ספר

דרך אמונה

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ז"ל

DERECH EMUNAH

The Way of Faith

by Rabbi Meir ibn Gabbai

With interlinear English
translation and elucidation

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Chapter 1

She'eilah Rishonah: How the World Has a Governor — the Soul as Microcosmic Proof, and the Six Marks of the True Governor

Summary

Narrative. This unit is the answer (*teshuvah*) to the first question of *Sefer Derech Emunah*: how do we know that the world has a Governor (*manhig*) who sustains it? Ibn Gabbai answers from the microcosm. Man, the "small world" (*olam katan*), is built as a scale model of the whole created order, and the soul within him is what keeps him alive. Since the small world cannot survive without its governor (the soul), neither can the great world survive without a Governor. That Governor is "the soul of the world and its form that sustains it."

Torah Basis. The argument is anchored in two Rabbinic texts that draw the very same soul–G-d analogy: the five comparisons of *Barchi nafshi* in *Berachos* 10a (G-d fills the world / the soul fills the body, etc.), and the six comparisons in *Midrash Tehillim* 103. Ibn Gabbai supports each point with verses from *Yirmiyahu*, *Yeshayahu*, *Vayikra*, *Bamidbar*, *Devarim*, *Chavakkuk*, and *Koheles*.

Aggadic and Kabbalistic Elaboration. Ibn Gabbai reads the Sages' analogy on two tracks. First, the comparison "proves" the existence and divine origin of the soul (an emanation drawn from supernal Atzilus), which bears G-d's "seal" and is comprised of His *midos*. Second, he turns the six points into a systematic list of the qualities a perfect Governor must possess (omnipresence, infinite wisdom and capacity, immutability, self-sufficiency, untouchability by His subjects' deeds, and invisibility to the senses) and shows that no created being possesses them, so that only the Holy One is the true Governor.

Thematic Significance. The closing paragraphs develop ibn Gabbai's classical Kabbalah: G-d governs and creates through "His Name" (the system of the *sefiros*, "His world," the hidden *olam hane'elam*), of which the Infinite is the cause. He warns that one who believes in the Infinite while denying the Name and its *midos* "denies the fundamental principle" and the heavenly retinue. The unit culminates in faith: The Infinite, beyond all sensory and imaginative grasp, is the root of both belief and its denial, and "the righteous shall live by his faith."

The Question

עַל הָעוֹלָם אֵיךְ יֵשׁ לוֹ מַנְהִיג:

Concerning the world: How can we know **that it has a Governor?** This asks for proof that creation is not self-governing, but is directed and sustained by G-d.



Section 1.1

Answer to the First: Man as Microcosmic Proof

(א): תְּשׁוּבָה לָרִאשׁוֹנָה. דַּע כִּי הָאָדָם הַנִּבְנֶה בְּדִמְיוֹן בִּנְיַן כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת

(1): Answer to the first question. **Know that man is constructed** in a form corresponding to **the structure of all the worlds.** Man is therefore a microcosm, fashioned on a smaller scale to reflect the entire created order.

וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁבּוֹ הַמְקַיֶּמֶת אוֹתוֹ הַזְּמַן הַגָּזוּר עָלָיו, כְּלוּלָה וּמְשֻׁכְלֶלֶת מִן הַהֲוָיוֹת הָעֶלְיוֹנוֹת.

The soul within him, which sustains him for the period decreed for him, is comprised and fully formed from the higher spiritual realities. These realities are Atzilus and its *sefiros*. The soul thus gives life to the body while bearing within itself the imprint of the higher worlds.

וּבְעוֹד הַנֶּפֶשׁ בּוֹ הִנֵּה הוּא דְּוּגְמַת הָעוֹלָם הַגָּדוֹל, וְזֶה נִקְרָא הָאָדָם עוֹלָם קָטָן.

While the soul is within him, he is a model of the great world, and for this reason man is called a small world. The living human being is therefore a microcosm, a small-scale parallel of the larger cosmos.[1]

וּמִמֶּנּוּ תִּלָּקַח הָרְאָיָה עַל הָעוֹלָם הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר נִבְנָה בִּדְמוּתוֹ בְּצַלְמוֹ.

From him shall be taken the proof concerning the great world, which was constructed in his likeness and in his image. Because man reflects the structure of the cosmos, what is established concerning the human being provides evidence for understanding the world as a whole.

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁאִי אֶפְשָׁר לָעוֹלָם הַקָּטָן הַזֶּה שֶׁיִּחְיֶה וְיִתְקַיֵּים מִבְּלִתִּי מַנְהִיג שֶׁהוּא הַנֶּפֶשׁ כָּךְ אִי אֶפְשָׁר לָעוֹלָם הַגָּדוֹל שֶׁיִּתְקַיֵּים מִבְּלִתִּי מַנְהִיג, וְהַמַּנְהִיג הַהוּא הוּא נִשְׁמַת הָעוֹלָם וְצוּרָתוֹ הַמְקַיְּמוֹ.

