

P A R T N I N E

BUILDING

*A Sanctuary
In The Heart*

INTENDED FOR ADVANCE SCHOLARS

EXPERIENCING EMUNAH
BASED ON TEMIMUS

UNEDITED SPECIAL INTERNET EDITION

Editor’s Preface	1
Author’s Introduction	3
01 <i>Emunah</i> – The Power of Transcendence	6
02 } We Are Never Disconnected From Hashem	14
03 The Purpose of Our Doubts	23
04 Answering the Contradictions	29
05 Connecting To Moshiach (abridged)	31
06 Nullifying The Intellect	36
07 } The Source of Crying	40
08 The Torah of Moshe and the Torah of Moshiach [abridged]	48
09 The Deepest Level of <i>Emunah</i> (ABRIDGED)	54
10 Waiting for Moshiach (abridged)	59
11 The Innermost Point of Life [Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh: “Final Chapter”]	60

Building a Sanctuary in the Heart | Part Nine

Our primary task in life is to internalize and observe the practical and intellectual boundaries set by the Torah, known in kabbalah as the general “vessel.” Once a person has attained a deep commitment to *halachah* and has toiled greatly in Torah, he may begin to experience the “light,” which is the level of *emunah* based on *temimus*, a degree of faith that reaches beyond all boundaries, enabling a person to cleave to Hashem, the Infinite, and see beyond all contradictions in life. The essays in this work are meant for advanced scholars on this level, who are able to live with the “light” without sacrificing their commitment to the truths of the “vessel.”

Editor's Preface

The ninth and final volume of Bilvavi is the deepest in the series. In this volume, the Rav is helping us prepare us for *Moshiach* – by explaining to us how we can reach deep *emunah*.

Concepts such as *ayin*, *Ain Od Milvado*, *bittul*, and *temimus* are frequently occurring words in this sefer. If you are familiar with these concepts from the author's previous sefarim, then you will be able to easily understand this sefer. If you are not familiar with these concepts, then it is recommended to first learn Bilvavi Volumes 7 and 8.

This sefer is written on a very high level, and it deep reading. It cannot be understood if it is read quickly – it requires steady and slow reading so that these concepts can be absorbed. Although this is a deep sefer, it is not an intellectual kind of sefer, as the author states in the introduction. It can only be understood when you use a different kind of understanding, which the author calls “heart understanding” – *avanta d'liba*.

But what is even more important is what the author writes in the introduction, that this sefer must not be learned by anyone who isn't careful in keeping *Halacha*.

Hopefully, with the attempted English translation of this sefer, those who learn the Rav's words in this sefer will gain a greater and deeper sense of what is *emunah*, so that we can prepare for the times of *Moshiach*, and to access the state of *Mashiach* in our own souls – and to reach the ultimate purpose of it all, which is: *Ain Od Milvado*,

“There is nothing besides for Hashem”!

Author's Introduction

In Creation, everything is comprised of two components – a spiritual light, and the container that holds it together to maintain it.

The most basic “container” we ever find is the keeping of *halachah* (Torah law), which will help us maintain any of the spiritual revelations we come across. If we are careful when it comes to keeping *halachah*, only then will we be able to gain from all that spirituality can give us.

Therefore, without being careful in *halachah*, human growth and improvement will be impossible to really be maintained in the person. The spirituality won't have any effect on the person, since he has nothing to contain the light he is receiving, for he isn't keeping to the *halachah* and thus missing the basis to anything.

It is therefore apparent that the reader of this sefer be aware, that keeping to *halachah* is of utmost priority. If not, then *chas v'shalom* (G-d forbid) this sefer will only be a source of a person's downfall, and he will come to make grave errors in the understanding of this material. He will just misinterpret the information here.

Only someone who is exacting to keep to *halachah* can gain from this sefer. We have unfortunately seen many people who haven't been careful with this, and they made the mistake of involving themselves with this kind of material, which led them to make terrible mistakes in life. Therefore we must emphasize and repeat here that only by keeping exactly to all of *halachah* will we have the basic prerequisite to gain from any of the matters discussed in this sefer.

There is a rule that any matter that has to do with serving Hashem is “*rotzoh v'shov*”, “running and returning.” First, we progress, then we have to pull away a little, and then we once again repeat the cycle. The more we progress – *rotzoh* - the more we need to strengthen our power of containing our growth, which is *shov*. Therefore we need that strong container, which is the adherence to *halachah*. Without this *chas v'shalom*, there will be nothing to contain and maintain our spiritual progress. It would be just be the “*rotzoh*” part without the “*shov*” part, and there will be nothing but emptiness. The spirituality won't be maintained, because there will be *ohr* with no *kli* to hold it.

The matters in this sefer are very subtle, and not everyone needs to delve into this. If someone doesn't need this sefer, learning this sefer can actually harm his soul. Therefore, before one learns this sefer, he should think it over if he indeed should learn such a sefer like this. It is difficult to know this, and it cannot be determined by regular logic, so one should entreat Hashem that he be guided in the right direction – that he should learn the part of Torah which is meant for him to learn.

A large part of this sefer revolves around the meaning of what is written, “*Ain Od Milvado*” – There is nothing besides for Hashem.” Our Rabbis taught many meanings of the depth behind this matter, and their words are all holy and true. But if someone is more internal, he must strive to know where each interpretation of the matter belongs. After that, a person can figure out which interpretation applies to his own soul root (which is possible to know, as the *sefarim hakedoshim* reveal), and then he can connect to that meaning.

(There is an exception to this rule, and that is if one has *mesirus nefesh* (altruism for G-d); with *mesirus nefesh*, one can penetrate into the deepest part of the soul, which is the point in the soul that was unaffected by the sin of Adam.

If this is the case, one can then connect to deeper meanings of *Ain Od Milvado* that are really above his current soul level.)

When a person delves into concepts that are above his current soul level's comprehension, he won't really understand the concepts, because it's above his comprehension. In trying to understand, the person is apt to degrade the high spiritual light and lower it to his understanding, and then he will misinterpret whatever he's learning in the process. He will also come to disagree with what he's learning, erroneously thinking that the matters don't make sense.

The truth is that this mistake has actually been the cause for many a downfall throughout the generations: learning about things that are above one's current level of understanding. The facts only become misinterpreted. (This was the depth behind the argument behind the sin of the brothers, who accused Yosef wrongly - because they did not interpret Yosef's actions correctly, they came to accuse him unjustly).

An internal kind of person understands that there are many different ways to understand something – as Chazal say, “All opinions are different” – and thus he understands that each soul can have a different understanding of something. Each way of understanding has its proper place.

Throughout this sefer, the world of *emunah* is explained – a kind of *emunah* which is above intellect. Yet, this doesn't mean that we should skip the intellectual stage. We need to intellectualize and understand things with our human comprehension – but it is just that after that, we need to ascend beyond our intellect and enter into the *emunah* above it.

This is written in *sefer Sheairis Yisrael*¹: “One who wants to enter the service of Hashem...can approach this reflecting the level of a Torah scholar, who serves Hashem with his comprehension and understanding; and to reflect on the greatness of Hashem with great concentration...after this, he must come to the true service, to understand that he really cannot understand. This means that he must realize that any matter cannot ever be known. It is like the expression, “The purpose of knowledge is to realize that we don't know anything”....

“We must definitely seek to know things, for it is written, “*Know the G-d of your father.*” However, the main thing is that we not remain with just knowledge. The main thing is that after we know things, we should then come to the faith that is above intellect, as it is written, “*And I am a fool, who does not know anything.*” After we know things, we must come to feel like we don't know anything...”

In the words of the above sefer, it is apparent that we must, initially, seek to understand things using our human intellect. In fact, it is only after we seek to understand things intellectually that we can come to the higher understanding, which is the perspective of the “faith above intellect” (*emunah*).

In fact, the depth of all our *avodah* is three stages: first we need plain, simple *emunah*; then we need to understand things intellectually, and then we need to enter a deeper kind of *emunah* that is above our intellectual understanding.

Another way of describing this is that there are three phases of Creation which we all go through: first there is *Olamos* (“Worlds” – the world we live on), then *Neshamos* (“Souls” – deepening our existence by entering our soul), and finally, *Elokus* (“Godliness” – entering a state in which we are integrated with Hashem). *Olamos* is essentially our plain *emunah*, *Neshamos* is our intellectual understanding, and *Elokus* is when we reach deeper *emunah* that is above our intellectual understanding.

¹ *shaar hiskashrus*: 5: 2

The words of the above-quoted sefer have revealed to us that there is a concept of deeper *emunah*, a kind of *emunah* that is above all intellectual comprehension. Below that deep *emunah* is our intellectual understanding, which is the path we use to eventually ascend our intellect. Our intellectual comprehension (*Neshamos*), is essentially the bridge in between *Olamos* (this current world of 6,000 years) and *Elokus*, the light of the World-to-Come, which will start in the year 7,000. Therefore, one has to be aware that if he's trying to understand matters of deep *emunah* using his intellectual understanding, he's mistaken, because the regular intellect cannot be used to understand the deep understanding of *emunah* that is above intellect.

Most of this sefer is discussing the deep *emunah* which is beyond intellectual understanding. Therefore, one who learns this sefer should be aware that he cannot use his regular intellect to understand it, and if he tries to, he will fail.

Thus, this *sefer* is only meant for one who is heavily dedicated to learning Torah and exerts himself in it. Only with exertion in learning Torah can one penetrate into his soul and reveal the light of deep *emunah* that is above all intellect.

01 | *Emunah* – *The Power of Transcendence*

The Way To Get to Hashem Is Through “Temimus\Earnestness”²

The goal here is clear: we are searching for the Creator!

However, we need to know what the tools are to find Him.

We can compare this to someone who’s looking for a lost object. If he wants to find it, he will have to locate it and figure out how to go about his search. The same is true of our search to find the Creator – we must know how to search for Him, the tools we will need for this.

The human soul is comprised of many parts. In the deepest layer of the soul is our innermost point. What is that innermost point? It is revealed by Chazal³: “Hashem, the Torah, and the Jewish people are one.” In other words, if we want to get to the Oneness of Hashem, it’s a three-fold process.

What is that three-fold power which will help us arrive at the Oneness of Hashem? It is the *possuk*, “*You shall be earnest with Hashem your G-d.*”

The more “earnest” a person in his relationship with Hashem – the more “*temimus*” he has – the more he is “with” Hashem. Without *temimus*, a person is *chas v’shalom* without Hashem.

The Jewish people are called “Yisrael” – the other name of Yaakov Avinu, who personified *temimus*, as Yaakov Avinu is called *ish tam*, a “wholesome man.” The Torah is also called “*Torah Temimah*” – a “wholesome Torah.” Thus, *temimus* encompasses everything.

Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people are all intertwined as one – only through *temimus*.

What exactly is *temimus*? It’s a very deep matter. Hashem looked into the Torah to create it, and if Torah is a “*Torah temimah*”, then it must be that *temimus* is a very deep matter. Hashem looked into the Torah with *temimus*, and He created the world with *temimus*. Thus, the inner point of just about anything is always its *temimus*, so *temimus* surrounds all of Creation and encompasses it.

Since this is so, if we want to arrive at the root of any matter – and to bond with Hashem from the root understanding of a matter – we must think into its *temimus*. Without this point, we are missing the root of Torah as well as the root of our soul, and then there will be no complete bond with Hashem.

Let us think about what *temimus* is, and how we can get to it.

First Learn Simply, Then Analyze

² The literal translation of *temimus* is “simplicity” or “wholeheartedness” or “earnestness”, but as we progress throughout this chapter, we will see that “simplicity” is actually a very deep matter.

³ Zohar, *parshas Achrei Mos*, 73a.

Here is the simple definition of *temimus*.

Chazal⁴ teach us a fundamental principle: “A person should first learn (*ligmar*), and after that he should explain it (*lisbar*).” Simply, this means that a person first has to learn Torah on a basic level, because first he has to gather together the facts, and only after this can one delve into the knowledge its depth and logic.

Really, it’s much more than that. *Ligmar*, besides for learning, can also mean to “complete”. In other words, first a person needs to be complete and wholesome – he needs to accept Torah with a *temimus*. Only after that can a person come to the stage of *lisbar*.

If a person begins with *lisbar*, he jumps to the understanding of Torah without ever accepting it with *temimus*. He’s into the logic and intellectual analysis contained in Torah, but that’s it....

The way we need to bond with Torah is through *ligmar*. We will then learn it with *temimus*, as an automatic result. After learning Torah with *temimus*, we can then come to understand its depth. We have to nurse our knowledge in Torah mainly from using our *temimus*, and as a result we can then truly understand it.

Understandably, this is a deep matter. But as we begin to conceptualize this, we must all know that we cannot deeply reflect into a matter as soon as we hear it. It is even more detrimental when we immediately start to question a matter we have just begun to hear about.

Our Temimus Is Our Point of “Ayin”

The depth of these words is as follows.

By the giving of the Torah, it is written, “*for those who are here with us today...and for those who are not here with us today.*” Every soul stood at Sinai, as the Sages reveal. So who are those people who were not at Sinai? It doesn’t mean in the simple sense that they were not there. The ones who were there were those who had a soul with a body, while those who “weren’t here” were those who had just their souls, with no vestige of body. They had reached *Ayin* – the point of “nothingness”, complete spirituality, which is the state of soul without a body.

In other words, the Torah is revealed to us on two different levels. Torah is either accessible to our physical bodies, via the power of our mind; [this is the basic kind of Torah which we are familiar with; the Torah is clothed by the intellectual mind, which acts as a garment to contain it]. But there is another manifestation of Torah, which is not accessed through the mind. This is hinted to in the second part of the possuk, “*For those who are not here with us today.*”

The basic understanding of Torah is available to those who use their *daas* (mind) to understand it. But there are other souls who can receive an understanding of the Torah that goes above human *daas*. These souls are essentially the point of “*ayin*” that is in a person.

What does this mean? It means that the Torah is not understood completely by someone who is entirely “here” on this earth. It is understood on a complete level only when a person reveals his deep aspect of “not here” on this earth – the point of *ayin*, nothingness. *Ayin* is essentially accessed by someone who hears not just the intellect of the Torah’s wisdom, but someone who hears the *temimus* earnestness that is contained in the Torah. (*Temimus* is also called “*me’ohr sheboh*” – the “illumination” contained in the Torah).

⁴ *Shabbos 63a*

Temimus: The Heart's Understanding

The *chochmah* of the Torah – its wisdom – is something which is revealed to the human intellect. But the *temimus* of the Torah – the earnestness contained in it – is something that cannot be explained intellectually. *Temimus* is *avanta d'liba*, the “understanding of the heart”.⁵

Temimus is to understand that all of the *chochmah* which we learn in the Torah is not just for the sake of knowing the Torah's vast wisdom. It is so that we can receive a bond with Hashem. Only through *temimus* can we attain the true bond with Hashem. Thus, the entire purpose of the Torah's wisdom is so that one should come to reveal his *temimus* through learning it.

More than that, there is nothing else that we need!

Eemunah – The Only Way To Connect To Hashem's Endlessness

How can a person, who is human and so limited, connect to Hashem, Who is endless? It doesn't make any sense. The answer is that indeed, it is not logical! It is something that can we attain only through the power of *emunah* – to believe that we can have a connection with Hashem.

This is really the secret of *temimus*, and it the secret to *emunah*. It is for a person to know, “I can only understand things as much as my mind allows me to understand. But I cannot reach closeness to Hashem through my own understanding. The only way I can reach connection with Hashem is when I **believe** that I can; with ***emunah***.”

As long as a person tries to connect to Hashem only on an intellectual level, his *emunah* isn't complete. What our soul needs is *temimus* – to earnestly believe, even if we can't understand how, that we can have a bond with Hashem. Of course, our intellect also has a role, but the root power which our soul uses to connect with Hashem is only through ***simply believing*** that we can do so. That's *temimus*: an earnest belief, even when we can't understand how it works.

As long as a person never arrives at this pure *emunah* (*temimus*), he will be bound to the limits of time – the body, and its limits. If he remains at that understanding, then even when he goes to *Olam HaBa*, his *Olam HaBa* will be limited, and it will not be the endless connection that one can have with Hashem. He has formed a limited perception of *Olam HaBa*, and that is the kind of *Olam HaBa* he will find when he gets there...

There is only one thing that can connect us to the endlessness of Hashem is when we use our power of simple, pure *emunah*. It is when a person believes that Hashem is endless, and therefore, our belief in Hashem is endless. This is what it means to believe in the *Ein Sof*, in the endlessness, of Hashem. *Eemunah* is the only power we can use to connect ourselves with the Creator.

Chazal⁶ state that the “illumination contained in the Torah” (*me'ohr sheboh*) is able to return people to good.” This is referring to the inner point of the Torah, the “*Torah of Hashem is perfect, it settles the soul*” – the point of *temimus* contained in the Torah. As long as a person isn't aware of the *temimus* in Torah, he is only aware of the intellectual wisdom of Torah, and he won't really bond with Hashem through learning the Torah. He might even receive all kinds of Heavenly sustenance due to the merit of his learning, but he won't have an actual **connection** with Hashem through his learning.

⁵ To access our power of “heart understanding”, see *Getting To Know Your Inner World, Chapter 5: The Intellect and the Heart*.

⁶ *Eichah Rabbah, Pesichta 2*

It is written⁷, “*And wisdom (chochmah) is found in nothingness (ayin).*” The source of all *chochmah*\wisdom is *ayin*\nothingness, which is the same thing as *temimus**emunah*. Without *ayin* – without *temimus* – our *chochmah* won’t be coming from a true source.

This power – *ayin**temimus**emunah* – is hidden deep in the Torah. The *sefer Meor Einayim* writes in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that this power is rarely accessed by anyone, but in the later generations, as we draw closer to the “light of *Moshiach*”, the spiritual light is more revealed, and therefore our souls are able to reach it more easily than in previous generations.

Emunah – The Bridge That Connects Us To Hashem

This point of the soul – *ayin**temimus**emunah* – is very deep, and it very hard to understand. This is because we are limited Creations; the fact that we can believe in our ability to connect ourselves with the sphere of the unlimited is something that is totally beyond our comprehension.

Our *emunah* and our senses are two contradictory forces. Our senses can only perceive the limited, while our *emunah* can take us beyond the limits of our understanding.

This deep point (*temimus*) exists within every Jew’s soul, but it is usually hidden away. There is no soul in the Jewish people which does not contain the ability of *temimus* [unless he is from the Erev Rav...]. It is an extremely subtle power in the soul.

The more *temimus* that one reveals from within himself, the greater of a connection he will have with Hashem. A person has to allow his point of *temimus* to open up and expand.

Our highest sense is our ability of *daas*. Our *emunah*, however, can show us matters that are beyond our *daas*. Our *emunah* can show us the inner layer to reality – the viewpoint of *Ayin*. Our *daas* tells us that are limits, while our *emunah* tells us that there are no limits. Our *daas* tells us that we have an ego, while our *emunah* tells us “*Ain Od Milvado*” – there is nothing to our existence other than Hashem.

Our *emunah* is the bridge, so to speak, between Hashem and creations. It is a sublime power that transcends our human abilities. *Emunah* can show us that there are things that are beyond human logic.

There Is Nothing Holding You Back From Getting Close To Hashem

If we want to break the barriers between us and Hashem, we need to *emunah* – which is *temimus*. When we have the *emunah* through our *temimus*, we will be able to see that there are really **no barriers** whatsoever between us and Hashem.

The Baal Shem Tov gave a parable to explain this. Once there was a king who wanted to see how much his son loves him. He erected many walls and barriers in front of the palace which would make it harder for the prince to enter. The prince tried getting through the obstacles in his path, but he saw that it was impossible. He realized that it would take a lifetime to get by all the barriers and see his father again.

⁷ *Iyov* 28:12

The prince sat and thought, “What does my father, the king, want from me? Does he really want to distance me from the palace? How could that be?! I’m his son! He’s my father! So why is he making it so hard for me to get to him? It must be that he wants me to somehow get by all these barriers, but this is impossible. It will take me a lifetime until I get by all these obstacles.”

Then, the Baal Shem Tov concludes: “The prince comes to the conclusion that it’s impossible that his father has put up all these walls to distance him. The prince concludes: It must be that there are no barriers. It’s all in my imagination!”

These are deep words.

