

“The Sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that [the Jews] rule over the entire world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they be exalted through them, nor in order that they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that [the Jews] be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom, without anyone to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to Come”. (Rambam Mishne Torah, Laws of Kings)

“It will be very difficult to remain firm in faith, and not be misled by everyone’s mistaken beliefs in the pre Messianic era. At that time, many who call themselves religious leaders will preach falsehood. A group like ours, where people gather together, thirsting for G-d’s word, will no longer exist. There will be some truly religious individuals, but they will be very few and far between. Rabbi Nachman then quoted the verse: “Write this as a record in a book” (Exodus 17:14). In days to come let people know that there was someone who already predicted this. Then they will know and be encouraged in their faith” (Rabbi Nachman of Bresslov [1772-1810], Sichot Ha Ran 126)

“This is the actual time of the “footsteps of Mashiach”. It is imperative for every Jew to seek his fellow’s welfare- weather old or young- to inspire the other to teshuva (return to G-d), so that he will not fall out, G-d forbid, of the community of Israel who will shortly be privileged, with G-d’s help to experience complete redemption. (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch as brought in Hayom Yom)

“It is known that the culmination and fulfillment of creation will take place in the days of Mashiach, and particularly, after the resurrection of the dead. It was for this reason that the world was initially created” (The Alter Rebbe, Tanya ch. 36)

“Rabbi Elazar was asked by his students: what will a man do to be spared from the pains of the arrival of the Mashiach? Let him occupy himself with the Torah and let him perform acts of kindness” (Talmud Sanhedrin 98a)

“Redemption is dependent on faith. The root cause of the exile is simply a lack of faith” (Rabbi Nachman of Bresslov, Likute Moharan 7:1)

“Even a person who attains a certain level of religious insight and understanding must take good care to ensure that the perception he has is suffused with faith. Intellect alone is not something to rely upon” (Rabbi Nachman of Bresslov, Likute Moharan 24:6)

“For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go into exile, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city”. (Zechariah 14)

“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven when all arrogant and evildoers will be straw. And the Day that is coming shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in its wings. And you shall go out and leap like calves from the stall. And you shall tread down the wicked for they

shall be ashes under the sole of your feet on the Day I do this, says the Lord of Hosts.” (Malachi 3,19-22)

“If man occupies himself with the study of Torah and acts of kindness and so awakens the Divine attribute of mercy, then when he is, G-d forbid, in trouble, the Holy One Blessed be He, Himself will hear his case and extend His Kindness to him. So the person will surely be saved”. (Chafetz Chaim, Achavat Chesed)

“He who seeks to cover up his transgressions will not succeed, but he who confesses and abandons his evil actions, You (G-d) will have mercy on him”. (Proverbs 28:13)

“You will arise and have mercy on Zion for it is time to favor her, for the time has come” (Psalms 102:14) ...**“Jerusalem will be rebuilt when the Jewish people desire it to the maximum, taking pleasure in her and favoring her stones and dust”.** (Rabbi Yehuda ha Levy, The Kuzari 5:27)

Every nation and kingdom that oppressed the Jews will see their rejoicing during the times of the Mashiach and be upset. Each will die and never return to the world. However, every nation and kingdom that didn't oppress the Jews will see their rejoicing and become their farmers and vinedressers. (Tana DeVe Eliyahu, ch 22)

INTRODUCTION

WHAT REALLY COUNTS IN LIFE

In the Torah, (Deuteronomy 10:12) Moshe exhorts all Jews with the following words: “And now Israel, what does G-d, the Lord ask of you, but to fear The

Lord, your G-d". In the Bible, King Salomon finishes his work Koheles with the following idea: "The end of the matter, all having been heard, fear G-d and keep his commandments because that is the whole human being". We know that King Salomon was the wisest man that ever lived as well as one of the wealthiest, lacking no material pleasure that his heart could desire. When King Salomon tells us that at the end of one's life, the only thing that matters is to fear the Creator and to do His Will, we must humbly try to take his advice, and especially nowadays when we form part of a society with great wealth, that pursues only material objectives, and that doesn't realize that they have no lasting value.

THE PERILS OF A WEALTHY SOCIETY

Rabbenu Bachya Ibn Paqudda, of blessed memory, wrote the book Duties of the Heart, around nine hundred and fifty years ago. He informs us, that the man who has great wealth falls prey to it, and although, people tend to view wealth as an unequivocal blessing from G-d, nevertheless for the wealthy man, wealth brings many perils. Let us quote what the Rabbi says (Chap. 4, Gate of Humility): "The sign that wealth is actually a vengeance from G-d, is that its owner is always involved in seeking pleasures and is too busy to fulfill his obligations to the Creator and to other people, both of which he is indebted to. He forgets the true owner of the good he has received, and doesn't realize he should serve The Creator for this good, as it is written (Isaiah 22,13): "Here's joy and gladness...Let us eat and drink because tomorrow we will die", and it is also written (Isaiah 5,12): "There was musical instruments and wine

banquets and the works of the Lord They did not pay attention to". And this is what constitutes vengeance in the form of a blessing".

THE TRAP OF MATERIALISM

"Jewish wealth is not houses and gold. The everlasting Jewish wealth is: To be a Jew who keeps Torah and mitzvot, and bringing into the world children and grandchildren who keep Torah and mitzvot. (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch as brought in Hayom Yom)

Rabbi Bahya Ibn Paqudda further describes the process by which people fall prey to the excesses of materialism (Gates of Abstinence, Chapter 2): "It is known that the dominance of desire over intellect is the beginning of all sin and source of all tragedy. And the people do not turn to this world until they have before turned away from the Torah. And the evil instinct makes the person abandon the way of their forefathers which was that of material contentment, taking only from the world what is necessary for their basic needs and no more. The evil instinct leads the person to a lifestyle of indulgence and of the pursuit of wealth, to endear the person with this endless pursuit until the person drowns in the depths of the material sea. And his instinct obliges him to suffer the pains of the waves of this sea, and the world rules over him blocking his ears and closing his eyes. There's not a single person that is not occupied with his own pleasures, to obtain them whenever possible and feasible. And this becomes the person's law and religion, thereby abandoning the true G-d, as it is written: "Your wickedness will punish you, your sins will rebuke you" (Jeremiah 2,19).

And there are the ones who do not get to obtain the pleasures they pursue, but their minds are always on them, and it's their only desire day and night, as it is written: "Evil he thinks on his bed, He plans on a path that is not good" (Psalms 36:5).

THE PERSON WASTES ALL HIS LIFE AWAY

All the person's years are engrossed on this pursuit, preventing the person from obtaining the true good that is in the world, too weary to attain it. The person loses with the merchandise he deals with. His soul diminished, he chooses evil, not knowing what he gives up, as it is written: "They exchanged their honor for the image of a bull that consumes grass" (Psalms 106:20).

And the person suffers from a growing addiction, and more and more the pressure from the loosing ways of the merchandise the person chose (his materialism) occupy his mind permanently, with ever newer forms of desire revolving in the person's heart. The closer the person gets to his goal, the further he gets from the light of truth that he abandoned, and the stronger the person's bond with his baser instinct.

In this way, darkness becomes thicker; this world grows in the person's mind, enchanting him. The person develops in this world at the expense of his mind which becomes wasted.

TWISTED VALUES

And in the end, he thinks that his wrong path is the right one, and his mistake is the correct way, finally he makes this his statute and his moral. And parents teach these ways to their sons and grandsons, the

majority is led to follow these rules, and the leaders are zealous to keep these statutes. And the evil is rooted in everyone. And the houses are filled with vanity. And what was foreign becomes normal and acceptable and what is good becomes foreign. The person who is content with little is considered not to have fulfilled his duty.

WE COPY OUR NEIGHBORS AT OUR SOUL'S EXPENSE

And everyone does what he saw his neighbor doing, and he who is happy with less is considered a lazy person. And the one who does not wish to accumulate material things is considered short of mind and the one who is content with little is thought to be weak and the one who is all day accumulating wealth is thought to be industrious.

And for the sake of materialism, people unite or fight and for the rewards, they make the stomachs their g-ds, and their clothing is their torah and their ethical ideal is to increase the size of their house". (end of quote).

FEAR OF G-D

"For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven when all arrogant and evildoers will be straw. And the Day that is coming shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in its wings" (Malachi 3:20)

Everyone must analyze his situation and contemplate how he wastes his life away trying to

pursue everything that our society tells us to pursue, following values that are foreign to what G-d wants from us.

Jews have forgotten that to fear G-d is a commandment and one of the most important ones in the Torah. In this society, we are not supposed to fear but only to love. It is very noble to do things out of love, but what about respect? What about the fear of punishment that keeps us from listening to our base instincts? From stealing? From committing adultery? Have we not witnessed how sons and daughters disrespect the parents? Is not this a reflection of the way in which we behave towards The Creator of the World?

But the problem is that in a wealthy society, arrogance grows, wealth brings a sense of power and security that humans tend to overdo. The previous Rebbe of Lubavitch Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, of blessed memory, remarked (Likute Dibburim II, 12): “When a man grows rich, he forgets who he is and what stock he stems from. In his eyes he is now wise, aristocratic and omniscient. Above all, as the verse says “the rich man answers with insolence” (Proverbs 18:23). His insolence grows at a grotesque rate”.

LET'S BE SIMPLE

“It is far better to have even simple minded faith than to believe in nothing at all. When your faith is simpleminded you may even believe certain things that are not true. But at least you will also believe in the truth. If you reject all simplemindedness you may end up rejecting everything and you will become

totally cynical. Then you won't even believe in the truth". (Rabbi Nachman of Bresslov's wisdom, 103)

The ways of our forefathers have stood the test of time. The principles and mitzvot to which they adhered to, kept families together, kept Jews within their faith. We in our arrogance, think that we know better, that the ways of the nations we try to emulate can lead us to better and happier lives. We should know better. We know what happened in Germany where Jews thought they would be better off by imitating the ways of the Germans.

