

An End to Conflict



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PART 1

The **Roots of Conflict**



CHAPTER 1

You Broke It, You Fix It: The Roots of Conflict



The superiority of man over the beast is nil, for all is futile.

— Proverbs 1:1

The physical universe is a mixture. It is a meeting-place where G-d meets together (as it were) with man, the select of all creatures; yet it is also ginat egoz, "a garden of nuts," the word egoz having the numerical equivalent of cheit, "sin." G-d gives man the capacity to choose freely, that man may choose for himself a path in life.

— Hayom Yom, 8 Sivan

From the holy teachings of the Alter Rebbe: "Israel, one nation on the earth." The nation of Israel, even in the earthly world, is bound up with the one G-d. G-d transforms the spiritual into something material; Israel transforms the material into something spiritual.

— Hayom Yom, 27 Elul

Why is the world filled with conflict? Where did it come from? Who started it?

You probably grew up hearing this story.

Once upon a time (in the very beginning), G-d created Adam and placed him in a beautiful, pristine garden. Then He told him, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat. But of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for on the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die."¹

Of course, we know the rest. When G-d gave the command to Adam, Eve had not yet been created. She never heard the command directly from G-d, and that set the stage for the serpent to fool her. He persuaded her to eat from the tree, and she gave of its fruit to Adam as well.

What ensued was that each one pointed a finger at the other. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent. In the end, each bore some of the guilt and was punished as a result. The serpent would creep on the earth and eat dust. Eve would suffer the pain of childbirth and child-rearing. Adam would have to perform backbreaking work to earn his daily bread. And all of them would die.

Adam and Eve were evicted from the garden in disgrace, and we've been working ever since to clean up their mess, to remove traces of that sin.

In other words, G-d gave us a perfect garden, and we ruined it! Any conflict, ugliness, pain and suffering that resulted is due to us. We broke it,

we own it, we must pay for it.

Even those who don't subscribe to the Biblical view of creation tell a similar story. The world in its natural state is pristine and harmonious. But greedy, rapacious human beings come along and despoil the earth, pollute it, and abuse its resources. We broke it, and only we can fix it.

That was the story as I understood it in childhood, and I never thought to question it. It made sense to me. G-d is perfect and we are not. So, naturally, any discord or conflict must be due to us.

It was only when I began to study Chassidic teachings in depth that I realized that there was something missing in my understanding.

What was that tree doing there in the first place? Who put it there? What was the role of the snake? And what was the nature of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil"? Was the tree evil in itself, or did it only contain knowledge of evil? Why did G-d single out one tree and tell them not to eat from it? Why didn't he hide it from them if it was so dangerous? The whole episode began to seem suspiciously like a setup.

Could this mean that we've been thinking about this the wrong way all along? If the tree was there before Adam and Eve got to the garden, then maybe... they weren't the ones who broke it? Maybe they weren't the ones who brought conflict and chaos into the world. And if we didn't break it, can we really fix it?

If we want to understand the roots and origin of conflict, we need to look back further than the story of Adam and Eve, back to the very first moment of creation. And what we learn shifts our entire perspective on why conflict exists and what we are meant to do about it.

The existence of conflict is a major question that Chassidic thought grapples with. How does a perfect G-d create such an imperfect world? How does a fragmented, chaotic world emerge from His absolute unity? The distillation of this question is, how does the world exist altogether? How can anything at all exist outside of G-d?

Indeed, this was the state of reality before the world was created. There was nothing but G-d. G-d was alone.

But G-d did not want to be alone. He wanted companionship. He wanted someone to share Himself with. He wanted to express Himself, and in order to express Himself, there had to be an “other.” There had to be someone else. We are that “other” whom G-d created in His image. He invested in us His hope and desire for a partnership.

You may be rightfully wary of anthropomorphizing G-d and projecting on Him human impulses and desires. We get lonely; we desire companionship. Does G-d have needs and desires like ours? But since we are created in the Divine image, our desires are a reflection of His. Our drive for closeness, for companionship, for unity, derives from Him. G-d has a compulsion to connect and he created within us a similar desire.

The question still remains. How can anything exist outside of G-d? How can a finite, limited creation emerge out of an infinite G-d? G-d wanted us, and wanted a world in which we could live together, and therefore He did us a favor: He hid himself. He withdrew in order to allow space for us to exist.

Imagine a great and mighty king who decides one day that out of all people in the universe, he wants to have a relationship with you. Now, if he simply invites you over to his palace, there wouldn't be much of a relationship. He's the king and you're just an ordinary person. He far surpasses you in every imaginable way. You'd probably feel awkward and uncomfortable in his presence. Certainly you'd never be yourself. And the palace would be nice, but it wouldn't be *your* palace. It wouldn't reflect your tastes or your desires. You probably wouldn't feel comfortable asserting yourself at all. You'd defer to the king for every decision. You'd be struck dumb, as if you didn't exist at all.

But because the king truly wants a relationship with you, he gives you space in which you can grow and develop and become your own person. He tells you to build the palace to your own taste, while keeping His needs

in mind. Then, when you're ready, He will enter and join you. This way he won't overpower you, and you won't dissolve in his presence.

In the analogy, you and the king may be very far apart but you're still alike in that you are both human beings. But in the case of G-d and His creations, the gap between us is vast and unbridgeable. He is the Creator and we are the created. Even if he "gives us space," we are still completely dependent on Him for our existence. We may feel ourselves independent but we only exist because He desires us to be.

When G-d moved Himself aside, so to speak, He created a space in which the world could exist. In Chassidic terminology this act is called *tzimtzum*, withdrawal. This very first act of separation is what allows for creation, but also allows for chaos and conflict. It was the initial crack in G-d's perfect, ultimate unity. But although *tzimtzum* might seem to be a negative event, in itself it's an expression of G-d's love and kindness: He had to move Himself aside to give us room to exist.²

Now, when an infinite Being wants to create a space where He's concealed, what does He do? He makes it as different from Himself as He possibly can. He makes it the polar opposite of Himself. The initial *tzimtzum* was the first of a series of contractions that led to a chain of universes, each successively less spiritual than the previous one, culminating in the physical universe, the coarsest, darkest and most fragmented of them all.³ Our world is the lowest of the low, the furthest you can possibly get from G-d. He is sublime; the world is mundane. He is infinite, the world is finite. He is the ultimate in giving and compassion; the world is selfish and petty. He is goodness; the world is a dark and dirty place where the wicked prosper.⁴

He created a world where He is hidden to the utmost, because He wanted us to look for Him. In this world, every perception that we have is distorted. Light appears dark, good appears bad, sweet appears bitter and right appears wrong. G-d wanted a home in *this* world, because the essence of unity is to bring extremes together. The further apart the two extremes are, the greater the energy is needed to unite them. This is where

G-dliness is most expressed: Not in the infinite and not in the finite, but in the fusion and harmony between them. Does that sound impossible? Paradoxical? A contradiction in terms? Absolutely. And that's exactly where the Divine essence resides—in the realm that completely transcends logic, that transcends boundaries entirely.

