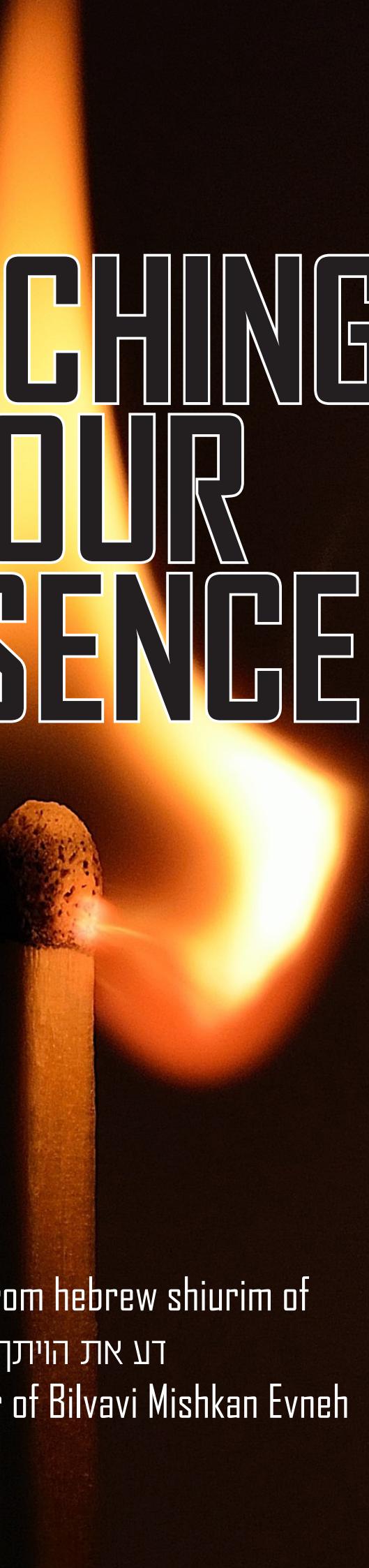


REACHING YOUR ESSENCE



Adapted from Hebrew shiurim of
דעת הויתך
by the author of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION	2
AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION	6
01 HAVAYAH - THE DEEPER ESSENCE OF THE JEW'S SOUL	7
03 HAVAYAH - THE SOUL'S INNER VOICE	40
04 HAVAYAH – THE ALL-INCLUSIVE ASPECT	50
05 HAVAYAH – THE POWER TO BREAK ALL LIMITATIONS	67
06 HAVAYAH – REVEALING A DEEPER REALITY	81
07 HAVAYAH – ABOVE THE WILL	95
08 HAVAYAH – A CONSTANT INNER EXPERIENCE	109
09 HAVAYAH – DECISIONS OF A HIGHER PERSPECTIVE OF EMUNAH	123
11 HAVAYAH – THE POINT OF STILLNESS - NO MOVEMENT	144
12 HAVAYAH – BEYOND CHOOSING	156
13 HAVAYAH –UNCHANGING & INVINCIBLE POINT IN THE SOUL	169
14 HAVAYAH - CENTEREDNESS	183
15 THE CONDITIONS FOR REVEALING HAVAYAH	192
EPILOGUE	209

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This series, **Reaching Your Essence**, (דַע אֶת הָוִיתךְ), is an adaptation of the series “*Da Es Havayesecha*”, a course consisting of 15 classes in which the Rav explains the essence of Jewish spirituality and several ways of how one can identify and access the deepest part of the Jewish soul: *havayah* (the essence of our reality), also called the “*Yechidah*” (the place of “oneness” in the soul).

This series was given immediately after the original series of the author on self-actualization which was entitled *Da Es Atzmecha*, “Getting To Know Your Self.”

The original audience who attended the classes of *Da Es Atzmecha* felt that it greatly clarified to them the meaning of their identity; however, now that they had gotten to that point, they wanted to hear something a bit more spiritual. They had also heard about the concept of the “*Yechidah*” and they wanted to know all about it, what it is, and if there is any way to have some access to it at our current level. The Rav agreed to give this special series, titled “*Da Es Havayasecha*” (lit. “Getting To Know Your Essence”), which we have decided to more appropriately name as “*Reaching Your Essence*.”



It would be helpful to be aware of the following quote from the words of the Rav at the very end of the series:

“Generally speaking, the proper path for most people to take [in working with the soul] is to work their way upwards, starting from the lower levels of the soul and progressing to the higher levels of the soul. In this path, one cannot attempt to reach his *havayah* point [the *Yechidah*] unless he has acquired the lower levels of the soul, which are the areas of the soul known as *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah*. We have explained these levels of the soul in previous *sefarim*.¹

“However, there are certain types of people who may begin their inner work by first trying to reach the *havayah* point in the soul. This includes any of the following:

¹ Refer to the Rav’s *Da Es Atzmecha* (*Getting To Know Your Self*)

3 | REACHING YOUR ESSENCE

“Some people were born with the power to naturally access this deep place in themselves, but they do not clearly understand it, and they would like to become clearer about what it is and how they can fully reach it. (Even in such people, there are also times where their innermost point becomes hidden from them.)

“There are also people who, although they were not born with great inner strength of their soul, were still able to penetrate very far into their deeper self, because they went through certain experiences in life that uncovered great depth to themselves. Either they went through a very traumatic experience, or they went through a deeply joyous one, which enabled them to penetrate straight into the deepest layer of their existence.

“These kinds of people cannot be told to ignore their inner point; they live with it as an existing reality. To tell them to ignore their inner point and to instead work with the lower parts of the soul would be like asking the person if he minds if his leg would be cut off. For such people, their *avodah* is to receive further guidance in how to use their *havayah* point, to clarify more of the ways of how they can properly connect to it.

“Similar to the above category are those who are born with great inner strength in their souls, who have the ability to easily and quickly penetrate deep into their soul.

“There are also people have entered very deep within themselves, but they used methods from impure sources that came from strange places of the world.²

“Any of the people in the above four categories can begin their inner work by starting to implement the ideas in these chapters which explained the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul. As for most people, who are not any of the above three exceptions, they will need to start to understand their soul through the previous series³, and **only after reaching their layers of *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah* can they attempt to do any of the *avodah* that was described in this series.**

“We are emphasizing this so that you will be aware of this and save yourself from damage. If you are like most people (who are not of the above three exceptions we

² Refer to the Rav’s derasha entitled “The Void”

³ Refer to the Rav’s sefer *Da Es Atzmecha* (*Getting To Know Your Self*). Editor’s Note: Refer also to the Rav’s series “*Da Es Nishmasecha*” (*Torah Way To Enlightenment*), which explains how to expose the five layers of the soul (*Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*).

described), you need to make sure that you begin with working on your *Nefesh*, then with your *Ruach*, then with your *Neshamah*, then with your *Chayah*, and only after that should you begin to try to get to your *Yechidah*, as described in this series.

“However, even if you cannot begin implementing any of the ways of *avodah* explained in these chapters, it is still beneficial for most people to hear the words of this series and to simple become aware of these concepts, because even if you cannot absorb it fully at this point, it is still important to know the goal of where you are supposed to end up at.

“When a person hears about concepts he needs to work on, the initial reaction is that he has to act upon them afterwards, but there is another way to hear: even though you will not be able to implement these matters right after hearing them [if you are not one of the three exceptions listed], you can still hear it just for the sake of building your soul, by absorbing these concepts. There is a purpose in just hearing concepts so that you can build your soul, even though you can’t act upon these matters right away.

“It is important for you to at least hear about these concepts, even if you can’t work on actualizing them yet, because it is good for you to know what your eventual goal is. “*Sof maaseh b’machshavah techilah*” (The end of action if first preceded with thought). When you hear about the goal, that itself is constructive. First of all, it gives meaning to your current level of *avodah*, because you know where you want to end up at eventually, even though you’re not there yet.

“In addition, it builds your aspirations. There are people who only act with what is in front of them; they live for the moment, and they never try to develop themselves for the future. A deeper kind of person will build himself up each day with the goal in mind that he wants to form a certain a path that will lead him to his goal. This does not mean that a person should become a dreamer, immersed in his fantasies of the future. A person needs to be involved with the here and now, but along with this, he also should expand his future, by building himself a path that will lead him into his future goal.

“When a person hears a *shiur/Torah* lecture solely so that he can arrive at the practical conclusions from it, he is limiting himself in the process. It is detrimental to a person when he needs to know what has to be done as a result of what he has heard, and when he wants to know the practicality of it right now, immediately. Rather, the

5 | REACHING YOUR ESSENCE

sensible approach is to hear about concepts even if they won't be immediately applicable in your life, so that you can at least absorb the end goal and be aware of the goal you will eventually head towards.

"So if you have absorbed these concepts, even if you aren't yet at the level of actualizing them, that itself is a great accomplishment, because it helps you acquire a deeper perspective and know where you want to get to."



It is our hope in releasing this English adaptation of *Da Es Havayasecha* that our life's task on this world gain greater meaning to it; that we serve the Creator genuinely and wholesomely with the awareness of our soul; and that the study of these chapters should help us relate better to the vast endless space of G-dliness that is present deep in our soul, the place in ourselves which is fully aware of truth – the point in our soul which is already at "one" with G-d and is part and parcel with His reality. And may the awareness to this deep place in ourselves be allowed to fully penetrate our entire being, in our own lifetime, and even more so, in the time of the imminent Redemption - where the view from our *Yechidah* will be fully revealed to all, where we will all gain the "collective" *Yechidah* of the entire Jewish people.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

It is written, **כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמִים בָּאָרֶץ**, “*For all is in the heavens and earth.*”⁴ The *Targum* translates this to mean as **דָּאכֵיד בְּשָׁמַיָּא וּבָאָרָעָה**, “unification of heaven and earth”. A person is comprised of a *neshamah* (Divine soul) and a *guf* (body). The *neshamah* comes from Heaven, hewn from the Throne of Glory. The physical body, though, comes from the earth. When a person approaches inner study, which is like “Heaven” and which is applicable to the soul, this must also be integrated with a simpler kind of learning, which is like the “earth” – a study that applies to the physical body.

If one only learns about knowledge applicable to the body, he is feeding the body, but he is lacking the sustenance for his soul. The same is true vice versa – if a person only learns inner matters which apply to the soul, his soul will be satiated, but he will be lacking the simple sustenance for his body. Therefore, man’s task is always to learn about inner matters of the soul, in conjunction with learning about externalities which are applicable to the body. A person needs a balance between the spiritual and the physical, and he should not involve himself solely with any one of the two extremes. One needs to learn about the Heavenly, alongside the simpler learning that is applicable to the body.

These words are being said as an introduction to this *sefer*. While we will discuss internal matters in this *sefer* which are applicable to the soul, one needs to also learn and act upon the simplest matters of keeping *Halachah*, [so that he will be able to gain fully from learning about the internal matters in this *sefer* and] so that he won’t lose out on the desired goal.

[Translated from the Rav’s introduction to sefer *Da Es Havayesecha* **דַע אֶת הַוִּיתָךְ**]

⁴ *Divrei HaYamim I*:29

OI | HAVAYAH - THE DEEPER ESSENCE OF THE JEW'S SOUL

Man – An Embodiment of Heaven and Earth

At the beginning of Creation, Hashem took the heavens and earth, which He first created separately, and unified them together. Man as well is made up of both heaven and earth. The body, which is a material existence, comes from the earth. The soul is the spiritual part of our existence, and it is hewn from underneath the Throne of Glory in Heaven.

Thus, in order to understand ourselves properly, we need to learn about both our body and our soul [and how they integrate]. If we learn about worldly matters but we don't learn about spirituality, our body will be fed, but our soul will not be. And if a person only learns about the soul and he doesn't learn about the body, his soul will be satisfied, but his body will be neglected.

So although we will be speaking here about heavenly, spiritual matters that speak to our soul, we have a simultaneous task of learning how we can feed the body – which includes the learning and the keeping of *halachah* (religious Jewish law). Without this, the purpose of these classes will be lost.

The Atonement of Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the day of atonement. As is known, the reason why we require atonement is because sins create a divide and a separation [between man and Creator], as the prophet states, “*Their sins separated between them, and between them and their G-d.*”⁵ The *Sfas Emes* says that there are two aspects contained in this verse: Sins separate “between them” – it causes a divide amongst each other – and sins also separate between man and G-d. In other words, there are sins between man and his friend, and there are sins between man and G-d. The *Mishnah* teaches that Yom Kippur atones for sins between man and G-d, but not for sins between man and his friend [which, in

⁵ Yeshayahu 59:2

order to be forgiven, he must seek forgiveness from the one he has wronged].⁶ Thus, there are two kinds of separation that exist – separation from the Creator, and separation from others. This is also true in the opposite sense – there can be unity (*achdus*) between man and G-d, and unity between man and his friend. On *Yom Kippur*, we are able to achieve both kinds of unity – our sins are forgiven by G-d [if we repent], and we can become unified again with G-d. People also forgive each other for the wrongs committed against each other, and there is once again unity among people.

However, we must know that the *achdus* (unity) between man and the Creator, and the *achdus\unity* between man and his friend, are not the same thing. The deeper implication of either of these kinds of unity is vastly different from each other.

Unity As It Affects The Jew and The Gentile

Let us explain. On *Rosh Hashanah*, the entire world, including the gentile nations, passes before G-d in judgment.⁷ But *Yom Kippur* is unique to the Jewish people, in that it is a day of atonement only for the Jewish people: “*For on this day, you shall be atoned.*” So there is a fundamental difference between *Rosh HaShanah* and *Yom Kippur*. *Rosh HaShanah* is for the entire world, but *Yom Kippur* is only for the Jewish nation.

There is also a deeper understanding of this. It is because there is a degree of unity which can be revealed even amongst the gentiles, and there is a higher level of unity, which can only be revealed amongst the Jewish people. Interpersonal unity can be revealed amongst gentiles, but unifying with the Creator – the absolute level of unity – can only be revealed amongst the Jewish people alone.

Unity Is Only Possible In The Spiritual

Let us explore this deeper and see what kind of unity can be revealed amongst gentiles, and what kind of unity can be revealed amongst Jews.

⁶ *Yoma* 8:9

⁷ *Rosh HaShanah* 16a

The material, physical world is called a “world of separation” (*alma d’piruda*). In the physical realm, there is no such thing as intrinsic level of connection with something. Although this world consists entirely of the four elements, which can combine together and unify, it is well-known that any of the four elements eventually ceases.

What happens when any of the elements disappear from physical existence? The Rambam, in *Moreh Nevuchim*, writes that fire goes back to its root, which is spiritual, Heavenly fire, and wind as well returns to its root – spiritual, Heavenly wind. Water returns to being a spiritual, Heavenly form of water, and the same goes for earth. Thus, even when the elements unify with each other, it is only a temporary connection. It does not last, so the connection is not intrinsic.

Therefore, the physical elements cannot become unified in the inner sense. Inner unity is only possible in the spiritual dimension, and in the dimension above that (as it is known, there is a higher dimension that is above even the spiritual, and enough has been said about this, which we will not go into here). Only in the spiritual realm, the world of souls and spirits, can real unity of forces exist.

To give an example of the concept, if we would only be made up of a physical body with no soul, we wouldn’t be able to connect outward to others and to love others. The commandment of the Torah “*to love your friend like yourself*” (“*kamoicha*”) is a concept that can only be possible through our soul, through which we can unify with another.

The Difference Between The Spirituality of Jew and Gentile

We have so far seen that unity only exists in the spiritual dimension. Now let us think: Does spirituality only exist within the Jewish people, or does it also exist by the gentiles?

Clearly, a gentile can also have spirituality. A clear example of this is the Egyptian sorcerers. They were able to change nature. The commentators explain that the sorcery of the Egyptians was based on their knowledge of spirituality.

Even more so, we find that there was prophecy, the greatest spiritual level possible, in a gentile. Moshe was the greatest prophet who ever lived, and the Sages state that this is only true about the prophets of the Jewish people; but amongst the gentiles, there was one prophet who equaled Moshe in prophecy – the wicked Bilaam. In our *sefarim* that explain the inner dimension of Torah, it is brought that Moshe and Bilaam were on parallel planes, but they are backward dimensions of each other. Moshe is the ‘front’, while Bilaam is the ‘back’. Bilaam was not a false prophet, and he was not imagining his visions. He received prophecy from the Creator. His power to curse the Jewish people was clearly a spiritual power.