MODERN PROPHECIES AS TOLD BY OUR HOLY RABBIS

Let us bring here from the book *Sefer Zijronot*, the words of the Maggid of kelm, of blessed memory, pronounced in 1871, in which prophetically he describes what would befall the Jews of Europe 60 to 70 years later. The Maggid said "The German doesn't pursue the Jew in an arbitrary way. He doesn't oppress the Jew when he reaches power. But it is as if his anti Semitism was a precept in some code of law, may heaven protect us. Due to this new Shuljan Aruj written by Geiger (an early Jewish German leader of the reform movement who wrote the Reform code of Jewish law), it will be decreed against us a new code of law by the Germans, in which the main law will be: "Kill even the best Jews, kill even the best Jews". May G-d save us and protect us".

Along these lines and also with prophetic insight, the Rabbi of Dvinsk, Reb Meir Simcha Ha Cohen, of blessed memory, twenty years before world war II said: "Modern man thinks that Berlin is Jerusalem, but

the fierce storm of destruction will emanate from Berlin and leave but a scant remnant”.

FIFTY LEVELS OF IMPURITY

The Ohr ha Chaim ha Kadosh, Rabbi Chaim Benatar of blessed memory, who lived around 250 years ago, wrote that before the arrival of the Mashiach, the Jews would enter into the 50th and worst level of impurity. As we know, the Jews in Egypt were at the 49th level of impurity before they were redeemed. And they had to leave quickly from Egypt for if they had entered in to the 50th level, G-d would not have redeemed them. The Ohr ha Chaim said that even though we will have reached the 50th level of impurity, G-d will redeem us in the merit of the Torah, and this merit we did not have before leaving Egypt. And what is the 50th level of impurity? The Ohr ha Chaim says that it is atheism, heresy, faithlessness, disbelief in our holy Torah and in our sages. We see how in the past years, these afflictions sadly have captured a great part of the Jewish people and only grow stronger every day. Thank G-d the opposite is also true. The number of Jews returning to the faith is also growing every day.

“Rabbi Yanai said: When you see that generations, one after the other curse and blaspheme G-d, then wait for the steps of the Mashiach, because it is written: (Psalms 89:52) “...Your enemies have insulted the footsteps of your Mashiach”, and immediately after that it is written (Psalms 89:53): “Blessed be The Lord for ever and ever” (Shir ha Shirim Rabba 2)

THE CHAFETZ CHAIM AND THE DISBELIEF OF OUR TIMES

The saintly Chafetz Chaim, of blessed memory lived in Europe until 1933 and saw the deterioration of the Jewish masses. He thus wrote: "Due to our many sins, in many places, religious observance today is on the decline and even on the verge of collapse. From their youth, children are pushed away from God's Torah -a situation that hasn't existed for years - If we investigate the causes of this situation, we will see that, among other factors, the prime cause is the weakening of faith in the eternal afterlife, in reward and punishment, and in the coming of Mashiach, our righteous redeemer.

The Torah's promises and assurances have given generations of Jews the courage to bear distress and suffering and to be unshakeable in their religious commitment. This is what has enabled them and their children to die as martyrs, with a father preferring to see his son slaughtered before his very eyes in sanctification of G-d's name - thereby returning his pure soul to his Maker - rather than seeing him achieve the peak of [apparent] happiness if, G-d forbid, this means deviating from the way of Torah and mitzvot.

Today, however, as a result of our sins, the forces of evil have weakened the fundamentals of faith among the Jewish people. This applies to belief in reward and punishment and in all the promises of the prophets...Furthermore, some spurn the yoke of Heaven and make light of even the most serious matters, including those for which the Torah exacts the death penalty or excision, such as violation of

Shabbat - regarding which the verse states, "The one who violates it will surely die" (Exodus 31:14) - or transgressing the laws concerning illicit sexual relations, such as the laws of immersion for a niddah, which are included among the forbidden unions listed in parashat Acharei Mot. (TZIPITA LISHUA)

"In previous generations, things went according to their proper order, and the entire Jewish people maintained its religious footing. Fathers transmitted the tenets of our faith to their children, and their children accepted all these teachings with love and devotion. This is according to the rules of derech erez (courtesy and good conduct), which precede the Torah. According to these rules, young children should obey their parents' instructions. This is how our holy faith has been transmitted from generation to generation, from father to son, ever since the first generation of six hundred thousand men over the age of twenty (plus women and children) stood at Mount Sinai. They saw everything with their own eyes, as the verse states, "...we have seen that G-d speaks to man, and [yet man] lives"(5:21)..."

...Yet all the above applied when the foundations of faith and the roots of our belief were accepted readily and uncompromisingly, with no weakness in our faith in Torah and mitzvot. However, in these times, many rebel and desecrate the holy faith by disseminating a flood of books presenting immoral and "freethinking" views. They have nearly extinguished the pure flame of faith in the hearts of our youth, causing many to reject the tradition of their parents. They rely on their own judgment, which contradicts that of all previous generations. They

despise those sages, scholars, and holy men of earlier generations who sacrificed their lives for the sake of each and every law of the Torah. Some even dare to criticize our teachers, the authors of the Mishnah and the Talmud, who attained the spiritual stature of angels. Woe unto us that our Sages' vision - that impudence will flourish in the generation of Mashiach - has been fulfilled in our generation. Naturally, it is impossible for parents to transmit their faithful tradition concerning the foundations of faith and the preciousness of Torah and mitzvot to children who spurn it". (Chafetz Chaim, Tzipita Lishua)

THE EVIL ONE CONCENTRATES ON THE LEADERS

In the holy book Toldot Yakov Yosef (Parshat Nasso) written by Rav Yaakov Yosef of Polnoye, of blessed memory, says that now in the years of the Mashiach the evil inclination concentrates on the leaders and not on each individual, because if the leaders fall into the net of the evil inclination thereby straying from the right path, then they will bring down with them the masses that follow those leaders.

THE REASON FOR OUR EXILE AND SUFFERING

For once, let us try to attribute our misfortunes to the most honest and simple reason, the reason given to us by G-d, as it says in the prophecy of Ezekiel (39): "Israel went into exile because of their iniquity, because they were not faithful with me, therefore I hid my face from them, and gave them into the hands of their enemies, so they fell by the sword, all of them. According to their uncleanness and according to their

transgressions have I done to them, and I hid my face from them”.

WE CAN ONLY WIN BY LISTENING TO G-D

Let us realize that G-d, Our Father only wants our good. Let us be simple and eliminate the sophistications that block our clear reasoning. Do you really think that by listening to G-d's word you will be missing out on something? Don't you realize that the mitzvot in Jewish Law are necessary breaks and restraints we need in order to control and balance our base desires, in order to lead happy lives? Do you really believe that we are smarter than our forefathers? They were more humble therefore they could learn from their fathers. But then again, since we are so well off, we do believe we know better.

THE ARROGANT MAN COMMITS IDOLATRY

Not for nothing it is written in the Talmud which is the Book of Oral Law put into writing one thousand five hundred years ago: “Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai: An arrogant person is as if he worships idols, for it is written, “Every haughty person is an abomination to G-d” (Proverbs 16:5), and it is also written, “Do not bring any abomination (idolatry) into your house” (Deuteronomy 7:26). Rabbi Yochanan said himself: The arrogant person is as if he reneged on the oneness of G-d, as it is written: “Lest your heart grows proud and you forget G-d your Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:14).

ON ACQUIRING HUMILITY BEFORE G-D

Listen to the words brought in the book Duties of the Heart concerning ways to acquire humility, (Gate

of Humility, Chapter 5): “When a person considers his changing nature, when he considers how quickly death comes, how all his hopes and desires are cut off, how he must depart without any of his possessions which can not accompany him as provisions. When he imagines his face in the grave, without its luster, darkened, becoming full of worms, putrid, his physical beauty no more, increasingly emitting the odor of putrefaction. When these or similar thoughts enter the person’s heart, his soul will feel humbled and will not become proud or arrogant and will not aggrandize himself....”

And it is further written: “When the person realizes that he will have no excuse when the day of accounting comes, and how he will regret when the reward is given, the person will be humbled and his spirit broken, as it is written: “Behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven when all arrogant and evildoers will be straw” (Malachi 3:19).

And Rabbenu Yona, of blessed memory, wrote (Shaare Teshuva 2:23): “One who does not have constantly the day of death in mind, supposes that he has time and leisure to attain his ends. Our Sages of blessed memory have said: “One hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is worth more than all the life in the World to Come, and one hour of pleasure in the World to Come is worth more than all the life of this world” (Pirke Avot 4:22)

Hopefully, with G-d’s help, our hearts will open to receive the truth from the words of Torah that are brought in this booklet. The whole purpose is to fear G-d, to know what the prophets tell us about the

messianic times, so that we will hope and long for the coming redemption.

And now that we see that the fight for control of Jerusalem intensifies, that the sons of Ishmael (Muslims) grow increasingly hostile to Israel and that anti-Semitism intensifies once more in the world, we must contemplate thoughts of repentance so that G-d will find our hearts acceptable before Him. And G-d should accomplish on us what He communicated through the prophet Yoel (4:16-17): “And the Lord roars out of Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake. But the Lord will be a shelter for his people, and a stronghold for the children of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your G-d dwelling in Zion, My Holy Mountain”.

A SMALL REQUEST

And I beg you to do kindness and to bring merit to other Jews by letting them read this booklet. You can copy it, e-mails its contents, basically you can spread this booklet in any way you wish. “And the person who brings merit to others is saved from all harsh and evil decrees”. May G-d find enough merit in the Jews to protect us from our enemies and may the merit of our holy Fathers stand for us and may the gates of mercy be opened to receive all our prayers for good and for peace, Amen.

THE WAR OF GOG AND MAGOG

Rashi, one of the most important Rabbis who wrote his commentary to the scripture around 900 years ago, explains that the Battle of Gog and Magog will be G-d's revenge for all the evil perpetrated

against the Jewish people throughout history. (Rashi on Ezekiel 38).

The Ramak (Rabbi Moshe Cordovero) of blessed memory, explains that in the final days the nations will make peace between themselves and arise to destroy the Jews because They have established their own kingdom (country), and that there will be terrible trouble.

The Midrash Vayosha says the following: “When the days of the Mashiach come, Gog and Magog will rise up against Israel. Gog will take all the nations along and will go up against Jerusalem”.

Metzudat David and Ibn Ezra say that the battle will also serve to rid the Jewish people of the sinners within it, that do not deserve to witness the good the Jews will receive then.

