**Selected Passages from the Writings of the Kabbalists on the Topic: Despair from his own forces**

**1. Rabash. Article 10 (1986) “Concerning Prayer**

Therefore, before one knows that he cannot obtain the vessels of bestowal by himself, he does not ask the Creator to give them to him. It follows that he does not have a real desire for the Creator to answer his prayer.For this reason, one must work to obtain the vessels of bestowal by himself, and after all the work that he has put into it without obtaining it begins the real prayer from the bottom of the heart. At that time he can receive for help from above, as our sages said, “He who comes to purify is aided.”But since this prayer is against nature, since man was created with a desire to receive, which is self-love, how can he pray to the Creator to give him the force of bestowal while all the organs oppose this desire? This is why this work is called “prayer,” meaning he must make great efforts to be able to pray to the Creator to give him the force of bestowal and annul man’s force of reception.

**2. Baal HaSulam. Shamati 5. “Lishma Is an Awakening from Above, and Why Do We Need an Awakening from Below?”**

However, the prayer must be a complete prayer, from the bottom of the heart. This means that one knows one hundred percent that there is no one in the world who can help him but the Creator Himself.Yet, how does one know this, that no one will help him but the Creator Himself? One can acquire that awareness precisely if he has exerted all the powers at his disposal and it did not help him. Thus, one must do every possible thing in the world to attain “for the sake of the Creator.” Then one can pray from the bottom of the heart, and then the Creator hears his prayer.However, one must know, when exerting to attain the Lishma, to take upon himself to want to work entirely to bestow, completely, meaning only to bestow and not to receive anything. Only then does one begin to see that the organs do not agree to this view.From this one can come to clear awareness that he has no other choice but to pour out his heart to the Creator to help him so the body will agree to enslave itself to the Creator unconditionally, as he sees that he cannot persuade his body to annul itself completely. It turns out that precisely when one sees that there is no hope that his body will agree to work for the Creator by itself, one’s prayer can be from the bottom of the heart, and then his prayer is accepted.

**3. Rabash. Article 29 (1987) “What Is “According to the Sorrow, So Is the Reward”?**

A person cannot emerge from the control of self-reception by himself, as it is the nature in which the Creator created man, which only the Creator Himself can change. In other words, as He has given the created beings the desire to receive, He can later give them the desire to bestow.However, according to the rule, “There is no light without a Kli, no filling without a lack,” first one needs to obtain a deficiency. That is, he must feel that he is deficient of this Kli called “desire to bestow.” And concerning feeling, it is impossible to feel any lack if one does not know what he is losing by not having the Kli, called “desire to bestow.” For this reason, man must introspect on what causes him not to have the desire to bestow.To the extent of the loss, he feels sorrow and suffering. When he has the real lack, meaning when he can pray to the Creator from the bottom of the heart for not having the strength to be able to work for the sake of the Creator, then, when he has the Kli, meaning the real lack, this is the time when his prayer is answered.

**4. Rabash. Article 30 (1989) What Is the Meaning of Lighting the Menorah in the Work?**A person must not escape the campaign when he sees that he is not making progress. Sometimes he gets thoughts of the spies, who said that this work is not for us and requires special people who can walk on the path of overcoming. All this comes to him because he understands that each time, he must see how he is making progress. However, it does not occur to him that he must advance in obtaining darkness, that this is the only *Kli* he needs to acquire. A *Kli* is a need for a filling. That is, if he has no filling for the lack, he feels that he is in the dark. For this reason, a person must not say that he is not advancing in the work. Hence, he wants to escape the campaign, for it is not the truth, since he sees each time how far he is from obtaining the light, meaning for the Creator to give him the *Kli* called “desire to bestow.” He cannot obtain the desire to bestow by himself, and then he comes to feel that the world has grown dark on him. At that time, the light comes, meaning help from above, as it is written, “He who comes to purify is aided.”

