

# Timely Titles

By: RABBI MENDY GOLDBERG

לזכות  
משפחת קארנפעלד  
בורביינק, קאליפורניא

## DERECH CHAIM



The month of Elul, a solemn period of introspection preceding the profound *yomim nora'im*, heralds the time for *teshuvah*. An omnipresent theme throughout the preparatory activities leading up to Tishrei, *teshuvah* weighs heavily on the minds of all, occupying the focus of this transformative time. Central to this spiritual journey is the study of an essential guide to *teshuvah*, the soul-stirring *sefer*, *Derech Chaim*.



*"Awake, you sleepers, from your deep slumber. Rouse yourselves from your lethargy and examine your deeds; remember your Creator and return through Teshuvah."*

Elul. The very name evokes a vibrant tapestry of potent imagery — the murmur of the “*teshuvah* breeze” that doesn’t just fleetingly waft through, but saturates the air, its ethereal fragrance permeating every mundane task and activity in the lead-up to Tishrei. It conjures up a spectacle of bustling townspeople, scurrying about in a flurry, fervently readying themselves to approach the benevolent king in the field, eager to behold a glimpse of his radiant, smiling countenance. The primal cry of the shofar, a clarion call to *teshuvah*, reverberates through the collective consciousness of the community, sparking a heightened sense of introspection and alertness.

Like seasoned merchants, the people audit the ledgers of their souls and take stock of their spiritual inventory, accounting for every thought, word, and deed. With solemn care, they meticulously calculate the deficits and surpluses on their internal balance sheet, evaluating the highs and lows of their personal journey throughout the year. Strategizing ahead, they recalibrate their tactics and chart fresh courses of action, all in pursuit of spiritual prosperity in the year to come. Not a single moment of this precious month is squandered; each tick of the clock is seized to reckon and rectify, to reflect and correct, thereby harnessing its fullest potential.

Already from the crack of dawn, the *beis midrash* pulses with activity as people converge on the shul to drench their spirit in divine service. Elul is no time for sleep — some rise early and others burn the midnight oil, every spare moment dedicated to the heartfelt seeking of their Creator. Inside the *beis midrash*, one can find tear-streaked individuals steeped in fervent recital of Tehillim, others engrossed in soulful prayer, and still others immersed in the impassioned study of Chassidus. Typically, the chosen Chassidic texts echo the theme of *teshuvah*, favored for imparting tangible lessons that resonate with personal *avodah*. Still today, the recommended studies for Elul include the third section of Tanya — Iggeres HaTeshuvah, and chiefly, the Mittlerer Rebbe’s seminal treatise on *teshuvah*, Derech Chaim.



## OVERVIEW



**Derech Chaim** is the third volume in a series of works by the Mitteler Rebbe, collectively known as “Shaarei Teshuvah.” This fundamental work contains “words of reproach” which aim to stir the reader’s conscience towards his Father in Heaven, inspiring a complete *teshuvah* and offering an avenue for the soul to find solace through serving Hashem with unwavering sincerity for the rest of its days. As it explores the gravity of sin and the essence of *teshuvah* through the unique prism of Chassidus, Derech Chaim has established itself as a foundational text in this field.

Written in the Mitteler Rebbe’s characteristically expansive and intricate style,<sup>1</sup> the text delves deeply into the subject of *teshuvah*, occasionally branching into secondary and tertiary concepts that frequently arise. The main body of the book is divided into two primary sections: “Shaar HaTeshuvah” (The Gate of Repentance) and “Shaar HaTefillah” (The Gate of Prayer), supplemented by an additional discourse. Recent editions of Derech Chaim feature a variety of valuable enhancements, including a new typeset, copious appendices, and extensive annotations.

