

בס"ד

The Light of Ephraim Tikkun Manual

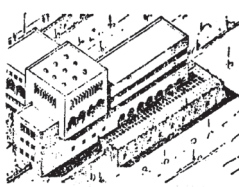
Guidelines to the Rectification¹

1 Dedicated to Ephraim G. ben Chana

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Approbations



ישיבת תורה-אור" בע"מ ירושלים
 בנשיאות מרו הרב הגאון חיים פינחס שיינברג שליט"א
"TORAH - ORE" SEMINARY
 THE AMERICAN SEMINARY IN ISRAEL
 קריית מטרסדורף - KIRYAT MATTERS DORF
 ת.ד. P.O.B. 6979 טל: 02-537-3049
 טלפקס: 02-537-6612
 טל תלמידים: 02-537-2200 02-537-1400
 JERUSALEM 91150 ISRAEL

בס"ד

First candle of Chanukah, 5761

The Light of Ephraim is an important book addressing a central aspect of man's Divine service, based on the teachings of our Sages and *daat Torah*. The theme of the book is the flaw of the covenant and its rectification, as well as the ways in which to guard oneself from this transgression and uphold the covenant with holiness.

I bless the readers to attain a complete *teshuvah*-repentance- the higher *teshuvah*—causing pleasure and delight to the Holy One, blessed be He, by fulfilling the *mitzvot* and studying Torah for the sake of Heaven. "In the place where the repentant stands, even the perfectly righteous cannot stand." In their merit, and in the merit of the Community of Israel, we will be redeemed with the coming of the Messiah, quickly and in our time, Amen.

May it be His will that all the author's offspring be filled with the *daat*-knowledge of *Hashem*, and study Torah with the intention of causing pleasure on high.

With blessings from Jerusalem,

Chaim P. Scheinberg

Dayan Ch. Ehrentreu

ב"ה

חנוך עהרנמרייא

Rosh Beth Din

ראש בית דין

1 Highfield Gardens

דק"ק לונדון והמדינה

London NW11 9HD

Tel: (0181) 458 6322

Fax: (0181) 922 0760

ט' אלול חשמי"א לפ"ק

To whom it may concern

The author of '*The Light of Ephraim*' who is personally known to me, is a deeply religious individual who is imbued with a true Torah Hashkafa.

I sincerely believe that this work can inspire its readers to raise themselves spiritually and assist them in their quest and striving to ascend the steps of Torah and Yirat Shomayim.

In particular those who are starting their spiritual journey will derive especial strength from the message of this book.

with Torah greetings,

Dayan Ch. Ehrentreu
Rosh Beth Din, London

Rectifying in Our Time

On Thursday night at 1:00 a.m., Adam knocked lightly at the rabbi's door and opened it carefully.

"Good morning!" greeted Yosef. "I am so glad you asked me to give you a few more sessions; there is no question that it is the right thing to do. As we say in our daily blessings:

Blessed is He Who guides the steps of man

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּכִינְ מִצְעָדַי גִּבּוֹר

"Baruch Hashem," murmured Adam softly.

"Before we start, let me explain an expression that we will be referring to: 'Days of *Shovavim*.' Many kabalists in each generation fast on Mondays and Thursdays during these six consecutive weeks, from *alot hashachar*-dawn, till *tzet hakochavim*-the coming out of three stars. These weeks are referred to as 'Days of *Shovavim*'-rebellious children; the acrostic of this Hebrew word hints at the span of time during which these fasts take place, namely the time in which we read the first six weekly Torah portions of the Book of Exodus: *Shemot, Vaera, Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim*. The fasts thus take place throughout the six weeks in which we read about our ancestors' bondage in Egypt, for this time is imbued with a special light propitious for the rectification of the covenant.

"Remember what I explained to you last night: each sefira is connected with one of the Divine Names and has attributes that define its unique character. Hence, depending which sefira your highest soul-root is connected with, you are going to have special powers, whether in actuality or still in potential. When man's soul falls into the clutches of the other side, the special Divine forces

permeating it are going to fall as well, and along with it will be dragged all the sparks connected with his soul – be it his own soul or the sparks stemming from the soul of another, which for some reason is connected with his own. In consequence, a great spiritual darkness comes over the Divine spaces whence his soul originated, and all the Divine forces on High are affected: the heavenly worlds, the souls, his own soul-root, the angels, and the holy sparks linked with his soul.