**5. Rabash. Article 38 (1990) What Is, “A Cup of Blessing Must Be Full,” in the Work**A person needs great mercy in order not to escape the campaign. Although he uses the counsels that our sages said, “I have created the evil inclination; I have created the Torah as a spice,” but the person says that he has already used this advice several times to no avail. He also says that he has already used the advice “He who comes to purify is aided,” and it is as though all the counsels are not for him. Thus, he does not know what to do. This is the worst state for a person, meaning he wants to escape from these states but has nowhere to run. At that time he suffers torments at being between despair and confidence. But then a person says, “Where will I turn?” At that time, the only advice is prayer. Yet, this prayer is also without any guarantee, so it follows that then he must pray to believe that the Creator does hear a prayer, and everything that one feels in these states is to his benefit. But this can be only above reason, meaning although the mind tells him, “After all the calculations, you see that nothing can help you,” he should believe this, too, above reason, that the Creator can deliver him from the will to receive for himself, in return for which he will receive the desire to bestow.

**6. *Meshivat Nefesh*, Item 40**

The war against Amalek, which is the war against the inclination, is a very long war, and submitting it is mainly by strengthening. Through everything that one experiences in one’s life, he should be very strong and not let himself fall under any circumstances, for as long as one does not despair oneself and strengthens oneself to somehow start over every time, he is regarded as winning the war, for it is impossible for man to defeat it by himself. It is as our sages said, “Were it not for the help of the Creator, he would not overcome it.” Rather, man must only commit to strengthening himself each time anew, and not retreat from this war or cause oneself despair under any circumstances.

Certainly, in this war, it is impossible to evidently see who is the winner, since the war is still long, the exile is intensifying, and each one experiences what he experiences. Yet, as long as we are holding our weapons in our hands—and our main weapon is the prayer—and as long as we do not cause ourselves despair from this war and keep gripping to our weapons, we are winning for sure, since as long as one strengthens oneself in prayer and outcry to the Creator, he is winning the war, as this is essentially the victory.

**7. Rabash, Article 23 (1989) WHAT IS, IF HE SWALLOWS THE BITTER HERB, HE WILL NOT COME OUT, IN THE WORK**When he comes to know that the Creator can help him, and he understands that the real advice is only prayer, the body comes and makes him see that “You see how many prayers you have already prayed but you received no answer from above. Therefore, why bother praying that the Creator will help you? You see that you are not getting any help from above.” At that time, he cannot pray. Then we need to overcome once more through faith, and believe that the Creator does hear the prayer of every mouth, and it does not matter if the person is adept and has good qualities, or to the contrary. Rather, he must overcome and believe above reason, although his reason dictates that since he has prayed many times but still received no answer from above, how can he come and pray once more? This, too, requires overcoming, meaning to exert above reason and pray that the Creator will help him overcome his view and pray.

**8. Baal Hasulam, Letter 34**We rush our pleas above, knock by knock, tirelessly, endlessly, and we do not weaken at all when He does not answer us. We believe He hears our prayer but He is waiting for us, for a time when we have the *Kelim* [vessels] to receive the faithful bounty, and then we will receive a reply for each and every prayer at once, since “the hand of the Lord will not be short,” God forbid. This is the meaning of the words, “Children in whom there was no blemish ... and who have the strength to stand in the king's palace.” It teaches you that even those who have been rewarded with pardon for iniquities—which became as merits, by which the matter appears after the fact, and in whom there is no blemish—still need more strength to stand in the king’s palace, meaning to stand and pray, and wait tirelessly, with knock by knock until they elicit the complete desire from the Creator. This is why we should learn this trade before we enter the king’s palace, meaning muster power and might to stand as a pillar of iron until we elicit the desire from the Creator, as it is written, “Take no rest.” Although the Creator seems silent and unresponsive, let it not cross your mind to be silent, too, “Take no rest.” This is not what the Creator aimed for with His silence, but rather to give you power to stand afterward in the king’s palace when you have no blemish. This is why, “and give Him no rest.”