👉 **Hakdamah:** Like in many of his other *sefarim*, the Mitteler Rebbe sets the stage with a critical introduction, one that deserves recognition in its own right. Here, the introduction serves as a profound exposition on the essential principle of “fear of sin,” which stems from accepting the yoke of Heaven. Conversely, it identifies the root of all iniquity as *prikas ol*, the impudent shirking of heavenly responsibility. Throughout several pages the Mitteler Rebbe outlines various degrees of fear of sin, and digresses into a fascinating tangent regarding the principles of pursuing a livelihood, advising the correct approach to maximize Hashem’s blessing and succeed in business. Concluding the introduction, the Mitteler Rebbe veers into a pragmatic note, entreating the Chassidim to take heed of this book, not to merely skim it but to internalize its message. Recognizing the propensity of his community to overlook commonly

available texts and take them for granted, he encourages *anash* to designate specific study times to prevent the book from sitting idle and collecting dust on the shelf, and concludes this earnest appeal with his signature.

👉 **Shaar HaTeshuvah:** This 27-chapter section delves into the mystical dimension of *teshuvah* as seen through a Chassidic lens. It outlines several tiers of *teshuvah*, beginning with the most basic *teshuvah tata’ah* — the renunciation of sin alongside a renewed commitment to accepting the yoke of Heaven, and culminating with the most sublime *teshuvah ila’ah* — where the *neshamah* reunites with its Divine source. Each stage corresponds to a different level of the soul: *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah*, and *yechidah*, with this extended theme predicated on the structure of the morning blessing of *Elokai Neshamah*. Amidst this

extensive discourse, the Mittlerer Rebbe underscores the transformative power of the contrite tears shed during *teshuvah*, and the self-induced agony and distress upon realizing the extent of one's spiritual downfall; how far he has strayed and how low he has sunk. It is this poignant undercurrent which may evoke intense emotions and could be particularly jarring and emotionally triggering for some. (See sidebar "A Sore Subject.")

👉 **Shaar HaTefillah:** Spanning 71 chapters, this segment sheds light on the inner significance of prayer. It focuses on the composition of the *Shemoneh Esrei*, elaborating on how each of its eighteen blessings correlates with different aspects of one's divine service.

👉 **Hinei Ksiv Domeh Dodi L'Tzvi:** A supplementary discourse comprising seven chapters, this treatise explores the innate, yet often concealed love every Jew harbors for Hashem during times of exile. It explains why this love is hidden, the manners in which it manifests, and how its concealment paradoxically paves the way for a heightened revelation. A recurrent analogy invoked throughout this section likens these dynamics to two distinct behaviors of a deer.

👉 **Maftechos L'Sefer Derech Chaim:** This compact section was curated by the Rebbe and includes an index of frequently occurring topics, a partial directory of named individuals, referenced works, and unusual terminologies, as well as a listing of the various editions of Derech Chaim.

👉 **Kitzurim L'Sefer Derech Chaim:** Retyped from a manuscript penned by the Friediker Rebbe, this portion presents his synopses of chapters from Derech Chaim. It remains an incomplete summary, as it encompasses only the first sixteen chapters along with several additional paragraphs on the initial two chapters.

👉 **Biur HaRav Hillel M'Paritch:** An in-depth interpretation and commentary on the introduction of Derech Chaim by Reb Hillel Paritcher, this study revolves around the themes of various levels of fear of



THIS EDITION OF DERECH CHAIM WAS PUBLISHED IN SHANGHAI IN THE MIDST OF WORLD WAR II.

sin and the different ways to earn a living and channel Hashem's material blessings in this world.<sup>2</sup>

👉 **Likkut Sichos v'Igros Kodesh:** This unique addition to the recent editions features a collection of excerpts drawn from various *sichos* and letters that mention or relate to Derech Chaim.

👉 **Mafteichos:** These comprehensive indexes map out the *pesukim*, *maamarei Chazal*, *sefarim*, parables, analogies, and unique expressions featured throughout the work. A convenient resource, this section only features in the most recent edition.

# BACKGROUND

The fascinating origin story for Derech Chaim was recorded in the sefer Ben L'Oshri<sup>3</sup> by Rabbi Yitzchak Huberman,<sup>4</sup> as follows:

Once, in the city of Zhuravitz, nestled in the region of Mohilev within the expansive borders of Russia, there was a well-known child prodigy, who had mastered all of *Shas* with *poskim*. Suddenly, he was overcome by a wave of skepticism; he abruptly forsook his studies of Torah, surrendering instead to the allure of secular literature, until the tendrils of heresy had burrowed deeply into his consciousness. His father, a sincere G-d-fearing man, attempted to steer him back on course, but his admonitions proved futile, his pleas fell on deaf ears.

