In the previous chapters, the Alter Rebbe explained how it is "very near to you," i.e., how it is very easy and accessible to every Jew to serve G-d with love and awe. He stated that this can be accomplished either by creating a love and fear of G-d through meditation on G-d's greatness, or by arousing the "hidden love" (which also comprises a fear of G-d) inherent in every Jew.

In the coming chapters, the Alter Rebbe will discuss means of overcoming possible obstacles in the path of one's service to G-d. In the first instance, he shows how one may overcome the sadness, and dullness of heart, whereby the heart becomes insensitive to feelings of love and fear of G-d.

But this must be made known as a cardinal principle:

It is with the service of G-d just as it is with a victory over a physical opponent; for instance, two people who wrestle with each other, each striving to fell the other.

If one of them is lazy and sluggish he will easily be defeated and will fall, even if he be stronger than the other, since his laziness and sluggishness prevent him from revealing his strength.

Similarly with the conquest of one's evil nature.

Despite the fact that the good nature is stronger than the evil, for
as explained in previous chapters, “Even a little of the light of holiness dispels much darkness of the kelipah,” yet here too the previous rule applies; and thus:

It is impossible to conquer the evil nature with laziness and sluggishness, which stem from sadness and a stone-like dullness of the heart,

cי אם ברייה, הנפשם מס哪家好 ותיניו חול, וכתרו וככל דבר

but rather with alacrity, which derives from joy and an open i.e., responsive heart that is unblemished by any trace of worry and sadness in the world.

As for the verse,1 “In every sadness there will be profit,” which means that some profit and advantage would be derived from it,

In אדרבא, 말וש יצ משמש שוחצבез עד עזמו אירוב מעלה, רק שיעי

the wording (“there will be profit”) implies that, on the contrary, the sadness itself has no virtue, except that some profit will ultimately be derived from it.

This profit is the true joy in G-d which follows the true i.e., justified sadness over one’s sins, with bitterness of soul and a broken heart, which must come at specific, suitable times.

Hence the “profit” of sadness is the joy that follows it.

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1. Mishlei 14:23.
Why should this sadness lead the worshiper to joy? For thereby (through one’s sadness) the spirit of impurity and of the sitra achra is broken, and so too the “iron wall” that separates him from his Father in heaven.

as the Zohar comments on the verse, “A broken spirit, a broken heart, [You will not despise].”

The Zohar interprets the verse as follows: “A broken spirit of the sitra achra is brought about by means of a broken heart. . .” Since sadness over one’s sins causes the sitra achra to be broken, and the “iron wall” to vanish, it leads one to rejoice — as the Alter Rebbe now goes on to say:

Then the preceding verses will be fulfilled for him: “Make me hear joy and gladness”; “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and [support me] with Your generous spirit.”

This joy is the “profit” of sadness, whereas sadness itself is neither “profitable” nor advantageous.

This is the simple reason i.e., apart from the deeper, mystical ones for the practice instituted by the AriZal (Rabbi Isaac Luria) of reciting this Psalm containing the verses quoted above after
Tikkun Chatzot (the midnight prayer) before resuming one’s Torah study —

ךידי לلزمך בשמה אמיתיות ביה תבואו את ח:req
in order that one should study with the true joy in G-d, that succeeds the remorse of Tikkun Chatzot.

Such joy is of a greater quality than joy which is not preceded by sadness, similar to the distinctive quality of light which follows darkness.

As the Zohar\(^6\) comments on the verse,\(^7\) “And I (King Solomon) saw that wisdom surpasses foolishness as light surpasses darkness.” Note there, and this will suffice for him who understands.

The Zohar asks: Does it take a Solomon to see this? And it answers that the intention of the verse is that just as darkness contributes to light, for we cannot truly appreciate light unless we have experienced darkness, so too does foolishness contribute to the appreciation of wisdom. Similarly in our case, one’s earlier sadness adds strength to the joy which follows it, and this is the “profit” of sadness. Sadness itself, however, is a hindrance in one’s service of G-d.

