

P A R T S E V E N

BUILDING

A Sanctuary In The Heart

INTENDED FOR ADVANCE SCHOLARS

ALL ABOUT EMUNAH IN
KABALLAH & CHASSIDUS

UNEDITED SPECIAL INTERNET EDITION

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Building a Sanctuary in the Heart | Part Seven

This volume is entirely devoted to the idea of *emunah*. Intended for advanced scholars, it shows how *emunah* relates to various concepts in kabbalah, *chasidus*, and all areas of *avodas Hashem*. Of special interest is a guided nighttime meditation for accessing the soul's inner state of *Adam HaRishon* before the sin.

Seven Selected Essays

Author's Introduction

"Emunah From A Deeper Perspective"

This *sefer* is coming to explain how *Emunah* relates to all parts of our learning and *Avodas Hashem*. It should be clear that anyone who learns this *sefer* has to be very immersed in learning Torah; it should not be a study that involves any slackening off in one's learning.

The matters in this *sefer* are very subtle and deep, and they cannot be expressed fully in the written word. If something here seems too vague, please let us know.

This *sefer* is not for everyone who comes across it. It is only meant for certain individuals who feel a need in their souls to learn about these matters. Even those individuals still have to know how to use it. If one's understanding of subtle matters is poor, these matters are not meant for him. This is not being written for the public, but only for individuals.

Know that these words come from the heart, and not just from the intellect. May Hashem merit us that "words which come from the heart enter the heart". These words here are not meant to be turned into intellectual discussions, but rather to purify one's *Avodas Hashem*. That is the purpose of our job – **to return to simple *Emunah***, as the Baal Shem Tov writes. The fact that we have to delve deeply into matters of *Emunah* is just a temporary path to take – the goal is to return to simplicity (*temimus*). The simple understanding of a matter is what enables us to arrive at the essence of a matter.

I am letting you know that I am only writing this for the purpose of arriving at the utter simplicity of these matters. That is the goal here.

The truth is that it is not possible on this physical world to arrive at totally perfect *Emunah*. On a deep note, it won't even be possible until the end of 10,000 years! However, it is our job to perfect our *Emunah* as much as we can in our lifetime.

When one is faced with a scary situation in life, the outer part of his self is frightened, because it lacks *Emunah*. Since this is so, we need *Tefillah*.

Even when we *daven* that Hashem take away our suffering, we are always involved in some scary situation. The truth is that we have nothing other than the Torah; it is written, "*If not for the Torah my delight, I would go lost in my suffering.*" Whenever we find ourselves in a scary situation, our job is (besides for having *Emunah*, which is explained at length in this *sefer*) to immerse ourselves totally in

Torah – with every part of our soul. Learning the Torah will calm us down and help us take our mind off our troubles.

Without immersion in learning Torah, life is bitter, worse than death. *Chazal* say that there is no day that isn't worse than the day before it. Without learning Torah, life tastes more bitter than death, and if someone comes to you and tells you that learning Torah isn't as important as other matters in *Avodas Hashem*, don't listen to him, because he is trying to take you away from life itself.

Know that although this *sefer* addresses the lofty aspects of our soul, we do not mean to diminish the importance of the other points in our soul that are lower than our power of *Emunah*. *Yiras Shomayim*, *Bechirah*, and *Tefillah* are all truthful points, and although they are lower than the power of *Emunah*, we do not mean to negate them, *chas v'shalom*. They are all needed. We must stress this point because many are mistaken and think that when we speak about the loftiness of *Emunah*, it seems to negate everything else in *Avodas Hashem*; but this is not true.

Since this *sefer* is all about *Emunah*, one who wants to understand the crux of this *sefer* should learn the chapter entitled “*Emunah – Ain Od Milvado*”, and he will see the goal of this entire *sefer*.

01 | The Abilities of Tefillah & Emunah

Tefillah and Emunah

There is a *mitzvah* to *daven* (pray) to Hashem. In a time of distress, all agree that this is a Torah-ordained commandment – that when one is suffering, he must *daven* to Hashem to change the situation. So we have a *mitzvah* of *Tefillah*.¹

Yet, although we must perfect our power of *Tefillah*, it is a higher level if we perfect our *Emunah*.

We find times in which Hashem preferred that we have pure faith in Him, rather than *daven* to Him. We also find times in which we should *daven* rather than have *Emunah*. What is the reason of this?

We Daven When We Don't Feel Strong Emunah

(First, we will explain when it is preferred that he *daven* rather than rely on his *Emunah*.)

When a person is in a dire situation, he desires to come out of it, and this desire in ourselves is essentially our power of *Tefillah*.

This really reflects a lack of total *Emunah* in Hashem, because if he would really believe, he would believe that everything that Hashem does is for the best. So when a person is on the level of *Tefillah*, that essentially translates into not being on the level of *Emunah*.

Tefillah and Emunah – Two Forces in Creation

There are two places in our soul: one ability in the soul is *Emunah*, and the other ability in our soul is *Tefillah*. We need to make use of both.

On one hand, Hashem fills the entire universe, and this represents *Emunah*. On the other hand, Hashem had to remove some of His light in order to create a space and make way for the creation of

¹ There is a well-known dispute between the Rambam and the Ramban if *tefillah* is a Biblically ordained commandment. The Rambam maintains that *tefillah* is always a *mitzvah*, while Ramban maintains that *tefillah* is only a *mitzvah* in a time of distress.

the universe; this represents *Tefillah*, when something is “missing” which we are trying to get. Thus, both *Emunah* and *tefillah* have their time and place.

When Should We Daven?

When should we *daven*, and when should we rely on our *Emunah* that everything is for the best?

There are times in which our *Emunah* is a bit weak, and this indeed is the will of Hashem that this should happen to us sometimes. There is nothing wrong with us that we are like this; it is the way Hashem made us. In these situations, when we feel our *Emunah* weaken, our job is to increase our *Tefillah*.

We live with both *Emunah* and *Tefillah*, and the two concepts seemingly contradict each other, but really they are not a contradiction. On one hand, we are attached to the state that was after Hashem made a space in the world – which was the state of *Emunah*. At the same time, we are also attached to the state that was before Creation, which represents *Tefillah*.

The understanding of this matter is limited to our human point of view, however, and we are only at the “receiving end” of the information, so we cannot fully understand it.

Hashem wants us to desire to leave our dire situations, and this is the role of *Tefillah*. *Tefillah* utilizes our willpower. Our willpower is actually our very soul, and our will is expressed through our mouth.

The Disadvantage To Tefillah

However, that is only true when our soul indeed feels a desire to leave the current situation, and thus we *daven*. But if the soul doesn’t feel a desire to leave the current situation, then the person doesn’t *daven* because he feels such a strong need to *daven*, and his whole *davening* is merely a lip service – “*In their lips they honor me, but in their hearts they are far from me.*”

A Tefillah Emanating From Emunah

There is a higher kind of *Tefillah*, however, and that is when we *daven* not out of personal reasons, but because it is the will of Hashem that we *daven*.

Then there is an even more subtle kind of *Tefillah*: when we *daven* even though we don't know why we are *davening*. (This comes from a deep power in our soul called "*lo yeda*" – to "not know." It is the essence of our soul that is above knowledge – it is pure faith, beyond any logic.)

