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The third stage, which we will now discuss, is Hashem's guidance of the world. The Rambam writes (Hilchos Avodah Zarah 1:1) that there were those who erroneously thought that although Hashem created this world, He subsequently abandoned it and the world is now governed by the stars and the constellations, without Hashem's involvement, chas veshalom.

A person's avodah is to recognize intellectually and feel in his heart that Hashem has not abandoned His world for even a brief moment and will never ever abandon it. Every believer knows this well, but our avodah is to ensure that this knowledge permeates every fiber of the heart, so that a person will feel it during each step of his life. Through this awareness, he will become strongly attached to the Creator.

[Before progressing further, we must point out that although the ideas are presented one after another, it takes time for each level to be attained. It is also essential to review the material often. If this were just a matter of intellectual knowledge, one could just rely on one's memory, but since it is a matter of internalizing the ideas and living with them, one must review them again and again.]

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We will now discuss Divine Providence, with the help of Hashem. A person's activities can be divided into two general categories: Those considered minor and those viewed as major. For example, purchasing a home, getting married, and the like, are seen as major events. One does not change his home on a daily basis, and certainly, one hopes to marry only once a lifetime.

In these types of cases, most people with emunah are aware of Hashem's Providence and feel that they need His help. Many will seek out various tefillos composed by greatest tzaddikim, look for segulos, and try to increase their merits. But when it comes to the small events that occur on a daily basis, the fact that these things come so naturally, make many people forget the truth, that just as marriage is dependent on Hashem's help, so is every little detail of life.

For example, when a person enters a store to purchase a small cassette tape recorder, he checks the various brands, compares prices, tries them out, and finally buys one. Does he feel that he needs Hashem's help now, just as he does when he gets married? Yet, this is his avodah - to remember that Hashem is guiding his life on a daily basis, even during very minor events. When one remembers this with every detail of life on a daily basis, he lives a life of emunah, a proper life in which he is

connected to Hashem.

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Let us explore this further. Let's say that we ask a person who is about to buy a table, a set of chairs, or something similar, "Do you think you really have control over what kind of table you will buy, or do you clearly believe that you cannot determine this at all, and it is Hashem Who decrees exactly what you will buy?" Most people, apparently, know the truth that a person doesn't really have the ability to determine which table he will buy. However, this is just something hidden somewhere in the back of their mind. Not only is it far from their heart, but it is not even in their consciousness. A person doesn't naturally think about this or contemplate it at all. A person's avodah, therefore, is to train himself to think before doing even small acts, like the purchase of a table or chairs. Don't run to the store without a moment's thought. Stop to think a little and contemplate what you are about to do. Consider whether you are the one who determines what you will achieve in the act you are about to do. After you have thought about it, speak it out and say to Hashem, "Master of the World, I know clearly that when I buy the table, I do not have control at all as to which table to buy, but it is all by Your decree. (However, a person can certainly effect the decision through prayer, as will be explained later at length, with the help of Hashem.)

[Care must be taken that this basic emunah should not be used by the yetzer hara as an excuse to absolve oneself from the responsibility to make reasonable hishtadlus to spend one's money wisely. One is required to make responsible and well-considered choices taking into account all relevant factors, in particular how this purchase will affect others. The result of an irresponsible, rash decision may be that Hashem will decide to let you suffer the consequences of your folly.]

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A person should train himself gradually, that whenever he is about to buy an object or accomplish anything else, he should consider whether the matter really is really under his control. In this way, he will instill within himself the fundamentals of simple and pure emunah, that there is one unique G-d, the Master of all the worlds, Who alone determines every single detail (except for the fear of Heaven, as Chazal have said, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven" [Berachos 33b]).

One should accustom oneself, for a long period of time, to perform every act with a thought of emunah. In this way he will connect all his actions to the Master of all the worlds. His life will be saturated with emunah, and all his deeds will be linked to the one unique God. This habit will become his nature, and he will truly acquire it in his soul. Pure, unadulterated, and simple emunah will be firmly entrenched within him.

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This is a person's avodah: to firmly infuse himself with the knowledge that the only One Who determines each and every event is the One Master of the world. We shall try to make this matter more meaningful to you, so that not only will you accept this intellectually, but you will also feel it in the depth of your heart.

A person's avodah is to first nullify the notion, and then the feeling, that he is in control of events in the world. His avodah is to weed out this feeling from its roots, to ferret it out and destroy it, until he truly feels that he has control over nothing but the acquisition of fear of Heaven, which Chazal have said this is the sole arena of free will. Other than that, every single event is determined by the One Master of the world.

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It says, "You shall know today and impress on your heart" (Devarim 4:39). This is a most basic principle and the root of the entire process of avodah. A person's task is first, "know today" to establish the concept in his mind as a given. After the idea is a well-established fact in his mind, there begins the process of "and impress it onto your heart," taking the knowledge to heart. The feelings of one's heart must be in consonance with one's way of thinking, so that it receives the knowledge without any obstruction. This requires a pure heart that has been freed from the "foreskin of the heart", which prevents the truth from penetrating into the heart and guiding it. This is the process of spiritual growth for any level a person strives to acquire. First there is the stage of "know today," and then, there is the stage of "and impress on your heart."

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There are two ways to effect the transition from the stage of "know today" to the stage of "and impress on your heart."

