

Teshuvah - Chapter Ten

Translated by Eliyahu Touger

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Sefer Ahavah

1 A person should not say: "I will fulfill the mitzvot of the Torah and occupy myself in its wisdom in order to receive all the blessings which are contained within it or in order to merit the life of the world to come."

"[Similarly,] I will separate myself from all the sins which the Torah warned against so that I will be saved from all the curses contained in the Torah or so that [my soul] will not be cut off from the life of the world to come."

It is not fitting to serve God in this manner. A person whose service is motivated by these factors is considered one who serves out of fear. He is not on the level of the prophets or of the wise.

The only ones who serve God in this manner are common people, women, and minors. They are trained to serve God out of fear until their knowledge increases and they serve out of love.

א אֵל יֹאמֵר אָדָם הֲרִינִי עוֹשֵׂה מִצְוֹת
הַתּוֹרָה וְעוֹסֵק בְּחֻמְתָּהּ כְּדֵי שְׂאֲקַבֵּל
כָּל הַבְּרָכוֹת הַכְּתוּבוֹת בָּהּ אוֹ כְּדֵי שְׂאֲזַכֶּה
לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְאִפְרָשׁ מִן הָעֲבֵרוֹת
שֶׁהִזְהִירָה תּוֹרָה מִהֵן כְּדֵי שְׂאֲנַצֵּל מִן
הַקְּלָלוֹת הַכְּתוּבוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה אוֹ כְּדֵי שְׂלֹא
אֶכְרַת מַחְיֵי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. אֵין רְאוּי לְעַבֵּד
אֶת ה' עַל הַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה, שֶׁהָעוֹבֵד עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה
הוּא עוֹבֵד מִירָאָה וְאִינָה מַעֲלַת הַנְּבִיאִים
וְלֹא מַעֲלַת הַחֻכְמִים. וְאֵין עוֹבְדִים ה' עַל
דֶּרֶךְ זֶה אֶלָּא עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְהַנְּשִׂים וְהַקְּטַנִּים
שֶׁמְחַנְכִּין אוֹתָן לְעַבֵּד מִירָאָה עַד שֶׁתִּרְבֶּה
דַּעְתָּן וְיַעֲבֹדוּ מֵאַהֲבָה:

2 One who serves [God] out of love occupies himself in the Torah and the mitzvot and walks in the paths of wisdom for no ulterior motive: not because of fear that evil will occur, nor in order to acquire benefit. Rather, he does what is true because it is true, and ultimately, good will come because of it.

This is a very high level which is not merited by every wise man. It is the level of our Patriarch, Abraham, whom God described as, "he who loved Me," for his service was only motivated by love.

God commanded us [to seek] this rung [of service] as conveyed by Moses as [Deuteronomy 6:5] states: "Love God, your Lord." When a man will love God in the proper manner, he will immediately perform all of the mitzvot motivated by love.

3 What is the proper [degree] of love? That a person should love God with a very great and exceeding love until his soul is bound up in the love of God. Thus, he will always be obsessed with this love as if he is lovesick.

[A lovesick person's] thoughts are never diverted from the love of that woman. He is always obsessed with her; when he sits down, when he gets up, when he eats and drinks. With an even greater [love], the love for God should be [implanted] in the hearts of those who love Him and are obsessed with Him at all times as we are commanded [Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love God..."] with all your heart and with all soul."

This concept was implied by Solomon [Song of Songs 2:5] when he stated, as a metaphor: "I am lovesick." [Indeed,] the totality of the Song of Songs is a parable describing [this love].