In these two higher levels, our *Tefillah* is not coming from a need for *Tefillah*, but it is rather stemming from our *Emunah*; and because we have *Emunah*, we aren't obligated to *daven*, because we don't feel the stress of the situation. We are *davening*, but not because we feel scared. Such *Tefillah* isn't *Tefillah* per se, because it is a *Tefillah* which from *Emunah*.

From the Viewpoint of Emunah, There Is No Need for Tefillah

When we don't feel strong *Emunah*, we are scared, and that obligates us to *daven*, because *Tefillah* is an obligation whenever we are in a time of stress. If we wouldn't feel scared in the first place, we wouldn't have to *daven*.

Maybe you will ask: if we don't feel stressed by the situation (and thus we aren't obligated to *daven* because of "*Tefillah*", and we are only *davening* from our *Emunah*), how can *Emunah* come and take away our *mitzvah* to *daven* in a time of stress?

There are two answers to this.

Emunah – There Is No Danger Here

One answer is that a stressful situation, which is called *tzarah*, comes from the word *tzar* – "narrow." When a person is in a narrow spot, he wants to come out of it. But if a person accepts his situation lovingly and willingly, he doesn't feel constricted by the situation, and for such a person, it's not considered a stressful situation!

Emunah Is The Inner Layer of Our Soul, Tefillah Is The Outer Layer of the Soul

A second answer is that there are two layers in our soul – an outer layer and an inner layer. Although the inner layer of our soul has *Emunah* and is happy with the situation, the outer layer of our soul is still uneasy. The outer layer of our soul, which resembles the body, feels pain at the situation, and thus we find ultimately find ourselves scared, due to the pain that the external layer of our soul is experiencing. Thus, in the end, we are obligated to *daven*. Since our inner layer and our outer layer are intertwined, we must pacify the outer layer and calm it by *davening*.

How To Daven Shemoneh Esrei

Until now we only spoke about *davening* for private reasons, but *Shemoneh Esrei* was enacted by *Chazal* for the public, and there are actually two ways to *daven Shemoneh Esrei*.

One way is through understanding the words – either the simple meaning of the words, or the hidden, esoteric meaning of them.

There is a higher way to *daven Shemoneh Esrei*. does not involve our mind at all; it is to be connected in our thoughts throughout to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem.²

² This is written as well as in sefer Sheairis Yisrael: shaar hiskashrus, derush 5, maamar 1.

בלבבי ז. אמונה ותשובה (עמ' ז)

02 | *The Emunah Behind Doing Teshuvah*

Preface: The State That Is Above Free Will

The *sefer Pri Tzaddik*³ describes a concept called “*ohr olam habah*” (the light of the World To Come), in which we will enter a state that is above our *bechirah\free will* – the state of *yediah\knowledge* of Hashem (in which there are no room for any questions, and thus there is no possibility of choosing evil, because the truth is so clear).

In The Ego, Beginning To Come Out of the Ego, and Above the Ego

In previous volumes, we have explained that there are three parts to our soul.

The highest part of our soul is *Ayin* (“nothingness”), which is another term for *yediah*, as well as a term synonymous with *Emunah*.

The lowest part of our soul is *Yeish* – (a sensing of our existence, connoting the human ego, and this is synonymous with *bechirah*).

There is a middle part of our soul in between the lower and higher layers, and it serves to help us transform our *Yeish* into our *Ayin*; that we are able to transform our egotistical existence and instead come to negate our sense of self, attached only with thoughts about Hashem and doing His will.⁴

One Who Is At “Ayin” Doesn’t Need To Do Teshuvah

When a person reaches *Ayin*, he reaches the perspective of *yediah\Emunah* – he can see how it is indeed Hashem who made everything and continues to make everything. This is essentially the *ohr olam habah* which the *sefer Pri Tzaddik* described above.

In this state - *Ayin* – a person reaches a level in which there is no need for him to do *teshuva* (repentance). Just as the *mitzvos* will go away in the future, so is it possible for a person to reach a

³ *Pri Tzadik*, Vol. I, *kedushas Shabbos*, maamar 4.

⁴ In other volumes, the author explains (based on the sefarim hakedoshim) that our entire existence is made up of three stages. First we exist, which is *Yeish*. We must divest ourselves of our ego more and more, which is *Ayin*, when we feel like nothing. Ultimately, we must transform even our *Ayin* into our *Yeish* – our perfected form of existence, which will exist in the future. This will be a sublime kind of existence in which we recognize that our existence is all nothing, because we are completely integrated with Hashem. This is explained in *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, Volume IX, Chapter Five.

state in which his need to do *teshuva* disappears (because he is so utterly connected to the sublime – he's truly there.)

One Who Is Still At “Yeish” Needs to Do Teshuvah

However, when a person is only at the lower level of his existence, *Yeish* (meaning, he still has not left his ego yet) – he has to carry out *teshuva* in all its details, because his the kind of existence he is living obligates him to do *teshuva*.

The Middle Level In Between Yeish and Ayin: Teshuvah, But From A Higher Perspective

And what if a person is at the middle layer of his existence – what if he is currently working to reach *Ayin*? Does he have to do *teshuva*?

The avodah for such a person is two-fold. On one hand, he is trying to access *Ayin*, which is essentially for a person to recognize that nothing is up to me; and because this is so, there should be no need for *teshuva* over a sin. This is really because in the state of *Ayin*, a person is actually above *bechirah*, and being above *bechirah* equates into no need for *teshuva* - because the truth is clear. It is still called “*teshuva*” though because one still has to “return” something here – he has to return his abilities to the Creator in recognizing that all his abilities really come from Him, and not from himself. So there is still a need for *teshuva*, but it is a *teshuva* which is coming from a deeper perspective – a *teshuva* stemming from *Emunah*.

In doing so, a person transforms his sense of self, *Yeish*, into *Ayin* – an existence removed from any trace of ego. He goes above *bechirah* and is in the state of *yediah* – he has entered total *Emunah*.

Thus, a person who is working to get to *Ayin* is at the middle layer of his soul, and thus he has a two-fold job. He needs to do *teshuva*, in the simple sense; yet he also needs to do *teshuva* from the higher perspective, *Emunah*: by recognizing that all his abilities come from Hashem.

Teshuvah By Realizing We Can Become Anew Again

There is another way to do *Teshuvah* from the perspective of *Emunah*, and it is described in *sefer Kedushas Levi*⁵: “Each Jew must believe with perfect faith that every moment he receives vitality from the Creator, as *Chazal* say, that “*for every breath, Hashem is praised*.” Every second we exist, our life

⁵ *Kedushas Levi, Eichah*.

wants to escape us, but Hashem sends us new life every second to keep us alive. Since this is so, *teshuvah* can help for any person, because when a person does *teshuvah*, he believes that he is becoming a new creation.”

The Rambam has written that when a person does *teshuvah*, he is like “a new creation”, and this is utterly true, as we have said. It is really because when a person sins, he ceases to exist, but then Hashem renews him.

בלבבי חלק ז. "אמונה – אין עוד מלבדו"

03 | “Ain Od Milvado”

Accessing The State of Before Creation

One's *Avodas Hashem* is complete only when he attaches himself to the state that existed before the creation of the universe.

Olam, which means universe, has the same letters as the word *he'elam*, which means confusion. Before the world, there was no “confusion” - just perfect *Emunah*.

This is actually what “*Ain Od Milvado*” means – there is nothing besides Hashem, simply put.