“Since the people of Israel are considered a collectivity of souls forming one single spiritual structure, these sages undergo the Shovavim fasts with total deprivation of food and drink in order to bring about the Redemption of the lost souls of men’s spiritual children that we call also *shovavim*, as well as of Divine powers affected by the fall of these souls, attempting to repair the damage for the entire Community of Israel as well as for their own souls.”

“Why is it necessary to fast?” asked Adam. “I am sure that there are men who succeed in overcoming this yetzer and would be able to live a life imbued with the strength of their Torah study alone.

“Of course there are such men! In fact, there are many of them. However, unless they rectify the damage inadvertently committed in the sefira on High to which their soul is connected, their Torah study will never attain its full expression. They will not be able to actualize the special powers their soul has in potential.

“Now, I thought about what you requested and am going to share with you the advice proffered by three major sages among the kabalists of our time.

First Way of Tikkun

“The first one, who is no longer with us, Rabbi Shmuel Darzi, zt’l, Rosh Yeshiva of *Yeshivat Naot beRama*, completely gave himself to the Shovavim fasts for the sake of the Community of Israel. Every Monday and Thursday during the days of Shovavim there were special prayers in his yeshiva at the time of Mincha, during which he read the prayer composed by the *Rashash*, geared to this

rectification.¹⁴ Many have become Torah sages in the merit of the tears Rabbi Darzi shed during his prayers in the Days of Shovavim at the Western Wall at sunrise. He was the *chavruta*-study partner of the late kabalist Rabbi Yitzchak Kaduri, zt'l; countless Jews have derived immense benefit from the study of these two Torah giants.

“This Zohar that we read at the Third Shabbat Meal will give you a better idea of who Rabbi Darzi was:¹⁵

Come and see! Throughout the six weekdays, at the time for the Mincha prayer, severe justice is dominant, and all the strict judgments are aroused. However, on Shabbat, when it becomes time for Mincha, the yearning of yearnings is emitted, and *Atika Kadisha* [aspect of Divine revelation at the level of Keter] reveals his *ratzon*-desire. All forms of judgment are then suspended, and desire and joy flow down to all [the worlds].

It was at such time of favor that Moses, the prophet who was faithful and holy, left the world, so that it would be known that his death was not an expression of strict justice. At that time, [drawn out] by the desire of [Divine revelation at the level of Keter, referred to as] *Atika Kadisha*, his soul left and hid in the palace of desire [in the world of *Briya*].

תָּא חָזִי, בְּכֹל שְׁתָּא
 יוֹמֵי דְשַׁבְּתָא, כַּד
 מְטָא שְׁעָתָא דְדְצִלוֹתָא
 דְּמִנְחָה, דִּינָא תְּקִיפָא
 שְׁלִטָּא, וְכֹל דִּינִין
 מִתְּעָרִין. אַבְל בְּיוֹמָא
 דְּשַׁבְּתָא, כַּד מְטָא
 עֲדוֹן דְּצִלוֹתָא דְּמִנְחָה,
 רְעוּא דְרְעוּוֹן אֲשֵׁתְכֹחַ,
 וְעֵתִיקָא קְדִישָׁא גְּלִיא
 רְצוֹן דִּילֵיהּ, וְכֹל דִּינִין
 מִתְּכַפְּיִין, וּמִשְׁתַּכֵּחַ
 רְעוּתָא וְחֵדוֹ בְּכֹלֵא:
 וּבְהָאֵי רְצוֹן,
 אֲסֵתְלֵק מִשְׁהָ, נְבִיאָה
 מְהִימְנָא קְדִישָׁא
 מְעֻלְמָא. בְּגִין לְמַנְדְּע,
 דְּלֹא בְּדִינָא אֲסֵתְלֵק,
 וְהֵיא שְׁעָתָא בְּרְצוֹן
 דְּעֵתִיקָא קְדִישָׁא נְפַק
 נְשִׁמְתִּיהּ, וְאֵתְטַמַּר בֵּיהּ.

