



THE PURPOSE OF SOCIETY 1

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We have gathered here to establish a society for all who wish to follow the path and method of Baal HaSulam, the way by which to climb the degrees of man and not remain as a beast, as our sages said (*Yevamot*, 61a) about the verse, “And you My sheep, the sheep of My pasture, are men.” And Rashbi said, “You are called ‘men,’ and idol worshipers are not called ‘men.’”

To understand man’s merit, we shall now bring a verse from our sages (*Berachot*, 6b) about the verse, “The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man” (*Ecclesiastes*, 12:13). And the Gemarah asks, “What is ‘for this is the whole man’?”

Rabbi Elazar said, “The Creator said, ‘The whole world was created only for that.’ This means that the whole world was created for the fear of God.”

Yet, we need to understand what the fear of God is, being the reason for which the world was created. From all the words of our sages, we learn that the reason for creation was to benefit His creations. This means that the Creator wished to delight the creatures so they would feel happy in the world. And here our sages said about the verse, “For this is the whole man,” that the reason for creation was the fear of God.

But according to what is explained in the essay, *Matan Torah* [“The Giving of the Torah”], the reason why the creatures are not receiving delight and pleasure, even though it was the reason for creation, is the disparity of form between the Creator and the creatures. The Creator is the giver and the creatures are the receivers. But there is a rule that the branches are similar to the root from which the branches were born.

And since there is no reception in our root, since the Creator is in no way deficient and needs nothing to satisfy His want, man feels unpleasantness when he needs to be a receiver. This is why every person is ashamed to eat the bread of shame.

To correct that, the world had to be created. *Olam* [world] means *He'elem* [concealment], so that delight and pleasure must be concealed. Why is it so? The answer is, for fear. In other words, it is so that man would fear using his vessels of reception, called “self love.” This means that one should prevent oneself from receiving pleasures because one craves them, and should have the strength to prevail over the craving, the object of one’s desire.

Instead, one should receive pleasures that bring contentment to the Creator. This means that the creature will want to bestow upon the Creator and will have fear of the Creator, of receiving for oneself, since reception of pleasure—when one receives for one’s own benefit—removes him from cleaving to the Creator.

Therefore, when a person performs one of the *Mitzvot* (commandments) of the Creator, one should aim that this *Mitzva* will bring him pure thoughts that he will bestow upon the Creator by keeping God’s *Mitzvot*. It is as our sages said, “Rabbi Hanania Ben Akashia says, ‘The Creator wanted to cleanse Israel; hence, He gave them plentiful Torah and *Mitzvot*.’”

And this is why we gather here—to establish a society where each of us follows the spirit of bestowing upon the Creator. And to achieve bestowal upon the

Creator, we must begin with bestowal upon man, which is called “love of others.”

And love of others can only be through revoking of one’s self. Thus, on the one hand, each person should feel lowly, and on the other hand, be proud that the Creator has given us the chance to be in a society where each of us has but a single goal: for The *Shechina* [Divinity] to be among us.

And although we have not yet achieved this goal, we have the desire to achieve it. And this, too, should be appreciated by us, for even though we are at the beginning of the way, we do hope to achieve the exalted goal.