If a person thinks about it, from a logical perspective it’s impossible to get to Hashem. After all, it takes 500 years just to reach Heaven, and even then, it takes another 500 years to get to each of the angels (See *Chagigah 15a*). Not only does it seem difficult to get to Hashem, it seems impossible.

Of course, people answer to this that we can get to Hashem when we have *siyata d’shmaya* (Heavenly assistance) and that “Hashem will help.” But there is a lot more to it than this.

Our *avodah* is to **reveal** the fact that there is **nothing** getting in the way between us and Hashem. There are no barriers!

How do we come to this realization? Only through our *emunah*. We have to **believe** that we can get to Hashem and be close with Him, even though it doesn’t seem logically that it can happen.

It’s not simply that we have to “break” the barriers between us and Hashem; it’s that there are no barriers at all! Such a deep understanding can only be reached when we have *emunah* in this.

Our senses tell us otherwise. Our senses are telling us that it’s impossible to go beyond our limits and connect to endlessness. But our *emunah* tells us that we can go above our limits.

As long as we feel like we have to **sense** matters having to do with *emunah*, our *emunah* isn’t true *emunah*. It is still bound to the senses. Only when we start to **believe** – *without* having to sense things – do we access our true power of *emunah*, which can take us beyond all known limits.

Of course, we also need to have the basic level of *emunah*, which is to believe that there is a Creator, and to believe in Divine Providence. But there is another aspect of *emunah* which we also need, and that is to believe in the fact that Hashem is unlimited; this is the essence of the Creator – He is unlimited.

How can a person know if he has true *emunah*? Since we have said that our senses contradict our *emunah*, then as long as we think that we sense matters of *emunah*, it shows that we haven’t yet accessed the real *emunah*. *Emunah* is reached precisely when you can’t sense it, and yet you *still* believe in the spiritual realities which cannot be sensed.

“Open for Me an opening the size of a needle”

Here we come to the following important point that we should emphasize.

We are not coming here (in this sefer) to transform a person into a being that is entirely *emunah*. It is not possible to do so, because we are, after all, just human beings, who are limited. Rather, our *avodah* is as Chazal say [Hashem says:] “Open me for an opening the size of a needle.” In other words, a person just has to open up one

point in his soul – *emunah* – and believe in the endlessness of Hashem. As long as a person hasn't opened up this point from within himself, he will not have a true bond with Hashem.

Let us explain this matter a bit more. Before, we mentioned that in learning Torah, there are two stages: *ligmar* (learning) and *lisbar* (analyzing one's learning in-depth). Ever since the sin of Adam, we initially first seek to understand through *lisbar*: we immediately try to understand things well. Sometimes we do this because we really want to understand what we learn, and sometimes we do it just to argue with others. In either case, our initial reaction is always to first seek to understand what we learn.

But if we would access the power of *ligmar* first, we would have the “opening the size of a needle” which would break all the barriers to our understanding! This is essentially when we utilize our *emunah*. When we have true *emunah*, we connect to Hashem, who can penetrate all our obstacles for us.

Connecting To Hashem's Reality, Through Emunah

How indeed can we reach true *emunah*? Is it accomplished through deeply reflecting about it?

As much as we reflect about it with our minds, we won't get to it. Our mind alone, which is limited, will not be able to connect us to the unlimited. Of course, we cannot say that it will be totally pointless when we reflect deeply about *emunah*, but we definitely will not arrive at *emunah* if all we do is reflect. *Emunah* is simple, and it isn't an intellectual matter; intellectualizing it as much as we can will not help us arrive at simple *emunah*.

Hashem existed before the world, and He continues to exist after He created the world. We usually only think about the fact that He is the Creator in the sense that He's still around, after He created the world; do we ever think about the fact that He was around ***before*** Creation?

Of course, no one knows what went on before Creation. We aren't allowed to think about it, as the *Gemara* warns. No one will ever know, even if he tries to find out. And the truth is that we don't have to know what went on before Creation. We aren't supposed to be looking for such information; it is of no use to us. The only thing we have to know concerning this is what *didn't* go on then.

“*You existed before the world was created.*” What does this mean? It means that Hashem is not only in the present, but He was there in the past, and He will be there in the future; these realities of Before Creation and After Creation are eternal realities which we can connect to.

Therefore, if a person thinks that Hashem is only found in the present, and He isn't aware that He can connect to Hashem's past and future, then the kind of connection he is seeking with Hashem will be an incomplete one. Why? Because Hashem's reality is above the present moment of Creation. The reality of Hashem is both in before Creation and after Creation. Hashem is *above* Creation – not just *within* it. A person has to connect to this “Before Creation” aspect of Hashem, not just the “After Creation” aspect of Hashem.

However, *chas v'shalom* should one take this power to an extreme and only seek a connection to the Before Creation state. What is meant here is that a person should simply open up this point in his soul – “a small opening, the size of a needle” – in which he connects to the state of Before Creation, to the endlessness of Hashem.

How does a person connect to the Before Creation state in his relationship with Hashem? The only way is through *emunah*!

True, we have no comprehension of the concept of Before Creation. But that is precisely why we need to make use of our *emunah*. If we try to use our human comprehension, our *daas*, we will never get there.

Thus, if a person wants a connection with Hashem, he has to come to the understanding that he needs to be connected with Hashem *even if there wouldn't be a world*. We are not referring to this physical world. Even if there would be no such thing as all the spiritual realms – we still have to connect with Hashem.

This is the meaning of “Before Creation.” Before Creation isn't just referring to before this physical world; it is referring to before all the creations of all the spiritual realms, that Hashem existed before.

Our *avodah* is to feel that Hashem's existence was always there. In this way, we connect to the state of Before Creation – “*You existed before the world was created.*” When Chazal revealed that Hashem has been around before the world was created, the deeper implication of this is that we are able to connect to the state of Before Creation.

This is a very, very deep point. Let us try to explain it more.

Believing That We Can Always Be Connected to Hashem

We are not saying that because of the concept of *emunah*, we therefore do not have any limits, and that there is no such thing as being concealed from the reality of Hashem. Rather, we are saying: it doesn't matter! It doesn't matter if you are sleeping or awake, or whatever you are doing; once you have *emunah* that you can have a connection with Hashem in any situation, you will.

How, exactly, does this work?

It is because a person has a choice in what perspective he will have in his life towards his relationship with Hashem. If a person thinks that he has things holding him back from being close to Hashem, and it is just that he has to break those barriers – then he will not succeed in forming a true bond with Hashem. Or, he can take a higher path in life: that there *are no barriers* at all holding him back from reaching Hashem, that he is able to always be connected to Hashem, no matter the time or situation.

Does a person believe that he can be close to Hashem even as he's sleeping? If the answer is “Yes”, then he will indeed receive a connection with Hashem even as he sleeps! When a person is eating, does he think that it's impossible to be close to Hashem as he eats? If he answers “No”, then his eating will indeed prevent him from being close to Hashem as he eats. But if he believes that there are no barriers between him and Hashem, then he will transcend his limits and connect to the unlimited. He will be able to connect to Hashem even as he eats.

Of course, one should not *chas v'shalom* misuse this concept and take it to an extreme, doing pointless things and believing that those things will somehow bring him closer to Hashem. We are only referring to the actions in life which we have to take care of. We must never abandon the Torah, in any way – *chas v'shalom!* Without keeping to the Torah, it is impossible for a person to bond with Hashem. That's clear and simple. Only by keeping to the boundaries of the Torah is it possible for us to believe that we can always connect to Hashem.

To give a practical example of the concept, when a person goes to sleep, he can believe, with simple *emunah*, the following: “Who created sleep? Hashem. When I sleep, is there still a Creator? Of course.” In this way, a person is able to bond with Hashem even through his sleep.

When a person goes through life and serving the Creator with the lower perspective, that there are barriers that hold him back from Hashem which he needs to overcome – then he will think that he can only be close to Hashem when his mind is working properly, as opposed to when he sleeps.

Emunah Will Help You Only If You Keep the Torah's Mitzvos

Thus, if one wants to have a true bond with Hashem, he has to first understand that he has two paths in front of him, a lower path and a higher path. The lower path focuses on his limited aspect as a human being, and it says that one will have struggles as he tries to get closer to Hashem. But the higher path says: “There are no limits. You can always have a connection with Hashem, in all situations – and *nothing* is holding you back.”

However, there is a necessary condition for this: a person has to make sure he's always being careful in keeping the mitzvos of the Torah. The Torah places limits on us, but these limits are the kind of limits that we need to help us reach the unlimited and endlessness which we are striving for. Without keeping to the Torah's rules, a person is sorely mistaken.

When a person is keeping the Torah, it is then that he can open up his connection with Hashem. *Emunah* without Torah is a fantasy.

Emunah - The Deepest Wisdom

The kind of *emunah* we have been describing in this chapter is the *emunah* known as “*temimus*.” Our thoughts are limited and cannot understand unlimited concepts, but our *temimus* can take us there – in spite of the fact that we *do not* understand.

The *emunah* of “*temimus*” is also known as “*chochmah*”\wisdom. Why? It is because the greatest *chochmah* is really *emunah*. The greatest *chochmah* that exists is the kind of *chochmah* which can cause a person to nullify himself to the Creator. *Chochmah* comes from the words “*koach mah*” (“*What is [my] energy [worth]?*”)

This is the meaning of the possuk, “*Fear of Hashem is wisdom.*” When a person reaches true fear of Hashem, which is when he nullifies himself to the Creator, that is the greatest *chochmah* that can be reached. The most perfect kind of “*chochmah*” is for a person to recognize the endlessness of Hashem and connect to Him, nullifying himself in the process.

This is the kind of *Chochmah* that comes from the source of all *chochmah* – “*ayin*” (the inner and spiritual layer to our existence; our state of nothingness, which is reached we nullify ourselves to the Creator). If our *chochmah* isn't coming from *ayin*, it is instead coming from human understanding, which is called *Yeish* (the materialistic layer to our existence).

When we access the deeper *chochmah*, which comes from *ayin*, then that *chochmah* will show us how to escape our limits and instead receive the understanding that comes from *emunah**ayin*.

Beginning Our Path With Torah and Emunah Together

To summarize, this is the first point which we need to understand: there are two ways how to get to Hashem.

One way is to view our path of serving the Creator as being full of obstacles, which we must break; and the other way is to understand that there are no obstacles at all that are holding us back. Chazal state, “There is no place that is empty from Him.” It is to realize, *Ain Od Milvado* – There is nothing besides for Hashem, and therefore, Hashem is everywhere, even when we feel that our spiritual situation is lowly.

The second path, though, cannot be all just about *emunah*. It requires one to keep the Torah, the holy limits which we need. Without keeping the Torah, a person who tries to connect to *emunah* will *chas v’shalom* fall into the hold of evil.

Only by incorporating both our limited (Torah) and unlimited (*emunah*) aspect **together** can we truly be able to open up for ourselves the power of *emunah*.

The word “*Beraishis*”, (“in the beginning”) can also mean “Two beginnings.”⁸ This hints to us that there are two kinds of beginnings we can take. One kind of beginning we can take is to recognize our limits, and the other kind of beginning of our path is to realize that we can transcend our limits and connect to the endless. The Torah is hinting to us that we need both beginnings – *Beraishis*, “two” beginnings.

In the coming chapters, with the help of Hashem, we will try to explain more this concept of using our *emunah* to believe in our unlimited aspect – the awesome path which tells us that there are no barriers between us and Hashem, no matter what situation we are in.

02 } We Are Never Disconnected From Hashem

Emunah – Believing, Even When It Contradicts Our Senses

In this chapter we explain the secret of *emunah*, which we have begun to discuss. It is the point of endlessness, which a person can connect to.

There seems to be a great contradiction going on. Hashem is unlimited, while we are limited humans. If so, how is it possible for us to connect with Him?

But the answer is: through *emunah*. *Emunah* helps us believe in two contradicting concepts at once. Once we access *emunah*, the “contradictions” will no longer seem to us like contradictions. Contradictions are only possible when we go with human logic. Once we access our *emunah*, we ascend the understanding of regular human logic, and we will then be able to understand contradictions.

Now, if we were to try to explain this intellectually, it is going against our *emunah*. We also will not be able to understand this concept with our intellect, as much as we try to understand it. It is not something that we can understand through our mind.

Therefore, we do not need to think how it’s possible that Hashem, who is unlimited, really dwells inside a person, who is limited. We do not need to understand how this can be. We only need to believe in this.

⁸ *Tikkunei HaZohar 2a*

Our *emunah* enables us to live with contradictions, that on one hand, we are limited, yet at the same time, we can go above limits and connect to the unlimited, to the endless – to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem.

However, we must not abuse our unlimited aspect and only seek to connect to the *Ein Sof*, ignoring the limits placed on us. This is wrong, because we cannot ignore the fact that we are human beings. If a person only seeks to transcend his limits, he is being a sinner; he won't keep the Torah's rules, since he is misunderstanding his unlimited aspect. He also will not have a true connection with Hashem.

We need to be able to live with both aspects at once – that we have limits which we must keep to [we are human and thus limited, and we have all the Torah's commandments to keep], but that we can also go beyond human limits and connect to the unlimited.

In other words, our actual behavior needs to reflect the fact that we are limited. We must act as if we are limited, because our physical aspect requires us to acknowledge our limits. But at the same time, our soul inside us can go beyond all limits and connect to the unlimited. That is the attitude with which we should go about this.

Understanding Torah Through Accessing Emunah

The following results from the concept we are discussing.

When we are learning Torah, and we come across contradictions, there are two options we can take to answer the contradiction. Either we can try to explain with our minds how it's really not a contradiction – or, we can solve the contradiction by accessing *emunah*.

For example, a person comes across a statement of Chazal that contradicts a different statement in Chazal. How can we answer it? We can try to explain logically how it's not a contradiction, but there is a higher method we can use: we can strengthen our connection with Hashem, and believe that His Torah is true. When we strengthen our belief that everything in the Torah is true, then when we come across a contradiction, that doesn't mean that one of the facts is incorrect. Rather, they are both correct!

When you firmly believe this, you will suddenly discover that it's not a question. Either you will find the answer to the contradiction, or you'll realize that it was a never a contradiction to begin with.

It is written, "*Wisdom comes from ayin (nothing).*" The source of all wisdom comes from *ayin*, "nothingness" – which is essentially accessed through *emunah*. When we have *emunah*, we will have true *chochmah* wisdom.

All contradictions that we come across can only be "contradictions" to us when we lack *emunah*! Once a person repairs his *emunah*, he will find that there was never a contradiction to begin with!

Having *emunah* is not just a way to reach *emunah*; it is a way to really understand our Torah learning. Perfecting your *emunah* helps you understand the Torah – its **inner** understanding, and not just the superficial layer of its vast wisdom.

Without *emunah*, the Torah is just intellectually stimulating to a person. The *chochmah* of the Torah, when learned without *emunah*, is cut off from its deeper source, *ayin*. But if we are connecting to the root of the Torah's wisdom – *emunah* – then the Torah that we learn will reveal to us Hashem's wisdom. The Torah only reveals to us its true wisdom when we are connected in our learning to Hashem.

Connected To Hashem, No Matter What

When it comes to serving the Creator, we go through a cycle of *rotzoh v'shov*, “running and retreating”; we progress, then we pull back, and then we progress again, in a continuous cycle.

[Simply speaking], we progress when we have *emunah*, and we retreat when we enter back into our intellect and our various other physical actions that we need to take care of.

Rotzoh v'shov seems to be a great contradiction. One moment we are totally spiritual, cleaving to Hashem with complete believe in His endlessness; then we go back to being routine. We draw ourselves closer to Hashem, then we go back to routine, then we once again get closer to Hashem...and so forth. That is our cycle we go through, *rotzoh v'shov* – “running” forward by advancing in our spiritual growth and getting closer to Hashem, and then “retreating” when we go back to routine. It’s a continuous contradiction.

But on a deeper note, we can understand that just as we believe in the unlimited and in the endless, so we must we believe that Hashem also desired to create His creations to have their limits. Therefore, we don’t have to look with disdain at our limitedness. Even as we are in our limited state, we can still remain connected to the Creator!

This is a very deep matter. Simply, we understand than when we are “*rotzoh*”, only then are we close to Hashem, but when we go back to “*shov*”, we are separated from Him – *chas v'shalom*. The deeper understanding of *rotzoh v'shov* is that both our *rotzoh* aspect and our *shov* aspect are each desired ways to serve Hashem. This is because even as we are in *shov*, we can still have *emunah* and realize that we are both limited yet unlimited at once. In this way, we connect to Hashem even when we are in *shov*.

Thus, our *emunah* can extend even into all that we do, no matter the situation. We can still be involved with closeness to Hashem even as we are in *shov*, our limited state. With this deep understanding, we can connect to Hashem whether we are in *rotzoh* (spirituality), or whether we are in *shov* (physicality).

Believing That Hashem Is Found In Your Heart

It is written, “*And I will dwell amongst them.*” In every Jew’s soul, there is a G-dly spark which enables him to connect to Hashem’s endlessness. “*The rock of my heart and my portion is G-d, forever.*” This possuk applies to every Jew.

It is our *avodah* to first search for the Creator, not to first find our true self. After we find the Creator, we can then search for our true self and come to find our true self.

If a person is only interested to discover his true self, maybe he will indeed find out much about himself, but it’s very doubtful if he will ever reach Hashem.

Hashem is the “*rock of my heart, and my portion.*” Hashem is found within us! We must awaken this point from within ourselves. After we awaken that point, we can then try to understand His creations – ourselves. But first, we must seek to serve the Creator.

This is a very simple matter, but at the same it is so hidden from people. If a person would just think for a day or two, or for a week or two (and some people need a month or two, and some need a year or two – each person according to his own level) about the simple thought that “*Hashem is found in my heart*”, without trying to delve into this intellectually – he will indeed succeed in revealing an awesome relationship with Hashem!

Everything we want to achieve is found here, on this world – but it is just hidden from us. The world is called *olam*, from the word *healam* – hidden. How can we leave all the concealment and reveal our relationship with Hashem on this world? Through *emunah*!

We must first reveal the fact that we can connect to the unlimited, to the endlessness of Hashem. Then we can fuse together the unlimited with the limited. But first we must make sure that we have total belief that Hashem is found in our inner depths. This is not a thought; it is a *belief* that He is in our hearts. There should be no doubts about this. If a person truly believes this, with utter certainty, he will achieve a 24\7 connection with Hashem.

A lack of *emunah* in this is the root behind all the concealment we feel on this world. Whenever we feel that spiritual attainment is concealed from us, it's a sign that we don't feel the Creator's presence as an existing reality within ourselves.

Naturally, people are inclined to their intellectual understanding of things and to doing physical actions. But our true connection to Hashem can only be achieved if we believe, firmly, that He is found inside ourselves. Everything is contained in understanding this point. The clearer our *emunah* is in this, the more we will sense Hashem.

Hashem is not outside of ourselves that we have to go looking for Him. He is inside us, in our soul. Only by using the innermost point of the soul, our *emunah* in the Creator, can we reach Hashem.

Therefore, a person should set aside time on a regular basis to think about a simple thought, without even reflecting deeply into this: That Hashem is found in the heart of a person. This doesn't have to be explained logically, or even from many Torah explanations how it can be.

Once a person becomes aware of this, without having any doubts about it, he will achieve a total connection and attachment with Hashem!

It Is Difficult to Reach Emunah Through Deep Reflection

However, what usually happens is that people tend to reflect about this deeply, and then they have questions: "How can it be that Hashem is in my *heart*...?"

Doing this goes against *emunah peshutah* (simple, earnest faith in G-d) and instead brings down everything into intellectual terms. It will then be most difficult for a person to reach the connection with Hashem. Even if a person intellectually proves it to himself that matters of *emunah* makes sense, such *emunah* is only *emunah* based on intellect, and that itself will prevent the true *emunah*. It will not be the kind of *emunah* that enables a person to believe that he can reach the unlimited endless.

These are very deep words. Our *emunah* must not be because we understand *emunah*; it must be simply to believe. Hashem has told us [via the means of the possuk in Tehillim we quoted before] that He is found within us! What concern is it if we understand this or not? Hashem said so; this is the truth. There's no room for questions on this.

Emunah In Hashem's Presence Is Not A Feeling

Whenever a person entertains the thought that he is apart from Hashem, it's all a result from a lack of *emunah*. There is no such thing as even being disconnected from the Creator, because He resides everywhere. He is clothed in everything in Creation.