We also know that Esav and Yaakov fought over who would get the World To Come; thus, even Esav has some connection to spirituality. Esav wanted the World To Come, so he has some connection to spirituality, which he fought Yaakov for. In the end, he did not win the fight; Yaakov received the World To Come, while Esav received This World. But he still fought for the World To Come, which shows that he wanted it.

Thus, it’s clear and simple that just as the Jewish people can have spirituality, so can gentiles have spirituality. Just as the spiritual world exists in the side of holiness, so is there a spiritual world that exists in the side of impurity; Hashem created an equal counterbalance between the forces of holiness and impurity.

Therefore, there is also a spiritual task (*avodah*) which the gentiles are assigned with. Spiritual work is not unique to the Jewish people, and it is not a novel concept produced by recent generations. Rather, since the time the Jewish people have become a nation, there is an inner spiritual task which is applicable to the Jewish nation, and there is a spiritual task which is applicable to the gentile nations.

It is upon us to understand, however, the difference between the spirituality of the Jewish people, with the spirituality that exists by the gentiles.

Achdus (Unifying) and Echad (Intrinsic Oneness)

Clearly, all spirituality to some degree is a kind of unifying (*achdus*). Therefore, just as is there spirituality in the Jewish people which is one kind of *achdus*\unifying so is

there a certain degree of *achdus*\unifying that is found by gentiles. Let us explain the difference, though.

As mentioned in the beginning, there is a concept of attaining unity between one and another (interpersonal unity) and there is also concept of “unifying” with G-d.

Within interpersonal unity, there are several levels. The first level of it is physical connection with others. As we explained, this unity is not intrinsic, for it is of the material world, and the material can disappear.

A higher level of interpersonal unity is to unify with another’s soul. Of this level, the sage Hilel was referring to when he said, “Do not do unto your friend, what you do not want done to you”, which is the explanation of what it means to love another person like yourself, and which Hilel viewed as a commandment that represents the entire Torah.

In other words, the very concept of the Torah is to unify and love others with an absolute level of connection; the word *ahavah* (love) has the same numerical value in Hebrew as the word *echad* (one).

However, even in this “soul” kind of unity with others, there are two different levels: (1) Unifying with other souls, and (2) Revealing the unity in which all souls are really one collective soul.

Unifying With Other Souls

Let us explain. The first kind of “soul” unity with another is to unify with other souls. Just as in the physical world we can take two objects together and unify them, so can two souls combine together and unify. In the physical world, however, the merging of material elements together is only temporary, but in the spiritual world of souls, the unity is absolute.

An example of this is the love between Dovid and Yehonasan, of which the Sages state is the prime example of unconditional love and which lasts forever. Dovid and Yehonasan were two separate beings, but they made a pact between them that they would always be loyal to each other.

They created an inner unity between them which was forever. That is one kind of unity: unity between two souls.

Revealing The Collective Soul

A more inner kind of unity between souls than the above is to reveal a state of unity where there is only “one” soul.

In the very beginning of man’s creation, Hashem first created Adam as one soul. Later, his soul was divided into several parts. Chavah was created from an incision in Adam’s body, from his rib – but this does not just mean that her body was separated from his in the physical sense, but that her own soul was separated from Adam’s soul. Before this incision, Chavah’s soul was one with Adam’s, and only at a later point was Chavah taken from Adam’s rib.

After this separation, there were several other divisions of Adam’s soul, such as Kayin and Hevel, which divided his soul into another two pieces. Thus, Adam was originally one soul, and only at a later point was his soul divided.

Lower Unity and Higher Unity

Based upon the above, we find a lower, external kind of unity, in which two parts become unified into one, such as the love of Dovid and Yehonasan, or like the level of union between Adam and Chavah after the incision. The deeper kind of unity than this is the level of unity in Adam’s soul before his soul was separated into any parts, before Chavah’s being was separated from his soul, before Kayin and Hevel.

The difference between these two levels of unity is vast. Now that we live after the sin of Adam - and to be more precise, now that we live after the state in which Chavah was separated from Adam - the unity we are more familiar with is that of connection: either through physical connection, or through spiritual connection. In this perspective, the unity is about unifying together separate parts. But since all people were once included in Adam’s soul, there is a deep point in our souls in which there was never a separation from each other. There, we were all one soul.

Thus, all of us contain two layers to our soul – an external layer, and a more inner layer. In the external layer of our soul, a person views himself as a separate being from others, with the possibility to connect and unify with others. In the more inner layer of the soul, there is a perspective in which all of us are essentially one collective soul.

Love vs. Oneness

The Torah commands us, “*And you shall love your friend like yourself.*” The word “as yourself”, *kamoicha*, has two interpretations. According to one approach, “as yourself” means “similar” to the love that you have for yourself, but it does not mean to love another as yourself in the actual sense. This is the view of Ramban. According to a second approach, *kamoicha* means “*kamoicha mamash*” - “as yourself – in the literal sense”, meaning that a person should not differentiate between himself and others.⁸ The source for either of these two explanations is contingent on the concepts we are discussing here.

From the external perspective, where we have become separated and we can unify the separation, there is no possibility to love a person like yourself in the actual sense. But from the more inner perspective, since we were all once part of Adam’s soul, it is possible to love another person like yourself in the actual sense, *kamoicha mamash*.

How can a person love another person as much as he loves himself? It is only if he reaches the deeper perspective, in which he understands that I and another are truly one (as opposed to being two separate parts that can be unified). The word *ahavah* (love) is equal to the word *echad* (oneness). When love is coming from this perspective of *echad* – from oneness, and not from a place of separation – it is then that a person can love another as much as he loves himself – *kamoicha mamash*.

We have learned thus far that there are three kinds of unifying between people: (1) Unifying on a physical level. (2) Unifying with souls, from an understanding that we are separate parts which can become unified. This level of unity is called “*achdus*”. (3) Unifying with souls, from an understanding that all of us are essentially one. This deeper level of unity is called “*echad*”.

⁸ Mesillas Yesharim: Chapter 11

The Difference Between "Echad" and "Achdus"

The power of "*echad*" (intrinsic oneness) can be reached even by gentiles.

The Ramban, in his commentary on the Torah, writes of an all-inclusive force in Creation which was the very first material that Hashem created in forming the universe. This original material of the universe was known to the Greek philosophers as "*hiyuli*" (matter). This is another term for the force of "*echad*", the oneness in Creation, from which all material comes from. Thus, the concept of "*echad*" was even to gentiles. It is not unique to the Jewish people; it had always been universally known to the other nations.

All of the gentile nations received the power of *echad* oneness, because they all come from Avraham Avinu. Avraham is the first of the three Avos (forefathers) of the Jewish nation, but he is not only a father of Yisrael, he is a father to all of the nations. That is why Hashem gave Avraham Avinu the title of "*av hamon goyim nisaticha*", "A father of the nations, I have placed you."

Let us explain the depth of this. The Jewish nation has three forefathers, who, from a simple understanding, seem to be three separate beings. But as we have been explaining until now, there is a point where everyone is unified.

What was the unifying point between the three *Avos*? We can answer this on a more external level by noting that wherever there is three, there is always a unifying point, because unity is always based on two separate parts with a third point in between them that bridges them together. For example, in the love of Dovid and Yehonasan, there was Dovid, Yehonasan, and the pact they made between them, which unified them together.

But as we explained earlier, this is the lower level of unity, *achdus*, in which there is first separation and then unity, where the unity cannot be on an absolute level. It can only be *kamoicha*, not *kamoicha mamash*. From the higher perspective of unity, *echad*, where unity with another is *kamoicha mamash*, there weren't 'three' Avos – there was only one. All of the Avos were contained in Avraham Avinu, the first father. Only Avraham is father of everyone, as opposed to Yitzchok and Yaakov, who were each separated from Yishmael and Esav.

So, from the lower perspective of unity, *achdus*, there are ‘three’ forefathers. From the deeper perspective of unity, *echad*, there is only one father, Avraham. And since Avraham is the father of all nations, all nations of the world inherited the power of *echad\oneness* from Avraham.

If gentiles have access to *echad* (oneness), can they also reach *achdus* (lower level unity)? It would seem, simply, that they can. For if they have access to *echad*, which is the deepest level of unity, it would seem that they can surely reach *achdus*, which is a lower level of unity. But the truth is: they cannot! The gentiles can only reach *echad*, but they cannot reach *achdus*.

We can understand this by examining the lives of our forefathers. From Avraham Avinu came a righteous son and a wicked son, Yitzchok and Yishmael, and from Yitzchok Avinu also came a righteous son and a wicked son, Yaakov and Esav. Yaakov merited a higher degree of spiritual perfection and therefore he merited that all of his twelve sons were completely righteous, and none of them were separated from him to become part of the gentile nations.

We explained earlier the concept that all unity is based on two sides which become unified together through a middle point between them. Avraham was one side, Yitzchok was on the other side, and Yaakov is the unifying point between them. From Avraham and Yitzchok came children who separated from each other, resulting in a split between another child who would father the Jewish nation, and another who would become part of the gentile nations.

Thus, *achdus* was not revealed through Avraham and Yitzchok. They fathered separate beings – Avraham and Yitzchok are each alone, and so are Yishmael and Esav alone – or, we can look it as a result of *echad\oneness*. But they did not reveal *achdus*. Therefore, the “*achdus*” aspect is only in the Jewish people, who descend entirely from Yaakov *Avinu*.

Now we can have a deeper understanding in the story of the convert who came to Hillel and asked the Sage to teach him the entire Torah. Hillel told him that the entire Torah is contained in the *mitzvah* to “love your friend as yourself”. The depth behind this is that before he converted, when he was still a gentile, he can still know of the concept of “*kamoicha mamash*”, which is the original power of “*echad\oneness* that everyone possesses; but he is not able to know the secret of “*achdus\unity*”, of “*kamoicha*”, which only the Jews received. Hilel was saying that now that he has

become a Jew, he can know of “*kamoicha*”, to love another Jew “as yourself”, which is “*achdus*”.

We can actually see this in our world. We will either find gentiles who are totally physically-oriented, in which each person lives entirely for himself and only worries about himself, or, we can find spiritual gentiles, who attempt to reach oneness (*echad*) – but they do not even attempt to reach *achdus* (unity with others). At best, they will reject the idea of disparity, but they do not know how to unify any disparity.

What is the reason for this? It is because the power to unify together all disparate parts is **only through the Torah and the mitzvos**. The word “*mitzvah*” is from the word “*tzavta*”, which means “connection”, because the *mitzvos* can connect and unify together all of the disparities in Creation. That is why only the nat

ion of Yisrael, who received the Torah and its *mitzvos*, can reveal unity with others. The nations of the world, in contrast this, did not want to receive the Torah, because they would not be able to handle the Torah’s commandments on interpersonal relationships, which is about unifying Creation together (*achdus*).

Only the holy Torah and its *mitzvos* can unify the created beings together.

Five Levels of Unity

If we look into it deeper, there are altogether five levels.

- 1) **Separation (nifrad)** – Since everyone in Creation has a physical body, the body itself is a cause for separation between beings.
- 2) **Unity (achdus)** – As it has been explained here, this level of unity exists only in the Jewish nation, Yisrael, and not by the gentiles.
- 3) **Oneness (echad)** – The deeper level of unity, the undivided “oneness”, is universal to all creations, so it is found by gentiles as well.
- 4) **Unifying the oneness of created being with the Oneness of Above** – This is based upon the second level described, *achdus*, unifying with others. When one unifies properly with others – a power that exists only for the Jewish people – he can then take this *achdus* further and unify the oneness of created being with the oneness of the Infinite (*EinSof*). The gentile nations, who cannot reach

achdus with other created beings, are therefore not able to unify with the Infinite.

- 5) **Unification Within The Infinite (*Achdus Muchletes shel Ein Sof*)** - The innermost level of unity that exists is the “absolute unity of the Infinite.”

Only The Jewish People Can Unify With G-d

Hashem gave the Torah and *mitzvos* to the Jewish people. There are 613 *mitzvos* in the Torah, with 248 of them parallel to the 248 limbs of the body, and 365 of them parallel to the 365 sinews of the body, for the *mitzvos* connect the entire whole of a created being with G-d. Without *mitzvos*, a person is only 613 separate parts. The *mitzvos* connect all the parts of a person and make him one unified structure. It is the Torah which unifies the oneness of a created being with the oneness of the Infinite.

The gentiles, who do not have Torah and *mitzvos*, cannot reach the lower level of unity, *achdus*, because it is only the *mitzvos* which create the first level of unity. For this reason, they cannot either reach the higher level of unity, of unifying the oneness of created being with the oneness of the Infinite. In other words, it is only the Torah which unifies the created being with G-d – and therefore, only the Jewish people, who received the Torah and its *mitzvos*, can become unified with their Father in Heaven.

These are deep words, and they are the basis of religious Torah Jewry. If a Jew would know about these words, he would never seek to learn anything from a source other than the Torah. Alas, there are Jews these days searching all over the world for understanding, and in unbefitting places, because they are unaware of the power that is contained in the Jew’s soul, and so they turn to strange and secular sources in order to find themselves. It is like the verse, “*They have abandoned Me, the Source of all living water, to draw from ruined pits.*”

We, the Jewish people, have an entire structure to view ourselves with, from the highest level all the way down to the lowest level. We have a complete map of our existence, whereas the nations of the world are missing spaces in the map; they cannot bridge together all of the difference areas in the soul. They can reach *echad*oneness,

but they cannot reach *achdus\unity* – and therefore, they cannot unify together the disparate parts. That is why they also cannot unify their being with G-d.⁹

For this reason, the gentile nations of the world are not able to clearly feel the reality of Hashem in their hearts. Only a member of Yisrael can, and indeed, this is the entire *avodah* (inner task) of a Jew: to feel the reality of Hashem in the heart. As it is written, “*And I will dwell amidst the children of Yisrael*” – which is explained as “I will dwell in each of them.”

Why, indeed, is this unattainable for a gentile? A gentile will either relate to separation or oneness, but he cannot harmonize together the disparity with oneness.

This is because, as we explained, gentiles can know of *echad*, but they cannot know of *achdus*. They will either understand all of Creation as being an entirely disparate structure with a bunch of separated beings from each other, or, they will view all of Creation as being one unit, the oneness of Creation, the Infinite. But to understand that the light of the Infinite can shine even within this world of separation, to understand that the Infinite can unify together all of the separated beings of this Creation – that, they will never be able to grasp. They cannot bridge together the two extremes; they cannot attain the **balance** and harmony of inner forces as we have described in previous *sefarim* (see “*Da Es Atzmecha*”, “Getting To Know Your Self”).

Unifying The Physical With The Spiritual

The Gemara states that the holy Torah is associated with the number three. It was given to a nation divided into three camps (Kohanim, Levites, and Yisraelites), it was given through Moshe, who was the third child of his family, and it was given in the third month of the year (Sivan), and on the third day of the month.¹⁰ The *Maharal* speaks about this concept at length.

The depth of this is because the entire secret of Torah and *mitzvos* is to balance, harmonize, and bridge together the opposite forces in Creation. It is meant to

⁹ After this shiur, the Rav clarified to a questioner that although non-Jews are capable of “*derekh eretz*” and good manners, this is not because they have any desire to deeply unify with others, and it is rather entirely social mannerisms of how to win friends and get along with people, entirely for self-interests.

¹⁰ Shabbos 88a

harmonize the light of the Infinite together with the disparate perspective which exists among created beings.

That is why the gentile nations of the world can either understand one of two extremes, either separation or oneness, but they cannot go about their physical matters with a spiritual perspective. Either they will live a totally materialistic, hedonistic life, or, they will go in the opposite extreme: becoming totally separated and abstinent from materialism, so that they can meditate on the oneness of the Creation. But they cannot relate to a concept of revealing the oneness of Creation within the material and physical realm - they cannot bring the oneness into the separation.

By contrast, the entire holy Torah is based on revealing oneness within the material realm. Most of the mitzvos of the Torah involved physicality. We take a ram's horn and use it for a *shofar*. We turn the physical into the spiritual; we unify the physical with the spiritual. We sit in a *sukkah*, made of walls and branches. We don't sit in the Clouds of Glory – we sit in a physical *sukkah*, and that is the *mitzvah*.