PROPHECY ABOUT THE WAR OF THE FINAL DAYS AS TOLD BY THE PROPHET EZEKIEL, CHAPTER 38 AND CHAPTER 39

G-D IS AGAINST GOG TO PUNISH HIM

“And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshej and Tuval, and prophesy to him and say, Thus says the Lord G-d; Behold I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshej and Tuval, and I will turn you and put hooks into your jaws, and I will bring you out and all your army, horses and horsemen, all of them in complete attire, a great company with buckler and shield, all of them handling swords, Paras, Kush and Put with them, all of them with shield and helmet, Gomer and all his

bands, the house of Togarma of the far sides of the north, and all his bands, and many peoples with you. Be prepared, you and all your company that is assembled with you, and be a guard to them. After many days you will be called upon.

GOG COMES AGAINST ISRAEL

In the latter years you shall come against the land that is brought back from the sword and is gathered out of many peoples, against the mountains of Israel, which had been a continual waste, but it is now brought out of the nations and they dwell safely all of them. You shall ascend and come like a storm, you shall be like a cloud to cover the land, you and all your bands and many peoples with you. Thus says the Lord G-d, It shall come to pass on that day, that things shall come into your mind, and you shall think an evil scheme and you shall say, I will go up to the land of the villages without walls; I will go to them that are at quiet, that dwell in safety, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates; to take a spoil and to take a prey; to turn your hand against the waste places that are now inhabited, and against a people that are gathered out of the nations, that have acquired cattle and goods, and that dwell at the center of the earth. Sheva and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish, with all its young lions shall say to you, Do you come to take a spoil? Have you gathered your company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil? .

THE ARMIES COME TO ISRAEL IN THE LATTER DAYS

Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, Thus says the Lord God: In that day when my people Israel dwell safely, shall you not know it? And you shall come from your place out of the far sides of the north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding upon horses, a great company and a mighty army, and you shall come against my people Israel, like a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me, when I will be sanctified through you, O Gog, before their eyes. Thus says the Lord G-d, Are you the one of whom I have spoken in old times by my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring you against them? .

THE PLAGUE FROM THE LORD

And it shall come to pass, on that day, When Gog shall come against the Land of Israel, says the Lord G-d, that my fury shall glare out. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my anger I have spoken saying, Surely in that day there will be a great quake in the land of Israel, and the fishes of the sea, and the birds of the sky, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep on the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him upon all my mountains, says the Lord G-d. Every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will contend with him by pestilence and by blood; and I

will rain down upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many peoples that are with him, a torrential rain and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. Thus I will magnify and sanctify myself, and I will make myself known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, Thus says The Lord G-d; Behold I am against you, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshej and Tuval; and I will turn you about, and entice you, and I will cause you to come up from the far sides of the north, and I will bring you against the mountains of Israel; and I will smite your bow out of your left hand, and I will cause your arrow to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your bands, and the peoples that are with you; I will give you to the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the fields to be devoured. You shall fall on the open field. For I have spoken it, says The Lord G-d. And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell securely in the coastlands, and they shall know that I am The Lord. So I will make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not allow my name to be profaned anymore, and the nations shall know that I am The Lord, The Holy One in Israel.

THE BIG DAY OF THE LORD

Behold it comes and will be accomplished, says The Lord G-d; this is the day of which I have spoken. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel, shall go forth and shall set fire to the weapons, and burn both shield and buckler, bow and arrows, and the staves and the

spears, and they shall make fire with them for seven years. So that they shall take no wood out of the field, nor cut down any of the forests, for they shall make fire with the weapons, and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, says The Lord G-d. And it shall come to pass, on that day, that I will give to Gog a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those that travel to the east of the sea. And it shall block the path to the travelers, and there shall they bury Gog and his entire multitude. And they shall call it the valley of Hamon Gog (the multitude of Gog). And for seven months shall the House of Israel bury them, that they may cleanse the land. And all the people of the land shall bury them, and it shall be a praise for them on the day that I shall be glorified, says The Lord G-d. And officers shall dispatch men to range the land and with rangers they shall bury those that remain above the earth to cleanse it. After the end of seven months they will make their search. And the rangers that pass through the land, when they see a human bone, then shall they set up a sign by it, until the buriers have buried the bone in the valley of Hamon Gog. And also the name of the city shall be Hamona, and in this way shall the land be cleansed.

THE FESTIVITY AFTER THE VICTORY OF THE LORD

And you son of man, thus says The Lord G-d, speak to every feathered bird and to every beast of the field. Assemble yourselves, and come, and gather yourselves for my festive meal that I prepare for you, a great feast upon the mountains of Israel, that you may eat meat and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth,

of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And you will eat fat till you are full, and drink blood till you are drunk, of my feast that I have prepared for you. Thus shall you be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men and with all men of war, says The Lord G-d. And I will set My Glory among the nations, and all the nations shall see My Judgment that I have executed and My Hand that I have laid on them. And the House of Israel will know that I am The Lord Their G-d from that day onwards.

BECAUSE OF OUR SINS WE WERE EXILED

And the nations shall know that Israel went into exile because of their iniquity, because they were not faithful with me, therefore I hid my face from them, and gave them into the hands of their enemies, so they fell by the sword all of them. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done to them, and I hid my face from them. Therefore, says The Lord G-d, Now I will bring back the captivity of Yaakov, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and I will be zealous for My Holy Name. And they will get rid of their shame and of all their faithlessness with which they have been unfaithful to me, when they will dwell securely on their land, with none to make them afraid. When I have brought them back from the peoples, and gathered them from their enemies' lands, and I will be sanctified in them in the sight of many nations. Then shall they know that I am the Lord their G-d, who caused them to be led into exile among the nations, but I have gathered them to their own land, and have left none of them there anymore. Nor will I hide my face from them

anymore, for I have poured my spirit upon the house of Israel, says The Lord G-d”.

**PROPHECY ABOUT THE SAME WAR OF THE
FINAL DAYS AS TOLD BY THE PROPHET
ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER 14**

THE NATIONS GO AGAINST JERUSALEM

“Behold the day of The Lord comes when your spoil shall be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go into exile, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

THE REVENGE OF THE LORD

Then will The Lord go out and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the days of battle. And His feet shall stand on that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in the middle by a very great valley from east to west, and half the mountain shall be moved towards the north, and half of it towards the south. And you shall flee to the valley of the mountains, for it shall reach to Azel. And you shall flee like the day you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah King of Yehuda. And The Lord My G-d shall come, and all the holy ones with you. And it shall come to pass on that day, that there shall be neither bright light nor thick darkness, but it shall be a special day called The Lord's, neither day nor night, but it shall come to pass that at evening time, it shall be light. And on that day, living waters will come out

of Jerusalem, half of them towards the eastern sea and half of them towards the western sea. In summer and in winter it shall be.

THE LORD SHALL BE ONE AND HIS NAME ONE

And The Lord shall be King over all the earth, on that day The Lord shall be One and His Name One. All the land shall be flattened like the Arava from Geva to Rimmon south of Jerusalem, while she shall be lifted up, and shall remain in her place, from the gate of Binyamin to the place of the first gate, to the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel to the King's winepress. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall dwell secure. And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem, their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it will pass on that day, that a great panic from the Lord shall be upon them, and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor. And Yehuda shall also fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the nations all around shall be gathered together, gold and silver and clothing in great abundance. And such shall be the plague that will afflict the horse and the mule, and the camel, and all the beasts that shall be in these camps, as this plague.

NATIONS WILL GO TO CELEBRATE SUCCOT

And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations that come against Jerusalem, shall

go up from year to year to worship The King, The Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Holiday of Succot. And whoever does not come up of all the families of the earth to Jerusalem to worship The King, The Lord of Hosts, upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt does not go up and does not come, then they shall have no overflow. This shall be the plague, with which The Lord will smite the nations that shall not come up to keep the Holiday of Succot. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the holyday of Succot. On that day there shall written be upon the bells of the horses, Holy to The Lord, and the pots in The Lord's house will be like the basins before the altar. And every pot in Jerusalem and in Yehuda shall be sacred to The Lord of Hosts. And all those that offer sacrifices shall come and take them, and cook in them. And on that day there shall be no more merchants in the house of The Lord of Hosts.

PASSAGE FROM THE TALMUD (MAKKOT 24B) RELATED TO THE PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH.

On one occasion, Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva were going up to Jerusalem (after the destruction of the second temple). When they reached Mount Scopus (and saw Jerusalem destroyed) they rent their garments. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox coming out of the place of the Holy of Holies, and they began to weep. Rabbi Akiva smiled. They asked him: "Why are you laughing?" And He replied: "And why are you crying?". They said: "A place about which it is written that no strangers may go in (only the High Priest) and now foxes walk

through, shall we not cry?” Rabbi Akiva replied: “That’s why I am laughing, because it is written: “ I will put as witness, faithful witnesses, Uriah the Kohen and Zechariah (Isaiah 8:2). Now what is the connection between these two prophets? Uriah prophesied in the times of the first temple and Zechariah during the second temple. But this verse makes the prophecy of Zechariah dependant on that of Uriah. In the case of Uriah it is written: “Therefore, because of you, Zion will be ploughed as a field” (Micha 3:12), and in the case of Zechariah it is written: “Old men and old women will again sit in the streets of Jerusalem” (Zechariah 8:4). Now as long as the prophecy of Uriah had not been fulfilled, I feared that the prophecy of Zechariah would not be fulfilled, now that the prophecy of Uriah has been fulfilled, for sure the prophecy of Zechariah will also be fulfilled”.

**PROPHECY ABOUT THE SAME WAR OF THE
FINAL DAYS AS TOLD BY THE PROPHET YOEL,
CHAPTER 4**

THE RETRIBUTION OF G-D

For behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Yehuda and Jerusalem, I will also gather all the nations, and bring them into the valley of Yehoshafat, and will enter into judgment with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and have divided up my land. And they have cast lots for my people, and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink. Moreover, what are you to me Tzor and Tzidon and all the provinces of Peleshet? Will you render retribution on my behalf, swiftly and speedily will I return your

retribution upon your own head. Because you have taken my silver and gold, and have carried into your temples my good treasures. The children of Yehuda and Jerusalem you sold to the Yevanim so that they would be removed far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out of the place to which you have sold them, and will return your retribution on your own head. And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the children of Yehuda and they shall sell them to the Shevayim, to a people that live far off. For the Lord has spoken it.

