an example from the business world). They are often "security pledge seekers", similar in concept to merchants who sell on credit to someone he does not trust, and will demand a security pledge at the time of sale, because he minimally trusts his client and fears the client will not be able to pay him.

(1) The first of the possible answers to him: we tell him "You, the man who doubts the [reliability of the] decree of the Creator, and does not believe His great might, you whose light of intellect has dimmed, whose candle of understanding has extinguished due to being overpowered by the darkness of material desires. You see proper to seek a security pledge from a client who has no dominion over you, and cannot command you, however, for a worker who seeks to be hired by an employer, it is not proper for him to seek a security pledge of his wages before he has done any work. All the more so, it is not proper for a servant to seek a security pledge of his food from his master before working for Him, and even more so, for a created being to seek a pledge from his Creator before working for him!

This is a wonder, even the work of a slave to a master on condition to be paid after the work is a disgrace, as the sages said "be not like servants who serve their master on condition to receive reward, but rather like servants who serve their master even without condition of receiving reward" (Avos 1:3). All the more so to be brazen to seek his food from his Master before doing His service, on similar to this it is written "Is this how you repay the L-ord, you disgraceful, unwise people?! Is He not your Father, your Master? He has made you and established you." (Devarim 32:6).

(2) One who seeks a security pledge from a client, seeks a fixed, finite amount. But for the proponent of this thinking, there is no end to what he seeks, because he does not know how much money will suffice for his and his family's needs and luxuries for the rest of their lives, and even if he obtained money many times his

needs, he would not be at peace, because their end is hidden, and the number of their days is not known, and he is foolish in what he seeks because there is no end and no measure.

(3) One who takes a security pledge from a client, only does so if there are no previous debts that he owes the client, and the client has no claims against him, only then is he entitled to request a pledge. But if he has outstanding debts to the client, and knows the client has legitimate claims to collect, he has no business whatsoever in seeking a pledge, and should not accept it even if the client volunteered the pledge.

All the more so, for the Creator who has legitimate claims on man, that even if one man combined all the service of all men who ever lived, this would not be enough to cover the debt of gratitude he owes for even one of the favors of the Creator to him (such as bringing him to existence from nothingness). And how can this brazen face not be ashamed to seek from the Creator big favors on top of previous favors and increase his debt to Him, and maybe he will not be able to repay the service that he vowed due to the passing of his days and reaching his end.

One of the pious would say to people: "Gentlemen, is it possible that the Creator would claim from you today for work that you are obligated to do tomorrow? And likewise, would He claim today for what you are obligated next year, or many years from now?"

They answered him, "How is it possible to claim from us future obligations when we don't even know if we will live to see them? Rather, we have obligations for the here and now and when the future comes, we will be obligated in the service of then."

He would answer them "So too, the Creator has promised for you a certain amount of income for a certain time span of service, and just like He does not claim from you future service before its time comes, so too you should be embarrassed to ask for future income before its time comes, and why do I see you seeking from Him income for several years in the future? You don't know if you will live to reach those days. You seek to prepare money for a wife and children which you don't even have yet. Is it not enough to seek money for your basic needs, that you seek to prepare money for basic needs and luxuries for times that you are uncertain to reach and that are not promised to you. And, not only do you not prepare to Him future service, but you don't even make an accounting of the service to Him which you failed to do in the past, and even while He did not withhold from providing for you then."

(4) One who takes a security pledge from his fellow does so for one of three reasons: One, maybe the fellow will become poor and won't be able to pay him. Two, maybe the fellow will be dishonest and refuse to pay him. Three, in case the fellow dies or won't be found. The security pledge is like a medicine for these problems between people. But if men were assured of each other against these three possibilities, it would certainly be shameful to seek a security pledge. And the Creator for who these three possibilities do not apply, it is a great disgrace to seek a security pledge from Him. And the verse already says "silver and gold is Mine" (Chagai 2:8), and "wealth and honor belong to You" (Divrei Hayamim 29:12).

(5) One who obtains a security pledge from his fellow will be at peace since he expects to collect from it or from the client. But one who claims that if the Creator will advance him future provisions he will have peace of mind regarding this world - his claim is false, because he cannot be sure the money will remain by him. It is possible that he will be struck by some big loss that separates him from the money, as written "in mid-life he will lose it" (Yirmiyahu 17:11).