The first is through extensive contemplation on the matter one wants to master. This can be achieved by setting aside a set time each day to think about it for a long period of time. (We will later discuss the statement of the Ramchal in Derech Etz Chaim that everyone must devote about an hour a day for contemplation.) Alternatively by thinking briefly about the matter at short intervals throughout the day - approximately once every fifteen minutes - (except when one is studying Torah, as mentioned before).

The second way is to repeat statements relevant to the topic numerous times. The mouth has the power to inspire the heart, as will be explained later, with the help of Hashem.

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We will now focus on the method of contemplation during the allotted time devoted to such thought. We will try to show how to think in order to acquire emunah in Hashem's Providence over every detail of life.

A person should sit in his house and devote about an hour of quiet time, free of any worldly distractions, and begin to think: "Who lives in this house? I and my wife," and so on. Then, he should think: "Who determined that she would become my wife? Did I determine it, or was it the One Unique Being - Hashem - Who determined it?" He should talk about this in the form of a question (as described above) and then respond to himself, "Chazal, whose words are absolute truth, revealed how Hashem guides the world and they taught us that forty days before a fetus is formed, a Heavenly voice proclaims, 'The daughter of this man will marry that man' (Sotah 2a). Hence, Hashem Himself determined who would be my wife. I didn't determine it at all, only He did.

Since this marriage was determined by Him, it must be clear to me that whatever resulted from this marriage also came through Him. There is no such thing as Hashem doing an action and not foreseeing all its results. Everything was revealed to Him from the beginning, and whatever ensues is His will. Hence, all the results of this marriage are really His will."

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The person should continue to reflect: "Who determined that I would live in this house? Was it I, because I looked at a number of places and liked this one, or did Hashem determine it, as Chazal have said that a Heavenly voice proclaims, 'This house will go to that person'?" (Sotah 2a).

He should consider the fact that although he already knows clearly that the words of Chazal are true, he doesn't think about the concept much; it is just stored somewhere in his memory. In addition, since he doesn't think about it often, his heart doesn't sense it. The feeling that he determined it by himself is closer to his heart.

A person will thus gain a clear grasp of his condition. He knows intellectually Who determined who will be his wife and where he will live, but he has two problems: a) He doesn't think about this much. b) His heart doesn't feel it. He will then resolve to think about it more frequently and to work on similar details. He must first rectify the first problem, by at least keeping this belief alive in his mind with clear, pure and calm thought. Slowly, the concept will take root in his soul, and his heart, too, will feel it properly.

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In addition to contemplating this, he should articulate all his thoughts, repeating words of emunah, and affirming that only Hashem determines every detail. He should review each point, one after the other with great patience, because this will have a major effect on the soul. (There are two ways to do this: He could speak about Hashem in the third person, saying that Hashem determines each detail, such as this one and that one. The other way is to speak directly to Hashem in the second person, saying, "You, Hashem, determined who shall be my wife and where my home will be." This is a lofty level that expresses the goal of a person's life which is to feel that he is in the presence of Hashem. But if this is difficult to start with, one may use the third person.)

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In this way, a person should analyze all the aspects of his life in great detail. He should also articulate any considerations that might, *chas veshalom*, oppose simple emunah: "It seems that I chose my marriage partner and my home." Then, he should discount them one by one, saying to Hashem, "Even though my feeling is that I am in control, I know that this is not true. You are the One Who determined that this person will be my marriage partner and that I will live here."

A person should carefully consider one detail after another. He should consider, for example, the chair he is sitting on and the table nearby. He should reconstruct the process of the purchase, how he chose the particular style and color of the table and chairs: "If so, on the surface, it seems that I chose my table and chairs." But, he should then continue to reflect and then articulate: "This is not true. Only, You, Hashem, determined precisely which table and chairs I would get. Without a doubt, even if I chose the color and style, the manufacturer makes many such chairs, so why did this chair or table specifically become mine? This was Your doing, Hashem, and You determined it with precision."

In this way, he should consider the contents of his wardrobe, his shirts, his shoes, and so on, item by item. With each item, he should repeat in his mind and verbally state that only Hashem determines with precision which object will be his. He should thus cover all the objects he owns, and review all the events he has experienced, considering each one in detail, instilling within himself the fundamentals of emunah, the simple emunah that only Hashem determines each detail. He should first think about it in his mind, and then articulate it, as we said before, either in the third person ("He") or in the second person ("You") - if he is ready for that.

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"I have emunah because I spoke" (Tehillim 116:10). As the sefarim *hakedoshim* explain, "When do I have emunah? When I speak!" That is to say, emunah is planted deeply in a person's heart by expressing it in words. The more one articulates one's emunah in addition to thinking about it, the

more emunah will take root deeply in his heart. The opposite is also true: "Emunah is lost; it is cut off from their mouths" (Yirmiyahu 7:28). As the sefarim explain, why is emunah lost? Because it is missing from their mouths. Since they were not accustomed to constantly articulate words of emunah, in addition to thinking about it, emunah became lost from their hearts. The deep clarity of the light of emunah was concealed and buried in their hearts; it was not alive there in an active way.