One fateful midnight, the son approached his father and declared that he had come to the conclusion that the country of Russia was the most foolish of countries, the region of Mohilev was the most foolish in Russia, the city of Zhuravitz was the most foolish in Mohilev, his father's house was the most foolish in the city, and his father was the biggest fool in the household. Therefore, he decided to sever his familial ties and set off on a new course of life. He promptly vanished into the night, never to return, and journeyed to Berlin where he enrolled in prestigious universities. With the support of generous endowments from patrons of the enlightened '*maskilim*' he plumbed the depths of academia, utilizing his prodigious intellect to become proficient in every academic discipline.

After five years, the prodigy authored two books; one out-

lining potential illnesses of every organ, the causes, prevention strategies, and treatment procedures; and the second, a thesis on mathematics and engineering. Presenting his works to the eminent professors of Germany and France, he was met with admiration and praise for his depth and breadth of knowledge. In the wake of this acclaim, he resolved to return to his paternal abode, confident that his accomplishments would appease his father.

It was during this time that the Alter Rebbe had just been liberated from his Petersburg imprisonment, and news of his intellectual prowess spread throughout the world, his reputation amplified by his brilliant resolution of complex mathematical quandaries posed to him in Petersburg. Intrigued, the prodigy decided to divert his path to meet the Alter Rebbe and to seek his appraisal of his books. Arriving at the Alter Rebbe's city, he found himself in a study hall, its interiors warmed by two burning stoves amidst the winter chill. Communicating in fluent German, he found a conversational partner in Reb Mordechai Liepler, who was familiar with the language due to his dealings with German merchants in Petersburg. Upon hearing the prodigy's wish to meet the Alter Rebbe, Reb Mordechai relayed the request, and the Alter Rebbe consented.

Without ado, the prodigy laid out his works before the Alter Rebbe, eager for his scholarly evaluation. The Alter Rebbe picked up the volume on mathematics, perusing it with swift precision. On the fifth page, he paused, scribbled a note in the margin, and quickly skimmed the rest of the book. After he finished, he pointed out to the prodigy a critical error on the fifth page, a flaw that crucially impacted the validity of the subsequent content.

Startled by this revelation, the prodigy hastily offered his second book, the medical treatise, to the Alter Rebbe. After a brief examination, the Rebbe asked him which organ, if severed, would present the least danger. Without hesitation, the scholar identified the little toe. The Alter Rebbe, however, pointed out his error, explaining that the seemingly insignificant toe housed a vital nerve junction. Disrupting it could pose a threat far exceeding that of operating on a larger organ.

Overwhelmed by the Alter Rebbe's wisdom, the prodigy retreated to the study hall, pacing to and fro, absorbed in his thoughts. Noticing his turmoil, Reb Mordechai Liepler inquired about his distress. The prodigy, acknowledging his predicament, admitted that the Alter Rebbe was the only one



capable of providing the guidance he sought.

After hours of contemplation, he picked up one of his manuscripts, and tore it in half, feeding each half to the hungry flames of the stoves in the study hall. The flames consumed the pages, reducing his years of labor to mere ashes. An hour later, he subjected his second work to the same fate, wiping out all tangible traces of his former scholarly pursuits.

In the meantime, the Alter Rebbe extended an invitation to the prodigy, offering to mentor him if he agreed to stay. Accepting the proposition, the prodigy became the Rebbe's private student for a full year. During this period, even the Rebbe's son, the Mittlerer Rebbe, was not allowed to participate in their study sessions, despite his persistent pleas.