The holy Torah is based on unifying the spiritual with the material. The nations of the world can only be “either, or” – either they will only have physicality, or they will only have spirituality, but never an integration of the two. It is because they do not have the ability of *achdus*, of unifying together any differentiated and separated parts. That is also why they cannot unify with the Creator.

Our Purpose Is To Unify Our Entire Being With The Creator

The true meaning of reality is that there is a Creator, and there are the creations, and man's *avodah* (spiritual task) is to unify and connect himself to the Creator. We have received the special power of *achdus*, of unifying, and it is our task to use it, both with regards to connecting properly to other people on the word, as well as to connect together ourselves with the Creator. It is our task to unify together the material with the spiritual – which are both creations - and to unify our own souls with the Creator. We need to unify our material with our spiritual, and, on a deeper level, to unify our spiritual with the Infinite.

The *avodah* of a member of Yisrael is to leave behind the world of disparity, and cycle back and forth between the states of *echad* (oneness – unifying with the Infinite)

and *achdus* (unity – harmonizing the material with the spiritual). Meaning, a Jew's task is to live both the states of *echad* and *achdus*, in a balance. We can receive illumination from the higher level, *echad*, and shine it onto the lower level, *achdus*. From *echad*, we can unify the material and the spiritual, as well as human being with the Creator.

This is the depth behind the atonement of Yom Kippur. On one hand, we need to ask others for forgiveness, so we that can remove our separation from others and reveal unity with them. In this way, we reveal unity within this world of separated beings. On the other hand, it is also a day to ask forgiveness from sins between man and his Creator, which represents our *avodah* of *echad*, to unify with the Creator. Without achieving the initial level of *achdus*, which is to unify with other people on this world, a person cannot get to the higher level of *achdus*, which is unity with the Creator.

The gentiles have the Seven Noachide Laws, and they get some spiritual vitality from this, because these are *mitzvos*, which provides them with a spiritual source of vitality to live from. However, they cannot unify all 613 parts of the body through these 7 *mitzvos*. Only the Jewish people, who have the 613 *mitzvos*, can unify their entire physical being with the spiritual, and from this unification of their being that is achieved through observing the 613 *mitzvos*, they can then unify their souls with the Creator.

In Conclusion

The words here have been an opening to the words that we will merit to learn about, may Hashem will it. They are deep words, concepts that many of us are still not familiar with. We would all like to know about how to relate to our body and our soul. On one hand, we need to learn about the natures of the physical body and how to balance out our bodily forces. Simultaneously, we also need to learn about the powers in the soul, and then to learn about how the soul and body are balanced. Then we can attain the balance between our souls with the Creator.

We will try here, with Hashem's help, to provide here a kind of 'dictionary' of certain concepts which we learn about, so that we can learn about the soul that is within us, and how we can connect it with the Creator of the world, Who lives forever.

02 / HAVAYAH – THE SEARCH FOR COMPLETE TRUTH

What Are We Searching For?

All of us have a soul within us, and we all have a soul that is searching for something. If someone is immersed in materialism, he searches for honor, money, and desires. But we will not discuss this kind of person here. Most people in this generation who are searching are searching for something that is deeper than those things. Most people know that they are searching for something very deep, and we often cannot identify what that deep thing is that we are searching for.

But there is one common denominator with all people that search: a person feels empty somewhat, and he is trying to fill the emptiness. When a person isn't clear about what's going on inside himself, he feels lacking somewhat in his situation, and he can't put his finger on it. He just knows that he's trying to fill the emptiness, but he doesn't know how to fill the void he is feeling. To say this in slightly different terms, he's not really trying to *fill* his emptiness, and he just wants to *relieve* himself of all of the inner emptiness that he feels.

If a person is a bit clearer to what's going on inside himself, he knows how to fill what he's lacking. There are levels of this reaction. Some people will feel that what they are missing in life is calmness and inner serenity; others feel that they need more quiet; others feel that they are missing love and warmth in their life; others feel that they are looking to see the "light", because they feel like they are living in the "dark"; others have a sense of feeling like they are somewhat "trapped", and they express a desire for "freedom". The deepest kind of search a person can have is to search for the "*ohr Ein Sof*": the Infinite Light of Hashem.

Filling the Emptiness vs. Seeking Relief

Most people are not aware of what they are searching for. They wander the earth trying to find themselves. When a person is searching and he doesn't know what he's searching for, he is actually in grave danger. There are many things he encounters that

he uses to fill his emptiness which, if he would really know what these things are, he would never go near it.

I will try here to explain how one can realize why all the things that people seek are really imaginary forms of filling one's emptiness, and why people come to make these erroneous searches.

When a person doesn't seek to actually fill his emptiness, and he is merely trying to *relieve* himself of emptiness, he is in more danger than anyone else. We can see this, in extreme cases, from those we know who were going through much emotional suffering and great stress, and they were suffering so much that they took drugs so they could alleviate themselves. These people can be feeling so much pain in their life that they wish they could die, so they engage in suicidal behavior.

This person's thinking is, "Death means that I stop existing, which means I will have no more pain." A person who contemplates suicide thinks, "When I die, there will be no more "I", and he thinks that this will put an end to all his pain. He's not trying to fill what he lacks - he just wants to stop existing, so that he won't have to deal with the problems of life anymore. The suicidal person thinks that death will be the answer to all the pain. He doesn't seek to fill his emptiness - rather, he wishes to escape all the pain he feels.

How can we know that such a person is merely imagining his great escape? We know the answer. We know that a person has a body and a soul, and that death is not the end of our life. It merely puts an end to our body, while our soul still exists.

At death, there are writings of our Sages that describe what goes on. The body undergoes suffering, so that the soul can escape it easily. If the body doesn't suffer and the mind of the person is still there when he dies, the soul suffers terribly in Hell, *rachmana litzlan* (may Hashem have mercy on him), because in order for the soul to totally pull away from physicality and fully enter the Next World, the physical mind has to have stopped beforehand as well. This is a necessary process in order for the soul to take leave of the body and be serene. So suicide merely takes away the body's suffering, because the mind is still there, replacing it with far worse suffering - suffering of the soul, which takes place in Hell.

These are well-known matters to most of us. But if you think about it, even if a person doesn't commit a suicide, he might very well be adapting a suicidal person's

kind of thinking in his own life. A person might live his whole life and never seek to fill his emptiness, and all he does is seek to get rid of his pain! Such a person will seek to live a life of only comfort, in which there is no pain.

We all know that the world is full of suffering. People are lacking in their livelihood and have health problems, etc. How does a person fill what he lacks? One way, of course, is to seek a way to actually do something about it and fill it, whatever that way will entail. The other path that people try is that instead of working hard to fill the pain from feeling lacking, they will instead teach themselves how to detach from feeling any pain. They train themselves to detach from pain and anxiety, to harden their emotions so much to the point that their feelings inside are totally deadened, and in this way, they won't feel the pain of whatever it is that they are missing in their life.

Taking this "easy way out of life" then becomes the way of life for the person. A person can live a life in which his emotions are completely hardened, and he becomes like a stone, which cannot feel anything. He does this so that he won't feel any stress or pain at all in anything in his life.

People actually think that is the most perfect kind of existence a person can live on this world, and this is what many people are taught when they want to learn how to have a successful life: "Don't let pain get in the way of your life. The only way to get what you want in life is by avoiding pain, so train yourself not to let anything bother you." In this way, people kill off all their feelings, so that they will be able to be dull to emotions and thus avoid all pain and survive life. People even think that this is the ideal way for a person to live life.

We will address this point later, because there is some truth contained in it. At this point, we are only addressing the root reason of why people think this way. It is basically a subconscious decision that a person makes so that he can avoid pain in life. The person teaches himself, subconsciously, to deaden his emotions, so that he won't feel like he's missing anything in his life, and that is how he solves the problem of feeling lacking in life.

Is it really possible for a person to never be lacking anything? If a person has a good job, a happy marriage, and good children, does that mean his life is perfect? We all know that there is no such thing. Every person is lacking things.

Even if a person would have everything he needs, the very fact that we are human beings makes us limited. So we are always missing something. Even if a person is a millionaire, he's missing another million dollars. It is written, "*He who loves money is never satisfied with money.*" The Sages state that a person does not even die with even half of his desires fulfilled – if he had a hundred, he wanted two hundred.¹¹ Humans are limited, thus, we are always lacking. It won't help to get more money and own more real estate, because we are always lacking something.

The Desire to Escape Limits

A person may reflect about this and conclude, "Fine, I agree. Humans are limited, by essence. But maybe there a way for me to transcend all those limits..."

The Serpent was the first being in Creation to wish to transcend limits. It told Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge with the argument that if she eats from it, she will become like a G-d, in the sense that she will become enabled to created worlds.¹² The Serpent was telling her to leave her limits, to become unlimited. If so, the desire in a person to escape his human limits is, deep down, is like a desire to become like God.

There are even people who wish they could be God! Just like a person can be jealous of another person, so can a person be jealous that he's not Hashem, and he might wish he could be God. When a person realizes that he can't get what he's jealous of, he feels lacking, so he might convince himself that he is a God, in order to avoid the real conclusion, which is painful to him.

The Sages explain that the Serpent was jealous of Hashem that it wasn't a Creator. Therefore it compared itself to Hashem and eventually thought it was God, and it told Chavah that she could do the same and become God.

Understandably, for all evil that exists, there is always a way to use it for good, and therefore, it is possible for a person to use the desire to escape limits for a good purpose. There is a concept of "The Serpent" in the side of holiness, "*nachash d'kedushah*", in which the Serpent's argument can be used for holiness: the desire to

¹¹ Koheles Rabbah 1:13

¹² Beraishis Rabbah 19:4

become “one” with the Creator. This is the implication of the statement, “Yisrael, the Blessed One, and the Torah are one.” The Jewish people are “one” with G-d – but this is a very deep dimension. Right now, we are discussing the external aspect of the Serpent’s argument, which was certainly an evil and erroneous perspective.

The desire to become unlimited is evil when a person wishes that he could be G-d in the sense that he doesn’t want to feel limited by anything on this world. The person doesn’t want to have any limitations, and therefore he comes to the conclusion that he is like a G-d, and that he can do anything.

It is the greatest error one can make. A person doesn’t like to deal with the facts, and he might feel so bothered from the limits that life places on him, that he convinces himself that he is above human limits, that his like a G-d whom nothing can stop, and in doing so, he totally fools himself, in the most erroneous way possible.

People Who Live In Their Imagination

To illustrate, there are people who are living totally in their imagination; they are totally deluded. They can have many wonderful ideas, because they have a powerful and creative imagination, but they do not have the tools or the means to carry out their ideas.

I met someone once who wanted reconstruct Rechov Yaffo, and he was serious about carrying out his ideas, when all of his plans were totally unrealistic, because he did not have the means or the money for it to even start his plans. Yet, he continued to imagine what the new plans for Rechov Yaffa will look like, constantly shaping the image in his mind, without ever doing a thing to actualize his grand ideas. Not only that, but from speaking with him, I realized that in his mind, his new Rechov Yaffa was already built, and he lived constantly in that place he imagined; he was already imagining that people were coming over to him each day and complimenting him over it....

A person might live totally with his imagination, and he has great ideas, but he is unrealistic about them at the same time. Yet, he continues to fool himself. These people live their imagination as reality, and they are really emotionally ill. Whenever this kind of person feels lacking, he will imagine that he already has whatever he is

missing - and this is how he feels better about his situation! Imagination is reality to such people.

There are also people who feel that they are literally “everything”, that they are unstoppable – it’s like they think are a god. They live all the time in their imagination, and they live so much with their imagination that they believe that they cannot even be mistaken at all. They truly believe that they are unlimited and that it impossible for them to ever be mistaken about anything.

As we know, imagination is not always a bad thing. It can help a person achieve things through his creative aspirations. Imagination is a very tangible sense, as the Ramban writes. But such people not only feel the tangibility of their imagination – their imagination **is** their reality! They don’t just imagine - they *live* in the land of imagination in their heads.

People do this so they shouldn’t feel like they are missing anything; they imagine that they have everything, that they are the entire world. A person imagines that he is missing nothing, because deep down, he thinks he is like a G-d! Pharoah also imagined that he was a G-d; he honestly believed that he created the Nile River.

It is not only the Serpent and Pharoah who made this mistake of thinking “I am a G-d.” Many people make this mistake, and feel that they can be “everything”; they feel like they are unlimited and that they don’t lack a thing. If they ever feel lacking, they immediately imagine very strongly that they have already what they are missing.

Knowing Your Limits

We have examined the deep root of why people don’t seek to really fill their emptiness: it is because such a person, deep down, wishes he could escape all human limits, and in doing so, he resembles the Serpent’s argument of trying to become G-d (or godlike).

Let us see how his thinking can be refuted, first from a logical perspective, and then we will see the matter through a deeper perspective, through the lens of our soul.

If we would ask such people if they think they're trying to be G-d, they would answer, "Of course not." They don't even realize that they are trying to be like G-d! That's how fooled they are by their imagination.

According to his line of thinking, there are no problems in life, because he just imagines that there is no problem. If you ask him if he is aware that he is imagining things, he will say, "True, I am imagining that I am unlimited, but it is still true." He honestly believes that his imagination is reality, and therefore, he continues to think that he is God-like kind of being that is unlimited by this world. So he can very well be aware of his imagination, but he thinks that it's real. If you ask him, "So you admit to me that you're imagining that you're unstoppable. But how are you able to imagine in the first place? Who created your ability to imagine...?"

Here is where he will be stumped. He's refuted from his own logic. But if you try this on him, he will probably answer something like, "Hashem wants me to be like this." But we can all recognize that he has warped his own logic and fooled himself.

We won't go further into this point and how the conversation will continue. We already understand that this person is fooling himself more and more, thus, we see that imagination cannot solve what a person lacks, because such a person doesn't make any sense.

Let us rather focus on a different problem with his thinking, the emotional problem that is really going over here inside this person.

Leaving the Narrow-Minded Perspective About the Soul

People naturally see things as "black, or white", but this is a big mistake. All that takes place in Creation is really 'multi-colored' - nothing is ever "black, or white". This is often the problem of those who want to be unlimited; they are being too narrow-minded, and they see things as "either, or."

For example, there are five levels in the soul, which the Sages refer to as the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. Yet, many people hear this concept and think that they are either just a "*Nefesh*", or just a "*Ruach*." They only see one part of themselves – and think that this is all there is to who they are. A person hears about

what the “*Neshamah*” is and he might think, “I am a *Neshamah*”, because he identifies more with the *Neshamah* than with the other parts of his soul, for whatever personal reason he has.

When people think like this, they are really feeling something truthful, but they are mistaken in thinking that this is all there is to their existence.

When a person strongly identifies with a part of his soul and connects with it – whether he’s identifying with his *Nefesh*, or with his *Ruach*, or with his *Neshamah*, *Chayah* or *Yechidah* - this is certainly stemming from a truthful feeling, but what is wrong with what he is feeling? He is wrong in taking that feeling and thinking that “This is all there is to my existence. I am a *Nefesh*, or I am a *Ruach*, or I am a *Neshamah*, etc.”

Falsity Within A Truth, and Truth Within A Falsity

The Sages state the purpose of exile is so we can gain converts¹³, and the holy *sefarim* explain that this is because we are supposed to gain the good from all the places of the world, so that we can pick up truthful points from all of these places. There are truthful points that we can pick up from any place in the world. So we can find truth in all countries of the world, in America, in Iceland, in Egypt, in India, in Japan. We can find truth anywhere.

But what is truth? Truth is *emes*, which has three letters in it – a top letter, a bottom letter, and a middle letter, to show that *emes* is only *emes* when all of the truthful points are connected. Otherwise, even if it contains truthful points, it is ultimately falsity, *sheker*. When we take points that are *emes* and we split them apart, it becomes *sheker*, because the truthful points aren’t being connected.

Therefore, just because there are truthful points in what we come across doesn’t mean that it is total *emes*. It can have *emes* in it and still be *sheker*, because if we don’t know how to unify the truthful points together, in the sum total of things it is *sheker*.