100

These words of emunah can be expressed in two forms. When talking to friends, emunah must be a dominant theme that accompanies everything one says. But that is not enough. Even when a person is alone, which in fact is the main time for instilling emunah, he should express ideas of emunah in great detail, as explained above. "Even when I walk in the shadow of the valley of death, I will not fear, for You are with me" (Tehillim 23:4). A person must constantly speak words of emunah, and always live with Hashem with pure emunah. In this way, "Even when I walk in the shadow of the valley of death, I will not fear, for You are with me." The person will always be in the state of "for You are with me."

101

The gemara in maseches Bava Kamma (3b) describes man as one who prays (mav'eh), based on the passuk (Yeshayahu 21:12), "If you wish to pray, then pray (be'ayu)." A person's task is to speak to Hashem and about Him with words of pure emunah. One who habituates himself to constantly speak this way and does not give up hope can reach a wondrous level of emunah. He can attain a true acquisition of pure emunah in his soul. This can be achieved entirely through simple words of emunah, not with lofty and sophisticated ideas, but with total simplicity. This is the essence of the Jewish soul - simple and pure emunah in the Creator of the Worlds.

102

The times when a person must strive to instill emunah in Hashem's Providence fall into two categories, as we explained above with regard to every aspect of avodah: 1) During the time in the day devoted to contemplation, which we have just been discussing. 2) At brief intervals throughout the day - about every fifteen or thirty minutes.

During the months in which a person is working to attain this level of faith, the matter must occupy his heart throughout the day. He must live with this perspective all day long. If he works with it only during his designated hour of contemplation, there will be an interruption of 23 hours until the next time he thinks about it. Anything that is not constant cannot properly take root in a person's soul. Therefore, throughout the day, one must think about the matter he is toiling to master.

103

There are two applications of remembering Hashem's Providence throughout the day. One application is when the occurrence is not a daily event, and the other applies to a daily occurrences.

We will begin with the first application. A person plans, for example, to purchase a table, chairs or the like. Preferably, before leaving the house, he should think to himself and say, "I am going to buy a table and chairs. I cannot really choose at all. Only Hashem will determine which table will I purchase. What I do and the choice I make will not make any difference at all, but nevertheless according to the level of hishtadlus (required effort) expected from me, I need to go about making a choice, as the Mesillas Yesharim says (ch. 21) that even though one puts forth effort, he must know that his effort does not really accomplish the result."

This is the perspective with which he should enter the store. Even when he is in the store and begins to select the table and chairs, he must keep in mind that his choice is like that of a monkey that acts as directed. He is not in control at all, because Hashem has already determined which table and chairs will enter his home.

104

We have used the example of a table and chairs, but obviously, this is just an example. The point is that a person should not buy anything without some prior contemplation. No matter what he buys, be it a refrigerator, a washing machine, a cabinet, or anything else, he must first prepare himself mentally, as described above, and then go to buy the item together with Hashem, not by himself, *chas veshalom*. A person must acquire the habit of not doing any significant act without entertaining a thought of *emunah* beforehand. One who acts in this manner will find that along with each material acquisition, he has gained a great and powerful spiritual acquisition. By going about a purchase in such a manner, he will infuse his heart with *emunah* in Divine Providence. By repeatedly thinking and articulating these thoughts, pure faith in Hashem's Providence will take root inside him.

105

We have dealt so far with significant acts, such as major purchases. Once one has attained the habit of contemplating significant acts, his *avodah* is to habituate himself to do so regarding even minor acts.

We will provide an example: A person goes to buy food for Shabbos. Through this commonplace act, he can acquire a great deal of *emunah*. For example, he stretches out his hand to take a package of noodles from the shelf. He should think to himself and say, "This shelf has tens of packages. Why did specifically this one come to my hand and not another? It must be that for some hidden reason, You decreed that precisely this package would come to my hand, and not another." (We are not going into what might be the reasons why Hashem decrees such things.)

The details are numerous, but there is one underlying principle: a person must train himself to inculcate himself with *emunah* in Divine Providence every time he buys something, as described above. An acquisition carried out in this way can enable one to make a great acquisition of *emunah*. Certainly, if a person takes this to heart, and accustoms himself to do so always, *emunah* will firmly take root in his heart.

One must get used to living this way and achieve thereby a lofty and awesome spiritual acquisition, that of pure *emunah* in Hashem and His Providence. One should accustom himself to ponder many different situations throughout the day. For example, when he sits down to eat some bread, he should consider the fact that specifically this piece of bread came to his hand. When washing his hands or drinking, he should ponder that this water came to him specifically through precise Divine Providence.

106

Of course, one cannot always contemplate every detail of his life, but one should strive constantly to expand his awareness to more details of life, little by little, until the concept is fixed in his heart.

The main thing is that one must avoid the superficial perspective, in which Hashem's Hand and Providence are seen only during very unnatural events and miracles. Rather, a person must see Hashem during each detail of his life, even the smallest of them, although it may seem to be a very natural happening.

The point is not to tell stories of wondrous events. To be spiritually alive, one must live with genuine emunah his entire life. One who lives in such a manner will attain a very high degree of deveikus to Hashem, provided that he has fulfilled the prior conditions, which are remembering Hashem's existence and being aware that He is the Creator and we are his creations.

[But contemplation is not enough; one must express these thoughts. One must know that he is not talking to himself. He is talking to the Creator of the world with the definite faith that He listens attentively to every word of emunah that comes from a sincere Jew.]