Ain Od Milvado: No Sense of Self

Ain Od Milvado essentially is for one to nullify his “I” – it is to erase your ego entirely. Your “I” is not limited to any place, as we know. Your “I” is something that can be sensed. When a person erases his senses – that itself is how he nullifies his “I.”

When a person gets rid of his “I”, he then comprehends how there is simply nothing besides for Hashem. Any doubt about the concept of *Ain Od Milvado* is only possible when a person is still confined to his “I”; it is always a person’s “I” that holds back one’s perception of *Ain Od Milvado*.

We find many times that *Chazal* have to explain to us many concepts about *Emunah*, but it's not because there are really questions; there are only “questions” from our point of view, who are only at the receiving end of the information. This is explained by both the Ramchal and the Maharal.

When a person nullifies his senses, he nullifies his “I”, and he is then able to understand *Ain Od Milvado*. He goes from *ani*, “I”, to *ayin*, “nothing”.

How To Nullify Your “I”

How do you nullify your senses, the sense of your “I”?

The way is through *Emunah*. This is when you realize that your senses are not the end; it is only part of the big picture. There is more to life than what you sense – a whole new kind of inner depth to

life. When a person connects himself to *Emunah* and he is aware that there are things which are above his comprehension, he leaves the view from his senses and instead is attached to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem.

The Room Reserved In Heaven For Those Who Have Reached “Ain Od Milvado”

Know that there is a chamber (*heichal*) in Heaven called *Ain Od Milvado*. In this room, there are souls who have merited to leave all their “garments” on this world, and their entire desire is to be integrated with Hashem. They think and live only “*Ain Od Milvado*”, and this is their whole desire.

On a more subtle note, these souls have arrived at the belief that there is only One whose existence is true – that not only is there no one else besides Him, but the focus is on Him, that He alone exists.

There is a well-known statement of the Baal Shem Tov, that “the purpose of knowledge is to realize that you don’t know anything.” First, we need to realize that there is only Hashem, and then we can realize that there is nothing else besides Him. We keep passing through these concepts in a cycle, until we finally reach the ultimate level, which is to integrate totally with Hashem. There are times, however, where we sometimes experience *Ain Od Milvado*, and the more we experience it, the more permission we gain in being able to enter the high chamber of Heaven that is entirely about “*Ain Od Milvado*.”

This chamber is the highest of all the Heavenly chambers. The other chambers in Heaven are devoted to the “garments” of Hashem, but this chamber is all about Hashem Himself. It is essentially a longing to become integrated with Hashem, and it intensifies with the more a person realizes “*Ain Od Milvado*.”

You Can’t Get There By “Thinking” About This

However, *chas v’shalom* should one attempt to actually try to enter this chamber by trying to think about it and concentrate on it; the *sefer Nefesh HaChaim* has already warned about this. It is *d’veykus* (attachment to Hashem), and *d’veykus* is a soul experience; it is not something we can “do” with even our mental powers.⁶

This chamber is actually the inner chamber of Moshiach. The outer layer of it is essentially the Torah that Moshiach will reveal, while the inner layer of it is *Ain Od Milvado*. (Torah is the

⁶ The ways to attain *d’veykus* are the subject of the previous Bilvavi sefarim.

“garment” that cloaks *Ain Od Milvado*, because *Ain Od Milvado* is at the core of Torah. It is the inner essence of the Torah!)

The inner layer of this chamber is only about *Ain Od Milvado*, and it is nothing that can be comprehended intellectually. It is the revelation of the ultimate reality as it is – the simple truth of *Ain Od Milvado*.

04 | *Emunah & Tefillah*

There is a mitzvah to *daven* to Hashem. In a time of distress, all agree that this is a Torah-ordained commandment – that when one is suffering, we must *daven* to Hashem to change our situation.

If a person has perfect *Emunah*, he is on a higher level than one who is at the most perfect level of *Tefillah*. We find times in which Hashem preferred that we have pure faith in Him rather than *daven* to Him. What is the reason of this?

When a person is in a dire situation, he has a certain will to come out of it. This reflects a lack of total *Emunah* in Hashem, because if he would really believe, he would believe that everything that Hashem does is for the best.

There are situations in which we must *daven*, and there are situations where we must instead have *Emunah* in Hashem. This is because there are two places in our soul: one ability in the soul is *Emunah*, and the other ability in our soul is *Tefillah*. On one hand, Hashem fills the entire universe, and this represents *Emunah*. On the other hand, Hashem had to remove some of Himself in order to create a space and make way for the creation of the universe; this represents *Tefillah*, when something is “missing”. Both of these abilities have their place.

Thus, there are times in which *Emunah* is a bit weak, and this is the will of Hashem. There is nothing wrong with us that we are like this; it is the way Hashem made us. In these situations, when we feel our *Emunah* weaken, our job is to increase our *Tefillah*. We live with both *Emunah* and *Tefillah*, and the two concepts seemingly contradict each other, but really they are not a contradiction. On one hand, we are attached to the state that was after Hashem made a space in the world, and at the same time, we are also attached to the state that was before Creation.

The understanding of this matter is limited to our human point of view, and we are only at the “receiving end” of the information.

Hashem wants us to desire to leave our dire situations, and this is the role of *Tefillah*. *Tefillah* utilizes our willpower. There is a higher kind of *Tefillah*, and that is when we *daven* not out of personal reasons, but because it is the will of Hashem that we *daven*. A more subtle kind of *Tefillah* is when we *daven* even though we don’t know why we are *davening*.

Maybe you will ask: how can *Emunah* come and take away or mitzvah to *daven* in a time of stress? There are two answers to this.

One answer is that a stressful situation, which is called *tzarah*, comes from the word *tzar* – “narrow.” When a person is in a narrow spot, he wants to come out of it. But if a person accepts his situation lovingly and willingly, he doesn’t feel constricted by the situation, and for such a person, it’s not considered a stressful situation!

A second answer is that there are two layers in our soul – an outer layer and an inner layer. Although the inner layer of our soul has *Emunah* and is happy with the situation, the outer layer of our soul is still uneasy. The outer layer of our soul, which resembles the body, feels pain at the situation, and this creates for us enough of an obligation to *daven*. Since our inner layer and our outer layer is intertwined, we must pacify the outer layer.

Until now we only spoke about *davening* for private reasons, but *Shemoneh Esrei* was enacted by *Chazal*, and there are two ways to *daven Shemoneh Esrei*. One way is through understanding the words – either the simple meaning or the hidden, esoteric meaning of them. The other way does not involve our mind at all; it is to be connected in our thoughts to the *Ein Sof*. This is written as well in *sefer Sheairis Yisrael*.

בבלבבי חילק ז עמל נח –UA (אמונה – סוד עבודה עז הח"ם)

05 | A Deep Method of Hisbodedus

1

The *Ramchal* writes in *Sefer Adir B'Marom* (p.416):

“It is written: “G-d made man upright (*yoshor*), but they seek many calculations (*cheshbonos rabim*)” - had man reached the state of perfection, he would never need to engage in any “calculations”. But when man descended from his level after partaking of the *Eitz HaDaas Tov V'Ra* (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil), his eyes became “clever”, and instead of going in a path of holiness, now man would have to traverse a path of crookedness. The intended way of mankind was to be *yosher* (straight), but man has become crooked with *cheshbonos rabim*, “many calculations”.

“However, we can see that the original path of mankind has not been totally abandoned. The way of *yashrus* (straightness) is still standing in its place, above, and one can return to it. It is just that one needs much help and strong energy to get there, to be able to leave his “many calculations” no matter what situation he is in, and return to the state of knowing that Hashem runs everything and that all will eventually return to Him....