¹³ *Pesachim* 87b

To illustrate the idea, a person borrows a dollar and then returns it the next day to the lender. The lender comes back to him the next day and says, “You borrowed a dollar from me.” The borrower responds, “You are right, but I paid you back yesterday!” It is true that he borrowed the money, but it is *sheker* for the lender to demand the money again. He’s saying something true, that money was borrowed from him by this person, but it’s *sheker* for him to claim it today, when it was paid back yesterday.

Emes is really the power to unify all the “pieces of the puzzle” that make up the world. The Jewish nation had 70 souls who went to Egypt, and there are 70 corresponding nations of the world. What is the difference? The 70 nations of the world are 70 scattered pieces, which are not unified. Only Yaakov *Avinu*, who personifies the trait of *emes*, can be the father of 70 unified descendants. Since all the 70 souls who went down to Egypt came from Yaakov *Avinu*, they were all unified by him, for his *emes* made him into a connecting point of all of them. The nature of *emes*, when it is total, is that it unifies.

So if we examine any *sheker/falsity*, we can find sparks of truth there, but that doesn’t make it *emes/truth*.

When You Heart Is Feeling A Pull Towards Something

Often, a person can feel an emotional pull towards something, a force of *meshichah* (pulling) that’s pulling him after something and drawing him towards it. It can be a desire to visit a certain country, or a desire to befriend a certain person, and he feels the desire very powerfully. People feel all kinds of pulls towards certain things or people, which tug at their heart, and they can feel this pull very strongly. There is some truth to what they are feeling, but it is still dangerous for a person to follow his heart’s feelings.

Let’s examine both the truth and the falsity contained in his feelings. The truth here is that he feels a connection to something, but the falsity here is that it will involve other “connections” along the way with it that are evil.

To give an example, a Jew might feel a strong connection in his heart with a gentile, and he might feel a powerful feeling of love towards him. How should he view this?

Here again we can examine the truth and falsity contained in the feeling. The Sages state that in the future, the gentiles will be our servants.¹⁴ So it's possible that a Jew is already feeling that connection now; so there is some truth to what he is feeling. But if he allows himself to become fully connected to the gentile and he goes overboard in his relationship with him, he is acting improperly, and this is the falsity contained in what he is feeling.

The Desire To Explore The World In The Name of "Kiruv"

The inner description behind our *avodah* on this world is that we need to gather together all the truthful points that are spread out over the entire world.

This is the deep reason of why there are Jews everywhere in the world. You won't find a place in which there is no Jewish soul, and it is because there is a truthful spark in any place in the world.

There are Jews all over the world who do not even know they are Jews. However, just because this is true, that does not mean that we are the ones to engage in bringing them all back. If we are to return them, we need to know how to return them in the proper way.

People also want to go to other countries of the world and observe them, so that they can learn lessons from what they see there. They are not totally wrong for feeling that way; our Sages did reveal that there is a "spark of truth" in every place in the world. But the truth is only the truth when it is the complete truth. Seeing only one side of the coin, even if it contains truth, is not yet the total truth. A Jew has to know how to put together all the "puzzle pieces", and if not, even the truth he is feeling is not called genuine truth, and it instead becomes falsity.

Truth Is Not Always The Total Truth

¹⁴ Pesachim 68a, Shabbos 32b

This is the really the depth of the concept of *achdus* [which we described in the previous chapter] – it is to take all the truthful points from all over the world and then unify them together.

One of the Sages, Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi, would honor the wealthy. His house was always set with the finest of foods, whether it was summer or winter.¹⁵ There are people who hear about this and feel, “If so, I will also honor wealthy people.” But just because Rabbi Yehuda HaNassi did this doesn’t mean that we know how to do this properly. He knew how to see the good in wealth, how it can be *emes*, but for those of us who are not on this level, it connects to the *sheker* involved in amassing wealth.

Here is another example. There is a concept of righteous gentiles, “*chassidei umos ha’olam*”. Does that mean we should learn from these gentiles how to act? And *Chazal* say we could have learned *derekh eretz* (manners) from a cat.¹⁶ Does that mean we should observe cats to learn *derekh eretz* from them? Of course not. Just because there is truth that can be learned from a gentile or from an animal doesn’t mean that we should go observe them and learn from them – and the reason is, because we do not know how to see those truths.

Thus, when the Serpent told Chavah that she will become like Hashem if she eats from the *Eitz HaDaas*, it wasn’t totally lying to her. There was some truth to what it was saying; there is some valid need in a person to wish to escape his limits, and this needs to be channeled in the right direction (for, as mentioned before, there is a very deep level in which a Jew can reach “oneness” with G-d), but the point is, it was not totally lying to her in its argument. If it was a total lie, then there would be nothing at all to discuss about its argument, because a lie that is baseless has no claim to it whatsoever. As the Sages state, “When *sheker* (falsity) has no feet, it cannot stand [exist].”

So what was the *sheker* in the Serpent’s argument? The *sheker* was that it was saying that man can become so unlimited that he can totally become like G-d, with no limits at all, and that he will never have to lack for a thing. This was total *sheker*, because there are lower levels to a man’s being which will always have their limitations, for that is the way Hashem has designed us. There is a part of us that can unify with G-d, but the lower parts of our being will always be separated from G-d. Therefore, the in the

¹⁵ *Eruvin* 86a

¹⁶ *Eruvin* 101b

sum total of things, man will always be limited. So whatever truthful point that the Snake's argument contained ended up becoming a total *sheker*.

Understanding Ourselves

Let's go back to the example we brought earlier of a person that is too narrow-minded when it comes to understanding his soul.

If a person, for example, claims that he only has a *Yechidah* and he has no *Chayah* or *Nefesh* or *Ruach*, he is mistaken – why? If a person says that he has a *Yechidah*, that part of his statement is true. He is saying a truth, because the *Yechidah* is part of the five layers of his soul. However, when a person focuses on any one part of his soul and thinks that this is who he is, he becomes delusional.

Instead, he should see each part of his soul and realize that there is more to himself. Each part of the self needs to put into its proper place, and then a person can build himself properly.

Thus, the soul is not “black, or white” – rather, it has layer within layer, and it is very deep. We describe it generally as having five parts, but there are many, many layers to the dimensions in it that we can cover. When people focus only on one part of the soul, they are only seeing one side of the coin, and this isn't the complete picture.

Complete on the Inside, Lacking on the Outside

To give an example of this idea, the holy Zohar states that “Yisrael, the Torah and G-d are one”. A person might read this statement and only see one side of the coin, and erroneously think that the nation of Yisrael is “one” with Hashem and therefore they *are* Hashem (Heaven forbid such a thought), which means that we don't have to keep the *mitzvos*...after all, we are “one” with Hashem....

Just because a Jew is “one” with Hashem doesn’t mean that he doesn’t have to keep *mitzvos*. There is a deep part in us that is connected with Hashem, but there is also a part in us which needs to serve Him and do the *mitzvos*.¹⁷

In summary, when a person only focuses on one side of the coin alone, when he thinks of himself in such one-dimensional terms of “either, or”, such as if he thinks that he is unlimited and unstoppable, this really deadens his own emotions; he convinces himself that he no problems, lost in his imagination.

Instead, one must understand that he consists of many layers. One can realize that there is a deep part in his soul which is “one” with Hashem, but there is an outer layer of the soul which requires observance to the *mitzvos*.

The lower part of ourselves lives in the realm of disparity that is This World, and therefore it needs the *mitzvos* to unify its disparity; whereas the deeper part in us is connected to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem; it lacks for nothing. But this deeper reality does not invalidate the reality of the outer parts of our soul, which are not yet connected to the *Ein Sof*, are incomplete, and require the observance of the *mitzvos*.

The Soul Is Complicated To “Feed”

Knowing the soul means to recognize the many layers of the soul, its many “colors” – because as we have explained, the soul is not “black or white”. Every person has many layers to his existence. A person can familiarize himself with his soul layers and then know how to balance himself, and then he will know how to feed his soul properly.

I once knew a person who fed his parrot from the food in his house. He told me about his parrot and that he feeds it with human food, not bird food. So of course I asked him, “What are you thinking? Why don’t you give it birdfeed? It’s going to die!” He said to me, “No, no, it’ll be all right. My parrot can eat regular food.” He honestly believed that this parrot does not need to eat birdfeed, and that it can be fed by human food. The parrot died, of course. A person has to know to feed something

¹⁷ See *Sukkos_007_The Jew's Inner Self*

properly; the same sustenance cannot be used for everything. So too, with regards to our soul, each part of our soul needs to be “fed” in a different way.

The *Nefesh* part of the soul has a certain kind of sustenance it needs, and the *Ruach* is fed in a certain way, and the *Neshamah* has a certain sustenance it needs. There is no one ‘pill’ that feeds all of the layers of the soul; you need to know how to take care of each part of the soul and give it what it specifically needs. We all understand that just because we have a soul, that doesn’t mean we don’t need to feed our physical body. In the same vein, you can’t feed the entire soul just by developing a particular emotion that you focus on.

You can’t eat more than you need, or else it damages the body. So too, if a person engages in spiritual knowledge that is way above his current level, he damages his soul. Many people don’t know about this, and what happens? They seek to fill what they are lacking, and they find something to connect to and they attempt to let it solve all problems in their life.

To illustrate further, just because a person knows about the body, that doesn’t mean he knows how to be a doctor. If he has learned one kind of medicine, that doesn’t mean his knowledge about this medicine can be used to solve all problems in life. In the same way, just because a person knows one way how to deal with the soul, because he has learned about different aspects about the soul, that doesn’t mean that he can apply his knowledge to treat all of the problems that develop in his soul. Each part of the soul is a different field of knowledge.

Even very spiritual people make this mistake. Many people focus on one point in spirituality and decide that this is their entire service to G-d. There is a lack of balance here. We cannot build up the soul based on putting emphasis just on one part of the soul.

For example, some people think that the best way to build a healthy human soul is by taking care of the body, that the body should be very healthy, and that by keeping the body healthy, one will keep his soul healthy in turn. Others have the opposite view – that only through building the soul alone one builds the soul. Both of these views are incorrect. They are not totally wrong, because as we know, the body and the soul are interconnected and they can affect each other. But in the sum total of things, they are each incorrect, because each of these views is attempting to solve *all* problems based on *one* side of the coin alone.

We can understand that it is senseless for a person who studies the body, who might know all about health, to think that the body's health can solve all emotional problems of the soul. Just because a person knows all about the body doesn't mean that all problems in life can be solved with this knowledge. You can't use one field of knowledge to solve problems that have to do with a different field of knowledge.

The Torah incorporates both the body and the soul. There are *mitzvos* we do with our physical body, and there are *mitzvos* we do with our heart and mind. There are *mitzvos* we do with our speech. The Torah is the only framework of knowledge in the world which combines both body and soul and truly integrates them. There are also other views in the world which deal with both body and soul and integrate them, but not quite. They only address the outer layers of the soul. Only the Torah shows us how to take care of the body as well as the soul, because only the Torah deals with the inner layers of the soul.

The other views of the world, which certainly contain truthful points to their ideologies, can only be truthful if they consider their knowledge to be parts of a puzzle. But they do not perceive their views in this way, and they instead have the attitude that their knowledge is everything, and that it can be used to solve any problem. They don't view their tidbits of information as merely being pieces of a larger puzzle. They don't see the bigger picture of things, and they instead focus on various "parts" of the puzzle.

Thus, there is no single "vitamin" that heals the entire soul or the entire body at once. In order to solve our problems, we need to study the entire spectrum of the soul, the whole picture of it, and then we can see where to put out knowledge into, which part of the soul's puzzle that it fits into.

Analyzing Wealth and Opulence

We will give an example of how to apply this concept. Let's take the great abundance we see in the world, such as wealth. Western society contains an abundance of materialism and monetary wealth. How should one view all of this wealth? Is wealth a bad thing? Is there anything wrong with having so much abundance?

Most of us would say yes, it is wrong to be rich. After all, the Sages said that one should live frugally, in order to live a life of Torah. That's what it would seem. Others would say that it is the way of gentiles to indulge in the world, and therefore, it's wrong for a person to be fabulously wealthy and to live in opulence. Yet, we find many *tzaddikim* (righteous people) who were wealthy, such as Shlomo *HaMelech*, who wrote in *safer Koholes* that wealth is all "futility of futilities", but before he came to this conclusion, he acquired much wealth. Jewish kings were required to be wealthy, and if they didn't have wealth, the nation was obligated to make them wealthy. The kings of the Jewish people lived with opulence. Why? Isn't it wrong to live with such extravagance?

Rabbeinu Hakadosh (Rebbi Yehuda HaNassi) was also very wealthy; his table was always set with the finest of food.¹⁸ Why did he set his table like this every day? Why didn't he instead just give his money to *tzedakah*? What did he need all of this extravagance for?

It is surely a deep matter, and it is not intention here that every say *Tehillim* in order to merit becoming wealthy. But what we definitely see from this is that some of our Sages used wealth for holiness. The same Rabbeinu HaKadosh, who lived with so much wealth, testified on his deathbed that he never enjoyed any of it.¹⁹ What, then, did he use it for? He must have used it somehow to serve the Creator. If one does know how to use it to serve the Creator, then he should certainly not seek it, just as a person shouldn't drive a car if he has never learned how to drive. But *tzaddikim* knew how to use wealth for holiness and how to serve the Creator through it.

The point of this example is that everything in Creation is complicated, with layers upon layers of understanding. I am not suggesting that everyone here set his table with riches every day. Wealth is used for evil by people who don't know how to use it. If the average person uses it, it becomes *sheker* for him, because he will misuse wealth and become completely indulged in it. Although nothing is wrong with wealth in essence, that doesn't tell us that it is a way for us to live.

But we can definitely see that there is nothing wrong with wealth in essence, and we just need to understand how indeed it can be used in a spiritual way. There is *emes*

¹⁸ Berachos 57b

¹⁹ Kesubos 107a

(truth) contained in it, and we just need to know how to use it properly - or else it becomes *sheker* (falsity).

Our Avodah Preceding Moshiach: Seeing Truth and Taking It Apart

On a superficial level, we have to see how everything contains truth because we should have an *ayin tovah*, “good eye” on everything, and be positive-minded. But there is a deeper reason to see good in everything. The deeper reason is because we have to reveal the truth in everything, because our people have the ability of *achdus*, to unify with everything. Our *avodah* to achieve *achdus* on this world is not simply to gather in all the exiles, all the Jews in Japan and in other countries who don’t know their Jews, and to get them to realize they are Jews and bring them all to *Eretz Yisrael*. Our *avodah* of *achdus* is rather to gather together all the “pieces of the puzzle” on this world and see the truthful points in everything.

This is really known as the concept of the “spiritual light of *Moshiach*”, which is beginning to radiate, now that we are closer to *Moshiach*’s arrival. The light of *Moshiach*, when it is revealed fully with *Moshiach*’s arrival, will “remove all the impurity of the world”, as the prophets state.

We tend to think that *Moshiach* will simply remove all the evil in the world in the sense that he will come and destroy all the churches and temples of idol worship. This is true, but there is more to it. *Moshiach* will see the truth in everything and reveal how everything can be unified. And only *Moshiach* knows how to do this fully. As for us, we have an *avodah* to see the truth in everything, and then take it apart, seeing how something can be truthful and how it isn’t.

Two Conditions In Order To Continue

These words are not just for the sake of listening. In order to be inspired from what we have said here, we need to hear them in a way that will cause our soul to really grow from these concepts. But there is a condition we need, before we continue: We need to understand **ourselves**, [our inner workings], **before** we try to see truth in whatever we see in the world. This will include knowing about all our soul's layers.

Also, we need to see how any truthful point we have picked up from anywhere in the world is really in the Torah; we need to be able to see it all in the Torah.

From this point on, we will try to examine various points and see how they can be truthful and how they are not.

Understanding Our Unlimited Aspect

Let's examine one example of something that contains truth to it, but in the sum total of things, it is false.

When a person is taught in other places in the world that he can be "everything" and that he is unlimited, that he is perfect and he doesn't have to change, we cannot say that there is no kernel of truth to this. It is true only when a person believes that deep in our soul we are "one" with Hashem, but at the same time, we still have to do *mitzvos*, because the outer layer of our soul requires the *mitzvos*. Without this understanding, a person's feelings will become deadened.

In our innermost point of the soul, which is the light of the Infinite of the Creator that manifests in our own souls, we indeed lack nothing, for it is the light that is unchanging and complete, and which is not missing a thing. This is true - but it is only true when we acknowledge our "opposite" point than this, our limited aspect, which is commanded with the *mitzvos* that are given to us to complete the rest of our being.