**9. Baal Hasulam. Letter 57**Do not weaken or give up on mercy. Although you do not see anything, for even when the measure of labor is complete, it is the time of prayer, but until then, believe in our sages: “I did not labor and found, do not believe.” When the measure is full, your prayer will be complete and the Creator will grant generously, as our sages instructed us, “I labored and found, believe,” for one is unfit for a prayer prior to this, and the Creator hears a prayer.

**10. Rabash. Article 24 (1986) The Difference between Charity and Gift**When he does not see results over a long period of time of making efforts, and he does not see a satisfaction of his deficiency, torments and pain begin to form in him because he has made efforts but sees no progress in his work. At that time the thoughts begin to come one-by-one. Sometimes it is with sparks of despair, and sometimes he grows stronger, but then he sees once more that he has fallen from his state, and so on repeatedly. Finally, a real deficiency forms in him, which he has obtained through exertion in ascents and descents. These ascents and descents leave him with pain each time at not having been granted *Dvekut* with the Creator. Finally, when the cup of labor has been filled sufficiently, it is called a *Kli*. Then the filling of it comes from the Creator, since now he has a real *Kli*.

**11. Rabash. Article 12 (1985) Jacob Dwelled in the Land Where His Father Had Lived**One must believe that the Creator has created the world with benevolence, and the evil in his body removes him from all the good. That is, when he comes to learn Torah, he finds it utterly tasteless. And also, when he comes to perform some *Mitzva* [good deed/correction], he finds it utterly tasteless because the evil inclination in his body has the power not to let him believe in the Creator above reason by taking out every flavor. Whenever he begins to approach something spiritual, he feels that everything is dry without any moisture of life. When the person began his work, he was told—and he believed what he was told—that the Torah is a Torah of life, as it is written, “For they are your life and the length of your days,” and as it is written (Psalms 19), “More desirable than gold, than much fine gold, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.” But when one consider this and sees that the evil inclination is to blame for everything, and strongly feels the bad that it is causing him, then he feels on himself what is written (Psalms 34) “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” That is, that verse was said about him. At that time he looks at what the verse says afterwards, “but the Lord delivers him out of them all.” At that time he begins to cry out to the Creator to help him because he has already done everything that he could think of doing, but nothing helped, and he thinks that “Everything that you find within your power to do, that do,” was said about him. At that time comes the time of salvation—the salvation of the Creator delivering him from the evil inclination—to the extent that from this day forth the evil inclination will surrender before him and will not be able to incite him into any transgression.

**12. Rabash. Article 34 (1991) What Is Eating Their Fruits In This World And Keeping The Principal For The Next World, In The Work**

In the work, when one sees that it is hard to get what he wants, he escapes from the work. He says, “I believe that there are people who have been rewarded and to whom the Creator gave the desire to bestow. But this was because they were more gifted than I am. But a person like me, with worse qualities than others, has no chance of meriting this.” Hence, he escapes the campaign and begins to work like the general public. Only those who say that they want to escape from the work but have nowhere else to go, since nothing satisfies them, those people do not walk out from the work. Although they have ups and downs, they do not give up. This is as it is written, “And the children of Israel sighed from the work, and they cried, and their cry went up to God from the work.” In other words, they cried out from the work because they were not advancing in the work of the Creator, so they could work in order to bestow contentment upon the Maker. At that time, they were rewarded with the exodus from Egypt. In the work, this is called “emerging the control of the will to receive and entry into the work of bestowal.”

**13. Rabash. Article 19 (1985) Come Unto Pharaoh - 1**One should always overcome and not let thoughts of despair enter his mind, as our sages said (Berachot, 10), “Even if a sharp sword is placed on his neck he should not deny himself of mercy,” as it was said (Job, 13), “Though He slay me, I will hope for Him.” We should interpret the “sharp sword placed on his neck” to mean that even though one’s evil, called “self-love,” is placed on his neck and wants to separate him from *Kedusha* by showing him that it is impossible to exit this authority, he should say that the picture he sees is the truth. However, “He should not deny himself of mercy,” for at that time he must believe that the Creator can give him the mercy, meaning the quality of bestowal. That is, by himself, it is true that one cannot exit the authority of self-reception. But from the perspective of the Creator, when the Creator helps him, of course He can bring him out. This is the meaning of what is written, “I am the Lord your God, who took you out from the land of Egypt to be your God.”