“One who merits this is called *yashar lev*, one whose “heart is straight”....One who merits will gain a spirit to enable him to go on the straight path of *yoshor* and to totally abandon the crooked path of *cheshbonos rabim*. All other ways [besides for the path of *yoshor*] are many and can become many other ways, for evil can take hold on them.

“...One who knows this will be able to draw himself closer to *menuchah* (serenity of the soul) even through learning the Torah, to fulfill the verse, “*Cast your lot upon Hashem.*” We still need to make use of the “*cheshbonos rabim*” in order to protect ourselves as we traverse our path, for it would be foolish not to be.”

2

Thus, there are two paths.

1) The path of “*cheshbonos rabim*”, “many calculations”, and this is rooted in the *Eitz HaDaas*. Mankind is now connected to this path ever since Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas* [so we inevitably start out with it].

2) The path of *Emunah* [or *yoshor\yashrus*] as the Ramchal said, that one can return to the state of knowing that Hashem runs everything and that all will return to Him. (It is just that we need to make use of *cheshbonos rabim* in order not to “get lost” from our path; the ideal path to take is not *cheshbonos rabim*, but *Emunah*.) That was the path that existed before Adam’s sin.

Although we now live after the sin, still, the Ramchal has taught us: “We can see that the original path of mankind has not been totally abandoned. The way of *yashrus* (straightness) is still standing in its place, above, and one can return to it.”

3

The way which we are coming to explain here is the way of *yosher*, the straight path – the path of *Emunah*, which is also called the path of the *Eitz HaChaim*. It is the path that Adam cleaved to before the sin.

Understand this, because all souls were contained in Adam *HaRishon*. Therefore, every person, every *neshamah*, is literally a part of Adam *HaRishon*. The path of total *yoshor\Emunah\Eitz HaChaim* was completely revealed before the sin of Adam, and now that we live after the sin, it has become concealed and hidden [but it still exists].

It is now our *avodah* to return to the revelation of that state, as the Ramchal has written about.

4

It is written that Hashem “*fashions light and creates darkness*”. Creation is always being renewed. The holy *sefarim* explain that Creation is always cycling between the state of “*Yeish*” (The physical dimension of reality) and “*Ayin*” (The non-physical; the spiritual layer of reality).

Understand what this is, because that means that at any given moment, a person can resemble Adam before the sin – for we are being created new every moment.

Now we will explain this more. The concept of sin is only in the physical dimension (*Yeish*); when the physical dimension becomes integrated into and becomes the spiritual reality, *Ayin*, there is no

possibility of sin. The spiritual dimension, *Ayin*, has no tangibility to us; therefore, sin does not exist in it. This is clear and simple to anyone who understands it; let it suffice with just these words.

And since this is so, that Creation is always being renewed every moment, going from *Ayin* to *Yeish*, this implies that before Creation, *Yeish* was integrated with *Ayin*, and that is why before Creation there was no possibility of sin. Thus, the inner dimension of reality [the state of before Creation, which is still existing, but it is hidden] is a place where there is no possibility of sin at all.

However, from the external dimension of reality that we see, it doesn't appear to us that way; the external dimension of reality doesn't show us any renewal and it doesn't show us any cycle of *Yeish-Ayin-Yeish*. From the external perspective on reality [our physical dimension], *Yeish* continues to exist on the plane in which sin is a possibility. Therefore, because we see through a physical dimension, we are required to do *teshuva* for our sins.

Both perspectives on reality (external and internal) are true, however; they do not invalidate the other.

5

Thus, if a person wants to attach himself to the state of Adam before the sin, he has to connect himself on a constant basis to the state of *Ayin*; his *Yeish* must become bound up with *Ayin* and integrated with it. It is to enter a renewed state of Creation in which there is “*Yeish M'Ayin*” – “Something from nothing” [when he attaches his physical state, *Yeish*, with the spiritual state, *Ayin*, he receives a new kind of *Yeish*].

Without attaching the state of *Yeish* to the state of *Ayin*, a person remains bound to the sensual and external layer of reality, which is the totally physical dimension – the *Yeish* that began with Adam's sin which continues until today. If a person is bound to the superficial layer of reality, that means it is possible for him to sin, and thus he won't be able to become attached to the level of Adam before the sin.

6

In order for a person to awaken himself to this concept, he will need a guided path to get there. Here it will be attempted, with the help of Hashem, to explain what the path is.

Hashem said, “*It is not good for man to be alone.*” Our Sages said, “Hashem is the only One above, and He has no mate; while man is below [therefore, he needs a mate].”⁷ Understand this: Adam *HaRishon*, in his natural state, was created “alone.” (Meaning, there was no woman yet in Creation; woman was rather integrated into man. Afterwards, woman was created, and this began a new level of existence for man. Later, this will be explained, G-d willing).

Therefore, if a person wants to awaken and reveal in himself the state of Adam before the sin, he must enter a kind of life which is “alone.”

(This does not mean that one should become anti-social. *Chazal* say that one should be *daato m'ureves im habriyos*, to be pleasant and get along with others. However, we need to view the social aspect of our life as a “garment” we wear sometimes, and we should not view our social aspect of life as the essence of our life. We can be with others at times, and it is not a contradiction to living an inner life of “alone.” It is just that we need to view the “alone” as the actual essence of our life. Soon, we will explain this as well, G-d willing).

Practically speaking, a person has to try to arrange a kind of life for himself in which he can have this state of “alone” - to have solitude.

The depth of these words is because man’s purpose is to become a vessel that holds the light of the *Ein Sof* (Endlessness) of Hashem. The “vessel” which we need to become has to be able to hold spiritual light, or else the spiritual light cannot enter the vessel. Therefore, since Hashem is called the “*Yachid*” (the One) who resides above, so must man reflect this concept of “*Yachid*” and be “alone” on This World, and that is how man can become a vessel that holds the spiritual light of Endlessness – for by attaining the state of “alone”, the “vessel” will then begin to resemble the spiritual light that is entering it.

This is the meaning behind “*And Yaakov fought alone, and Hashem remained alone with him.*” In other words, because Yaakov attained “alone”, he became a vessel to hold the spiritual light of Hashem’s Endlessness – “And Hashem remained alone with him.”

⁷ See *Rashi* to *Beraishis* 2:18

7 Beginning The Deep Meditation

In order to understand these words – in order for a person to negate his state of *Yeish* and instead let his *Yeish* become integrated with *Ayin*, as we explained before – a person will first need to disconnect himself from the external dimension of *Yeish*.

Therefore, the first step a person needs to do is to separate himself from [the **people** in] his external surroundings, being that they consider themselves to be of *Yeish* [and they don't identify themselves with the reality of *Ayin*]; and then, a person will be able to enter the lifestyle of “alone.”

In this stage, one abandons *Yeish* in relation to **people**.

8

In addition to this, one needs to separate himself from the [external] **place** he is in as well. This is because the place you are in is a place of *Yeish*, for the people that live in it consider themselves to be living solely in *Yeish*; it therefore awakens your perspective of *Yeish* when you are focused on it.

That is why a person has to enter the state of “alone” only when he is apart from his external surroundings, where no one is around to remind him of anything *Yeish*. A person has to consider his solitude as the main aspect of his life – both in regards to being isolated from people, and in relation to the surroundings.