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We must understand that although this is a simple path, it affects the deeper recesses of one's soul. The yetzer hara may ridicule a person claiming that this approach is stupid and simplistic. However, anyone who has achieved the simplicity born of kedushah will understand and sense [that this process takes a person out of a superficial world and places him into a completely different world.]

Hashem is called a "hidden G-d" (Yeshayahu 45:15). Where does He hide? In a person's heart. A person must work to reveal Hashem's presence in his heart. This is achieved through an approach of uncomplicated simplicity based on kedushah. A thoughtful person can discover Hashem through each detail of creation, and remove the veil from his heart.

108

Now that we have shown how to instill in one's midst a simple and pure faith in Hashem's Providence, we will see how establishing this emunah in one's heart will weaken the degree of one's anger.

The truth is that anger is a measuring rod for a person, through which the extent of one's faith in Hashem's Providence can be checked. The greater one's emunah is in Hashem's Providence, the weaker is his trait of anger. And the further one is from faith in His Providence, the greater will be his anger. (This is besides the differences in people's natures, making some people quicker to anger than others.) Therefore, if a person wants to check if his efforts have borne fruit and whether faith in Hashem's Providence has made inroads into his heart, one method is to check the degree of his anger. If his reactions have not changed and he becomes as angry as he did before, he has not truly acquired emunah in Hashem's Providence. But if he finds that the degree of his anger is decreasing, he can take that to be an indication of the extent to which he has indeed acquired emunah in Hashem's Providence.

109

We will give a brief introduction before we explain how instilling emunah can cure the trait of anger. There is a principle that applies to all true avodah in general and specifically regarding the trait of anger. The way to correct any trait and give it a proper balance is through bringing Hashem into the picture.

"If I [Hashem] am here, all is here" (Succah 53a). That is to say, if Hashem is included in the process in an appropriate manner, the matter in question will be properly rectified. When Hashem is truly present at the heart of a matter, it will perforce be properly corrected and perfected, with no evil or deficiency at all. A person's entire avodah therefore is to properly bring Hashem into the picture.

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We will now discuss and explain how to cure the trait of anger. How does one bring Hashem into the

picture, to cure it?

What leads a person to anger? One simple answer is that anything that opposes one's will brings him to anger. Sometimes, the anger is very weak and barely discernable. Sometimes, it is strong and very evident in the heart. And sometimes, it is so powerful and fierce that is openly visible in the person's facial expression.

Another cause of anger (this is included in the first aspect, but is a specific application of it) is that when a person's honor is slighted, he is angered. He feels he deserves honor, and it has been denied to him.

111

Generally speaking, there are two situations that make one angry: 1) When one's will is frustrated not through another person, but through natural events. 2) When another person thwarts one's will.

We will provide some examples. A person gets up one morning and embarks on a journey. Suddenly, he gets a flat tire, and he can't continue driving. No one caused this to happen. Tires naturally wear down until they get ruined. This event can make a person angry, because he planned to meet someone at a particular time, and now, he can't. There is no one against whom to direct the anger, because the event didn't occur through a person. If you would ask him, "At whom are you angry?" He would correctly respond, "I am not angry at the tire, but at the situation. I am unable to carry out my wishes and plans." Seemingly, his anger is not directed against anyone specific. (Later, we will see that this is not exactly true.)

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The second kind of anger occurs when one person does some harm to another, such as breaking his window. Here, there is someone at whom to direct the anger - the specific individual who caused the damage.

Hence, there are two kinds of anger: 1) Where there is no clear target for the anger, because there is no one to get angry with. 2) Where there is a person who caused one to become angry.

On a deeper level, all kinds of anger are the same. We will explain. When a person really understands emunah in his mind and is properly aware of it in his heart, he realizes that in each case, the source of the event that made him angry is only the Creator.

113

We will initially consider the first kind of anger, and then, with Hashem's help, the second kind.

A person wakes up in the morning, gets into his car, and drives off. Later on, he gets a flat tire. If he doesn't think too deep thoughts, he will naturally feel angry and frustrated. But if he lives in the proper way, he will do the following: When he enters his car in the morning, he will first of all think, "Who gave me the car? Hashem! From where does the car receive its ability to drive? Hashem gives the car the capacity to drive each moment. (The phrase in our Morning Prayers, "With His goodness, He renews creation each day" is said in the present tense.) If this attitude in his mind and heart, when the car stops functioning for any reason at all, he will think as follows: "Who gave the car the ability to drive until now? Hashem! And Who now took away its ability to drive? Hashem! If so, if I get angry at my inability to use this car, that really means I am getting angry with Hashem, because it was He Who took away from me the ability to drive this car now."

114

However, many people live with a superficial outlook on life and do not keep in mind - all the more so, in their hearts - that Hashem alone provides the ability to use a car at each moment and it is He Who constantly guides their life. When such people encounter some problem on the road, they will find it extremely difficult to suddenly remind themselves that Hashem alone guides them. Hashem was not in the center of their thoughts before the problem surfaced, and as a result, anger will surface.

But if one constantly remembers that Hashem controls everything with precise Providence, then even when it seems that his journey was unsuccessful because there were hold ups on the way, he will remember in his mind and feel in his heart that: a) only Hashem has led him until now; b) only He is delaying him now, as there is no other cause. He will understand that the present hindrance is from Hashem.