Furthermore, the verse states explicitly:\(^8\) “Because you did not serve G-d your L-rd with joy...[therefore you will serve

\(^6\)III, 47b.
\(^7\)Kohelet 2:13.
\(^8\)Devarim 28:47.
your enemies]" — and everyone is familiar with the explanation of the AriZal on this verse.9

The verse reads: "Because you did not serve G-d your L-rd with joy and gladness of heart, from an abundance of everything [good]..." The simple meaning is: "When you had an abundance of everything you did not serve G-d with joy..." (This meaning is borne out by the context of the following verse: "You will serve your enemies... in hunger, thirst, and nakedness, and in want of everything.") But the AriZal interprets it thus: "You did not serve G-d with a joy greater than that caused by an abundance of everything..."

We see from all the above the importance of serving G-d joyfully. Yet, many things in one's life, both physical and spiritual, may cause him sadness. The Alter Rebbe now goes on to propose means of combating this sadness, so that one may always be joyful.

Sound advice has been offered by our Sages on cleansing one's heart of all sadness and any trace of worry about mundane matters, even a sadness or worry caused by the lack of such essentials as children, health, or livelihood.

The advice is contained in the well-known saying of our Sages:10 "Just as one recites a blessing for his good fortune ('Blessed are You, G-d,... Who is good and does good'), so must he also recite a blessing for misfortune."

The Gemara explains11 that this does not mean that he recite the same blessing (for the blessing in a case of misfortune, G-d forbid, is

11. Ibid. 60a.
“Blessed are You, G-d, . . . the true Judge”); rather, the implication is that one should accept misfortune with joy, like the joy in a visible and obvious good.

For it, too, is for the good, except that it is not apparent and visible to mortal eyes, for it stems from the “hidden (spiritual) world,” which is higher than the “revealed (spiritual) world,” whence derives an apparent and revealed good.

The latter emanates from the letters vav and hei of the Tetragrammaton (the Four-Letter Divine Name, composed of the letters yud hei vav hei), while the former derives from the letters yud hei.12

This is also the meaning of the verse,13 “Happy is the man whom You, G-d (spelled yud hei), chasten.” Since the verse speaks of man’s suffering, only the letters yud and hei are mentioned.

Man sees misfortune only because he cannot perceive that which derives from a higher, hidden level of G-dliness. In truth, however, the “misfortunes” are actually blessings in disguise. On the contrary, they represent an even higher level of good than the revealed good, since they originate in a higher world.

For this reason, our Sages of blessed memory stated14 that the

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12. See Iggeret HaTeshuvah, ch. 4, where the relation of the various Worlds to the letters of the Tetragrammaton is discussed at length.
verse,\textsuperscript{15} "Those who love Him shall be as the sun when it comes out in its might," refers to the reward of those who rejoice in their afflictions.

G-d always rewards man "measure for measure." What is the connection, then, between rejoicing in affliction and "the sun..."? Also, why are those who rejoice in affliction described as "those who love G-d"? The Alter Rebbe now explains that since misfortune is really nothing but a disguise for the higher form of good that derives from the "hidden world," the option as to whether it will bring man either joy or misery depends on his priorities. If he deems his physical life all-important, he will indeed be miserable, while if nearness to G-d is his primary concern he will rejoice, since nearness to G-d is found in greater measure in the "hidden world," whence derives the good that is hidden in misfortune.

Those who rejoice in suffering are therefore called "lovers of G-d," and are rewarded by being granted the vision of "the sun emerging in its might." Since in this world they disregarded externals and ignored the veil of misfortune hiding the good within, choosing instead to concern themselves with the deeper aspect of good and G-dliness lying behind the veil, G-d rewards them in the World to Come "measure for measure," by casting off the veils that surround Him, and revealing Himself in His full glory to those who love Him.

For the Four-Letter Divine Name, signifying G-d in His Essence, is compared to a sun, and the Name Elokim, signifying G-d as He is clothed and concealed in the created universe, is compared to a veil shielding the created beings from the intensity of its rays; as it is written,\textsuperscript{16} "A sun and a shield (respectively) are Hashem (i.e., the Four-Letter Name) Elokim." In the World to Come, the "sun" will emerge from its "shield", i.e., the Four-Letter Name will no longer be veiled by Elokim, and it will shine forth "in its might" as a reward for those who love Him.

This, in summary, is the explanation contained in the following paragraphs.