9

In addition, one also has to separate from “*Yeish*” in the **time** he is in. (We separate from *Yeish* in all three planes - place, time, and soul. However, we have not gone in order of place-time-soul. Here, we have first explained how to separate from place, and now we are explaining how to separate from time).

The “*Yeish*” aspect of time is the light of the day, which enables you to see physicality. The “*Ayin*” aspect in time is the darkness of nighttime, when you can’t see your physical surroundings and you are thus not connected to “*Yeish*” of your surroundings.

Therefore, a person should train himself to get used to sitting in the dark, for certain stretches of time. This is a matter written about in *Sefer HaMaspik* of Rabbi Avraham ben HaRambam (in the section which explains *hisbodedus*\meditation).

10

[In relation to the *Sefiros*⁸], *Ayin* is also known as *Keser* (lit. crown) and *Yeish* is known as *Chochmah* (lit. wisdom). Therefore, when a person wishes to connect himself to *Ayin*, he needs to leave the plane of *chochmah*.

Of *chochmah*, it is written, “*With wisdom, a house is built.*” Thus, a person needs to leave his house, which is his physical surroundings, *Yeish*. He also has to leave the light of the day, because light is “*ohr*”, and *ohr* is another term for *chochmah*.

Keser is the hidden dimension and it is concealed; the darkness of the night, which conceals one from physicality, is the way to attach oneself to concealment, and that is why a person needs to become accustomed to sitting in the dark.

11

There are three levels to “alone.” 1) The first level is to be alone from people. 2) The second level is to be alone from civilization. 3) The third level is to be away from light.

Through this, a person leaves *Yeish* of place, time and soul (people), and he can now connect to *Ayin* in place, time and soul.

12

Until now we have explained how to leave the external layer of *Yeish*: to be away from people, from civilization, and from light. Now we will begin to explain how we can nullify the *Yeish* in our own soul.

However, this stage can only be reached after one has separated himself from his physical surroundings as we explained above and he is thus living the state of “alone”.

13

Yeish is called *chochmah* (wisdom), and it is also called *machshavah* (thought) or *mochin* (mind). It is the thoughts of our mind which enable us to have “*chesbonos rabim*”, the “many calculations” [which make us deviate from the path of absolute *Emunah*].

⁸ The Heavenly spheres, which are: *Keser*, *Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, and *Malchus*

It is man's task to negate his *cheshbonos rabim*, his state of *Yeish*; as we brought from the Ramchal. This can only be done through *Emunah*, as he says.

14

Now these words will be expanded and explained, with the help of Hashem.

There are some thoughts we need to think about, such as the thought to go to sleep or to eat when we have to. It is not these kinds of thoughts which we need to nullify. You certainly need to think about your needs; just make sure not to think about things that are more than your necessity.

We also have thoughts about having to make effort in making a living, and how to make money. These thoughts need to be uprooted - mentally or verbally. Internalize the statement of our Sages that "the food of a person is already determined for him" – nothing can get added onto your predetermined amount, because Hashem has already decreed how much you will get. Therefore, any thoughts about trying to make more money than your destined amount will only prove futile.

Keep repeating this thought to yourself [verbally or mentally] until you have calmed your desire to make money and have sufficient livelihood. Do the same when it comes to other worldly desires as well, such as the desire for marital intimacy, as well as all other various physical desires. Think only about what you absolutely need.

The truth is that it is impossible to calm yourself perfectly when it comes to these matters, but you should draw yourself closer to this level as much as you feel you can.

15

We also have thoughts about Torah. At the beginning of one's path, it is of course necessary for one to exert himself in Torah study very much, until his mind is purified and calm and totally immersed in thoughts of Torah; this is how a person attains his *Chochmah*. But after this, a person needs to attach himself to the state of "no knowledge" – to truly feel and recognize that "*Man is a boor, who does not know.*" It is called *lo yeda*, to "not" know.

The truth is that of all people it can be said that "*man is a boor, who does not know.*" Our wisdom cannot perceive the endless wisdom of Hashem. One must internalize this fact very well, and remove his feeling that he understands things, and instead feel that he does not understand things. He must come to understand that he does not understand – "*man is a boor*".

In order to help himself accept this fact, one should use an ability called *sod hahafachim*, the “secret of opposites” – he should realize that for everything we understand, there is always an opposite way to understand. In this way, a person can really come to feel that he does not understand anything, for as much as we understand, so do we not understand – thus, whatever we do comprehend doesn’t mean that we comprehend things.

One must use this ability properly and not use it conceitedly, *chas v’shalom*, to think that now he understands things even more; the point of using *sod hahafachim* is to really understand and agree that you do not comprehend things at all. There is nothing we know, because since there is always an opposite way to understand, nothing is ever absolute knowledge to us. This helps you nullify your sense of understanding things (*yeda*) and to instead realize that you do not understand things (*lo yeda*).

If one doesn’t know how to use *sod hahafachim*, he can still nullify his knowledge by having simple and earnest faith in this concept, that the wisdom of Hashem is endless, and therefore, whatever we do comprehend is not even comprehensible. This connects our soul to *lo yeda*.

In this way, a person ascends from the world of thought*Yeish\yeda*, and he connects to *Ayin\Lo Yeda*.

16

Another step in nullifying our state of *Yeish* is to realize that Creation is not just a physical dimension; there is G-dliness contained in everything, and the spark of G-dliness that is in everything is what leads each thing.

So you need to view Creation with the understanding that there is G-dliness in everything. When you see something, focus on its aspect of G-dliness, instead of just seeing it as it appears. The G-dliness that is in each thing is really the point of *Ayin* [that is within *Yeish*]. Therefore, in whatever you see, focus on the fact that Hashem controls it; feel and sense that Hashem is empowering it.

In this way, you negate *Yeish*. You come to feel that the world does not run itself, but rather, that Hashem is running each thing in the world. As Dovid HaMelech said, “Hashem told him to curse.” In each thing you see, see how “Hashem told him to curse” – meaning, realize that only Hashem enables anything to work, and nothing and no one else. Don’t attribute anything on this world to people.

Through this kind of thinking, a person leaves his attachment with the creations (*nivra*) and instead he connects the Creator (*Borei*).

This is a long *avodah*: to feel that each and every thing is only from Hashem's ability, and that nothing at all is being run by people. It is a deep perspective which is acquired only through mentally reflecting on the concept, detail after detail, hundreds and thousands of times, and even more than that. You should try this mentally and verbally: "There is no one in charge of anything, no one except the Creator."

As a direct result of this *avodah*, you will also find yourself being removed from fears, and from conceited kinds of thoughts, as well as other negative traits!

17

In addition, a person also needs to view himself with a perspective of *Emunah*: One should feel that every thought you experience, even the tiniest and most fleeting kind of thought, as well any emotion of your heart (joy, sadness, fear, etc.), every feeling, every movement, etc. is all from Hashem, literally!

This does not contradict the fact that we have free will. We have free will to control our thoughts and desires. But what we don't control is the fact that the thoughts and the desires fall into us in the first place. All that comes into us is from Hashem.

In summary: One must feel strongly that every ability in himself comes from Hashem. (The only exception is our power of free will.) In order to come to terms with this, one must mentally reflect on detail after detail in his life, repeating it to himself mentally and verbally, that everything in him comes from Hashem.

18

Now understand: *Emunah* is the power to negate the physical existence of your "I." *Emunah* is to negate any trace of *Yeish* (the physical dimension), and to reveal Hashem in its place.