115

An almost identical episode to this appears in the Torah. There, of course, it is not talking about a car, but about a donkey. Bilaam was going on his way, and his donkey crouched down and prevented him from continuing. Bilaam thought that the donkey had chosen to stop him, but that was not at all the case. The donkey did not stop of its own free will, but through an angel, a messenger of Hashem. In other words, the fact that it stopped and did not continue was a direct result of Hashem's will. But since Bilaam did not understand this, at whom did he get angry? At the donkey! When he later understood that the hindrance was from Hashem, he saw that there was no one at whom to be angry.

If a person would always think in this manner, he would realize that there is no reason to get angry at physical things, because everything is from Hashem. He will realize that if he gets angry at the cause of disturbance, he is getting angry with Hashem, and he certainly wouldn't want to do that. He will realize that his life is a constant interaction with the Creator, and he will direct his attention toward Hashem, remembering Who he is dealing with. He will not give any attention to the many intermediary factors, but to He Who stands behind everything - Hashem Himself.

115

Once a person has come to realize intellectually and feels in his heart that every single event comes only from Hashem, he must think more deeply about this. Does this act of Hashem stem from His love, or, chas veshalom, from hatred? Clearly, Hashem loves every person very much, with a love that transcends the kind found in created beings, a love whose essence can only be present in the One G-d.

[Here is a simple example: Someone gets drunk on Purim, and wants to drive a car. His father tries to convince him that it is very dangerous, but the son doesn't listen. The father tries to take away the car keys, but he is unsuccessful. When he sees that the son is about to drive away, he goes and lets the air out of the tires. The son realizes that he cannot drive, and begins to scream, "Father, what are you doing to me?" The father doesn't answer, because the son will not understand him then. The son dejectedly returns to the house and falls asleep. The next morning, he barely remembers what happened, and asks his father about the previous evening's events. When the father tells him what happened, the son hugs and kisses his father, saying, "Thank you for saving my life!"]

Similarly, a person must clarify to himself that the event in question occurred through Hashem, as a result of His love toward him. That being the case, it undoubtedly was for his benefit. Although the benefit and the love are not immediately apparent, he must accept in his mind and feel in his heart that the event occurred as a result of Hashem's deep love for him. The entire event was only for his

benefit, even though he does not sense the nature of the benefit.

117

Once a person realizes and feels that every single incident that occurs to him flows from Hashem's deep love entirely for his benefit, there is no place for anger. Anger arises when someone offends a person or tries to harm him, or the likes. But if the act is entirely positive, devoid of evil, and results from Hashem's deep love, what place is there for anger?

118

We will summarize what we have discussed so far. The first stage is for a person to know and feel that Hashem alone causes each event. The second stage is for the person to know and feel that Hashem loves him very much. The third stage is to know and feel that Hashem is the only One Who knows what is truly best for a person. If He put the person into this situation, then His infinite wisdom has determined that this was the best way to benefit the individual at this time.

Sometimes, the yetzer hara tries to fool a person and puts the thought into his head: "True, this was totally for my benefit, but why couldn't Hashem have benefited me in a different way, in a way that I could see even with my physical eyes that this was good?" You must believe, understand, and feel that Hashem knows everything. His infinite wisdom has determined that this was the only way to benefit you at this time.

119

Once a person has internalized this concept, he will not get angry over any event that happens to him. Not only that, but he will even be happy about it. Chazal refer to, "those who rejoice even when suffering" (Shabbos 88b). This comes from a clear recognition of Who was the cause of the event, and why He caused it.

When a person understands this and feels it with all his heart, there can be no place for anger, only for joy. If his heart is not filled with joy, and certainly, if there is still room for anger, his emunah is obviously not pure enough.

This is a person's avodah - to fully internalize these ideas of emunah into his heart. The first step is to give it a lot of thought. The next step is to speak about it often, repeating the concepts time after time. He should say to Hashem, "I know that You caused this event, I know that You love me, and I know that this event was totally for my benefit. Enable me to feel all this." A person should repeat such words thousands of times, and even more, until he really feels them properly in the depths of his heart.

120

Even if a person fails and does become angry, he should not get upset about that. [He should think back how he began the day, and realize that he was not sufficiently aware of Hashem's guidance.] Then, he should go back and instill in himself the emunah, many thousands of times. This should be done both before an unpleasant situation arises, and during such situations. He should go back and infuse these words in his heart incessantly, without being disheartened by failures. If he perseveres with this, despite the failures and setbacks and is not overwhelmed by them, Hashem will certainly grant him the privilege to acquire pure faith in his heart.

[It is essential for a person to keep a daily account of his spiritual growth. This is particularly

important when one is working on anger. One must check if he became angry that day, identify that it was a result of a lack of emunah, and commit himself to improve. This will have a very positive effect.]

121

We have described, so far, how to deal with anger that comes through an event that doesn't involve another person. Now, with Hashem's help, we will discuss anger that is aroused by the behavior of another person.

We have already mentioned that this is a very difficult situation, because when another person is not involved, it is clear that one cannot really get angry at the rock that one tripped over, or the tire that burst, or whatever it was. The person understands (if he is worthy) that it came from Hashem. But when another person makes one angry, one is apt to think that since that person has free will, the event was not decreed by Hashem, but is a result of that individual's free will. It is natural to be inclined to become angry with that individual who chose to harm him.