“Rabbi Darzi’s soul left this world on a Shabbat afternoon, when he was in the synagogue of his yeshiva at the time of Mincha and they had just opened the Ark to remove the Torah scroll.”

Adam raised his eyebrows in appreciation, but remained silent.

“Rabbi Darzi was very careful not to allow a man to undertake

14 The prayer appears in the compilation of teachings of the *Rashash*, *Ohr haLevana*.

15 Zohar, *Yitro*, 89a-89b.

the deeper rectification of his soul by means of fasting as taught by our sages of early generations whenever he thought that the man had not yet attained the spiritual level permitting him to undergo such a cleansing without danger of falling again. I have seen him turn down men who wanted such rectifications and were ready to offer generous donations to his yeshiva.

“Hence when he felt that fasting was not an option, Rabbi Darzi advised his students to read forty *dapim*-two sides of a page, or even forty *amudim*-single page sides of Zohar every day. Now, do not think that this suggestion is limited to those who need to rectify their past! Reading the Zohar brings great light upon the soul, and Rabbi Darzi followed his own advice. This is a practice followed by many sages: the late Rabbi Israel Abuchatzera, known as the *Baba Sali*, had one of his disciples read the Zohar to him daily when he could no longer do it himself toward the end of his life.”

“That is a lot of material to cover,” mused Adam. “It does not seem like user-friendly advice! Besides, I’m not even sure of what a *daf* or an *amud* are,” he ended with a smile.

“Each Zohar page is called a *daf* that has two *amudim*-sides, *amud aleph* and *amud bet*. In old manuscripts a *daf* was larger than today’s standard page format. In modern editions of the Zohar the *daf* and the *amud* are always clearly marked, along with the regular page number. To complete the *tikkun* of the flaw of the covenant, one who reads quickly can go through 40 *dapim* per day, and one who reads more slowly can aim for 20 *dapim* which are two *amudim* each, adding up to 40 *amudim* total. The number 40 is significant for the *tikkun*. To complete the *tikkun*, one needs to finish the entire Zohar, excluding the *Tikunei Zohar* and the *Zohar Chadash*. However, any amount of reading has a cleansing effect on the soul.

“It takes me two hours to read this amount, but there is no question that this would be difficult for anyone who does not read Hebrew with great fluency.

“However, to follow Rabbi Darzi’s advice, you would have to buy an edition which does not even have a facing translation, for your aim would be to cover ground. If you have a translation readily available, it would be very difficult not to look up any of the fascinating mysteries that you will read about.”

“Why should I not try to look up the meaning and try to understand rather than reading like a parrot?” asked Adam.

“It does not sound like you grasp that your first duty is to initiate the cleansing of your soul. If not for your sake, you should do it for the sake of your spiritual children!” retorted Yosef. “If you can derive delight from your study of the Zohar at this point in your life, think how much more you will achieve when your flawed daat has been healed from Above!”

Adam closed his eyes for a moment. “It is hard to keep in mind that this cleansing is the most important thing I can do right now. I have to be grateful for the Divine intervention in our times to help us ‘weed our inner garden!’” He shook his head and repeated: “Unquestionable Divine intervention.”

Second Way of Tikkun

“Let’s continue: We will now discuss the approach to rectifying practiced at *Yeshivat Bet El*, a yeshiva devoted to the study and transmission of Kabala. For many generations, the *Rashei Yeshiva*-leaders of Bet El have organized joint fasts for the sake of the people of Israel in the days of Shovavim, adding a special feature called *Taanit Dibbur*, which may be translated as ‘a fast of silence.’ The *Taanit Dibbur* enables all those who don’t have the spiritual strength to fast, either because of physical limitations or because they are widowers or bachelors, to participate in the Days of Shovavim.¹⁶ However, many engage in this practice in addition to the regular fasts. Rabbi Yitzchak Alfie, zt’l, has written an entire book devoted to the *Taanit Dibbur*,¹⁷ and it was published with an excellent introduction. Torah sages such as Rabbi Ovadia Hedaya and Rabbi Meir Getz used this book as a basis for their *Taanit Dibbur* practice.”