Just as it is impossible for this small world, the human being, **to live and continue existing without a governor, namely the soul, so too it is impossible for the great world** as a whole **to continue existing without a Governor. That Governor is the soul of the world and its form, which sustains it.** By analogy, the Governor is the inner, life-giving power through which the cosmos is animated and maintained, just as the soul gives life to the body. Here, "form" means the spiritual principle that gives the world its ordered and sustained existence.

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[1] "Small world" (*olam katan*) is the classic designation for man as a microcosm. See *Zohar*, *Vayikra* 33b; *Tikkunei Zohar* 100b and 130b; the author's *Avodas HaKodesh*, Part I, chapters 7 and 18; and the introduction to his *Tolaas Yaakov*. Compare *Moreh Nevuchim* I:72; *Recanati* 7b; *Shefa Tal*, Gate III, chapter 4; *Nefesh HaChaim*, Gate I, chapter 1; and *Iyov* 19:26, "From my flesh I behold G-d." See also Maharsha on *Berachos* 10a and *Sanhedrin* 42a.

וְאִלּוּ ח"ו יִשָּׁוֵעַר הֶעְדֵּר זֶה הַמַּנְהִיג יֵעָדֵר הָעוֹלָם בְּכֻלּוֹ.

If, G-d forbid, one were to conceive of the absence of this Governor, the world as a whole would cease to exist. Its dependence upon the Governor is absolute, just as a body dies when its soul departs.[2]

וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ שׁ תִּצְטָרֵךְ לָבֹא כְּלוּלָה מֵהָעֶלְיוֹנִים לְקַיֵּים וּלְהַנְהִיג הַגּוּף, וְלוּלֵא זֶה לֹא תוּכַל לְקַיְּמוֹ וּלְהַנְהִיגוֹ.

The soul must come endowed with what derives from the higher realms in order to sustain and govern the body. Its higher origin gives it the power and capacity to rule over the body and preserve its life. **Without this, it could not sustain or govern it.**

וּמִמֶּנָּה תִּלָּקַח הָרְאָיָה הַנְּכוֹנָה הָאֲמִיתִּית עַל שֶׁיֵּשׁ מַנְהִיג לָעוֹלָם בְּכֻלּוֹ:

From it, from the soul's governance of the body, **the correct and true proof will be derived that the world as a whole has a Governor.** The soul thus provides a visible model for understanding that the entire cosmos likewise depends upon a sustaining Governor.

וּלְהָעִיר עַל מַה שֶּׁכָּתַבְתִּי תִּמְצָא לְרז"ל פְּעָמִים יָבִיאוּ רְאָיָה עַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ מֵהקב"ה וּפְעָמִים יָבִיאוּ רְאָיָה עָלָיו מֵהַנֶּפֶשׁ.

To illustrate what I have written, you will find that our Sages sometimes derive proof about the soul from the Holy One using Divine governance as the model, **and sometimes they derive proof about Him from the soul.** The analogy therefore works in both directions. The author will now cite one Rabbinic teaching that explains both.

SECTION 1.2

THE FIVE COMPARISONS OF *BERACHOS* 10A

וְאָמְנָם הָרְאָיָה מִמֶּנּוּ עַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ אָמְרָם בְּפ"ק דִּבְרָכוֹת (י' א) הָנֵי חֲמִשָּׁה בָּרֵכִי נַפְשִׁי כְּנֶגֶד מִי אֲמָרָן דָּוִד לָא אֲמָרָן אֶלָּא כְּנֶגֶד הקב"ה וּכְנֶגֶד נְשָׁמָה.

Indeed, the proof from Him concerning the soul is found in what our Sages **said in the first chapter of Berachos (10a): "These five** passagesof **'Bless, my soul,' with reference to whom did David say them? He said them only with reference to the Holy One and the soul."** This introduces the Talmud's five comparisons between the soul and G-d. The author now

[2] See *Nefesh HaChaim*, Gate I, chapter 2: although G-d created all worlds from nothing through His unlimited power, their existence, order, and endurance depend at every moment upon His continuously renewed influx. If He withheld that influx even for an instant, they would immediately return to nothingness. See also Gate III, chapter 2.

quotes them in full to show how Divine governance serves as a model for understanding the soul and its governance of the body.[3]

מַה הקב"ה מָלֵא כָּל הָעוֹלָם אַף הַנְּשָׁמָה מְלֵאָה כָּל הַגּוּף. מַה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא רוֹאֶה וְאֵינוֹ נִרְאֶה אַף נְשָׁמָה רוֹאָה וְאֵינָהּ נִרְאֵית. מַה הקב"ה זָן אֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם אַף נְשָׁמָה זָנָה אֶת כָּל הַגּוּף. מַה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא טָהוֹר אַף נְשָׁמָה טְהוֹרָה. מַה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ יוֹשֵׁב בְּחַדְרֵי חֲדָרִים אַף נְשָׁמָה יוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּחַדְרֵי חֲדָרִים, יָבֹא מִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ חֲמִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים הַלָּלוּ וִישַׁבַּח לְמִי שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ חֲמִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים הַלָּלוּ ע"כ:

Just as the Holy One fills the entire world, so too the soul fills the entire body. His presence and sustaining power extend throughout creation, while the soul gives life to every part of the body. **Just as the Holy One sees but is not seen, so too the soul sees but is not seen.** The soul perceives through the body's faculties, yet it remains hidden from physical sight, reflecting in a created way G-d's own invisibility. **Just as the Holy One nourishes the entire world, so too the soul nourishes the entire body.** This nourishment refers to the continual sustaining of life. **Just as the Holy One is pure, so too the soul is pure.** The soul's purity is a created reflection of the perfect purity attributed to G-d. **Just as the Holy One dwells in the innermost chambers, so too the soul dwells in the innermost chambers.** Both are concealed from sight, though their effects are evident. **Let the one who possesses these five qualities come and praise the One who possesses these five qualities. Thus ends the quotation.** The soul, bearing these five qualities in a limited and created manner, is therefore uniquely fitted to praise G-d.[4][5]

וְהַכַּוָּונָה לָהֶם ע"ה בִּכְלָל לְקַיֵּים לָנוּ מְצִיאוּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר הִיא אֲצִילוּת נֶאֱצָל מֵהָאֲצִילוּת סוֹד הָאֱלָהוּת

Their general intention, peace be upon them, is to establish for us the existence of the soul, which is an emanation drawn from Atzilus, the mystery of Divinity. Their first purpose is therefore to affirm that the soul truly exists and that its spiritual source lies in Atzilus.

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3 The Gemara in *Berachos* 10a refers to the five times Dovid says "Bless Hashem, my soul," all in *Tehillim* 103–104: "Bless Hashem, my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy Name" (103:1); "Bless Hashem, my soul, and do not forget all His kindnesses" (103:2); "Bless Hashem, all His works ... Bless Hashem, my soul" (103:22); "Bless Hashem, my soul; Hashem my G-d, You are exceedingly great" (104:1); and "May sins cease from the earth ... Bless Hashem, my soul. Hallelujah" (104:35).

4 See Rabbeinu Bachya, *Kad HaKemach* (entry "Mourning"), on the five names of the soul and the five occurrences of "Bless Hashem, my soul." Although the Holy One fills the entire world, His power is more manifest in certain places; similarly, the soul fills the entire body but is more manifest in the brain, heart, and tongue. See also *Pischei Shearim* (Leshem, Path of the Lights of the Ears, Nose, and Mouth of Adam Kadmon, opening 10): the soul's radiance emerges through the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, with sight subtler than hearing, hearing subtler than smell, and smell subtler than speech.

5 See the author's own words in the introduction to his *Tolaas Yaakov* on these five qualities.

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַבְתִּי בְּחִיבּוּרִי הַגָּדוֹל (עֲבוֹדַת הַקּוֹדֶשׁ ח"א פי"ז) בְּחֵלֶק הַיִּיחוּד.
As I wrote in my larger work (*Avodas HaKodesh*, Part I, chapter 17), in the section on Unity. There he discusses at length the soul's origin as an emanation drawn from the supernal realm of Atzilus.

וּלְהוֹרוֹת עַל מְקוֹמָהּ בָּאָה חֲתוּמָה בְּחוֹתָמוֹ וּרְשׁוּמָה וּכְלוּלָה בְּמִדּוֹתָיו, וְהֵם חֲמִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים הַלָּלוּ אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם תּוּכַל לְהַנְהִיג וּלְקַיֵּים הַגּוּף
To indicate its place, the higher source from which the soul comes, **it came sealed with His seal, marked, and comprised of His attributes. These are the following five qualities, through which it can govern and sustain the body.** The soul's resemblance to G-d thus testifies to its Divine source, and these same qualities enable it to rule over the body and preserve its life.

וְתַכְלִית זִוּוּגָם וְהִתְאַחֲדָם שֶׁהוּא בְּרִיאָתָם לֹא הָיָה כִּי אִם לְשַׁבַּח לְיוֹצְרָם אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ חֲמִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים הַלָּלוּ, וְלָזֶה הִשְׁפִּיעָם בָּהֶם וּכְלָלָם מֵהֶם:
The ultimate purpose of their union and becoming one, the joining of soul and body, **which constitutes their creation, was solely to praise their Maker, in whom are these five qualities. Therefore, He bestowed these qualities upon them and comprised them of those qualities.** G-d imparted these powers to the soul so that the united soul and body could praise their Creator.