Man is like Jacob's ladder, which "is footed on this earth, and its head reaches the heavens". Our 'head' is in Heaven - but our 'feet' are on this world. In Heaven, fire and water can unite and be at harmony with each other; there, opposites can co-exist. The higher part of our being, our 'head', is at the place where it can harmonize opposites together. But the lower aspect of our being, our 'feet', the part of us which is

on this world, is in a place where opposites cannot be unified, the “world of separation”, so we must acknowledge that this part of ourselves exists as well.

In Conclusion

I hope that the words here will be understood better as we continue to explain these concepts. May Hashem merit us to sift out the good from the bad, so that we can we present the Creator with our offering of ‘refined flour’, complete cleansed from any impurities.

03 | HAVAYAH - THE SOUL'S INNER VOICE

Viewing Through the Soul Is A Different Kind of View

We will try now, with the help of Hashem, to draw these matters closer to our soul and be more specific in how to apply these concepts in our life.

We have begun to explain²⁰ that a person is comprised of a *guf* (physical body) and a *neshamah* (spiritual soul), and our inner task on this world is to learn how to identify ourselves as a soul. Now we will expand upon these words.

The body, as we know, is not entirely one part. There is a head, feet, hands, and organs. Our soul is also not just one part. It has layers to it. As we know from our Sages, the soul has five names: *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*.

It sounds like these are five separate “parts” in our soul, but in reality, they are actually just five different “names” that describe one fact: our soul. They are five “names” that describe the same **existence** (*havayah*) of the soul - and it is just that there are five unique perspectives on how to view the essence of the soul.

To illustrate this, think about a house with many rooms. A person can look at each room like a “part” of the house, or he can look at each room like another view of his house. Our soul can be looked at the same way. The soul doesn’t have separate parts to it; it is one entity, but it has several “rooms” within it.

So the five “names” of the soul are really five different ways to “describe” the soul. As in the illustration we brought, I can look at a room in the house as a room, or I can see it as being a part of a house. So too, one can look at the soul through five different lenses; one can see it from different perspectives, but whatever the perspective is, it is always a way of how to view the same thing – the soul’s spiritual essence.

The way to view the soul’s layers is not like when you cut a cake and you get five pieces from it. It’s not like a father and mother with three children, which add up for a total of five people.

²⁰ See *Da Es Atzmecha* | Getting To Know Your Self, chapter one

When a child looks at the world, he sees things through a childish perspective, and he can think that things are a game. So too, it is possible for an adult to see everything through a childish perspective – when he only sees things through the lens of his physical body. We need to therefore become accustomed to a *totally* different view on things than what we are used to until now, in order to view things through our soul.

Our body and soul do not view things in the same way at all; we cannot view spiritual concepts through our body's lens. Physical sight is a materialistic kind of view; you can learn how to view the same thing through a lens that sees deeper into the very same thing. When you see through your soul, you see the depth in something which the human eye cannot see.

Seeing the soul is even deeper than how you understand seeing through a microscope. When you look at something through a microscope, you can see more subtleties in it, but seeing through your soul is not simply to see the subtleties in something. It is rather a totally different lens from what you are used to. For example, feeling the cold is a totally different kind of feeling than heat, and vice versa. So too, just because we know to see things through our eyes doesn't mean that we can see through our soul.

We need to learn how to gain a whole new way to view things, in order to enter our inner world and identify ourselves as a soul. Therefore, you can't try to know about your soul from your body's perspective. You need to acquire *a whole new perspective* than what you are used to.

Learning About The Soul: Entering The Unknown

Entering the world of spirituality means that you will have no idea what you will be entering!

To illustrate, a child learns things on his own by observing the world, and he develops in steps, slowly. The world of our soul is like a whole different language that we need to learn. There will be mistakes as we learn it, because we are entering a place that we've never been in before, like when you're in a new country for the first time. Be aware that it's a whole different perspective than anything you are used to.

Spirituality is just not viewed through the same lens as the physical world is viewed, which you see through your physical eyes.

We are trying to learn here how we can identify ourselves as a soul. How can a person identify himself as a soul, though, if he doesn't know what the soul is?

Many people identify themselves as their background. If a person is Ashkenazic, or Sephardic, or Chassidic, often he thinks that this is "who" he is: "I am Ashkenazi", "I am a Sephardi", "I am Chassidic", etc. But really, your background is not who you are; it is only a comparison of yourself to your background. If a person thinks that he is who he is because of his background or community, he views things through his body and not from his soul.

So how do we identify ourselves as a soul when we don't know what it is? A person cannot be told to get there by thinking certain thoughts, because he is not there yet. He doesn't identify it.

Recognizing True Spirituality: Hearing A New Sound

When G-d came to Shmuel, He appeared to him as a human. Why was it necessary to do this? It is because we are used to recognizing something based on human properties, such as a voice. If he would have heard Hashem's voice, he wouldn't have known what it is, because he never heard it before. We hear a physical voice in something and then we can know it is real.

There are sounds we recognize and sounds we don't recognize. No two voices are the same. This we can recognize already from the physical world; we identify voices. When we hear a voice, we know what kind of voice it is. When the phone rings, we can tell from the voice on the other end of the line if it's our friend, or if it's the bank, just by hearing the tone of voice on other end of the line before he even says a sentence. We can all identify the natures of different voices.

But there are also voices going on **inside** us, and we need to able to listen to ourselves, and hear those inner voices.

Hearing Your Inner Voices

We all have a *yetzer tov* (good inclination) and a *yetzer hora* (evil inclination). We can tell if there is an inner voice in us coming from our *yetzer tov* or *yetzer hora*. Sometimes we hear an inner voice in us and we don't know where it is coming from, and we aren't sure if it's telling us to do something good or evil, so we don't know if it's the *yetzer tov* or the *yetzer hora*. If we hear a voice in us telling to do a *mitzvah*, we know it's coming from the *yetzer tov*, and if we hear that something is forbidden, we know it's the voice of the *yetzer hora* if we want to do it.

But even if we are aware if we're hearing something good or evil, it's not because we recognize the voices. It's simply because we know the nature of what the information is telling us, and therefore we discern where the voice is coming from. But we still don't know how to recognize the actual inner voices. It is something we have to learn about.

Hearing The Subtle Inner Sounds

The Arizal said that there are four "voices" contained in every word of the Torah: *taamim* (the tune of the word), *nekudos* (the pronunciation of the word) *tagim* (the crowns on top of a letter in a *Sefer Torah*) and *oisiyos* (the letters of the word).

The *oisiyos*/letters of a word don't mean much to us, because we can't hear any meaning when we just read the letters of a word. The *nekudos* begin to tell us what the word is saying, by showing us how to pronounce it - we begin to "hear" the meaning word. But *nekudos* don't fully reveal the meaning, because we can interpret the word to mean different words. For example, when we see the word "*av*", it can be read as *av*, but it can also stand for the words "*aleph beis*". [The *tagim*/crowns of a letter, are hidden matters that we don't understand, so they do not tell us anything about the meaning of a word]. The *taamim* - the way a word sounds - is what reveals the meaning of the word to us.

The *taam* in a word, the tune that it sung/pronounced with, is really like a voice in a word. *Taamim* are thus what gives inner meaning of a word in the Torah. If a person doesn't know how to sing the *taam* in a word, he cannot read the Torah for the congregation (*l'chatchilah*).

Taam also means taste. When you taste a food, you recognize its essence. So the *taam* is the inner tune that each word is carrying.

Others describe it in the following terms. The *oisiyos*/letters are like the “body” of a word, while the *taamim* are like the “soul” of the word.

In order for a person to recognize his soul, he must acquire the ability of *taam*, to hear the ‘tune’ behind something, which gives him a taste of the matter. It is essentially an ability in a person to pay attention to his inner sounds – his inner voices.

If a person knows how to taste foods, it is actually a tool he can use to listen to his own soul. When this ability is never channeled towards spirituality, it is used as an ability to taste food and discern what ingredients are in the food and what it needs. A person can develop this ability and become the best chef in the world, but this is not the deep way to use the power of *taam*/subtle discerning of taste. The ability to sense the *taam* in foods is really a tool given to us so we can sense subtle tastes - the ability of inner listening.

Expanding Upon Our Senses For Subtlety

We need to be able to feel our inner voice; to hear it. To illustrate, there are people who are gruff in their nature, and others have a more refined nature. We can tell right away if someone is like this, just by hearing his voice. Sometimes we do not always make a correct assumption, but often we can sense when we are in front of a person with a tough personality or a sensitive personality; we simply just “sense” it. But we are really “hearing” something in the way the other person talks, and we are discerning what kind of person he is.

Another example of the concept is that when a person is trying to become a musician, he needs a subtle sense for hearing sounds. If he doesn't already have this subtle sense, I'm not saying he can't become a musician, but it will be very hard.

There are people who were born with a subtle sense for music, and they keep expanding upon it throughout their life, and that is why they succeed with music.

This is the concept – we have already have a bit of a sense to hear subtleties, and we just have to expand upon it further, in order to hear the subtle inner voices inside us.

Spiritual Sound: Powerful, Yet Subtle and Refined

The Kotzker Rebbe would say that if a person can only cry aloud to Hashem, but he never davens in a whisper to Hashem, this is like the prayers of a non-Jew, for the non-Jews of Ninveh were crying aloud. A Jew, however, can cry from inside himself, and he doesn't have to make it audible to Hashem. That is the unique inner voice that a Jew has.

The Baal Shem Tov calls this a “silent cry.” It is a subtle sense in a person to be able to hear an inner voice going on inside himself – it is a powerful kind of voice, but it is refined at the same time.

Based on this, we can now understand: Why is it that most people are not succeeding at serving the Creator? Some people are simply not searching for it, and some do not have a will at all. Others have a will, and they are searching, but they aren't succeeding, because they don't realize that spirituality is really a world of our inner soul, and the soul is a very refined and subtle kind of world that you have to listen to.

In order to really live the inner world, a person needs to be able to listen to himself. If a person doesn't have that ability of inner listening, he doesn't grow in spirituality. People who live their inner world are able to hear the voices of their soul. As we have outlined, the sounds of the body are gruff in their nature, whereas the sounds of the soul are subtle and refined kinds of sounds.

Chazal say that when Moshe was performing the plagues, the Egyptians couldn't produce lice, because lice are small. The meaning of this is that the magic of the Egyptians, which was the impure knowledge of spirituality, cannot create subtleties. Evil spirituality can create blood or frogs, which are big, but it can't create something

that looks like a small kernel, because the real spiritual world is a very subtle world. Thus, they couldn't create lice, which are small and subtle, because the nature of evil spirituality is that it is gruff, and therefore it cannot produce anything subtle.

A person can't live the inner world of spirituality if he has a gruff and unrefined nature. In order to live and experience the inner spiritual world, a person has to hear its sounds, which are subtle, and it is very different from the nature of physical sounds that we are used to.

The "Bas Kol" – The "Heavenly Voice" and Beyond

The voice of a person changes as he gets older. A child and a teenager sound very different, and the voice of an old person is another kind of voice. But the soul in us has its own voice, which always remains the same.

Again, as I said before, it's hard to describe the inner world. It's like trying to describe color to a blind man. You can describe to him a shape, but you can't get him to actually see. So too, we have a soul and body. When we live through entirely the body, all we hear are physical sounds, and we will be deaf to the sounds of the soul.

However, there is no person who lives totally in his body. If a person was totally controlled by his body, he can't survive. All of us are being held alive by our soul. Although this is true, though, a person doesn't know how to differentiate between the voices of the body and the soul. When a person never learns how to discern between all the voices, he remains with a salad-like mixture of voices going on inside him.

We have in us the body's voice and the soul's voice. It is not possible to hear both of them at once, except for certain rare individuals.

Chazal say that every day, a *Bas Kol* ("daughter of a voice", a Heavenly voice) goes out every day by *Har Sinai* and says, "Do *teshuva*, wayward ones."²¹ The Baal Shem Tov explained it that any person who has thoughts of doing *teshuva* is really hearing the *Bas Kol*.

²¹ *Avos* 6:2

The *Bas Kol* is not the actual *kol* (voice) itself our *neshamah*, however, because it is only the “*bas*” of the *kol*, the “daughter” of the “voice”; thus, it is the “*bas kol*” of the *neshamah*, but it is not the “*kol*” itself of the *neshamah*. The actual *kol*/voice of the soul, itself, is the essence of our soul which we need to get to – it is the inner and most subtle point of life that there is. Just to hear the “*bas*” of the “*kol*” is like remaining with the branches and missing the root.

Listening To The Inner Voice

Thus, either we are hearing the sounds of our body, or we hear the *bas kol* of our soul. We can’t hear both at once; either we are involved in physicality and thus deaf to spiritual sounds, or we are involved with spirituality and we can’t hear anything physical. If we can’t do both at once, and we have a body and a soul, then how do we listen to our inner voice?

In *Birkas HaMazon*, we say “*BaKol, Mikol, Kol*”. Avraham said “*Yeish Li Kol*”, “I have everything.” This represents the ultimate level of *kol*, to feel that one has everything inside himself. The *Gemara* says that *BaKol* is referring to Avraham, *Mikol* is referring to Yitzchok, and *Kol* is referring to Yaakov, and since all of them had this revelation of *kol*, “everything”, they all tasted on this world a semblance of the World To Come.²²

In other words, the *Gemara* is telling us what the World To Come “tastes” like, what it sounds like, so that we can thereby recognize this sound in our own soul. For, as it is well-known, the World To Come is called “the world of the soul”. The day of the holy Shabbos is also called “a semblance of the World To Come”, and it is also called “day of the soul”.

Chazal are telling us how to “taste” the World To Come - how to hear the sound of the World To Come. This is the sound of the World To Come itself, not the *bas kol*,

²² *Bava Basra 16b*

not the “daughter” of the Heavenly sound which is a lesser degree of this sound, but the actual *kol* itself – what the actual sound of the World To Come is.

The *kol* that we currently hear in us [the voice in us that is motivated to do *tshuvah*] is a spiritual sound, but it is not yet the ultimate spiritual sound we can hear in ourselves. It is only a *bas kol*, which is a partial *kol*, thus it is not yet the inner point of a *kol*. If we want to hear the actual *kol* - the inner voice itself - we need to realize, that a partial *kol* that we hear inside ourselves is only the *kol* of the body.

There is only one *kol* that is complete and not partial: the *kol* of Hashem. It was a *kol* that could have created the world in one sound, but Hashem split it into ten sounds. It was a complete *kol*. Any *kol* we hear is *kol*, from the word *kelalah* (curse), which implies that the *bas kol* we hear is incomplete. But the “complete” *kol* which we need to hear is *kol* from the word “*kaf*”, and it is the inner *kol* contained in the *neshamah*.

We are used to hearing *kolos* (voices) in ourselves that are only “partial” kinds of *kol*, because they are different from each other, and thus impermanent. We need to get used to hearing the *kol* of the *neshamah*, the *kol* of the World To Come, the *kol* of Hashem, Who is One. It is a *kol* that never breaks up, and it is only one *kol*, unlike the many *kolos* we hear, which can become split up and broken up into many different voices.

All Jewish souls were by *Har Sinai* and thus we all heard Hashem’s voice. That voice remained forever, for it is the voice of Hashem, and thus it can still be heard, deep in the soul. We need to learn how we can listen to it.

We have already explained in *Da Es Atzmecha* (Getting To Know Yourself) that man’s task is to identify himself as a *neshamah*, a Divine soul. We mentioned that there are five names to the soul. The lower layers of the soul, from *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah*, all became dominant after Adam’s sin. Had Adam not sinned, we would have remained with just the *Yechidah* level of the soul which hears only one voice alone - the voice of Hashem.

We can get to our *Nefesh* and *Ruach* and *Neshamah*, and maybe to our *Chayah*, if we become aware of our inner voices. But to remain at that level is still not the level of hearing our actual essence, which is always one voice alone. We need to hear our essence, which is our *Yechidah*, thus we need to get used to listening to the one voice

alone, which contains everything that we need. It is the *kol* that is *hakol*, “everything.” It is also known as the “*kol demamah dakkah*” (“silent, subtle sound”).²³

Everything is there! We need to hear the inner voice in us, which is the complete kind of voice; it is the voice of our actual essence.