**14. Rabash. Article 16 (1984) Concerning Bestowal**“Man’s inclination overcomes him each day and seeks to kill him, as it is said, ‘The wicked watches the righteous, and seeks to slay him.’ And if the Creator did not help him, he would not overcome it, as it is said, ‘The Lord will not leave him in his hand.’”This means that first, one must see if he has the strength to come to be able to act with the aim to bestow contentment upon the Creator. Then, when he has already come to realize that he cannot achieve it by himself, that person focuses his Torah and *Mitzvot* on a single point, which is that “the light in it reforms him,” that this will be the only reward that he wants from the Torah and *Mitzvot*. In other words, the reward for his labor will be for the Creator to give him this strength called “the power of bestowal.”

**15. Rabash.Art. 21 (1988) What Does It Mean that the Torah Was Given Out of the Darkness in the Work?**

The Torah is given specifically to the deficient, and that deficiency is called “darkness.” This is the meaning of the words, “The Torah was given out of the darkness.” That is, one who feels darkness in his life because he has no vessels of bestowal is fit to receive the Torah, so that through the Torah, the light in it will reform him and he will obtain the vessels of bestowal. Through them, he will be fit to receive the delight and pleasure,... It follows that the Torah was given specifically to those who feel that their will to receive controls them. They cry out from the darkness that they need the Torah in order to deliver them from the darkness that is the control of the vessels of reception, on which there was a Tzimtzum [restriction] and concealment so that no light will shine in that place. But that place is the cause for the need to receive the Torah.

**16. Rabash. Article 37 (1991) What Is the “Torah” and What Is “The Statute of the Torah,” in the Work?”**
When he wants to do everything for the sake of the Creator and not for his own sake. Here the body resists with all its might, since it argues, “Why do you want to put me and my domain to death? You come to me with having to work only for the sake of the Creator and not for one’s own sake, which is truly annulment of the will to receive from everything. You tell me that our sages said, ‘The Torah exists only in one who puts himself to death over it,’ meaning to put to death all the domain of self-benefit and care only for the benefit of the Creator, and before this, a person is unable to be rewarded with the Torah.” Yet, a person sees that it is unrealistic that he will have the strength to go against nature. At that time, one has no choice but to turn to the Creator and say, “Now I have come to a state where I see that unless You help me, I am lost. I will never have the strength to overcome the will to receive, as this is my nature. Rather, only the Creator can give another nature.”

**17. Rabash. Letter 65**The main thing in the work is that there is no giving of half a thing from heaven. Otherwise, it could happen that if a person repented half way he would receive assistance from above for half the work. But since there is no giving of half a thing from heaven, a person must pray to the Creator to give him complete help. This means that during his prayer, a person sets what is in his heart in order, since prayer is work in the heart, so a person must decide that he wants the Creator to give him a desire to completely annul before Him, meaning not leave any desire under his own authority, but that all the desires in him will be only to give glory to the Creator. Once he decides on complete annulment, he asks the Creator to help him execute it. This means that although in the mind and the desire he sees that the body disagrees with him annulling all his desires before the Creator instead of for his own sake, he should pray to the Creator to help him want to annul before Him with all the desires, leaving no desire for himself. This is called a “complete prayer.”