וְאַחַר שֶׁלּוּקְחָה הָרְאָיָה עַל הַנֶּפֶשׁ מֵהקב"ה וְקִוִּיִּם לָנוּ מְצִיאוּתָהּ וְשֶׁנִּשְׁתַּלְּחָה אֶל הַגּוּף לְהַנְהִיגוֹ וּלְקַיְּימוֹ וּבָהּ הוּא נִקְרָא עוֹלָם קָטָן, הִנֵּה יֵשׁ לָנוּ עוֹד רְאָיָה מִמָּנָּה עַל הקב"ה הֱיוֹתוֹ נִמְצָא וּמַנְהִיג הָעוֹלָם
Once the existence of the soul has been established through comparison with the Holy One, blessed is He, and it has been shown that the soul was sent into the body to govern and sustain it, thereby making man a "small world," we can now reverse the comparison and draw proof from the soul concerning the Holy One, blessed is He: that He exists and governs the world.

Section 1.3

The Six Comparisons of *Midrash Tehillim*

וְהוּא אָמְרָם בְּמִדְרַשׁ תְּהִלִּים (קג) בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְיָ'.
This is what they said in *Midrash Tehillim* (103): "Bless Hashem, O my soul." This teaching develops the analogy from the soul to G-d through six corresponding features.[6]

6 *Midrash Tehillim*: i.e. *Midrash Shocher Tov* on Psalm 103.

לָמָּה מְקַלֵּס דָּוִד לְהקב"ה בַּנֶּפֶשׁ, אָמַר מָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ מְמַלְּאָה אֶת הַגּוּף כָּךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְמַלֵּא אֶת הָעוֹלָם. וּמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ סוֹבֶלֶת אֶת הַגּוּף כָּךְ הקב"ה סוֹבֵל אֶת הָעוֹלָם. וּמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ יְחִידָה בַּגּוּף כָּךְ הקב"ה יָחִיד בְּעוֹלָמוֹ.

Why does David praise the Holy One with the soul? He said: Just as the soul fills the body, so the Holy One fills the world. Just as the soul supports the body, so the Holy One supports the world. Just as the soul is unique within the body, so the Holy One is unique in His world. These comparisons identify three marks of the true Governor. His presence extends throughout the world, His power sustains its entire existence, and He alone governs it.

וּמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֵינָהּ אוֹכֶלֶת וְאֵינָהּ שׁוֹתָה כָּךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֵינוֹ אוֹכֵל וְאֵינוֹ שׁוֹתֶה. וּמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ טְהוֹרָה כָּךְ הקב"ה טָהוֹר שֶׁהוּא לְמַעְלָה מֵעוֹלָמוֹ. וּמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ רוֹאָה וְאֵינָהּ נִרְאֵת כָּךְ הקב"ה רוֹאֶה וְאֵינוֹ נִרְאֶה.

Just as the soul neither eats nor drinks, so the Holy One neither eats nor drinks. Just as the soul is pure, so the Holy One is pure, for He is above His world. Just as the soul sees but is not seen, so the Holy One sees but is not seen. These three comparisons describe His complete self-sufficiency, His purity and transcendence beyond the world, and His invisibility even though nothing is hidden from His sight.

אָמַר דָּוִד תָּבֹא הַנֶּפֶשׁ שֶׁיֵּשׁ בָּהּ כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת הַלָּלוּ וּתְהַלֵּל לְהקב"ה שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת הַלָּלוּ.

David said: Let the soul, which possesses all these attributes, come and praise the Holy One who possesses all these attributes. Because the soul reflects these qualities in a limited way, it is fitting that it should praise the One who possesses them in their perfect and original form.

ע"כ: הִנֵּה יֵשׁ לָנוּ רְאָיָה נִצַּחַת מֵהָעוֹלָם הַקָּטָן שֶׁאִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לְהִתְקַיֵּים בְּלֹא מַנְהִיג אֶל הָעוֹלָם הַגָּדוֹל שֶׁאִי אֶפְשָׁר לוֹ לְהִתְקַיֵּים בְּלֹא מַנְהִיג.

Thus ends the quotation. Behold, we have conclusive proof from the small world, the human being viewed as a microcosm, **which cannot continue existing without a governor, to the great world**, the cosmos as a whole, **which cannot continue existing without a Governor.** The two Rabbinic teachings cited above firmly establish this inference from the soul's governance of the human body to G-d's governance of the entire world.

וְרז"ל הוֹרוּנוּ בָּזֶה הַמִּדּוֹת אֲשֶׁר יִצְטָרְכוּ לְמַנְהִיג הַשָּׁלֵם לִהְיוֹת מְמוּלָא בָּהֶם וְאֵין שׁוּם נִמְצָא בָּעוֹלָם שֶׁיּוּכַל לְהִתְפָּאֵר בָּהֶם אִם כֵּן אֵינוֹ רָאוּי לִהְיוֹת מַנְהִיג בֶּאֱמֶת.