This is the meaning of the words of the Ramchal quoted earlier, that a person must "know that Hashem rules over all, and that all will return to Him."

This is the work of man: to negate the physical aspect of our "I", more and more – through tapping into the concept of *Emunah*. The more a person deepens this awareness, the more he leaves *Yeish*, the physical layer of Creation – and he enters *Ayin*, into the world of the Creator.

19

Until now we have explained how one removes himself from actions and from all *nivraim* (creations and people), and in turn, to recognize that it is only Hashem who is behind all.

The only exception to this part (negating all actions) is the concept of *bechirah*, for it is always up to man to choose between acting right and wrong. However, even our power of *bechirah* comes from Hashem; when one understands this, he removes himself from *bechirah* as well. When you realize this kind of *Emunah*, this is how you negate your very “I.”

The *sefarim hakedoshim* revealed that there are two kinds of *bechirah*. 1) The simple power of free will. 2) To “choose not to choose.” We are coming to explain the second level of *bechirah*: to “choose not to choose”, to realize that only Hashem is behind everything.

Let it suffice with these words; it is a deep concept.

When one reaches this second kind of *bechirah*, he attains a higher kind of *bechirah*. This is the depth behind *Emunah*: to negate the “I” that chooses – which in turn nullifies the “I” with the more tone does this.

20

After a person has separated himself from all the *nivraim* (creation), which includes separating from the people of society as well as from his own activities (for he, too, is part of the *nivraim* of the world), and in its place he connects himself to the *Borei* (Creator), he has mostly left the outer dimension of *Yeish* (thus it is considered as if he is left it entirely). He is not involving himself with actions of created beings, and he is now connected instead with what actions of Hashem, in the understanding of “*All of them, You made with wisdom*”.

Now the *avodah* is to leave the world of action entirely and enter into the world of *havayah* (the higher dimension of reality).

To explain this matter, there is handiwork of the Creator, and there is rest of the Creator. The absence of handiwork is the concept of Shabbos, where there is no action. It reveals the world of *havayah*.

At first, a person’s *avodah* is to connect himself to the Creator’s handiwork, to “*All of them, You made with wisdom*”, and after this, one can involve himself with the world of *havayah*. (The intention here is to enter it within one’s soul, and not to say it with one’s mouth, because as we

know, it is forbidden to pronounce the name of *havayah*). Understand well that there is a difference between Hashem's handiwork and *havayah*, for this is one of the deepest fundamentals of the Torah.

The main way in which one can remove himself from this world of action and enter *havayah* is through accessing the perspective of *yediah* over his *bechirah*. This is because *bechirah* contradicts *yediah*, and the purpose of why we have this contradiction is so that we will crush our perspective that comes from this world of action, and instead connect ourselves with the world of *havayah*. Understand this well.

21

Before we complete the process of leaving this world of action and crossing over into the world of *havayah*, it must be added the following important fundamental.

Many mistakes result from our actions. Sometimes a person actually commits a sin, G-d forbid. Sometimes a person does something permitted but it causes him to stumble, and sometimes even doing a *mitzvah* can cause a person to stumble. The reason that Hashem does this is to show a person that the "I" in us which acts, is really a false implication.

Understand that all successes are really a test to us which make us feel and think, "I am successful." So when a person stumbles, it is actually a gift from Heaven, which enables him to realize the truth, that his own actions do not make him successful. One needs to think this way towards all of his actions, and think to himself, that all of his successes are really testing his faith, and all of his failures are really forms of help from Hashem to him, to make him realize that he is not in charge.

Indeed, there are many times where Hashem puts a person into a situation in which the person can see right away that there is nothing he can do to alleviate the situation, and that there is no one who can save him – not himself, and not others. All situations that are like this are really a gift of Hashem to the person, to help him see the truth, that his actions cannot accomplish anything. Through thinking about this, a person can reach a true realization, that there is no Worker except Hashem. Then he can take this realization further and view all actions on this world as being Hashem's actions, and that no one can do anything with his actions. He can go through all of his thoughts, desires, and *middos* (character traits) and every aspect of his being, and realize that they are all the Creator's actions.

Understand that there are two aspects of *middos* in us: there are seven *middos* in us which come from our lower realms (*Asiyah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Beriah*), and there is a higher group of seven *middos* in us which come from the higher realm, *Atzilus*. The first group of *middos* are within "Yeish", whereas the

second group of *middos* enable us to have “*bittul*” (nullification). The *middos* of *bittul* are accessed when we use each of the *middos* to bring ourselves to *bittul*.

In every thought, there is *chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas*, and in every *middah*, there are the seven *middos* (*chessed*, *gevurah*, *tiferes*, *netzach*, *hod*, *yesod*, and *malchus*). One can go through each of these and declare, “He made, makes, and will make, all actions.” In this way, the *middos d'atzilus* bring a person to nullify himself and reveal the Creator in place.

This is the depth behind the wisdom of *Atzilus*: to understand how in each thing, there is no Worker except the Creator, and to see how He is revealed in each and every aspect. If one is examining a success of his, he can understand that it is only Hashem who allowed him to succeed. If he is examining a failure of his, he can understand that it is because he is not able to succeed on his own at anything.

In this way, a person can examine each and every aspect and bring himself to *bittul*, that there it is only Hashem who lets any action take place.

22

Another deep method of removing the “I” with regards to our actions (and it is a path which is even closer to entering the world of *havayah*, which will soon be explained further, with Hashem’s help), is for a person to break his *mochin d'katnus* (small-mindedness), through contemplating the concept, “*Ana Emloch*” (“I rule”), as is well-known.

The simple way in which one rectifies his feelings of self-success is through nullifying his sense of “I am in charge” and realizing that Hashem is in charge.

But the deeper way of this method is to acknowledge who the true “I rule” is, and that the “I” in me is not the one who “rules.” In other words, the inner depth behind the “*Emloch*” is for one to let Hashem’s will take over and feel the “*Ana Emloch*” from that higher perspective. Of course, it does not mean that the “I” in me is ruling just because I am acknowledging that it is Hashem who rules over all.

In this way, one nullifies his own will to Hashem’s will, and he lets the “I” of Hashem take over his own “I”, which breaks his entire feeling of “*Ana Emloch*” that he originally had. In this method, one recognizes that all feelings of self-success are really coming from Hashem, and that one has to remove his own “I” from the picture and instead realize that the “*Ana Emloch*” kinds of thoughts were not really coming from his “I”, but from the G-dliness [which is present in man].

Let it suffice for now with this, because it is a very deep matter.

23

Now it will be explained how to cross over into the world of *havayah*.

First, there must be a brief introduction to this. Until now, we have explained how to negate the “I.” Now we will explain how one *builds* the true “I.”

Everything that exists in the inner dimension of this reality is hidden from our physical senses. The way to reach anything in the hidden dimension is through *Emunah*, through believing that it exists, and then we can grab onto it and connect ourselves to it. When one palpably believes in something and he lives with the knowledge of it, and he is deeply aware of it in his mind as well, his deep thoughts about it can be used to awaken in him a sense that can actually feel the hidden dimension. It awakens his *neshamah* to sense something he knows of deeply, to the point where he actually feels it in his heart.

In other words, first a person has to simply believe in a concept that exists, and he must keep believing in it, even though he cannot actually sense what he believes. If he keeps being persistent in his belief, as time goes on, a matter he believes in will slowly become revealed from within his *neshamah* and it will be sensed in his heart.