THE WAR AGAINST THE NATIONS

Proclaim this among the nations, prepare war, stir up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up, beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, I am strong. Hasten and come, all you nations and gather yourselves together. Let your mighty ones go there, O Lord. Let the nations be stirred up, and come up to the valley of Yehoshafat, for there I will sit to judge all the nations. Put on the sickle for the harvest is ripe, come tread down for the press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

THE LORD ROARS OUT OF ZION

The sun and moon are darkened, and the stars are without shine. And the Lord roars out of Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shake. But the Lord will be a shelter for his people, and a stronghold for the children of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your G-d

dwelling in Zion, My Holy Mountain. Then will Jerusalem be Holy, and no strangers shall pass through her anymore. And it shall come to pass on that day, that the mountains shall drop down sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the water paths of Yehuda shall flow with water, and a fountain shall issue from the House of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim. Egypt will be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the children of Yehuda, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Yehuda shall remain forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation. And though I have acquitted them, those who shed their blood I have not acquitted. And the Lord dwells in Zion.

PROPHECY ABOUT THE FINAL DAYS TOLD BY THE PROPHET JEREMIAH, CHAPTER 30

THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

“The word that came to Jeremiah from The Lord, saying, Thus speaks The Lord G-d of Israel saying, Write all the words that I have spoken to you in a book. For days are coming says The Lord, when I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel and Yehuda, says The Lord. And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. And these are words that The Lord spoke concerning Israel and concerning Yehuda.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

For thus says The Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask now, and see whether a man can father a child? Why then do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in

travail, and all faces turn to paleness? Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it. And it is a time of trouble for Yaakov, but He shall be saved from it. For it shall come to pass on that day, says The Lord of Hosts, that I will break the yoke of the stranger from your neck and will burst his hand and no more strangers shall enslave you. But the Jews will serve their G-d, and David their king whom I will raise up for them. Therefore, do not fear, my servant Yaakov, says The Lord, nor be dismayed O Israel. For I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity. And Yaakov will return and shall be quite and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with you, says The Lord, to save you.

PUNISHMENT TO THE NATIONS THAT AFFLICTED US

For I will make a full end of all the nations where I have scattered you, yet I will not make a full end of you, and I will correct you in due measure, and will not leave you altogether unpunished.

FOR OUR SINS WE ARE DESPISED

For thus says The Lord: Your bruise is incurable and your wound is grievous. There is none to take up your case, to bind up your wound, you have no medicine to heal you. All your lovers have forgotten you, they seek you not. For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of the cruel one, for the multitude of your iniquity, because your sins have increased, I have done these things to you.

AS THEY DID TO US WILL BE DONE TO THEM

Therefore all those that devoured you shall be devoured, and all your adversaries, everyone of them shall go into captivity, and those that took spoils from you shall have spoils taken from them, and all that plunder you I will give them for prey. For I will restore your health and I will heal you of your wounds, says The Lord, because they have called you an outcast, saying, This is Zion, for whom no one cares.

THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM

Thus says The Lord: behold I will bring back the captivity of Yaakov's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city will be built to its former glory, and the palace shall stand on its proper place. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of those that are merry, and I will multiply them and they shall not be diminished. I will glorify them and they will not be small. Their children also will be as before and their congregation shall be established before Me, and I will punish all those that oppress them. And their prince shall rule them, and their governor shall emanate from their midst. And I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach Me, for who is this that engaged his heart to approach Me? Says The Lord. And you shall be my people and I shall be your G-d.

THE FURY OF THE LORD IS COMING

Behold, The storm wind of The Lord goes out with fury, a sweeping storm, it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of The Lord shall not turn back, until He has done it, and until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days

you shall understand this, At that time, says The Lord, I will be G-d for all the families of Israel and they shall be my people.

**PASSAGE FROM THE HOLY ZOHAR (II, 58)
WRITTEN 1800 YEARS AGO BY RABBI SHIMON
BAR YOHAI, MAY HIS MERIT PROTECT US**

“Rabbi Ytzchak said: In the future seventy princes from all over the world will unite with the masses to attack Jerusalem and plot against G-d. They will plan to battle Him, then fight over His people and Temple. However, “He who sits in heaven laughs, The Lord will mock them” (Psalms 2:4). In His glory, G-d will wipe them from the face of the earth.

Rabbi Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yisa Sabba, and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai also said: In the future, G-d will revive (reincarnate) and reinstate all the kings who oppressed the Jewish people and ruled Jerusalem: Adrianus, Lupinus, Nevuchadnezzar, Sancheriv, and all the others who destroyed His house. They will unite with other nations. The Lord will announce: “And this will be the plague with which G-d will smite all the nations that mobilized against Jerusalem...” (Zechariah 14:12).”

PSALM 83

THE NATIONS UNITE AGAINST ISRAEL

A song, Psalm of Assaf, Do not keep silence, O G-d, do not hold your peace, and be still, O G-d. For your enemies are making a tumult, and those who hate you have lifted up their head. They take clever counsel against your people, and they advise against your hidden ones. They have said, come let us cut them

from being a nation, that the name of Israel will be remembered no more. Because they conspire together, they have made a pact against you. The tents of Edom and Ishmaelites, Moav and Hagrim; Geval and Amon and Amalek. Peleshet with the inhabitants of Tzor. Ashur is also joined with them, they are the strong arm of the children of Lot, sela.

WE BEG G-D TO PUNISH THEM

Do to them as to Midyan as to Sisera as to Yavin at the stream of Kishon, who where crushed at Ein Dor, they became like dung on the earth. Make their nobles like Orev and Zeev, all their princes like Zevah and Zalmuna, who said let us seize the dwelling of G-d as our possession. O my G-d, make them like the whirling chaff, like the stubble before the wind. As the fire burns a wood, and as the flames set the mountains on fire, so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. Fill their faces with shame so that they may seek your name, O Lord. Let them be confounded and frightened forever, and let them be put to shame and perish. Let them know that you and your name the Lord, is the most high on earth.

PSALM 2

NATIONS UNITE TO TAKE G-D'S YOKE FROM THEM

Why are the nations in uproar, and the peoples talk vain words. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against The Lord and against His Mashiach, saying Let us break their yoke from us and cast away their cord from us. He who sits in heaven laughs, The Lord has them in derision. Then

shall He speak to them in His wrath, and terrify them in His burning anger. But I have set my king upon Zion, my holy hill. I will tell the law, The Lord has said to me: You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you nations for your inheritance, and the farthest part of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O kings, be warned, O judges of the earth. Serve The Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling. Arm yourself with purity, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, for in a little while His anger will blaze. Blessed are those who put their trust in Him.

THE SONS OF ISHMAEL (MUSLIMS) FIGHT FOR THE LAND OF ISRAEL

PASSAGE FROM THE HOLY ZOHAR CHAPTER OF VAYERA, PAGE 119a

“The children of Ishmael will at the same time, rouse all the peoples of the world to come up to war against Jerusalem, as it is written: “For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for war” (Zechariah 14,1), and it is also written: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Mashiach” (Psalms 2, 2).”

PASSAGE FROM THE HOLY ZOHAR CHAPTER OF VAERA, PAGE 32a

Rabbi Jose and Rabbi Hiya were walking together. Said Rabbi Jose to Rabbi Hiya: “Why are you silent? Without talking words of Torah our walk has no value” Rabbi Hiya burst into tears and said: It is written

“Sarai was barren, She had no child” (Bereshit 11,30), Woe, Woe for the time when Hagar begat Ishmael! ... Through his circumcision (done when He was 13 years old) Ishmael entered into the holy covenant before Isaac was born... Woe, Woe that Ishmael was born into the world and was circumcised! What did The Holy One do about it? He banished the children of Ishmael from the heavenly communion and gave them instead a portion here in the Holy Land, in the merit of their circumcision. And They are destined to rule over the land so long as it is empty, just as their form of circumcision is empty and imperfect; and They will prevent Israel from returning to their own land until the merit of the children of Ishmael shall have become exhausted. And the sons of Ishmael will fight mighty battles on the world... The Lord will wipe out the children of Ishmael from the Holy Land... And only one power will remain above to rule above the nations of the world, namely the power representing Israel.

FROM RABBI CHAIM VITAL

Rabbi Chaim Vital, of blessed memory, the student of the Holy ARI, may his merit protect us, in the book Etz daat Tov, writes that the Jews have been in four exiles and at the very end of time, there will be a fifth and last exile which is called The exile of Ishmael (Ishmael literally means G-d will hear), which will be the most terrible and difficult of all, and because of the many afflictions the Jews will suffer, they will cry to G-d and He will hear their prayers (Ishmael). Rabbi Chaim Vital brings a verse from Psalm 124: “If not for G-d that is with us, when ADAM comes up against us”. This ADAM is Ishmael, for in the Torah (Bereshit 15,12) He is referred to as PERE ADAM (A wild man,

His hand shall be against every man and every man against his). And if not for G-d that is with us, Ishmael would eat us alive, G-d forbid.

LAWS RELATED TO THE MASHIACH

LAWS OF KINGS FROM MISHNE TORAH AUTHORED BY THE RAMBAM (1135-1204)

CHAPTER 11

1. In future time, the King Mashiach will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its former glory. He will rebuild the Temple and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then, in his days, all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the Sabbatical and Jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah.

Whoever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only [the statements of] the other prophets, but also [those of] the Torah and of Moses, our teacher, for the Torah attests to his coming, stating: (Devarim 30:3-5)

And the Lord your G-d will bring back your captivity and have compassion upon you. He will return and gather you [from among all the nations].... Even if your dispersed ones are in the furthest reaches of the heavens, [from there will G-d gather you in].... G-d will bring you [to the land].... These explicit words of the Torah include all that was said by all the prophets.

CHAPTER 12

4. The Sages and prophets did not yearn for the Messianic Era in order that [the Jews] rule over the

entire world, nor in order that they have dominion over the gentiles, nor that they exalt them, nor in order that they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that [the Jews] be free to involve themselves in Torah and its wisdom, without anyone to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to Come.