In this teaching, our Sages showed us the qualities with which a perfect Ruler must be fully endowed. Since no being in the world can truly claim all of these qualities, no other being is fit to be regarded as the true Ruler.

וְאָמְנָם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לוֹ נָאֶה לְהַנְהִיג וְלֹא לְזוּלָתוֹ כִּי לוֹ וּבוֹ כָּל מִינֵי הַשְּׁלֵמִיּוֹת וְא"כ הוּא הַמַּנְהִיג הָאֱמִתִּי הַשָּׁלֵם.

However, it is fitting for the Holy One to govern, and for no other, because every kind of perfection is His, belonging to Him alone, **and is within Him. Therefore, He is the true and perfect Governor.**

THE SOUL AND THE HOLY ONE — THE SAGES' PARALLELS

Just as the soul, in the body...	*...so the Holy One, in the world*	
fills the whole body	fills the whole world	B · M
sees, yet is not seen	sees, yet is not seen	B · M
is pure	is pure — and above His world	B · M
sustains it entirely	sustains it entirely	B
dwells in the innermost chambers	dwells in the innermost chambers	B
bears and carries it	bears and carries it	M
is unique within it	is unique in His world	M
neither eats nor drinks	neither eats nor drinks	M

B = Berachos 10a (five comparisons) M = Midrash Tehillim 103 (six)

The Rebbe's Sicha — On the Opening of the Sefer

When the newly reprinted edition of *Derech Emunah* reached the Lubavitcher Rebbe, he devoted a *sicha* to this very opening passage (*Shabbos* Parshas Vayetzei*, 7 Kislev 5748*), raising a question he called "fundamental, yet utterly simple."

Ibn Gabbai proves a Governor of the great world from the soul that governs the small world: as the body cannot endure without a soul, so the cosmos cannot endure without a Governor. **But how can the way the lower world is conducted *compel* the way the Upper World is conducted?** The Holy One is omnipotent: "who can say to Him, *what are You doing?*" Surely He could have created a great world bearing no resemblance whatever to the small one: one that endures with no governor at all. (The same question presses on the chapters that follow: that there *must* be *sefiros*, and that they *must* be ten.)

The foundation of every such proof, the Rebbe answers, is *ratzon*, the Divine will. Because He is omnipotent, creation could have taken endlessly different forms; rather, "it arose in His will," in the language of our Sages, that the world "be as it now is," and further, that "whatever can proceed by intellect and ordered gradation should proceed by intellect." He revealed in His Torah that He chose to contract Himself, as it were, into the configuration of *Adam*, fashioning lower man "in Our image, after Our likeness": in *that* image. **Only once we know from the Torah that He willed the lower man to mirror the Upper** may we reason from the one to the other: "from my flesh I envision G-d."

This, the Rebbe shows, is why ibn Gabbai's opening question is worded with such care: "*how* does the world have a Governor," not "*why*." To "why" there is no answer of intellect, for in truth He could have made a world that needs no governor at all; there is only His will that it be governed. But "how" (granting that He willed His governance to proceed by intellect) invites exactly the demonstration ibn Gabbai gives: "a conclusive proof from the small world, which cannot endure without a governor, to the great world, which cannot endure without a governor."

(Sefer HaSichos 5748, Parshas Vayetzei*.)*

Section 1.4

The Six Marks of the True Governor

וְאָמְנָם הַמִּדּוֹת הַצְּרִיכוֹת לְמַנְהִיג שֶׁאֵינָן כִּי אִם בְּמַנְהִיג הַשָּׁלֵם יִתְבָּרַךְ וְלֹא בְּזוּלָתוֹ הֵם שִׁשָּׁה:
However, the attributes required of a Governor, which are found only in the perfect Governor, may He be blessed, and in no other, are six: These six attributes provide the structure for the remainder of this answer, corresponding to the six comparisons presented in *Midrash Tehillim*.

הָא' אָמְרָם מָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ מְמַלְאָה כו' כָּךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מְמַלֵּא כו'. וְהַכַּוָּונָה כִּי כָל מַנְהִיג שֶׁאֵין הַנְהָגָתוֹ כּוֹלֶלֶת וּמִתְפַּשֶּׁטֶת לְכָל מוּנָהֲגָיו אֵין רָאוּי לְהִקָּרֵא מַנְהִיג.
First: Their statement, "Just as the soul fills the body, **so the Holy One fills** the world. **The point is that any governor whose governance does**

not encompass and extend to all those under his rule is not worthy of being called a governor. The first mark of true governance is that it reaches every subject without exception.