Later, the Alter Rebbe revealed to his son in confidence that this prodigy was the reincarnation of Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya,<sup>5</sup> who had returned to the world three times in an attempt to complete his atonement, only to succumb to corruption on each occasion. This time, the Alter Rebbe was determined to not let him slip away. As a sign, the Alter Rebbe instructed his son to count seven weeks from that day. And so it was that at the end of the seven weeks, the prodigy abruptly passed away.

Subsequently, the Alter Rebbe studied with his son, the Mittlerer Rebbe, teachings that would later form the work "Derech Chaim." Eventually, the Mittlerer Rebbe compiled these teachings and published them during his lifetime.

It is interesting to note that the *teshuvah* of Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya is mentioned no less than seven times throughout Derech Chaim, a testament to his final and complete redemption.



Unlike some of the Mittlerer Rebbe's other *sefarim*, where the *maamarim* were initially delivered orally and only later transcribed, Derech Chaim was expressly written from the start. Nonetheless, themes from various chapters can be traced back to certain verbal deliveries of *maamarim*.

A unique feature of the Mittlerer Rebbe's Chassidus is that he authored comprehensive works focusing on specific themes, instead of solely addressing the weekly *parshah* or seasonal occasions. In addition, these works were often composed with particular Chassidim in mind, tailoring the material to their personal spiritual needs. However, while Derech Chaim was initially conceived for a specific individual<sup>6</sup>, its teachings are universally accessible and serve as guidance for anyone earnestly seeking to cultivate fear of God. In fact, the Frieddiker Rebbe once emphasized that "*avodas Hashem* necessitates an element of acute bitterness, which can only be

attained through studying Derech Chaim. I heard this from my father, the Rebbe Rashab, during a private *yechidus*, but it wasn't merely personal guidance; rather, it is advice that applies to everyone."

Indeed, the Rabbeim consistently encouraged Chassidim to study Derech Chaim. Generally, they recommended Elul as the optimal time for this study, given its association with the prevailing theme of *teshuvah* and self-improvement. As the Rebbe Maharash once told his son, the Rebbe Rashab, in a *yechidus*: "To effectively evaluate and understand your thoughts, words, and actions, as well as to recognize your strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies for improvement, it is essential to study Derech Chaim."

Furthermore, it appears that the study of Derech Chaim constitutes an essential step in the Chassidic process of an



THE SHAAR BLAAT OF THE MOST RECENT EDITION OF DERECH CHAIM

individual's *teshuvah*. For instance, during Reb Shmuel Gronem Esterman's first private meeting with the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe instructed him to first address the sins of his youth and study *Derech Chaim* before seeking further spiritual guidance. Similarly, in numerous instances, the Rebbe advised individuals seeking atonement and *teshuvah* for a specific sin to study *Derech Chaim*, particularly the first eleven chapters, and to review it so often that they know it by heart.

Over the years, numerous editions of *Derech Chaim* have been printed, some in remarkably challenging circumstances. Notably, one version was produced in Shanghai during World War II, published by "The Committee for Printing Chassidus by Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch – Shanghai."

In 5715\*, a new edition was released by Kehos, with substantial additions, including footnotes and indices, compiled by the Rebbe. Later, in 5762\*, Kehos published a further enhanced version featuring supplementary material and comprehensive citations, curated by Rabbis Elie Matusof and Gavriel Schapiro. Most recently, Kehos unveiled a redesigned edition with an improved layout and additional punctuation to aid its study. This edition also introduces new indices, annotations, and glosses that cross-reference the ideas discussed in *Derech Chaim* with those found elsewhere in Chabad Chassidus, produced by Rabbis Mendel Mishulovin and Chaim Elimelech Wilhelm. Additionally, it contains a preliminary synopsis of all 105 chapters, written by Rabbi Yisroel Olidort.

## A Word On The Title

*Derech Chaim* was famously dubbed "the *mussar sefer* of the Chabad Chassidus canon" on account of its incisively reproachful nature. This is reflected by its full title "Derech Chaim V'Tochachos Mus-sar Haskel" (The way of life and rebukes of moral discipline), which aptly conveys the penetrating impact of this sobering *sefer*. On a different note, in a letter, the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchak, notes that the character of the Mittlerer Rebbe is reflected in the names of his *sefarim*, among them *Derech Chaim* which alludes to the Mittlerer Rebbe's uniquely vibrant spirit.