The inner voices we are familiar with are sometimes loud and sometimes quiet; they fluctuate in their frequency. How do we hear the constant kind of voice, which is the voice of our actual essence? When someone is talking, we hear his voice, and when someone is not talking, we don’t hear his voice. So how do we hear a voice that is constant?

The voice of our essence never ceases, thus it can always be heard. “*Hashem is not found in a great noise, but in a “kol demamah dakkah” (soft, subtle voice)*” – Hashem’s “voice” is found in the voice of our soul’s essence, which is a “silent, subtle sound”. That is the voice we need to hear how to listen to.

We hear voices of our *yetzer tov* and our *yetzer hora*. Sometimes we hear one of them more than the other, while the other one goes to sleep. But those are just partial voices, because they fluctuate, and therefore, even the voice of our *yetzer tov* isn’t yet our innermost voice. We need to hear the voice of our very essence, which is always one voice.

We are trying to learn how to identify our “I” as a *neshamah*, a soul. What does that really mean? It means to listen that we need to listen to the voice of your soul’s actual essence. That is how we will come to identify our *neshamah* as being our true self.

Concerning Channah the prophetess [mother of the prophet Shmuel], it is written, “*And Hannah spoke on heart, and only her lips were moving, and her voice was not heard.*”²⁴ This does not mean simply that she spoke quietly or that she whispered. The depth of this matter is that she spoke from her heart, from her innermost voice, the voice of her very being. In that inner place in herself, her voice could not be heard, not because she was whispering, and not because it was a quiet *tefillah*, but because it is the eternal voice of the soul’s essence, which is found in the deepest inner silence.

²³ *Melachim I:18*

²⁴ *Shmuel I: 1:13*

It is the inner voice of Creation, contained in each soul, which never ceases. This is an inner dimension of Creation which does not contain any noise or any arguments. There is nothing raging there, not on an external level and not in the internal sense. It is the Creation itself, its inner dimension, which exists deep in our soul.

In Conclusion

I hope that besides for hearing these actual words, that you be able to hear and feel the soul of the words contained in them. These matters cannot really be described in the word, for they can only be understood if you connect deeply into yourself. It is my hope that all of us here reach the inner essence of the soul.

04 | HAVAYAH – THE ALL-INCLUSIVE ASPECT

The Difference Between the Yechidah and the Rest of our Soul

So far, we have begun to discuss how to reveal our true self. We have explained that a person is comprised of a body and a soul, and that the true essence of a person is his soul, and that the body is only a “garment” on top of the soul. The soul, itself, is really one piece. In terms of our Sages, it splits up into five “names” – *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah*, and *Yechidah* - but it is essentially one unit, one reality.

These five “names” of the soul are all describing the soul in different terms. These are not five separate compartments of the soul, for there is only one essence of the soul. The five names of the soul are not splitting up the soul into five different parts as we understand in the simple sense; rather, they are five names that are all describing the same reality.

To explain this a bit more, it is only our body’s viewpoint which views the soul as having five “parts” to it, but the true view of how to view the soul is through our soul’s viewpoint. The soul’s view is essentially the view from deepest point in the soul, which is called the “*Yechidah*”.

The “*Yechidah*” in our soul knows that our soul is really undivided, whereas the other layers of our soul do not comprehend this deeper reality. But we have the ability to have this deep understanding – that is, when we reach our *Yechidah*’s viewpoint. When we reach this deep inner understanding, we would be able to see how our soul is really all one all-inclusive unit, which contains everything.

Searching for the Truth: Elazar Ben Dordaya’s Inner Voice

The Gemara tells us the story of “Rebbi” Elazar ben Durdya. This Elazar ben Dordaya committed every possible sin that there is to commit in Creation. [He thought he had committed adultery with every single harlot in the world, and when he found out that there was one harlot whom he hadn’t sinned with, he went to meet her so that he could sin with her. Right before he was about to sin with her, she mocked him, telling him that someone who was like him would never be able to repent from all his sins even if he tried to, because he had sinned so much. Suddenly, her words caused him to reflect.] For a moment, his mind settled, and then he discovered the inner voice in his soul which gave him no sense of peace, demanding from him that he perfect himself and repent. [He began to beg all of Creation to plead mercy on his behalf, but none of Creation wanted to defend him. Finally, he realized, “The matter is dependent only on me.” Then he cried so much until his soul left him.^{25]}]

This inner voice was the same inner voice that pushed Avraham Avinu to search for the truth, until he realized the purpose of life, which is to recognize the Creator. This sense of recognition is an **inner push** that exists in man.

It was precisely after Elazar ben Dordaya reached the lowest point possible, after committing every sin in the world, that he discovered the most difficult inner angst that a person can be in turmoil in. But it was precisely there that he heard the innermost voice of the soul. Just when he had descended to the “fiftieth gate of defilement”, he discovered the “fiftieth gate of holiness” - the inner voice of the soul which never ceases, and which demands from a person to listen to it, which doesn’t give a person any peace until he satisfies its calling.

²⁵ *Avodah Zarah* 17a

At first, he turned to all of Creation to save him, praying to the land, the mountains, the trees and fields, the skies, everything in physical Creation. He then realized that they cannot bring him to his innermost point.

It can be compared to a person who needs heart surgery. He is told that he needs surgery overseas in America and that it will cost 100,000 dollars. He goes collecting money from some donors, and they each give him 5 shekel. They helped him somewhat, but they haven't even begun to take care of the problem.

So, too, when a person is searching to overcome his problems, if the problems are only external, he might be able get help if he goes to a doctor or a psychologist. But if a person identifies that his problem is more inner, no one will be able to help him, because since it is coming from the most inner place in himself, it will be his own personal work to take care of. In fact, not even the holy *Avos* would be able to take away a person's problems if he would go to them! If one doesn't hear this inner demand for self-perfection, he will be satisfied with partial solutions to his issues. But if one hears the inner voice of the soul, he will not be calmed until he reaches a perspective that is more all-inclusive of the issues involved.

We can compare this to a metal spring. The more we pull it back, the more it will spring forward. The inner voice of the soul, which is telling a person that he needs to grow, that he needs to search, is like a spring. If a person only seeks partial perfection, he will get sprung only half the distance that he could have reached. But if a person pushes as much as he can and aims for the complete level, he will be able to reach the end, because he will get sprung very far.

Many people in the world are searching for something, but the question is: What is the depth of their search? What is it that they are truly searching for? People have always been searching. Yisro, and many others throughout the generations, have been searching for truth. But only of Elazar ben Dordaya did Rabbi put his head between his knees, cry, and exclaim: "There is a kind of person who acquires his World To Come in one *shaah* (hour)."

It is not easy to acquire the World To Come so fast. What's the difference if a person acquires it through one hour or through 100 hours? The word "*shaah*" means to be "*poneh*", to "turn". It means to turn to one goal alone. When Rabbi Eliezer ben Dordaya saw that one could help him except himself, he turned only to his inner voice

of the soul and heard it, which turns to only point alone – to an all-inclusive perspective, which is the *Ein Sof* (the Infinite) of the Creator.

Knowing Why We Are Searching

We are all trying to learn about how we can reveal our soul. If someone doesn't search for this, he wouldn't be interested in reading or hearing about this. Anyone who came here to learn how to reveal his soul obviously came here out of a desire to reveal the soul. But the question is: How much you are *really* searching for this? What is that you are truly searching for?

Compare this, *l'havdil*, to a person who wants *kavod* (honor). Every person would like *kavod*, but some people don't pursue it so much. Others run after *kavod* and get very offended when their *kavod* is slighted; there are even people who die out of a broken heart if their *kavod* is severely attacked. So there are some people who merely would like *kavod*, while there are others who live entirely for *kavod*. The first kind of person will be a bit sad if he doesn't get *kavod*, but he'll get over it. He knows he exists even if he doesn't get *kavod*. The second kind of person, however, seeks *kavod* as if it's his whole life, because he attaches his existence to the pursuit of *kavod*.

In the same way, we can understand that if we want to truly reveal our soul, we have to really search for it, and it will not be enough if we just try partially to reveal it. We need to search to reveal it no less than how we understand a person who is hungry for honor – he does not just search for it partially; he seeks it totally.

Thus, the question is, when a person searches to reveal his soul, if he is only searching for this partially, or if he is searching for this totally.

If a person has a partial aspiration to reveal his soul, but he feels that he can move on in life if he doesn't, then he might get to a partial revelation of his soul, but he won't get to a total revelation of it. If a person completely seeks to reveal his soul, however, then such a search is emanating from his innermost point of the soul, which contains everything – and he will indeed get to his desired goal.

So when a person is searching, for any goal, he has to know where this is search is coming from in himself. How much is a person willing to expend on what he searches

for? If a person is only a little interested in searching for something, he won't get that far. Only when a person is willing to search for something completely does he truly search for it, and only this kind of person will get reach what he wants on the complete level.

Avraham *Avinu* searched for the Creator. Nimrod, also, was also searching for the Creator in his life. But Avraham *Avinu* was willing to jump into a fire for this. Nimrod was not ready to do this. The depth behind this is that a fire cannot destroy the innermost point of one's soul. It can destroy only the external parts of the soul, but it cannot destroy our essence. If a person searched in his life only for things that were superficial, then indeed, if he were to be thrown into a fire, he is destroyed by a fire.

But as for those who reached their innermost point in the soul, when they were thrown into a fire, they were not destroyed. There were Jews in previous generations who let themselves be thrown into a fire to sanctify Hashem's Name. The depth of their act was because they knew that fire could only destroy their body. It could not destroy their essence, their innermost point of the soul.

A person might be searching to reveal his soul, but only because he is suffering physically. He wants to have an outer-body experience so he can leave the pain of his body, but not because he really wants to reach his soul. Such a person will be satisfied as long as he reaches the outer part of the soul, because his whole wish is to leave the pain of his body.

How do we reach our innermost point of the soul, which contains everything? Before we do anything, we need to want to get there. It's not enough to think of how to get there. We must reveal a true will for it.

Why Do We Want Moshiach?

One of the thirteen principles of faith is to believe that *Moshiach* will come – “And although he tarries, even so, I still wait for him, every day, that he should come.”

The Chasam Sofer was asked: Why is believing in *Moshiach*'s arrival one of the prerequisites of faith? If a person believes in G-d but he's a bit skeptical about when *Moshiach* will arrive, why is he considered to be a non-believer?

There is a famous story that someone once came to his Rebbe that he was having troubles with his livelihood and with the local *poritz* (czar). The Rebbe told him, "Either *daven* that *Moshiach* should come, or, go to *Eretz Yisrael*." He asked his wife what they should do, and she said: "*Daven* that *Moshiach* should come, so that *Moshiach* should come and get rid of the *poritz*!"

There is a deep statement of the Baal HaTanya: "The *Moshiach* that people *daven* for will not come, and the *Moshiach* who will come is someone that people do not await." What did he mean? There are many people who want *Moshiach* to come so that *Moshiach* will solve the overdraft that he has in the bank, so that his daughter will get her *shidduch*, so that he should be healthy, etc. This kind of person wants *Moshiach* so that he can be comfortable. He's not really awaiting *Moshiach* - he's awaiting someone who will come solve all his problems.

If *Moshiach* would come for that reason, then belief in *Moshiach* wouldn't be one of the 13 principles of faith. Awaiting *Moshiach* is to await the all-inclusive light that will come to the world. It is not about awaiting the time in history of *Moshiach*, but rather, to await the time in which Hashem's Name will be one.

If one hasn't yet reached his innermost point of the soul, he doesn't await *Moshiach*, because in his mind, when *Moshiach* comes, he won't get any more Bamba or Bissli (nosh)!

Who truly awaits *Moshiach*? Only the innermost point in our soul, our *Yechidah*, really wants *Moshiach*. Our body wants *Moshiach* so that we will be comfortable. Our *Yechidah* wants *Moshiach* because it wants the all-inclusive light that will come to the world.

Thus, we must await *Moshiach* every day, because one must learn how to leave his superficial viewpoint and enter into the all-inclusive viewpoint, in which he sees how all details are unified, which will be fully revealed to all with the coming of *Moshiach*.

There is a Chassidic story told of Reb Zusha of Anipoli, who would frequently meet with Eliyahu *HaNavi*²⁶, and he asked Eliyahu when *Moshiach* will be coming. Eliyahu told him that the Sages say that “The son of David will not come until every *perutah* (coin) is missing from our wallets”,²⁷ and then Eliyahu *HaNavi* explained the deeper meaning of this: *Moshiach* will not come until all the “*peratios*” – every divided part – is no longer. *Moshiach* will come only when there are no more “divisions”; when there will only be unity.

We are in exile and we await the redemption. What is the exile? There are many layers to the exile. There is physical sickness and suffering, and this is but the physical aspect of the exile. A deeper aspect of the exile is that Jews are living in other countries other than *Eretz Yisrael*; we are controlled by gentile governments and we don’t have our own nationality. An even more inner aspect of our exile is that the Jewish people have become lax in keeping the *mitzvos*. Going deeper, even those fully dedicated to the observance of Torah and *mitzvos* often lack inner vitality and joy are not inwardly connected to their outward behavior. All of this is yet the external layer of the exile. The core of the exile is that we aren’t yearning for the state of spiritual perfection of *Moshiach’s* times. That is the true inner meaning of the exile we are in.

Moshiach ben Dovid will come to reveal each person’s *havayah* point of the soul (the deeper essence of the Jew’s soul). Thus, if we want to reveal it, we need to aspire for its perspective! We must wish to come out of our “partial” viewpoint, the view from the outer layers of our soul, and enter into the all-inclusive viewpoint of the soul. It is the innermost point of what is meant by identifying yourself as a *neshamah* (Divine soul). The innermost perspective I can have, my very *havayah* (essence), is an existence that is everything and all-inclusive, and not partial.

The View From The Yechidah: Realizing That You Have Everything

²⁶ Elijah the prophet. It is brought in the many holy books of Jewish literature that the truly righteous (the tzaddikim) merit a revelation of Elijah the prophet, who reveals to them the secrets of G-d and His Torah.

²⁷ Sanhedrin 97a

The Arizal said that all of the high levels that he reached came from his happiness in Torah and *mitzvos*. There are many explanations to what he meant; the deeper meaning is as follows.

We must know what happiness is. What is happiness? The word for happiness in Hebrew is “*simcha*”, which has the same letters as “*chameish*”, five, meaning, a person usually has happiness in various “parts”, which is the idea behind “five” as opposed to “one.” A child is happy when we give him anything to play with, usually pieces. But real happiness is, “*The righteous rejoice in Hashem*.” In other words, happiness is when one is happy with something all-inclusive. The Arizal reached the complete understanding that the soul contains everything, and that was the root of his deep happiness that he reached.

This is not a ‘*segulah*’ to reach our innermost point - it is rather the actual definition of our innermost point. We need to arrive at the point in us that is “everything.” In our mystical teachings (the *Kaballah*), it is known as the *ohr Ein Sof*, the Infinite Light, in the soul.

If we don’t uncover it in ourselves, then we will only be happy when we have a good experience here and there in life, like when we “have a nice time” or when we go on an exciting trip. This happiness is only in the “parts” of life, and it is not real happiness. The true happiness is to arrive at your real “I”, your soul, which is your innermost point, which is when you reach the inner understanding that you really have everything, and not just good “times” and good “parts” in your life. It is a very deep understanding in which you realize that you really have all that there is inside yourself.

Our soul is who we are, while our body is a garment. We must know what the structure of the soul is. Our body is a garment over our soul. The lower/external layers of the soul are garments covering over the higher/deeper layers.²⁸ Our *Nefesh* is the garment over our *Ruach*. Our *Ruach* is the garment over our *Neshamah*. Our *Neshamah* is the garment over our *Chayah*. Our *Chayah* is the garment over our *havayah* (deeper essence) – and our *havayah* is, so to speak, a ‘garment’ for the Infinite

²⁸ Editor’s Note: This is the theme of the Getting To Know Your Self series (which includes Getting To Know Your Self, Getting To Know Your Soul, Getting To Know Your Feelings, Getting To Know Your Imagination, Understanding Your Middos, and Fixing Your Earth\Water\Wind\Fire), which explains how we can get by layer and layer of ourselves until we can reveal our innermost point of the soul.