And as for the claim that he will have peace of mind when he amasses wealth - this is a foolish claim, on the contrary this will likely be the very cause that causes him much pressure and anxiety as our teachers said "more possessions, more worries" (Avos 2:7)..

(6) One who takes a security pledge from his fellow, if he were certain that the fellow would pay him before the due time, and would out of pure kindness reward him twice his money for his waiting time, he would not seek a security pledge under any circumstances. And the Creator, of who it is known to us of his benevolent conduct towards us, and of His great past and present favors on us, and that He rewards acts of charity and service with reward that we cannot even imagine, as written "no eye had ever seen, O G-d, besides Yours, what He will do for those who wait for Him" (Yeshaya 64:3), certainly it is a great disgrace to ask for a security pledge.

(7) One who seeks a security pledge from a client, only does so if he is able to supply the client with the merchandise purchased. But one who seeks a security pledge from the Creator, in seeking advance favors, is not capable of paying back the service for them. And he is not even certain of paying back what he owes from past debts, all the more so for paying what he owes for future favors, because the righteous man cannot pay back the debts of gratitude of the Almighty on him except through divine help, as one of the pious in his praises said: "Even the intelligent person who knows You, does not praise his own acts, but praises Your Name and kindnesses with which You prepared his heart to know You. Through You the people of Israel will be found worthy and be praised saying: "We praised [ourselves] with G-d all day long, and we will forever thank Your name" (Tehilim 44:9).

***** Chapter 7 *****

Since we have completed in this gate, a fitting amount of discussion on trust, according to our understanding, it is now proper to clarify what causes a loss of trust in the Almighty. I say that all the things mentioned in the 3 preceding gates of this book which cause harm to the service of G-d also cause harm to the trait of bitachon.

More things which cause a loss of true:

Ignorance with regard to the Creator, and his good traits, because one who does not understand the mercy of the Creator on His creations, and His shielding them, and His providence and ruling over them, and that they are bound by His chains, under His total control - he will not be at peace and will not rely on Him.

Another, ignorance of the commandments of the Creator, namely His torah, who He instructed us in it to rely and trust on Him, as written "test Me in this..." (Malachi 3:10), and "trust in G-d forever" (Yeshaya 26:4).

Another detriment to trust is to tend to rely in the means which one can see, without realizing that the closer a cause is to the effect, the further it is from the primary

cause which can help or harm him, while the further a cause is from the effect, the closer it is to the primary cause, and the more power it has to help or harm him.

For example, when a king wants to punish one of his servants, he commands his general to do it, and the general orders his major, and the major orders his captain, and the captain orders his officer, and the officer orders his soldier, and the soldier executes the punishment with the capabilities he has. And the soldier has the least capability to reduce or increase his punishment than any of them, they are like machines who have no say in the matter. The officer has greater capability than the soldier, and likewise the captain more than the officer, and the major more than the captain, and the general more than the major, and the king more than all of them, because if he wants, he can pardon him.

As you can see, the causes and their power to affect the subject are according to their distance in the chain of causes. And the Creator, who is the first Cause and furthest away, it is fitting to trust in Him, and rely on Him due to His great ability to help or harm, as we explained.

The general principle in the matter of trust is that the more one understands G-d, has faith in His protection, and His great providence to benefit man, the more he will trust in G-d.

(even though man has free will, nevertheless, everything is in G-d's hand and under His authority regarding whether the matter will be carried out or not, whether in torah matters or in worldly matters - from Marpe Lenefesh commentary on Gate #10 chapter 7)

THE TEN LEVELS OF TRUST

(1) A child, in his beginning, trusts in his mother's breast, as written "For You drew me from the womb; You made me secure on my mother's breasts" (Tehilim 22:10).

(2) And when he grows in understanding, his trust moves to his mother, due to the great care she gives him, as written "I swear that I calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child on its mother" (Tehilim 131:2).

(3) And when his understanding grows more, and he sees that his mother depends on his father, he moves his trust to him due to the great protection he receives from him.

(4) When his body strengthens, and it becomes possible for him to earn for himself a livelihood through work or business, or the like, he moves his trust to his strength and resourcefulness. All this because of his ignorance that all the past good he received came from G-d.