122

There is a well-known incident that happened in the beis din of the Beis Halevi (Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik; 1820-1892 C.E.). A butcher once came to him with a question about the kashrus of an animal, and he ruled that the meat was forbidden. The butcher calmly accepted the decision, in spite of the financial loss this ruling caused him. Some time later, this same person came before the Beis Halevi to resolve a financial dispute between him and another man. After the Beis Halevi ruled against him and in favor of his opponent, he became enraged. The Beis Halevi commented that even though the man lost more money as a result of the first ruling, he didn't have anyone with whom to get angry then, because the animal was not his opponent. But in the second case, there was someone to blame, and this stirred up hostile feelings.

123

There are two issues when the anger-provoking situation is caused by another person: 1) It appears that the other person chose to hurt him. 2) The very fact that there is another person involved draws one into a fight, due to feelings of pride and honor. This can only be corrected through pure, clear emunah. When a person lives with true emunah, it makes no difference if he was harmed by a rock, water, a person, or anything else. Only a lack of clear emunah creates these distinctions and incites anger.

124

The Zohar points out that when a dog is struck by a stick, it runs after the stick and tries to bite it. This is because the dog is unaware that the real cause of the blow was not the stick, but the person holding it. People make the same mistake. They fail to realize that any time a person serves as an intermediary to bring about an unpleasant occurrence, he is only a stick in Hashem's Hand.

One must identify the true source of an event. It is not the stick, but Hashem. Sometimes, this stick appears in the form of a rock, sometimes as water, and sometimes as a person. The common denominator, though, is that they have the same origin - Hashem Himself.

When David Hamelech was cursed by Shimi ben Geira, his reaction was, "Hashem told him to curse" (Shmuel II 16:10). This is the foundation of emunah - "Hashem told him to curse." Similarly, we may say that Hashem told him to hit, Hashem told him to break, Hashem told him to embarrass. Although

these examples are not found in the Torah, a wise man will extract the message from "Hashem told him to curse," and understand that the proper approach should be nothing other than "Hashem told him."

125

One must understand the inner structure of creation. There are two ways a person might view the world: 1) The world is comprised of inanimate objects, plants, animals, and people. This is a superficial approach, because the person is only looking at the external aspect of creation. 2) We say in the Morning prayers: "You existed before the world was created, and You exist now that the world has been created." Why did Chazal reveal this fact to us?

Clearly, any time Hashem caused some knowledge to be revealed to man, he must need it for his avodah. If so, this must also apply with regard to the statement, "You were the One before the world was created, and You existed now that the world has been created." Chazal revealed to us a new perspective on creation. We should not just focus on the perspective of seeing the inanimate objects, plants, animals, and humans, which is the perspective of after creation. We must learn to live even now with the perspective of "before the world was created." This is a deeper view of life, and provides an inner, true perspective of the essence of all created beings.

126

This is the explanation: When a person sees an inanimate object, a plant, an animal, or a human as a separate entity - which is the perspective of after creation - no matter what his form of contact is with it, he relates to it as an independent entity. This can lead him to anger, thinking that a certain person committed a particular wrong against him. But if one always has the perspective of, "You existed before the world was created," he finds Hashem in everything. He doesn't view the inanimate object as something independent; he senses Hashem's energy in it. The same is true with the plant, the animal, and the person. Therefore, he never really deals with the created being, but with Hashem. He senses that the entire physical world is a garment with which Hashem has disguised Himself, so to speak. He does not bother himself with the garment, but with the underlying essence, which is Hashem. Therefore, whenever something happens, he sees only Hashem, Who is the real cause of all events.

This outlook on life will totally change a person. He will escape from the superficial state of seeing only created beings and connect to a deeper state of sensing the Creator. His only involvement will be with Hashem. (This is the depth of Chazal's comment that when Esther said, "May the king come" [Esther 5:4], she had in mind the King of the World. That was how she lived - seeing Hashem in everything - and her entire focus and communication was only with Him.)

127

You should understand that this perspective is the true way to look at creation. When one views the objects of creation as separate entities, their value is lowered, because the sole importance of anything is measured by its degree of G-dliness. Other ways of assessing value that are commonly employed in this world are definitions that come from the world of falsehood. The truth is that each thing is as great as the G-dliness it reveals. When one has the deeper perspective of seeing the G-dliness underlying an inanimate object, a plant, an animal, or a human, he elevates them from the state of ordinary creations to the state of being creations connected to Hashem, in which there is a revelation of G-dliness. This is the entire value of any created being: the degree to which it represents and reveals the presence of Hashem.

128

When a person merits to maintain the perspective of "before the world was created," within the present state of "now that the world has been created," he can become close and attached to Hashem even while interacting with anything in creation., The physical world does not become a barrier between him and his Creator. This is achieved when the person mentally removes the outer form of the object and sees Hashem's presence in everything (note: we are not referring to the specific spiritual energy of the object, but to the ultimate common source, which is Hashem). In this manner, he will never be connected to the events and acts of the physical world, since he realizes that they are not involved at all in the interaction. In this way, he will totally disconnect from physical entities, their actions, and the results of their actions. Furthermore, by removing their outer form and exposing their inner essence, which is Hashem, a person is able to connect with Hashem through any event. We have elaborated on this somewhat, because it is a fundamental understanding of the inner essence of life and connecting to Hashem.