וְאָמְנָם אֵין נִמְצָא בָּעוֹלָם שֶׁמְּמַלֵּא הָעוֹלָם כְּלוֹמַר שֶׁהַנְהָגָתוֹ מִתְפַּשֶּׁטֶת וּמְמַלְאָה כָּל הָעוֹלָם כִּי אִם הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ וּכְעִנְיַן אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי מָלֵא (ירמיה כג, כד) וּכְתִיב (ישעיה ו, ג) מְלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ, אִם כֵּן הוּא הַמַּנְהִיג הָאֲמִיתִי וְלוֹ תַּאֲוַת הַהַנְהָגָה לְכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת וְלֹא לְזוּלָתוֹ:

Indeed, no being exists in the world who fills the world, which means **whose governance extends throughout and fills the entire world, except He, blessed be He. This accords with: "I fill the heavens and the earth" (*Yirmiyahu* 23:24). It is also written (*Yeshayah* 6:3): "The whole earth is filled with His glory." If so, He is the true Governor, and governance over all the worlds is fitting for Him and for no other.** These verses attest that G-d's presence and governance extend everywhere, fulfilling the first requirement of a true Governor.

הב' כָּל מַנְהִיג שֶׁאֵין לוֹ יְכוֹלֶת וְחָכְמָה בִּלְתִּי בַּעַל תַּכְלִית לְהַנְהִיג מוּנָהֲגָיו כְּפִי חֲלוּפֵיהֶם וּ(בְּ)פִי נִסְתָּרֵיהֶם אֵינוֹ מַנְהִיג אֲמִיתִי, כִּי אֵין בּוֹ חָכְמָה וְיכוֹלֶת לִסְבוֹל וְלָשֵׂאת מוּנָהֲגָיו לְרֹוב חֲלוּפֵי הַנְהָגוֹתֵיהֶם וּמַצְבֵי עִנְיְנֵיהֶם וּמְקוֹמוֹתֵיהֶם וְשִׁנּוּיֵי טִבְעֵיהֶם וְלָזֶה יָקוּץ בְּמוּנָהֲגָיו וְהֵם בּוֹ.

Second: Any governor who does not possess unlimited power and wisdom to govern those under his rule according to their differences and their hidden circumstances is not a true governor. For he lacks the wisdom and ability to tolerate and bear those under his rule amid the great diversity of their conduct, the conditions of their affairs, their locations, and their changing natures. He will therefore grow weary of those under his rule, and they of him. The second mark of true governance is infinite capacity and wisdom. A finite ruler is eventually overwhelmed by the endless variety and changing circumstances of his subjects, causing weariness on both sides.

אָמְנָם הַיָּכוֹל וְהֶחָכָם הָאֲמִיתִי הַבִּלְתִּי בַּעַל תַּכְלִית יֵשׁ בּוֹ דַּי לִסְבוֹל וְלָשֵׂאת מוּנָהֲגָיו וּלְהַנְהִיגָם הַנְהָגָה הַיְשָׁרָה הַקַּיֶּמֶת עִם כָּל חֲלוּפֵי הַנְהָגוֹתֵיהֶם וּתְמוּרַת מַצָּבָם וְעִנְיְנֵיהֶם וְשִׁנּוּיֵי טִבְעֵיהֶם וְרִבּוּי אֱינוֹשׁוּתֵיהֶם וְנִסְתָּרֵיהֶם.

However, the truly powerful and wise One, who is without limit, has sufficient capacity to bear and carry His subjects and to govern them with upright and enduring governance, throughout all the variations in their conduct, the transformations of their circumstances and affairs, the changes in their natures, and the multitude of their human conditions and hidden matters. What overwhelms a finite ruler presents no

difficulty to G-d, whose unlimited wisdom and power encompass every subject and every changing circumstance without strain.[7]

וְהָאָדוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵלֶּה לוֹ לוֹ נָאוָה הַהַנְהָגָה וְלוֹ רָאוּי לְהִתְפָּאֵר שֶׁאֵין מַנְהִיג אֲמִיתִי אֶלָּא הוּא לְבַדּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, וְהוּא אָמְרָם מָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ סוֹבֶלֶת כו' כָּךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא סוֹבֵל כו',

The Master to Whom all these qualities belong, to Him is such governance fitting, and it is proper for Him to glory in it, for there is no true Governor except He alone, blessed be He. This is what our Sages meant when they said: "Just as the soul bears..." and continues to endure all that occurs within the body, **"so too the Holy One bears..."** and sustains His world despite all that takes place within it. The soul's capacity to carry the body serves as an analogy for this second mark of the true Governor, His capacity to bear and sustain all His subjects.

וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר (יִרְמְיָה כג, כד) אִם יִסָּתֵר אִישׁ וְגוֹ' וּכְתִיב (שָׁם יז י) אֲנִי יְיָ' חוֹקֵר לֵב וְגוֹ', וּמִי שֶׁהוּא יָכוֹל וְחָכָם בִּלְתִּי בַּעֲלֵי תַכְלִית עַל הַנִּסְתָּר כ"ש עַל הַנִּגְלֶה:

So it says (Yirmeyahu *23:24), "Can a man conceal himself, etc.?" It is also written (ibid. 17:10), "I, G-d, search the heart, etc." Whoever possesses unlimited power and wisdom regarding what is hidden, all the more so possesses them regarding what is revealed.* These verses show that G-d's wisdom penetrates even the concealed inner life of His subjects. If His governance encompasses what is hidden, it certainly encompasses everything visible.[8][9]

Section 1.5

Third Mark: Immutability and Self-Sufficient Unity

הג' כָּל מַנְהִיג יִשְׁתַּנֶּה בְּהִשְׁתַּנּוֹת דֵּעוֹתָיו וְהַנְהָגוֹתָיו לְשִׁנּוּי מְנָהָגָיו. וּבְהַנְהָגָה זוֹ נִשְׁתַּנֶּה מִמָּה שֶׁהָיָה בַּהַנְהָגָה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה, וְאֵין רָאוּי לְהִקָּרֵא מַנְהִיג אַחֵר שֶׁאֵינוֹ מִתְאַחֵד בְּהַנְהָגוֹתָיו, כִּי כְּפִי שִׁנּוּי מְנָהָגָיו וְהַנְהָגוֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׁתַּנֶּה מֶרְצוֹן אֶל רָצוֹן וּמִדַּעַת אֶל דַּעַת.

Third: Every governor changes as his views and methods of governance change in response to changes among those he governs. A finite ruler must adjust his policies whenever the circumstances of his subjects change. **In this mode of governance, he differs from what he was in the first mode of governance, and he is not worthy to be called** the same **governor**, but

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7 On the endless variety and hidden states of G-d's subjects, compare *Vayikra Rabbah* 4:8 and *Devarim Rabbah* 2:36. *Midrash Tanchuma* (*Bereishis* 5) relates that Hadrian asked Akilas what supports the world. Akilas answered, "The spirit." He loaded a camel and then choked it; when the camel could no longer rise, Hadrian conceded that its spirit had been removed. Akilas replied: if a camel cannot bear its load without the spirit within it, how much more must the Holy One's spirit bear the entire world. Hadrian fell silent.

8 *Yirmiyahu* 23:24: "Can a man hide in secret places so that I will not see him? says Hashem. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says Hashem."

9 *Yirmiyahu* 17:10: "I, Hashem, search the heart and test the innermost parts, to give each person according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds."

effectively becomes **another, since he is not unified in his methods of governance. For as those he governs and their conduct change**, continually presenting him with different conditions, **he changes from one will to another and from one opinion to another.** His governance therefore lacks the constancy and unity required of the true Governor.[10]

אָמְנָם הַמַּנְהִיג הָאֲמִיתִי יִתְבָּרַךְ לֹא יִשְׁתַּנֶּה כְּלָל עִם כָּל שִׁנּוּי מְוּנָהָגָיו וְחִלּוּפֵי הַנְּהָגוֹתֵיהֶם וְלֹא יוּמַר מֵרָצוֹן אֶל רָצוֹן וּמִדַּעַת אֶל דַּעַת, אֲבָל תָּמִיד יִקָּרֵא אֶחָד מְיֻחָד יָחִיד בְּכֹחוֹ וַאֲחִדּוּתוֹ קוֹדֶם הַהַנְהָגָה כְּמוֹ בִּשְׁעַת הַהַנְהָגָה וְאַחֲרֶיהָ, וְהוּא אָמְרָם מָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ יְחִידָה וכו' כָּךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יָחִיד כו'.

However, the true Governor, may He be blessed, does not change at all amid all the changes among those He governs and the variations in their conduct. Nor can it be said that He passes **from one will to another or from one opinion to another. Rather, He is always called one, unique, and singular in His power and unity, before the governance, during the governance, and after it.** G-d remains absolutely one and unchanging throughout every phase of His governance, although the world He governs is constantly changing. **This is what they said: "Just as the soul is singular, etc., so too the Holy One is singular, etc."** The comparison teaches that His act of governing does not introduce any change or division into His essential unity.

וְעוֹד יִרְמְזוּ בָּזֶה לוֹמַר כִּי מַנְהִיג בָּשָׂר וָדָם יִצְטָרֵךְ לְיוֹעֲצִים וּלְעוֹזְרִים בְּהַנְהָגוֹתָיו וְאִם כֵּן הַמַּנְהִיגִים הֵם רַבִּים כִּי אֵין דַּי בְּאֶחָד לְהַנְהִיג.

They further allude through this to the fact that a governor of flesh and blood requires advisers and assistants in his governance. If so, the governors are many, because one alone is not sufficient to govern. Effective rule is therefore shared among all those on whom the human governor depends, rather than belonging to him alone.