\textsuperscript{15} Shoftim 5:31.
\textsuperscript{16} Tehillim 84:12; cf. Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah, ch. 4.
For one’s joy in affliction stems from the fact that being near to G-d is dearer to him than anything of the life of this world,

as it is written:17 “For Your lovingkindness is better than life…”

Now, the nearness to G-d is infinitely greater and more sublime in the “hidden world,” for18 “there the concealment of His power is lodged”; and it is also written,19 “The Most High abides in secrecy.”

Both these verses indicate that the “hidden world” contains a higher aspect of G-dliness than the “revealed world.” Since the “hidden world” is the source of seeming affliction, he who loves G-d rejoices in it, for it represents a greater nearness to G-d than revealed good, which derives from the “revealed world.”

Therefore he is found worthy of seeing “the sun emerging in its might” in the World to Come, when the “sun” will emerge from the “sheath” in which it is hidden in this world, and will then be revealed.

This means that what is presently the “hidden world” will then

be revealed, and it will shine forth and glow in a great and intense revelation upon all who seek refuge in Him in This World, taking shelter in his “shadow”, the “shadow of wisdom,” which is presently in a state of “shade” as opposed to revealed light and goodness. I.e. they find shelter and refuge even in that which presents an external appearance of “shade” and darkness, whereas the light and goodness contained in it is concealed. This is sufficient explanation for the understanding.

To return to our original point: When one considers that whatever appears as suffering is actually a higher form of good, he will no longer be saddened or worried by it.

... The Alter Rebbe now goes on to discuss a different type of sadness, that caused by one’s failings in matters of the spirit.

As for sadness connected with heavenly matters, one must seek ways and means of freeing oneself from it.

That this applies to the time of one’s divine service, is self-evident, for one must serve G-d with joy and gladness of heart.

But even one who is occupied in business and worldly affairs, should there descend upon him any sadness or anxiety about heavenly matters during his business affairs,

it is certainly a trick of the Evil Inclination which saddens him, ostensibly for spiritual reasons, in order to lure him afterwards into lusts, G-d forbid, as is well known.
It is man’s nature to seek pleasure and not to remain depressed. If his feeling of spiritual failure distresses him, he will seek his pleasure in physical gratification. The Evil Inclination therefore wishes that one be depressed, be it even over spiritual matters, so that he will later succumb to temptation.

For if it were not so, that this depression is the doing of the Yetzer Hara, whence would a genuine sadness, one that is derived from love or fear of G-d, come to him in the midst of his business affairs?

Since a genuine sadness is an expression of love or fear of G-d, it should express itself at a time when these emotions are active — during prayer, Torah study and the like, but not during one’s business. Clearly, then, the sadness is artificial, created by the Yetzer Hara for its own purposes, and one must therefore rid himself of it. The next paragraph provides the means:

Whether the depression settles upon him during his service of G-d in Torah study or prayer, or when he is not engaged thus, but with his material affairs, this is what he should consider:

“Now is not the proper time for genuine sadness, nor even for worry over grave sins, G-d forbid.”

For this one must set aside opportune times, when the mind is calm, to reflect on the greatness of G-d against Whom he has sinned,
so that thereby his heart will truly be rent with genuine bitterness i.e., bitterness — remorse — as opposed to depression; the former is alive and active, while the latter is resigned and "dead". It is explained elsewhere when this time should be.  

There it is also explained that immediately after his heart has been broken during those appointed times, he should completely remove the sorrow from his heart, and he should believe with perfect faith that G-d has erased his sin, and that "He pardons abundantly."

Thus, even if one has sinned repeatedly against Him, G-d will readily forgive him as though he had sinned for the first time; unlike man, who easily forgives a first offense but finds it difficult to do so when the offense is oft repeated.

This knowledge that G-d has surely cleansed him of his sins is the true joy in G-d which follows the sadness, as explained above — that the advantage of sadness lies in the joy to which it gives rise.

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20. See Iggeret HaTeshuva, chs. 7, 11.
Chapter Twenty-Seven

In the previous chapter the Alter Rebbe stated that sadness hinders one's service of G-d in general, and his battle with the Yetzer Hara in particular. He therefore discussed means of overcoming sadness caused by material concerns, and by anxiety over one's sins.