“Could you give me an idea of what it entails?” asked Adam.

“Basically, you accept the *Taanit Dibbur* upon yourself the day before, just like you do with a regular fast. On the day itself, you

16 Widowers and bachelors must ask a competent rabbi if they are allowed to participate in the Shovavim experience.

17 Rabbi Yitzchak Alfie, *Or Chadash Vetzemach Tzadik*. Published by David Yehudayoff.

may read prayers but must refrain from any unnecessary speech, and you have to complete the entire book of Psalms three times. Although you have one month to complete the Psalms, Rabbi Alfie emphasizes that you must exert yourself in your reading, covering as much ground as you are able to during that day, and finishing the rest at the earliest possible opportunity.

“When discussing the rectification of the covenant, you have to distinguish between two types of men – or maybe one could say two different stages in man’s life. There is a man whose main concern is repairing his own bond with Hashem, and so he wants to undergo the rectification for his own sake. And there is another type of man who has walked farther along the path; his life is totally immersed in Divine service, and he wants to become Hashem’s partner in rectifying the world, to make it a worthy space for the Divine Presence.

“Now, Bet El Yeshiva’s main concern is centered on this effort to ‘release Divine powers in captivity,’ and the key part of the rectification consists in the kabalistic kavanot that the Yeshiva students do at the end of these fasts. *One* of their main concerns,” repeated Yosef, correcting himself. “Their main concern is interpreting and transmitting the teachings of the Ari z’l and the Rashash after him, like at any other yeshiva devoted to the study of Kabala. However, the task of rectifying the collective soul of Israel through the Shovavim fasts is one of the undertakings which they share with most other institutions of a similar nature. Their members are at different levels of Torah knowledge and observance, but they all unequivocally follow their leader with the common goal that I mentioned in mind.”

“I guess they have no time to waste with the guy who is still at the beginning of his journey and it is not that he doesn’t want, but he does not yet have what it takes to go along with their lofty rescue plan!” mused Adam, with overtones of bitterness in his voice.

“Let me remind you that the reason why we are meeting tonight is the question you asked yesterday: What do the authentic kabalists of our day and age suggest to the man who is living in *galut*, exile, outside of Israel, who knows he has fallen and wants to begin the rectification his soul badly needs? So I wanted to give you living examples, and Bet El Yeshiva is one of them.

“Many men knock at the Yeshiva’s heavy silver door, and they

all receive the guidance they seek. The success of their journey depends on their ability to listen to what they are being told to do and their irrevocable commitment to abide by this guidance. As I have mentioned to you, the concept of *הַדָּעוּת הַבְּטוּל*-unequivocal surrender of your daat to a Torah sage is the first item in the list of precautions to prevent a fall.”

“I remember reading in the *The Path of the Just*¹⁸ that life is a maze and you may think that the best option for you is to turn right; the sage, however, has been through the maze and is now above it. He thus has the general picture that you are missing and can guide you with precision,” nodded Adam. “And indeed that is what led me to you, Rabbi: I had rejected a center for studies of Kabala because I felt it was led by phonies. The problem is that it is not always easy to see who is a phony and who is genuine.”

“That is why I agreed to meet with you again in order to tell you how we try to help those who want to begin the tikkun on their own,” noted Yosef.

“Please give me a few examples of what a newcomer is told to do and what he is warned to avoid,” asked Adam.

“The first thing is – as long as a young man is unmarried, he is not to study Kabala and he is not to engage in fasts other than the prescribed fasts that each one of us has to do, until one year after he gets married. Another piece of advice he is given is to read the *Pitum haKetoret*, Compounding of the Incense, every day – if possible, between chatzot-midnight and *alot hashachar*-dawn, or in the three hours following *netz*-sunrise.”

“Are you referring to the readings about the Compounding of the Incense that we are to read at the beginning and end of our morning prayer and at the beginning of the afternoon prayer?” asked Adam.