אָמְרוּ כִּי הַמַּנְהִיג הָאֲמִיתִי יִתְבָּרַךְ אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ לְזוּלָתוֹ וּכְעִנְיַן אֶת מִי נוֹעַץ וַיְבִינֵהוּ (ישעיה מ, יד). וּכְנֶגֶד הָעֵזֶר אָמַר (שם סג, ה) וְאַבִּיט וְאֵין עוֹזֵר וגו', וְאִם כֵּן דַּי בְּאַחְדּוּתוֹ לְכָל מִינֵי הַהַנְהָגָה מִבִּלְתִּי עֵצָה וְעֵזֶר מִשּׁוּם נִמְצָא זוּלָתוֹ:

They said that the true Governor, blessed be He, needs no one else, as in: "Whom did He consult, and who gave Him understanding?" (*Yeshayah* 40:14). Regarding assistance, it says (ibid. 63:5), **"I looked, but there was no helper," etc. Thus His unity is sufficient for every kind of governance, without counsel or assistance from any other being.**

[10] Compare R' Elchanan Wasserman, may G-d avenge his blood, in *Kuntres Ikvesa DiMeshicha*, on the teaching "the face of the generation is like the face of a dog" (*Sotah* 49b). A dog runs ahead and appears to lead, yet its master chooses the direction and the dog merely races before him. In a healthy generation, Torah leaders set the course. In the final era before Mashiach, the crowd chooses the path and its "leaders" run before it like the dog before its master: no real governor at all.

The two verses establish separately that G-d requires neither an adviser to direct Him nor an assistant to help Him carry out His governance.[11][12]

Section 1.6

Fourth Mark: He Needs Nothing From His Subjects

הַד' כִּי כָל מַנְהִיג תַּכְלִיתוֹ וְכַוָּנָתוֹ בְּהַנְהָגוֹתָיו הַתּוֹעֶלֶת וְהַכָּבוֹד, כִּי חֶסְרוֹנָם דָּבֵק בּוֹ וְהֵם יַשְׁלִימוּהוּ כִּי הוּא צָרִיךְ אֲלֵיהֶם וּבִלְתָּם לֹא יִתְקַיֵּים, וְאֵין זֶה מַנְהִיג עַל דֶּרֶךְ הָאֱמֶת.

The fourth requirement is **that the purpose and intention of every** human **governor in his governance is benefit and honor, because he is marked by lacking them, and they complete him. He needs them and cannot continue to exist without them, and such a person is not a governor in the true sense.** His governance serves his own deficiency by securing the advantage and prestige that he lacks, revealing that he is dependent rather than truly self-sufficient.[13]

אֲמְנָם הַמַּנְהִיג הָאֲמִיתִי יִתְבָּרַךְ אֵינוֹ כֵן כִּי אֵין אֶצְלוֹ חֶסְרוֹן כֹּל כִּי הוּא הַשְּׁלֵמוּת בְּעַצְמוֹ. אֲבָל כָּל מוּנְהָגָיו צְרִיכִים לוֹ וּמְצַפִּים לְבִרְכָתוֹ וְעֵינֵיהֶם נְשׂוּאוֹת לְיָדוֹ הַמְּלֵאָה וְהָרְחָבָה. וְאִם כֵּן לוֹ נָאֲוָה תְּהִלַּת הַהַנְהָגָה, וְהוּא אָמְרָם וּמָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֵינָהּ אוֹכֶלֶת וכו' כָּךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֵינוֹ אוֹכֵל וכו'.

However, the true Governor, blessed be He, is not so, for He lacks nothing at all, since He is perfection itself. Rather, all whom He governs need Him and await His blessing, and their eyes are raised to His full and open hand. Therefore, the praise of governance fittingly belongs to Him. This is what our Sages **said: "Just as the soul does not eat, etc., so too the Holy One does not eat, etc."** Unlike an earthly ruler, He receives no support or benefit from those under His governance. Rather, they depend wholly upon Him. The Midrash uses the soul's need for neither food nor drink to express this fourth mark of true governance: the Governor needs nothing from those He sustains.

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11 *Yeshayahu* 40:14: "Whom did He consult, and who gave Him understanding? Who taught Him the path of justice, taught Him knowledge, and made known to Him the way of understanding?"

12 *Yeshayahu* 63:5: "I looked, but there was no helper; I was astonished, but there was no supporter. My own arm brought salvation for Me, and My wrath sustained Me."

13 A finite ruler's need of his subjects is itself a sickness, as *Mishlei* 13:12 says: "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life." Rashi explains that relying on another person and being disappointed brings sickness to the heart. Human dependence on approval creates a hunger that is never satisfied. Only one who is free of that dependence truly lives, as *Mishlei* 15:27 says: "One who hates gifts will live." The servant of G-d therefore strives to direct his love toward his Creator alone, without dependence upon other people.