

### תפארת ישראל The Splendor of Israel Chapter 4

#### Introduction

This profound discourse by the Maharal of Prague—one of the greatest Jewish thinkers and mystics of the 16th century—dives into the nature of Torah, mitzvos, and the human being as the pinnacle of creation. The Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Loew, 1512–1609), who lived in Prague and was a contemporary of the Ramah and Rema, was known for his synthesis of Kabbalistic thought, philosophy, and halacha. He led a distinguished yeshiva and is often associated with mystical traditions, including the legend of the Golem. His influence endures through his works like *Netzach Yisrael*, *Tiferes Yisrael*, and *Gevuros Hashem*.

In this maamar, the Maharal explores why there are 365 negative commandments and 248 positive ones, and how these correlate to the human being. With astonishing depth, he reveals how Torah is the supreme blueprint of existence and how each mitzvah refines either the form or function of man. The Maharal distinguishes between "form" (tzurah) and "matter" (chomer), and demonstrates that Torah doesn't only guide man—it *elevates* him to become a reflection of divine perfection.

שְׁסָ"ה מִצְּוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה וּרְמַ"ח מִצְּוֹת עֲשֵׂה הֵם לְעֲמֵת הַבְּּרִיאָה There are 365 negative commandments and 248 positive commandments, corresponding to the structure of man.		
The paths and actions that lead to success are the commandments of the Torah; without them, one would remain merely in potential, as will yet be explained.	הַדְּרָכִים וְהַפְּצֵלוֹת אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְבִיאִים אֶל הַהַצְלָחָה, הֵם מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁבְּזוּלָתָם הָיָה נִשְׁאָר בְּכֹחַ, כְּמוֹ שִׁיִתְבָּאֵר עוֹד.	
These mitzvos are like a rope that lifts a person from the depths of the pit—this lowly world—to the higher world, to seat him with the King, Hashem Tzevakos, face to face, as will also be explained.	ְהֵם הֵם כְּמוֹ הַחֶּבֶל שֶׁמַצְלִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִבּוֹר הַתַּחְתִּיוֹת, הוּא הָעוֹלָם הַשָּׁפָל, אֶל עוֹלָם הָעֶלְיוֹן, לְהוֹשִׁיב אוֹתוֹ עִם הַמֶּלֶךְ ה' צְבָאוֹת, עַיִן בְּעַיִן, וּכְמוֹ שָׁיִּתְבָּאֵר עִנִּיָן זָה.	
For the mitzvos refine a person from his physical nature, until he is no longer a naturally material being of coming into existence and passing away, like the physical things which are transient.	כִּי הַמִּצְוֹת הֵם צַרוּף הָאָדָם מִן הַגַּשְׁמִי, עַד שֶׁאֵין הָאָדָם טִבְעִי חָמְרִי בַּעַל הֲוָיָה וְהָפְּסֵד, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהֵם הַדְּבָרִים הַמָּבְעִים הַחָּמְרִיִּים.	
All the mitzvos are logically mandated by reason to be done this way and that. And when a person fulfills a mitzvah which intellect mandates, he thereby draws his soul out of its material nature and connects it with intellect, for the Divine intellect mandates the mitzvah.	פִּי כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת מְחַיַּב אוֹתָם הַשֵּׁכָל שֶׁכָּדְּ וְכָדְּ יַצְשֶׂה. וְכַאֲשֶׁר הָאָדָם עוֹשֶׂה הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁהַשָּׁכֶל מְחַיַּב, הֲרֵי בָּזָה יוֹצְאָה נַפְשׁוֹ מִן הַטֶּבַע הַחָמְרִית, וּדְבַקָה בַּשִּׂכְלִי, כִּי הַשֵּׂכָל הָאֱלֹקִי מְחַיַּב הַמִּצְוָה.	
And this is the purification and refinement of our soul, as will	וֶזֶהוּ צֵרוּף וְזִכּוּף נַפְשִׁנִי, כְּמוֹ שֶׁיִּתְבָּאֵר.	

be explained.

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And the number of mitzvos by which one's soul emerges from darkness to light, as our sages of blessed memory said at the end of Makkos (23b): Rabbi Simlai expounded, 613 mitzvos were given to Moshe—365 negative mitzvos, corresponding to the days of the solar year, and 248 positive mitzvos, corresponding to the organs of the human body.

ּוּמְסְפֵּר הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁבָּהֶם נַפְשׁוֹ יוֹצְאָה מֵאֲפֵלֶה לְאוֹרָה, פְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ זִכְרוֹנָם לִבְרָכָה בְּסוֹף מֵכּוֹת (כג, ב): דָרַשׁ רַבִּי שִׂמְלַאִי: תַּרְיַ"ג מִצְוֹת נִתְנוּ לוֹ לְמֹשֶׁה; שָׁסָ"ה 'לֹא תַּצְשֶׂה' -כְּמִנְיָן יְמוֹת הַחַמָּה, רְמַ"ח צֲשֵׂה' - כְּמִנְיַן אֵבָרָיו שֶׁל אָדָם

Rav Hamnuna said: What is the source? (Devarim 33:4) "Torah tzivah lanu Moshe morasha." The word "Torah" in gematria is 611. And "Anochi" and "Lo Yihyeh Lecha" (the first two of the Ten Commandments, in Shemos 20:2–3)—we heard directly from the Mighty One.

אָמַר רַב הַמְנוּנָא: מַאי קְּרָא (דְּבָרִים ל״ג, ד): "תּוֹרָה צָּנָה לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה", 'תּוֹרָה' בְּגִימַטְרָיָא הָכִי הָנֵי, 'תּוֹרָה' – שִׁית מֵאָה וְחַד סְרֵי הָנֵי, "אָנֹכִי" וְ"לֹא יִהְיֶה לְדִּ" (שְׁמוֹת כ, ב–ג) – מִפִּי הַגְּבוּרָה שְׁמַעְנוּם, עַד בַּאן

And there is no doubt that the number and count of the Divine commandments were not by happenstance, for there is no randomness in such Divine matters.

וְאֵין סָפֵּק שָׁאֵין מִסְפָּרָם וּמִנְיָנָם שֶׁל הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֱלֹקיּוֹת הָיוּ בְּמִקְרָה, כִּי אֵין מִקְרָה לִכְמוֹ דְּבָרִים אֵלוּ הַאֱלֹקיִים.

Furthermore, he did not attribute the number to chance occurrences, rather he explained that the number of negative mitzvos corresponds to the days of the solar year, and the number of positive mitzvos to the limbs of a person—and there is meaning in these connections.