Of course, it's possible that we don't *feel* that we are a part of Hashem, and it's possible that we don't even know what this, or perhaps we never heard about it. But if you're sitting on a chair, let's say, and you're not aware that you're sitting on the chair – does that mean you're not sitting on the chair? Maybe you don't know you're sitting on the chair, but that doesn't mean you're not sitting on the chair.

Therefore, not only must we believe that Hashem wants to draw us close to Him and that He loves us, but we must believe that it's not possible for us to ever be disconnected from Him! Hashem is found in us – this is not a possibility, but a reality. It's possible we don't know about this, and it's possible that we don't feel it – but it's not possible that we are apart from Him.

If a person would truly believe that it's not possible for him to be apart from Him, even if he doesn't feel the connection, as long as he is aware that he's always connected no matter what, he's connected to that truth – and such a person will definitely come to reveal the inherent connection with Hashem.

It is written, “*And I will surely conceal My face.*”⁹ The Torah writes the word “conceal” twice in the possuk – *hastir* (conceal), and *astir* (surely conceal), which are usages of the word *hester*, concealment. The Baal Shem Tov said because of this that *hester* is only when a person feels a double concealment – when not only doesn't he feel connected with Hashem, but he doesn't even know that he's being concealed from Him. *That* is the ultimate concealment. But when a person is at least aware that he is always connected to Hashem, no matter what – even though he doesn't feel it – then he only feels part of the concealment, and therefore he's not feeling the total *hester*. That itself is an achievement.

If a person knows this simple fact, that Hashem is found with him wherever he is, because he is a *cheilek eloka mimaal* (a “portion of G-d from above”) – that “Hashem and the Torah and Yisrael are one¹⁰” – and he truly **believes** in this oneness – then he is indeed connected to the oneness. When you become one with something, that essentially means you can't be apart from it.

“A Jew, even when he sins, is still a Jew.”¹¹ It is not possible for a Jew to be separated from the Creator! If a person would truly believe this, he will definitely come to reveal a true attachment with Hashem.

In fact, even if a thought enters our head that maybe it's possible for us to be apart from Hashem, we must believe that even this thought came from Hashem. Our thoughts are also a part of Hashem, and they are also a part of our connection with Hashem.

If heretical thoughts ever come to your head, ignore it and instead say to Hashem: “I know this thought is also connected to You, Hashem.” If someone does this, he will see that there are no barriers between him and Hashem, not even all the worst thoughts in the world that go through his head from time to time. Even if thousands of heretical thoughts ever come to a person's mind, and even if he has thousands of sinful thoughts, *chas v'shalom* – a person still must believe that these thoughts do not essentially sever him from the Creator.

All of us get forbidden thoughts in our head from time to time. Sometimes these are thoughts that are permissible, and sometimes these are thoughts that our outright forbidden. A person naturally feels, when he gets

⁹ Devarim 31:18

¹⁰ Zohar parshas Acharei Mos, 73a

¹¹ Sanhedrin 44a

such thoughts, that he is no longer close to Hashem. But he must **still** believe that it's not possible to be far from Hashem. Even if we do not understand this, we do not have to understand it. Of course, *chas v'shalom* should one deliberately think forbidden or sinful thoughts. It is just that the reality is that all of us encounter forbidden thoughts that fall into our hearts – each to his own – and when this happens, we must firmly believe that whatever happens to us, whether in this world or in the next, **never** disconnects us from Hashem. Even if a person ends up in the lowest level of Gehinnom, he **still** has to have *emunah* that he is never apart from Hashem....

In fact, even if a person would be found in *Kaf HaKela*¹², if he would have the kind of *emunah* we are describing, he wouldn't be in *Kaf HeKela*! *Kaf HeKela* is essentially to be flung from one's root, but if one believes that he is always connected to his root no matter what – to Hashem – he would come to his true peace after he dies.

When a person only has the lower perspective, focusing on his limits as a human, than he thinks he has to “come closer” to Hashem, but that he is currently far from Him. He will have spiritual failures, and it will be very difficult. But if he believes that Hashem is found within every person – no matter how great or how small, because “There is no place that is empty from Him¹³” – then he will be connected to *emunah*, and he will receive a true bond with Hashem.

Three Parts To Our Emunah

The secret of *emunah* is *Ain Od Milvado* – “There is nothing besides for Hashem.”

Emunah contains three parts to it:

(1) We must believe in the *Ein Sof* of Hashem, (2) We must believe that we have certain limits, (3) We must believe that both of these concepts do not contradict each other.

When we have all these three beliefs together, we can then reach the complete connection with Hashem. However, we have to be very careful that we not try to understand this intellectually. “No thought can comprehend Him.” If we try to understand this intellectually, there will be questions, and *chas v'shalom* there will be questions that a person won't be able to answer.

We cannot understand, with our intellectual mind, the matters that we are describing here!! It is not because it is hard to understand; even Moshe Rabbeinu did not understand this! No one can understand it. All we can do is **believe** in these matters.

Once a person starts to work out these matters intellectually, even if he is just trying to understand it a little bit, he's already trying to comprehend Hashem, and this is impossible. “No thought can comprehend Him.” The only thing we need is *emunah peshutah*, and we do not need intellectual *emunah* at all. We must believe, simply, in the reality we are describing.

Hashem created everything, and He also created thoughts that can enter us and convince us that we are apart from Him. What should we do with such thoughts? We can believe that they are also from Hashem, and in this way, we take these once “disconnected” thoughts and instead connect them to Hashem.

¹² “*Kaf HaKela*” is one of the forms of spiritual suffering that the wicked have to undergo in order to atone for their sins.

¹³ *Zohar*

The kind of *emunah* we are describing here should be a point that you should take with you and let it surround your whole life. Realize it as you're feeling connected to Hashem, as you're learning Torah, as you're davening. Realize it even when you have failures. Whenever you feel despondent and that you're not succeeding, realize that Hashem is *also* found in those thoughts! He is found everywhere, even in your despondent thoughts, no less than He was found in the *Beis HaMikdash*.

This is an awesome realization! If a person truly believes that Hashem is found in himself, no matter what – even when lowly thoughts enter him – he is as close to Hashem, no less than if he would be in the *Beis Hamikdash*!

“There is no place that is empty from Him.” It is impossible to run away from Hashem.

Chazal¹⁴ say that Hashem does not dwell with someone who is a *baal gaavah* (haughty person): “I and him cannot dwell under one roof.” The depth behind this matter is that because a *baal gaavah* doesn't think he needs Hashem, he doesn't connect to Hashem, and therefore, Hashem doesn't dwell with him. If this *baal gaavah* would have *emunah*, he wouldn't entertain the thought that he's apart from Hashem, and then he would reveal Hashem's existence in himself. The *baal gaavah* thinks that Hashem isn't found within him, and therefore, he thinks that Hashem cannot dwell with him...

A person can have a simple belief that Hashem is found within him, even in his thoughts that he's embarrassed of. A person doesn't have to think for this that he is like the *Beis HaMikdash*; he can just think simply that Hashem is found in his thoughts and created every one of his thoughts. When this point becomes ingrained in you, you can reach a simple attachment with Hashem.

The Avodah of the End of Days Era

The Torah says¹⁵ that in the End of Days, we will cry out to Hashem from all our suffering and return to Hashem, and He will hear our voices.

What is the reason that we must go through an exile? It is because we are meant to reveal Hashem on this world, no less than how He is found in Heaven.

The test that the Jewish people will go through in the End of Days is a difficult one. But at the same time, it's actually easy. Let us explain why it's really an easy test.

If a person has the attitude that on this earth, he's so far from Hashem – and that he can only be close to Hashem in heaven – then indeed, the End of Days will be very hard for him. In this current day of age, we are very far from Hashem – so it seems.

However, precisely because this is so, the prophet Chavakuk states concerning this generation that “*The righteous person shall live by his faith.*”¹⁶ When a person thinks that he has to keep getting close to Hashem, and that he's so far from reaching closeness with Hashem, than indeed, he will never get there. In the previous generations, people were naturally closer to Hashem, and by working hard at it they could get there. But today, who doesn't know how difficult it is to serve Hashem? Reality seems to tell us that it is impossible in this current generation to really get to closeness with Hashem.

Is it possible for us to be close to Hashem, even though we live in this generation?

¹⁴ Sotah 5b

¹⁵ Devarim 4:30

¹⁶ See Makkos24a

The prophet Chavakuk revealed to us a secret, that we can: through *emunah*. He has come to teach us that we must believe, firmly, that we are **not** far from Hashem! Not only are we close to Hashem just as in the previous generations, but even more so: **there is no such thing as being distant from Hashem!** If a person *chas v'shalom* thinks that it's impossible for him to get to close to Hashem, then of course, he ruins it for himself. He distances himself when he has that attitude.

The Redemption Will Reveal That This Exile Was A Dream

This is actually the secret of the concept of redemption. The redemption will reveal to us that *there was never an exile!* In the future, we will look back at this exile and express, “*We were like dreamers.*”¹⁷ This exile will feel like a dream – we will realize that this exile wasn't the true reality. When we think that “we are in exile right now”, it's not the true perspective.

What, then, is exile\galus? The exile is that we **think** that Hashem isn't present. This is the meaning of the concept, “The *Shechinah* is in exile.” When we think that Hashem isn't found with us in this generation, that itself is why the *Shechinah* is, so to speak, exiled.

If a person would believe, with complete *emunah*, that Hashem is present with us today no less than in the times of the Beis Hamikdash, then he has left the exile! This is the secret of the redemption – the redemption will *not* serve to bring us close to the Creator; it will reveal that there was never an exile!

Exile is represented by the verse, “*And I will surely conceal My face.*” When we think that it's possible for us to be separated from Hashem, **that's** exile, as the Baal Shem Tov revealed. When we have *emunah* that there is no difference between time or place, for “There is no place that is empty from Him” – Hashem is found with us, no matter what – then, we will be truly close to Him. **That** is the redemption.

The secret to all our *avodah* is to take this thought – the fact that we are always close to Hashem, no matter where, when, or what – and connect to it, simply, without delving into this matter intellectually. We must train our thoughts to get used to simple *emunah* in Hashem.

(Of course, we are not saying that there is no point in trying to understand things. We have a separate *avodah* to understand things¹⁸, but the current point we are discussing does not involve that *avodah*).

There is a private redemption, as well as public redemption for the masses. The public redemption will come in its time – whenever Hashem wants it to happen. But there is a private redemption which takes place for each person who works on it; and it is given to a person by Hashem as a gift, just as Hashem will bring the general redemption as a gift to the masses.

But before anything, we need to know: What is redemption? What is the true reality?

It is by firmly establishing in our thoughts - without even delving into this intellectually - there is a Creator, and His creations are not separate from Him (they are integrated with Him).

Ain Od Milvado. Hashem is everywhere, “even in the *chalal* (empty space) of the world”, as the Sages say. In other words, even when it appears to us that there is a void going on and that Hashem isn't around, even then, we have to reinforce our *emunah* that He is here. Hashem was around Before Creation, before He created the

¹⁷ *Tehillim 126:1*

¹⁸ Refer to the author's *Getting To Know Your Thoughts*.

chala empty space to make the world. Hashem created the *chalal*, yet He always existed, even after He made empty space to make the world.

This of course seems like a contradiction, but it shouldn't be of concern to us. We shouldn't be interested in trying to make sense of it. Why? "*Ani Maamim*" – because **I believe**, simply put.

We do not mean to imply that there is no such thing as *chalal*; it exists, but we must believe that it is a Creation of Hashem, and therefore, Hashem is found in it as well, even though by its very concept it is emptiness and devoid of Hashem. Many people in the past have tried to understand how the *chalal* concept makes sense, since Hashem is everywhere. No one has ever succeeded in understanding it. We do not have to understand it! If we try to understand it, we will fall into the *chalal*...

We must believe that there is a Creator, and that He also created a void that seemingly did not contain His presence. And we must believe that both His existence, and the void He created in order to contract from Himself and create the world, are two facts that are intertwined, even though the two facts contradict each other.

When we find ourselves seeking to understand this matter, we must return our thinking to its source, *ayin*, and put them away. What we need to think about is not to probe this intellectually, but to think about *emunah*: that it is not possible to ever be disconnected from Hashem. There is no such thing.

Ain Od Milvado. Hashem is found *everywhere*.

If we come to this level of *emunah*, we will be helped by Hashem to reach a total and eternal bond with Him.

03 | *The Purpose of Our Doubts*

Even Our Senses Are Enabled Only Through Emunah

We have five senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. The senses are powers of our mind, and above the senses is our power of *emunah* (faith in the Creator). At the point where our senses end, that is where the point of our *emunah* begins; our *emunah* can show us things that are senses cannot.

That is the simple way of understanding things. But on a deeper level, it goes even further than this: the root of our senses is the power of *emunah*! Our very senses thrive on our power of *emunah*.

We naturally trust our senses whenever we see or hear something, that what we are seeing or hearing is real. But how are we relying on our senses? Maybe our senses are deluding us? The answer is because we believe in our senses, that they aren't deluding us. Thus, our power of *emunah* is essentially what is behind our senses, and that is why we trust our senses. So if not for *emunah*, we wouldn't be able to rely on our senses. We believe that Hashem created us with senses, and therefore we believe that our senses are giving us a true perception of reality.

For example, the Torah says that two witnesses are believed to testify in matters. How can we believe the witnesses? Maybe they are lying? The answer is, because the Torah says to believe in them. It is not because we know for sure they are telling the truth; maybe indeed they are not telling the truth, as we know very well that there can be false witnesses.¹⁹ It is rather because the Torah tells us that we are allowed to trust them, (unless, of course, they are proven afterwards to have been lying).

How can we ever be confident in our own intelligence? Who says we every understand anything? We indeed cannot know for sure. We can't just trust our natural senses and intellect. We can very well be fooling ourselves and imagining things. So we cannot trust our senses or our thinking mind. The only way we can know anything is through *emunah*; we *believe* in our senses and in our mind.

We Cannot Rely On Our Own Intelligence!

Therefore, in anything we understand, we have to realize that we aren't understanding it with our intellect. Nothing we understand is coming from our own intellect. If we think that we understand things due to our own natural thinking process, then our thinking is disconnected from the truth, and then our mind will indeed be able to mislead us.

For example, if you are reading a possuk in Chumash and you are trying to understand it, be aware that you are not understanding it on your own. If you do understand something, realize that it is coming from Hashem's vitality being poured down upon you.

When you gain that perspective, your mind connects to *emunah*, and it is then that you can trust your mind. Your mind then becomes fueled by *emunah*, and the wisdom you discover will not be superficial wisdom, but the kind of wisdom that is coming from the source of all wisdom – *ayin* (lit. "nothingness", the inner understanding of things). *Ayin*, the source of all wisdom, is essentially the power of *emunah*, and it is reached through *emunah*.

¹⁹ As we learn in Tractate Makkos.

Without this perspective, your mind cannot be trusted.

For this reason, Hashem created all kinds of people in the world, each with varying opinions. Why is Creation designed this way, that each person thinks differently and has different opinions? It is so that we should all come to realize that we cannot rely on our own understanding alone, since there are so many different ways to understand something.

How Our Doubts Can Actually Bring Us Closer To Faith in the Creator

In Creation, there is a particular evil force that exists called “Amalek.” Amalek manifests in our soul as the evil power to doubt reality. As is well-known, “*Amalek*” has the same numerical value in Hebrew as the Hebrew word *safek*, doubt.

The Amalek within us can get us to doubt just about anything. Amalek\Evil Doubt says to us: “Who says so? Maybe not!”

What is the solution to our tendency to doubt things?

The answer is through *emunah*. We find this hinted to from the war with Amalek; as long as Moshe’s hands were raised, we were winning against them, and when his hands grew weak and slumped downward, Amalek gained the upper hand. What does the possuk call Moshe’s hands when they were raised? “*And behold, his hands were “emunah” (Shemos 17:12)*. This hints to us that when we have *emunah*, we can defeat Amalek’s evil.

On a simple, superficial level, it seems that there is a war between good and evil in Creation; evil is represented by Amalek\doubt, while good is represented by *emunah*.

But the truth is (as the Baal Shem Tov revealed) that even evil can become constructive. “*Hashem created everything in His honor*”, even evil. Therefore, even our doubts can serve a constructive purpose.

How? It is if when we realize, due to our many doubts, that we indeed cannot rely on our understanding, since there is so much that we can doubt about. That is how our doubts become transformed into good: when they help us realize this understanding, that since we cannot be sure of ourselves, we indeed cannot just rely on ourselves alone.

We can only be confident in ourselves if we realize that Hashem is directing us. If I believe in myself simply because of my “I” (my ego), then there will be doubts. But if I believe in the deeper part of myself, my “*Ayin*” (my nothingness, my negated ego) – which tells me that my entire existence serves to be connected to the Creator at all times – then I can be confident in my understanding. The reason is because if I have this perspective, I am relying on *Hashem* for my understanding, and I am realizing that I am only understanding something because Hashem is allowing me to.

We have no way of being confident in ourselves for just about anything! What we can do, however, is to realize that our entire understanding is provided by Hashem, Who has no doubts. If we understand that, then we can rely on our understanding of things, and when we come across a doubt, we can tell ourselves: “Why did Hashem place this doubt in me? So that I should know that, “*HaVadai Shemo*”, that only “His Name is definite”, and not me.

The closer we come to our own soul, the more doubts we will actually come across. In fact, the less doubts we have and more we think that we are that we know ourselves, the further we are from our own soul! We must go through a doubting process, constantly. Why?

The closer we are to our true self – which is our non-ego, our power to be nullified totally to the Creator, in which there is no sense of “I” whatsoever – the more we will have to get rid of our various doubts. The only way we can do this is by experiencing the doubt and then dealing with it. The way we reach our true self is by removing all our doubts, more and more.

The way to actually do this is through *emunah*. Whenever you come across a doubt, summon forth your *emunah* and trust in Hashem that He is guiding you. As it is written, “*Follow me into the desert.*”

Not Sure, Yet Sure, At the Same Time

Amalek is also the source of the evil power of *leitzanus* (mockery), for they epitomize this trait, of mocking holiness. Of Amalek it is written (Mishlei 21:24), “*Rebellious one, haughty one – a mocker is his name.*” What exactly is *leitzanus*?

The depth behind *leitzanus* is that when a person belittles holiness, he is essentially trying to break the rules. The limits of this world – contained in the Torah – are generally referred to as “*Yeish*”. The realm of the unlimited, [the *Ein Sof* of Hashem], is referred to as *Ayin*. But Amalek, who epitomizes *leitzanus*, is trying to mix the two; it is trying to pervert Creation, ignoring *Yeish* and instead trying to negate its rules into an evil distortion of *Ayin*.

When this concept is applied to holiness, it is essentially *emunah*. Through *emunah*, we are able to transcend our limits and enter into the realm of the unlimited, the *Ein Sof* of Hashem. Our doubts hold us back from keeping our limits; when we have *emunah*, though, and we believe that the limits which the Torah has placed on us are good for us - when we believe in the truth of the limits that the Torah has placed on us – then we will be able to connect to our limits in the right way. But if we are doubting the limits which are placed on us, then what will happen? We will only want to connect to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem, ignoring the Torah’s rules and limits in the process [fooling ourselves], and this is evil.

We are supposed to be balanced between our limited and unlimited aspects. If we have *emunah*, then we believe both in the endlessness of Hashem, as well as in our limits that are placed on us. Through this, we are able to believe both in the unlimited and in the limited, simultaneously, and this is the proper balance. Our doubts, fueled by Amalek’s evil, will then cease.

Therefore, we have to totally be in doubt about our own understanding of things, all the time. This is a necessary process we have to go through in order to reveal our own *emunah*. If we think that there are some things we know for sure and some things we don’t for sure, then it’s a sign that we still haven’t yet accessed true *emunah*, and we are only having superficial, external *emunah*, and this shows in turn that one hasn’t gotten close enough yet to discovering his true essence.

Once a person connects to *emunah*, he will discover that he was what to be in doubt in, in just about anything he encounters. He will realize that he truly cannot be sure of anything, not even today’s date. Who says that the date on the calendar is the right day today – maybe the printers made a mistake? Maybe even all the calendars in the world were printed wrong, and they are all the wrong date! Do you think that’s illogical? Who says it’s really illogical to think so? And who made the dates in the calendar to begin with...?