This is the secret of *Emunah*: it reveals something from its potential state to its active state. It enables that which was until now hidden and concealed from the person, to become actually felt and sensed.

This fundamental concept is the backbone of all the words to come. We will be dealing here with how to reveal realities that are not revealed to our physical senses, and the way to reveal those realities is through *Emunah* that these realities exist. Remember this introduction well, and seal it in your mind well.

24

Understand, that the way to deepen our *daas* (mental perception) towards something, is accomplished in two ways.

(1) Through the power of mental visualization and imagination. This power is tangible to us and it is within the logical realm. (2) Through the power of abstract thought. This power requires us to enter the realm of the unknown.

Most of our *avodah* is usually about revealing realities which are not in the realm of the known. Thus, we mainly need to use the power of abstract thought, divorced from any kind of mental picture or visualization.

25

We already explained in the introduction that we are coming here to explain how we can awaken and reveal the point of “Adam *HaRishon* before the *cheit*” in us. Thus, in order for a person to enter the world of *havayah*, he will first need to mentally visualize (at this very beginning stage, we need to make use of the power of imagination, and not abstract thought) the following: that there is nothing that exists at all on this world except you - just as Adam had no one else in the world with him.

Contemplate the fact that Adam *HaRishon* had no parents, he had no mate before the creation of Chavah, he had no children yet at that point – he was totally alone on the world, with no person to talk to. There were no creations in the world except him. Think about this very deeply.

(In order to contemplate this properly, you will need to have isolated yourself to a place where there are no people and no civilization, and it should be in the dark; all of this we said earlier, as an introduction to this).

Do not think that this is a fantasy; do not think that the reality around you is contradicting this thought, for you see that there are many creations in the world. The deep reality is that there is no one in the world, but we cannot see this deep reality, for it is very concealed from us. By awakening the concept of it in your thoughts, you awaken yourself to feel the truth of it, and that it is not a fantasy at all.

26

After deeply contemplating and being very sure in your mind that there are no creations in the world except for Hashem, now think: who is found in the world, with you? There is no one with you except Hashem. Clarify this to yourself well: Hashem is with you, in every place and at all times, for “*His glory fills the world.*” (On a deeper note, Hashem’s actual essence is above His own glory; suffice it for now to understand this).

Keep reviewing this mentally and verbally, that you are not alone, and that there is Someone who is with you at all times: Hashem. Keep reflecting about this until you can really sense that Hashem is indeed next to you at all times and in all places.

This kind of reflection requires a settled and tranquil mind, along with constant review in your mind of the concept, until the words are internalized in your heart.

27

After a person has firmly established in his thoughts and heart that there are no other creations in the world, and that he is with Hashem alone, at all times, now the *avodah* is to reveal Hashem in the sense of “*nachach*”, to feel that He is opposite me; to feel towards Hashem that He is “*Attah*”, “You”, in first-person, as opposed to being hidden, “*Hu*”, “Him”, which is in the third-person.

This is acquired through mentally reflecting about it, and mainly through talking to Hashem in first-person, both mentally and verbally. This is not in the same way you *daven*. This is about talking about the very *havayah* of Hashem. One can say, “*Ribono shel Olam*, You are found with me, You are listening to me. There is no one on this world except me and You.” Say words like this which are in first-person to Hashem.

At first you will not actually feel that Hashem is in front of you, but when you keep being persistent with this and you keep talking to Hashem in the first-person – both mentally and verbally – if you keep doing this for a long time and you don’t give up, eventually you will feel that Hashem is found with you.

Obviously, this can only be worked once a person has already gotten used to the lifestyle of *hisbodedus* (solitude) that was explained earlier.

One should continue to practice this until it becomes a natural sense to him without having to think deeply into it, to the point where he senses Hashem no less real than how he has hands and feet; he doesn’t have to think about to know that they are with him. So too, one should keep thinking about this until it comes as a natural sense to him, where he doesn’t have to reflect about it deeply; where his *neshamah* feels it at all times.

If it happens that he stops thinking about it, he should immediately return his thoughts to sensing of how Hashem is next to Him at all times.

28

After a person merits the level in which this understanding is firmly planted into his mind and heart – that Hashem is literally next to him at all times – now it is upon him to think deeply that not only is Hashem found next to him, but he is even found *within* him.

One should think about this a lot, with deep thought, and in silence, as above. He should review this mentally and verbally, saying, “You, Hashem, are found in my heart, in my mind, in my hand, in my entire being.” He should review it for hundreds and even thousands of times, mentally and verbally, until he literally feels it.

29

After a person merits this level in which he really feels that Hashem is found within him, his *avodah* now is to feel that he is literally a *cheilek eloka mimaal*, a “portion of G-d above.” As opposed to understanding his relationship with Hashem as being two components coming together, he should now rise above this understanding and think that he is part and parcel with Hashem: “*Cheilek eloka mimaal.*”

This can be attained either through mental reflection as he goes step-by-step through the stages, or, he can reach it by simply having deep *Emunah* in the concept.

The first method is a path that involves deep thought and reflection, in which a person goes deeper and deeper in his perception. To illustrate, a child is brought into the world through a droplet that came from the father’s brain; there was a thought to conceive him⁹, but even deeper than this was the very desire to conceive him¹⁰, which came before the thought. The first method, deep reflection, is like entering the thoughts of Hashem to create the world. The second method, in which one feels that he is “one” with Hashem, is like the entering the very will of Hashem to create the world (so to speak), which came even before His thoughts to create the world; so it is a deeper perspective.

The second method is reached through simply having deep *Emunah* in the concept (that one is a *cheilek eloka mimaal*), and it does not involve deep reflection on how it can make sense. It is a higher method to use than the first method, but it is harder to reach, for it requires a tremendous amount of *bittul* (willingness to become nullified).

30

Understand, that this [second and higher] method is essentially the level in which one attaches himself to the level of “Before creation.”

⁹ Note from Hebrew sefer: [In terms of the Ten Sefiros,] this emerges from the Sefirah called “chochmah”

¹⁰ Note from the Hebrew sefer: [In terms of the Ten Sefiros], This emerges from the Sefirah called “Keser”

The creation in front of us is tangibly felt, but when one rises to this level of “Before creation” described here, he is connected to the dimension that came before all of [the physical and tangible] creation. One can attach himself to the state of Hashem’s *thoughts* to create the world, or to the state that came before that: Hashem’s *will* to create the world.

In order to merit this level, one needs a clean mind, for these matters cannot be physically sensed at all. It is entirely a comprehension reached through the depths of our *neshamah*. It is very, very subtle.

31

Now understand, that all of these levels mentioned until now, are in relation to this world. Whether a person is thinking about Hashem’s thought to create the world or about His will to create the world, in either case, the person is thinking of how this relates to us as His creations.

But there is an even higher understanding than this: to connect oneself to the state of “*achdus hapeshutah*” (“the simple unification”), in which one doesn’t even think about how the higher reality relates to the created world.

This is above even the level of “Before creation”, because in “Before Creation” there is at least a contrast of before the creation with after the creation. But in the recognition of *achdus hapeshutah*, there is no contrast with our created world.

From this higher perspective, there is no creation at all, for it is a fully realized reality of the verse, “*I am Hashem, and I do not change.*” It is a reality in which it is fully recognized that that He is one and that His Name is one; with regards to past, present, and future.