129

When a person has the privilege to understand and internalize this concept, he achieves a powerful bond with the Creator, for there is nothing to separate between him and his Creator. He relates to the inner essence of each thing, which is Hashem's light, and thus, the outer form of things do not block him from deveikus to his Creator. This person can connect to Hashem not only while learning Torah and performing mitzvos. He lives according to the passuk, "In all your ways, you must know Him (da'ehu)" (Mishlei 3:6). Literally in everything he does, he knows (yode'a) Hashem and is attached to Him (yediah means connection and deveikus, as is known).

This is a person's avodah - to reject the superficial outer appearance of the world around him and to cleave at all times to the inner essence, which is Hashem. This includes a clear awareness of Hashem's existence and His Providence, as we explained before. By acquiring this way of life, a person escapes the world of separateness, and joins Hashem's world: "Hashem is One and His name is One" (Zechariah 14:9), becoming a member of the people "who acknowledges Your oneness" (Hoshanos). The purpose and endpoint of this stage is total deveikus to the Infinite. Each person should strive to achieve this to the best of his capabilities.

130

Once a person has reached the level where his emunah is strong, and he sees Hashem's guidance in everything he does, he should enter the world of tefillah. We intentionally use the term "world" here. This is because tefillah is not merely a matter of reciting three prayers a day. Rather, a person must enter the "world of tefillah". Life with tefillah is an entirely different kind of existence. David Hamelech said, "and I am tefillah" (Tehillim 109:4). He was always involved in tefillah; he lived in the world of tefillah. When a person lives in this world of tefillah, he will not allow even fifteen minutes go by without turning to Hashem in prayer, whether in thought or verbally. The first thing to understand is that tefillah is an entirely different way to live, not merely a detail that applies at specific times in the day.

131

We will explain. A sincere Jew lives in a way that ensures he is with Hashem throughout the day: his Torah is with Hashem, his mitzvos are with Hashem, and so on.

What binds the person to Hashem throughout the day is tefillah. The real purpose of tefillah is to bring a person to a state in which he is always close to Hashem. When we understand that this is the

purpose of tefillah, it becomes clear that tefillah cannot be limited to three or four times a day. If that were the case, the main point of tefillah - the constant connection to Hashem - would be lacking. If it only takes place during a small part of the day, how could it generate a bond that lasts throughout the entire day? Clearly, some form of tefillah must be present all day (as described later). Of this, David HaMelech said, "and I am tefillah." His entire being was always involved in tefillah.

132

If a person does not remember Hashem during the day, how can he turn to Him at all times? If he does not even remember Him, he will certainly not daven to Him.

Therefore, it is clear that first of all, a person must remember Hashem throughout the day, as explained above in detail. Furthermore, even if a person remembers Hashem, but does not remember His constant Providence over each thing every single moment, why would he turn to Him for help? After all, he doesn't presently remember and feel that Hashem is the sole address to turn to for help in all areas.

Therefore, it is clear that to embody, "and I am prayer," one must first have a constant awareness of the Creator and be constantly cognizant that there is a "Manager of this palace" (Bereishis Rabbah 39:1), Who is the only Master over each and every detail.

133

When a person goes through his day thinking and feeling that the success and failure (chas veshalom) of all his endeavors depends only on Hashem, his mind or his lips will murmur a prayer to Hashem for success in his endeavors, before and even during each act.

We will provide some examples: A person is about to daven Shacharis. From many years of experience, we know that it is very difficult to pray with proper intent. Who can help a person with this? Certainly, one should try to maintain proper focus to the best of his ability, but without Hashem's help, he cannot succeed.

Chazal have already stated, "Each day, the yetzer hara opposes a person anew; without the aid of Hashem, the person cannot be victorious (Kiddushin 30b). Consequently, a person cannot succeed in having the proper thoughts during his prayers relying only on his own abilities. Who can help him? Only Hashem!

If a person is wise, he will turn to Hashem and beg Him for the privilege to daven with proper intent. Likewise, if during the tefillah, he encounters difficulty in concentrating, he should pause a moment and daven to Hashem, either mentally or verbally (depending on the situation), to help him so that he can resume proper tefillah.

134

Here is another example: When a person is about to begin a session of Torah study, he must understand that without Hashem's help, he will not be able to grasp the truth. The Torah is loftier than human intellect. In the sefarim hakedoshim, it is referred to as sechel nivdal, "a separate intellect," because it is separate and elevated above human intellect. Therefore, it is clear that there is no way for a person's mind, which is merely human intellect, to understand the depth of the inner truth of the Torah. That being the case, how can one hope to understand the holy Torah properly? This can only happen with help from Hashem, "for Hashem gives wisdom, from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Mishlei 2:6).

Therefore, when a person realizes that left to his own resources, he cannot understand the Torah, and success can only come through Hashem's help, he must pour out his heart in tefillah to Hashem (in his own language) that he should have the privilege to grasp and discover the truth of our holy Torah. Before a person begins to learn, he should beg Hashem for the ability to understand the holy Torah properly. Also, while he is learning, any time he is faced with a question or something he doesn't understand, he must naturally turn to Hashem and beg for the privilege to understand the matter at hand.