So, to get back to the story of Adam and Eve.

Before G-d created the world, he “consulted with the souls of the righteous.”⁵ Our souls were unified with G-d well before the first *tzimtzum*, with no differentiation. But what G-d really wanted was a relationship, and a relationship is not possible unless there's some distance, some independence. So, he asked us to go “down there.” He wanted us to go to that very dark, distant place, the furthest extreme you can possibly get from G-d. He said, “This is where I want to live. And I want you to build a home for me.”

He didn't send us away from Him against our will. He asked us first.⁶ And we signed on to G-d's plan to make a “dwelling place in the lowest world.”⁷

So Adam and Eve were created as souls in bodies and placed in the Garden of Eden. When Eve looked around she said to herself, “This doesn't look so bad. This looks quite beautiful, in fact. Where is the concealment? Where is the distance from G-d that I'm supposed to bridge? I don't see it.” She wondered what the point of creation was if G-d just wanted to park them in the garden. Was this it? Or was there more to it?

Along came the snake to give her some perspective. Now, who was the snake? According to Chassidic teachings, he was a big star! A *shemesh gadol*.⁸ He was very clever, more sophisticated than any of the creatures that G-d had made.⁹ And he explained the situation clearly to Eve: “For G-d knows that on the day that you eat thereof, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like G-d, knowing good and evil.”¹⁰ In other words, as long as you stay in the garden you'll be safe and coddled. You'll be just another one of G-d's creatures. But that's not what G-d wants! He wants a partner, an

equal! He wants you to struggle, to choose between good and evil. To stay in the garden is to take the easy way out!

This was the impossible, paradoxical choice that Adam and Eve were given. Not to eat from the tree meant to accept the status quo. They'd be comfortable and well taken care of for the rest of their lives. In fact, the "rest of their lives" would last forever. But that would be it. No growth, no advancement. No leaping over obstacles to unite with G-d. No transforming of the physical into spiritual. No merging of the finite with the infinite to create something new.

The paradox they faced is the inverse, the mirror image of the familiar paradox that we face every day of our lives. If G-d wants us to be good, why does He make it so difficult? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do we have to struggle? But their question was the opposite. If G-d wants us to grow, why did He put us in the garden? Why did He make it so easy? Where's the challenge? Where's the struggle? Eat from every tree in the garden except one? Is that it?

So Eve accepted the argument of the snake. What G-d really wanted was for her to become like G-d, to "know good and evil." To become independent and disconnected from G-d, more of her own person. She ate from the fruit and gave it to Adam as well.

Did they make the right choice?

Well, it's complicated.¹¹

They chose to sin. They chose to violate G-d's command and eat from the tree He told them not to eat. They consciously chose to separate themselves from Him and to leave the beautiful garden He had made for them.

But were they wrong?

When we sin, we usually choose the path of least resistance. We choose what's easier, more comfortable, more convenient. Adam and Eve had no obvious benefit from eating from the tree. They had millions of other trees

to choose from. They had each other. They lacked for nothing. For them, the comfortable, easy, obvious choice was to stay in the garden. By eating from the tree they were choosing pain, choosing death, choosing knowledge of good and evil, choosing conflict and ambiguity over wholesomeness and naivete. They chose to plunge themselves down into the depths in the belief that this was G-d's intent.

So, the nature of their choice was ambiguous, and the nature of their sin is ambiguous as well. Sometimes when we're faced with a paradoxical choice, it's better not to be so clever or sophisticated, not to overthink things. Maybe they could have left it up to G-d to work it out. Being sly, *arum*, like the serpent isn't always an advantage.¹² But they made their choice, the die was cast, and here we are.

The consequence for Adam was that he'd have to toil to work the earth and it would produce thorns and thistles. He'd earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. The consequence for Eve was the pain of childbirth and childrearing. And both would die.

The nature of the physical world is fundamentally unstable. Things fall apart; they don't fall together. Stability is a function of unity, of closeness and connection to the Divine. Distance from G-d leads to impermanence and fragmentation. Adam and Eve became independent from G-d, but also from each other. Man and wife no longer have an essential, innate harmony; it takes tremendous effort to build a relationship and keep it going. Their own children quickly fell to fighting and killing, and humankind has been at it ever since. To build something and keep it in order takes tremendous work and effort. Hours or years of painstaking labor can be undone in seconds. This is the natural law known as entropy—when left alone, conditions in the world gradually decline into disorder.

Every day in the post-Eden world is a struggle for survival, a struggle to preserve and maintain whatever we've built up. At any moment we can fade into nothingness, along with everything we've ever done or acquired. This gives our lives an essential fragility. What is our life worth and what are we working for? As we say in our morning prayers:

What are we? What is our life? What are our acts of kindness? What is our righteousness? ... Are not all the mighty men as nothing before You? Famous men as though they had never been? The wise as if they were without knowledge? And men of understanding, as if they were devoid of intelligence? For most of their actions are a waste, and the days of their life are trivial in Your presence. The superiority of man over the beast is nil, for all is futile.

Are Adam and Eve responsible for this state of affairs? They have a valid complaint to G-d. You put us in this situation. You caused the rift in creation. You concealed Yourself. We didn't break it, You did. And because we didn't break it, there is only so much we can do to fix it. We can repair the sin of the Tree of Knowledge up to a point, but the rest will have to be done by You.

This is a dialogue that we've been having with G-d since the dawn of human history. We tell G-d that we've had enough. We've fixed as much as we can fix. We're done. **"Take us back, O G-d, to Yourself, And let us come back."**¹³

And G-d says to us, no, you first: **"Turn back to Me, and I will turn back to you."**¹⁴

But we have the last word, as the scroll of Lamentations concludes on an uplifting note: "Master of the universe, it is up to you... **"Take us back, O G-d, to Yourself, And let us come back. Renew our days as of old!"**¹⁵

But, to go a bit deeper, the point of sending us down to earth was not the separation, it was the reunification. In G-d's eyes, the *tzimtzum*, the withdrawal, was worth it if it leads to greater closeness and connection. G-d gave us a choice, and we bought into it as well. G-d gave us this fragmented world, the raw materials, leaving it up to us to fuse them together, to make sense out of them on our own. In a sense, this is G-d's greatest gift to us: He imparts to us some of His own creative ability. He didn't give us a finished world but an imperfect one, and invites us to share it with Him and build it together with Him. And because the withdrawal was for our sake, it means

that G-d never really left. He's right there hovering over us, nurturing us, giving us all the life-force and energy and tools that we need to survive and thrive, so we can be partners with Him.

CHAPTER 4

Emotional Labor: the Peaceful Battle



He redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that came upon me, because of the many were with me.

— Psalms, 55:19

“To love the L-rd your G-d and to serve Him with all your heart.” Which is the service of G-d that is performed in the heart? This is referring to prayer.

— Tractate Taanit, 2a

Learning to manage conflict is hard work that often involves deferring gratification, sublimating one’s own ego and desires, and putting ourselves to the side. We need to learn to look at a situation from another person’s perspective, even when we find it offensive and off-

putting. And it's a constant process. Winning one battle over ourselves isn't enough. We win one, then wake up the next morning and start all over again. And sometimes we backslide. We might feel like we won a victory over ourselves and then find ourselves slipping back into the same habits.