“The text I’m referring to is based on those daily readings in our siddur,” replied Yosef. “But it was expanded by Rabbi Chaim Vital under the guidance of the Ari z”l, who added to it other Biblical texts with the similar property of extending Divine protection to those reading them.

“You see, the Zohar reveals that the Biblical readings about the

18 A seminal work of Jewish ethics written by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto known as the Ramchal (1707–1746).

ketoret-incense have the special property of destroying outside forces and mitigating strict justice. Rabbi Chanania Baron, a Torah sage who is a member of the Yeshivat Bet El, published a book entitled *Kol Rina*, containing many prayers that kabalists are apt to read in the holy hours after midnight. *Kol Rina* has the kabalistic version of the *ketoret* readings; this version of the *ketoret* contains Torah sections such as the one describing the light of the Menora that has to be read seven times, and selected verses which have to be read backwards and forwards, all geared toward confounding the outside forces and preventing the heavenly accusers from blocking man's prayer."

"I'm sure that must take a long time to read," mused Adam. "Why so much? There is already a tremendous amount that we have to read throughout the day and little time and energy to do these readings!"

"That's just it, you see," noted Yosef. "A man will willingly balance two or even three jobs, working impossible hours, but he won't devote time to destroy the forces which do not leave him day or night, harnessing all his Divine sustenance to themselves. At some point throughout his fall, man ceases to be prodded by the yearning of attaining *daat*, and becomes stupefied by a paralyzing sense of resignation to his fate."

"*Daat pagum*-our *daat* is messed up," whispered Adam to himself.

"Yes!" noted Yosef, "But as you hear this, forewarned is forearmed. The *ketoret* included in *Kol Rina* is preceded by a short introduction culled from Rabbi Chaim Vital's writings; let me read you a few lines:

After a man is overcome by these [outside forces], they don't separate themselves from him. They are always cleaving to him; they surround him for a few cubits on all sides.⁴⁷⁷ Furthermore, [care has to be exercised] in the neighborhood in which he lives, [to avoid touching] any instrument or garment belonging to him, and to keep distance from him.

אחר שהכו אותם אינם
נפרדים ממנו ותמיד
דבוקים בו ומקיפין
אותו מכל סביבותיו
שיעור כמה אמות, ולא
עוד אלא אפילו באותה
השכונה שעומד שם
המוכה או אפילו איזה
כלי ומלבוש שלו צריך
להתרחק ממנו [...]

Adam sighed heavily. “Yes,” he said. “You told me as much when we first met; I have a short memory. So reading the ketoret helps.”²⁰

“So much so that this same introduction states that when a person is in any kind of danger, one should organize a group of ten men to read the ketoret between midnight and sunrise, to pray for Divine compassion on his behalf.”²¹

“I feel that it’s not really fair to the bachelor when you prevent him from learning Kabala, as well as from fasting – it’s as if on the one hand you cut his legs and on the other you tell him to run away,” observed Adam.

“You are mistaken, my son. I know a young man who abided by these instructions to the letter and even added his own measures of precaution based on what he was able to pick up from the more senior members of the Yeshiva. For instance, he saw that they did not have meat on the weekdays because they learned that it contains sparks that are difficult to elevate unless it was prepared for a *seudat mitzva*-meal of mitzva, such as that of Shabbat or a wedding. Hence, even though he heard the Rosh Yeshiva warning his students that this advice should under no circumstances be extended to their wives or families, still, he readily took this measure upon himself. He also noticed that they were careful not to eat a lot on the weekdays based on the knowledge that whenever you eat something your body doesn’t require, it brings you down. He then realized that when

- 19 A cubit is an ancient unit of length equal to the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger – approximately 50 cm or 20 inches. Some opinions say it is 18 inches, while others maintain that it is 24 inches.
- 20 I have included two attachments with the text of this prayer on my website www.healingwithinwithout.com, in the article *Pitum HaKetoret*; one of these is the kabalistic version from the above-mentioned *Kol Rina* published by Bet El Yeshiva listed as *Pitum_HaKetoret.pdf*; I have included in the study detailed instructions for this reading. The second attachment is the layman version published by the Nahar Shalom Yeshiva, appearing under the name *Ketoret_Nahar_Shalom.pdf*. Also included are recorded readings of the Bet El version of the Ketoret, one in male and one in female voice. Those unable to read Hebrew fluently may hear the recording of the Bet El version of the prayer while following it with the text of this prayer.
- 21 The Bet El Yeshiva provides such a service with ten of their members, who have to be compensated.