5. In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance and all the delights will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d. The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the [full] extent of human potential; as it is written [Isaiah 11:9], "For the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed."

PASSAGES FROM THE TALMUD (SANHEDRIN 97a) ABOUT THE TIMES WHEN THE MASHIACH WILL COME

"Rabbi Yehuda says: In the generation when Mashiach will come...those who fear sin will be despised...and truth will disappear as it is written "And the truth will be absent, and he who turns away from evil will become foolish (in the eyes of others) (Isaiah 59:15)".

"Rabbi Nehorai says: In the generation when Mashiach will come young people will shame the old, and old people will rise before the young and a daughter will be against her mother and a daughter in law against her mother in law, and the face of the

generation will be like that of a dog and a son will not be ashamed in front of his father”

“Rabbi Nechemiah says: In the generation when Mashiach will come, insolence will increase.... whole kingdoms will turn to heresy and there will be no rebuke”

SANHEDRIN 98a

“Rabbi Abba said: There is no clearer indication of the End of Times than this: “But you, mountains of Israel, you will shoot forth your branches and bear your fruit for My People Israel” (Ezekiel 36:8)

“Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina said: “The son of David will not come until the bad governors will cease from ruling Israel”

“Zeiri said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: “The son of David will not come until the arrogant are eliminated from Israel”

“You will arise and have mercy on Zion for it is time to favor her, for the time has come” (Psalms 102:14) ...“Jerusalem will be rebuilt when the Jewish people desire it to the maximum, taking pleasure in her and favoring her stones and dust” (The Kuzari of Rabbi Yehuda Ha Levy 5:27)

“Rabbi Yanai said: When you see that generations, one after the other curse and blaspheme G-d, then wait for the steps of the Mashiach, because it is written: (Psalms 89:52) “...Your enemies have insulted the footsteps of your Mashiach”, and immediately after that it is written (Psalms 89:53): “Blessed be The Lord for ever and ever” (Shir ha Shirim Rabba 2)

JERUSALEM IN THE FUTURE, AFTER THE WAR OF GOG AND MAGOG

Jerusalem is destined to be enlarged on all sides, and her gates will reach Damascus (Sifre, Devarim 1).

In the future all nations and kingdoms will gather in Jerusalem (Avot de Rabbi Natan, 35).

R. Hoshayah said: Jerusalem is destined to become a beacon unto the nations of the world...As it says, Nations will go toward your light...(Isaiah 60:3)...the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the mountaintops and exalted above the hills; all the nations shall flow to it; (Isaiah 2:2); and For with You is the fountain of life, in your light we will see light (Psalms 36:10) (Yalkut Shimoni)

Every nation and kingdom that oppressed the Jews will see their rejoicing during the times of the Mashiach and be upset. Each will die and never return to the world. However, every nation and kingdom that didn't oppress the Jews will see their rejoicing and become their farmers and vinedressers. (Tana DeVe Eliyahu, ch 22)

After the war of Gog and Magog, there will be worldwide peace and tranquility...There will be no more suffering and worry in the Land of Israel, and the nation of G-d will be granted long and happy lives, as it is written: "...The former troubles are forgotten and...hidden from My eyes". (Isaiah 65:16) (Midrash Kah).

Rabbi Yochanan said: Jerusalem will become a capital for all countries and draw them toward her like a river in her house (Shir Ha Shirim rabba 1:37)

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESHUVA (REPENTANCE)

Rabbenu Yona wrote in the first chapter of his book Shaare Teshuva: “Among the good things that The Blessed One bestowed on His creatures is having prepared the way for them to raise from the pit of their actions and to escape the trap of their transgressions; to save themselves from destruction and to turn G-d’s wrath away from them. In His abundant goodness and righteousness, G-d has taught and exhorted them to turn to Him upon having sinned against Him, for He knows the inclination of their hearts, as it is written: “Good and upright is The Lord, therefore He teaches sinners in the way” (Psalms 25:8). Even if they have offended and rebelled exceedingly, and even if they have been completely faithless, He does not close the doors of repentance to them, as it is written: “Turn to Whom you have profoundly rebelled against, children of Israel” (Isaiah 31:6) and it is also written: “Return, you backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings” (Jeremiah 2:22).

“He who seeks to cover up his transgressions will not succeed, but he who confesses and abandons his evil actions, You will have mercy on him”. (Proverbs 28:13)

“If one single individual repents, the whole world is forgiven” (Yoma 86B)

“Whoever observes the practice of eating the three meals of Shabbat, saves himself from three calamities: The wars of Gog and Magog, The birth pangs of the Mashiach and the retribution of Gehinam”. (Talmud Shabbat 119a)

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING TORAH

“Rabbi Elazar was asked by his students: what will a man do to be spared from the pains of the arrival of the Mashiach? Let him occupy himself with the Torah and let him perform acts of kindness” (Talmud Sanhedrin 98a)

The Chafetz Chaim said: “Anyone who has the slightest fear of G-d and believes with perfect faith in the coming of the Mashiach must prepare himself with all his might, according to his abilities, studying Chumash, Mishna or Guemara, so that we will merit true, complete redemption and receive Moshiach with joy”.

“The only reason the days of Mashiach have distanced themselves from this exile is because of the lack of Torah study” (Zohar Chadash, Bereshit).

The Vilna Gaon said: “In the final exile all the wonders will be in Torah, and the sea of Torah will split (like the Red Sea), for by virtue of Torah study we will merit complete redemption speedily in our days, amen” (Commentary to Tikune Zohar)

The Chafetz Chaim wrote: “It is well known to all that the Torah warns us to beware of untruth and hypocrisy. As the verse states, “Keep away from anything false!” (Shemos 23:7). This exhortation implies that even if the matter is not an outright untruth but is simply partially false, we should avoid it (Shevuot 31a). Moreover, this applies even if one is talking to an equal, and all the more so if one is speaking with a leader of the Jewish community. How much more so is a person obliged to guard himself against untruth when conversing with G-d Himself. As

the verse states, "...a liar will not endure in My Presence" (Tehillim 101:7). Consequently, a person must be careful even if he does not mention the name of the Holy One, blessed is He, regarding some matter, and particularly if he does mention the name of the Holy One. It is thus very surprising that three times a day we repeat in the Aleynu, "And therefore, we hope unto You, O Lord, our God, that we speedily behold the splendor of Your might." If we really hope that the splendor of G-d will be speedily revealed, shouldn't each person prepare himself by learning the laws of the Temple, its service, and its sacrifices? (By analogy, if we expect a king to arrive in our city, even if there was some doubt as to whether he would actually come, we would adorn all the streets in his honor, even if there were a thousand of them, since we could not be sure which route he would take!) Since all these laws will then apply in practice, how embarrassing it will be for a Torah scholar if he is unaware of them.

The laws of the Temple, its service, and its sacrifices are not known only because we are prepared to utter untruths before G-d even as we mention two of His holy names! Our words are clearly from the mouth only, not from the heart. Hence, a person should reflect on the fact that he utters Divine names in vain more than forty times every week and more than two thousand times every year (in repeating Aleynu three times every day), for he states before G-d that he hopes His glory will be speedily revealed, and in fact he does not hope for this at all. (Chafetz Chaim Tzipita Lishua)

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACTS OF KINDNESS

“Rabbi Elazar was asked by his students: what will a man do to be spared from the pains of the arrival of the Mashiach? Let him occupy himself with the Torah and let him perform acts of kindness” (Talmud Sanhedrin 98a)

“Come and consider how great is the power of those who are charitable and perform acts of kindness, for they shelter neither in the shadow of the morning, nor in the shadow of the wings of the earth, nor in the shadow of the wings of the sun, nor in the shadow of the wings of the Chayot or the Cherubim nor in the shadow of eagle’s wings; but under whose wings do they shelter? – Under the shadow of Him Whose word created the world, as it is written (Psalms 36:8): “How precious is Your kindness, O G-d, and the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings”. (Chafetz Chaim, Achavat Chesed)

“If man occupies himself with the study of Torah and acts of kindness and so awakens the Divine attribute of mercy, then when he is, G-d forbid, in trouble, the Holy One Blessed be He, Himself will hear his case and extend His Kindness to him. So the person will surely be saved”. (Chafetz Chaim, Ahavat Chesed)

THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR TEFILOT, PRAYERS

“There is another great principle, something that brings redemption closer, and that is prayer, as was the case in Egypt...From this we see that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wants us to pray to Him in abundance, and then He will redeem us. Nowadays, we must also strengthen ourselves in prayer, since He

desires that we pray to him. Why should we remain silent at this time? (Chafetz Chaim, Chochmat Hadaat)

“When the Jews cry out before Him, salvation will come to them (Midrash Rabba)

Since G-d prevents The Mashiach from coming, Why do we await him fervently? In order to receive merit for waiting for him as it is written (Isaiah 30:81): “Blessed are all who wait for him”(Talmud Sanhedrin 97b)

Rava said: When a person dies and is brought to judgment he is asked: ...Did you wait for salvation? [Rashi: for the words of the prophets?] (Shabat 31a)

Rabbi Chaim Vital, of blessed memory, wrote in the book Pri Etz Chaim that in the times of the Mashiach the major task for the Jews is prayer.

IGUERET HAGRA - THE VILNA GAON'S LETTER

(Sent by the Gaon, R. Eliyahu, of blessed memory while traveling to Israel, to instruct his family in the ways of G-d.

I came to ask you to refrain from becoming sad, as you promised me truthfully, and not to worry. Men leave their wives in order to travel and wander destitute for years to make money. But I, thank G-d, am traveling to the Holy Land - which everyone longs to see - Israel's Most Beloved (or: Hashem's Most Beloved, all heavenly and earthly beings desire it). And I am traveling in peace, thank G-d. You are also aware that I have left behind my children, for whom my heart yearns, and all my precious books, and I am as a stranger in a foreign land. I have left everything behind.