When you're on the job, you're trained to stay polite and unflappable in the face of belligerence and provocation. Social psychology has a term for this: "Emotional labor," referring to the work we do to manage our emotions when interacting with other people.⁵⁸ Working in customer service or any profession that involves a lot of interaction with the public demands emotional labor. People who work in healthcare, in particular, need to train themselves to express compassion for people who are suffering and in pain.

In the course of our workday, there can be times when we are not feeling particularly calm or compassionate and the emotional labor becomes more difficult. There are two ways we can handle this: One is called "surface acting"—that's when you put a smile on your face or say the right words but don't feel them inside. The other is "deep acting"—when you actually invoke compassion within yourself for that person's suffering.⁵⁹

Which one do you think is more difficult? You might think that digging deep inside yourself to feel compassion for a stranger is more demanding. But research shows that it's the reverse. It turns out that as human beings, we're not very good at faking emotions. It becomes stressful and anxiety-producing when we're forced to do so for long periods of time.⁶⁰

In Chassidic terminology there's a term for this which sounds almost synonymous: *avodah sheb'lev*, or labor of the heart. This refers mostly to our service of G-d through prayer, but actually this labor takes place throughout the day in many different settings. It's the work we do to integrate the physical side and spiritual side of our personality. Just as in our work life, we can do "superficial labor"—training ourselves to say the right thing and do the right thing even when our heart isn't in it. It's certainly better than nothing; better than flying off the handle or indulging our whims all day. But putting on a show and suppressing our true emotions is stressful and

not sustainable in the long term. What's healthier is to do the "deep labor," to really invoke in ourselves a feeling and passion for what we're doing.

It's important to emphasize that our daily battle is *not* between the body and soul. There actually is no conflict whatsoever between meeting the needs of the body and the soul. Taking care of our body is a mitzvah and sacred obligation. Our body is given to us as a gift from G-d and it's up to us to treat our body with care to keep it functioning optimally. The desire of the body is to live and to be healthy and well. Your body doesn't want to stuff its face with ice cream, lie in bed all day, or fly into rages. It doesn't want drugs or alcohol or cigarettes. It wants clean living, and when it doesn't get what it needs, it lets us know with uncomfortable physical symptoms and sensations.

So if our body doesn't want any of those things, then who does?

Enter the animal soul.

The animal soul is the seat of our drives, desires and passions. The animal soul has intellect and emotions. In fact, it's an entire personality unto itself, sort of an alt-personality to the G-dly soul.

The entire book of Tanya, the fundamental work of Chabad Chassidic philosophy authored by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, is dedicated to understanding the personality of the animal soul and its conflict with the G-dly soul. Under normal circumstances, these two personalities are battling inside of us constantly. They're like two armies battling for control over a city. When one goes up, the other goes down.⁶¹ But having a constant conflict inside of us is exhausting and draining. It saps us of energy that we could devote to more constructive things.

Chassidus teaches us that while the battle may be unavoidable, there's a way to fight this battle peacefully.

How so? Isn't that a contradiction in terms?

This concept is elaborated on in a series of Chassidic discourses entitled *Padah B'shalom*, from the verse in Psalms, "He redeemed my soul in

peace from the battle that came upon me."⁶² This verse refers to the ongoing battle between the animal soul and the G-dly soul, which plays out over many different fronts over the course of our day and the course of our life.

What does it mean to be "redeemed in peace" from a battle? If it's a battle, it's not peaceful. If there's peace, the battle is over. The word for battle used in the verse is *krav*, which refers to a brawl or wrestle as in the Israeli term for martial arts, *krav maga*. The word *krav* is related to *kiruv*, meaning closeness. The very term is an oxymoron. On the one hand, when you're at war with someone you're as far apart from each other as you can get. And you can fight a battle from a distance, carpet bombing them or throwing arrows at them. But the height of the battle is when you are physically entangled in hand-to-hand combat.

Since the animal soul and the G-dly soul occupy the same body, they're always in a closely fought battle with each other. There are some general principles to keep in mind regarding the nature of the animal soul:

The animal soul is **SELFISH**. Self-centeredness is the single most important organizing principle for the animal soul. Its primary consideration is, "What's in it for me?" Now, the animal soul can be made to understand that prosocial behavior is good for society as a whole. I'll be nice to you so that you'll be nice to me. But it's very transactional. It has no sense of being altruistic and doing good for its own sake. The animal soul can never really be talked out of its basic self-centeredness, and this narcissism will tend to pop up again and again at the most inconvenient times.

The animal soul is **INTELLIGENT**. This is an important point to keep in mind. It's not stupid. It's not irrational. It can be very clever and deliberate in pursuing its desires. And because of its intelligence, we can easily become tripped up and confused. Our animal soul is great at rationalizing and coming up with truly brilliant reasoning to explain why what it wants is correct and ideal. The intellectual battle between the animal and G-dly soul will be discussed in more depth in a future chapter.

The animal soul is **ENERGETIC**. Now, maybe you think laziness comes from the animal soul. Each of us has an animal soul that's unique, with a different blend of personality traits, which will also be discussed in depth in a future chapter. But as a general rule, while the animal soul can be lazy to do things it's not interested in, it has tremendous drive when pursuing something it wants. Part of our battle is to learn how to channel this passion and drive into good things.

Is the animal soul evil? Not necessarily. We are all tempted by different things and drawn towards different things, but most of us don't consciously desire to be evil or destructive. The animal soul is just extremely self-centered and acts only in its self interest. And unchecked, extreme self-interest can lead to terrible evil.

Now that we understand a little of what the animal soul is all about, what about the G-dly soul? What does it want?

The G-dly soul is a part of G-d.⁶³ That's about it. Its chief desire is to be close to G-d. Whatever brings you closer to G-d, it wants, and whatever takes you further away from G-d, it doesn't want. Your G-dly soul and my G-dly soul and everyone's G-dly soul are all one. We all want the same thing, and we all want things to be good for one another. On the level of the G-dly soul there is no conflict. We all get along and support each other perfectly.⁶⁴

Since the G-dly soul only desires closeness to G-d, it isn't exactly thrilled about living in this world. It's extremely reluctant to tear itself away from the divine resplendence of the higher spiritual worlds to take up residence in a physical world, in a physical body. In fact, living in a physical body is a very painful experience for the soul. It's cut off from everything it knows and loves and craves. It's in exile, so to speak.

But, as we read in chapter 1, the G-dly soul knowingly and willingly makes this journey, because this ultimately is what G-d wants. He wants a home in *this* world. He wants us to take the place that's furthest from him, the most distant, with the least awareness of him, and make it G-dly.

So, the G-dly soul gets its assignment and is sent down to earth, and is designated a partner. Basically, the G-dly soul is told, Hello, meet your animal soul who will be your assistant in this mission. But it will be up to *you* to figure out how to get your animal soul to work with you.