ְוְעוֹד, שֶׁלֹא תָּלָה הַמִּסְפֶּר בְּמִקְרֶה קָרָה, רַק שֶׁאָמֵר עַל מִצְוֹת 'לֹא תַּצְשֶׂה' שָׁהֵם כְּמִנְיָן יְמוֹת הַחַמָּה, וּמִסְפֵּר מִצְוֹת 'עֲשֵׂה' כְּמִסְפַר אֵיבָרִיו שֶׁל אָדָם, וּמָה עִנָיַנִם לִדְבַרִים אַלוּ

And if we say that the number of negative commandments—365—is to warn a person each day not to transgress a "do not do," and the positive commandments—248—are to instruct a person to fulfill the commandments with all his limbs, then it would also have been possible for the inverse to be true: that the negative commandments would be 248, warning each of a person's limbs not to transgress a "do not do," and the positive commandments 365, instructing each day to perform the mitzvos.

וְאָם נֹאמֵר כִּי מִסְפַּר מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה' – שְׁסְ"ה,
שׁמֵּזְהִירִין אֶת הָאָדָם בְּכָל יוֹם שָׁלֹא לַעֲבֹר 'לֹא
תַּעֲשֶׂה', וּמִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה – רְמַ"ח, שַׁמַזְהִירִים אֶת הָאָדָם
שָׁבְּכָל אֵיבָרָיו יַעֲשֶׂה הַמִּצְוֹת, אִם־כֵּן גַּם הָיָה אֶפְשָׁר
שָׁיִהָיָה – בְּהַפֶּך זָה; מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה' – רְמַ"ח,
שְׁמַזְהִירִים כָּל אֵיבָרָיו שֶׁל אָדָם שָׁלֹא יַעֲבֹר לֹא
תַּעֲשֶׂה', וּמִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה' – שְׁסָ"ה, שֶׁמֵזְהִירִין כָּל יוֹם
שִׁיַעֲשָׂה הַמִּצְוֹת

All the more so, this proves that this is not merely a symbolic hint or allusion (remez), for such matters are not fitting regarding Divine things, which do not occur by accident or arbitrary structure. Therefore, this statement is one of the deep teachings.

וּמִכֶּל שֶׁכֵּן שֶׁלֹא יִהְיֶה דָּבֶר זֶה רַק רָמָז, וְאֵין רָאוּי בַּדְּבָרִים הָאֱלֹקִים, שֶׁנִּמְצָאִים כָּדְ לְעַצְמָם; וּלְכָדְ הַמַּאֲמֶר הַזֶּה מִן הַמַּאֲמֶרִים הָעֲמָקִים.

כּוֹלֵל אוֹתוֹ.

# The Maharal of Prague

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Know: When Hashem, blessed be He, desired to merit a person—to acquire for him eternal existence through the Divine mitzvos—it could not be done through only one type of commandment.	דַּע, כַּאֲשֶׁר רָצָה הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ לְזַכּוֹת אֶת הָאָדָם שָׁיִּקְנָה הַנִּצְחִיוּת עַל־יְדֵי מִצְוֹת הָאֱלֹקִיוֹת, אִי אֶפְשָׁר יָשֶׁיִּקְנָה אוֹתוֹ רַק עַל־יְדֵי שְׁנֵי מִינֵי מִצְוֹת;
One category is that he should not alter his essential form and existence upon which he was created. For if he alters the essential form upon which he was created, there is a change from what is fitting for human existence, and thus that existence is disrupted.	הַחֵלֶק הָאֶחָד – שֶׁלֹא יִהְיֶה מְשַׁנָּה אֶת מְצִיאוּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא עָלָיו. כִּי אָם מְשַׁנָּה אֶת מְצִיאוּתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא עָלָיו, הַרֵי יֵשׁ לוֹ שְׁנּוּי מַה שֶׁהוּא רָאוּי לִמְצִיאוּת הָאָדָם, וְיָבֹא הָפְּקֵד לִמְצִיאוּתוֹ.
These are the negative commandments—"do not do"—which ensure that a person does not deviate from what is fitting to his true existence.	– ןאֵלוּ הֵם מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה', שֶׁכָּל אֵלוּ הַמִּצְוֹת הֵם שָׁרֹא יֵצֵא הָאָדָם מִן מַה שֶׁהוּא רָאוּי אֶל מְצִיאוּתוֹ;
For example, illicit relations, adultery, theft, and similar prohibitions—all prevent corruption of human essence.	ּכְּבְעֵילַת אָפּוּר וְגָאֵל וּגְנֵבָה, וְכַיּוֹצֵא בָּהֶם מִן הַמִּצְוֹת.
Even though we do not know the reasons for the commandments, nevertheless we know that all negative commandments are departures from the straight and proper existence that intellect mandates. And deviation from upright, essential form is destruction and ruin to that being.	אַף כִּי אֲנַחְנוּ לֹא נֶדֶע טַעַם הַמִּצְוֹת, מִכָּל מֶקוֹם נַדַע בָּהֶם שֶׁכָּל מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה' הֵם וְצִיאָה מִן הַיּשֶׁר הַמְצִיאוּת מֵה שֶׁהַשֵּׂכָל מְחַיַּב, וְהַיְצִיאָה מִן הַיּשֶׁר הַמְצִיאוּת הוּא הָפְּסֵד וְאִיבּוּד אֵלָיוּ.
The second category consists of the positive commandments. As we have already said (Chapters 2–3), man is not yet at his ultimate Divine level; rather, he exists only in potential, and he must acquire actual perfection through the Divine commandments.	הַחֵלֶק הַשֵּׁנִי – הַם מִצְּוֹת צֲשֵׂה. שֶׁכְּבֶר אָמַרְנוּ (פְּּרָקִים ב–ג) כִּי אֵין הָאָדָם בְּמַדְרֵגָתוֹ הָאַחַרוֹנָה הָאֱלֹקִית, וּכְאֵלוּ הוּא בְּכֹחַ בִּלְבַד, וְצָרִידְ שֶׁיִּקְנֶה הַשְׁלֵמוּת בְּפְעַל עַל־יְדֵי הַמִּצְוֹת הָאֱלֹקִיוֹת.
And as was explained to you above in the previous chapters—even if a person acquires this material world and its apparent qualities, he has not acquired the World to Come—which is not a physical realm—except through the Divine actions (i.e., mitzvos), by which he merits the transcendent world.	וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהִתְבָּאֵר לְדְּ לְמַעְלָה בַּפְּרָקִים הַקּוֹדְמִים, שֶׁאַף אָם הָאָדָם קוֹנָה הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הַמִּבְעִי הַחָמְרִי, לֹא קָנָה עוֹלָם הַבָּא – שֶׁאֵינוֹ בַּשְׁמִי – כִּי אָם עַל־יְדֵי הַפְּעַלּוֹת הָאֱלֹקִיּוֹת, וְעַל יָדָם יִזְכָּה לָעוֹלָם הַנִּבְדָּל.
When you contemplate the nature of this world, it divides into two parts encompassing all of existence: One is the lower realm, generally described as being "under the sun," and it is ruled by	וְכַאֲשֶׁר תִּתְבּוֹנֵן בִּמְצִיאוּת עוֹלֶם הַזֶּה, נָחֶלֶק לִשְׁנֵי חֲלֶקִים, כּוֹלְלִים כָּל הַמְּצִיאוּת; הָאָחָד – הוּא הַמְצִיאוּת הַתַּחְתוֹן, וְהוּא בִּכְלָלוֹ מְסַדָּר תַּחַת הַשֶּמֶשׁ, וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ

the sun.