In this chapter and the next, he will discuss another type of melancholy, that caused by concern over one's sinful thoughts and desires. This category itself may be further subdivided into two: (1) Where these thoughts occur while one is occupied with his material affairs, and (2) Where these thoughts disturb his service of G-d in Torah study, prayer and the like.

In this chapter the Alter Rebbe discusses the first situation. He states that not only are these thoughts no cause for sadness, but on the contrary, they ought to give rise to joy.

If, however, his sadness does not stem from anxiety over sins that he has committed, but from the fact that sinful thoughts and desires enter his mind, then:

If these thoughts occur to him not during his service of G-d, but while he is occupied with his own affairs and with mundane matters and the like,

he should, on the contrary, be happy in his lot; for although these sinful thoughts enter his mind, he averts his attention from them.
It is clear that here we are speaking of one who does not wilfully dwell on sinful thoughts, for if he does so he is a sinner, and the previous chapter has already dealt with sadness arising from sins.

By averting his mind from sinful thoughts he fulfills the injunction,¹ “You shall not follow after your heart and after your eyes, by which you go astray.”

Only when sinful thoughts enter one’s mind can he fulfill this command. For the intention of the verse is not that one be at a level where such thoughts would not occur to him: this is the level of tzaddikim, who have eradicated all evil from their hearts. Surely, then, this verse is not addressed to tzaddikim. The verse refers rather to one who does have such thoughts, and he is commanded to banish them — as the Alter Rebbe continues:

The above verse surely does not speak of tzaddikim, referring to them (G-d forbid) as “going astray,”

but of Beinonim like himself, in whose mind there do enter erotic thoughts, whether of an innocent nature [or otherwise],

and when he averts his mind from them, he fulfills this injunction.

Our Sages have said:² “When one passively refrains from

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sin, he is rewarded as though he had actively performed a mitzvah.”

Consequently, he should rejoice in his compliance with the injunction just as he does when performing an actual positive precept.

Thus not only should the occurrence of these thoughts not grieve him, but it ought to bring him joy, for only thereby is he able to fulfill this commandment.

On the contrary, such sadness is due to conceit.

For he does not know his place, and that is why he is distressed because he has not attained the level of a tzaddik,

to whom such foolish thoughts surely do not occur.

For were he to recognize his station, that he is very far from the rank of tzaddik,

and would that he be a Beinoni and not a rasha for even a single moment throughout his life (i.e., this is what he should be striving for at present, rather than vainly desiring to be a tzaddik),

then surely, this is the due measure of the Beinonim and their task:
To subdue the evil impulse and the thought that rises from the heart to the mind, and to completely avert his mind from it, repulsing it as it were with both hands, as explained above in ch. 12.

The Alter Rebbe explained there that the evil in the soul of the Beinoni remains vigorous; his task is to prevent it from expressing itself in thought, speech, and action. Thus, he has no control over the occurrence of evil thoughts in his mind, but only over his acceptance or rejection of these thoughts.

With every repulsion of this thought from his mind, the sitra achra is suppressed here below in This World,

and, since “the arousal from below (in our case, the initiative of the Beinoni in suppressing the sitra achra) produces a corresponding arousal above,”

the sitra achra above in the supernal worlds (the root of the sitra achra of this world) which soars like an eagle, is also suppressed,

thus realizing the verse,³ “Though you soar aloft like the eagle… I will yet bring you down from there, says G-d.”

Indeed the Zohar, in Parshat Terumah (p. 128), extolls the

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³. Ovadiah 1:4.
Divine satisfaction that occurs when the sitra achra is subdued here below,

and the seated ones, may it be for the good, may it be for the good, may it be for the good,

for "thereby G-d’s glory rises above all, more than by any other praise, and this ascent is greater than all else, etc."

Thus, it is the evil thoughts which enter the mind of the Beinoni that enable him to fulfill G-d’s command in averting his attention from them, thereby subduing the sitra achra.

Therefore one should not feel depressed or very troubled at heart (— he ought to be somewhat troubled by the occurrence of these thoughts, otherwise he may become indifferent to them and will cease to wage war against them; but he ought not to be sorely troubled by them).

even if he be engaged all his days in this conflict with the thoughts which will always enter his mind.