And the G-dly soul *needs* the animal soul. The G-dly soul is absolutely dependent on the animal soul because without it, none of the processes we need to keep life going in the physical world can be carried out.

A soul on its way down from heaven to earth met a soul on its return journey, from earth back to heaven.

“How is it down there on earth?” He yelled out.

“It’s wonderful down there! You can get strings for tzitzis for only two kopecks!”

“Two kopecks for tzitzis strings? Such a priceless mitzvah for such a cheap price? I can’t wait!”

“Aaaaah,” said the seasoned soul to the novice. “Wait till you see what you have to do to earn those two kopecks!”

The G-dly soul is excited to get down into the world where it can perform physical mitzvos like tying tzitzit strings on the edges of its garments. But the G-dly soul knows nothing about shearing or spinning or weaving wool to make tzitzit strings. It has no idea how to go about earning two kopecks to pay for tzitzit strings. It’s completely dependent on the animal soul to navigate this world. The animal soul is like the personal assistant or chauffeur of the G-dly soul.

But the animal soul is not a perfect employee. It’s quirky. It has its own desires and agenda. Sometimes it shows up for work and sometimes it doesn’t. Sometimes it understands its mission and sometimes it doesn’t. This is what the G-dly soul has to deal with, day in day out. It has a critical mission to fulfill that can *only* be done with the help of its assistant, the animal soul, who can be quite obstreperous and unreliable. And the G-dly soul cannot fire or get rid of its animal soul, or they would both die. Quite

a frustration and a headache for the G-dly soul! But if the animal soul and G-dly soul are locked in battle all day, nothing gets done and a lot of energy gets wasted. That's why Chassidus puts so much emphasis on teaching us how to fight this battle *peacefully*.

So, let's get into the heart of the battle.

When the Holy Temple stood in Jerusalem, a big part of our service of G-d was offering up sacrifices on the altar. After the Temple was destroyed, prayer took the place of animal sacrifices. We are offering up the animal inside of us.⁶⁵ Our emotional labor, our service of the heart, is to channel the drives and passions of the animal soul to G-d, to work with it and get it to work with us. Like a farmer harnessing an ox to plow his field, the G-dly soul can accomplish more through working with the animal soul than it could ever achieve on its own.⁶⁶

The main battlefield in the struggle between the animal and G-dly soul is during prayer. Does the G-dly soul want to pray? Does it ever! The G-dly soul *loves* to pray. It would like nothing more than to spend all day praying and being close to G-d. Does the animal soul want to pray? Decidedly not! It gets bored and distracted. It doesn't see the point. So the challenge for the G-dly soul is to get the animal soul interested, to get it to reflect on G-dliness in terms it can understand. The G-dly soul can try to tell the animal soul that we need to pray to G-d for health, food and shelter. This is how the G-dly soul engages with the animal soul, to explain to it on its own terms how it is dependent on G-d.

We see in our lives that the animal soul can be provoked to pray, when it is feeling particularly desperate, lost or in pain. When the pressures of life overwhelm the animal soul, when it feels its resources depleted, then it turns to G-d in prayer, and those prayers have a special urgency and intensity. But when life is smooth and comfortable, the animal soul loses interest.

Another option for the G-dly soul is to short-circuit the animal soul altogether and meditate on G-dliness so intensely that the animal soul

gets blotted out entirely. This approach has its uses, but it's not completely satisfactory because the animal soul tends to pop right back up again after prayer. It's a temporary measure at best.⁶⁷ You can pray with a lot of intensity and passion and then a minute later you're thinking about lunch. It's not that your prayer was not sincere. It's just that in fighting the battle, you weren't completely victorious.⁶⁸ You're a work in progress.

After prayer is when the real work of perfecting and refining the world begins. The G-dly soul wants the inspiration of prayer to last all day. The animal soul wants to get back to its business of eating, drinking, work, and daily affairs. During prayer, the animal soul is in the G-dly soul's turf, but during the day, the G-dly soul is on its turf, trying to insert itself to make sure that all the body's functions are carried out for the sake of Heaven. And so the battle goes on, day by day, with all its ups and downs.

Generally speaking, within any given person the animal soul and G-dly soul are well matched in temperament, intelligence, energy level, etc.⁶⁹ With such a balance of power, control of the body tends to fluctuate between the animal and G-dly souls. The G-dly soul has thoughts and feelings; the animal soul has thoughts and feelings. The G-dly soul has passions and desires; the animal soul has passions and desires. Sometimes we feel excited and passionate about G-d; other times we feel passionate about baseball or the stock market or our chocolate chip cookie recipe.

But the G-dly soul has a secret weapon. There is one power the G-dly soul possesses that has no counterpart in the animal soul. This is called the Yechidah, the essence of the soul, which never comes down into the body but remains connected to G-d, its source.

Under normal conditions, the Yechidah does not make an appearance. The real work of engaging with the animal soul is relegated to the lower soul powers, Nefesh, Ruach and Neshamah. Only under conditions of dire emergency does the Yechidah kick in. When the G-dly soul is at an ebb, when it senses that it's about to lose the battle to the animal soul, G-d forbid, the Yechidah roars to life. It's our Jewish survival instinct, the part of us that come what may, cannot and will not be separated from G-d.⁷⁰

When our Yechidah is activated, then it's checkmate for the animal soul. Its desires and passions fall by the wayside, and the person's entire focus is solely on spiritual survival.

But a knockout punch of the animal soul by the G-dly soul isn't really the goal. The ideal really is to remake the animal soul in the image of the Divine soul. Over time, just by strength of habit, the animal soul gradually becomes transformed. It no longer has the same tastes and desires that it had before. It's like a child outgrowing his taste for candy or games as he matures. A more mature animal soul has desires that are naturally more in sync with the G-dly soul. So our superpower, the Yechidah, makes an appearance only occasionally. Most of the day it may seem like the animal soul is in charge. We're not doing anything that looks manifestly G-dly. Our challenge and goal is to make our everyday activities more G-dly and let the Divine soul shine through in everything we do. That's the true peaceful resolution of the battle, when the animal soul and Divine soul function together as a unit.

We experience this truce between the animal and G-dly soul once every week on Shabbat. We take a temporary break from our workday toil to spend the day immersed in prayer and spirituality. At the same time, the animal soul gets to savor the day of rest, as it is a mitzvah to enjoy extra delicacies. Shabbat is a foretaste of the World to Come, when this harmony between the animal soul and the G-dly soul will be permanent.

CHAPTER 5

The Case for Mitzvot



Our sages state: The Holy One blessed be He desired to bring merit to Israel; therefore he increased for them Torah and mitzvos

— Mishnah Makot, 3:16)

Run to do an easy mitzvah and run away from sin, because one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah... the reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah

— Avot 4:2

We are here in this world to resolve an essential paradox: How does a G-d who is One express Himself, if there's no other to express Himself to? How do we enter into a relationship with Him without obliterating ourselves in the process? Why does G-d want a home in the physical world? In previous chapters, we explored the *why*

and the *what* of G-d's desire. We've learned that the fullest expression of G-d is through the paradoxical, through bringing extremes together and somehow containing them as one. The more extreme and unbridgeable the divide, the greater the power that unites them. That's why G-d created a world filled with conflict and disunity, with dramatic contrasts and extremes, and gave us the job of remaking it into His home. The remaining question is *how*? How do we go about reconciling the irreconcilable and solving the essential riddle of creation? What tools do we have at our disposal?