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For the sun is the king of the natural world, and the world of nature is organized under its domain. As we find in Scripture, whenever one wishes to describe all of reality, it is said to be "under the sun," as it is written (Koheles 1:3): "What profit does a man have from all his labor under the sun?" and (Koheles 1:14) "I saw all the deeds done under the sun," and so throughout.

כִּי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ מֶלֶּהְ עוֹלֵם הַטֶּבַע, וְעוֹלֵם הַטֶּבַע מְסַדָּר מַּחְתָּיו. וּכְמוֹ שֶׁתִּמְצָא מְבֹאָר מִן הַכָּתוּב, שֶׁכַּאֲשֶׁר יִרְצֶה לְהַזְּכִּיר כָּל הָעוֹלָם יֹאמַר: "תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ", וּכְדְכְתִיב (קְהָלֶת א, ג): "מַה יִתְרוֹן לָאָדָם בְּכָל עֲמָלוֹ שִׁיצְמֹל מַחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ". "וְרָאִיתִי כָּל אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ" (קהָלֶת א, י״ד), וְכֵן תָּמִיד.

The sun preserves the order of the natural world through its movement and cycles, as it rules the natural realm—like a king who upholds the structure of his domain so that none deviate from the proper order. So too the sun governs this world. As it says (Tehillim 136:8): "The sun for dominion by day."

ְוְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הִיא שְׁמִירַת סֵדֶר עוֹלֵם הַטֶּבַע בְּמַהַלְכָה וּבְתָנוּעָתָה, בַּמָּה שֶׁהִיא מוֹשֶׁלֶת בְּעוֹלָם הַטֶּבַע. וּכְמוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁהוּא הַשׁוֹמֵר אֶת הַפֵּדֶר לְבִלְתִּי יֵצֵא אֶחָד מִן הַפַּדֶר הָרָאוּי, כָּךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ שֶׁהוּא הַמּוֹשֶׁל עַל עוֹלָם הַזֶּה. וּכְדִכְתִיב (תְּהִלִּים קלו, ח): "אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת בַּיוֹם", וְהוּא הַשׁוֹמֵר סֵדֶר הָעוֹלָם לְבִלְתִּי יַחַלִּיף וְיָמִיר אֶת סֵדֶר הָרָאוּי, וְיַצְמֹד עַל עָמְדוֹ. וְדָבָר הָה יָדוּעַ מְאֹד וְאֵין סָפֵק בָּזָה.

#### This is the first category.

זָהוּ חֵלֵק הָאֶחָד.

The second category is man alone, who stands distinct from the rest of creation. He is not included with the other beings, for all was created for his sake. How then could the servant be included with the master? Such a thing is inconceivable. Therefore, man is a separate category unto himself.

הַחֵלֶק הַשַּׁנִי הוּא הָאָדָם בִּלְבַד, שֶׁהוּא חֵלֶק שֵׁנִי נָגֶד כָּל הַמְצִיאוּת. שֶׁהוּא בִּפְנֵי עַצְמוֹ, אֵינוֹ נִכְלָל עַם שְׁאָר הַנָּמְצָאִים; שֶׁהְרֵי בִּשְׁבִיל הָאָדָם נִבְרָא הַכּּל, וְאֵיךְ יִהְיֶה נִכְלָל הָעֶכֶד עִם אֲדוֹנָיו, דָּבָר זֶה לֹא יִתָּכֵן כְּלָל, וּלִפִיכֵךְ הוּא חַלָּק בּפִנִי עַצָמוֹ.

He is also distinct from the first category of existence, which does not change from the order upon which it was created. These other entities do not acquire any additional perfection beyond what they were created with—they remain as they are, as explained in Chapter 3.

וְהוּא גַּם־כֵּן נֶחֶלֶק מִן חַלֶּק הַמְצִיאוּת הָרִאשׁוֹן, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יְשַׁנּוּ סִדְרָם אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא עָלָיו, אֲבָל לֹא יִקְנוּ גַּם־כֵּן דְּבַר מַעֲלָה גּוֹסֶף עַל עַצְמָם, רַק הֵם נִשְׁאָרִים בַּהָוָיָתָם בִּמוֹ שֶׁנִּבְרָאוּ, וּכְמוֹ שֶׁנִתְבָּאֵר בְּפֶרֶק ג'.

But man—who is this second category—is capable of deviating from the proper order, and also of attaining levels beyond what he originally had. Just as the sun is a king, so too man is a king, for everything is given into his domain.

וְהָאָדָם הַזֶּה, שֶׁהוּא הַחֵלֶּק הַשֵּׁנִי, אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁיֵצֵא מִן הַפּזֶר הָרָאוּי, אֲבָל הָאָדָם הוּא קוֹנָה מַצְלָה יוֹתֵר מִמְה שֶׁהָיָה לוֹ. וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הוּא מֶלֶךְ, גַּם־כֵּן הָאָדָם הוּא מֵלֶךְ, שֲׁהַרֵי הַכֹּל נַתוּן תַּחָתִּיו.

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Man's kingship is that he brings perfection to all lower beings, for everything was created to serve him. Through him, they gain form and completeness—just like a king completes his realm.

וּמַלְכוּת הָאָדָם הִיא, שֶׁהוּא מוֹלִיךְ שְׁלֵמוּת אֶל כָּל הַמַּחְתוֹנִים, כִּי הַכִּל נִבְרָא לַעֲבֹד הָאָדָם וּלְשַׁמְשׁוֹ, וּבָזֶה הוּא צוּרָה אֶל כָּל הַתַּחְתוֹנִים. וּמוֹלִיךְ שְׁלֵמוּת אֶל הַכֹּל, כְּמוֹ הַמֶּלְךְ שֶׁהוּא הַמַּשְׁלִים אֶת הַכּּל

And man is the opposite of all other beings. All beings under the sun do not attain higher levels than those for which they were created—but they also do not deviate from their ordained order. Man, however, attains more than he began with—but he also deviates from the order.