Though he may never rise to the level which precludes their occurrence, yet he should not be depressed.

For perhaps this is what he was created for, and this is the service demanded of him — to subdue the sitra achra constantly.

Concerning this Job said to G-d: “You have created wicked

men,’” as though it were preordained that one man be wicked, and another righteous.

In the first chapter, the Alter Rebbe pointed out that this is contradicted by the statement in the Gemara that before a child is born, G-d decrees whether he shall be wise or foolish, strong or weak, and so on, but does not determine whether he will be righteous or wicked — this is left to one’s own choice. The meaning of Job’s statement becomes clear, however, in light of the above discussion. True, G-d does not ordain whether man will act wickedly, but He does “create wicked men,” in the sense that their minds work like the mind of the rasha, with evil thoughts constantly occurring to them. G-d created them in this way so that they will engage in battle with these thoughts, and thereby subjugate the sitra achra — as the Alter Rebbe now goes on to say.

The implication of Job’s statement is not that they were created to actually be wicked, G-d forbid, i.e., sinful in thought, speech and action,

but that there should occur to them, in their thoughts and musings alone, that which occurs to the wicked, i.e., that evil thoughts should enter their mind, as they do in the mind of the wicked,

and they shall eternally wage war to avert their minds from them in order to subjugate the sitra achra,

yet they will never be able to annihilate the sitra achra in their souls completely, for this is accomplished by tzaddikim.

A tzaddik subjugates his animal soul to such a degree that it is unable to arouse temptation in his heart. His mind is therefore untroubled by evil thoughts. Those, however, of whom Job said that they were “created wicked,” cannot rise to this level. It is always possible for evil thoughts to enter their minds; their task is not to give them free rein.

For there are two kinds of Divine pleasure:

one, from the complete annihilation of the sitra achra, and the conversion of bitter to sweet and of darkness to light (—the former referring to the emotional faculties of the animal soul, and the latter to its mental faculties), which is accomplished by tzaddikim;

and the second: when the sitra achra is subdued while it is still at its strongest and most powerful, soaring like an eagle,

and from this height G-d topples it in response to human initiative, i.e., as a result of one’s efforts at subduing the sitra achra in his soul. This is accomplished by Beinonim.

Each of the two aforementioned categories — those who were “created righteous” and who were “created wicked” — brings about one of these two kinds of Divine gratification.

This is alluded to in the verse,6 “And make me delicacies, such as I love,”

where the word matamim ("delicacies") is written in the plural, indicating two kinds of pleasure.

These words are the charge of the Shechinah to its children, the community of Israel, as explained in Tikkunei Zohar — that with these words G-d asks of the Jewish people to please Him with their divine service.

Just as with material food, there are two kinds of delicacies —

one of sweet and luscious foods, and the other of sharp or sour articles which are unpleasant to eat in their natural state,

but have been well spiced and prepared so that they become delicacies which revive the soul — so too are there two kinds of spiritual delicacies.

One is provided by tzaddikim, who are occupied solely with matters that are "good" and "sweet" — holy matters. Having conquered the evil of their animal soul, they no longer need grapple with the sitra achra. Their divine service consists of increasing the light of holiness. The second kind of delicacy is provided by Beinonim, who are occupied with "bitter" matters, with battling against the sitra achra in their soul, and with the evil thoughts that it spawns.

This is indicated in the verse, "The L-rd has made everything for His sake; even the wicked for the day of evil."

Chapter Twenty-Seven

361

How can it be said that the rasha was created for G-d's sake?

This means, however, that he should repent of his evil, and turn his evil into "day" and light above,

when the sitra achra is subdued, and the glory of G-d is uplifted on high.

Thus, the meaning of the words "even the wicked for the day of evil" is that the purpose of the wicked is to transform the "evil" into "day".

The central point of the above discussion was that through the occurrence of evil thoughts in one's mind, and through one's battle against them, the sitra achra is subdued, causing great pleasure above.