G-d had a plan for this. A 613-point plan, to be exact. He gave us the Torah, a list of rules for life, 248 do's and 365 don'ts, also known as mitzvot. A mitzvah is a commandment or good deed, but also has the Aramaic root of *tzavta*, meaning connection.⁷¹ The theme of every mitzvah is to connect us to G-d and ease the conflict inherent in creation.⁷² Each mitzvah that we do is a different tool or approach to create order out of chaos and unity out of fragmentation.

Mitzvot are incredibly variegated, textured, multi-sensory experiences, encompassing every human activity and bodily function. As a popular children's book says, "There are mitzvot to wear and mitzvot to eat; mitzvot for home and for shul and the street; mitzvot for noses and fingers and feet."⁷³ Mitzvot are primarily actions, but include our thoughts and feelings as well. Doing even a single mitzvah is a life-changing experience in which we become entirely submerged and invested.

Despite the celestial underlying theme of mitzvot, they are oddly specific. The entire body of Jewish law is dedicated to defining the parameters of a mitzvah down to the exact size, shape, weight, movement, and time. For example, take the mitzvah of blessing the four kinds on Sukkot. This mitzvah involves taking four different types of vegetation, binding them together and shaking them. There are pages and pages of Jewish law defining exactly what these four types are and what features they must have; how to bind them together; how to shake them; and where and when to make the blessing. This intense focus on the details of

mitzvah observance seems extreme, even obsessive. Why were our sages so preoccupied with the minutiae of the commandments, and why do Torah scholars to this day spend many hours each day poring over texts clarifying the specifics of each mitzvah? Does G-d really care?

The precision of a mitzvah is exactly how it works its power. A mitzvah is a finite, physical vessel for G-d's infinite light. Without the definition provided by Jewish law, the mitzvot would be nice thoughts, nice concepts, but hazy. They would have no way of taking hold in this world, and the merger between finite and infinite would not take place.⁷⁴ The Tanya⁷⁵ describes doing a mitzvah as giving G-d a big hug. He may be dressed in many layers that conceal Him from us, but he's nevertheless inside of those garments and embracing us with every mitzvah that we do.

Embarking on a life of Torah and mitzvot can seem daunting, and indeed, none of us are observing all 613 mitzvot of the Torah. There are certain mitzvot that only apply under certain circumstances, so we may never get that opportunity in our lifetimes. There are other mitzvot that apply only within the land of Israel or only when the Temple in Jerusalem is standing.⁷⁶ So, if you are not observing all the mitzvot at this time, relax—we are all in the same boat. In fact, that's part of the reason that G-d gave us such an abundance of mitzvot, so that wherever we are, whoever we are, we have an opportunity to perform a mitzvah, like plucking a fruit off a tree.⁷⁷

To make mitzvot further accessible to people who may have little experience with them, the Rebbe introduced 10 mitzvah campaigns in the 1960's and '70's.⁷⁸ These ten can be considered "gateway" mitzvot—simple, easy to perform, yet powerful manifestations of the fusion of the finite and the infinite. Each of these mitzvot illustrates a different aspect of healing the essential conflict in creation.

Following the Rebbe's introduction of these mitzvah campaigns, "mitzvah tanks" became a familiar sight in the streets of Manhattan and other cities around the world. These campers emblazoned with mitzvah banners brought "mitzvos on the spot for people on the go," further

underscoring the theme of taking the most intense, profound Divine lights and bringing them into physical form in the most unexpected places.

Below is a brief summary of the meaning and symbolism of these ten iconic mitzvot. To discuss each mitzvah in depth would take many books, and indeed, many have already been written, some of which are referenced below. I encourage all readers to delve into the references for more information about the details of the observance and meaning of these mitzvot.

#1: TEFILLIN

Tefillin are black leather boxes containing parchment scrolls inscribed with Torah verses. The tefillin are tied around the head and upper arm (facing the heart) every weekday morning during prayers, in fulfillment of the verse, “You shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for a reminder between your eyes.”⁷⁹

The word tefillin is related to the word *tefillah*, prayer, and to the word *tofel*, to bind, as in the verse *Naftulei Elokim niftalti im achoti*,⁸⁰ “I have been joined in a Divine bond with my sister.” It also has a root of *tafel*, meaning secondary, the act of setting aside our own desires and feelings to join in a union with G-d.⁸¹ The position of the tefillin, on the head and upper arm, opposite the heart, represent our ongoing effort to resolve the conflict between mind and heart, between intellect and emotions,⁸² and harmonize them both in our service of G-d, which will be elaborated upon in a later chapter.

#2: TZEDAKAH

The mitzvah of giving tzedakah is considered an all-inclusive mitzvah. There are many different things we can do to earn money, and many different things we can spend money on. In other words, money represents the entire spectrum of human need, industry and endeavor. When we give

our money away to charity, it's as if we are giving away our entire self—all the labor that went into earning the money, and all the things we could have bought with that money.⁸³ Just by giving a single coin to charity, you lift up the entire world with it.

When it comes to tzedakah, the repetitive, habitual nature of it is what matters. It's better to give a small sum every day than a large sum once a year. Why is this? For one thing, the point is to make a habit of being generous, not to suffice with a one-time gesture.⁸⁴ Furthermore, *each act* of giving tzedakah creates a union between the upper and lower worlds, joining the finite with the infinite.⁸⁵

The Rebbe spoke about the power of tzedakah on many occasions and encouraged us to make giving a regular part of our day, especially when we are in need of particular blessings and salvation. Tzedakah has the power to bridge divisions and to heal, as the verse in Proverbs (10:2) states, "Charity saves from death" and as our sages say, "Great is charity for it hastens the redemption."⁸⁶

#3: TORAH STUDY:

Of all mitzvot, Torah study is the one that allows us to directly connect with the mind and intellect of G-d in an intense and powerful way.⁸⁷ Refer back to Chapter 2 for a full discussion of how Torah brings peace and unity to the world.

The mitzvah of Torah study is an all-encompassing one, because there are many different topics that one can study, on many different levels. In our generation, Torah is accessible in multiple languages, in many different formats, in print, online and through audiovisual classes that one can join anytime, from anywhere.

