Following Hashem’s promise not to destroy the Jewish people, after the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe requested that Hashem make known to him the qualities of Divine mercy. In response Hashem showed Moshe a prophetic vision, in which He was wrapped in a tallis as a shaliach tzibbur while reciting the י"ג מדות (Rosh Hashanah 17b). Hashem informed Moshe that in the future whenever the Jewish people sin, they should perform the י"ג מדות and He will forgive them.

In The Gemarah cited above it says כל זמן שישראל חוטאין יעשו לפני כסדר הזה ואני מוחל להם Any time that Yisroel sins, let them perform before me this procedure and i will forgive them.

Hashem was very precise when establishing the condition of this promise. Hashem did not say let them “recite” but rather let them “perform!!!”

The moshol is given about the owner of a factory who had to go away on a business trip. He decided to ask his manager to take control while he would be away. The owner wrote down a detailed list of all the tasks that needed doing while he would be away thus feeling confident that, upon his return, the company would still be able to run despite his absence.

Upon the owner’s return, he was horrified to discover that the factory was in total chaos. He immediately summoned his manager and demanded an explanation as to why the factory was in this mess. The manager looked puzzled and answered innocently “I read your list every day I don’t know how this mess could have happened”. The owner retorted “You are meant to perform the list not just to read it!!”

In order to activate Hashem’s mercy we need to perform these י"ג מדות. In our relationship with our fellow man, we must conduct ourselves in a degree of mercy worthy of emulating Hashem.

There are a variety of opinions as to the precise identification of these attributes, this pamphlet has followed the order of the Sefer T omer Devorah, (As based on Michah) authored by R’ Moshe Cordovero, who shows us in great detail how man can follow the example set by Hashem in each of these י"ג מדות. The י"ג медות listed by Micha parallel the original set written down by Moshe Rabbeinu and loosely correspond to them.

If we try to practice these attributes then we should all be Zoche to all the divine mercy which is stored up in Hashem’s treasure house of kindness and none of our Tefilos should go unanswered.

The 13 MIDDOS EMULATING Hashem

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JUST AS HASHEM endures human behaviour that is insolent and insulting, and yet gives the person all his needs, SO WE MUST be patient even with people who are unfriendly towards us.

JUST AS HASHEM refuses to allow the destructive angels to harm those who have sinned, SO WE MUST be tolerant and not try to take revenge on those who have hurt us.

JUST AS HASHEM cleanses the sinner, although Hashem had no part in his sin, SO WE MUST look to correct wrongs and damage even if caused by other people.

JUST AS HASHEM does not want to punish his beloved Yid, for He is close to them, and this would be like punishing Himself, SO WE MUST love our fellow Jew and view him as an extension of ourselves.

JUST AS HASHEM does not retain His anger eternally although it would be within His rights to do, SO WE MUST keep calm and not get angry, even if we are in the right.

JUST AS HASHEM delights in the good aspects of man, even when there are many negative areas in his behaviour, SO WE MUST look for the good in each person even if he hurts and provokes you.

JUST AS HASHEM loves the repentant as if he has never sinned, SO WE MUST help people make amends by showing them kindness and encouragement.

JUST AS HASHEM rewards for mitzvos and does not cancel them out against aveiros, SO WE MUST try to remember the good deeds that were done to us and forget the bad.

JUST AS HASHEM separates the evil from Klal Yisroel and casts it faraway to the depths, SO WE MUST realize if we see a person suffering, that the sufferer is a worthwhile person being cleansed by Hashem.

JUST AS HASHEM acts in total faith and honesty to every person SO WE MUST be true and fair in all dealings with our neighbours.

JUST AS HASHEM acts with extra kindness to the righteous, SO WE MUST be even more fair and patient when dealing with the learned and pious people.

JUST AS HASHEM helps the un-deserving because He promised our forefathers that he would care for their descendants, SO WE MUST remember when dealing with bad people that they are still children of the Avos.

JUST AS HASHEM remembers the good a person once did, even if currently he has not done anything praiseworthy, SO WE MUST always consider that even the greatest sinner might have previously done good.