So there is nothing in Creation that you can be sure about. You should be skeptical about everything; you have no way of knowing for sure anything you come across. Reveal forth your power of doubt, and see that you have what to be in doubt in just about anything in the world.

However, you can only do this if you're connected to *emunah*. With *emunah*, you accomplish two seeming contradictions at once: On one hand, you must doubt yourself entirely, and the other hand, you must have total and complete faith in the Creator, and therefore, there are no doubts.

We are a paradox. On one hand, we must doubt everything. On the other hand, we shouldn't be doubtful about a single thing! It seems that this is a contradiction, but when we have *emunah*, we will be able to handle the contradiction. We will be able to believe in the fact that we have our limits, which makes us doubt everything; and we will be able to believe in the realm of the unlimited, which is to be connected in total *emunah* with the Creator, Who has no doubts whatsoever.

“Follow Me Into the Desert”

It is written, “*Follow Me into the desert.*” This entire world is like one giant desert; we have no choice but to follow Hashem into that “desert”. This is because we cannot be sure about anything in the world. Only Hashem is sure about everything, so we have no choice but to follow Him. If we do that, then we can be assured about things.

If we believe that Hashem is running the world and that He is running it well, we will have no fear and no doubts. The world, indeed, is a place full of fear and doubt. Our fears and doubts exist so that we can uncover *emunah* through them. The more we mature spiritually, the more doubts we will actually encounter, and we can keep doing this until we eventually reach a situation of 100% doubt – in which we will have no choice but to totally nullify ourselves to Hashem. That's the whole point!

Repairing the Evil In The World

In this way, we are able to transform the essence of evil in the world into good [a concept that the Baal Shem Tov introduced]. Even evil and falsity can be good; how??

It is when we realize that we must stay within our limits and rules of the Torah and not bypass them, in spite of the fact that we know that we have an unlimited aspect to us. In this way, evil\doubts\falsity serves a catalyst to help us hold onto our *emunah*, enabling us to accept that we must live a paradoxical kind of existence.

How We Are Limited and Unlimited At The Same Time

Our soul can connect to the unlimited, to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem. But in our actual behavior, in our physical existence, we must realize that we are bound to certain limits of the Torah and therefore not attempt to break those limits. It is the only the inner world within us, the world of our soul, which can be used to connect to the sphere of the unlimited, to the endlessness of Hashem. But since we have an outer and physical existence to ourselves as well, we must realize that, and therefore at the same time we have to keep to the rules and limits placed on mankind.

Moshiach's Revelation: How Evil Became Good

When *Moshiach* comes, he will reveal a secret. We know simply that the purpose of *Moshiach* is to come and erase all the evil in the world. But let us explain the depth behind this matter.

Moshiach will erase the “spirit of impurity” that is in the world (see *Zecharyah* 13:2). Impurity is none other than Amalek; why is Amalek called “impurity”? Amalek is the perspective in a person in which he views his essence as being contaminated, due to his sins. This root evil perspective is that a person forgets that he is in essence a *cheilek eloka mimaal*, a “portion of G-d from Above”, and instead views himself as an impure essence.

What is the root of Amalek’s perspective? It is because Amalek “met” us along our travels, and this defines its evil: “*met*” in Hebrew means *mikreh*, which hints to the perspective in a person in which he feels that things are just “happenstance.” When a person believes in coincidences, that things just “happen”, this evil perspective is essentially Amalek’s impurity gaining its hold. But when a person believes that there is no such thing as *mikreh*\happenstance\coincidences – because everything is a result from Hashem, even what appears to be just “*mikreh*” – he then achieves the true connection with the Creator.

This is essentially the secret behind what *Moshiach* will reveal: the truth of *Ain Od Milvado*, “There is Nothing Besides For Hashem” – and since there is nothing besides for Hashem, even evil is somehow a *cheilek eloka mimaal* (a piece of G-d from Above). That is how *Moshiach* will come and cleanse the world from evil – he will show us all this revelation, that since evil is also part of Hashem’s plan, it is also good, in the long run of things.

Of course, *chas v’shalom* should one take this understanding to an extreme and think that it’s therefore okay to connect to evil, since in the future it will be revealed that evil can be good. G-d forbid! As long as the redemption hasn’t actually yet come to the world, it is the will of Hashem that we refrain from connecting to evil, and we have to recognize our rules. It is just that after *Moshiach* comes, there will be no more difference between the limited and the unlimited, and thus it is only then that we won’t differentiate between good and evil.

Therefore, the depth of *Moshiach*’s purpose is not just to return evil to good, as we simply understand based on *sefarim hakedoshim*. The depth is that he will reveal how even evil is a “piece of Hashem,” since evil is ultimately part of Hashem’s plan.²⁰

The Practical Outcome Of This: Living With Deep Emunah

To make these matters into a practical *avodah* for us that we can implement, this is what we can do.

When a doubtful kind of thought enters you, you can use this as an opportunity to return the doubt to its source, which is good. Remember Who created this doubtful thought which entered you. It was Hashem Himself who allowed such a thought to enter your mind.

The same goes for the rest of your senses. Whenever you see or hear something, or whenever you use any of your five senses, ask yourself: “Who is helping me see? Who is helping me hear?” Remind yourself that Hashem is enabling your very senses. In this way, you will see G-dliness in everything.²¹

²⁰ Editor’s Note: Elsewhere, (in this sefer, as well as in *Bilvavi Vol. V: Mili D’Avodah*), the Rov writes that this understanding can be reached on *Purim*, as this is the meaning of “*Ad d’lo yoda*”, to not know the difference between *Mordechai* and *Haman* – in other words, to not know the difference between good and evil, which is the perspective that will be revealed in the future.

²¹ Editor’s Note: This is a practical way for one to work on the *avodah* stated by the *Baal Shem Tov*, that a person has to learn how to see the *nitzotz eloki* (G-dly spark) in everything there is.

There is nothing which doesn't involve Hashem. Everything in reality is a part of Hashem. One of the major fundamentals that the Baal Shem Tov taught was, "G-dliness is everything, and everything is G-dliness." Without getting into the difference between the first half of the statement and the second half of the statement, suffice it to say that we must all know that everything in Creation is really G-dliness. Along with this, we also believe in the fact that we have certain limits that we must keep to.

This is the secret to having true *emunah*.

It is our *avodah* to first realize the reality of Creation, which is that everything, in essence, is G-dliness. We need to realize the truth of the statement of Chazal, "There is no place that is empty from Him." This applies as well even to the evil traits that exist within mankind, even the concept of falsity. It is not only every Jewish soul which will return to Hashem in the long run²², but even evil itself will get returned to Hashem one day and integrate with Him.

Not only will evil simply "return" to its source in the future, but even more so, the truth about reality will be revealed, and we will be able to see how everything, even evil, is a true Creation of Hashem. This is the depth behind "*Ain Od Milvado*" - there is nothing besides for Hashem [because evil will eventually become integrated with Hashem].

²²See *Shmuel II*, 14:14

04 | *Answering the Contradictions*

“Contradictions” Are Really Not Contradictions

The Torah says to believe 2 witnesses. Do we have to believe them, or are we just following the Torah’s commandment to accept them? This question is discussed by the *Acharonim* (later Sages).

The *Gemara* says that a second pair of witnesses can come and deny the testimony of the first pair. It would seem that when this happens, it shows that the first pair was lying, and we were fooled into believing them. However, that is not really the way to understand it.

When a second pair of witnesses comes and refutes the first pair’s testimony, the Torah says that we now believe the new witnesses, but that doesn’t mean that the first pair was lying, retroactively. Rather, when we believed the first pair, the Torah commands us to believe them – and now when a second pair comes, the Torah tells us that now we should believe the second pair. We had a right to believe each of the pairs. It’s not a contradiction.

This is a fundamental for life: in Torah, there is no such thing as a contradiction. The only contradictions that exist are things which contradict the Torah! What appears to our eyes as a contradiction is only due to our limited understanding. We never really see reality as it is. Our whole perception of reality is how we relate to it, but that’s all.

In the *Gemara*²³, we learn the *halachah* of falsified witnesses (*eidim zomemim*). When two witnesses testify about someone that he is deserving of the death penalty, and then they are proven by a second pair of witnesses to have been falsely accusing the person, the *halacha* is that the witnesses are punished with the death penalty, just as they tried to inflict. What happens if a third pair of witnesses comes and proves that the second pair was lying, and that really the person did kill someone? Does that mean that the first pair of witnesses was killed for nothing?

Logic would dictate that since we have now proven that the first pair of witnesses were innocent, it must be that the first pair was unjustly killed. However, the *Zohar* reveals that even though the first pair has been now been proven innocent, they still deserved to have been killed. Now that they have been killed, they must have deserved it. Why?

The *Zohar* says that the first pair of witnesses, who were killed, deserved exactly what was coming to them, because in a previous lifetime, the souls of these witnesses must have harmed the litigant somehow. The litigant was innocent in his previous lifetime, while these witnesses must have harmed him for no justified reason. Therefore, the witnesses, who were killed, deserved to be killed anyhow, even though their actual testimony has been proven at a later time to be true.

However, there is a deeper approach to understand all of this. Even if we wouldn’t know about such a concept as soul reincarnations (*gilgul*), it still wouldn’t be an issue. Why? It is because when we see two seemingly contradictory facts in Torah, it’s really not a contradiction to begin with. Due to the Torah’s commandment, we had a right to believe the first pair, and we acted with them as we were supposed to. We had a right to then believe the second pair, which is what the Torah says to do, and thus mete out the death sentence to the first pair. And when a third

²³ *Makkos 2a-5a*

pair comes and refutes the second pair, the Torah says to believe the third pair and now punish the second pair; but that doesn't mean now that the *first* pair has been proven to be correct.

Logically, this is a contradiction. But it's really not a contradiction. We listened to the Torah when it came to one situation, and then we listened to the Torah when it came to the other situation. Each time, we were following what the Torah says to do. Therefore, when we add up the facts and it seems like a contradiction, it's only a logical contradiction. When we have *emunah*, it's not a contradiction.

The point we see from this is that even when it seems that the Torah is contradicting the reality before us, we must reinforce our belief in the Torah's truth and not allow the contradiction to bother us, because Hashem is True, and His Torah is always true.

Nullifying Ourselves To Hashem

Often, we come across certain contradictions in life. The Torah says one thing, while reality seems to tell us otherwise.

For example, Chazal and the astrologists disagreed about astrology. It seems in reality to us that the astrologists were correct, and it seems that the Sages were wrong. In fact, even the Sages themselves stated that we can believe the astrologists when it comes to matters of astrology. However, that was only to satisfy people who are superficial. There is an inner answer to this, written by our Rabbis, which explains how it's really not a contradiction.

Yet, on an even deeper note, it's not a question at all. We simply cannot comprehend the truth, because the truth is above our senses. We need to learn how to nullify ourselves to the truth. The truth of things can only be comprehended by Hashem; we cannot comprehend truths. All we can do is nullify ourselves to the truth.

This is the secret behind the concept "*Emes V'Emunah*" (Truth and Faith). What does this mean? Doesn't the concept of *Emes* imply that it's also *emunah*? Can there be *Emes* which isn't *emunah*?! It must be because there are levels to *Emes*. There is an *Emes* which we can see and sense, but it is limited to what we can sense. This is just "*Emes*", but it is not yet "*Emes shel Emunah*". *Emes* contains *Emes* – but it doesn't always contain *emunah*.

Emes shel Emunah is the higher level. This is when we believe in a truth, even when we can't see it or sense it. This is an even more truthful kind of *Emes*. It is "*Emes shel Emunah*."

After a person reaches *Emes shel Emunah*, there is still a higher level to strive for: in which a person understands that even what he sees, hears or senses is also *Emes shel Emunah* ! This is because we can never rely on our understanding that comes from our senses.

First, however, we must realize the very concept, that there are levels to truth. The lower truth is *Emes*, the higher truth is *Emes shel Emunah*, and after that, a person can ascend to an even higher *avodah* - to nullify the senses and realize that even his senses do not give him the true perception of things.

05 | *Connecting To Moshiach (abridged)*

Hashem Is Found Amidst All the Contradictions

It is written, “*I will dwell amongst them.*” Hashem is found within every Jew. Upon even an even more inner understanding, Hashem is in everything, for He is everywhere.

Hashem is “*Yoisher B’saiser elyon*” – “He sits above in concealment.” He is found precisely where He is hidden and concealed from us; when we find ourselves concealed from him, these dark situations serve as a catalyst to reveal Him. Hashem is found even amongst all the contradictions we encounter.

The Baal Shem Tov stated that there is a G-dly spark in everything, so essentially, we can find concealment in everything – for Hashem is a *yoishev v’saiser* – yet, at the same time, that is precisely where we can find Him! Whenever we feel that He is concealed from us, that is where we can somehow find Him and reveal Him forth from that situation.

Before Creation, there was nothing but *tohu u’vohu* (emptiness). This is another way of describing the *ayin*, the nothingness [which we mentioned in the previous chapters], and thus *ayin* is the state of Before Creation which we can connect ourselves to.

The Baal Shem Tov says that the *ohr haganuz* (hidden light) is contained in the Torah; where is it? In Torah, there is *ohr* (light) and there is also *me’ohr* (illumination). The *ohr* of Torah is our “*Torah ohr*”, the Torah which we can comprehend with our intellectual understanding. But the deeper understanding of the Torah is the *me’ohr shebobh*, the “illumination” contained in it. This is the understanding that comes from our *ayin*.²⁴ This is essentially the *ohr haganuz* contained in the Torah – when we access the understanding of Torah from the higher understanding, *ayin*.

Moshe and Moshiach

In Creation, there are two root forces of good: Moshe Rabbeinu, who is the inner essence to all *daas* (human comprehension); and *Moshiach*, who represents understandings that are beyond *daas*.

The *sefarim hakedoshim* revealed that sparks of Moshe’s soul extend to every generation. In addition to this fact, the *sefer Tanya* wrote that as the days draw closer to *Moshiach*, sparks of *Moshiach*’s light are also contained in the generations immediately preceding his arrival. Therefore, the leaders of the later generations each contain sparks of Moshe’s soul, which is sparks of his *daas*, as well as sparks as *Moshiach*’s soul, which have a power that is above *daas*.

Moshe grasped the 49 Levels of Understanding (*Shaarei Binah*), but the 50th gate was not revealed to him. [*Moshiach*, though, will attain it, and reveal it to the world]. The numerical value for Moshe in Hebrew is 445,

²⁴ As explained in the previous chapters, *ayin* is essentially our power of *emunah\temimus*, which is accessed when we nullify our intellect to the Hashem and His Torah, that even when we don’t understand things – such as when we come across contradictions in Torah – we nullify ourselves to Hashem.

while *Moshiach* equals 448. The difference between them is 13, and the numerical value of *echad* (one) equals 13 – thus, the gap between Moshe and *Moshiach* is that until *Moshiach* comes, there is no *achdus\echad*unity to the world.

Moshe represents the power of *daas*. There are three kinds of *daas*. There is *daas hamavdeles*, which is when we take apart information. There is *daas hamachraas*, which is when we decide between information. And there is *daas hamechaberes*, which is when we connect information together. Because we are able to split apart information using our *daas*, our *daas* represents disparity; our *daas* is therefore missing oneness, “*rozo d’echad*”²⁵ – the “secret of one”).

But *Moshiach* will reveal the 50th Gate of Understanding, which will be the *rozo d’echad*, the secret of oneness. This will be a new facet to our *daas*, and it will be called *daas hamis-hapeches*, *daas* which can “turnover” information.²⁶ We find this hinted to in the Torah that sometimes the letter *nun* is upside down, because *nun* is 50, and the 50th Gate of Understanding will be a kind of *daas* that can turn information upside down and thereby show us a new understanding of things.

The 50th Gate of Understanding, *daas hamis-hapeches*, will show us how even evil can be good. All evil will integrate with good, because everything will return to its source.

Moshe Rabbeinu revealed to us the Torah, which is the power of *daas*. *Moshiach* will reveal to us *ayin*, the comprehension that is above *daas*.

The sefarim hakedoshim reveal that Moshe will come in the future with two Messiahs. The depth behind this matter is as follows.

We should not, *chas v’shalom*, think that *Moshiach* will negate Moshe. *Chas v’shalom!!* The Torah of Moshe is an inextricable part of the higher understanding. We need it in order to get to the higher understanding.

The current understanding in the world is that of *Yeish* (Materialistic Existence), while the future understanding is *Ayin*. Although our eventual purpose is to arrive at *Ayin*, this does not negate our current level, which is *Yeish*. We need *Yeish* if we are to get to *Ayin*. They are different expressions of how to reveal Hashem, and it’s not that *Ayin* is the more truthful perspective than *Yeish*. They are both two different angles of the same thing – the will of Hashem.

That is why Moshe will come with the two Messiahs. It is to show us that even when *Moshiach* comes in the future and he reveals to us a new Torah, this does not negate the Torah of Moshe. Rather, the current level of Torah, which is the Torah of Moshe, is the necessary prerequisite in order to get to the future Torah of *Moshiach*, which is *ayin*. So we need *Yeish* in order to get to *Ayin*.

Connecting To Moshiach Through Our Point of Emunah

The current Torah, which was given to us by Moshe, and the future Torah of *Moshiach*, are two interdependent concepts. The future Torah of *Moshiach* will not *chas v’shalom* negate our current understandings of Torah; rather, it will reveal a different kind of revelation that what we are used to. But both the Torah of Moshe and the Torah of *Moshiach* are utterly true; none of them is more true than the other.

²⁵ *Kaballas Shabbos, nusach Sefard*

²⁶ To understand more what “*daas hamis-hapeches*” is, refer to the audio class of *Da Es Daatcha 007: Daas Hamis-hapeches (Using Daas To Turn Over Information)*.

In today's times, all we can comprehend is the Torah of Moshe, which is understood through our *daas*. Because our current comprehension is *daas*, we aren't able to access the comprehension of *Moshiach's* times, which will be above our *daas*. This is the depth behind the concept of exile; we are in *galus*\exile, because *Moshiach* hasn't been revealed.

But in the inner point of our soul, *Moshiach* is indeed revealed. In today's era, we are able to connect to that deep point in ourselves – through *emunah* [as described in the previous chapters]. In that inner place in ourselves, we are able to see how the concepts of Moshe and *Moshiach* are both one and the same, because the 49 Gates of Understanding are needed in order to get to the 50th Gate of Understanding. Only by combining Moshe and *Moshiach* together can there be a redemption.

Now we can understand why Moshe will come with two Messiahs at his side in the future. It is because we are not supposed to think that there are three rulers: Moshe, *Moshiach* ben David, and *Moshiach* ben Yosef. That is just furthering the situation of disparity in the world, and this goes against the entire concept of the redemption. Rather, the attitude is that Moshe and the two Messiahs are all one – they are all integrated with each other.

The Secret of Purim: Turning Over the Current Reality

Here we can come to the secret of the higher *daas*, which is called *daas hamis-hapeches*.

The root behind our power of *daas* is that it is a power that can turn over things. The reason for this is because since our *daas* is ultimately rooted in *ayin*, and *ayin* can turn over reality and show us a new reality, our *daas* itself can be used, for this higher purpose: to turn over things. As an example, the Vilna Gaon writes in the beginning of *sefer Mishlei* that our power of *daas* can turn over all our *middos* (character traits).

When we view our *daas* as just our intellect unto itself, with no deeper source to it, than our *daas* won't be able to turn over information. Only when we reveal that *ayin* is the source of our *daas* can our *daas* be able to turn over information.

This is, in essence, the secret of Purim. The Purim miracle came about through Mordechai, who, according to the Arizal, had the same soul as Moshe. Chazal²⁷ state that in the future, all the festivals will disappear, except for Purim. It seems from this statement that Purim is essentially a festival of the future, something that has to do with *Moshiach*. If so, wouldn't it have been more fitting for the miracle of Purim to be brought about by *Moshiach*, instead of Moshe\Mordechai?

The answer is: Moshe is integrated with *Moshiach*! Moshe is not apart from *Moshiach*; Moshe is really sourced in *Moshiach*.

This is the secret of why Purim will not disappear in the future, unlike the other festivals. It is because Purim is about the future understanding, but it is **not** all about the future – it is applicable as well to the present. Purim reveals the higher understanding of *ayin* even in our present dimension, *Yeish*. It takes both our current dimension and the future dimension and synthesizes them together!