ALL IN THE WORLD IS VANITY

And it is known that all this world, it is all emptiness, that every amusement is worthless, and woe to those who pursue vanity, which is worthless. And don't envy wealth, for "riches are kept by their owner to his misfortune" (Kohelet 5:12); "As he came out from his mother's womb, naked will he return...exactly as he came he must depart, and what did he gain by toiling for the wind?" (Kohelet. 5: 14, 15); "Even if he should live a thousand years twice over, but find no contentment - do not all go to the same place?" (ibid 6:6); "Even if man lives many years, let him rejoice in all of them, but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is futility" (ibid 11:8); "And of joy, what does it accomplish?" (ibid 2:2). Tomorrow you will cry for having laughed today. Do not lust after imaginary honor, which is similar to vanity, and time is a traitor and like scales, lifts the light and lowers the heavy. The world is like one who drinks salty water: he thinks it quenches his thirst, but it only makes him thirstier (Bechar ha Pninim). No one leaves the world with even half his cravings fulfilled (Kohelet Rabbah 1). "What profit does one have from all his labor under the sun" (Kohelet 1:3)? Remember our predecessors, all of whose love, desire and joy have disappeared (see Kohelet 9:6), but who are being judged severely for them. And of what benefit is gratification to man - whose end is dust, maggots and worms, as he is bound to die - when all his enjoyments turn to bitterness in the grave? And what is this world, whose days are full of anger and pain, and its nights where sleeping brings no rest? Neither is death a mikveh.

MAN IS JUDGED FOR EVERYTHING HE SAYS

Man will be judged for everything he says; even the slightest expression is not overlooked. Therefore I warn you to train yourself to sit alone as much as possible, because the sin of the tongue is the most severe, as our Sages said (Tosefta Pe'ah 1): "These are the things...and lashon hara is equivalent to them all." And what need is there for me to elaborate on this most serious sin, the worst of all. "All man's labor is for his mouth" (Koheles 6:7). Our Sages said that all man's mitzvot and all his torah are not enough to counterbalance what comes out of his mouth. "What should be a man's occupation in this world? He should become as a mute person" (Chullin 89a). One must seal his lips as tight as two millstones. And all the punishment of *Kaf ha Kela* (the hollow of the sling, a punishment for the soul after death) comes from the breath of idle words and for every idle word one must be thrown from one end of the world to the other. Now this is true concerning mere permitted speech. Where forbidden speech is concerned - e.g. lashon hara, mocking, swearing, vowing, fighting and cursing - especially in the synagogue, and on Shabbat and Yom Tov - for every utterance of this type one descends to the sheol, very very low, and it is impossible to imagine the pain and suffering one will receive for one utterance (Zohar)! No word is lost; everything is recorded. Winged beings attach themselves to everyone, recording all they say. "For a bird of the skies may carry the sound, and some winged creature may tell the matter" (Kohelet 10:20). "Let not your mouth cause your flesh to sin, and do not tell the messenger that it was an error. Why should G-d be angered by your speech and destroy the work of your hands?" (ibid 5:5).

Purchase all your needs through a messenger, even if this costs two or three times as much. "Is there a limit to what G-d can provide?" (Bamidbar 11:23). G-d feeds all creatures, from the greatest to the smallest (Avodah Zara 3), and provides to each one all his needs. And on Shabbat and Yom Tov do not speak at all about things that are not urgent, and be brief even with what is important, for the Shabbat is very holy and our Sages barely permitted the exchange of greetings (Yerushalmi Shabbat, and Tosfot Shabbat 113). See how strict they were concerning even a single expression! Keep giving great honor to the Shabbat as when I was there. Do not cut back [on your Shabbat] expenses, since "Man's entire sustenance [for the year is fixed for him from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur,] except [the expenditure for Sabbaths and Festivals,] etc." (Beitzah 16a). I also implore and plead with you to guide your daughters very carefully to refrain from cursing, swearing, lying and fighting. Rather, everything should be done peacefully, with love, affection and gentleness.

TEACH GOOD CONDUCT TO YOUR CHILDREN

I have left behind several books on Mussar (proper conduct). See that [the children] read them constantly, especially on the Holy Shabbat, when Mussar is the only thing they should occupy themselves with. Always instruct them according to Mussar books. Don't hold back from hitting them when they curse, swear or lie. Don't have mercy for them, because parents will be punished severely for the corruption of their children, G-d forbid. And even if one constantly teaches them Mussar, but they do not follow it, Woe to the sorrow and shame in the World to Come. As it is written (Vayikra 21:9), "She defiles her father"- [in such a case] the wicked son of a righteous man is called "the wicked son of a wicked man" (Sanhedrin

52a). Similarly in other matters, lashon hara, gossip, their eating and drinking as well should always be preceded and followed by the appropriate blessings. They must be careful to say the blessings, Birkat Hamazon and Kriat Shema with proper kavanah (intent). Most importantly, they must not wander outside the home and must obey and respect you and my mother and all their elders. They also need to observe all that is written in the Mussar books.

Raise your own children as well correctly and sensitively, and pay their tutor well, for “Man's entire sustenance for the year is fixed for him from Rosh Hashanah...except TiShReY (Talmud, Shabbat, Rosh Chodesh and Yom Tov - Beitzah 16a). I have also left books for them. For Hashem's sake, guide them well and gently. Take care of their health and make sure that they always have enough to eat. First have them learn the entire Chumash, seeing to it that they know it almost by heart. The learning must be done without undue pressure, rather gently, because the studies are only fixed in man when there is tranquility. Give them coins, etc., as a reward. Always focus your attention on these matters and not on others, because all else is trivial. For man can salvage nothing from his labor to take with him, except two white garments (shrouds). Also (Tehillim 49), “A man will not redeem his brother...Fear not when a man grows rich...For when he dies, he shall carry nothing away....” Don't say, “I will leave a portion for my children” - who will tell you in the grave? The children of man are like grasses of the field, some blossom and some fade (Eruvin 54a). Each one is born under his constellation and is guided by the Highest G-d Blessed be He, they are glad when he dies and he goes into the sheol. [At his passing] Resh Lakish left his children a kav of saffron, and he applied to himself the verse (Tehillim

49:11), "...and they leave their wealth to others" (Gittin 47a). Woe to all who plan on leaving [wealth] to their children! The only reward from sons and daughters is through their Torah and good deeds. Their sustenance is fixed for them. It is also known that women earn merit by making their children learn Torah, etc. (Berachos 17a). And our Sages said (Tanna D'Vei Eliyahu Rabba 9): "The only proper wife is one that does her husband's will." I am indeed writing you words of the Living G-d. Therefore, I am certain that you will follow all that I have written. Nevertheless, I wish to strongly warn you not to deviate from anything that I have written. Read this letter every week, especially on Shabbat before and during the meal, in order to prevent idle talk and, even worse, lashon hara and the like, G-d forbid. I reiterate my request that you guide your sons and daughters with words of kindness and Mussar that will find a fixed place in their heart. This is true especially if we merit to arrive in Eretz Yisrael, because there one must very much follow Hashem's ways. Therefore, train them often, since one must work hard on one's speech and character traits, and only through perseverance can we control ourselves (Shaarey Teshuvah). All beginnings are hard (Mechilta Yitro). But afterwards, one is worthy of praise (Proverbs 20:14). For the wicked person knows that he is taking the wrong path, but it is hard for him to change.

CONTROL OF THE MOUTH, THE MAIN TASK

But this is man's main task, not to go after his desires, but (Psalms 32:9) "To restrain himself with a bit and bridle when he is being groomed." Man must deprive himself until he dies, not by fasting or asceticism, but by controlling his mouth and desires. This is teshuvah. And this is the whole reward of the World-to-Come, as it is written (Proverbs 6:23): "For

the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is a light" - but "the way to life is the rebuke that disciplines." And that is worth more than any amount of fasting and self-affliction! For every second that man controls his tongue, he merits some of the "hidden [by G-d for the righteous] light," something which no angel or [other] creature can imagine (Midrash). And it is stated (Psalms 34:13,14): "Who is the man who desires life, and loves days that he may see good? Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceitfully." This will atone for any sin and save one from the lower Sheol, as we find (Proverbs 21:23): "He who guards his mouth [from permitted eating and drinking] and tongue [from idle words] guards himself from trouble." Also (Proverbs 18:21): "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." Woe to one who gives away his life for one word! Then what advantage is there to one who has a tongue (see Kohelet 10:11)? And, "Everything has a cure except, etc." It is most important to refrain from speaking words of praise about anyone. How much more so does this apply to speaking ill of anyone! Why must one speak about others? "The mouth that speaks strangely is a deep pit; he angers G-d and falls into it" (Proverbs 22:14).

AVOID JEALOUSY AT ALL COSTS

Concerning solitude, the main thing is not to go outside of home. Even your visit to the synagogue should be very short. In fact, it is better to pray at home, for it is impossible to be spared from jealousy or from hearing idle talk or lashon hara in the synagogue. And one receives punishment for this, as we find (Shabbat 33a), "Also one who hears and is silent...." This is even the more so on Shabbat and Yom Tov when they gather to talk - It is then better that you don't pray at all. Refrain also from going to the cemetery (especially women), as all impurities

stick to women there and all sorrow and sin comes from this. It is also advisable that your daughter not go to the synagogue, because she'll see beautiful clothes there, become jealous and talk about it at home. This will lead to lashon hara, etc. She should rather cling to Mussar and not become jealous of anything in this world, where everything is vanity and illusions, appearing and disappearing overnight (Yonah 4:10). "Though he grows as high as the sky, his head reaching the clouds, he perishes forever..." (Iyov 20:6,7). "For property does not last forever, or a crown for all generations" (Mishlei 27:24). And even while it exists it is worthless, loathsome and disdained by any sensible person. Woe to him who is impressed by it. Envy only the fear of Hashem (ibid 23:17). She should not say, "How can I earn a share in the World-to-Come? - I can't do it!" For we have learned (Berachos 17a): "One may do much or one may do little, provided he directs his heart to heaven."

A FIFTH TO CHARITY

For the sake of Hashem, give a fifth of all earnings to charity. Do not give less, as I have already warned you, because that causes the transgression of several positive and negative mitzvot every minute! It also implies a rejection of the Holy Torah, G-d forbid.