וְהָאָדָם הַפֶּךְ הַנְּמְצָאִים; שֶׁכֶּל הַנְּמְצָאִים תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ אֵינָם קוֹנִים מַעֲלָה עַל מַה שֶׁנְבָרָאוּ, אֲבָל לֹא יִצְאוּ גַּם־כֵּן מִסֵּדֶר הָרָאוּי. וְהָאָדָם קוֹנָה מַעֲלָה יוֹתֵר מִמֶּה שָׁהָיָה, אֲבָל הוּא יוֹצֵא מִן הַסֵּדֶר.

And when the prophets would rebuke the Jewish people, they would do so with metaphors drawn from the visible world, such as the prophet Yeshayahu said (Yeshayahu 1:3): "The ox knows its owner," etc. And Moshe, the master of all prophets, said (Devarim 32:1): "Give ear, O heavens."

וְכַאֲשֶׁר הַנָּבִיאִים הָיוּ מוֹכִיחִין אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, הָיוּ מוֹכִיחִים אוֹתָם בַּדְּבָרִים הַמִּבְעִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמֵר הַנָּבִיא וְשַׁעְיָה (יְשַׁעְיָהוּ א, ג): "יָדַע שׁוֹר קֹנֵהוּ" וְגוֹ'. וּמֹשֶׁה אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים אָמֵר (דְּבָרִים ל״ב, א): "הַאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם.

And it is stated in the Midrash (Devarim 30:19) on this: He said to them, "Look at the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, which I created to serve you—they receive no reward or punishment, yet they have not changed from their nature.

וְאָמְרוּ בַּמִּדְרָשׁ (דְּבָרִים ל, י״ט) עַל זֶה: אָמַר לָהֶם: הָסְתַּכְּלוּ בַּשָּׁמִיִם וּבָאָרֶץ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בָּם אֲשֶׁר בָּרָאתִי לְשַׁמֵשׁ אֶתְכֶם, וְאֵין לָהֶם שָׁכָר וְעֹנֶשׁ, וְהֵם לֹא שְׁנּוּ מדתם:

Have you ever seen the sun go toward the west? Or did you sow wheat and the ground produced barley? If you fulfill the commandments, you will be rewarded; if not, you will be punished—all the more so."

רְאִיתֶם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הוֹלֵךּ לְמִזְרָח, אוֹ שֶׁמֶּא זְרַעְהָּם אֶת הָאָדֶמֶה חָפִים, וְהִיא הָעֱלְתָה שְׁעוֹרִים. וְאִם אַתָּם מְלַיִּמִים תְּקַבְּלוּ שָׂכָר, וְאָם לָאו תְּקַבְּלוּ ענֶשׁ, עַל אַחַת בַּמֵּה וָכַמֵּה.'כַּמֵּה.

Nevertheless, a person's superiority is through Divine actions. As was explained earlier (Chapter 2), the deeds of man are more beautiful and praiseworthy than the acts of nature—even though they are also Divine acts. And this matter is unique to man.

אֶמְנָם מַצְלָתוֹ עַל־יְדֵי הַמַּצְשִׂים הָאֱלֹקִיִּים, וּכְמוֹ שָׁהַתְּבָּאֵר לְמַעְלָה (פֶּרָק ב) מִמַּצְשֵׂה יָדָיו שֶׁל אָדָם, שֶׁהֵם יוֹתֵר נָאִים וּמְשֻׁבָּחִים מִמַּצְשֵׂה הַטֶּבַע, שֶׁהֵם מַצְשֵׂה אֱלֹקִים, וְדָבָר זָה מְיָחָד בָּאָדָם.

And when Hashem, may He be blessed, wished to purify the Jewish people through the two types of mitzvos—"do not do" and "do"—He gave Israel a number of negative mitzvos equal to the days of the solar year.

וְכַאֲשֶׁר רָצָה הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּשְׁנֵי מִינֵי מִצְוֹת, שָׁהַם לֹא תַּעֲשָׂה וַעֲשֵׂה. שֶׁהַמִּצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה הֵם שֶׁיִשְׁמֹר הַסֵּדֶר, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה לָאָדָם וְצִיאָה מִן הַסֵּדֶר, נָתַן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִנְיַן הַמִּצְוֹת בְּמִסְפַּר יְמוֹת הַחַמֵּה

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For we have already said that the sun preserves the order of the created beings, and its days are 365. These 365 days complete the true dominion of the sun—just as the limbs complete the person. Through the sun's 365 days, its rule is fulfilled.

ּכִּי כְּבָר אָמִרְנוּ כִּי הַחַמָּה הִיא שְׁמִירַת סֵדֶר הַנִּמְצָאִים, וְיָמֶיהָ הֵם שְׁס״ה. וְאֵלוּ שְׁס״ה יָמִים הֵם מַשְׁלִימִים אֲמִתַּת מַלְכוּת הַחַמָּה, כְּמוֹ הָאֵבָרִים לָאָדָם. כִּי עַל־יְדֵי [יְמוֹת] הַחַמָּה שֶׁהֵם שְׁס״ה, גוֹמֶרֶת מֶמְשֵׁלְתָּהּ.

Thus, this number—365—is inherently capable of maintaining order and preventing deviation from the order of existence.

עַד שֶׁמִּסְפֶּר זֶה, שֶׁהוּא שָׁס״ה, מְסָגֶּל בְּעַצְמוֹ לְשְׁמִירַת הַסֵּדֵר, וּבַלְתִּי יָצִיאַה מִן סֵדֵר הַמִּצִיאוּת.

Therefore, when Hashem gave the Torah to Israel—who are considered the essence of existence, just as the sun and man represent all existence—He gave them 365 negative commandments, corresponding to the solar year, which preserves the order of reality.

וּלְפִיכָהְ כַּאֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַהְ תּוֹרָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶחְשָׁבוּ כָּל הַמְּצִיאוּת, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַחַמָּה וְהָאָדָם הֵם כָּל הַמְצִיאוּת, נָתַן לָהֶם שְׁס״ה מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּצְשֶׁה, בָּמִסְפַּר יְמוֹת הַחַמָּה, שָׁהִיא שְׁמִירַת סֵדֶר הַמְּצִיאוּת.

For since the order of existence in its entirety is governed by the number 365—the days of the sun—He gave Israel 365 "do not do" commandments, by which the order is preserved. And through observing the negative commandments, there is no deviation from the order.