This is the meaning behind “*V'nahafoch hu.*” It is because on Purim, we “turn over” everything; we use our future power of *daas his-hapeches* and reveal the deep perspective of the future, *ayin*, amidst even our current level, *yeish*. We “turn over” our current reality.

²⁷ Yalkut Shimeoni, Mishlei, 944

The 50th Gate of Understanding: “Lo Yeda” – Knowing That We Don’t Know

However, as we explained, the 50th gate of Understanding will not come to negate the previous 49 Gates of Understanding. In order to get to 50, we need the first 49. The first 49 levels of Understanding represent the ability to use our *daas* to turn over reality, and this is the root of all the first 49 levels. But the 50th level of Understanding is *ayin* – it will be the higher understanding that is above *daas*, “*lo yeda*.”²⁸ It is not the same kind of *lo yeda* that the first 49 levels can reveal. It is a whole different kind of *lo yeda* than the previous 49 levels.

This is a deep point. The revelation of *lo yeda* will not serve to simply turn over all of current understanding, which is *yeda*. Rather, it will show how “the purpose of *yeda* (to know) is *lo yeda* (to “not” know)”.²⁹ Let us explain this concept more.

When a person arrives the understanding that he doesn’t really know things, this is actually the revelation of the 49th level of Understanding; he “knows” that he doesn’t know. But there is a higher way to reveal this, and it doesn’t involve any thinking at all. It is rather a reality that a person reveals, as opposed to a thought-process: it is to remove the thoughts, to remove one’s *daas* – and instead to reveal one’s essence. A person’s essence is above his thoughts, because thoughts are only a garment of the soul.

This is the secret of “*d’veykus*”, attachment with Hashem; it for a person to realize that *d’veykus* doesn’t take place in one’s thoughts, because thoughts can only act as a means to help one get to *d’veykus*. The actual reality of *d’veykus* is above the thoughts. Thoughts can definitely help us get to *d’veykus*, but the thoughts cannot be *d’veykus* itself. *D’veykus* is in a plane that is above human thinking.

Purim contains two contradicting concepts at once, and that is exactly why Purim is “*V’nahafoch hu*” – everything is turned over. There is one kind of *V’nahafoch hu* on Purim, in the simple sense, that Haman tried to kill the Jewish people, but the tables were turned on him. But the Purim of the future will contain a deeper kind of *V’nahafoch hu*, and this will reveal the very depth of Purim: the 50th Gate of Understanding, which will be *lo yeda*. In today’s times, our entire comprehension comes from *daas* – which is of course rooted in *ayin*, and we are able to attain *daas hamis-hapeches*. But in the future, the actual *ayin* will be revealed as it is.

Let us emphasize that when we discuss “present” and “future” here, we are only discussing this from the viewpoint of the way things are on the world. But in our soul, we can connect to any point; we can even connect to the state of Before Creation. Our soul is above time, and it is therefore not bound to any time. It can go above time and connect itself to the concept of *Ain Od Milvado* - simply put. Our soul has no limits.

However, because we also have a physical layer to our existence, we must also remain aware of our limits. We must recognize that we have limits, yet we can be connected to both the limited and the unlimited at once.

The depth which we can reveal is that there is G-dliness in everything³⁰. Because there is G-dliness inherent in something, we are able to see how even evil is a creation of Hashem, and therefore, even evil will eventually become integrated with good. Hashem did not create anything for nothing; even evil will eventually reach its rectification. We should not look at anything as being unimportant, because everything is Hashem’s creation – everything has a role in the sum total of things.

²⁸ For more on “*lo yeda*”, see the English adaptation of Bilvavi Part 5 (Chapter 14): *Above Our Comprehension*.

²⁹ See the Author’s Introduction.

³⁰ A statement of the Baal Shem Tov, which we brought before in Chapter Three

Three Levels of Daas

When these matters here are understood, we can receive an inner perspective on our Torah learning.

We need to learn Torah with a basic kind of *daas*. We also need to ascend the regular kind of *daas* and learn how to use our *daas hamis-hapeches*, to be able to turn over concepts. Finally, we must also be able to access *lo yeda* as well when we learn Torah.

Our basic *daas*, which is called *Yeish*, is all the wisdom which we receive from *ayin*. When we reveal *ayin* amongst our own *yeish* wisdom, we then achieve *daas hamis-hapeches*. When we reveal *ayin* as it is, that is *lo yeda*. Without possessing all these three levels of understanding, our knowledge isn't unified.

The basic kind of *daas*, which comes from our *ayin*, is represented by Yosef. The higher level, *daas hamis-hapeches*, is represented by Moshe. Finally, the highest level, *ayin* itself, is represented by *Moshiach*. We need to gain all three perspectives. The Torah says that when Moshe left Egypt, he took the bones of Yosef with him. The depth behind this matter was that the level of Moshe also required the level of Yosef, in order to be complete; and as we said before, Moshe also incorporates the level of *Moshiach*.

Therefore, we need to gain a unified outlook on how we understand things. We cannot view our *daas* as being independent of its source, *ayin*; we cannot only connect to *ayin* and never use our basic *daas*; nor can we connect only to *ayin* itself. We must realize that all three levels of understanding thrive on each other; without this unified perspective, we won't have redemption. The redemption is only possible when we have the unified outlook.

The general redemption which will come to the masses will be viewed by all. Each person's personal redemption, however, takes place in his own soul. When both aspects of the redemption take place – the outer redemption, and the inner redemption of each soul – everyone will unify with their source, all at once.

If a person merits to connect all three kinds of *daas* together, he connects to “*Yoishev b'seiser elyon*”, and he will then merit “I will dwell amongst them – in each of them”, and he will merit, with the help of Hashem, the total revelation of Hashem within himself.

06 | *Nullifying The Intellect*

Doing Every Halacha, Whether We Understand It Or Not

As we explained in the last chapter, Hashem placed man on this world, which is called *he'elam* – concealment. The entire Creation we are in consists of contradictions, yet we have the power to live with the contradictions. We are, in essence, a contradiction – because we have a soul and a body.

Our entire *avodah* on this world is a contradiction. On one hand, “There is no place that is empty from Him.” On the other hand, Hashem created a void in the universe, which allows for people to feel that they are being concealed from Him. This entire Creation is full of contradictions on top of contradictions.

What is our *avodah* with all of this? *Emunah*! We must believe in everything the Torah says, for it all comes from Hashem. Since we believe in the Torah, we must do everything it says in the Torah – simply because Hashem wills us to. We should not be carrying out the Torah because it's good for us to do so, or because it's beneficial; we should do it simply for the sake of Hashem, and do so with love (*l'maan shemo b'ahavah*).

Even when we find contradictions in Torah, we must find out what the view of Torah is act upon it, because that is the will of Hashem. Many times we don't understand something that the Torah says to do, and we have all kinds of questions. But if we believe, with complete faith, that all of Torah comes from Hashem, then just as we believe that Hashem is endless, so can we understand that His wisdom of the Torah is endless – and therefore, we don't understand the Torah. We cannot truly understand the Torah's deep wisdom – “*It is very deep, who can find it*”.

Therefore, when we learn Torah and we are trying to clarify points in what we learn, there is a certain attitude we need to go about this: we have to understand that we are trying to figure out what Hashem is saying in His Torah. It's not that we are trying simply to figure out what makes sense; we are trying to figure out the Torah when we learn it, because we want to know what Hashem is telling us through the words of the Torah.

For example, it can be that we can find facts that seem to contradict an accepted *halachah*. How should we view these situations? We have to be able to live with the contradiction and carry out the *halachah* anyway. Yes, we can remain with the question. But that doesn't mean that it has to stop us from carrying out the *halacha*. We have to follow every *halacha*, no matter what, even when we know that there are facts which contradict the particular *halacha*. For this, we need *emunah*. We must believe that the *halacha* is the will of Hashem, and therefore, we have to act upon it, whether we understand it fully or not.

Halacha Is Independent On The Reason Behind It

Let us think into this matter.

To give an example of what we mean, Chazal say that a person has to daven during a time of distress, so that the evil decrees will be nullified. A person has the power to nullify decrees through his prayers.

The words of Chazal are true, but it's simple and clear that Chazal are not telling us here the entire reason why we daven. They only revealed to us one of the reasons we daven. So even if Eliyahu HaNavi would come and tell us that the evil decree was nullified, we would still have to daven.

This goes against our logic. If Chazal are telling us that we must pray in order to nullify evil decrees, then it sounds to us that if we know for sure that we don't have to worry about the decree, there should be no point in davening. That's what logic dictates! But here is where *emunah* comes in. *Emunah* tells us that there are many more reasons behind the Torah's commandments. *Emunah* tells us that there are exist more reasons which we don't understand, and on a deeper note, we must do the Torah's commandments even if there wouldn't be a reason. A person has to daven because "Hashem wills it so."

To Totally Nullify Our Intellect

To explain this concept on a deeper level, there are four parts to Torah: its sound (*taam*), its pronunciation (*nekudos*), its crowns (*tagim*) and its letters (*osiyos*). When a person goes above the *taam* – the "sound", which can also mean "reason" – he is connected to the level above all these four. This is called the *kutzo shel yud*, the "end of the letter *yud*", which represents the deepest and most subtle understanding of Torah.

When a person keeps the Torah even when he doesn't understand everything, because he nullifies himself to the Creator and to doing His will – whether he understands it or not – he is connected to the highest kind of understanding. This is the secret to all Creations.

When a person nullifies himself, he connects to *ayin*, the source of all wisdom. He will then receive higher levels of comprehension, because his wisdom will then be coming from *ayin*, its source. As it is written, "*Wisdom comes from nothing.*" He is connected to a kind of existence in which he doesn't need logical reasoning to go about things. He does everything because he knows "This is what Hashem wants – whether I understand it, or not."

When a person gets used to living with this perspective, he goes his whole life constantly nullifying his intellect. Not only does he learn how to nullify his own human intellect, but he even learns how to serve Hashem even if he doesn't understand the reasons of the Torah. He does the mitzvos not because he knows the reason for them, because even if there would be no reason for the *mitzvos*, he knows that he must still do them. This is the perfect *temimus* (earnestness) that one can have in his service to Hashem.

In fact, when a person has questions, it's really all a subtle sign of *gaavah* (arrogance). His arrogance is demanding that he understand everything. When he doesn't understand something, he questions it; that's really a form of arrogance!

If a person would just reach his pure point in his soul of *temimus*, he would never have a single question in his life. With *temimus*, it's not that a person has answers to all his questions. Rather, he has no questions in the first place. Questions are rooted in the Side of Evil³¹, and the Side of Evil is made up of the four elements of earth, water, wind and fire. Fire is the root of all the elements, and the trait of *gaavah* \arrogance comes from the element of fire. Thus, all questions that a person has come from his arrogance.

Arrogance resembles the nature of fire. Fire destroys things. When a person is arrogant, he can't come to terms with anything he doesn't understand, and therefore, he haughtily comes to nullify anything in his path that he can't understand.

When a person instead chooses *temimus*, he will not feel challenged by things he doesn't understand; he has no questions, and therefore, he doesn't need to come up with answers. A person with *temimus* simply believes that

³¹ In the Hebrew sefer, the word here is "*kelipah*" (husk). We have translated here as The Side of Evil, which is the translation of the term "*Sitra Achara*".

Hashem wills to run Creation the way He is running it, and He has commanded us with certain commandments; if I understand, that's wonderful, but even if I don't understand, it doesn't matter.

When it comes to learning what the *halacha* is, we need to uncover the contradictions. Hashem gave us all the contradictions so that we should decide between all of them what the *halacha* is. But if isn't an area that has to do with finding out the *halacha*, then being bothered by contradictions is all a lack of *emunah*. The only reason why the person is bothered by the contradiction (when it's not a matter of *halacha*) is only because he only acts if he understands.

Even if we are dealing with a *mitzvah* in which Hashem wants us to understand it, we have to have the attitude that we want to understand it solely because Hashem said that we should understand it, but not because we have any personal reason.

This is what it means to have true *temimus*: A person trains himself to living with this point – a clear point which we has been accepted throughout all the generations – that whether he understands something or not, he still does it because that is what Hashem wants. “*Minhag avoseinu b'yadeinu*” – it is “a custom of our fathers in our hands.” (Understandably, however, we are only referring to customs which have a holy source to them). When a person succeeds in living with this point all the time – *temimus* – he will come to eventually nullify himself to the Creator, and this is most important thing in life.

It doesn't matter which *minhag* (custom). Each person has his own *minhagim* he received; the main point is not in what we do, but in how we go about it. We have to do everything out of a sense of being nullified to doing what Hashem wants, without any desire to understand how it makes sense or not. We have to do everything solely because it is the will of Hashem.

The Secret of “Hishtavus” (Equilibrium)

Therefore, if we have any questions at all about anything in life, we must try to nullify them – completely. We must believe, with pure earnestness, that if Hashem wants us to understand, then we will understand, but that even if we never come to understand anything, we must still nullify ourselves. All of life is really one big secret – it is all about living with *temimus* towards Hashem.

When we achieve *temimus*, we will then realize that is really no room for any questions or contradictions, and that it doesn't matter if we don't understand things. All we have to do is one thing alone: to carry out every *halacha*. And if it's not a *halacha*, but rather a *minhag*, then we also have to do it, because it's the *minhag*.

But if it's something that's not a *halacha* and not a *minhag*, and we are in doubt about what to do, then what we have to do is to look at each of the options as equally true. This is the secret known as “*hishtavus*”, equilibrium. It is a holy power to be able to view two concepts as being equally truthful. Therefore, it doesn't matter which option we take when it comes to these gray areas.

However, that is only true when the person has no *negios* (personal interests) in one of the options. Once a person has motivations that are leaning towards one of the options more than the other, it shows that he is affected by *negios*, and therefore, he isn't really viewing both options as equally true. A person with *negios* thus isn't able to reach *hishtavus*.

If a person does attain *hishtavus*, though, he is truly connected with Hashem. When a person realizes that all of Creation is really *hishtavus*, he attains a *hishtavus* equilibrium in his own soul, and he will come to a perspective in which he has no doubts about anything.

The truth is: there is no such as any doubts in the world! This is the secret behind the mitzvah to erase Amalek: when we are at peace with everything. It is essentially reached when we realize that there is nothing besides for Hashem – *Ain Od Milvado* – and therefore, there are no ‘doubts’ at all, because there is truly nothing besides for Hashem.

When a person lives with the attitude of *Ain Od Milvado*, it doesn’t make a difference to him how to serve Hashem; the point is not in what we do or what we don’t do. The main thing is how we go about what we do – if we are doing our actions because Hashem wills us to. *That* is the true barometer in whatever we do.

When a person has this perspective, *hishtavus*, his sense of self is nullified – and then he can merit to integrate completely with the Creator.

07 } *The Source of Crying*

We Can Laugh and Cry At Once

There is a story brought in the *Gemara* that when the Sages and Rabbi Akiva were talking through the site of the destruction, they saw a fox emerging from the ruins. The Sages were crying, realizing that the *Beis HaMikdash* is in ruins. Rabbi Akiva, though, laughed. The Sages were bewildered at Rabbi Akiva and said to him, “Akiva, why do you laugh?” Rabbi Akiva responded, “Now that the first part of the prophecy has been fulfilled [that the *Beis HaMikdash* will be destroyed], the second part of the prophecy [that it will be rebuilt] will be fulfilled.”

The Sages and Rabbi Akiva had different reactions to the situation. Both opinions are equally true – as we know that “Their words and their words are both the word of the living G-d.”³² The two different opinions are also reflected in our own soul – our soul has the power to cry, and it has the power to laugh – at once! Our soul can both cry and laugh at the same time. How is this possible?! The answer is contained in the possuk, “*Yoishev B’saiser elyon*” (He sits Above, in concealment). Hashem resides precisely in our contradictions.

Therefore, our *avodah* on Tisha B’Av is two-fold: we cry over the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, yet we can also “laugh” inside ourselves and console ourselves that it will be rebuilt.

Chazal teach us that the root which caused the destruction was when the Spies reported bad news about the land of Israel, and on the night of Tisha B’av, the people cried “tears in vain.” Because of this, Chazal say, the night of Tisha B’av was decreed by Hashem to be a time of tragedy throughout the generations.

From a superficial perspective, we are sad when we hear “bad” news, and we are happy when we hear “good” news. As the *Gemara* says, on good news we make a blessing “*Baruch HaTov V’Hamaitiv*”, and on bad news, we say “*Baruch Dayan Emes*.”

But from a deeper perspective, we know that “Everything Hashem does is for the good”, and therefore, in the future, we will bless “*HaTov V’Hamaitiv*” even on what we once thought was bad.

Therefore, the Sages’ crying reflects the level of the current world, *Olam HaZeh* (This World), while Rabbi Akiva’s laughing was based on the perspective of the future, *Olam HaBa* (the Next World). In this way, we can explain how both the opinions of the Sages and Rabbi Akiva were correct: the Sages were coming from the current viewpoint, while Rabbi Akiva had the viewpoint of the future.

But there is an even deeper approach to explain it: it was, indeed, two contradictory reactions going at once. Even though Rabbi Akiva laughed, there was still a valid reason to cry – because even the perspective of the future doesn’t invalidate the Sages’ crying.

How can this be? If Rabbi Akiva had the future perspective – which is to laugh over all the “bad”, because everything will ultimately be good in the future – how can there be a valid reason to cry?

The answer to this is contained in the concept of “they cried tears in vain”.

³² *Gittin 7b*

From a simple perspective, crying over the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* seems to be a logical kind of crying – the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, the *Shechinah* left us, etc. But Chazal reveal to us that because the Spies' report caused the people to cry tears in vain, that made us “cry in vain” for all the generation; if so, even when we cry on Tisha B'av, it's also tears in vain! We aren't crying over the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* because it makes sense to; rather, we are crying due to a higher source. Chazal call this higher source of the crying as “crying tears in vain.”

How do we reconcile with this?

There is a source in Heaven which Hashem uses to bestow upon us His sustenance, without any reason. This is called His chamber of “*matnas chinam*”. In the same chamber in Heaven, there is a source for our crying, which is called *bechayah shel chinam* – “crying for no reason.” The inner root of all crying has no reason to it. The deep source to all crying is coming from Heaven – and therefore, the inner layer to our crying has no reason to it. When we cry, we really have no reason why we are crying. It is a crying coming from Heaven, *bechayah shel chinam*.

It is written, “*She weeps bitterly at night.*”³³ The possuk is saying that crying comes from the nighttime – in other words, all crying really comes from night/darkness, from a place that we don't understand.

Now that we have explained this, we can now understand how is it possible that we can have both the perspective of the Sages and the perspective of Rabbi Akiva on Tisha B'av; although we can laugh based upon the perspective of the future, we can still cry, because our whole crying over the destruction isn't really logical. It's a kind of crying that is coming from Heaven, *bechayah shel chinam*.

That is how we can both laugh and cry on Tisha B'av, and it's not a contradiction. It is because we do not really know why we are crying on Tisha B'av! After all, from the inner perspective, “Everything Hashem does is for the good.” So why are we crying?! There is really no reason why we are crying. Our crying is coming from a Heavenly source which we do not understand.

Is There Such Thing As “Evil”?

Let us try to understand what exactly the inner source of crying is.

We can ask the following question. Why is evil called “evil”? Why is the *yetzer hora* called the *yetzer hora*, the “evil” inclination? If Hashem created everything, than why is “evil” called “evil”, if it's all really good?

The answer lies in the meaning of the possuk, “*V'emunascha B'lailos*” (“And Your faith at nights”). In this possuk lies depth within depth!

Simply speaking, *V'emunascha B'lailos* means that we have to have faith in Hashem even when we find ourselves in darkness. There is a deeper meaning to the concept, however. After a person reaches the level in which he believes that everything Hashem does is for the best, he can reach the deeper level – *V'emunascha B'Lailos* – in that he believes that he can deal with contradictions.

The greatest contradiction that exists is the following. On one hand, Hashem is *Ain Od Milvado*; He is everywhere, and He fills all of Creation. On the other hand, He created an empty void which does not contain His presence, and He used this space to make the world with. If Hashem fills everywhere, how can there be such a

³³ *Eichah* 1:2

concept as the void? The answer is: it's a contradiction, and in spite of this, we can still have *emunah*. We have to have *emunah*, even when we come across the greatest contradictions.