TO MERIT THE WORLD TO COME

But the main way to merit Olam Haba is by guarding one's tongue. That is worth more than all the Torah and good deeds. This is the meaning of (Isaiah 32:9) "tranquil women" (Berachos 17a), because the mouth is the holiest of the holy. Among my books is a copy of the book of Proverbs with Yiddish translation. For the sake of Hashem, have them read it daily. It is better than any Mussar book. They should also read Kohelet a lot, because it points out the vanity of this

world, and other books as well. But G-d forbid that reading should be the objective! Reading Mussar alone does not necessarily move one to act differently. Going out into the world without a good understanding of it defeats the whole purpose. It is like one who sows without having plowed; the wind and birds will carry the seeds away, because they aren't closed off and protected. So is he who merely reads Mussar like him who plants without a fence; pigs will eat and trample on everything. Some plant on stone. This is comparable to a heart of stone which cannot be penetrated unless it is struck until it breaks open. That's why I wrote you to hit our children if they don't obey you. "Train a lad in the way he ought to go" (Proverbs 22:6). This is an important principle of education.

I also wish to appeal to my son-in-law to adhere to all the above. Read to the children as I have stated and learn for the sake of Heaven. Become well versed in it for Hashem's sake. Don't pay attention to those who say that it is unnecessary for the child, G-d forbid. To the contrary, "Train a lad, etc." It is easier to remove the skin of a nut before it hardens into a shell.

Most importantly, it is through such study that one merits everything, as our Sages stated (Pirkei Avot 6:1): "Rabbi Meir said: Whoever studies Torah for its own sake merits many things; furthermore, the whole world is worthwhile for his sake alone". You should study Tractate Avot, especially Avot D'Rabbi Natan, and Tractate Derech Eretz, since Derech Eretz (good manners) are more important than Torah study. Honor both your mother-in-law and your children's great grandmother. Also always treat everyone with politeness and respect.

My Dear Mother, I know that you don't need my advice, because you are very modest. Nevertheless, I wish someone would read this letter to you, for it consists of words of the Living G-d. I beg of you not to grieve over me, as you promised me, and G-d willing, if I merit to arrive at the gate of heaven in the holy city of Jerusalem, I will pray for you as I promised. And if we deserve it, we shall all be reunited, please G-d. I also ask my wife to honor my mother, as the Torah dictates, especially since she is a widow to whom it is a grave sin to cause even the slightest pain.

TO BRING JOY TO MAN

I also ask you, Mother, to please cause peace to reign between you, and that you should strive to bring happiness to one another. This is a great mitzvah incumbent upon everyone, as we find (Reishis Chochmah): "When man is judged, he will be asked, "Did you make your fellow a king over you?" We see that one must gladly enhance his friend's honor. In fact, the main goal of the Torah is to bring joy to man. Even if one of you should happen to act improperly, excuse each other and live in peace for Hashem's name. I also ask of you, Mother, to supervise and guide my children with gentle words, so that they will accept them. I instruct my sons and daughters to honor her, and not to fight among themselves at all, but to settle everything peacefully. May the Master of Peace grant you, my sons, daughters, sons-in-law, brother and all Israel life and peace. Your loving Eliyahu the son of R. Shlomo Zalman ztz'l

CONFESSION (VIDUI) FROM RABBENU NISSIM WRITTEN ONE THOUSAND YEARS AGO

From reading this confession we will learn how many aspects of our lives we can improve in order to fulfill the

wishes of G-d, Blessed Be He. It is very beneficial to read it because The Creator desires that we admit our sins and errors as a first step to improving our souls. Then, we must strive to make changes and try not to repeat our mistakes and G-d is always open to accept our prayers and our repentance. More than anything, our Father in Heaven wishes and yearns for us to return to Him and “A broken and a contrite heart, O G-d you will not despise” (Psalms 51, 19).

“Master of the Universe, before I begin to speak, I acknowledge that I have no mouth to respond, and no decency to lift my head, because my sins overwhelm me and as a heavy load they weigh me down, and my transgressions are too many to be counted, and my sins too many to tell. I confess before You, Lord My G-d and G-d of my fathers with head bowed down and with my body bent, with a lowly spirit and no strength with a broken heart, bowing and prostrating to You with terror, fear and awe; with trembling, dread and shuddering, for the sins and iniquities I have committed against You, and all that I have transgressed and sinned against You, Lord My G-d. I say before You Lord, My G-d, some of my evil deeds, my perverse ways and my ugly actions, for to make a complete confession is impossible, and I do not have the power to reveal and explain them and I don't have the power of putting them in front of You. And I am not worthy enough to seek Your pardon, forgiveness and atonement for them. What am I? and what is my life? I am vanity and emptiness, dust and ashes, worm and maggot; I am ashamed from my sins and embarrassed because of my transgressions; And if I try to clarify them, compile them or explain them, time

will run out but still I would not finish recounting them. Nor I have the eloquence to confess for them. My sin is too big for anyone to bear, and my transgressions can not be numbered. I am ashamed and confounded like a thief caught while hiding.

Master of the Universe, if I come to enumerate and to explain my transgressions, time would run out but they would not. For which of them shall I plead? Which shall I confess? And for which shall I ask pardon, forgiveness and atonement? For the general or for the specific? For sins I committed in public or in private? For early or recent, for new or old, for the hidden or for the known, for those I remember or for those I have forgotten? I am aware that I have no Torah and no Mitzvot, no knowledge and no understanding, no charity and no justice, no kind deeds and no upright heart. But I am fool and not educated, simple and not understanding, a thief and not faithful, guilty and not innocent, wicked and not righteous, evil and not good, and I have not done any good deeds.

And if You judge me according to my deeds, Woe is for me, Alas for me. And if You wish to cleanse and purify me as is done to silver, nothing would remain of me.

May it be Your will, Lord, my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that you not enter into judgment with Your servant, Because no life can justify itself in front of You. What am I? And what is my life? I am like straw before fire, dry wood before the flame, like silver pottery covered with dross, vanity of vanities with no substance within.

With what shall I present myself in front of You, Lord, my G-d, or what remedy shall I request of You? As a stubborn and rebellious son I have been to do what's wrong in Your eyes. Like a servant rebelling against his master, and a student disrespecting his teacher. What You declared pure I deemed unclean, and what You declared unclean I deemed clean, what You have declared permitted I deemed forbidden, and what You have declared forbidden I have permitted; That which You love I have hated and that which You hate I have loved; And that which You treat with care I treated lightly and that which You treat lightly I have treated with much care, what You have pushed away I brought close, and what You brought close I pushed away. But it was not my intention to anger You. Ashamed I come to ask from You pardon, forgiveness and atonement. I made my face hard like a rock and I know that I shall not be put to shame because in You, I have placed my trust, Lord; I said You are my G-d and I rely on your numerous mercies. Because I know that You are a gracious and merciful G-d, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, withholding evil and Faithful to give Good.

Master of the universe, the custom of Your Righteous Tribunal is not like that of humans. For the nature of flesh and blood is that if a man claims money from his neighbor, he takes that man before a judge, and if he denies any wrongdoing, he is relieved, but if he confesses to taking the money he is made to pay. But in Your Righteous Tribunal it is not so, and if one denies his wrongdoing Woe is to him, Woe is to his soul, but if he acknowledges his fault and abandons his ways, You have mercy on him and You

save his soul from the judgment of Gehinam (purgatory)...

Please Lord, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, may our prayers go before You, and do not hide, O King from our supplications; For we are not so arrogant and stiff necked to declare before You Lord, G-d and G-d of our fathers, that we are righteous and haven't sinned, for in reality we have sinned, transgressed and committed iniquity, we and our fathers and the people in our house.

My sin I have acknowledged to You and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said I would confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you have carried the weight of my transgression, sela.

He who seeks to cover up his transgressions will not succeed, but he who confesses and abandons his evil deeds, You will have mercy on Him. (Proverbs 28:13)

Now in the Hebrew comes a confession following the order of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet; when translated they lose the order but we will keep each paragraph separated.

(ALEF) We are guilty. We have eaten forbidden foods. We have eaten without washing our hands. We have eaten without reciting the preliminary or concluding blessings. We have eaten prior to reciting our prayers. We have partaken of food and drink without inspecting for worms, and for each worm we must be punished with five lashings.

(BEIT) We have betrayed. We have neglected the study of Your Torah. We pronounced blessings that were said in vain or that were not necessary. We have said blessings with no concentration and we said blessings in which we missed to pronounce some words or letters. We have neglected to read the Shema and to say our prayers and to wear Tzitzit and Tefillin. We

have scorned our father and mother and older brother. We have scorned the sages and the G-d fearing. We blessed the blessing after meals with lightheadedness. We did not answer Baruch Chu u Baruch Shmo while we heard blessings being recited

(GIMEL) We have robbed. We have stolen from Jew and not Jew. We have misled people and tried to fool G-d. We have revealed secrets. We have interpreted the Torah not according to the Halacha. We have been arrogant in thought, speech and deed and have caused the redemption to be delayed, because the Mashiach will not come until there are no arrogant people in Israel. We have caused the King Mashiach to be dishonored through our transgressions and afflicted from our sins.

(DALET) We have spoken slander and evil talk, mockery, gossip, falsehood, flattery and vulgarity. We have talked in the synagogue and we have spoken while wearing tefillin. We have talked during the repetition of the Amidah and during the reading of the Torah. We have spoken on The Shabbat about weekday activities. We have judged our fellow man considering him guilty. We said one thing with our mouth and another with the heart.

(HEI) We have acted perversely. We have been lightheaded. We have been impudent. We had evil thoughts during the day and came to have the contamination produced by seminal emissions at night. We have ashamed our fellow man in public. We have trespassed the border of others. We have walked with our heads fully up (arrogantly) and have forgotten that all the earth is full of His Glory. We were quick to get into conflicts. We have prayed and said confession without concentrating on what we are saying and The Shechina cries out: "With his mouth and lips he honors me but his heart is far from me". We have prayed alone and have neglected to answer (by not praying with a minyan) 90 amens, 4 kedushas, 10 kaddish and 100 blessings and the Tzaddik has lost His vessel for exaltation. We have engaged in much talk with women. We have spoken lies and defamed the living and the dead. We have gained honor through the misfortunes of our fellow man.

(VAV) We have acted wickedly. We have multiplied transgression and evil without limit. We have allied ourselves to conflict and sin. We have been lax with the property of others and misers with ours. We minimized the honor of Heaven and the respect for the Torah and we did not care about our honor (that we should have for being chosen to receive the Torah).