Shabbat came and he was able to enjoy a full meal with meat and wine, the alcohol weakened his guard. Upon consulting the Rosh Yeshiva, he decided that he would avoid any type of alcoholic drink until he got married – whenever that would be.”

“To avoid wine altogether, even on Shabbat... Wow, that’s hard!” exclaimed Adam. “That’s what you said last night, that any exercise of self-control when it comes to food and drink will help one’s rectification. I could accept it if you talked of saving wine for seudot mitzva, but when Shabbat arrives, to have to say *Kiddush* on grape juice...” He shook his head and said quietly: “Please, tell me what else.”

“He also happened to live near a mikve. Whenever he woke from any nap, he would go immerse in the mikve. His inner voice was screaming at him: *Don’t do it! You’ll be late for the next appointment. You don’t have enough time.* He would grit his teeth and not listen. Invariably, when he came out of the mikve, he made it on time to wherever he was going.”

“Are you telling me to go to a mikve more than once a day?” asked Adam in an incredulous tone of voice.

“No, I am not,” answered Yosef. “I am sharing the example of one person who was graced with the possibility of doing just that, and was clearly helped by this behavior, because as I once told you, among the measures of precaution and protection you may take, going to the mikve is essential. I believe, however, that the Holy One gives each of His precious souls a unique set of opportunities that can further its personal redemption. It is up to a man to recognize these and adopt them, making them part of his life.

“I’ll go on: He accepted the truly kind suggestion of a rabbi who offered to teach him the intricate Shabbat laws for two hours every morning.²² He realized that all the members of the Yeshiva invariably spent time after morning prayers studying a book called

22 As expounded in *Or Yitzchak*, compendium of Halacha by Rabi Yitzchak Abadi.

Chok leIsrael.²³ Upon asking, he was told that according to the Ari z”l, such study enables one to receive a loftier additional soul every Shabbat. He immediately tried to take it on, but was discouraged by the selections of Mishna, which were too complex for him to undertake. When he asked an older member of the Yeshiva if he could read these selections without understanding them, he was firmly told that the letters of the word Mishna are the same as those of the word neshama, the higher soul which dwells in our brain, meaning that you have to understand what you are reading. He then went to the Rosh Yeshiva, who told him that in his case, at this stage of his life he could do these readings with whatever understanding he could muster and would still reap the benefits.

“He noticed how careful the Yeshiva members were to avoid impurity. Upon learning that at the time of chatzot, as well as at half an hour before the time of alot hashachar, a wave of impurity is directed onto all those who are sleeping, he took on the practice of getting up before chatzot, reading the Midnight Prayer and going to sleep, to wake up again before alot hashachar. Whenever he went to sleep, even for a nap, he always tried to keep within reach a basin with a ritual vessel for washing hands, filled with water.

“He followed the advice of Rabbi Chanania Baron, who urged him to say the Aramaic meditation *Patach Eliyahu* before the evening prayer at the end of Shabbat, and once again throughout the Melave Malka-meal after the conclusion of Shabbat, in deference to our holy Shechina, Who must return to the weekday distance from Her Source on High when Shabbat ends.

“He allowed his beard to grow unrestrained, because he heard that the hairs of the beard are like spiritual conduits through which Divine sustenance flows down... but he had to shave it off about a

23 See the newly published edition of *Chok leIsrael* with clear vocalized texts, in which the Zohar selections appear with the Hebrew interpretations side by side; it may be purchased by sending a fax to the publisher in Jerusalem (972-2-523-2485) or writing (Rechov Yoel 30, Jerusalem, Israel) and asking for the Blum edition. Available in pocket-sized booklets. Besides its clear print, the advantage of the Blum edition is that the Zohar daily selections include the glosses of the *Matok MiDevash*, an extensive Zohar commentary. See also the website www.eChok.com. For more detailed information about the *Chok leIsrael* see my study “Preparing for Shabbat” on the website www.healingwithinwithout.com.

year later, at the request of his new bride...”²⁴

“What a wonderful story!” exclaimed Adam with a hearty laugh. “That’s what you were saying the other day, that the intensity of our effort to renew the bond with Hashem shows on High how much we want to make up for our past mistakes.”