Light of Hashem to settle in. Our innermost point that we can come to recognize is our own *havayah* point.

Therefore, if we want find who we truly are, we need to search for the innermost point that is in us. As we mentioned, there is a way to get there slowly and in steps, and there is a way to go straight to the innermost point itself, which is what Rabbi Eliezer ben Dordaya did. In one moment, he reached his innermost point, by “turning” all of his existence to face one point alone – to that one innermost point. We have a choice - we can either ‘turn’ to our body, the layers of our soul that are closer to physicality - or we can ‘turn’ to our innermost point alone, which is our very *havayah* (essence).

In order to realize that we are a soul, we need to gain the perspective of how everything is contained in our essence, and that it is not merely another “part” of our self. It is the understanding that our soul is really all one existence that includes in it *everything*.

In order to reach it, one has to be able to grasp onto it somewhat, to hold onto this point which has “everything” in it. We will try to explain a little of how to touch upon it and reach it somewhat.

Holding Onto Part of Our Soul Can Help Us Hold Our Entire Soul

We will first introduce the following concept that the Baal Shem Tov taught: “If one holds onto the edge of *achdus* (the unified essence of everything), it is as if he is holding onto everything.” This is possibly the deepest statement ever said by the Baal Shem Tov. It means that if you can’t grasp everything, you can still hold onto part of it, and it’s like you’re “holding onto” everything.

It doesn't seem that we can hold onto everything. You can't hold onto every apple, and if you hold onto an apple, that doesn't mean you are really holding onto every apple in the world through holding this apple. So the words of the Baal Shem Tov are not to be understood by regular human logic.

The Baal Shem Tov said that if you hold onto a little bit of something, you are able to hold everything, through this little bit that you're holding onto. Superficially, it means "as if", but that is not the true meaning. It's the deep fundamental understanding of the entire soul.

"Holding onto a little of everything" really doesn't make sense. How do you hold onto a little of everything? Is it like holding onto a string that goes around the entire world? There is no such string, and even if there would be, holding onto that string wouldn't mean that we are holding onto the entire world. So what does it mean that you can get everything by holding onto a little of it?

It means that there are two ways of how to grab onto the edges of our soul. One way is to grab onto it by trying to perform positive actions to get there, and this is called *chiyuvi*. There is another way of how to grab onto the edge of the soul: sometimes, we must not "do" anything at all. This is called *shelilah*. We will explain what this is.

The Concepts of "Chiyuvi" and "Shelilah"

When a person is afraid of losing his apartment, he holds onto his money and is afraid of losing it. This is a kind of grasping which is about accomplishing something because if he lets go of the money, he won't be able to keep his apartment. This is a kind of "grabbing" that we are familiar with; it is called *chiyuvi*, to do an action that accomplishes something. But sometimes, the way we hold onto something is by letting go of it! This is called *shelilah*.

What does it mean to grasp something by letting go of it? To illustrate this concept, if a person really wants to have good children, Reb Pinchos of Koritz *zt"l* said that even though one must show love to his children, he must keep a little distance as well. Why? Because if a father shows too much love to his children, they will actually lose

some of their self-esteem. They will never develop their own confidence if their father only showers love on them and never once keeps a distance from them.

When there is too much love, one's close relationship with his children can actually harm them; there are parents who don't let their children anywhere, not even to the supermarket, because they are so attached to their child. If you really want the child to develop, give him some space so that he can develop his individuality.

Here we see that there is a way for a person to let go of something, yet that allows for growth.

We can give more examples of the concept from the physical world. A person is brushing his teeth. If he brushes too hard, he will bleed and hurt his mouth. If he lets go of his strong hold on the brush and he brushes lightly, he will be able to brush properly. So we see that sometimes, letting go of your grasp on something is what allows you to gain.

We know of Hashem as the all-capable Being, which is the meaning of *Elokim*. We think He is stronger than billions of humans together, that He is above all of us. Our entire perspective is in terms of *chiyuvi*, of how things are accomplished in the active sense, as the Rambam writes. We are not used to the other perspective, of accomplishing things through refraining from action, which is called *shelilah*.

The depth behind this matter, *shelilah*, is because there is a deep point in the soul called *ayin*: "nothingness". It is an ability in our soul in which we refrain from doing something – the power of *shelilah*. This is a deep power that has to sometimes be utilized. Sometimes, we have to "not do" something. It is not so known to most people.

In order to grab onto the essence of our soul, which is *ayin*, you can't grab onto it in the same way you grab onto anything that is *chiyuvi*. It is rather grasped through *shelilah*. There, a person can find his innermost happiness.

Doing, and Not Doing

Our *mitzvos* are contained of 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments. This shows us that the essence of our *avodah* is to refrain from

certain actions. Simply, we think that only doing the *mitzvos* gives us holiness, while refraining from committing a sin does not give us holiness, and it is just an absence of impurity. But the truth is that even refraining from a sin gives us holiness!

People are more interested in “What to do”, while there is very little interest in “what not to do.” But the non-active part of our life is important, and in fact, it represents the nature our soul’s essence, and thus, it is the basis of how we reach our essence.

To give an example, look at the summer and winter seasons. In the summer, generally there is more action, and people are much more active in the summer. The winter is a time where there is not much activity going on, just staying indoors mostly. People that are more active love the summer – but they hate the ‘boring’ winter. But there is a lot to be learned from the winter season. It is a time in which we must learn that just as we can perform by being active, so too can we accomplish and perform even when we aren’t active.

Similarly, by daytime we are more active, and by night, we are less active. We need both aspects in our life, because there is what to gain from each of these facets to our life. Sometimes we act, and sometimes, we need to ‘not’ act.

We need to learn a new language: the power to “not do” something. Just like we can move, so can we learn how to refrain from movement.

Chiyuvi gives us partial gains, while *shelilah* can give us everything. Only *shelilah* can connect us to the concept of how everything is contained in our essence, which is the viewpoint from our *Yechidah*. In order to get to this perspective - which is really the Infinite Light of the soul - we need to realize what our point of *shelilah* is and how to work with it.

At first, when Hashem made the world, He took away some of His space, and after that He put Creation into that empty space. This was the first, starting point of Creation. Thus, non-action is really the root of everything in our existence.

We are usually active, and sometimes we are not active. But the point of non-action is the innermost point of our soul. In order to reach our innermost point, our *Yechidah*, we need to reveal the power of this empty space in the soul, called “*ayin*” (nothingness), which is revealed through utilizing our power of *shelilah*.

When a person wants to reveal his soul he tends to do certain actions to try to get there. But the innermost point of our soul is non-action. Therefore, we need to recognize what this is in ourselves, and after that we can reach our essence, our *Yechidah*.

To illustrate the concept, at first, when Rabbi Eliezer ben Dordaya realized that he needed to repent, he turned to all of Creation to pray on his behalf, but they did not want to pray for him. He wanted action; he wanted a great noise to stir him and get him moving. But anything he turned to refused to help him, and that's when he realized that all of these actions of prayer for him will not get him to the inner point that he needed to reach. He realized the depth of this concept, that "non-action" is the root of how he will get to his essence, and that is indeed how he got there.

It is written, "*For no man shall see Me and live.*" The Zohar says that this is only while a person is alive, but when a person dies, however, he does get to see Hashem. What is the depth of this? The simple meaning is that a person cannot see Hashem when he is alive, because he has a physical body that gets in the way. After he dies, he no longer has a body and he is entirely a soul, thus he can see Hashem after death. This was said by the Arizal. But the deeper meaning is, after death, a person realizes his inner point of non-action, and from that he is able to reach everything.

Utilizing The Power of Mesirus Nefesh (Sacrificing Your Desires)

The Sages say that one should "die before he dies." On a deep note, we have the power to "die" in our soul by not doing anything at all, the power to say, "Enough is enough." We don't need any action for this.

This is not referring to putting a stop to physical non-action, but to the soul's power to realize that no action has to be done. This is referring to the power of *mesirus nefesh*, the ability in a person to die for Hashem. The Arizal says that when a person is willing to die *al kiddush Hashem*, he merits the revelation of his *Yechidah*.

If a person doesn't want to die for Hashem, from a deep perspective it really means that he doesn't know how to put a stop to his "action" mode of the soul. Some people

can't close their store on Shabbos – that's one kind of problem. A deeper kind of problem is, that there are people who have no Shabbos in their own soul! They have no inner rest. They only know how to be active.

We only know what Shabbos is. It's the seventh day of the week. But Shabbos exists in our soul as well. On Shabbos, it is forbidden to speak of mundane things. It is about stopping the world, saying "Enough" to all action. The Shabbos we have today is only a "mini World To Come", and not the entire World To Come. In the future we will have the eternal Shabbos, the eternal *menuchah* (serenity). But if someone reaches his Shabbos in the soul, he reaches the eternal Shabbos in his own soul.

When we speak of the concept of *mesirus nefesh* here, this does not necessarily mean that we have to die in order to have *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice). We can have *mesirus nefesh* every day! By uncovering our power of *Ayin* in our soul – by learning how to refrain and not do something – we can reach *mesirus nefesh* every single day! It's a Shabbos-like attitude in our soul.

I met a person yesterday who told me he was very nervous. His wife was expecting a baby, and now the doctors told him that the fetus might not survive. I asked him, "So, what's the problem?" He told me, "What do you mean what's the problem?! Because the fetus might die." I said to him, "And what will happen then?" He was incredulous: "What do you mean?! I already feel that this is my future child!" He is right. He does feel connected to this future child. If he wouldn't feel at all connected to this child, then that would be a different problem. I told him, "Let's think about something else for a minute. Take your mind off this a bit and think about the following.

"Why do you want children? So that you can teach them the ways of Torah. You want your children to continue your path and to serve Hashem. That is why a person should want children.

"Hashem told Avraham to kill his own son. Nobody else has even been given such a test. The test you have is much smaller than the test that Avraham had, because Avraham was told to kill his own child. But Hashem is testing you, on a far smaller level. A fetus is not yet born; it is not a child you have raised. You are really being tested with a smaller version of the *Akeidas Yitzchok*.

"If Hashem would tell you that you need to lose your future child, are you prepared to listen to Him? If "No", then what is the point of living? What do you want this

child for if it's not about doing the will of Hashem? If a person just wants to have a child for his own reasons, he does not want a child to serve Hashem. Such a person is not prepared to accept Hashem's test if he were to lose this future child. But if a person wants to have a child so that he will teach Torah to this child and so that the child will serve Hashem, such a person is able to accept Hashem's will that he lose the child, because he understands that the purpose of his life and all that we desire in life is to do Hashem's will".

The Practical Way To Gain Mesirus Nefesh: Nullifying Your Will

Let us look at the opportunities we have every day for *mesirus nefesh*, our power of *shelilah*.

What happens to a person when he wants something and he doesn't get it? A person who never works on himself says, "Chaval" (or "Oy!"), or something like that, which voices his frustration. A more inner kind of person will believe with *emunah* that this is what Hashem wants.

But if a person is a bit more inner, he can react in an even more inner way. How can a person be more inner than having *emunah*? Is there anything more inner than having *emunah*? The answer is, there are levels and levels to *emunah*. The deeper way to use *emunah* is to use it for *shelilah* – to realize, that just like I need to do actions in order to serve Hashem, so are there times in which my *avodah* is not to do any action [*bittul haratzon*/nullifying the will].

There are people who want to open up a *chessed* organization or do something big, and they don't succeed. What is the reaction? "This is due to the Satan." Or, "It must be a *tikkun* (rectification)". Or, "There must be *kelipos* (spiritual husks) in this place." All kinds of "spiritual" reactions. This might be true, but there is a much deeper way to react. Just as you understand that you need to do things for Hashem, so can you understand that there are times where you *avodah* is to realize that Hashem doesn't want you to act.

We have the six days of the week, in which we do action, and we have Shabbos, in which we rest from action. We need both aspects in our life. We need action, holy

action, which is the purpose of the six days of the week. Shabbos represents the power of non-action.

When a person does something and he doesn't succeed, he should connect himself to the point of "Shabbos" in the soul and let go of his need for action. [He should realize that if his *ratzon* didn't happen, it must be that Hashem wanted him not to have this action fulfilled, whatever it was.]

The Ramchal wrote that the reason why there decrees throughout the generations which forbade Jews from learning Torah, although it made it hard for us to learn - which seemed to be nothing but a bother to us - was also for a purpose. It was to show us that sometimes, we serve Hashem by not being able to do something.²⁹

The deep aspect of serving Hashem is when we have to refrain at times from action. As one of the Sages said, "Just like I receive reward for expounding, so will I receive reward from abstaining."³⁰

In Conclusion

We have not completed the picture yet, but we have begun to explain the basis, of how we can reach the innermost point of our soul, the perspective of our *Yechidah*, which is entirely about non-action.³¹

In slightly different terms, we have a power of *chesed/ahavah*/loving kindness, which represents action, and we have also have an opposite power, *gevurah/yirah*, restraint, which is our ability to refrain from action. We must reveal both of these powers of the soul. *Ahavah* is the partial way to get to the soul, thus, doing certain "actions" can help us get to the outer layers of the soul; but it will not get us to the innermost point of the soul, which is the realm of non-action. *Gevurah/yirah*, or *shelilah* [or *ayin*] is the path that helps us get to the complete revelation of the soul, the innermost point, the *Yechidah*, which is not a partial view on things, but the complete view on things – the view that is all-inclusive and unifies all details together.

²⁹ Igros Ramchal: 50-53

³⁰ Bava Kamma 41b

³¹ This concept will be further explained in Chapter Eleven

66 | REACHING YOUR ESSENCE

In order to reach the inner perspective of the soul, we need to reveal more our power of *shelilah*, to get used to the concept of non-action; and from that, we have the key to reach the inner perspective in the soul.

May we merit from Hashem to continue to expand upon this, to learn how to use our point of *shelilah*, so that we can to get to our soul, namely, our actual essence.

05 | HAVAYAH – THE POWER TO BREAK ALL LIMITATIONS

The Yechidah – The Place In The Soul That Reveals The Infinite

We will continue the discussion we began on how a person can reveal his identity as being that of a *neshamah* (soul) and his very *havayah* (deeper essence).

Our soul has five names to it – *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. The true “I” is in our very *havayah*, our deepest essence - the *Yechidah* level of our soul. “*Yechidah*” is a feminine expression, as opposed to the word “*yachid*”, which would be a masculine expression. This is because the *Yechidah* is the tool a person can use to connect man to Hashem, similar to how a woman connects herself to her husband by allowing herself to become a *kli* (receptacle/container) to him.

If a person wants to be a “container” for Hashem’s Presence – if he wants to feel Hashem inside him and with him, that He fills all of existence – that He is everything – in order to feel this, a person has to reveal the Infinite Light in his own soul. This is the *Yechidah* of the soul, which is the tool to reveal how Hashem is endless, how He fills everything.

When we speak about this concept of *Ein Sof*, the Infinite, it’s the opposite of a *sof*, an end. So in order to understand what *Ein Sof* is, we need to know its opposite concept, which is the idea of *sof*, an end.

The End, and Beyond the End

Normally, there is an end to everything. There is nothing that has no end; everything has its limits, its rules, its end. We can see this from the concept of time. There is always an end when it comes to time.

Throughout the end of many times of the year, we keep meeting up with Dovid *HaMelech*. The end of the day is nighttime, in particular, midnight, as we see from

Dovid *HaMelech*, who hung a harp on his bed which would blow at midnight, which signaled the end of the day. The end of the week is *Melave Malka*, which is called the “meal of Dovid *HaMelech*”. The end of the month is *Rosh Chodesh* – it is the end of the last month, and the beginning of the next month. *Rosh Chodesh* is also called the festival of Dovid *HaMelech*. The end of the year is *Rosh HaShanah*, which is about declaring Hashem’s kingship. Dovid *HaMelech* is the epitome of a king on this world, thus he is a parable to the kingship of Hashem, so *Rosh HaShanah* is also connected with Dovid *HaMelech*. Every 7 years is *Shemittah*, and *Chazal* say that *Moshiach* can come on *Motzei Sheviis*; and *Moshiach* comes from Dovid *HaMelech*. So the end of every 7 year period is also connected with Dovid *HaMelech*.