Therefore, we can cry on Tisha B'av; because even though we know that in the future we will see how everything is good – which was indeed the perspective of Rabbi Akiva – we still cry, because Hashem also wants there to be a certain void in Creation!

Our *emunah* shows us how we can handle the great contradiction of our life. If we were to only focus on *Ain Od Milvado* and that everything Hashem does is for the best, then we would never have any pain, and there would be no validation to ever cry. But when we have *emunah*, we can believe that just as we believe in *Ain Od Milvado*, so can we believe that Hashem also created a void in the world, and from that void, we are able to cry when we have valid pain.

Therefore, when we cry over the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, it's really because we have *emunah* that we are supposed to cry, even though we don't understand why we should be crying. After all, everything Hashem does is for the best, so why are we crying? We are crying in vain. We are crying because we have *emunah* that we must cry, even though we do not understand why we should cry.

On Tisha B'av, we have to have *emunah* that there is such thing as “evil”, even though we know that in the future we will see how even evil can be good. Right now, in the current state of affairs, Hashem wants us to recognize such a thing as “bad” and “evil” and have pain at this. He wants us to cry right now, even though we know that everything He does is good.

This is the perspective we reach when we reach true *emunah*.

Our Life Is A Contradiction

From understanding this, we should arrive at the following point.

We are a contradiction. On one hand, we all know in our minds that “Everything Hashem does is good”, but when it comes to actualizing this belief in our life, we still feel pain.

There is a contradiction going on between our heart and our mind. Our mind understands, intellectually, what the truth is – that everything Hashem does is good. But our heart is feeling totally different from this. Simply, we would say that this is because we have a problem that we haven't internalized our knowledge yet into our heart, as we know that we have an *avodah* to internalize (“*And you will know today, and you shall return the matter upon your heart*”).

That is true, but we have a deeper *avodah* than this as well. Our mind's knowledge represents the understanding that is above us³⁴, the unlimited comprehension which goes above logic. Our heart's knowledge represents our limited comprehension.

Of course, first our *avodah* is to try to internalize our mind's knowledge into our heart. But we must also realize that there is a contradiction always going on inside of us between our mind and heart. Just as we believe that our

³⁴ In the Hebrew sefer, the author describes this as a manifestation of “*ohr makif*”, “surrounding light” (which is an understanding that is outside/above us), and “*ohr penimi*”, inner light, (the understanding that we have within us).

mind's knowledge is true, so must we come to understand that our heart's limited understanding (our feelings, which don't allow us any peace to make sense with things) is also to be validated.

This is a very deep point. It seems simply that our heart is disagreeing with the truth that we know in our mind, and that there is only one truth here, the truth that our mind knows. But at the same time, we must be aware that we live all the time with contradictions in our life; we must recognize that our mind thinks one way, while our heart always feels differently.

Our *avodah* is to keep trying to internalize our mind's knowledge (that everything Hashem does is good) into our heart. When we succeed in internalizing, we then gain a whole new mind. We will still have contradictions, though, even after that. What is then our *avodah*? Our *avodah* is to keep continuing to internalize our knowledge, again and again, and go through this cycle: knowing, then internalizing, then finding contradictions – and then once again returning to knowing, internalizing, and finding contradictions, etc.

Our whole human makeup is a contradiction. Our mind is one kind of understanding, while our heart is another kind of understanding. It is an example of the concept of “*rotzoh v'shov*”, our general *avodah* of “running and “returning”, in that we go through a constant cycle of progressing and then falling from our progress, only to return back to progress and then to keep repeating that cycle. The fact that we have a contradiction in ourselves between our mind and our heart is not just that there is this contradiction; it is the inner reality of every person!

Without knowing this secret about life, that we are supposed to live with contradictions, life is very difficult. We must firmly believe that our mind thinks one way, while our heart thinks a different way, and this contradiction is an inextricable part of who we are.

Now we can understand the following point. Although we know the statement of our Sages that “Everything Hashem does is for the good”, that doesn't invalidate our need to cry. Why? It's not that we aren't believers. It is for a different reason. It is because our mind believes the truth – but our heart does not. Our heart is below the understanding of *Emunah*, so it initially does not want to take *Emunah* as an answer. On a deeper note, we cry when we have real pain and suffering, not because it makes sense to cry, but for no reason at all.

(This is the depth behind, “They cried tears in vain”. We know that the destruction came about due to how the nation “cried tears in vain” when they heard the Spies' complaints about the land of Israel, and that we were punished because of this pointless crying. This was an evil usage of the power to cry, but the power to cry is good at its root, which is to cry for no logical reason at all. We can use the root good of “crying in vain” on Tisha B'av, which is really an illogical kind of crying).

It is our heart that has pain and cries, not our mind. This is not by chance. First, our *avodah* is to internalize our mind's knowledge into our heart, but at the same time, we must also understand that our heart's feelings of pain are to be validated, and that is an equal understanding to our mind's understanding. Just as our mind is correct for believing that “Everything that Hashem does is for the good”, so too, when we have legitimate pain and we cry, our heart is correct in feeling the need to cry. It is a crying that is above logic, the power of “crying in vain” being used for good.

However, when a person cries simply out of a lack of *Emunah*, he is using “crying in vain” for evil. It is only when a person believes that his crying is coming from his heart, from the root good power of “crying in vain”, that he elevates his heart's understanding to the level of his mind's understanding.

The Three Levels Of Crying When We Have Pain

To make this practical, there are three possible reasons why a person would cry. Two of these reasons are valid reasons to cry, while one of them is a lack of *Emunah*.

The lowest level of crying is when a person cries, simply, out of a lack of *Emunah*.

A person with the higher perspective, though, cries with the following attitude: he knows in his mind that everything Hashem does is for the best, but he also knows that sometimes we have a *mitzvah* to cry, like to cry over the destruction of Jerusalem. He detaches from his *Emunah* a bit and instead allows himself to cry.

This higher kind of crying is reflected in the following story. The Kamarna Rebbe *zt”l* once lost a son. As he went through this tragedy, he said that he is momentarily disconnecting from his great utter bond with Hashem, and that he is instead allowing himself to feel pain. He said that if he would have remained in his total attachment with Hashem, he wouldn’t feel any pain over the death of his son, and since he knew that it is Hashem’s will that he should cry over his son’s death, he allowed himself to disconnect from his great *d’veykus* and *emunah*. He let himself descend from his lofty perch a bit, to the level of his heart’s emotions, the lower understanding, so that he could cry.

There is an even higher kind of crying than this, and that is when a person cries even though he has no idea why he is crying; this is when a person is so connected with Hashem that his crying comes from a place that is above himself, a crying that’s coming from Heaven. In the level we mentioned before, a person cries out of *Emunah* that he knows he must cry in order to fulfill Hashem’s will. But in this third kind of crying, which is a higher level, a person cries without any explanation. He’s not crying because he’s sad, and he’s not crying because he knows that it is Hashem’s will. He is crying even though he has no idea why!

How can a person reach such a level of crying? It doesn’t come from within. It can come when a person becomes so utterly connected with Hashem that he goes above even his *daas*. This is a level called “*lo yeda*”³⁵, no *daas* – in other words, there is a kind of higher understanding from above that can come to a person when he nullifies his *daas*, when he realizes that just as he is limited in his understanding, so is there is a kind of unlimited understanding that is above human logic.

However, such a high understanding can only come to a person when he is truly connected to a life in which he has the synthesis of both understanding his human limits, as well as recognizing that there is a realm of the unlimited that is beyond him. Such a person can both “cry and laugh” at once – he can cry based upon his limited understanding, and he can laugh based upon the higher, unlimited understanding.

Suffering Is Incomprehensible!

The Maharal says that both the words “*galus*” (exile) and “*geulah*” (redemption) have the same letters in them (*gimmel* and *lamed*), because they are both from the word *giluy* – revelation. In other words, both the exiles and the

EDITOR'S NOTE: To be brief on this vast subject, the concept of “lo yeda” is that there is a kind of daas that is above our regular daas; the source of this is an expression of the Baal Shem Tov, who said that “the purpose of “yeda” (“to know”) is lo yeda (to not know)” – that there is a higher kind of understanding we can reach in which we can realize that we do not understand things from our logical perspective. This is reached the more and more a person attains a deeper closeness to Hashem. It is explained at length in Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Part 5, in the beginning of the section Mili D’Avodah (Deep Matters of Avodah), p.293-303 (a piece that will b’ezras Hashem soon be translated for the Bilvavi website), as well as throughout sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Part IX.

redemption serve to reveal Hashem, each in their own way. (The redemption, will, of course, be a more complete revelation).

It is written, “Behold, the angels are crying out” (In Hebrew, “*Hein erealim tzauku chutzpah*”). The commentators of this *posuk* explain that the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* is something that our logical mind cannot endure. How could it be that Hashem, who is so merciful, has given cruelty to rein free? How could He allow so much pain upon His creations? There is no logical way to understand the destruction.

Avinu, av harachaman – Our Father, our Merciful Father. Where is Your mercy?! Where is Your kindness? Even the cruelest person on this world wouldn’t bring so much destruction to the world; how can it be that You, Hashem, our Merciful Father, can do this to Your children?!

From our human perspective that is limited, there is no way to understand how it could be that Hashem, Who is the epitome of mercy (*midas harachamim*) could allow for the destruction of Jerusalem. The Destruction is something that is above our limited comprehension.

This is why the angels were crying out over the destruction: because there is no logical way to understand how Hashem could allow such destruction.

However, although we do not really understanding anything – not the *Beis HaMikdash* itself, and not its destruction, and not the Endlessness of Hashem – still, we know that *we are able to have a connection to Hashem*, and that is **when we nullify ourselves to Him**.

There are many valid questions which people are asking in the world: How could there be a destruction to Jerusalem? How could Hashem allow such destruction?

How can we understand all the suffering going on in the world?

There is only one answer. It is really not possible to understand suffering; it is simply illogical! When we read about the stories in the *Gemara*³⁶ about what went on by the destruction of Jerusalem, and when we read about all of this insane suffering that went on during that period, as well as when we think about all of the suffering that the Jewish people has gone through in more recent times (which is much more than what they went through in previous generations), everyone is baffled: Is this the Merciful Hashem, who is supposed to be the epitome of compassion?!!

Of course, when we look into our holy literature, we can find all kinds of answers: even bad can somehow end up being good, etc. But in the end, our mind cannot endure such a thing! All of the suffering is so mind-boggling! How could Hashem pain us for so many years?!

Logically speaking, one would have to be the cruelest being possible in existence to allow so much pain to go on in Creation.

The truth is that we cannot understand how Hashem could let it be possible for so much suffering to go on in His Creation, how He could allow so much evil and destruction to take place. However, precisely because we cannot understand it, that itself leads us to an inner understanding: that nothing can really be comprehended.

When a person reaches this inner perspective – that human suffering is impossible to understand, since our logic is limited – he will be able to understand that even when we have pain and cry over the Destruction on Tisha B’Av, it is not because we are simply saddened over what is going on, from our limited perspective. We are really crying

36 See Gittin 55a

because we are connecting to what is above our comprehension; it is a crying that we do not really understand. It is an illogical kind of crying, and it indeed does not make any sense.

The Deep Understanding Of Tisha B'Av

Herein lies the following deep point.

The simple understanding of Tisha B'Av is the following: the external part of our *avodah* on this day is to feel sad, to feel the destruction. The inner part of our *avodah* on this day is to be aware that *Moshiach's* light is contained in this day.³⁷ The external layer of Tisha B'Av seems to involve our *daas*, while the inner aspect of Tisha B'Av is *lo yeda*.

But there is more to Tisha B'Av. Even the outer aspect of Tisha B'Av – our sadness, pain and mourning – is also illogical; it's not something we can really perceive with our *daas*. Our *daas* really cannot come to terms with the pain. Both the outer aspect of Tisha B'Av (our mourning) and the inner aspect of Tisha B'Av (the birth of *Moshiach*) are forms of *lo yeda*! The very fact that we mourn on this day, which is the external *avodah* of Tisha B'Av, is a kind of *lo yeda*. It is not something we can understand through our *daas*.

Both the external and inner layers of Tisha B'Av are forms of revealing Hashem. The inner layer of Tisha B'Av, which is that it is *Moshiach's* birth, is a more obvious kind of revelation, but it is only one kind of revelation. Even the outer aspect of Tisha B'Av – our mourning – serves as a way to reveal Hashem. We do not understand with our *daas* either of these things. They are both forms of *lo yeda*, and thus they are both different ways of how Hashem is revealed.

Human comprehension cannot understand the destruction. Even the angels in Heaven didn't understand why it had to happen, and therefore they were crying out in protest. We cannot understand how it could be that Hashem would destroy His own home.

We do not either comprehend the *Beis HaMikdash*. The entire concept of the *Beis HaMikdash* is a form of *lo yeda*; the *Beis HaMikdash* contained the *Shechinah* (Hashem's Presence), which we have no comprehension of.

If we come into Tisha B'Av with the *emunah* that we must cry, even though we do not understand why we must cry (since everything Hashem does is good...), then we will be able to connect to the true, inner source of the crying.

If we only focus on the perspective of Rabbi Akiva, who laughed – because he was aware of the future, in which we will understand how all evil is really good – then we are denying the fact that we must cry on this day. The Sages were not wrong in crying. They were well aware of Rabbi Akiva's thinking.

The proper attitude to have on Tisha B'Av is with *hishtavus* (“equilibrium”) – to be at peace with two contradictory facts at once: that just as we must believe that everything Hashem does is for the best, so we must believe that we have to cry today. If we have this perspective, we will be able to draw our crying from its true source.

Therefore, if a person is crying on Tisha B'Av, and he is aware that it's simply because he is feeling pain over the destruction, then he must believe that his crying is really coming from an inner place. Our crying on Tisha B'Av is not coming from anything we understand; it is coming from an inner source, a higher source – a Heavenly source. It is not a crying coming from our *daas*; it is a crying coming from our *lo yeda*. When we have that perspective – when

³⁷ As Chazal say, that *Moshiach* is born on Tisha B'Av.

we can both cry on the outside, and “laugh” on the inside – we will be able to receive a clear connection with Hashem, a kind that is totally above human comprehension.

08 | *The Torah of Moshe and the Torah of Moshiach [abridged]*

The Two Dimensions of Torah: Current and Future

It is written, “Remember the Torah of Moshe, my servant.”³⁸ The Torah is called *Toras Moshe* – the Torah of Moshe Rabbeinu. On the other hand, it is written, “The Torah of Hashem is perfect, it settles the soul.”³⁹

This shows us that there are two angles of the Torah. One angle of Torah is the “Torah of Moshe”, which is the Torah we understand through our *daas*, our human comprehension. The other description of Torah is that it is “*Toras Hashem Temimah*” – it is called a Torah of *temimus* \wholesomeness, and this is called *Toras Hashem*.

The root behind these two descriptions of Torah – *Toras Moshe*, and *Toras Hashem Temimah* – is explained in *sefer Me’ohr Einayim* in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: Torah consists of two levels. One level is called *ohr* (light), which represents human comprehension. The other level in Torah is called *me’ohr* (illumination), and it represents *ayin* – the understanding that is above regular comprehension.

The Torah of our regular comprehension is called *Torah ohr*, and this is *Toras Moshe*. The Torah which we can’t understand with our human comprehension is *me’ohr*, and it is called *Toras Hashem Temimah*. “No thought can comprehend Him”, and therefore, there is a whole different angle of Torah: a Torah we receive when we have *d’veykus* in Hashem. It cannot be understood by regular human intellect; it’s an esoteric, spiritual kind of understanding which you don’t reach through human thought.

The Torah which we can reach through our *daas* is called the “*Torah of Moshe, My servant.*” But the description of Torah known as “*Toras Hashem*” will be revealed by *Moshiach*, and it will be above *daas* – above the current level of human comprehension. It will be “*lo yeda*” – “no *daas*”; it will be a connection with Hashem that doesn’t involve any human comprehension.

The Rambam (in *sefer Moreh Nevuchim*) writes that we are capable of receiving an intellect which comes from Hashem (*seichel d’kedushah* – holy intellect). The highest level of this human comprehension was reached by Moshe Rabbeinu – the personification of *daas*. As lofty as this is, it still involves human comprehension, and therefore, it is not yet the most complete connection that a person can reach with Hashem. The most complete connection with Hashem will only be revealed by *Moshiach*, which will be the level that is above our current comprehension; it will not involve any human thought whatsoever. It will be just a simple and utter connection with Hashem, with no thought involved at all.

This is the fundamental difference between the Torah of Moshe and the Torah of *Moshiach*. Of course, “The Torah will not be exchanged.” It is just that when *Moshiach* comes, a new depth to Torah will be revealed: that a person can connect to Hashem on a level that does not involve any thought. It will be a level that is above thought. It will not be experienced through our thoughts – it will be just the utter attachment with Hashem, with no thinking process involved.

³⁸ Malachi 3:23

³⁹ Tehillim 19:8

(Of course, as we already mentioned before, the Torah of *Moshiach* will not come to negate the Torah of Moshe, *chas v'shalom*. Rather, the Torah of *Moshiach* will serve to reveal a different kind of depth to how G-dliness is revealed on the world).

The Torah of *Moshiach*, of the future, is above thought. It will rather be total nullification to Hashem, a total attachment with Hashem – and for this reason, it is referred to as the “*Torah of Hashem is perfect, it settles the soul.*” It will be entirely a *bittul* – a sense of being completely nullified – to Hashem; it will be a total integration with Hashem.

Before *Moshiach* comes, only a few individuals have truly touched the Torah; this is what the Baal Shem Tov said. But after *Moshiach* comes, Chazal say that “the illumination in it [the Torah] will return everything to good.” This reflects the concept of how *teshuvah* (repentance), was created before the world. When *Moshiach* comes, the concept of “*Ain Od Milvado*” will be fully revealed; the point of “*ayin*” (the source of all wisdom) in Torah will be revealed. It will be the *d'veykus* (attachment) with Hashem that is above all thought.

This is what *Moshiach* will reveal.

The Core Of Everything: Hashem's Will Being Revealed

We will expand upon these very deep words.

In Creation, there are three root forces: *ratzon* (will), *machshavah* (thought), and *hisbonenus* (contemplation). These are also known as *chochmah*\wisdom [which is parallel to *machshavah*], *binah*\contemplation [which is parallel to *hisbonenus*] and *daas*\awareness [which is parallel to *ratzon*].

We contemplate things through our thoughts, and we think about what we want. This shows us that the *ratzon* is the root of our thoughts. How do we know what we want? For this, we use our power of *daas*: a person can know what he wants. Our *daas* reveals to us what our *ratzon* is.

Our *ratzon* is hidden from us; we usually don't know what we want. The root of all *ratzon* is Hashem, whose will is running the world; just as we have no comprehension of Hashem, so is the comprehension of our own *ratzon* hidden from us.

It is not simply that *ratzon* is the point above our *machshavah*; that is only the perspective from our *daas*. *Moshiach* will reveal the higher understanding, which is above our *daas*: that the only thing that exists is *ratzon*!

Our current understanding, the understanding coming from our *daas*, is that *ratzon* is the root all forces, and therefore our various senses and soul faculties are offshoots from *ratzon*. The future revelation, however, will reveal that *ratzon* is everything – and that all other forces in Creation are merely different ways of how Hashem's *ratzon* is revealed.

On the future, it is written, “*our mouths will be filled with laughter.*”⁴⁰ We will then see that our entire understanding is something to laugh about; “*we were like dreamers*”. Just as in a dream we do not see what is really going on, and we are merely viewing an illusion, so will we see in the future that we never understood anything. We will see that all of our current understanding is like a dream – a complete illusion! Hashem will show us that everything in essence is only to reveal His will. These are very, very deep words.

⁴⁰ *Tebillim* 126:1

Everything Serves To Reveal Hashem's Will

One of the great lessons that the Baal Shem Tov taught was that in whatever we see or hear, we need to learn from it how we can serve Hashem.

The depth of this matter is not simply because we have to see Divine Providence in everything; that is certainly true, but there is more to the matter. The depth of the concept is that in whatever we see, feel, or think about – it's all a revelation of Hashem's will. Everything that exists is all an expression of His will being revealed. Therefore, everything in Creation can show us how to serve Hashem, because everything somehow serves to reveal Hashem's will. It's not that everything "happens" to somehow teach us how we can serve Hashem; it is rather that since everything is a revelation of Hashem's will, we always have to learn how each thing serves to reveal Hashem's will.