This perspective reveals the level of negating the “I” entirely, for it is the absolute recognition of the words, “*Ain Od Milvado*” – that there is nothing besides for Hashem, simply put.¹¹

In Conclusion

The matters here contain depth within depth. We have only touched upon the roots of these matters here, and it should be understood that each of the levels here can enable a person to reach new perspectives, with layer upon layer of understanding.

¹¹ See *Nefesh HaChaim Shaar III*

בלבבי ח"ז – עם פט ("אמונה – כל' למדבקות בכל מדרגה")

06 | *Emunah - Really Believing*

Creation is designed in a way in which everything must be activated to its potential. Man's *avodah* is to unlock the potential of each thing and reveal it to fruition. By connecting ourselves to the potential power of something, it can then be released.

Before the power of something is brought to actuality, we must know: how indeed do we connect ourselves to something that merely lays in its potential state, and it is not yet actualized? The answer is the deep secret of "*Emunah*" (belief).

Emunah is known as the "secret of *ayin* ['nothingness']". *Ayin* is whenever something is hidden and it lays in its dormant state, where it hasn't yet been actualized. When one attaches himself to being in a state of *Emunah*, he is essentially attached to *ayin*; to a potential power of something. Thus, in whatever level a person is trying to actualize, he first needs to connect himself to it in its *potential* state, and this is done through the power of *Emunah*.

You should know that *Emunah* does not mean to connect yourself to that which is unknown to you. It is vitality-giving. It is written, "*The righteous person shall live by his faith.*" *Emunah* is life-giving. When a person knows about a certain concept but he doesn't live it, the concept is above him and it surrounds him, but it is not yet a part of him (this is referred to as "*ohr makif*" – "surrounding light"); it doesn't provide him with vitality and energy. But when the light of *Emunah* has penetrated into one's mind and heart, a person then lives what he knows, and he receives vitality it, in turn.

When a person wishes to awaken in himself a concept he knows about and bring it from potential state to its active state, he needs to use *Emunah*. As long as one's *Emunah* isn't alive by him and it's not yet ingrained in his mind and heart, it is not able to be awakened. This is because a person cannot work with a spiritual light that he has not yet reached which merely surrounds him.

Only when one's *Emunah* is alive in himself can he awaken the potential of something to become activated. His thoughts and heart can become connected to the vitality coming from his *Emunah*, and after a while passes, he can awaken the concept, through firmly and stubbornly believing in that which he wants to connect to. Through increasing the connection, the level he's trying to acquire is awakened from its potential state into its active state.

The *sefer Oihev Yisrael* (*parshas Noach*) said that *Emunah* can pull things towards us.

Through *Emunah*, we can draw a concept towards us from its source and cause it to come to us.

This is the secret that lays behind *Emunah*. From the viewpoint of our own comprehension, we are far from many levels. But from the viewpoint of *Emunah*, we can awaken our *Emunah* and believe that even the highest spiritual levels are in our reach. By revealing this alive kind of *Emunah* in ourselves, we can connect ourselves to the highest possible levels. This is a big secret.

For example, if a person wants to feel that he is a *neshamah* and he wants to reveal it (and our *neshamah* is indeed very hidden), by increasing his *Emunah* in the concept of his *neshamah* and in its reality, with constantly calm thoughts about this, he can slowly awaken and reveal his *neshamah*.

Even more so, if one wants to feel the Creator, Who is so very hidden, he can keep concentrating on the reality of the Creator, using his power of *Emunah*, through constant thought (and internalization) of the Creator's existence. This slowly reveals the sense for the Creator in his heart.

The same is true for any level a person wants to reveal. If he keeps thinking about a matter with his mind and he keeps internalizing it in his heart, and he is very persistent with this, in the end it will be revealed to him. This is a big secret.

When a person is still very attached to this physical dimension ("Yeish") and he does not how to go beyond what he can logically comprehend, he has no connection to this lofty *avodah* described. But when a person has trained himself to connect himself in mind and heart to the hidden dimension, he can take this route and acquire anything he wants to acquire.

The *sefer Toras Avos ((Slonim), p.25 and p.150)* brings from the *Kobriner zt"l*, "Emunah can reach the highest places. All other comprehensions can reach up until the place that comprehension can reach, whereas *Emunah* is not so, for when one believes that he can reach even places that he cannot normally reach, he reaches it. That is why *Emunah* is the loftiest kind of comprehension from all comprehensions. It is what it is written, "And your faith surrounds you." (*Tehillim 89:9*) [It is saying that] through *Emunah*, I can surround You, so to speak."

This is a very deep matter....

בלבבי ח' ז עמ' קי"א (אמונה ומחשבה – רצוא ושוב)

07 | *Cycling Between Deep Thought & Emunah*

The Cycle Between Thought and Emunah

It has been explained previously that the secret of *Emunah* is called the secret of [accessing] *ayin*, and that the essence of our power of *machshavah* (deep thought) is really the essence of this physical and tangible dimension (“*Yeish*”). When one deeply connects his soul to the plane of *Emunah*, he realizes that all deep thinking is actually a contradiction to this great *d'veykus*, for it is veering from *Ayin* and turning him back towards *Yeish*-thinking.

The truth is that we have an ongoing cycle, “*rotzuy v'shov*” (running and returning), where we keep ascending and descending from our level. When we are at a stage of spiritual progress (*rotzuy*), we are able to connect ourselves to the plane of *Emunah*, but it is impossible to stay in that state forever. There is always some stage of “*shov*” that we will inevitably find ourselves in at some point [and this process keeps being repeated]. When we are at *shov*, we feel a need for *machshavah*, deep thought.

When we are in “*shov*”, we are in “thinking” mode. There are two kinds of spiritual thoughts at this stage which we experience. One kind of thought is to have simple thoughts about the reality of the Creator. Another kind of thought is to have a complex and deep kind of thought about the Creator. The first kind of thought is closer to “*rotzuy*”, and it is the degree of *Ayin* that is always found within *Yeish*. The second kind of thought is analytical, so it is totally *Yeish* in its nature.

And when a person is teaching others, he is paying attention to his thoughts and to what he will say and how he will say it, which is an increase of *Yeish*-kind of thinking and doesn’t allow him to be in *Ayin*.

Returning To “Ayin”

When a person is at *shov\machshavah*, and he wishes to leave his mode of thought and return himself to the mode of *rotzuy\Emunah\ayin*, there are two ways of how he can get there.

- (1) The first way is to let go of his thoughts, and connect oneself to *Emunah*.
- (2) A second way is through revealing *Emunah* within his very thoughts. One can do this by turning “*yeda*” (knowledge) into “*lo yeda*” (“I do not know”). In other words, he should mentally reflect and

realize that anything he knows is not absolute. And, in fact, there is nothing that we really know absolutely.

This is for two reasons. First of all, the depth of the power of *chochmah* (wisdom) is not revealed to us, and there is also the plane of the unknown, *havayah* (also called *Keser*), which we never know of.

Getting used to thinking like this is what reveals a degree of ‘*Ayin*’ even within ‘*Yeish*’. This method has a gain that the first method doesn’t have. In the first method, although a person can return to *Ayin\Emunah*, he is still within his *chochmah*. But when a person uses the second method, he reveals *Ayin* within the *Yeish*; he reveals *Emunah* within his *chochmah*, and this raises the *chochmah* to the level of *ayin*.