The Alter Rebbe now goes on to say that this subjugation of the sitra achra and the consequent Divine pleasure are brought about not only by one's struggle against the sitra achra when it attempts to lead one to sin (as in our case, where the lack of a struggle against evil thoughts, and the continued meditation on them would constitute a sin). Rather, one produces the same effect by struggling with one's nature in abstaining from permitted matters. For as explained in ch. 6, any permitted action done without the specific intention of leading one to the serving of G-d (as, for example, eating in order to obtain strength for Torah study or performing the mitzvot) derives its vitality from the sitra achra. (This term simply means "the other side," i.e., the absence of holiness.) Only an action so directed can draw its vitality from the realm of holiness. Therefore, whenever one refrains from doing even a permissible act (in which this intention is lacking) in order to subdue the sitra achra, he gives rise to Divine pleasure.

Furthermore, not only by fighting his evil thoughts does one subdue the sitra achra, but even in matters that are fully permissible,
every act of sacrificing one's impulse, even if only for a short while i.e., if he delays partaking of even the permissible and essential, with the intention of subduing the sitra achra in the left part of his heart, achieves this end.

For example: when he wants to eat but delays his meal for an hour or less, and during that time he studies Torah.

For if he occupies himself with other physical matters, he does not subdue the sitra achra by postponing his meal, since he is in any case indulging his animal soul; but if he studies Torah during that time then even when the delay of his meal does not gain him any time for Torah study, for he would have studied Torah regardless (as will soon be stated), and despite the fact that he eventually does eat, yet he subdues the sitra achra by the mere effort of postponing his meal, and thereby he brings about the Divine pleasure caused by every subjugation of the sitra achra.

As the Gemara states: “The fourth hour [of the day] is when all men eat, but the sixth hour is the mealtime for scholars,”

because they would go hungry for two hours with this intention,

although even after the meal they would study all day.

8. Shabbat 10a.
So too if one restrains his mouth from saying things which he greatly desires to say, concerning mundane matters — even where there is nothing wrong with the words per se, yet he refrains from speaking them precisely because he feels a desire to do so;

and likewise regarding the thoughts of his mind he suppresses an urge to think about some mundane matter.

Even by the slightest subjugation of the sitra achra here below,

the glory of G-d and His holiness is greatly elevated on high.

From this holiness, a sublime holiness issues forth upon man below, to assist him with a great and powerful aid in his service of G-d.

This is what our Sages meant when they said:9 “If a man consecrates himself in a small measure here below, he is sanctified greatly from above.”

This is apart from the fact that when one sanctifies himself

in permissible matters, he thereby fulfills the positive commandment of the Torah:10 “Sanctify yourselves, and be holy.”

Hence, apart from the consolation previously offered the Beinoni — that through “turning away from evil” by combating evil thoughts and desires, he affords G-d a pleasure that tzaddikim cannot — his battle with the sitra achra also contains a positive quality in the category of “doing good,” that is likewise not present in the divine service of tzaddikim.11 This positive quality is the fulfillment of the mitzvah: “Sanctify yourselves...,” which applies only to Beinonim, not to tzaddikim. For the intention of the commandment is that even one’s personal, permissible, and mundane matters should not be attended to out of the desire of one’s animal soul, but for the sake of G-d. This directive cannot apply to tzaddikim, who are unencumbered by desires of the animal soul, as the Alter Rebbe continues:

The meaning of “Sanctify yourselves” is: “You shall make yourselves holy.”

That is to say, although in truth one is not holy and separated from the sitra achra,

for the sitra achra of his animal soul is still, as at birth, at its full strength and might, in the left part of his heart — the seat of the animal soul and evil inclination,

The world kedushah (“holiness”) means “setting apart,” i.e., separation from the unholy.12 The verse thus means: One should sanctify himself even if he must yet make himself holy and separate

11. Based on a comment by the Rebbe Shlita.
from the sitra achra, for at his present level his heart still desires those things that derive from it,

yet if even while at this level he subdues and masters his evil impulse and makes himself "holy", separate from the sitra achra, then, continues the verse:

"You will be holy."

The words "be holy" which, in their simple sense, voice a command, can also be understood as conveying a promise,

meaning that ultimately he will be truly "holy" and removed from the sitra achra,

through his being "greatly sanctified from above," as quoted earlier from the Gemara,

and through his being aided from above to expel [the sitra achra] from his heart, little by little, so that even in his heart he will no longer have any desire for anything originating in the realm of the sitra achra.