**18. Rabash. Article 3 (1989) What Is the Difference between the Gate of Tears and the Rest of the Gates**When a person knows that he is wicked, as in “the wicked in their lives are called ‘dead,’” when he has come to realize that the fact that he is placed under the control of the will to receive separates him from the Life of Lives, he knocks about this and wants to repent. That is, he wants to be given help from above so he can emerge from self-love and be able to love the Creator with all his heart. Thus, he feels that he is wicked, since where he should love the Creator, he loves himself. It follows that his knocks, we understand that he does what he can to make the Creator bring him closer and take him out of the control of his own evil. This is called “real tears.” This is the meaning of what we explained, “Open a gate for us, when a gate is locked.” That is, since he sees that all the gates are closed, he begins to knock. It follows that at the time of the locking of the gate, when he has already prayed and was notified the reason for the sin, he begins to shed the real tears, meaning at that time he simply wants to be a Jew. At that time, his knocks are regarded as tears, and this is the meaning of “Who opens a gate to those who knock in repentance.”

**19. Rabash. Notes. Article 626. Anything that the Merciful One Does, He Does for the Best**When a person comes to a state where he is truly lost, when he does not see how he can exist in the world or that he has anything to hold on to, and he has exhausted all the tactics and ideas, and sees that after all the labor and exertions, everything is lost, he must brace himself and say, “Everything that the Merciful one does is for the best.” In other words, the Creator brought upon him all those states of being lost, and they are for the best. That is, through them he has come to a state where he is at the lowest degree, and by this he will be able to rise up, as it is written, “The Lord is high and the low will see.”

**20. Rabash. Article 2 (1991) WHAT IS, “RETURN, O ISRAEL, UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD,” IN THE WORK?**

When a person prays to the Creator and says, “You must help me because I am worse than everyone, since I feel that the will to receive controls my heart, and this is why nothing of Kedusha can enter my heart. I want no luxuries, only to be able to do something for the sake of the Creator, and I am utterly incapable of this, so only You can save me.” By this we should interpret what is written (Psalms 34), “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted.” That is, those who ask the Creator to help them so their heart will not be broken and will be whole.

**21. Baal Hasulam. Article 38 (1990) “What Is, “A Cup of Blessing Must Be Full,” in the Work?”**

However, when a person is already standing near the place from which he will receive the help from above, and “near” means that the Kli [vessel], meaning the desire to bestow, is far away from him, then he sees that only the Creator can save him. As Baal HaSulam said, this is the most important point in man’s work, for then he has close contact with the Creator because he sees one hundred percent that nothing can help him but the Creator Himself.

**22. Baal Hasulam. Letter 57**

There is no happier situation in man’s world than when he finds himself despaired with his own strength. That is, he has already labored and done all that he could possibly imagine he could do, but found no remedy. It is then that he is fit for wholehearted prayer for His help because he knows for certain that his own work will not help him. As long as he feels some strength of his own, his prayer will not be whole because the evil inclination rushes first and tells him, “First you must do what you can, and then you’ll be worthy of the Creator.” It was said about it, “The Lord is high and the low will see.” Once a person has labored in all kinds of work, and has become disillusioned, he comes into real lowliness, knowing that he is the lowest of all the people, and there is nothing good about his body. At that time his prayer is whole, and he is granted by His generous hand.

**23. Baal Hasulam. Letter 57**

The writing says about this, “And the children of Israel sighed from the work, etc., and their cry went up.” It is so because at that time they came into a state of despair from the work. It is as one who pumps into a punctured bucket. He pumps all day but does not have a drop of water to quench his thirst.So were the children of Israel in Egypt: Everything they built was promptly swallowed in its place in the ground, as our sages said.Similarly, one who has not been rewarded with His love, all that he has done in his work on purifying the soul the day before is as though completely burned the next day. And each day and each moment he must start anew as though he has not done a thing in his entire life.Then, “The children of Israel sighed from the work,” for they evidently saw that they were unfit to ever produce something by their own work. This is why their sigh and prayer were complete, as it should be, and this is why “Their cry went up,” since the Creator hears the prayer, and He only awaits a wholehearted prayer.