ב העובד מאהבה עוסק בתורה ובמצוות והולך בנתיבות החכמה לא מפני דבר בעולם ולא מפני יראת הרעה ולא כדי לירש הטובה אלא עושה האמת מפני שהוא אמת וסוף הטובה לבוא בגללה. ומעלה זו היא מעלה גדולה מאד ואין כל חכם זוכה לה. והיא מעלת אברהם אבינו שקראו הקדוש ברוך הוא אוהבו לפי שלא עבד אלא מאהבה. והיא המעלה שצונו בה הקדוש ברוך הוא על ידי משה שנאמר (דברים ו ה) "ואהבת את ה' אלהיך". ובזמן שיאהב אדם את ה' אהבה הראויה מיד יעשה כל המצוות מאהבה:

ג וכיצד היא האהבה הראויה. הוא שיאהב את ה' אהבה גדולה יתרה עזה מאד עד שתהא נפשו קשורה באהבת ה' ונמצא שוגה בה תמיד כאלו חולה חלי האהבה שאין דעתו פנויה מאהבת אותה אשה והוא שוגה בה תמיד בין בשבתו בין בקומו בין בשעה שהוא אוכל ושותה. יתר מזה תהיה אהבת ה' בלב אוהביו שוגים בה תמיד כמו שצונו בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך. והוא ששלמה אמר דרך משל (שיר השירים ב ה) "כי חולת אהבה אני". וכל שיר השירים משל הוא לענין זה:

4 The Sages of the previous generations declared: Should one say: "I will study Torah in order that I become wealthy, in order that I be called a Rabbi, or in order that I receive reward in the world to come?" The Torah teaches [Deuteronomy 11:13]: "[If you are careful to observe My commandments...] to love God; [implying] that all that you do should only be done out of love.

The Sages also said: [Psalms 112:1 instructs:] "Desire His commandments greatly." [Desire His commandments] and not the reward [which comes from] His commandments.

In a similar manner, the great Sages would command the more understanding and brilliant among their students in private: "Do not be like servants who serve their master [for the sake of receiving a reward]. Rather, since He is the Master, it is fitting to serve Him;" i.e., serve [Him] out of love.

ד אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים שְׁמָא תֵּאמַר הֲרִינִי לְמַד תּוֹרָה בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂאֵהִיָּה עָשִׂיר בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂאֵקְרָא רַבִּי בְּשִׁבִיל שְׂאֵקְבֵּל שְׂכָר בְּעוֹלָם הַבָּא. תִּלְמוּד לְזִמְרָה (דְּבָרִים י"ג) "לְאַהֲבָה אֶת ה'". כֹּל מִה שְׂאֵתֶם עוֹשִׂים לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ אֵלָא מֵאַהֲבָה. וְעוֹד אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים בְּמִצְוֹתָיו חֲפֵץ מְאֹד וְלֹא בְּשִׂכָר מִצְוֹתָיו. וְכֵן הָיוּ גְדוּלֵי הַחֲכָמִים מְצוּיִם לְנִבּוֹנֵי תִלְמִידֵיהֶם וּמְשִׁכְלֵיהֶם בְּיַחְדוֹד אֵל תִּהְיוּ כְּעַבְדִּים הַמְשַׁמְשִׂים אֶת הָרֵב וְכוּ' אֵלָא מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא הָרֵב רָאוּי לְשִׁמְשׁוֹ כְּלִזְמֵר עֲבָדוֹ מֵאַהֲבָה:

5 Anyone who occupies himself with the Torah in order to receive reward or in order to protect himself from retribution is considered as one who is not occupied for the God's sake.

[In contrast,] anyone who occupies himself with it, not because of fear, nor to receive a reward, but rather because of his love for the Lord of the entire earth who commanded it, is one who occupies himself for God's sake.

Nevertheless, our Sages declared: A person should always occupy himself with the Torah even when it is not for God's sake for out of [service which is not intended] for God's sake will come service that is intended for God's sake.

Therefore, when one teaches children, women, and most of the common people, one should teach them to serve out of fear and in order to receive a reward. As their knowledge grows and their wisdom increases, this secret should be revealed to them [slowly,] bit by bit. They should become accustomed to this concept gradually until they grasp it and know it and begin serving [God] out of love.