THE HAMAAYANOS VOLUME OF SELECTED MAAMARIM FROM THE MITTELER REBBE WITH HELPFUL COMMENTARY.

Another useful study aid is the Haamayanos volume of selected Mittlerer Rebbe's *maamarim*, published by Torat Chabad L'Bnei Hayeshivos, which includes several sections of *Derech Chaim*, such as Shaarei Teshuvah, the *drush* Hinei Dodi, and the *biur* of the *hakdamah* by Reb Hillel Paritcher, in an enhanced format with helpful commentary by Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Zalmanov. **T**

1. The Mittlerer Rebbe's Chassidus is generally known for its elaborate and expansive style, often likened to the gushing flow of a widening stream. While it may seem somewhat excessive, the Rebbe Maharash asserted that when studied properly one will realize how every word is meticulously chosen and contributes to the clarity of the text.
2. For more about the Chassidus of Reb Hillel Paritcher, see Derher Av 5783, "Timely Titles — Pelach Harimon."
3. Another version of this story appears in Shmuos V'Sipurim (Kahan), vol. 3, p. 254.
4. For more about this fascinating character and his works, see the article "Sipurei Harav Hatzaddik Reb Yitzchak Huberman Me'Ra'anana by Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine" (originally featured in Kfar Chabad Magazine, currently available online on kramim.info).
5. For the complete narrative of the teshuvah of Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya, see Gemara Avodah Zarah, 17a.
6. For the backstory of this individual, see the letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe that prefaces *kuntres* Pokeach Ivrim of the Mittlerer Rebbe (which can be found in Maamarei Admur Ha'emtzai — Kuntreisim, page 449).

## A Sore Subject:

Due to the intense and somber content of *Derech Chaim*, particularly in its discussion of grave themes concerning sin, the *sefer* has gained a reputation for being emotionally triggering. Here are several anecdotes which demonstrate this sobering aspect of the book, and how it deeply affected various Chassidim:

The *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Gronem Esterman held an intense and somewhat tumultuous relationship with *Derech Chaim*. His studies often stirred him so deeply that they incited overwhelming emotional outpourings, occasionally compelling him to abstain from it for extended periods.

During one such hiatus, the Rebbe Rashab requested that Reb Gronem teach his students *Derech Chaim*. However, Reb Gronem declined, respectfully stating, “I will teach them whatever the Rebbe wishes, but *Derech Chaim*, I simply cannot...”

Despite this, Reb Gronem resumed studying *Derech Chaim* himself, often weeping profusely while doing so. His sorrow was so intense that his tear-stricken eyes eventually required medical attention. After his surgery, the doctor cautioned him against crying as it risked permanently damaging his eyesight. Upon learning of his predicament, the Rebbe Rashab categorically forbade him from studying *Derech Chaim* further, or even merely opening the book. Heeding the Rebbe Rashab’s directive, Reb Gronem retired the well-worn, tear-stained *sefer* to a less accessible spot on his bookshelf, where it would remain out of sight. However, upon unexpectedly encountering the *sefer* once more, he was again overcome with emotion and burst into tears. To spare him further anguish, his family sent the *sefer* to a book-binder for re-binding so that the sight of the familiar red cover of the book should not trigger him.

Before Reb Gronem passed away, he went to his bookshelf to bid farewell to his *sefarim*, and carefully withdrew the *Derech Chaim*, giving it an affectionate parting kiss.



Reb Elchonon ‘Chonye’ Marozov also held an intense relationship with *Derech Chaim*, and was prone to tearful outbursts, which eventually drew the concern of Reb Michoel Bliner, who felt that Reb Chonye couldn’t sustain such raw emotional intensity. Thus, Reb Michoel approached the Rebbe Rashab and implored him to intervene.

The Rebbe Rashab summoned Reb Chonye and said, “Trust that what I am telling you should be considered as if you heard it directly from Hashem: know that your

sins have been forgiven, and you shall no longer study *Derech Chaim*.”