During the years of his leadership, the Rebbe introduced multiple Torah campaigns which he tied to the theme of unity. The daily study of a portion of Chumash, Psalms and Tanya was a custom instituted by the Rebbe's

father-in-law, the Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson, but was repeatedly emphasized and reinforced by the Rebbe. In 1981, the Rebbe began a campaign to have every Jew purchase a letter in a “unity” Torah scroll to unite the Jewish people. In 1984, the Rebbe introduced the daily study of Mishneh Torah by Maimonides, which covers all the mitzvot in the Torah, even those that are not in effect today. The Rebbe instituted three tiers of study (three chapters a day for advanced scholars, one chapter a day for average people, and a daily mitzvah for beginners and children) which united all the Jewish people in this campaign.⁸⁸

#4: A HOUSE FULL OF BOOKS

This project, to fill our homes with Jewish books, is an interesting addition to the Rebbe’s mitzvah campaigns. We know that there’s a mitzvah to study Torah, but is there a mitzvah to buy books, per se? The final mitzvah of the Torah is for each Jew to write a Torah scroll,⁸⁹ a very skilled and labor-intensive process. Very few of us are able to write our own Torah, and before the advent of the printing press, very few people had sacred writings in their homes. Today, when books can be mass produced inexpensively, this mitzvah has become accessible for all of us. So, on one level, the campaign to fill our homes with Jewish books may be about using advances in technology for holiness.

Do we need physical books in the age of the Internet? While there is a plethora of Jewish teachings available online, there’s still a benefit to filling your home with tangible books that you can hold and sniff. A home with Jewish books in it feels different. I remember as a child, the sense of security and sanctity I felt from that wall of books, with their leather covers embossed with gold letters. At some point during household renovations, the books were moved to the basement, and I remember the relief when they were finally brought back upstairs to their place of honor on the shelves.

The Torah is G-d’s wisdom condensed into words, ink on parchment.

When we print a Torah book, the ink, the paper, and even the binding become holy and sacred. When we bring these books home, the home becomes sanctified as well. Another step in the process of bridging the gap between the finite and the infinite, the mundane and the divine.

#5: MEZUZAH

The mitzvah of mezuzah is to affix a parchment scroll inscribed with Biblical verses to our doorpost as a symbol of G-d's protection. By putting a mezuzah on our door, we're announcing to the world that this is a Jewish home, and we designate our *entire* home with all its contents as a dwelling for G-d. Whether we're coming or going, our last act is to reach up to touch the mezuzah and kiss it—a tangible reminder that we take G-d with us wherever we go. Putting a mezuzah on our door empowers us to integrate our external persona—the superficial side that goes out to engage with the world—with our true internal self that we reveal behind closed doors. For a Jew, the ultimate goal is that there be no “inside” or “outside,” but that the entire world should be suffused with awareness of G-d.⁹⁰

#6: LIGHTING SHABBAT CANDLES

Every mitzvah that we do brings Divine energy and light into this world, but only the mitzvah of Shabbat candles merges that radiance with the physical glow of the candles. Especially in these times of spiritual darkness, the lights of Shabbat illuminate our path so we will not stumble, regardless of the obstacles we face.

The act of lighting candles ushers in the peace of Shabbat, which is a foretaste of the ultimate peace of the Messianic era, when all the inherent conflicts within creation will be resolved and the underlying divine purpose will be revealed. Every woman who has lit Shabbat candles knows that feeling of instant relief that floods over you when the hectic Friday afternoon rush recedes and the tranquility of Shabbat enters. The candles

cast a captivating spell over the entire household, promoting peace and harmony, with aftereffects that last the entire week.⁹¹

#7: FAMILY PURITY

The relationship between husband and wife is the prototype for all relationships that exist in creation. G-d created the world with masculine and feminine energies, opposite yet equal, with the goal of synthesizing them and making peace between them. By bringing sanctity into our marriage, we become a receptacle for G-d's Infinite creative energy, as expressed by bringing children into the world.⁹²

The relationship between husband and wife has many layers. Each couple has a unique struggle to merge their individual desires and personalities into one unit. All of us need help and support in this journey from our third Partner, Who blesses our marriage with sanctity and harmony. We invite the third Partner into our lives through observance of the laws of family purity, which regulate our intimate life based on a woman's natural rhythms. The couple separates during the woman's monthly menses and reunites after she counts seven pure days and immerses in a mikvah. The cycle of separation followed by reunion closely tracks the ebb and flow of divine revelation in our lives. Sometimes G-d seems very close and present in our lives and sometimes He seems very distant, yet the distance propels us forward to connect with Him again.⁹³

#8: KEEPING KOSHER

If our job here in this world is to fuse together the physical and spiritual, no act accomplishes that quite as much as eating. Whatever we eat enters our body and becomes fuel to sustain all its functions.

Following the kosher laws is a way to refine the physical act of eating and make the body a proper vehicle for holiness. It also gives us the opportunity to extend that holiness to the animals, plants and minerals

from which our diet derives. Some foods can be directly elevated through being eaten, while other foods are refined by *not* eating them—by avoiding them entirely. And, of course, not every substance is edible. Through keeping a kosher kitchen, everything we use in the process—our dishes, our sink, our appliances, the walls themselves—are uplifted. The Divine energy that permeates the universe comes to rest in our humble abode.

In addition to following the kosher laws, another aspect that makes our eating sacred is when we generously share our food with others. In 1988, the Rebbe introduced another element to the Kosher Campaign: to affix a charity box to the wall of our kitchen. The pushka serves as a visible reminder that G-d's blessings are not for us alone. When we're in the kitchen preparing food for our family, the pushka signals us to share G-d's abundance with others, and He will reciprocate by showering His infinite blessings upon our home.⁹⁴

#9: JEWISH EDUCATION

What is the secret of Jewish survival? How are we still alive and thriving after generation after generation of expulsions, oppression and attempted extermination? The Jewish people is the most successful multi-generational franchise in history, and it's all thanks to our commitment to Jewish education. It's the link between past, present and future.

Before G-d gave us the Torah on Mount Sinai, He asked the Jewish people who would be their guarantors that the Torah would not be abandoned. The Jews offered their elders and scholars, but G-d was not satisfied. Finally they said, "Our children will be our guarantors."⁹⁵ Three thousand plus years later, we're still at our mission, still teaching it to our children and to everyone else we know.

While Jewish education primarily centers around the young, this mitzvah applies to teaching anyone, starting with ourselves. In order to inspire others, we need to first inspire ourselves. Enthusiasm is contagious!

#10: LOVE YOUR FELLOW JEW

While all the mitzvot in the Torah represent unity in a symbolic way, ahavat Yisroel is the one mitzvah where the theme of unity is explicit. This mitzvah campaign reinforces our obligation to love our fellow as ourselves, to encourage them and uplift them and help them in every way possible.

Strengthening in observance of this mitzvah also goes the furthest in repairing the basic split in creation that led to the exile. The second Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed because of senseless hatred and divisiveness. The key to rebuilding it is through senseless love—unconditional giving and acts of kindness.

On October 20, 1991, CNN correspondent Gary Tuchman approached the Rebbe and asked him what his message to the world was about Moshiach. The Rebbe answered, “Moshiach is ready to come now. It is only on our part to do something additional in the realm of goodness and kindness.”⁹⁶

SPREADING OUTWARD

The hallmark of the Rebbe’s mitzvah campaigns is their very public nature. Indeed, many other Jewish leaders struggled to understand the Rebbe’s approach, and the mitzvah campaigns generated heated opposition. How was it appropriate to send tender yeshivah students to the streets to offer random people the opportunity to do a mitzvah? Wasn’t that putting their own education at risk? And wasn’t it dangerous or, at the very least, off-putting to approach people who were not necessarily receptive?