A person who learns Torah in this manner, attaches himself to Hashem even while learning, and his Torah and tefillah are connected. If he doesn't do this, and forgets about Hashem because he is immersed in his studies, there is a danger that even when he has finished his learning session, he will, chas veshalom, forget about Hashem. Therefore, the proper way is to do as described above when learning Torah. In this way, his Torah will be attached to Hashem, and will attach him to Hashem. It will not, chas veshalom, distract him.

This is not some new concept which we have invented; it was the way of our master, the Chazon Ish, as is recorded in his biography. Any time he would come across a question or something difficult to understand, he would go a corner of the room and pour out a whispered prayer before Hashem, asking to be able to understand the matter properly.

Of course, you don't need to go into a corner. Each person should act according to the needs of his soul. You can certainly do this in front of the sefer, turning to Hashem with your mouth or mind, asking Him to help you understand the holy Torah. (Incidentally, besides tefillah during learning, which can bind a person to Hashem, each time one has the privilege to understand a Tosafos and the like, he should briefly thank Hashem at the end of the piece. He might say, "Master of the World, I thank you so much for enabling me to understand this Tosafos." In this manner, he will bind himself to Hashem the entire time he is learning. This is a wonderful suggestion for achieving true deveikus to Hashem.) A person should accustom himself to ask Hashem for understanding before learning, while learning, and after learning. He should ask to be able to remember the material and to have the privilege to learn in the future. If a person does this on a regular basis, he will achieve something really great, with the help of Hashem. He will understand the holy Torah, and also attain deveikus in the process.

135

Here is another example: A person goes to a store to purchase a table, a set of chairs, or the like. We described above how before and during a purchase, one must awaken the emunah that Hashem has determined which item he will purchase. In addition, before purchasing any such item, one must turn to Hashem and express all his thoughts: he needs a new table, and plans to buy one, he is going to try to find one in a particular store, and any other matters. He should spell out every single detail before Hashem. Then, he should ask Hashem to guide him in the proper way, so that he will buy the right table, he should not have to trouble himself too much, he should succeed in guarding his eyes from improper sights on the way, and also on, any other matters relevant to the purchase of that table. That is to say, he should relate to Hashem all the aspects of the purchase and ask for help in all of them.

136

Any person working on himself will understand that these are only examples., A person must gradually train himself to daven for success during all of his endeavors. (This must be approached gradually because "if you grab too much, you have nothing" [Yoma 80a] and anyway, it is pointless to move too fast, because this is a matter of the heart, and the heart cannot make radical changes

suddenly.) This includes repairing a broken object, or preparing food, or traveling to be somewhere by a specific time, or looking for a study partner, or whatever. He will then acquire the habit that he habitually prays to Hashem, with his mind or his lips, for each detail of life at all times. In this way, he will have the privilege to attach himself to the ultimate source of life - Hashem. This is a very wonderful piece of practical advice.

137

You should know that although tefillah has the ability to help childless couples, heal the ill, unleash a shower of material and spiritual blessings, and is a means for attaining all good things, these benefits are all incidental to the main point of tefillah. The real greatness of tefillah is that through it, one can become tied and attached to the ultimate source of life - Hashem.

When davening to attain a particular thing, whether spiritual or material, a person must bear in mind the main point of his prayer. This is really the whole secret of life - to always remember what is primary and what is secondary, and to always find the way to attain closeness to Hashem through every thing and each situation. Everything else is incidental and secondary to closeness and deveikus to Hashem. This is particularly true concerning tefillah, which is essentially communication with Hashem, closeness to Hashem, and deveikus to Him.

A person's avodah is to constantly be mindful not to be too engrossed in the subject of his requests, but rather, in the essence of tefillah, which is communication and closeness with Hashem. Tefillah is so called based on the passuk, "Naftulei Elokim Niftalti" ("I have been attached to Hashem") (Bereishis 30:8), which refers to deveikus, as the sefarim hakedoshim state. This is the whole inner essence of tefillah - attachment to Hashem.

138

When a person davens and talks to his Creator, there are two possibilities: he might speak in the third person, saying "He," or he might speak in the second person, saying "You." The ideal way to daven is to use the second person. Although this may be very difficult at first, because the soul doesn't feel Hashem's immediate presence, a person must accustom himself to it. With time, little by little, Hashem will grant him the privilege to feel that He is nearby.

This must also be achieved in stages. At first, one should speak mainly in the third person, using the word "He," and occasionally use the second person. Gradually, as he begins to feel more comfortable saying, "You," he should increase his usage of this mode, until all his words are in the form of direct communication with Hashem, and he has the privilege to feel that his Creator is right near him. This is the goal of life. The whole purpose of man's life in this world is to live with his Creator, and to feel that Hashem is really next to him. This, in fact, is one of the most difficult levels to achieve. As the Ramchal says (Mesillas Yesharim, ch. 19), our senses contradict this truth. But when a person gradually accustoms himself to attain it, Hashem will certainly help him until he really feels Him right nearby, and he can talk to his Creator "as one talks to a friend" (ibid.).

This may at first seem beyond a person, but if one accustoms oneself to have all his activities center around Hashem and talks to Him throughout the day, it will get much easier. He will grow in this lofty avodah of feeling that Hashem is there and to speak to Him at all times as if to a friend. This will become very simple and natural. This was the way of the great rabbis in all the generations. They sensed in a most tangible way that Hashem was present right next to them.