In a letter bemoaning the lack of commitment to maintaining proper study schedules in yeshiva, the Rebbe made reference to *Derech Chaim*: “It is difficult to elaborate on this so much, especially as this concept of *prikas ol* was already addressed at the beginning of *Derech Chaim*. Anyone who listens — or as the Frierdiker Rebbe emphasizes, ‘internalizes’ — what is stated there would find their hair standing on end.”



The Rebbe Rashab once asked his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe: “What does a Chassidisher yungerman study on Shvi’i Shel Pesach?” A copy of *Derech Chaim* lay on the table, prompting the Rebbe Rashab to follow up with another question, “Did you study *Derech Chaim*?” The Frierdiker Rebbe affirmed that he did, explaining that it was part of his nightly routine to study a small section of *Derech Chaim* before the bedtime Shema. The Rebbe Rashab acknowledged that while it is usually commendable to study *maamarim* that relate to personal development, there are occasions where it is more appropriate to embrace a mode of joy, particularly on Shvi’i Shel Pesach, a day that is regarded as a source of joy.



In 5714\*, an episode occurred where three students from Tomchei Temimim of Bedford and Dean committed a mischievous act of vandalism by overturning the secular library in the yeshiva. Upon learning of their actions, the Rebbe gave them a protocol for *teshuvah*, suggesting they study the first eleven chapters of *Derech Chaim*, among other things. On the first night of Pesach, during a *sicha*, the Rebbe referenced this rectification procedure, stating that although it was currently Nissan, they should start their protocol immediately, with the exception of the study of *Derech Chaim*, since its contemplative nature might lead to a somber mood, which is out of place during the joyous Pesach season. Nonetheless, the Rebbe stated that if the students felt inclined to undertake the study of *Derech Chaim* then, they could do so, as it is a worthwhile and blessed endeavor.



# A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

DERECH CHAIM — SHAAR  
HATESHUVAH  
Chapter 7

## Yiras Elokim:

A second reason a person will never lower himself to trivial pursuits is the shame and submission in his heart, which stems from a fear of G-d that surpasses the fear of sin. For although they are essentially the same — one fears sin because he fears G-d — we see that there are people who maintain a consistent fear of sinning but do not always hold a deep, conscious fear or awe of G-d in their minds and hearts.

This inconsistency could be due to their preoccupation with worldly matters such as making a living, or indulging excessively in permissible pleasures, like food or relations. Or, it might be that their fear of G-d simply doesn't match the level of their fear of sin.

For instance, you have simple laymen and women who exhibit fear of sin; they dread committing serious sins or transgressions like breaking Shabbos, murder or immorality, and are even apprehensive about committing minor infractions, considering them repugnant in their hearts. Despite this, their fear of G-d remains minimal, as is evident when they engage in wrongful acts such as financial fraud, lying under oath, slander, vulgar speech, and the like. All of this is due to a lack of fear of G-d.

פרק ז דרך חיים לו

מבחי' יראת חטא, שהוא המנגד לפשעים, שהוא המורד בפר"ע וקלות הלב שאינו חושש כלל וכלל כני"ל.