(ZAIN) We have sinned willfully. We have gone astray after our heart and our eyes. We have mentioned the name of Heaven in vain. We have been careless about the Torah, mitzvoth and the sages. We were careless in washing our hands. We haven't placed in our hearts the thought of the day of death. We have not put at the head of our happiness the memory of the destruction of Your Temple and the desolation of Your Palace. We have not considered The thought of the Day of Judgment in which we will have to give judgment and accounting in front of Your Seat of Glory, is not that the Day of wrath and chastisement, the Day of trouble and sighing, the Day when the accounts are ordered and the books are open and the scale of merit is in the hands of The Lord, almighty. A Day that is awesome and dreadful, a Day without ransom, a Day of trembling and shouting, a Day of desolation and groaning. To whom shall we escape for help, and who will help us hide. Let us go and return to the Lord before the stars of our night darken.

(JET) We have acted violently. We have coveted everything that belongs to our fellow man. We have flattered the evildoers. We have suspected innocent persons. We have profaned Shabbat and Festivals. We have profaned Your Holy Name in private and public.

(TET) We have conceived falsehood and deceit. We have defiled ourselves and our thoughts. We have defiled our soul and it is a part of G-d in the heavens. For three the earth trembles: For the slave that rules and for the handmaid that displaces her mistress. Woe is for our destruction. We have erred in teaching. We have handled Muktze items on Shabbat.

(YUD) We have given bad counsel without limit. We have sat with scoffers and in the company of jesters. We have slept without reciting the Shema. We have sat in synagogue with arrogance and contempt, and we have not placed the fear of the Shechina in front of us. And the Shechina cries out: "If I am a father where is the respect due to Me and if I am a Master, where is the fear due to me. Who has asked of You to trample my courts".

(JAF) We have spoken lies. We have dissembled. We have denied the whole Torah. We have become angry on weekdays and on Shabbat and have torn our souls with our anger. We have consumed our years with the vanities of the world and forgot that we will be brought to judgment for all that was wasted. We have given a bad reputation to our fellow man. We have denied Your good and the good of our fellow man.

(LAMED) We have scoffed. We have mocked. We have studied Torah, not for its own sake, without holiness and purity. We have not answered AMEN when we listen to blessings. We have not risen before the elderly, nor have we shown proper respect for the scholar. We have not concentrated on the blessings of the prayers. We have not contemplated where we came from, nor where we are going and before Whom, we will have to give an account of our actions. We have borrowed money on interest from a Jew. We have borrowed and not paid. We have not set fixed times for the study of Torah. We have not grieved for the destruction of the Holy Temple. We have taught our tongues false things.

(MEM) We have revolted. We have rebelled against Your commandments. We have revolted against the Kingdom of Heaven. We have revolted against the Kingdom of David. We have despised the Holy Temple and yet we seek the three of them. We have informed on our fellowman and have delivered him and his property into the hands of the authorities. We have trespassed against the bans and agreements of the community. We have filled our mouths with laughter in this world.

(NUN) We have shown contempt. We have been faithless. We have sworn falsely and in vain by Your Great Name. We have sworn and not fulfilled our word. We have made vows and we have not paid up. We have enjoyed this world and its pleasures. We have made improper use of the crown of the Torah and the Holy Names of G-d. We have taken revenge and borne grudges and hatred in our heart. We have enjoyed pleasures of this world without first reciting the blessing.

(SAMEJ) We have been stubborn. We have been stubborn and rebellious. We have turned away from You, Your Torah and Your commandments. We have turned away our ears from hearing words of Torah. We have turned away from Your righteous judgments.

(AIN) We have sinned knowingly. We have transgressed the 248 positive mitzvot and the 365 negative ones. We have transgressed commandments whose punishment is excision and death imposed by a court. We have transgressed by desecrating the Name of G-d. Woe to us on the Day of judgment. Woe to us on the Day of punishment. We have pained orphans and widows and the poor of Your people. We have performed work on Shabbat and Holy Days. We have answered blessings with Amens said hurriedly or lately or without hearing the blessings being recited. We have transgressed the 24 violations that carry the punishment of excommunication. We have transgressed ordinances of the congregation. We have transgressed the words of our Sages.

(PEI) We have sinned defiantly. We have thrown off the yoke of Torah, commandments and fear of Heaven. We have caused damage to the upper worlds and Your Holy Names. We have applied ourselves to idle matters. We have opened our mouths to speak evil. We have separated ourselves from the community. We have damaged the sign of the Holy Covenant.

(TZADDI) We have harassed. We have caused anguish to our Father in Heaven, and parents and teachers. We have caused anguish to Jewish scholars. We have caused anguish to creditors.

(KUF) We have been stiff-necked. We have made it difficult for us to learn. We have damaged the channels of Divine influence and transformed them into broken cisterns that can't hold water, and have caused a slave to rule and a handmaiden to supplant her mistress. Let us lie down in shame and let our disgrace cover us, for our sins caused all this and our transgressions have pushed our redemption further away, and our mistakes withheld the good from us. Woe to the children that are exiled from the table of their Father. These long and many evil years. We have closed our hand, so as to not give charity. We have plucked saltwort with wormwood. We have listened to evil talk. We have cursed father and mother. We have cursed our friends and our wives.

(REISH) We have acted wickedly. We have been wicked both to G-d and men. We have argued with others for no reason. We have pursued leadership and honor. We have deceived our fellowman and have run after conflict and sin.

(SHIN) We have corrupted. We have forgotten Your Torah. We have forgotten Your G-dliness. We have been false with all kinds of falsehood and trickery. We have dealt falsely with Your holy covenant. We have rejoiced at the fall of our enemies. We have turned to You in repentance and thereafter returned to our evil ways. We have destroyed holy seeds and created destructive angels. Also on our wings are found the blood of the innocent needy, and the tears of the oppressed, and there is no one to comfort them. O my heart, my heart, how it grieves over the fallen. My bowels, my bowels, how they yearn for the slain. Woe to the evildoer for the work of his hands shall be repaid to him.

(TAV) We have committed abominations. We have detested those who tried to chastise us. We have shaken hands and have not fulfilled our promise. We have regretted our past good deeds. We have gone astray like sheep that are lost. We have gone astray and have led others astray. We have turned from Your good commandments and judgments, and it wasn't worth it. For You are Righteous in all that has come upon us; for You have acted truthfully, but we have been wicked."

IGUERET (THE LETTER) OF THE RAMBAN

Sent from the land of Israel to his son Nachman in Spain

Heed, my son, the instruction of your father and don't forsake the Torah of your mother (Proverbs 1:8). Get into the habit of always speaking calmly to everyone. This will prevent you from anger, a serious character flaw that causes people to sin. As our Rabbis said (Nedarim 22a): Whoever flares up in anger is subject to the discipline of Gehinnom as it says in (Koheles 12:10), "Cast out anger from your heart, and [by doing this] remove evil from your flesh." "Evil" here means Gehinnom, as we read (Proverbs 16:4): "...and the wicked are destined for the day of evil." Once you have distanced yourself from anger, the quality of humility will enter your heart. This quality is the finest of all admirable traits (Avodah Zarah 20b), because (Proverbs 22:4), "Following humility comes the fear of G-d."

Through humility you will also come to fear G-d. It will cause you to always think about (Pirkei Avot 3:1) where you came from and where you are going, and that while alive you are only like a maggot and a worm, and the same after death. It will also remind you before Whom you will be judged, the King of Glory, as it is stated (I Kings 8:27; Proverbs 15:11), "Even the heaven and the heavens of heaven can't contain You" -- "How much less the hearts of people!" It is also written (Jeremiah 23:24), "Do I not fill heaven and earth? says G-d."

When you think about all these things, you will come to fear G-d who created you, and you will refrain yourself from sinning and therefore be happy with

whatever happens to you. Also, when you act humbly and modestly before everyone, and are afraid of G-d and of sin, the radiance of His glory and the spirit of the Shechina will rest upon you, and you will live the life of the World-to-Come!

And now, my son, understand and observe that whoever feels that he is greater than others is rebelling against the Kingship of G-d, because he is adorning himself with His garments, as it is written (Psalms 93:1), "The Lord reigns, He wears clothes of pride." Why should one feel proud? Is it because of wealth? G-d makes one poor or rich (I Samuel 2:7). Is it because of honor? It belongs to G-d, as we read (I Chronicles 29:12), "Wealth and honor come from You." So how could one adorn himself with G-d's honor? And one who is proud of his wisdom surely knows that G-d "takes away the speech of assured men and reasoning from the sages" (Job 12:20)! So we see that everyone is the same before G-d, since with His anger He lowers the proud and when He wishes He raises the low. So lower yourself and G-d will lift you up!

Therefore, I will now explain to you how to always behave humbly. Speak gently at all times, with your head bowed, your eyes looking down to the ground and your heart focusing on G-d. Don't look at the face of the person to whom you are speaking. Consider everyone as greater than yourself. If he is wise or rich, you should give him respect. If he is poor and you are richer -- or wiser -- than he, consider yourself to be more guilty than he, and that he is more worthy than you, since when he sins it is through error, while yours is deliberate and you should know better! In all

your actions, words and thoughts, always regard yourself as standing before G-d, with His Shechinah above you, for His glory fills the whole world. Speak with fear and awe, as a slave standing before his master. Act with restraint in front of everyone. When someone calls you, don't answer loudly, but gently and softly, as one who stands before his master.

Be careful to always study Torah diligently, so you will be able to fulfill its commands. When you arise from your learning reflect carefully on what you have studied, in order to see what in it that you can be put into practice. Examine your actions every morning and evening, and in this way every one of your days will be spent in teshuvah (repentance).

Concentrate on your prayers by removing all worldly concerns from your heart. Prepare your heart before G-d, purify your thoughts and think about what you are going to say. If you follow this in all your daily actions, you will not come to sin. This way everything you do will be proper, and your prayer will be pure, clear, clean, devout and acceptable to G-d, as it is written (Psalms 10:17), "When their heart is directed to You, listen to them."

Read this letter at least once a week and neglect none of it. Fulfill it, and in so doing, walk with it forever in the ways of G-d, may He be blessed, so that you will succeed in all your ways. Thus you will succeed and merit the World to Come which lies hidden away for the righteous. Every day that you shall read this letter, heaven shall answer your heart's desires. Amen, Sela!