This understanding is the perspective of the innermost point of the soul (*Yechidah*): that everything, absolutely everything, is always a way of how Hashem's *ratzon* is revealed.

Moshiach's Revelation

Moshiach will reveal this matter to the world. He will reveal it to everyone's heart; in our minds, we can all know about these matters intellectually, but it's not yet in the heart. *Moshiach* will reveal this fact into all our hearts.

The Torah of Moshe involves our *daas*. For this reason, we can argue about what the Torah is saying and have debates in Torah; we can try to clarify its wisdom. Our current understanding of Torah is that we are trying to figure out its *chochmah* – not to reveal Hashem's *ratzon* yet through it, but because we want to know the *chochmah*.

But the Torah of *Moshiach* will not involve our *daas*; it will be in the sphere of *temimus*, of seeing how everything is Hashem's *ratzon*. It will be that even after we figure out what the *ratzon* of Hashem is, we will still realize that we do not comprehend Hashem's wisdom.

Halacha Reveals Hashem's Will

Learning *Halacha* can show us how everything is essentially about doing Hashem's will. *Halacha* is not just about *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*; nor is it only coming to reveal to us the Torah. *Halacha* shows us what Creation is all about – that our entire focus and involvement is all about one thing alone: the *ratzon* of Hashem. Of course, beyond the realm of our understanding is the plane of where we can achieve *d'veykus* with Hashem. But when it comes to what we understand, our entire concern is always about what the *ratzon* of Hashem is.

"The Torah is not in heaven." Only we on this earth can reveal Hashem, through the keeping of *Halacha*. Although we live in the lowest realm – *Asiyah* \action – it is precisely in this lowly realm that we can reveal Hashem's will. It doesn't happen in Heaven. *Moshiach* will come on this lowly world we live on – not in Heaven. The revival of the dead will take place on this world – not in Heaven. It is precisely on this world – the lowest of all the realms – in which Hashem's *ratzon* can become revealed.

The word for "earth" is *eretz*, and when we rearrange the letters, it can spell "*ratzon*", alluding to how Hashem's *ratzon* can become revealed precisely on this earth, although we are not in Heaven.

When We Don't Know What the Ratzon Hashem Is

Just as when it comes to our thoughts there are lower thoughts and higher thoughts – *yeda* and *lo yeda*, as we have described before – so is this true when it comes to *ratzon*: there is a *ratzon* that we can know, as well as a *ratzon* that we don't know.

When a person learns and he clearly understands what he is learning, he realizes what the *ratzon* of Hashem is, but what happens if he's not sure about something in his learning? He's not sure about what the *ratzon* of Hashem is. How should he look at this?

If a person only has the lower perspective in life, then he doesn't care that he's not clear about what the *ratzon* of Hashem is, because he consoles himself with the fact that at least he has involved himself with the *Chochmah*\wisdom of Hashem.

But if a person has the higher perspective – which is that our entire involvement on this world should always be about the *ratzon* of Hashem – then being intellectually involved in Torah will feel pointless to him. When we aren't clear what the *ratzon* of Hashem is – not just when if we're unclear in *Halacha*, but even when it comes to all areas in life – then we are apt to feel that our everything is pointless, because we haven't figured out what the *Ratzon* of Hashem is.

Such an attitude is actually coming from the “Amalek” within the soul [which we mentioned before, in Chapter Three]; we are apt to become doubtful about what Hashem wants, and then we feel that everything is pointless. Since we know that all we live for is *Ratzon* Hashem, if we don't know the *Ratzon* Hashem is, we feel that all is pointless.

What is the proper to view these situations (when we are in doubt about what the *Ratzon* Hashem is)? We should make use of our power of “*lo yeda*”, this time applying it to *Ratzon*: that we indeed do not know what the *Ratzon* of Hashem is, yet we still can feel attached to Hashem through this very situation of doubt. It can help us feel nullified, because we are at a loss of understanding in what to do. We will feel even more humbled before Hashem and come to truly connect to Him – precisely through this situation of being disoriented.

When we are clear about what the *ratzon* of Hashem is, we think we understand things, and we don't come to nullify ourselves to Hashem. But when we find ourselves unclear about what His *ratzon* is, we feel like we do not understand things – and we can then feel humbled at this.

This is the meaning of *d'veykus* in Hashem! “No thought can comprehend Him.” We cannot understand Hashem; our entire priority and concern in life is to do His *ratzon*. But we do not know even His *ratzon*! What then are we to do? ***That's*** when we can become truly close to Hashem: we can nullify ourselves, because we feel that we do not understand anything. *This* is how we reach the state of *ayin*, “nothingness” – and this enables us to become integrated with Hashem (*hiskalelus*). This is the true *d'veykus* with Hashem.

“The Purpose of Knowing Is To Realize That We Do Not Know”

In these words, there is subtlety contained within subtlety.

Let's say a person thinks, “Hashem does not want to me to know what His *ratzon* is”, and perhaps he bases this on the well-known quote, “The purpose of “*yeda*” (knowing) is to realize *lo yeda* (that we do “not” know).” Yet, even such thinking is not yet accessing *lo yeda*, because he still thinks that he understands! He thinks that Hashem's

ratzon is that right now he should not know, so he thinks that he knows what Hashem's *ratzon* is from him right now. He won't be able to integrate himself with Hashem yet.

Rather, the more inner perspective to have is that Hashem always wants something from us, but that His *ratzon* is hidden from us – and it is hidden from us due to our own fault somehow, since we have the power of free will. The proper way to go about doubtful situations is that we are in doubt about what the *ratzon* of Hashem is, and Hashem indeed wants us to know what His *ratzon* is – and the only reason that we don't know His *ratzon* is somehow due to our own fault.

A person should come to the point in which he has no idea at all what Hashem wants from him: “Maybe He wants me to know what He wants; maybe He wants that I shouldn't know. Maybe he wants something else from me other than these two options. I have no idea what His *ratzon* is.” If a person truly gains this perspective, he can then come to feel integrated with Hashem.

“The purpose of knowing is to realize that we do not know.” It is precisely when we feel like we don't know anything that we truly access the state of *lo yeda*, and then, we can become integrated with Hashem. As long as we think we understand things – even if it is just about understand what Hashem's *ratzon* is – then we are still trying to understand things, and we won't be able to integrate with Hashem yet. It is precisely when we are totally disoriented about what the *ratzon* Hashem is that we can come to simply integrate with Him.

How To View Our Learning: What Hashem Wants From Us

When we get down to the depth of these words, we can come to the understanding that all ‘contradictions’ we find are essentially existing so that we can come to figure out what Hashem wants from us.

Let's say a person asks a Rov about a certain *Halacha*. He should have the perspective that his question is really: “What does Hashem want from me?”

We can give another example. Let's say a person comes across an argument in Chazal about what went on in history; for example, there is an argument amongst our Rabbis about what went on by the Exodus from Egypt. When we wonder about what went on then, it's not about what went on – it's about what Hashem wants from us from this information.

The Torah gives us certain information, and it is all to reveal to us what Hashem's *ratzon* is. We really do not understand the actual information contained in the Torah. For example, there is an argument if the Aron was 5 or 6 *tefachim* long. It's not a question of how the Aron looked. It's a question of: What does Hashem want from me to understand, based on if the Aron was 5 *tefachim* long – or if it was 6 *tefachim* long?

If we feel in doubt about what Hashem wants from us, refer to what we discussed earlier. But the point is that the way we should approach any point when we learn Torah is with this attitude: What does Hashem want from me based upon this information I am learning about? As it is written, “*What does Hashem your G-d ask of you...?*” Beyond what Hashem wants from us, we have no comprehension, and it is not of interest to us.

If we are simply trying to comprehend Torah without this perspective, then we are attempting to understand reality, and as we explained, this is impossible. We do not understand reality as it is. “No thought can comprehend Him.” We cannot clarify anything about this world; all we can clarify is to try to figure out what Hashem's *ratzon* is. If a person understands the point we are saying, he has everything – he won't be able to ever become

disconnected from Hashem, because he will have become ultimately connected to always doing Hashem's *ratzon*, as simple as can be.

People tend to be intellectual and think, "What happened? What took place? What's the reality?" But we do not know reality. All we should be interested in is in knowing what Hashem wants from us, based upon the information in Torah we are learning about.

If one understands this point, it will simply be impossible for him to disconnect from Hashem – or, at least, it will be impossible for him to ever disconnect from doing Hashem's will.

It is written, "*Those who grasp the Torah do not know me.*" This possuk is referring to those who learn Torah and only attempt to understand its information, without understanding that the point of learning Torah is to figure out what the *ratzon* Hashem is.

What Moshe Represents, and What Moshiach Represents

"Moshe" is close in numerical value to the word *ratzon*, and he is also the personification of *daas*. This hints to us that our entire *daas* is not merely for the sake of *daas*, but that our entire *daas* should be about what the *ratzon* of Hashem is.

"Moshe" equals 345 in Hebrew, while "*ratzon*" equals 346. This alludes that he was still missing one aspect of *ratzon* before his death. However, when his soul departed his body, he merited to reach the level of complete *ratzon* – he reached the level of *lo yeda*. This is hinted to in the possuk, "*And no man knows of his burial*" – a hint to "*lo yoda*" which he reached at his death.

The perfect level of *lo yeda* (or *ayin*) will be revealed by *Moshiach*. *Moshiach* will reveal to all the concept of *bittul* (nullification) to Hashem, and for this reason, the possuk refers to the era of *Moshiach* as "*days which I have no desire for*" – in other words, there will be no more free will anymore to choose evil, because everyone will feel nullified to the truth.

09 | *The Deepest Level of Emunah (ABRIDGED)*

We Never Really Understand Things!

The Hebrew word for “root” is the word *shoresh*. A root is something you cannot see – as we see from the physical world, that the roots of a tree are underground and hidden from the eye. We never see the root.

The *sefarim hakedoshim* write that the highest point in Creation is called *shoresh kol hashorashim*, the “root of all roots”. It is the point which is totally incomprehensible. Even if we were to reach beyond our regular understanding and enter into what is beyond our intellect – which we have been describing, generally, as “*lo yoda*” - there would still be concepts which we can’t understand. The root of all understandings – *shoresh kol hashorashim* – is the point of the incomprehensible. We cannot understand it; we cannot have any grasp of it.

The True Emunah

We know that there is a Creator. We can prove His existence in many ways. But if we reach the higher understanding (described in the previous chapters), we can realize that although we know there is a Creator, we still do not comprehend even this basic belief. Why? Because there are many contradictions to this basic belief. Although we can prove that He exists, there are still many contradictions we can find to this fact.

Here is where we come to the true depth of *Emunah* – to the very secret of *Emunah*.

The basic kind of *Emunah* is to believe that there is a Creator, since there is much proof to this irrefutable fact. But there is a deeper level of *Emunah* that we can still reach, which is a kind of *Emunah* that is higher than logic. There is a certain point at which we come to in which we realize that there are many things we don’t understand, and our logic can’t help us out.

At that point, we need to access a different kind of *Emunah* – an *Emunah* that’s coming from our heart. As Rashi often says, “My heart tells me so.” We can’t always prove everything that we believe in. Our logic serves to get us to understand things, but eventually we come to a certain point in which we don’t understand things, and we have to abandon our logic. We have to simply believe – that Hashem fills everywhere, that He is endless, that He is *Ain Od Milvado* (There is nothing besides Him).

When we reach the understanding that we do not understand things, it is then that we can reach total *bittul* (nullification) to the Creator. We can then realize that there is a Creator simply because we believe that He exists, and not because we can prove it. We simply have *emunah!* There is nothing to doubt about Hashem. The innermost point of our soul knows with absolute certainty that there is a Creator; our true essence, our soul, does not need proof. This is the true secret of *Emunah* – to believe in the Creator, even when we can’t prove everything about Him.

Until a person reaches this understanding, he has a logical belief in the Creator, but he hasn’t yet accessed the true *Emunah*. The true *Emunah* is to realize: We indeed have no proof; there are contradictions. We can believe in the Creator, even if we were to have no proof of His existence – because we don’t need proof. It is an intrinsic kind of *Emunah* – it is a pure and earnest belief, with no proof needed to validate it.

This is the secret to having complete *Eemunah*.

As long as a person thinks that he has “proof” that there is a Creator – even if it is only a subtle way of proving Him – on a subtle note, he hasn’t yet reached *Eemunah* ! In order to reach *Eemunah*, a person has to come to the point in which he believes in the Creator even if he wouldn’t have proof.

The depth of *emunah* is thus not just to believe that Hashem is endless, as we know from *sefarim hakedoshim*. The depth of *Eemunah* is to believe, *because I believe*.

This is the ultimate secret. What’s a true secret? If something can be logically explained, it’s not a secret. *Eemunah* is the ultimate secret, because as much as you try to explain that there is a Creator, one can still have logical questions; it is always a secret matter. *Eemunah* is truly reached only when we believe in His existence, even when can’t prove it logically.

Realizing That We Do Not Understand Things

The only way to reach true *Eemunah* is thus when we nullify our understanding; when we realize that our comprehension is limited.

If we only remain with intellectual *Eemunah* – meaning, if we believe in the Creator because we can prove His existence in many ways – then our *Eemunah* is being clothed by our intellect. Our intellect will thus be serving as a divider between us and our Hashem, and then we won’t be able to reach the simple connection with Hashem. But if we realize that *Eemunah* in the Creator doesn’t have to depend on our intellectual understanding, then we remove the divider – and we will be able to use *Eemunah* as a way to directly connect with the Creator.

This is the higher understanding: There is no I. There is no *daas*. There is no intellect. All of these factors [that involve our ego] – our “I”, our *daas*, our intellect – are barriers between us and Hashem, unless we nullify them. We have to simply believe in Hashem because we believe, and then we will discover that there are no barriers between us and Hashem.

Eemunah Is The Point Beyond Intellectual Thought

“No thought can comprehend Him.” If our *Eemunah* in Hashem is something we need to think about, it’s only intellectual *Eemunah*, and we won’t get to having a simple connection with Hashem. If we realize that we can believe in Hashem even when we can’t intellectually prove Him, though, then we transcend our thoughts, and then we will be able to come to the point of “No thought can comprehend Him.” No thought can comprehend Hashem; but if we have “no thought”, so to speak, *then*, we can have some grasp of Him.

The Sixth Sense

Let us attempt to explain what *Eemunah* is.

When a person is driving his car, why does he trust that his car will get him to his destination? It is because he has used his car in the past successfully, so he automatically trusts that his car will get him there again. His trust in the car is a logical kind of trust; he senses it.

But *Emunah* in Hashem, on its ultimate level, is a deeper kind of trust. It is intrinsic; it isn't based on logic, and it doesn't depend on our five senses. The *sefarim hakedoshim* refer to as *Emunah* as the sixth sense – a G-dly sense.

Let's say a person is aware that he cannot lift a mountain, but he knows that Hashem can lift a mountain. He knows that his strength is puny, while Hashem has much more strength – endless strength. Yet, even such belief is not yet true *Emunah*, because the person still thinks here that he has some understanding of Hashem. He thinks of Hashem as One who has much more strength than he does; he thinks he has some inkling of understanding.

Although it is true that Hashem possesses endless abilities, this is still not yet the depth of *Emunah*. The depth of *Emunah* is reached only when we realize that we have no iota of understanding of Him.

Emunah is to believe in the reality of Hashem, even though we cannot understand Him at all. Of course, we also have other parts to our *Emunah*, such as belief in *hashgacha peratis* (Divine Providence), and there are many other fundamentals as well pertaining to our *Emunah* which we must believe in. We are obligated to believe in all the fundamentals of faith, but we must be aware what the root of our faith is: that Hashem is incomprehensible. To believe that Hashem is very mighty is a weak kind of *Emunah* (to put it mildly).

This is the meaning of *Ein Sof* – the Endless, the Infinite – Hashem. It's not that Hashem is so big that we can't understand Him; it is even more than that – He is endless, and that is why we can't understand Him. This is why Hashem is referred to in *sefarim hakedoshim* as the *Ein Sof*; it is because we have no comprehension of Him. When something has an end, we can grasp onto its ends; but Hashem has no end, and therefore, we cannot “grasp” Him – we cannot understand Him.

Emunah in Hashem is thus not a kind of intellectual knowledge. It is not a thought. It is a reality we reach when we connect ourselves to it – when we simply believe.

Transcending Thought

One of the fundamentals that the Baal Shem Tov taught is that a person is found where his thoughts are. This does not simply mean that if someone thinks he's in the *Beis HaMikdash* that he is in the *Beis HaMikdash*. Although this is true⁴¹, the depth of this concept is rather that what a person thinks about becomes a part of his essence. It's not that a person's thoughts takes him to the place of where his thoughts are; it is that what a person is think about *becomes part of his essence*.

This is only true, however, for one who has developed inner thought. Inner thought is when one enters a concept using his thoughts, believing in the reality of the concept. For example, when a person “thinks in learning”, he can *become a reality of Torah!* And when a person davens and he thinks into his davening, he *becomes his davening*.

Now let us apply to the matter we are discussing: connecting ourselves to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem.

When a person thinks about the *Ein Sof*, he cannot connect to that place, since a person can be where his thoughts are. When a person connects to such thoughts – and on a deeper note, thoughts about Hashem's Endlessness are actually the essence of a person – he actually integrates with the reality of the *Ein Sof*. Then, he can reach true attachment with Hashem.

⁴¹ See *Bilvavi Vol VI, Chapter 11-12*, for further elaboration on this point.

When a person truly believes in the reality of *Ain Od Milvado* – that “no thought can comprehend Him” – and he truly connects to these thoughts – then he is found in that reality. In that reality, Hashem is One – and when a person is found in that reality, he integrated with the One of the world.

The Purpose of Knowing Is To Realize That We Do Not Know

However, we must emphasize that a person has to be very cautious with what is being said here. Just because we do not really understand anything does not mean that there is no point in trying to understand Torah. If we only connect to *ayin* – the “nothingness”, [the point of beyond understanding, which is when we nullify our intellect], we will not be able to have a true relationship with Hashem.

There is a famous concept, “The purpose of knowing is to realize that we do not know.” What does this mean? How can we say that we aren’t supposed to know things? Do we mean to negate the Torah of Moshe, *chas v’shalom*, which is a Torah that we learn with our *daas*?

What the concept means is that we know that there is a Creator – but even this fact, perceived through our *daas*, we do not really know! We don’t even know what our own *daas* is! It is not just that we don’t understand things. It is that even our own *daas* is really *lo yeda*.

When we realize that we do not even understand our own *daas*, that we do not even understand who we are – we can then truly feel nullified to the Creator, and that is when we truly connect to Him.

The concept being described here will not be fully reached until the end of the year 10,000 – which is when all of Creation will integrate with the Creator, returning to their Source. However, the *avodah* upon us is to try and nullify our intellect more and more.

Moshe and Moshiach Are Really Integrated

Here we can see again how Moshe and *Moshiach* will be integrated – a point we have begun to discuss.

Moshe represents *daas*; *Moshiach* will reveal that the purpose of *daas* is to realize *lo yeda* – to “not know”; that even our *daas* we do not know! Just as the people could not look into Moshe’s face because his face had “horns of light” illuminating his countenance, so will *Moshiach* show us that even the Torah of Moshe – our personification of *daas* – we do not understand it.

Purim – The Avodah of “Lo Yeda”

On Purim, “one is obligated to become inebriated to the point in which he does not know (*ad d’lo yoda*) the difference between ‘Cursed is Haman’ and ‘Blessed is Mordechai.’” How do we fulfill the *mitzvah* of Purim? Only when we reach the point of “*lo yoda*.”

A great depth is contained in this. All of the *mitzvos* we do throughout the year are done when we have a clear mind, when our *daas* is running properly. When one is intoxicated, he’s missing his *daas* – he can’t fulfill the *mitzvos*, and he’s exempt from the *mitzvos* as a result. But on Purim, we have to do the *mitzvah* precisely when we don’t have *daas*! What is going on over here?

Herein is contained the depth of all the *mitzvos*: that all of the *mitzvos* which we fulfill during the year are really incomprehensible...for even our *daas* is really not something we understand. Even our *daas* is really “*lo yeda*”...