ובאמת רבים נבוכים בעיקר ענין זה, דיש הרבה בני אדם שרואין עצמן בכל מיני רע בלי העלם דבר וחצי דבר, אך אינו מרגיש כלל להצטער ע"ז, רק לפרקי' כשיתעורר ימצא עצמו מלא רע ירגז על נפשו ויפול בעוצב לפי שעה, ואחר רואו שאין לו תקוה חוזר להתקלקל ביותר, עד שיפול הנופל כ"ז מצד שיאמר נואש בנפשו כ"ז, ובאמת זהו רק עצת היצר שכונתו להפילו לגמרי, וצריך שיתחזק מאד ויאמר ללבו על כי אין יראת חטא בלבו מצאוהו והשיגוהו כל הרעות האלה, והיא מיעוט נתינת דעתו ולבו בכל יום ושעה על הלכות בקלות מעט מעט, והיינו מחמת טבע הוללות, או מצד טרדתו בעניני עצמו שוכח על יראת אלקים, שמחמת זה נתמעט יראת חטא, כי יראת חטא ויראת אלקים אחד הוא, והא בהא תליא, דמשום דאין פחד אלקים בלבו ע"כ אין בו יראת חטא, ומה שאין בו יראת חטא משום דאין בו יראת אלקים (וכמ"ש) על כי אין אלהי בקרבו, יראת אלקים, ע"כ מצאוני כר"י. ויש הרבה בני"א שמוסיפי' על המדה, ומיצר ודואג ביותר על כל אשר ימצא בנפשו רע, ויאמר שאין לו תקוה ויתייאש, גם אם אינו רק דבור ומח' בעלמא, ואשר לא ימצא מרגוע לנפשו בעבודה שכלב ומוח ועסק תומ"צ וכה"ג, הנה ודאי עפ"י דרך התשובה כל שיצר לבו יותר יותר יקובל לרצון, אך זהו על המעשה כפר"מ דוקא, אבל על המח' ובפרט בהעדר הטוב דתומ"צ ותפלה כ"ז אין יתרון הצער ועוצב זה מעלה כלל, כי אין זה רק מצד גופו שמעורב טר"י, והרע שבו הוא העוצב שימשיכנו לט"י דקליפה כידועי, אלא צריך שמיד שיצר לבו יתחזק בלבו לקבל עליו לבלתי ילך עוד אחר ההבל, ויהיה יראת אלקים תמיד בלבו כדי שיהיה בו יראת חטא תמיד וד"ל.

והסיבה הב', הוא הבושה וההכנעה שכלבו, שבא מצד יראת אלקים שלמעלה מיראת חטא, אע"פ שהכל א' כני"ל דמה שהוא ירא מן החטא היינו מפני שירא מאלקים, מי"מ אנו רואים שיש אדם שהוא ירא חטא וביראת אלקים אין לו השגה במוח ולב תמיד, כמו מצד טרדת פרנסתו (או מצד גסותו כדברים המותרים כתאות מאכל ומשגל כ"ז), או שאין בו יראת אלקים לפי ערך יראת חטא שבו, כמו גם הע"ה ונשים שיש בהן יראת חטא, שיראים לעשות איוה חטא ועון כחילול שבת וש"ד ועריות, גם לעשות עבירות קלות יראו לנפשם וכוזר נחשבו בלבם, ועכ"ז יראת אלקים מעט מאד בלבם, כמו שעושי' עול וגול במר"מ ונשבעים לשקר ודבריה' להרי' ורכילות וניכול פה וכה"ג, והוא מצד מיעוט יראת אלקים. כי יראה זו נקי' יראת הרוממות, והוא בא מצד העבודה כלב ומוח עד שיתפעל ביראת

(22) ראה תניא ספ"ו. וראה אגרות קודש ח"ד ע' שית' ובכ"ז.

(20) וילך לא, י. (21) ראה תניא ספ"ו ובכ"ז.

# A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

DERECH CHAIM — SHAAR  
HATESHUVAH

Chapter 7

This kind of fear is called fear of exaltedness, a fear that emerges from deep contemplation and emotional investment in understanding G-d's greatness.

Yet, a person who doesn't engage his heart and mind in prayer or spiritual contemplation may not find much fear of G-d within him, only the natural innate faith of the soul that leads to a basic fear of G-d; that is, not to rebel against Him. And this fear of rebelling against G-d, through going against His visible will, is the opposite of the aforementioned mindset that has no concern for such rebellion.

This is the type of fear of sin that precedes the wisdom which endures. As it is said: "If there is no fear, there is no wisdom" — this is referring to the fear of sin; "and if there is no wisdom, there is no fear" — this means fear of G-d.