כִּי מֵאַחַר שֶׁסֵדֶר הַמְּצִיאוּת בִּכְלֶלוֹ הוּא עַל־יְדֵי מִסְפַּר שָׁס״ה, שֶׁהֵם מִסְפַּר יְמוֹת הַחַמָּה, נָתַן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל גַּם־כֵּן מִסְפַּר שָׁס״ה 'לֹא תַּצְשֶׁה', וְעַל יָדָם שְׁמִירַת הַסֵּדָר. וּבָשְׁמִירַת מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּצְשֶׁה אֵין וְצִיאָה מִן הַסֵּדָר.

And He gave them also 248 positive commandments, which are acquisitions of action—through which a person acquires virtue and perfection. These correspond to the second category of existence, which is man.

ְוָנָתַן לָהֶם עוֹד רְמַ"ח מִצְוֹת צֲשֵׂה, שֶׁהֵם קִנְיֵן מַצְשֶׂה, שֶׁעֵל יָדָם קוֹנָה מַצֲלָה וּשְׁלֵמוּת, כְּנָגֶד חֵלֶק הַמְּצִיאוּת הַשֵּׁנִי, שֶׁהוֹא הָאָדָם.

For man possesses the ability to acquire spiritual elevation, which is not found in the first category of existence, for it does not acquire anything at all—it remains as it was created.

שָׁנִּמְצָא בָּאָדָם קּנְיַן מַעֲלָה, שָׁלֹא תִּמְצָא בַּחֵלֶק הָראשוֹן, שֶׁאֵין בּוֹ קּנְיָן כְּלָל, רַק נִשְׁאָר עַל מַה שׁנִּבָרָא עַלִיוּ

And man alone possesses the power to acquire elevation. And the limbs of man are the completeness of the human form.

וְהָאָדָם בִּלְבַד יֵשׁ בּוֹ קּנְיֵן מַעֲלָה. וְהָאֵבָרִים שֶׁל אָדָם הם שַׁלמוּת צוּרַת הָאדָם.

Do not think like some people do—namely physicians—that the human limbs are merely natural, like those of other living beings. This is not so at all. For such doctors are mistaken fools who do not truly understand the form of man and his limbs, which are all Divine.

כִּי אַל תַּחְשֹׁב כְּמוֹ שֶׁחָשְׁבוּ קְצֶת בְּנֵי אָדָם, וְהֵם הָרוֹפְאִים, כִּי הָאָבָרִים שֶׁל אָדָם הֵם טִבְעִיִּים כְּמוֹ שְׁאָר בַּעֲלֵי חַיִּים. כִּי אֵין הַדָּבָר כָּךְ כְּלָל, כִּי רוֹפְאֵי אֱלִיל הַמָּה, לֹא יָדְעוּ בָּאֲמֶת תּאַר הָאָדָם וְאֵיבָרָיו, שֶׁכֵּלוֹ ארֹדי

Therefore, a person's limbs are his perfection. And through his limbs—which are 248—he was created in the image of God.

וּלְפִיכָךְ הָאֵיבָרִים שֶׁלוֹ הֵם שְׁלֵמוּת הָאָדָם, וְעַל־יְדֵי אֶבַרִיו – שֶׁהֶם רְמַ"ת – נָבָרַא בָּצֵלֶם הַאֵּלֹהִים,

נִבְדָּל.

# The Maharal of Prague

## תפארת ישראל The Splendor of Israel Chapter 4

And through this he becomes king over the lower realms, as it is written (Bereishis 1:26): "Let us make man in our image and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens."	וּמִצַד הַזֶּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ בַּתַּחְתּוֹנִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (בְּרֵאשִׁית א, כו): "נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצֵלְמֵנוּ וְגוֹ' וְיִרְדּוּ בִּדְגַת הַיָּם וּכְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם.
Therefore, the number of mitzvos—being the perfection of man—corresponds to the number of his limbs, which are also the measure of his completeness and greatness, through which he is in the image of God.	ּוּלְפִיכָדְ מִסְפַּר הַמִּצְוֹת – שֶׁהֵם שְׁלֵמוּת הָאָדָם – כְּמִסְפַּר אֵבָרָיו, שֶׁהֵם גַּם־כֵּן שְׁלֵמוּת וּמַצְלַת הָאָדָם, עַד שֶׁהוּא בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים עַל־יְדֵי רְמַ"ח אֵבָרָיו
And the perfection and greatness of the mitzvos follows from this perfection—that man was created in the image of God. Through this, man becomes the perfection of all lower existence.	וּשְׁלֵמוּת וּמַעֲלַת הַמִּצְוֹת נִמְשָׁךְ אַחַר הַשְׁלֵמוּת הַגָּה מַה שֶׁהָאָדָם נִבְרָא בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים, שֶׁעַל־יְדֵי־זֶה הָאָדָם הוּא שָׁלֵמוּת כָּל הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים.
And if you contemplate this matter more deeply, you will know and understand that the sun and man are two kings.	וְתַצְמִיק יוֹתֵר בְּעִנְיָן זֶה וְתַדַע וְתָבִין, שֶׁהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאָדָם שָׁנֵי מְלָכִים.
For the sun rules over the world, as the verse says (Bereishis 1:16): "To govern the day," and man rules over the creatures as well, as it says (Bereishis 1:26): "And let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens." This matter is explained.	כִּי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הוּא מוֹשֵׁל בָּעוֹלָם, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמֵר הַכָּתוּב (בְּרֵאשִׁית א, ט״ז): "לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם". וְהָאָדָם מוֹשֵׁל בַּנָּמְצָאִים גַּם־כֵּן, כְּדְכְתִיב (בְּרֵאשִׁית א, כ״ו): "וְיִרְדּוּ בִּדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמֵיִם", וְדָבָר זָה מְבֹאָר.
One of these rulers is a physical ruler, for the sun is entirely physical; while the second ruler is transcendent, for man is not entirely physical—both because of his Divine soul, and because of what is said about him (Bereishis 9:6): "For in the image of God He made man."	וְהַמּוֹשֵׁל הָאֶחָד הוּא מוֹשֵׁל גַּשְׁמִי, כִּי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הִיא בַּשְׁמִית, וְהַמּוֹשֵׁל הַשֵּׁנִי הוּא נִבְדָּל, כִּי הָאָדָם אֵינוֹ בַּשְׁמִי גָּמוּר.
Both because he has a holy soul and because his form contains a Divine element—known to those who understand the secrets of wisdom. In any case, man surely possesses something transcendent.	הֵן בְּנִשְׁמָתוֹ הָאֱלֹקִית, שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ נְשָׁמָה קְדוֹשָׁה, וְהֵן מִצַּד שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר בּוֹ (בְּרֵאשִׁית ט, ו): "כִּי בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹקִים עָשָׂה אֶת הָאָדָם". כִּי יֵשׁ בְּצוּרָתוֹ עִנְיָן אֱלֹקִי, לְמִי שֶׁיוֹדֵעַ בְּרָזֵי הַחָּכְמָה. מִכָּל מָקוֹם עַל כָּל פָּנִים יֵשׁ בָּאָדָם עִנְיָן נִבְדָּל
So we see these are two distinct entities: one is a ruler with a physical body, and the other has a non-physical, transcendent element. Whatever the interpretation of "in the image of God" may be, the bottom line is that man possesses something Divine	הַרֵי כִּי אֵלוּ שְׁנֵי דְּבָרִים מְחֻלָּקִים; הָאֶחָד – הוּא הַמּוֹשֵׁל, וְיֵשׁ לוֹ חֲשִׁיבַת גּוּף. וְהַשֵּׁנִי – יֵשׁ לוֹ עִנְיָן בִּלְתִּי גַשְׁמִי, וְהוּא נִבְדָּל. יִהְיֶה הַפֵּרוּשׁ מַה שֵּיִהְיָה בִּלְשׁוֹן "צֶלֶם אֱלֹקִים", סוֹף סוֹף יֵשׁ בָּאָדָם דָּבָר אֱלֹקִי