10 | *Waiting for Moshiach (abridged)*

Our *avodah* is to reach the utter simplicity – the point of “You [Hashem], existed before the world was created”, the point of “*Ain Od Milvado*” – “There is nothing besides for Hashem.”

In the depths of every soul lays the point of G-dliness; the point of “*I will dwell amongst them.*” Since Hashem was around even before Creation, we also have a deep point within us in which we connect to the state of Before Creation, when there was nothing but Hashem. When our soul shines with this understanding, we connect ourselves to the hidden point, to the point of “No thought can comprehend Him.” This is the secret of “*lo yeda*”.

Although we are able to awaken this deep power in our soul, it is clear that since we are living in the end of this current 6000 year era we are not able to totally connect ourselves to the point of Before Creation.

Yet, we can shine the light of this understanding onto our souls and attain it somewhat. Just as we are supposed to aspire to be reach the actions of our forefathers – and we should indeed to try to have some “touch” of their level, as the *sefarim hakedoshim* explain – so should we attempt to try and “touch” some of this great light we are describing.

The point we are describing here is the highest point from anything we have described until now. Whatever we described until now is from the perspective of a human, but now, we are describing the very point of G-dliness, the essence of G-dliness in a person: accessing the state of Before Creation.

Our *avodah* is to reach this, the simplest point of all – *Ain Od Milvado*, simply put! It is the point of “You [Hashem] existed before the creation of the world.”

Why Should We Await Moshiach?

We constantly await the arrival of *Moshiach*, but the subtlety of this concept is that we have to await Hashem, because *Moshiach* is only a tool to reveal the reality of Hashem to the world. As the possuk says about *Moshiach*'s arrival, “*He will come suddenly, to the palace of the Master, Whom they seek.*”

11 | *The Innermost Point of Life* [Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh: “Final Chapter”]

A Simple Connection to Hashem Is Nothing New!

When the Jewish people stood at Har Sinai, they were warned, “*For you shall not see any image on the day that Hashem speaks with you at Chorev.*”

Every person has to be totally for Hashem, and there cannot even be a slim divider between a person and Hashem; that is already considered like “*an image.*” In a true connection with Hashem, there must be no barriers whatsoever between the person and Hashem.

Anything other than Hashem is supposed to be used as a *way* to reveal the will of Hashem, but the *actual connection* one has with Hashem is *directly* with Hashem, and nothing can come in between. Thus, anything which gets in the way of our bond with Hashem must be removed.

The three-day preparation for Har Sinai was really a means to remove all obstacles that got in the way between one and Hashem, and thus no “image” whatsoever was allowed for at least three days before standing at Har Sinai.

Connecting with Hashem is an inner point that cannot really be grasped, because it cannot be defined. If a person thinks that there is connection to Hashem, as well as something else involved, this is already an erroneous attitude, and this thinking itself holds back his connection with Hashem. In order to allow one’s connection with Hashem, nothing else, no other intermediary, can be in the equation.

Anything we know of is limited, and it is merely a tool to serve Hashem. The universe is a tool to serve Hashem. Time is a tool to serve Hashem. Our soul is a tool to serve Hashem.

The very connection we have with Hashem, however, is not a tool, and it cannot be grasped or understood, nor can it be reached in any other way other than through *closeness* with Hashem. Even the *middos* of Hashem which we know of are just a *tool* we use to get to Him, and they only *reveal* our connection with Him. The actual connection we have with Hashem involves no tool whatsoever.

This point is the most difficult point for any created being to grasp. We as creations seek to understand everything, and there are many ways how we try to do this: either through a certain person who can explain it to us, or by doing certain actions to arrive at that understanding, or to study it intellectually; each person has his own means of trying to understand what it means to connect with Hashem. Sometimes people connect only to the tools in getting there, and sometimes people actually are connected to Hashem. But the point is that all people seek to connect to Hashem through various tools of understanding.

We must know that we must connect to Hashem, and merely not to His 13 *middos*. Of course, Hashem wants us to keep the Torah, which are run according to His *middos*, and thus we must connect to His *middos* also. We definitely have to be connected to His ways. But this is not the **depth** of our connection with Him; the depth of our connection with Hashem is the *connection itself* we have with Him, and we mustn’t lose sight of this.

This is the deeper meaning behind why Shlomo HaMelech said that all of Creation is *hevel havalim*, “futility of futilities.” All of Creation is really nothing, in comparison to Hashem. When a person understands that everything,

even the *middos* of Hashem, are like *bevel havalim* compared to Hashem Himself, it is then that he can truly receive a connection to Hashem.

Human nature is to like to hear new things, and those who are spiritual look forward to always hearing a “new” way how to serve Hashem. But the truth is, however: “*I am Hashem, and I do not change.*”

The innermost point of all our Avodas Hashem is that point of simple connection with Hashem, and there are actually no explanations involved in it. There is the simple reality of Hashem’s existence, and no thought can comprehend Him. It is not possible to explain Hashem; even our connection with Hashem is impossible to really explain and comprehend.

What, then, is our mission?

Our mission is to be very involved with thinking about His existence, until one reaches a point in which Hashem merits him that He resides inside him. It is then that a person receives the true connection with Him.

The real, simple connection with Hashem we must have is a point that is nothing new.

It is written, “*This month shall be for you, the head of all the months.*” It is only “for you”, us as human beings, that we need new things to keep us interested. But from Hashem’s perspective, we can know that “*I am Hashem, and I do not change.*” Hashem isn’t new, nor does He change.

Thus, whenever we speak of “Hashem’s viewpoint”, we are essentially referring to the depth of our connection with Hashem.⁴²

Using Your Soul To Get To The Innermost Point

This matter needs a lot of clarification. We have to be very sure about what this means.

For already 5764 years, our souls have been revisiting this world as *gilgulim* (various lifetimes). We were all once part of the soul of Adam, and after that, his soul split up into many souls. But all of our *gilgulim* are basically one giant clarification process, and they all exist to clarify one point alone: if each person is prepared to clarify who he is, to realize that he lives only for Hashem and for no other reason.

No one reaches this understanding perfectly, as we are only humans and thus limited. The *Mesillas Yesharim* has written this in the end of his sefer. The job that is upon us is to establish in ourselves the point that all of life is all about Hashem, and that there is nothing else besides this to live for.

Throughout each *gilgul* we have gone through, there is always one small spark that remains with us from our last *gilgul*. Slowly, as each *gilgul* of all our souls adds up, all these sparks will gather together. That spark that is in every single soul – the part in us that is only concerned for living a life for Hashem, and for nothing else – will add up together with the spark that is from every soul, and all of this together will complete the collective soul of the Jewish people.

The part in us that seeks other things other than Hashem needs to be fixed, and they will achieve their rectification at *Techias HaMeisim* (the revival of the dead). The revival of the dead will actually be as follows: the

⁴²See sefer *Nefesh HaChaim*, Gate III

part in our soul which seeks only Hashem will be the only part of our soul that will get revived at the resurrection, and the rest of our soul, which contains motives other than a life for Hashem, will fall away.

We have already been through most of the 6,000 years of this physical world, and there is a rule that “most is like the whole.” The point in our soul which seeks only closeness to Hashem is found in every Jew’s soul, but it is hidden. The mission of our generation is like *makeh b’patish* – the “final-hammer blow”; what we are trying to achieve, in this generation, is to reveal our hidden point out into the open. We are trying to sift out the parts in our soul which aren’t directed toward Hashem.

The fact that people search for anything else other than Hashem is a problem that has already been around for many generations. It has been a mistake that all the generations have made: people erroneously think that we need to connect to something other than Hashem. This has been the downfall of every generation.

When a person is in pain, he becomes desperate, and he seeks a *tzaddik* or a miracle-worker to help him, but alas, he still has problems. He then has no other choice other than to turn to Hashem directly. This is really the entire vitality of a Jew – and there is no other vitality other than this: connecting directly to Hashem.

There Is No Place That Is Empty From Hashem

Here comes the point of clarification that each soul must go through: Do I really want to turn to Hashem and no one else (not even a *tzaddik*)?

This clarification has to be considered truthfully. A person might naturally think that in order to connect to Hashem - as opposed to other sources - this means that one should be spiritual and seek *tzaddikim*, and not to be involved with seeking help from non-Jews. But this isn’t enough.

The *sefarim hakedoshim* state that all the forces in our soul need to be directed toward Hashem, and towards nothing else!

Hashem never changes. When people want something “new”, it is basically saying, “I want something else other than Hashem.” Our mission is to accept the truth as it is, and to live that truth.

A person might approach this point superficially and think that this is called “*Avodas Hashem*” or “*Mesirus Nefesh* (altruism)”. Everyone has his own way of talking. But the truth is that it’s very simple. It’s not an *Avodah*, and it’s not *Mesirus Nefesh*! It is a simple awareness of reality – to realize “*Ain Od Milvado*” – there is nothing besides for Hashem!!

Our job, then, is to remove all the various feelings and views in us that are erroneous. “*Avodas Hashem*” is actually not “*Avodah*” (work) upon us, but it is really a gift. **It is to recognize reality as it is.** Just as you see a table and you know it’s reality, so it is possible to feel Hashem as a reality, to the effect that when a person turns to Hashem in prayer, it’s not just out of a feeling of despair or desperation for help, but out of a recognition that that there is really nothing else in our life besides Him.

There is nothing else we need other than to realize this! When we want this new thing or that new thing, it’s just a desire to receive more information, but this has nothing to do with connection to Hashem. We shouldn’t want anything else other than the simple connection to Hashem, which is to realize that in reality, there is nothing in life besides Him.

“There is no place that is empty from Him.”⁴³ Not only is there no place which Hashem doesn’t fill, but even our in our own soul, there is no place where He isn’t found.

These words are essentially a description of reality, of what it means to be a human being, a creation of Hashem. This is nothing new; it is just a revelation of reality. When a person merits to live by these words, his entire soul is full of Hashem’s presence; and when a person feels a need for something new to full his emptiness, he can know that this really stems from the fact that it’s because he hasn’t yet revealed Hashem entirely in his soul, and if he wants to be satisfied, he has to allow Hashem to fill his entire soul, instead of looking for something new. (This does not include our body, though, which needs new things to keep it going).

In fact, the entire need in people for renewal is rooted in the moon, which gets renewed each month; the moon was punished when it wanted to be the same size as the sun, that it would be made smaller and renew itself once a month. This shows how the need for renewal stems from sin, and thus it is not the ideal concept we should live with.

It is only after the sin of Adam that there became a need for renewal. After the sin of Adam, his soul was split up, which caused the separation between Jews and non-Jews. Rosh Chodesh, which is the root of renewal, was given only to the Jewish people, but if not for the sin, there would be no differentiation in the first place between Jews and non-Jews. From here we can see again how renewal is rooted in sin, and in the perfected state of mankind, we are supposed to do without it. We need to reach this state of non-renewal. When a person feels a need to give himself something new, it really comes from a deep emptiness – and it is a message that he needs to fill this emptiness by letting Hashem to fill his entire self.

True Perfection – Bringing Hashem Into Every Part of Our Life

This is everything. When a person lives these words, he has everything, because when a person has Hashem in him, he really has everything – for Hashem has everything. Any thought or feeling other than this fact detracts from this perfection. Hashem is supposed to fill every part of our soul.

In other words, a person might desire more and more spirituality, but it’s not necessarily a desire to cleave more to Hashem. It’s just about having “more” (although it’s commendable that the person at least has spiritual goals). All of our souls have already gone through much from all our lifetimes, and we have heard much, but has this contributed to bringing the redemption? Does all the new knowledge we keep hearing bring us to perfection? It brings partial perfection, but it doesn’t bring the total perfection we need. The true perfection is only when we succeed in bringing Hashem into every aspect of our life. All other ideas, even if they contain truth, don’t bring us to that perfection.

Will We Get There Through Our “Self”, Or Through Hashem?

What we need to do is truly connect ourselves to Hashem.

Hashem gave us a time of 6,000 years on this world, and each soul will eventually reach the innermost point we are describing. The only question that remains is: will a person reach it just through “himself”, or by connecting to

⁴³ Zohar

Hashem? Will a person realize that he needs to turn to Hashem for this, or does he think he will get to that point on his own?

Each generation has its unique struggle which is tailored to help each person come to the understanding that he must turn only to Hashem for help. In the End of Days, Hashem will show each person that he ultimately must turn to Him. We will all reach our goal, but the only question is: how will each of us get there, exactly? We have the power of choice as we live, now, to realize that we need Hashem for everything; if we don't choose to believe this now, then eventually Hashem will show us the truth, but we can choose to know it even now. This is a unique test for each individual person on this earth.

It's a simple, clear-cut goal: to ask ourselves if we are using each thought or feeling directed toward becoming close to Hashem, or for other things...? If indeed a person does discover that he is totally directing himself toward closeness with Hashem – every fiber of his being and psyche – then he can still work on this point even more and ask himself if he is doing so with vigor to connect with Hashem. If a person discovers that he still has some agendas other than being close to Hashem, he has to learn how to detach from such thoughts and instead redirect his thinking process about Hashem.

It's easy for people to talk about the mitzvos, such as how to shake a lulav and put on Tefillin. It's easy to talk about Kabalistic concepts such as “illuminations” and names of the Hashem. This comes much easier to a person than to connect to Hashem. But we must realize that all of these things have to be about trying to connect to Hashem, and we should not get caught up.

Repeating the Truth

We have explained at length about how much implication these words have, but we need to always review them throughout life. Even if one does a lot of personal reflection and hears a lot from other people, he has to make sure he never falls from the goal.

Of course, the mitzvos are important as well, and we must keep to them, but we must never lose sight of the goal, which is to come to *Ain Od Milvado*.

Thus, we have to always bear this in mind – every day, and every second. This is life itself – to connect to Hashem.

If the words here don't appeal to the reader, it shows a need for something “new” in life, which reflects a lack of a deep connection with Hashem.

We aren't trying to cause any depression with these words. Although the words here seem to contradict who we are as humans (because we feel like we cannot survive without something new all the time, and we might feel it's impossible to connect to a concept of non-renewal), know that Hashem is capable of anything, and He can give you the power to be able to go above your human nature. Just as He created the heavens, which are made up of fire and water – two contradicting elements – so can He give a person the ability to connect himself to the point that is non-changing.

Adding on to our knowledge alone is really a subtle way of losing sight of our goal. We need to review the point that we are supposed to be directed entirely to Hashem and not to anything else. If we are learning about the middos of Hashem or about the abilities of our soul, it's all so that we can use them to reach Hashem, and we must not get caught up in the study of these matters for their individual sake alone.

The truthful words here are the inner attitude to have about life. Any divergence from this point is like running away from what life is about – which is Hashem. Any point in our life has to be directed and connected to this inner point – that life is all about connecting to Hashem.

There are many parts in the soul, and each part in the soul can actually be a deterrent from the innermost point. The *Mesillas Yesharim* writes that everything on this world – even good things – can be a test for us that drive us away from reaching our goal. It is not only this world that makes us forget about our goal – our very soul can make us forget about our goal.

The “Yechidah” In Us

The kind of connection with Hashem we have described in this chapter is essentially a description of how our “*Yechidah*” (the deepest part of our soul, our existence, our actual essence) connects to Hashem.

The lower parts of our soul – *Nefesh*, *Ruach* and *Neshamah* - actually make us forget about our innermost part of our existence, our *Yechidah*, which is the part in us that only knows of connection with Hashem. The lower parts of our soul are active in our performance of the 613 mitzvos, which can make us forget about connection with Hashem.

One must understand that his very self holds him back from connecting with Hashem, simply speaking. But do not be discouraged at this. If Hashem made you that way, He also gave you the power to overcome this selfish existence. We all feel in us a natural opposition to having the utter connection with Hashem, but all of us still have to get this connection.

The factors which hold us back from achieving this differ with each person, but the inner point remains the same for each person. Anytime a person wants “new” things other than a connection with Hashem, he awakens the lower parts of his soul which take his mind even further off than the goal. If a person is only connected to the mitzvos alone, which are called “advice” by the Zohar, he’s only connected to the “advice”, but he’s not connecting to the goal that all that advice leads up to. A person’s mission is to become close to Hashem, and there is “advice” to get there – the mitzvos – but one must make sure he isn’t caught up in the “advice” and losing sight of the goal, Hashem.

These words need to be clarified within the depths of your soul: direct yourself only to Hashem. You can go over this hundreds and thousands of times – maybe even a million times – until it internalizes. Any fact that we know of can be a deterrent from realizing the innermost point. Even spiritual pursuits can make one forget about the goal, when he loses sight of the goal. Hashem has given us this test, and we must all realize that everything is integrated with Hashem. Nothing has a purpose unto itself, because since Hashem and His will are all one, everything is a part of Hashem.

In these words, we have explained the deepest point possible – the true, utter connection that one must have with Hashem. Each person will sometimes need specific advice to get there and learn how he can avoid losing sight of the goal, whether this involves overcoming sin or making sure that he’s not caught up in even the good parts about himself, because this too detracts from our connection with Hashem. Each person has his unique situation. But the innermost point for each person is always the same and it never changes: Connect to Hashem!

Removing The Barriers That Conceal The Truth

We have said these words here just to establish one simple point: Hashem has placed us on this world, and He wants us to totally return to Him. There are two kinds of *he'elam* (confusion) that people have. One kind of *he'elam* is when people don't know the truth. The other kind of *he'elam* is when people know the truth, but that it's hard to get to the truth, due to certain obstacles. We have thus come here in this chapter to clarify the point which must be clear to every person. Much confusion that people have is: "What new thing should I add onto my situation? Should I add on this, or maybe that?"

But we must know this one point: we must be directed only toward Hashem. Although the *Gemara* says that one must go to a sage and ask him to pray for him, that is only half the job; a person must also turn to Hashem, directly. Just as Esther turned to Achashveirosh for help and secretly prayed to Hashem for help at the same time, so must we understand that even when we have to turn to a *tzaddik* to help us, we have to turn to Hashem as well.

So when a person is davening and requesting that Hashem use His 13 *Middos* of Compassion, it's not about the *Middos*; it's about Hashem. Yes, we need the *Middos* of Hashem, but why are we turning to His *Middos*? It is only because we are turning to Him directly, as we turn to His *Middos*. When we involve ourselves with the *Middos* of Hashem, our thoughts should be entirely about Hashem, connected to Him. Torah, the words of Chazal, and the *Middos* of Hashem are all a part of Hashem, because they are all the will of Hashem, and one must understand this. They are not a purpose unto themselves.

More than this, it is too hard to say. It just cannot be expressed any more than the way we have said it. We need to get to the inner point of it all, the point that is behind everything – *we must designate ourselves entirely for Hashem*. We have tried to express this as much as we can in this chapter. When a person purifies himself within as much as he can, he receives the innermost point from Hashem, through working to get it.

Don't think that our tests end with this world. The tests keep coming. Even as a person is taking leave of this world and his soul is leaving him, and the souls are escorting him to the next world – he still has to remember: I must only turn to Hashem for help, and not to anyone or anything else.

Even if you know another person who gives the best advice possible, there should still be nothing more important to you in your life than your deep connection with Hashem. There were many great *tzaddikim* who were at the level of receiving astounding revelations from Heaven, such as revelation of Eliyahu *HaNavi*, yet they refused, because they wanted to hear the knowledge from Hashem Himself, not through an in-between. Of course, much clarification is needed in this matter, but one thing should always be clear: we have to turn to Hashem.

Even after death, or even if any of us ends up in *she'ol* (the lowest abysses of Gehinnom), *chas v'shalom*, a person still has to be entirely focused on Hashem. Even in *Gan Eden*, we have to turn to Hashem. The only search we need, the single desire of our soul, is to integrate with Hashem – "*And as for me, closeness to Hashem is good.*" Our soul wants to become totally bound up with Hashem, and with Hashem alone.

It seems as if we keep repeating these words over and over again. But the truth is that there is nothing that we have besides this. This is life, this is reality as we know it! This is, in a sense, all that Hashem has given to us as His creations – to be able to integrate with Him. We cannot comprehend it, we cannot grasp it, but we believe in this. "*For Hashem is part of His people.*"

May Hashem give each member of the Jewish people – and all Creations as well – the ability to receive the most complete connection with Him, until we reach the time in which "*And it will be that Hashem will be king over the whole earth, on that day Hashem will be One and His Name will be One.*"