ה כָּל הָעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה כְּדֵי לְקַבֵּל שְׂכָר אוֹ
 כְּדֵי שְׂלֵא תַגִּיעַ עָלָיו פְּרָעָנוֹת הָרִי זֶה
 עוֹסֵק שְׂלֵא לְשִׁמָּה. וְכָל הָעוֹסֵק בָּהּ לֹא
 לִירְאָה וְלֹא לְקַבֵּל שְׂכָר אֲלֵא מִפְּנֵי אֲהַבַת
 אֲדוֹן כָּל הָאָרֶץ שְׂעוּהָ בָּהּ הָרִי זֶה עוֹסֵק בָּהּ
 לְשִׁמָּה. וְאָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים לְעוֹלָם יַעֲסֹק אָדָם
 בַּתּוֹרָה וְאִפְלוּ שְׂלֵא לְשִׁמָּה שְׂמִתּוֹד שְׂלֵא
 לְשִׁמָּה בָּא לְשִׁמָּה. לְפִיכֹךְ כְּשֶׁמְלַמְדִין אֶת
 הַקְּטָנִים וְאֶת הַנְּשִׂיִם וְכֻלָּל עַמֵי הָאָרֶץ אֵין
 מְלַמְדִין אוֹתָן אֲלֵא לְעַבֵד מִירְאָה וְכֵדֵי לְקַבֵּל
 שְׂכָר, עַד שֶׁתִּרְבֶּה דַעְתָּן וְיִתְחַכְּמוּ חֲכָמָה
 יִתְרָה מְגַלִּים לָהֶם רְזוּ זֶה מְעַט מְעַט וּמְרַגְלִין
 אוֹתָן לְעֲנֹן זֶה בְּנִחַת עַד שִׁישִׁיגוּהוּ וַיִּדְעוּהוּ
 וַיַּעֲבְדוּהוּ מֵאֲהָבָה:

6 It is a well-known and clear matter that the love of God will not become attached within a person's heart until he becomes obsessed with it at all times as is fitting, leaving all things in the world except for this. This was implied by the command [Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love God, your Lord,] with all your heart and all your soul.

One can only love God [as an outgrowth] of the knowledge with which he knows Him. The nature of one's love depends on the nature of one's knowledge! A small [amount of knowledge arouses] a lesser love. A greater amount of knowledge arouses a greater love.

Therefore, it is necessary for a person to seclude himself in order to understand and conceive wisdom and concepts which make his creator known to him according to the potential which man possesses to understand and comprehend as we explained in *Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah*.

Blessed be God who grants assistance. This concludes the first book, the Book of Knowledge, with the help of the Almighty. The amount of chapters in this book are 46:

Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah - 10 chapters.

Hilchot De'ot - 7 chapters.

Hilchot Talmud Torah - 7 chapters.

Hilchot Avodat Kochavim - 12 chapters.

Hilchot Teshuvah - 10 chapters.

דָּבָר יְדוּעַ וּבְרֹר שְׂאִין אֶהְבֵּת הַקְּדוֹשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְשְׁרֵת בְּלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם עַד
שִׁישְׁגָה בָּהּ תְּמִיד כְּרְאוּי וַיַּעֲזֹב כָּל מֵה
שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם חוּץ מִמֶּנָּה. כְּמוֹ שֶׁצִּוָּה וְאָמַר בְּכָל
לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ. אֵינּוּ אוֹהֵב הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא אֲלֵא בְּדַעַת שִׁדְדָהּ. וְעַל פִּי הַדְּעָה
תְּהִיָּה הָאֱהָבָה אִם מְעַט מְעַט וְאִם הַרְבֵּה
הַרְבֵּה. לְפִיכָךְ צָרִיךְ הָאָדָם לִיְחַד עַצְמוֹ
לְהִבִּין וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל בְּחֻקֵּי וּתְבוּנוֹת
הַמוֹדִיעִים לוֹ אֶת קוֹנּוֹ כְּפִי כַּח שִׁישׁ בְּאָדָם
לְהִבִּין וּלְהַשִּׁיג כְּמוֹ שֶׁבְּאַרְנוּ בְּהִלְכוֹת יְסוּדֵי
הַתּוֹרָה:

נגמר ספר ראשון והוא ספר המדע:

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