and separate.

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Now, the sun and man are the most elevated elements in this world. For this world is composed of matter and form. The loftiest matter belongs to the sun, for it has refined substance. The loftiest form belongs to man, which is spiritual.

וְהָבֵּה הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאָדָם – הַיּוֹתֵר עֶלְיוֹן בָּעוֹלָם הַזָּה. כִּי הָעוֹלָם הַזָּה יֵשׁ בּוֹ חֹמֶר וְצוּרָה נִבְדֶּלֶת. וְהַחֹמֶר הַיּוֹתֵר עֶלְיוֹן – הוּא לַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, כִּי יֵשׁ לוֹ חֹמֶר זַדְּ. וּמַעְלַת הַצוּרָה הַנִּבְדֶּלֶת – לָאָדָם.

Therefore, these two are considered kings, because they are the highest among all beings in this world. Man is considered "form" relative to all beings—even to the sun.

וּלְכָךְ אֵלּוּ שְׁנַיִם הֵם נֶחְשָׁבִים מְלָכִים, מִצַּד שֶׁהֵם עֶלְיוֹנִים בַּנִּמְצָאִים בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. וְהָאָדָם נֶחְשָׁב צוּרָה אֶל הַנִּמְצָאִים כָּלָּם, אַף אֶל הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ.

It is known that sin comes from matter, not from form. Therefore, the negative commandments, which prohibit sin, correspond to the days of the sun—which has no deviation from order, despite being physical. This matter is further explained in Chapter 13—see there.

וְיָדוּעַ כִּי הַחֵטְא הוּא מִצַּד הַחֹמֶר, לֹא מִצַּד הַצוּרָה. וּלְפִיכָךְ מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה, שֶׁלֹא יַעֲשֶׂה חֵטְא – הוּא כְּנֶגֶד יְמוֹת הַחַמָּה, שֶׁאֵין בָּה וְצִיאָה מִן הַפַּדֶר, אַף כִּי הִיא בַּשְׁמִית. וְדָבָר זָה יִתְבָּאַר עוֹד בְּכָּרֶק י״ג עַיֵּן שָׁם. הִיא בַּשְׁמִית. וְדָבָר זָה יִתְבָּאַר עוֹד בְּכָּרֶק י״ג עַיֵּן שָׁם.

Therefore, women are obligated in the negative commandments just as men are (Kiddushin 29a), even though their level is more material. For the "do not do" mitzvos relate to materiality, and this is discussed further elsewhere.

וּלְפִיכָהְ כָּלֹ מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה מְחֻיָּיבוֹת בָּהֶן הַנָּשִׁים גַּם־כֵּן, כְּמוֹ הָאֲנָשִׁים (קִדּוּשִׁין כט, א), אַף כִּי מַדְרֵגָתָן חָמְרִית. כִּי מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה מִצַּד הַחֹמֶר גַּם־כֵּן, וּבִדָבַר זַה הָאֲרַכִנוּ בִּמַקוֹם אַחֵר.

But positive commandments that are time-bound—women are exempt from them (ibid.), because the mitzvah of "do" relates to form, and form is the perfection of man. His perfection is through the positive commandments.

וְאָלוּ מִצְוֹת צְשֵׂה שֶׁהַזְּמֵן גְּרָמֶן – פְּטוּרוֹת מֵהֶן הַנָּשִׁים (שָׁם), כִּי מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה הַמִּצְוָה הִיא מִצַּד הַצוּרָה, כִּי הַצוּרָה הִיא שָׁלֵמוּת הָאָדָם, וְהַשְׁלָמֶתוֹ הִיא מִצַּד מִצְוֹת עֵשֵׂה.

And you should have no doubt that the number of the solar days—365—relates to the sun exactly as it is. And likewise, the number of man's limbs—248—relates exactly to man as he is. There is no doubt in this.

וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לְךְּ סָפֵק, כִּי מִסְפַּר יְמוֹת הַחַמָּה שֶׁהֵם שְׁס״ה, מִתְיַחַסִים מִסְפַּר יָמֶיהָ אֶל הַחַמָּה כְּפִי מַה שֶׁהוּא. וְכֵן מַה שֶׁמִּסְפַּר אֵבְרֵי הָאָדָם הֵם רְמַ"ח, מִתְיַחֲסִים מִסְפַּר אֵבָרִיו שֶׁל אָדָם כְּפִי מַה שֶׁהוּא אָדָם, וִאֵּין בַּזָה סָפֵק

And we have already said: these two—the sun and man—are the most elevated in this world, and only they are called kings and rulers. The sun is a ruler and king who preserves order so it is not disrupted, as is the task of a king. And man is likewise a king who completes the people—thus man completes existence.