It is said of one of the pious, whose neighbor was a swift scribe and would earn his livelihood through his scribal skills. One day he inquired to the scribe: "how are things?" He answered "good, my hand is still in good shape." Then, that evening his hand was crushed, and he could not write with it for the rest of his life. This was his punishment from G-d, in that he trusted in his hand. (he was in a high spiritual level of knowledge of G-d so this was considered a blasphemy, but for most of us who are quite ignorant of G-d this would not be considered much of anything)

(5) If one's sustenance comes through other people, he trusts in them and relies on

them.

(6) But when his wisdom grows and he sees their lacking and their need for the Creator, then he moves his trust to G-d, and relies on Him for things beyond control and which cannot escape being dependent on the decree of G-d, such as the falling of rainwater on the crops, or (safely) sailing through the sea, or crossing a barren desert, floods, outbreak of a plague among the living, or the like among matters which a man has no solution whatsoever, as written "In the time of their trouble they will cry out: 'rise and save us' " (Yirmiyahu 2:27).

(7) If his awareness of G-d strengthens more, he can also trust G-d in matters which require some choice on his part, such as avoiding earning a livelihood through dangerous means or tiring occupations that wear down the body, and abandon these out of trust in G-d that He will provide for him through a lighter occupation.

(8) If his awareness of G-d strengthens more, he trusts in G-d in whatever occupation, whether difficult or easy, and has intent when working to serve G-d and guard His commandments.

(9) If his awareness of G-d strengthens more regarding His mercy on the created beings, he will accept the decrees of G-d, in his heart and speech, outwardly and inwardly, and he will be joyous with whatever G-d does to him, be it death or life, poverty or wealth, health or sickness. He will not desire anything G-d has denied him and desire only what G-d has chosen for him. He will give himself to G-d, and throw his body and soul over to His judgment. He will not prefer one matter over another and he will not choose anything other than his current situation, as one who trusts in G-d said "I never awoke in one situation and desired another".

(10) If his awareness of G-d strengthens more and he understands the true intent why he was created and came to this fleeting world, and he recognizes the exaltedness of the eternal, next world, he will be disgusted with (physicality of) this world, and its means. He will give himself over to G-d in his thoughts, soul, and body, and will rejoice in remembering Him when in solitude, and feel lonely when not meditating of His greatness. If he is among a crowd of people, he will desire nothing except to do His will, and long only to come near to Him. His joy in his love of G-d will distract him from the joy worldly people have for this world, and from the joy of souls in the next world (Marpe Lenefesh commentary: His joy in love of G-d is greater than the pleasure of the living in reaching their desires and even greater than the pleasures of the dead in the next world) - this is the highest of the levels of those who trust in G-d, reached by the prophets, pious ones, and treasured, pure men of G-d, and this is what the verse refers to in saying "Even [for] the way of Your judgments, O L-ord, have we hoped for You; for Your Name and for Your remembrance was the desire of [our] soul." (Yeshaya 26:8), and "my soul thirsts to the Al-mighty, the living G-d" (Tehilim 42:3).

These are the ten levels of trust which one cannot escape belonging to one of them. We find the matter of trust in scripture expressed in 10 different words corresponding to these 10 levels. They are:

Mivtach, Mishan, Tikva, Machse, Tochelet, Chikui, Semicha, Sever, Misad, and Chesel.

May G-d place us among those who trust in Him, which give themselves over to His judgment outwardly and inwardly, in His mercy, Amen.

The Gate of trust is Complete, to G-d the last and the first

Some Review Questions and Answers on Bitachon by the translator.

Q1. What is Bitachon?

A1. Trusting that G-d is on your side, and that everything that happens to you, good or bad, is from Him and is the best possible thing for you.

Q2. Can anyone have bitachon?

A2. Only if you are careful in the service of G-d and make big efforts. Otherwise, no, G-d may even be working against you. (Chapter 3)

Q3. How can I be free of the burden of earning a livelihood.

A3. The purpose of work is to test a man and also to keep him busy and away from sin. If one passes the tests and uses his free time properly, G-d will send him his money for free (unless it is not for one's benefit). (chapter 3)

Q4. Why do people love making money?

A4. For some it stems from desire for honor and to make a name for themselves. They see the masses honor the rich, and think real honor lies there. But really, true eternal honor, is earning the honor of the Creator. (Chapter 4)

For those looking for a paperback edition, I recommend the Feldheim translation called: *Duties of the Heart* by Daniel Haberman