לו

שער התשובה

פרק ז

אלקים, ואיש שחסר נפשו מכל עבודה שכלב בתפלה מאין ימצא בו יראת אלקים כ"כ, רק בבחי' אמונה טבעית שבנפשו יהיה ירא אלקים דרך כלליותי, שהוא שלא למרוד בו, ויראה זו שירא למרוד לעשות היפך רצונו הנראה לעין עכ"פ, והו היפך בחי' פריע הנ"ל שאינו חושש כלל. והו הנכלל בכלל יראת חטא שקודמת לחמתו שחמתו מתקיימת וא"ל כו"י, וכמ"ש: אם אין יראה אין חכמה שהיא יראת חטא, ואם אין חכמ' אין יראה: היינו יראת אלקים כו"י וד"ל.

(אך זה לא ימצא, שיהיה יראת אלקים ולא יהיה יראת חטא, דודאי יש בכלל מאתים מנה"י. ואנו רואים שאינו כן לפי ערך, היינו מה שימצא איש ירא אלקים בבחי' התפעלות יראה בתפלה, וגם בכל עת מצוא שעת הכושר כו', ואין בו יראת חטא כ"כ, עד שיכול להקל ראש לפרקים ולבא לידי פריע בכמה דברים לא טובים, הגם שאינו עבירות חמורות כ"כ כחילול שבת ועריות וכה"ג, אבל יפול בתאות הממון, שאינו נושא ונותן באמונה כ"כ, ואינו נקי כפים לגמרי, כי יעשה עול ואונאה, וכה"ג בשאי"ד שבינו לקונו, בהעדר מעשה הטוב, ובהרהורים לא טובים, ובכל מדות מגונות כגיאיות וגסות הרוח וכעס ונצחון והתפארות וכה"ג, לא ניוזו אפי' כמלא נימא כו', וכן במדת הקמצנות, שימניע צדקה וחסד לגמרי, ויהיה אכזרי לא ירחם, ורע עין וקנאי וכה"ג, וגם בהוללות ולצנות יתערב עם זרים. לבד תאוות היתר במאכל ובמשגל, ולחפזן מאד בכבוד המדומה, וכל חמדת תענוגי עוה"י, לא יסור מהם כמעט מאחד וכו', ואף שנשמר מכל רע ואיסור דאורייתא, מצד יראת אלקים ויראת חטא הוא, אבל אין זה לפי ערך התפעלי יראת אלקים שכלבו בעתים רבים, וזה פלא גדול לכאורה. ובהכרח לומר שאיש כזה שהוא במיעוט יראת חטא בכל הענינים אינו בכלל יראת אלקים כלל, שהרי מקרא מפורשי סוף דבר כו' את האלקים ירא ואת מצותיו שמור, דמשמע דהא בהא תליא, ואע"פ ששמירת המצות תלוי' באהבה, דאהבה שרש רמ"ח מ"ע ויראה שרש למניעת שס"ה לית'י, וכמ"ש: לאהבה את ה' ולעבדו, דהעבודה כמ"ע תלוי' באהבה כו', ולפעמים אמר"י מה ה' שואל מעמך כ"א ליראה כו', משום דהיראה כוללת הכל, דהמצות ג"כ גזירת מלך היא, בקבלת עומ"ש דוקא"י וד"ל. וא"א לומר דמה שמתפעל ביראת אלקים בתפלה כמו שקר בנפשו ממש אחר שאין בו יראת חטא לפי ערך כנ"ל, שהרי ידוע שהתפעלות אוי"ר בתפלה נמשך מכח מ"ה שנק' חכמה שכנה"א, שבא מכח הנשמה האלקי' שהוא בבחי' עצמיות כהתפעלות אלקות, והוא אשר לב כל א' לפי שרש נשמתו מתפעל לבו ביראת

(28) ראה תניא רפי"ד. ובמ"ם והנהגת כ"ק אדמו"ר ז"ע שם.  
(29) עקב י"א, י"ג (בדילוג).  
(30) שם י"ב.  
(31) ראה תניא ריש סמ"א. קונטרס העבודה ע' 15.

(23) ראה תניא רמ"א.  
(24) אבות פ"ג מ"ט.  
(25) שם ס"ד.  
(26) מנהגיו"ל לא. א.  
(27) קהלת י"ב, י"ג.