וּכְבָר אָמַרְנוּ, כִּי אֵלוּ שְׁנַיִם – הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאָדָם – הֵם בְּיוֹתֵר עֶלְיוֹן בָּעוֹלָם הַזָּה, וְהֵם בִּלְבֵד נָחְשָׁבִים מְלָכִים וּמוֹשְׁלִים בָּעוֹלָם; הַשָּׁמֶשׁ הוּא מוֹשֵל וּמֶלֶךְ וְשׁוֹמֵר הַפַּדֶר שָׁלֹא יִשְׁתַּנֶּה, כְּמוֹ שָׁהוּא עִנְיָן הַמֶּלֶךְ. וְהָאָדָם גַּם־כֵּן מֶלֶךְ, הַמַּשְׁלִים אֶת הָעָם, כָּךְ הָאָדָם מַשְׁלִים אֶת הַמָּציאוּת.

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However, what is even more exalted—"By it kings reign" (Mishlei 8:15)—is the Torah, which is even higher in the world, and by it kings rule.

אָמְנָם אֲשֶׁר הוּא עוֹד יוֹתֵר עָלְיוֹן, אֲשֶׁר: "בָּהּ מְלָכִים יִמְלְכוּ" (מִשְׁלֵי ח, ט״ו), הִיא הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁהִיא עוֹד יוֹתֵר עֵלְיוֹן בַּעוֹלַם, וּבָה מִלָכִים יִמִלֹכוּ.

Therefore, the Torah corresponds to these two types of kings: one, whose role is not to deviate from order, associated with the level of "do not do"; the other, whose role is to bring completion—associated with positive commandments.

וּלְפִיכָךְ הַתּוֹרָה מִתְיַחֶסֶת אֶל אֵלּוּ שְׁנֵי מִינֵי מְלָכִים, אֲשֶׁר הָאֶחָד עִנְיָנוֹ בִּלְתִּי וְצִיאָה מִן הַפַּדֶר בְּמַדְרֵגַת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה, וְהַשֵּׁנִי עִנְיַן הַשְׁלֵמוּת, שֶׁהוּא מַשְׁלִים הַמְצִיאוּת בְּמִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה.

For it is fitting that the Torah should contain both "do not do" commandments, which preserve the order so one does not transgress the law—like a king who preserves his people from disorder—and also positive commandments, which complete the people—like a king who brings perfection to his nation.

כִּי דָבָר זֶה רָאוּי לַתּוֹרָה שֶׁיּהְיוּ בָּהּ מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה, אֲשֶׁר שׁוֹמְרִים אֶת הַפַּדָר שֶׁלֹא יִהְיֶה עוֹבֵר הַחֹק, כְּמוֹ שֶׁרָאוּי לְמֶלֶךְ שֶׁהוּא שׁוֹמֵר הָעָם שֶׁלֹא יֵצֵא מִן הַפַּדֶר. וְעַם יֵשׁ בָּה מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה, הַמַּשְׁלִימִים אֶת הָעָם, כְּמוֹ הַמֵּלְךְ שֶׁהוּא הַשְּׁלַמִת הַעֲם

These two ideas correspond to matter and form. And the concept is as clear as the sun to one who understands, though we have elaborated on it elsewhere.

וְאֵלּוּ שְׁנֵי דְּבָרִים מִתְיַחֲסִים אֶל הַחֹמֶר וְהַצוּרָה. וְהַדְּבָרִים בְּרוּרִים כַּשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמִי שָׁמַעְבִּיוּ, וְהָאֱרַכְנוּ בָּמֵקוֹם אָחֵר בָּפֵרוּשׁ זָה.

The general principle: Hashem gave man the Torah so that he may attain the highest level in existence—either by maintaining the elevated state he was created in without falling into evil and deficiency, or by acquiring greater perfection through the positive commandments.

כְּלַל הַדָּבָר, כִּי הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרְדְּ נָתַן לָאָדָם הַתּוֹרָה, שְׁיִּהְיָה לָאָדָם הַמּוֹרָה, שְׁיִּהְיָה לָאָדָם הַמַּצְלָה הַיּוֹתֵר עֶלְיוֹנָה שֶׁהִיא בָּעוֹלָם; אָם שֻׁיִּהְיֶה בּוֹ הַמַּעֲלָה הַיּוֹתֵר עֶלְיוֹנָה שֶׁלֹא יָסוּר מִן אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא עָלָיו, אֶל הָרַע וְאֶל הַכְּחִיתוּת. וְאִם שֶׁיִּקְנֶה הַשֵּׁלמוּת הֵיּוֹתַר עֵלִיוֹן עַל־יִדִי מצְוֹת עֲשֹׁה.

And in the Midrash (Zohar I, 170b), it says: Hashem gave 248 positive commandments to Israel corresponding to the limbs of man, and 365 "do not do" commandments corresponding to the 365 sinews in the human body.

וּבַמִּדְרָשׁ (זֹהַר חֵלֶק א' קע, ב) אָמְרוּ, כִּי רְמַ"ח מִצְוֹת צְשֵׂה נָתַן ה' יִתְבָּרִדְּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל נָגֶד אֵבָרִיו שֶׁל אָדָם, וּשִׁסֵ"ה מִצִּוֹת לֹא תַּצִשִּׁה נֵגֵד שָׁסַ"ה גִּידִים שֵׁבַּאַדַם.

This Midrash supports what we have explained. The Midrash places everything within man, because he contains both the transcendent Divine element and the physical non-transcendent body.

וְגַם הַמִּדְרָשׁ הַגָּה פֵּרוּשׁוֹ כָּדְ. רַק הַמִּדְרָשׁ הַגָּה נוֹתֵן הַכֹּל בָּאָדָם. כִּי הָאָדָם הַגָּה יֵשׁ בּוֹ דָּבָר נִבְדָּל אֱלֹהִי, וְדָבָר שֶׁהוּא בִּלְתִּי נִבְדָּל, הוּא הַגוּף.

Therefore, He gave 248 positive commandments—which perfect man—corresponding to his limbs, because the limbs reflect his form, and that form is the transcendent image of God, as explained earlier.

וּלְפִיכָהְ אָמַר שֶׁנָּתַן רְמַ"ח מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה – הַמַּשְׁלִימִים אֶת הָאָדָם – נָגָד אֵבָרִיו שֶׁל אָדָם, כִּי הָאַבָרים הֵם צוּרָתוֹ, שֶׁצוּרָתוֹ צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים נִבְדָּל, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִתְּבָּאֵר לָמַעְלָה.

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And corresponding to this He gave 248 positive commandments that bring about man's perfection. And He gave him 365 "do not do" commandments corresponding to his sinews, which are not his form but sustain the body, ensuring continuity without deviation.