“Exactly,” nodded Yosef, “and Hashem, the Knower of All Secrets, knows... knows the effort each individual extends to get close to Him, no matter how hidden that effort is. And if you asked me, a passive observer, I would tell you that a great part of his effort that to my mind got him the Divine favor was the way he limited food intake to the minimum. Yes, he couldn’t fast while he was still single, because a man who fasts while he is unmarried is in danger of falling, but he was aware of what the sages say about the role of food in one’s Divine service. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero points out that if you restrain the desire to satisfy temptations for physical gratification of some kind, you will be sanctifying all your energy to serving your Creator with Torah study. Moreover, Rabbi Alexander Ziskind teaches in his *Yesod VeShoresh Ha’Avoda* that if instead of weakening yourself by fasting, you stop eating while still quite hungry, it will show how you are overcoming temptation for food for the sake of the Holy One. In response, He will accept it as if you had actually fasted an entire day.

“But this is just one example. Many men knock at the Yeshiva’s door requesting guidance on how to rectify the desecration of the covenant. After following a similar path, most of them attain the state of harmony they were yearning for.

“After a man succeeds in going through the higher rectification that I will tell you about in a moment, the Rosh Yeshiva advises him to read the text of the ketoret expanded by the Ari z”l daily, as a source of protection, for after this tikkun a man is often challenged, as if he had to prove that he is worthy of the higher rectification

24 In addition, a family member undertook to read the entire ספרא דצניעותא *Sifra DiTzeniuta*, a text that is part of the Zohar and is divided into five sections, each a counterpart of one of the five *Chumashim*-Books of Moses, on the young man’s behalf. This text is included in the above-mentioned *Kol Rina*. As Rabbi Chania Baron, who compiled it, observed, such a reading became an important element of the rectification the young man had to undertake. It is possible to hire the services of one of the members of the Bet El Yeshiva to do such a reading.

he was able to attain. He is told to read the ketoret after midnight for a few months. He is also told that when his wife becomes pregnant, he should say Psalm 20 on her behalf every single day until she gives birth. And believe me,” added Yosef, “many men whose wives had miscarriage after miscarriage until they were able to bear a pregnancy to full term would have been glad to receive this advice upon getting married!”

“So what would the Rosh Yeshiva suggest for someone like me to initiate his rectification?” asked Adam.²⁵

“Bear in mind that a rectification undertaken in a group is more readily accepted on High than the solitary prayer of an individual, and the same is true of the prayer you recite in synagogue, together with other members of the community. Let me tell you how to do this, following the lines of a general rectification which is taught in the holy Zohar:²⁶

“Take upon yourself a one-day, twelve-hour long voluntary fast, from alot hashachar to tzet hakoachavim-coming out of three stars, as the first level of rectification of your past.²⁷ Also, remain in silence for that entire day, meaning that you can only say words of Torah as when you pray, and donate money to charity.²⁸

25 If you are interested in getting information as to what you need to do for your personal tikkun, write me an e-mail to simchahbenyosef@yahoo.com with your Skype address and I will try to find someone appropriate to contact you.

26 The section that follows is dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Aharon Roth, zt”l, on whose work *Taharat HaKodesh* the last chapter of this book is based. After many attempts, I was only able to write this section on the day of Rabbi Roth’s *yahrzeit*, on the 6th of Nissan.