I confess to some discomfort myself with “going out on *mitzayim*,” approaching strangers and asking them “Are you Jewish?” As a shy, rather inhibited person, I prefer to use writing as a tool for reaching fellow Jews. But the Rebbe addresses this inhibition as well.⁹⁷ One commandment in Israel was to establish “cities of refuge” for people who committed

negligent homicide, where they would be protected from the vengeance of the victim's family. In Chassidic teachings, the concept of cities of refuge represents the entire idea of *teshuvah*, return to G-d. When we've done wrong, we need to retreat to a refuge for the soul where we can meditate and make amends. As part of the commandment to establish cities of refuge, there was also an obligation to post signs all along the road pointing the way to the city of refuge. Similarly, in our day all of us have an obligation to serve as living "road signs" to help others find the way to spiritual refuge.

True, it can be awkward to literally stand at a roadside offering people Shabbat candles or tefillin. It would be far easier to retreat into our own comfort zone. But when we truly care for another person and understand the value of a mitzvah for that individual and for the entire world, it becomes easier to brave our own fears and self-consciousness.

A NEW ERA

When we do a mitzvah, do we need to be consciously aware that we're doing a mitzvah? For example, if someone is vegetarian and happens to consume only kosher products, do they get credit for keeping kosher? The answer is yes. As long as you did a good deed (or refrained from doing a bad deed), your mitzvot will still have a powerful impact on the universe, bringing healing and harmony to all of creation. As another example, if a coin falls out of your pocket and a poor person finds it and benefits from it, you get the credit for doing a mitzvah.⁹⁸ Arguably, none of us are aware of the true impact of our mitzvot, because it will not be revealed to us until Moshiach comes.⁹⁹ Each mitzvah that we do fuses the physical with the spiritual and draws Divine light into this world, but we don't see it. We don't sense it. Through study of Chassidus, we are given just a hint of the magnificence of each good deed.

When the Rebbe introduced the mitzvah campaigns, the connection of doing mitzvot and bringing Moshiach was implied, but never made explicit. In 1991, the Rebbe announced a fundamental change. All along

we've been working to promote Torah and mitzvot while focusing on the meaning and impact of each mitzvah for itself. Until now we have done mitzvot to prepare and refine the world for the coming of Moshiach. But now the work of refinement is done. Our work now is to ready ourselves to actually receive Moshiach. All these generations, we've been drawing peace, harmony and light into the world through our mitzvot, but we were oblivious to those effects. Now the time has come for us to be able to enjoy the fruits of our labor and to experience the promised era of peace and tranquility, the time of Moshiach.¹⁰⁰

ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 1

¹ Bereishit 2:16-17

² See Maamar Asher Bara, 14 Kislev, Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat vol. 4, p. 83.

³ See Miller, Moshe, Shattered vessels: Introduction to the Ari's concept of shevirat hakeilim. Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380568/jewish/Shattered-Vessels.htm

⁴ Tanya Chapter 6, Chapter 36

⁵ Bereishit Rabba 8:7. Ruth Rabba 2:3

⁶ See Sefer Hasichos 5751, Vol. 2, pp. 799-800

⁷ Tanchuma Naso 16

⁸ Sanhedrin 59b

⁹ Bereishit 3:1

¹⁰ Ibid., 3:5

¹¹ An extensive discussion of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge and its consequences can be found in Basi L'Gani, a series of Chassidic discourses delivered annually by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, based on the final discourse of his father-in-law, Rabbi Joseph I. Schneersohn. For more analysis of the paradoxical choice of Adam and Eve, see the maamar of Basi L'Gani 1971 in Sefer Hamaamarim Basi L'Gani, vol. 2, p. 41

¹² See Likutei Sichot Vol.16, p. 160 and Vol. 33, p. 83. According to commentators, Eve arguably sinned because she did not hear the command from G-d herself and relied on second-hand information. G-d corrected this when the Torah was given and he directed Moses to speak to the women first.

¹³ Eicha 5:21. See Midrash Eichah Rabba, 5:21

¹⁴ Malachi 3:6

¹⁵ Eicha Rabba, 5:21

CHAPTER 2

- ¹⁶ Bereishit 4:26; see Rashi's commentary on verse. For more details on the generation of Enosh, see https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/3136200/jewish/Everything-About-Enosh.htm
- ¹⁷ Bereishit 6:5-6
- ¹⁸ Zohar Vol. I, 122:3-4
- ¹⁹ Sanhedrin 97a
- ²⁰ Bereishit 1:5
- ²¹ Nachmanides on Bereishit 2:3
- ²² Correspondence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to the Kabbalist Rabbi Meir Abuchatzzeira, dated 25 Elul, 1950, published in *Igrot Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 478. Translated into English by Rabbi Eliyahu Tauger in *I Will Write It In Their Hearts*, Vol. 6, letter 759.
- ²³ See Posner, Eliezer, *On the Meaning of Three*. Chabad.org. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/608781/jewish/On-the-Meaning-of-Three.htm
- ²⁴ See Tauber, Yanki, *The Third Millennium*. Meaningful Life Center. <https://www.meaningfullife.com/third-millennium/>
- ²⁵ Tanya Ch. 36-37
- ²⁶ Shabbat 88a
- ²⁷ Rambam Hilchos Megillah v'Chanuka, 4:14
- ²⁸ Mishlei 3:17
- ²⁹ *Likutei Sichot* vol. 3, p. 887
- ³⁰ Tanya ch. 5
- ³¹ Tanya ch. 52
- ³² Devarim 29:9-10
- ³³ Sichah of Shabbat Parshat Bamidbar 5742. During this talk the Rebbe highlighted the importance of purchasing a letter in the Sefer Torah written to unite all Jews, since the Torah creates a unity between us greater than any other mitzvah.
- ³⁴ In the upper worlds as well, there are various levels of differentiation, with the ultimate level of oneness being *atzmus or ein sof*, G-d's essential, infinite light, which is entirely undifferentiated. See *Heichaltzu*, chapter 28.
- ³⁵ See Tanya, chapter 32
- ³⁶ See *Heichaltzu*, chapters 18-20
- ³⁷ Tanya, ch. 32