וּכְנֶגֶד זֶה נָתַן לוֹ רְמַ"ח מִצְוֹת צֲשֵׂה, הַמַּשְׁלִימִים הָאָדָם. וְנָתַן לוֹ שְׁסָ"ה מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּצְשֶׁה נֶגֶד גִּידִים שָׁלוֹ, שֶׁהַגִּידִים אֵינָם צוּרָתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם, אֲבָל הֵם .נוֹתְנִים קִיּוּם לְגוּף הָאָדָם, עַד שֶׁהוּא מְקַיֵּם מִבְּלִי שִׁנּוּי

Therefore, there are 365 negative commandments—to ensure man does not deviate physically from the proper order. This is not man's perfection, but rather sustains his bodily integrity.

וּלְפִיכֶךְ הֵם שְׁסָ"ה מִצְוֹת לֹא תַּצֲשֶׂה, שֶׁלֹא וֵצֵא הָאָדָם מִצֵּר גּוּפוֹ מִן הַסֵּדֶר הָרָאוּי, וְאֵין זָה שְׁלֵמוּת הָאָדָם.

And there is no contradiction between Rabbi Simlai's teaching and this Midrash. According to Rabbi Simlai, all existence is one entity, and the world is like matter to man, who is its form and perfection. Therefore, the Torah corresponds to both sun and man.

וְאֵין חָלּוּק בֵּין רַבִּי שִּׂמְלַאי וּבֵין זֶה הַמִּדְרָשׁ. רַק כִּי לְדַעַת רַבִּי שִׂמְלַאי כָּל הַמְּצִיאוּת נֶחְשָׁב אֶחָד, וְכָל הָעוֹלָם נֶחְשָׁב כְּמוֹ הַחֹמֶר אֶל אָדָם, וְהָאָדָם הוּא שְׁלֵמוּת וְצוּרַת כָּל הַמְצִיאוּת. וּלְפִיכָךְ הַתּוֹרָה הִיא נָגֶד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְהָאָדָם.

But according to the Midrash, man is a distinct transcendent entity, equal in weight to all else. Therefore, the 365 negative and 248 positive commandments correspond entirely to man.

וּלְדַעַת הַמִּדְרָשׁ הָאָדָם מְצִיאוּת נִבְדֶּל לְעַצְמוֹ, שֶׁקוּל נֶגֶד הַכֹּל. וּלְכָךְ שָׁסָ"ה "לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה" וּרְמַ"ח "עֲשֵׂה", הַכֹּל נֵגֶד הָאַדָם.

And it is fitting to deeply contemplate these ideas, for they are very great matters. It is impossible to write more, for they are very deep. Yet there is no doubt in them for one who knows how to understand words of truth and uprightness. They are further explained elsewhere.

ְּוָרָאוּי לְהָבִין דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ, שֶׁהֵם דְּבָרִים גְּדוֹלִים מְאֹד, כִּי אִי אֶפְשֶׁר לְכְתֹּב יוֹתֵר, וְעִם שֶׁהֵם יוֹתֵר עֲמֻקִּים.
אֲבָל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלּוּ אֵין סָפֵק בָּהֶם לְמִי שֶׁיֵדַע לְהָבִין
דְּבְרִי אֱמֶת וְישֶׁר. וְהִתְּבָּאֲרוּ עוֹד בְּמָקוֹם אַחֵר, וְהַכּּלֹ
שֹׁרָשׁ אֶחָד אֱמֶת וְגָזַע צֶדֶק, יוֹצֵא מִפַּרְדֵּם הַחָּכְמָה.
וַעוֹד יִתְבַּאר

#### **NOTE Summary**

The discourse begins by explaining why the Torah comprises 365 *lo sa'aseh* (prohibitive commandments) and 248 *aseh* (positive commandments), corresponding respectively to the sinews and limbs of the human body. Drawing from both Midrash and philosophical frameworks, the Maharal presents man as the microcosm of all creation—so much so that the totality of mitzvos aligns with his very structure.

The Torah, being the most exalted form of wisdom—"בה מלכים ימלכו"—contains within it both the preservation of cosmic order (through the prohibitions) and the advancement of perfection (through the positive actions). Negative commandments represent guarding form—ensuring man does not deviate from his intended design. Positive commandments are the tools of completion—they *perfect* man by aligning his actions with his divine purpose.

Through the metaphor of kingship, the Maharal compares these mitzvos to the two roles of a king: the one who guards societal order and prevents chaos (parallel to *lo sa'aseh*), and the one who actively develops and enriches the nation (parallel to *aseh*). Torah, as the supreme wisdom, must contain both.

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He then goes deeper, explaining that limbs (eivarim) represent the essential *form* (tzurah) of man—his divine image—while sinews (gidin) support the function and structure. Therefore, the *aseh* mitzvos correspond to limbs, actively revealing divine form, while *lo sa'aseh* relate to sinews, guarding the body from deformity or misdirection.

This dual system also reflects two views: one, that man is the central axis of all reality (R. Simlai), and two, that man is a distinct spiritual being balanced against all creation (Zoharic Midrash). Either way, Torah exists entirely for the sake of man's completion—both preserving his essence and elevating it beyond nature. The Maharal concludes that this integrated system of Torah and man—limb and mitzvah, form and function—is unified in a single source of truth, rooted in divine wisdom, and meant to be unlocked by those who seek its depth.

#### **Practical Takeaway**

You are not just *observing* mitzvos—you *are* the mitzvah. Every positive action you do corresponds to a divine channel of light within you; every restraint you exercise preserves your spiritual design. See yourself as a living embodiment of Torah. Approach each mitzvah not just as a command, but as a sculptor's touch—chiseling you into a reflection of the Divine. And just like a king both protects and uplifts his people, so too your service of Hashem must involve both holding the line and pushing the world forward.

#### **Chassidic Story**

The Maharal once hosted a delegation of noblemen and scholars at his home. One of them mockingly asked, "Rabbi, your people claim that Torah was given by God—but why does your law care about things so minute: the placement of fringes, the cut of a parchment, the direction of a mezuzah? Surely God has greater things to attend to!"

The Maharal gently smiled. He walked over to a cabinet and brought out a royal seal—an antique signet that once belonged to Emperor Maximilian. He held it up and said: "This seal," he explained, "is nothing but a piece of wax, impressed by a stamp. But if the tiniest line of that impression is flawed—even a scratch—the whole document becomes invalid in the eyes of your emperor. Why? Because in that small mark lies the whole authority of the crown."

He continued, "So it is with Torah. These mitzvos, each detail, are the letters of the seal of the King of Kings. Alter them, and the world loses its shape. Fulfill them, and man himself becomes the parchment upon which divine wisdom is written."

(Source: *Otzar HaMaharal*, story attributed by tradition and cited in Rabbi Shlomo Fisher's *Derashos Beis Yishai*, p. 61) **END NOTE**]