27 Note that we may not undertake fasts of personal rectification during a Sabbatical (*Shmitta*) year.

28 You may give any amount according to your means. I suggest you make your check out to the “Rachel and Sarah Public Foundation Inc.,” (a 501 3c corporation), and mail it to S. Simon Yaacov, 500 Bloomfield Ave, Verona, NJ 07044. You will be sent a receipt for your donation and every cent of your money will be forwarded to a Torah institution in Jerusalem devoted to the study of Kabala; there are no fees or charges. I have selected this particular Torah institution because they send the donations to Yeshivat Bet El in Jerusalem, on whose teachings this book is based. Donations go to a special fund dedicated to their students who remain in the Western Wall area every weeknight from midnight until after morning prayers. This being said, however, you may select any other legitimate Torah institution for your donation.

“On the afternoon of the day before you want to fast you have to state your intention to fast at the end of the Mincha prayer, just before you say for the second time: *May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, Hashem...* However, you should add that if you find yourself unable to complete this fast, you will read Psalm 23 three times and it will automatically nullify your acceptance of the fast.²⁹

“As I mentioned above about the fast of silence, you also have to read the entire book of Psalms three times from beginning to end.

“On the day of the fast you should also read the *vidduy*-confession that we say on Yom Kippur just before the *Neila*-closing service. Furthermore, according to Rabbi Israel Avichai, present Rosh Yeshiva of Bet El, you must read a page of Zohar describing Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai’s discussion of the heavenly judgment in his final moments.³⁰

“Remember that you must give a donation – whatever you can afford – you can give it to any worthy Torah cause, but I think you should aim to give it to the Torah institution from where you received most help. It is important that this donation be given before you say Mincha. Incidentally, this is also true on a normal day: a small amount of charity must always be given before saying Mincha.

“I want to clarify that you are accountable for all the different types of desecration of the covenant you have committed, and can only rectify one at a time – whether you were guilty of indulging on your own, or had relations in an unnatural way: all of these are different transgressions and each requires its own rectification.

“As taught in the recent four-volume work published by the yeshiva *Nahar Shalom* under the direction of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Benayahu Yissachar Shmueli,³¹ even if a man knows that he never committed a certain type of transgression, it could be that he did so in other incarnations, or maybe other souls belonging to his soul-root sinned in this way. Therefore, for his own benefit he should undergo the appropriate rectifications in order to glean and rectify

29 The prayer stating one’s intention to fast may be found in Appendix V: Prayers.

30 The selection from the *Idra Zuta* may be found in Appendix II.

31 See *Sefer Benayahu: Tikkun haShovavim...*

the sparks of holiness that fell, whether by his own responsibility or by that of others – all this so that the klipot won't get sustenance by attaching themselves to his Torah study and performance of mitzvot.

“However, you asked me about a man like you – meaning someone who lives outside of Israel, and is not connected with an experienced rabbi to guide him – how can such a man begin his rectification. He has to have the wisdom of ascertaining whether his daily behavior is in accordance with the requirements for the lower teshuva, as I have described them to you. That is a way for a man to begin repaying his debt on his own. The sincerity and devotion with which he will undertake all the measures of precaution I have been giving you will earn him the merit of going deeper and deeper in his effort to cleanse his soul, attaining the lofty higher rectification.”

“But...may I ask you a question, Rabbi?” said Adam. Upon Yosef's nod of assent, the young man continued: “You said that Rabbi Darzi gave the above advice when fasting was not an option, and you yourself spent a good share of our meetings to tell me how the sages tend to discourage fasting nowadays. I know, however, that you teach your students to engage in long fasts to rectify the flaw of the covenant. Why is that?”

Yosef hesitated, and then answered with a slight smile: “I teach my students about fasting because I know that is the only way that they are going to regain access to all the levels of their soul – the only way they will be able to elevate all the souls and all the sparks of holiness that they lost. However, these are men whom I personally know and believe that they are ready for this form of growth. I always request that they receive a medical opinion as to whether they are fit to fast without detriment to their health. And I can tell you that when one engages in such spiritual cleansing, his desire for devekut, passionate attachment is fulfilled right from the Source... you feel like an angel when you finish such a fast!”

He paused and added: “We are all very good at telling ourselves that fasting would be very difficult for us, but those who find the courage to follow this path succeed beyond their often limited expectations of themselves. This being said, however, these fasts are only an option when you are under the supervision of a Torah sage who is well-versed in these methods of the Ari z”l and knows when