CHAPTER 3

- ³⁸ Tractate Chullin, 60a
- ³⁹ Tractate Shavuot 9a
- ⁴⁰ Hitvaaduyot 5744, Shabbat Shuvah, p. 58
- ⁴¹ Schneerson, Rabbi Joseph I. Sefer Maamarim Kuntresim, Vol. 1, p. 382
- ⁴² Midrash Tanchuma Mishpatim 9:5
- ⁴³ Micah 7:18. See Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat vol. 6, pp. 2-9.
- ⁴⁴ “For Israel is a child and I loved him,” Hosea 11:1. See Sefer Hamaamarim 5716, p. 380.
- ⁴⁵ Psalms 107:23
- ⁴⁶ Schneerson, Rabbi Joseph I. Sefer Hazichronos vol. 2, p 27-28
- ⁴⁷ Sefer Hasichot 5725 vol. 1, p. 296-297
- ⁴⁸ Bereishit Rabba 6:3
- ⁴⁹ Bereishit 25:23
- ⁵⁰ Tractate Sanhedrin, 97a.
- ⁵¹ Chronicles I, 22:9
- ⁵² Zohar 2:85a. The 15 generations are: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Peretz, Chetzron, Ram, Aminadav, Nachshon, Salmon, Boaz, Oved, Yishai, David, Solomon.
- ⁵³ Sefer Hasichot 5752, vol. 1, po. 155-161
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 63. Also see Tauber, Yanki, The Cosmic Twins. Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/35866/jewish/The-Cosmic-Twins.htm, and Marcus, Yosef, Cosmic Rendezvous. Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/379353/jewish/Cosmic-Rendezvous.htm
- ⁵⁵ Likutei Sichot vol. 20, pp. 108-115
- ⁵⁶ Sefer Maamarim Melukat vol. 2, p. 181; Vol. 3, p. 25
- ⁵⁷ Liturgy for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

CHAPTER 4

- ⁵⁸ Hochschild, Arlie. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983
- ⁵⁹ Trzeciak, Stephen and Mazarrelli, Anthony. *Compassionomics: The revolutionary scientific evidence that caring makes a difference*, pp. 265-267. Studer Group, 2019

- ⁶⁰ Jeung, Da Yee et al. "Emotional Labor and Burnout: A Review of the Literature." *Yonsei medical journal* vol. 59,2 (2018): 187-193. doi:10.3349/ymj.2018.59.2.187
- ⁶¹ Tanya Chapter 11
- ⁶² This verse is well known in Chassidic culture because of a famous song associated with the Chassidic holiday on the 19th of Kislev. The first Rebbe of Chabad and author of Tanya, known as the Alter Rebbe, was reading this verse in Psalms when he was released from Czarist prison, so this chapter became the theme song for the celebration of his liberation. His son, Rabbi Dov Ber, the Mittler Rebbe, was also imprisoned and released on the 10th of Kislev, the day of the month when this verse is recited. The Mittler Rebbe delivered a well-known discourse on these words, which was elaborated upon by subsequent generations of Rebbes.
- ⁶³ Tanya, chapter 2
- ⁶⁴ Ibid, chapter 32
- ⁶⁵ Likutei Sichot vol. 1, p. 205
- ⁶⁶ Proverbs 14:4. See Likutei Sichot vol. 18, p. 53
- ⁶⁷ Sefer Maamarim Melukat vol. 3, p. 27
- ⁶⁸ Tanya Chapter 12
- ⁶⁹ Kohelet 7:14; see Tanya Chapter 6
- ⁷⁰ Hayom Yom, 25 Tammuz. See Sefer Maamarim Melukat vol. 5, p. 83

CHAPTER 5

- ⁷¹ Torah Or Bereishit 6b
- ⁷² See Freeman, Tzvi, "What is a mitzvah?" Chabad.org https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1438516/jewish/Mitzvah.htm retrieved 1/17/2021
- ⁷³ Rosenfeld, Dina. *Tiny Treasures: The Wonderful World of a Jewish Child*. Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, 1988.
- ⁷⁴ Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Tanya, Ch. 52, and Iggeret Hakodesh, ch. 3. The Alter Rebbe explains that each mitzvah has the effect of "uniting *kudsha brich hu* [the Holy One, Blessed be He] with *Shechintei*, the Divine presence that descends and rests within this world. That's why before doing a mitzvah we say *l'sheim yichud*, "For the sake of the union of the Holy One, blessed be He, with His *Shechinah*." A mitzvah joins the light of G-d that is above the world and surrounds it with the light that enters the world and suffuses it. See also *Lessons in Tanya* by Rabbi Sholom B. Wineberg on the above chapters.
- ⁷⁵ Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Tanya, Chapter 4

- ⁷⁶ See Danziger, Eliezer. “How Many of the Torah’s Commandments Still Apply?” Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/541686/jewish/How-Many-of-the-Torahs-Commandments-Still-Apply.htm
- ⁷⁷ See Fried, Rabbi Yerachmiel. “Why does G-d give us so many mitzvot?” *Texas Jewish Post*, March 3, 2016, <https://tjpnnews.com/why-does-god-give-us-so-many-mitzvos/>
- ⁷⁸ For more details and resources on the ten mitzvah campaigns, see “The Rebbe’s 10-Point Mitzvah Campaign for Jewish Awareness and Observance” Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/62228/jewish/10-Point-Mitzvah-Campaign.htm
- ⁷⁹ Devarim 6:8
- ⁸⁰ Bereishit 30:8
- ⁸¹ Schneerson, Rabbi Menachem M. *Hisvaaduyot* 5743, Vol. 2, p. 972
- ⁸² Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazaken, Or Hachaim, 25:5. Tanya Ch. 41. See also Sichos Kodesh 5712, Rosh Hashanah.
- ⁸³ *Hayom Yom*, 6 Tammuz; Tanya, Igeret Hakodesh, ch. 16
- ⁸⁴ Maimonides, commentary on Mishnah Avot 3:15
- ⁸⁵ Tanya, Igeret Hakodesh, ch. 21.
- ⁸⁶ Baba Basra 10a
- ⁸⁷ Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, Tanya, Ch. 5
- ⁸⁸ See “Studying Rambam daily: What, when, how and why,” Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/900030/jewish/Studying-Rambam-Daily.htm
- ⁸⁹ Devarim 31:19
- ⁹⁰ Sichot Kodesh 5743, vol. 2, p. 928. See also Sichot Kodesh 5744, vol. 3, p. 2157 and
- ⁹¹ Sichot Kodesh 5735, vol. 1, pp. 127-133. During this talk the Rebbe introduced the Shabbat Candle Lighting mitzvah campaign.
- ⁹² Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat, vol. 5, Maamar Padah B’shalom Nafshi, p. 63.
- ⁹³ Handleman, Susan. On the essence of ritual impurity. *Total Immersion: A Mikvah Anthology* edited by Rivka Slonim, Jason Aronson, 1996. https://www.chabad.org/theJewishWoman/article_cdo/aid/1542/jewish/On-the-Essence-of-Ritual-Impurity.htm
- ⁹⁴ Sichah of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, 24 Elul, 1988.
- ⁹⁵ Shir Hashirim Rabba 1:4. Tanchuma Vayigash 2
- ⁹⁶ To watch the video, visit <https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/livingtorah/>

[player_cdo/aid/490071/jewish/Acts-of-Goodness-and-Kindness.htm](#)

⁹⁷ Likutei Sichos Vol. 2, pp. 365-368

⁹⁸ Sifra Teitzei 24:19

⁹⁹ Avot 2:1. See also Likutei Sichot vol. 4 pp. 1194-96

¹⁰⁰ Sefer Hasichos 5752, vol. 1, p. 97