**24. Rabash. Article 16 (1985) But the More They Afflicted Them**

“And the children of Israel sighed because of the labor, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God because of the labor. And God heard their groaning.”... All the sighs were not because they were lacking anything. They lacked only one thing, meaning they did not wish for any luxuries or payment. Their only lack, for which they felt pain and suffering, was that of not being able to do anything for the Creator. In other words, they wished that they would have a desire to give contentment to the Creator and not to themselves, but they couldn’t, and this afflicted them.

**25. Rabash. Article 5 (1991) “What Is, “The Good Deeds of the Righteous Are the Generations,” in the Work?**

We ask the Creator to give us the strength so we can perform all our actions for You, meaning for the sake of the Creator. Otherwise, meaning if You do not help us, all our actions will be only for our own benefit. That is, “If not,” meaning “If You do not help us, all our actions will be only for ourselves, for our own benefit, for we are powerless to overcome our will to receive. Therefore, help us be able to work for You. Hence, You must help us.” This is called “Do for Your sake,” meaning do this, give us the power of the desire to bestow. Otherwise, we are doomed; we will remain in the will to receive for our own sake.

**26. Baal HaSulam. Letter 52**When a person introspects and feels his poor state, he awakens to return to the Creator and pours out his prayer in great longing to cling to the Creator. He thinks that all those prayers and all that awakening are his own powers, and sits and expects the Creator’s salvation, whether small or great. When time passes and he sees no sign of welcome from the Creator, he falls into despair because the Creator does not want him, since after all those longing, He did not turn to him at all. It is written about that: “Seek the Lord while He is found,” when the Creator presents Himself to you for asking. Then you will necessarily seek Him, too, for it is man’s way to move first. In other words, the Creator first gives you the heart to seek Him. When you know this, you will certainly grow stronger, as strong as you can ask, for the king is calling you. So it says, “Call upon Him when He is near.” That is, when you call on the Creator to bring you closer to Him, know that He is already near you, for otherwise there is no doubt you would not be calling Him. This is also the meaning of the verse, “Before they call, I will answer,” meaning that if you are calling Him, then He has already turned to you to give you the awakening to call upon Him.
“While they speak, I listen,” meaning the measure of the Creator’s listening depends precisely on the measure of the longing that appears during the saying of the prayer. When one feels excessive longing, he should know at that time that the Creator is listening to him attentively. Clearly, when he knows that, he pours his heart out even stronger, for there is no greater privilege than the King of the world being attentive to him. This is quite similar to what our sages said: “The Creator longs for the prayer of righteous” because the Creator’s desire for a person to draw near Him awakens great power and longing in the person to crave for the Creator, for “As in water of the face to the face, so the heart of man to man.” It follows that the saying of the prayer and the hearing of the prayer go hand in hand until they accumulate to the full measure and he acquires everything.

**27. Rabash - 2. Letter 18**When we hear the voice of the Creator speaking to the heart, as in “He who comes to purify is aided,” and it was interpreted in the holy *Zohar* that he is aided by a holy soul, meaning that the heart hears the voice of the Creator and then specifically the voice of holiness receives the governance over all the desires, meaning the desire to bestow. And naturally, they will not turn back to folly, meaning he will not sin again because all the desires of reception have surrendered under the desire to bestow. At that time all the good pleasantness appears on the heart, for then there is room in the heart for the instilling of the *Shechina* (Divinity), and the gentleness and pleasantness, and flavor and friendship spread, and fill up all of man’s organs. This applies specifically when hearing the voice of the Creator. At that time the whole body surrenders and enslaves itself to holiness. At that time the body becomes a slave serving the holiness.

**28. *Likutey Tefillot* [Assorted Prayers], Part 1, Prayer No. 16**

Grant me with Your mercies, to pray with devotion and sincerity, that I may be awarded annulling all my being and my corporeality and will not pray for my own benefit at all, but rather be rewarded with complete annulment during the prayer as though I don’t not exist in the world at all, and my whole intention in the prayer will be truly only for Your sake, to raise the *Shechina* [Divinity] from exile, to reveal Your Godliness in the world.

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