On a year of *Yovel*, which is after 49 years - 7 cycles of *Shemittah* – it is the time when slaves go free. *Yovel* represents the concept of no more boundaries, the *Ein Sof*, the endless.

There are two people who are called “*Moshiach*”³² – *Moshiach* ben Dovid, and *Moshiach* ben Yosef. What is the depth of this concept? Why do we need two Messiahs?

The word “Yosef” is from the word “*sof*”, end. Dovid represents the “*Ein Sof*”, as we have seen above. Whenever there is a “*sof*”, an end, after that is the point of the *Ein Sof*, which is represented by *Moshiach* ben Dovid. So *Moshiach* ben Yosef represents a “*sof*”, and end, while *Moshiach* ben Dovid represents the “*Ein Sof*” – the point of the endless, which comes after the “end” point has been revealed.

Jumping Into The Infinite

Now we will draw this concept closer to our souls.

In each of our souls, there is a point of “*Moshiach* ben Dovid” and a point of “*Moshiach* ben Yosef”. We can reveal the light of the *Ein Sof* in our soul - after we reach the *sof* of our soul. As an example, the Zohar says that at death, a person can see the *Shechinah*, because when we get to the end, we can then receive higher

³² Messiah; the redeemer of the Jewish people who will herald the redemption to the world and reveal the glory of G-d upon the world

comprehension, the comprehension that comes after the endpoint - which is the *Ein Sof*.

When we get to the last point of what we can comprehend, after that, all we can do is “jump” to Heaven, to the Endless. “The task is not upon you to complete, but you are not exempt from it”³³ – after we do as much as we can, from there, we can jump beyond the endpoint and enter into the Endless.

There are two ways to get to the Endless (the *Ein Sof*). One way is to get there step-by-step, until we reach the endpoint of our soul, when are standing at the point of the Endless; and when we get to that point, all we can do is to take a “jump” in order to get to it. The other way, though, is, to begin our entire *avodah* already with the ability to jump straight into the Endless.

The truth is that, practically speaking, if we take the first method, which is based on steps of growth, then when we get to the end, we won’t be able to take the jump anyway, because jumping is the antithesis of everything we had been doing until then, which was all about taking steps. But if we already develop from the start our power to “jump”, then when we get to the endpoint, we will be able to take that jump, because we will already be familiar with what it is.

The Understanding of “No Barriers”

There is a deep parable from the Baal Shem Tov to explain this concept - of how we reach the *Ein Sof* of Hashem.

Once there was a king who wanted to see how much his son loved him. So he built a fortress around his palace and sent his son out of the palace, so that his son will break through the fortress and get to him.

The son thought, “How will I be able to break through this fortress? It will take me a lifetime. Why did Hashem place me outside the fortress if it’s impossible to break through??”

³³ *Avos 2:16*

He thought and thought, and then he came to the following conclusion. “It must be that there really is no fortress here, because if there was, why would my father place me outside of it if I can’t get to him, when he wants me to get to him? It must be that this whole fortress is a mirage. Maybe it’s magic. But it’s definitely not a real fortress.”

This is a deep parable. It means that we really do not have any barriers to get to Hashem. Nothing is really holding us back, even though it appears that it is.

However, this deep understanding about life is only one side of the coin. The other side of the coin in our life is that, yes, we do have difficulties. We must also be aware that life is full of difficulties. We all have difficulties; there is no one who does not have difficulty.

How can we deal with them? *Chazal* say that the evil inclination gets stronger every day, and that we cannot overcome it unless Hashem helps us.³⁴ We are facing struggles that we simply cannot overcome with our human strength. So why did Hashem give us such a test, when we cannot overcome it? It is because Hashem wants us to take a jump. We cannot complete our task, but that doesn’t exempt us, as *Chazal* say.

So we need to work hard in our *Avodas Hashem*, step by step, building and developing and improving ourselves, but we must also realize that we also need to be able to take a jump, and we have the ability to do so - to take a giant leap and reach the unlimited.

The possuk says “*Behold, it [the redemption] will jump over the mountains and skip over the hills*”. The meaning of this is, that we have a part of our *avodah* to “jump”, to realize that we have no barriers, as the Baal Shem Tov said.

What does that mean?? We don’t have any barriers?! Don’t we have many problems and obstacles in our way? We have bad *middos*, we have desires, and we have sins, *chas v’shalom*. So we do have barriers! What does it mean then that there are really no barriers in our *Avodas Hashem*??

The answer is, there are five parts in your soul. From the viewpoint of either your *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* or your *Chayah*, you have barriers. There is *avodah* and hard

³⁴ *Sukkah* 52a

work to improve those layers of your soul. But when you gain the viewpoint of your *Yechidah*, which is the inner view, you see that there are no barriers.

So if a person *only* tries to break all the barriers that are in his way of serving Hashem, and he never awakens his actual “I”, his *Yechidah*, then it will be very hard work, and not only that, but he won’t get to the inner point of his soul. Hashem gave us a deeper power to work with in our avodah: our *Yechidah*, which tells us that there are no barriers in our avodah.

Two Viewpoints At Once

Maybe a person will get carried away with this concept and say, “So you mean to say that I don’t have to work hard at anything, because there are no barriers?” But this is erroneous, because we have other layers in our soul, our *Nefesh* through our *Chayah*, which feels that there are barriers. So yes, we do need to work hard to overcome struggles, because we have the four outer layers of our soul, which require us to work hard and grow in a step-by-step ladder.

We can compare this to someone who says “I am totally spiritual, because I have a *neshamah* in me. I don’t have to eat or drink.” He is being suicidal! So maybe a person will say, “Okay, so I am not a *neshamah*, because I will die if I don’t eat or drink. So I must be a body, and not a soul.” But that’s also incorrect. As we explained previously, a person is not “black or white.” We are a complicated existence. We are made up of many layers, and we need to balance out all our layers.

To illustrate, when you want to grow a garden, it’s not enough to feed it and water it. You have to plow it properly and give it enough fertilizer. If you don’t, the garden will not grow. It’s not enough to simply feed it. There are other factors to consider.

So too, you are multi-faceted. You need to feed each part of your soul. This is how you build yourself. You can’t jump too many levels at once. But that’s all within the first four layers of your soul. But in the *Yechidah* of your soul, in that deep place in yourself, nothing has to be built in a step-by-step manner. The *Yechidah* in you is not developed in the same way that you work with your *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, or *Chayah*. It involves totally different thought patterns than what you are used to.

. Here we come to a great fundamental in all our inner work. We have an inner point in us which is a whole different perspective, a whole different way to work with, and it gives us different comprehension. So if we want to identify ourselves as a soul, we need to carry over this perspective into all five parts of our soul. We have to keep identifying ourselves as our inner point. This will give us a change of perspective entirely towards our avodah than from what we are used to.

This concept will be explained more in detail, but to give a general outline of it, we have in us a *Yechidah*, which has a different kind of comprehension towards things. We all have it. But we have to believe that it is in us, and we must want to reveal it, and we must want to know how to reveal it.

A person can have two perspectives at once! He can be working to uncover the first four layers of the soul, while at the same time, he is aware that he is a *Yechidah*, and thus he can let the perspective of the *Yechidah* to carry over into any stage he is at. He can work hard, going in the steps of developing the soul, from lowest stage to the higher stages, while at the same time being aware, that there is a deep point in him which can realize, that there are really no barriers – from that point of view.

How We Relate To Hashem

To give a simple example of this concept, we know that Hashem fills the entire world, but does a person really *feel* Hashem fills the entire world? Do we really feel that way? We need to feel a reality that we know of; it is not enough just to “know” it on an intellectual level. If we just know about it and we don’t feel it, that means we don’t consider it to be real.

If you get a bill from the bank and you don’t pay it, it means you don’t consider the bill to be real. You need to feel the reality, not just know about it in your mind. So too, we can’t feel the reality of Hashem’s existence if we just know about it.

There is a deep point in us which can feel that reality. Only through reaching one’s inner understanding of the *Yechidah* can a person feel this. The other layers of our soul cannot arrive at this great perception.

Our bond with Hashem has many layers to it. At first we need to develop the bond in the lower layers of our soul, and then we can go higher and higher in it, until we get the deepest layer of the bond.

There are different ways how a person can relate to Hashem: “Hashem loves me”, or “Hashem gives me my needs”, or “I feel gratitude to Hashem”, or “I feel the greatness of Hashem when I *daven*.” These are all different angles of our bond with Hashem. Does each of these aspects contradict the other? No. To illustrate, if you have many children, you love all of them. Your love for one child doesn’t get in the way of your love for the other child.

When a person *davens* to Hashem, how does he view this? Does he feel that he is on this earth while Hashem is in heaven? That is one perspective a person might have. Or, a person can daven to Hashem and feel that Hashem is next to him and that he is speaking to Him. Both of these views are correct, but to adapt one view alone is only half the picture.

Each person has different periods. Sometimes we relate to Hashem in the first way and sometimes we feel closer to the second method. We have times in which our heart is more open, like when we have happy occasions, and we can feel like Hashem is next to us in our actual life. But every person also has times in which his heart is closed up, times when he feels a great darkness in his life, and he feels like Hashem is in heaven, while he is on this earth, far from Him.

Indeed, Hashem is in heaven, while we are on earth. How are we able to develop a bond with Him, then? How can we bond with Him knowing that He is in heaven, while at the same time, to realize that He is literally next to us? The answer is: we have two opposite views going on in us at once. The outer layers of our soul relate to Hashem as being in heaven, while we are on earth, and that we have to climb the ladder of growth to get to Him. At the very same time, there is an inner perspective we can access, the view from our *Yechidah*, which already feels that Hashem is next to us, and that we can speak to Him because He is right next to us. The *Yechidah* in us says, Hashem is here, right next to you, because He fills all of existence.

We all want to get there, to the inner point of everything, to the complete bond with Hashem. If we want to put that goal into clearer, practical words: it is really the view from our *Yechidah*, which we need to get to.

But there are people who feel, “How can I get close to Hashem? I am on earth, while Hashem is high up in Heaven. How dare I speak to Him?”

There are also people who, if you tell them that our *avodah* is to feel Hashem’s existence in our hearts, they will respond, “Please. I am not one of the 36 hidden *tzaddikim*. I have sins; I know exactly where I’m holding. First I’ll try to keep a little *halachah*, the bare minimum of *Yiddishkeit* which I need to improve on, before I try to become so lofty.”

He’s right, but he’s wrong at the same time. As a person is trying to be on this earth and to be realistic and have his feet on this earth, at the same time, he also needs to realize that he can still find Hashem, even though he’s on this earth. Just like a person realizes that he needs to keep *halacha* and be realistic and to be in touch with this earth, so can a person simply realize that he can realize the innermost point of the soul, which can bond with Hashem and realize the highest point of all: the awareness that Hashem is right next to him.

Balancing Our Limits With Freedom

There are people who live a very limited kind of life; they live a prisonlike kind of existence. They never buy anything more than what they absolutely have to. Such a lifestyle actually harms the soul, because it places limits on the soul as well. It takes the soul and locks it up. Humans have a need to expand a little past the absolute necessities. It is because while we must certainly be aware of our limits, we also have a deep need to expand a little past our limits.

Of course, if a person spends water money like water, that is also bad. The need to expand past our limits has to be balanced. The sensible way is to be careful with your money, but to also put aside some money so you can buy something extra with it. In this way, you balance yourself out.

Our Sages state that “There is a rule, but for every rule, there is an exception”. What does this mean? It means that we have rules, which we need to follow in order to survive and be healthy, but we also need to come out of limits sometimes, or else we will suffocate. You need to develop a space you can go to in which you are free from limits. We need to come out of the limits we put ourselves in. This will feel like

freeing our soul from its captivity. It is important to have limits and rules in our life, but we need to balance this with knowing how to be free. We need to expand our soul a bit. We must have rules and limits in our lives – absolutely. Therefore, we need to go in steps in our growth. But there is also an ability in our soul to be above limits which we need to be aware of, at the same time.

We do not mean for one to have a life of total freedom from limits; such a life will not be a successful life. But there is a deep power in our soul to escape limits. As we all know, there is no job in which there are no off days. People simply cannot work if they never have vacation from work.

Chas v'shalom, when a person uses this power for evil, he wishes to be free from the *mitzvos*. But the sensible way to use this power is to give yourself the ability to go free from certain limits. It is a power that comes from the deep point in your soul of your *Yechidah*, (and it is also known as the “fiftieth gate of holiness” in the soul). We all feel a need for freedom from limits. The question is if we are using it correctly or not. When it is used incorrectly, people use freedom for materialistic desires. They feel a need to go leave the country for vacations.

But the real way to use our power of freedom is, in the realm of the spiritual. We need freedom in our very *Avodas Hashem*. This does not mean that a person should abandon *Avodas Hashem* sometimes. It means that as you are involved in serving Hashem, you can serve Him sometimes through using your power of inner freedom.

Examples of Using The Power of Freedom from Limits

For example, the Ramban said that a person should think before he talks. This is a commendable thing to do, but it needs to be balanced. Is it always a good thing to be so exacting about every word that comes out of our mouth? No, it is not. We see that sometimes, we have to daven to Hashem and cry out to Him, without thinking into this beforehand. If we would think before davening about how we will daven, this is detrimental to our davening, because our davening has to flow out of us freely.

There is a kind of prayer called *tzaakah*, to cry out to Hashem when we are in pain, and we don't have to think beforehand about what we will say to Hashem. If we have to think about what we will say when we talk to Hashem, it shows we are not really in

pain. A person in pain screams out, without organizing his thoughts. So there are times when we can't always think and be so organized.

There is a point in us which we need to develop and build, and there is an inner point in our soul which is allowed to be set free; it doesn't have to be developed and built in a step-by-step manner that we are used to from working with the outer four layers of our soul (*Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah* and *Chayah*).

Maybe a person will think that this means that we don't have to work hard and build ourselves and that we can do whatever we want. But this is wrong, because the Ramchal writes that even when we admonish ourselves, it should only be towards the outer layers of our soul. The inner point of our soul should be allowed to roam free, because its nature is to escape limits and be free.

To illustrate, a parent needs to let his child run around sometimes, so that the child can feel space in his life. But you can't let him run around in a place which is dangerous and he will hurt himself. So too, we need to be able to free, but that doesn't mean we can be free all the time, or else we will get hurt. But we definitely need to open our power of inner freedom.

How can we use our inner need for freedom? I will tell you that it is dangerous to use the power of freedom. Most people use it for inappropriate motives, as we can see from what goes in the world, that people who want to be free have no limits are destructive. Without rules, people would be at each other's throats.

The way to use the power of inner freedom is as therefore as follows: Remember the words of the Baal Shem Tov we brought before: that all 'barriers' in our *Avodas Hashem* are a mirage. That is the constructive way of how you can use your power of inner freedom. It is the power of the *Ein Sof* in your soul, which the outer layers of your soul cannot bring you to.

Work and Freedom At Once

Thus, your avodah is two utilize two different understandings at once. You need to build your "I", which is the perspective based upon the outer layers of your soul that require a step-by-step approach to build it. This entails hard work and following rules.

But at the same time, you must also realize, that you have the ability to let yourself go free from limits, and this is not something you need to build step-by-step. The normal rules don't apply to this inner space.

So if we want to use our power of inner freedom correctly, then the way to do it is, make sure you are following all the rules you need on this world, which you need to do and continue; and to bear in mind that at the same time as you work to improve yourself, you also have a point in yourself which you don't need to work on to develop.

Balance

To give an example of how we need this balance of limits and freedom, I knew a person who will come exactly five minutes before *davening* starts, every day. But he admitted to me that he feels a tremendous inner anxiety from this. The nature to be very exacting doesn't always come from a pure place within the soul; this kind of person will know very well how to keep to limits, but he imprisons his soul too much, because he has locked himself into a sort of self-imposed prison. He isn't balanced with the ability to be free.

There are many earnest people who serve Hashem that are like this; they excel when it comes to limiting themselves, but they aren't balanced, because they don't know how to free themselves from limits. I am not saying you shouldn't come early to davening. The point is that if it is causing you to feel inner anxiety at this, if it causing you to have guilty thoughts if you don't come early to davening, then you are locking your soul up and placing it in a prison.

There are people who are very exacting to follow every law in *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Jewish Law), but they don't know how to work with their soul. There are people who are actually found in the deepest levels of impurity even with all their strict observance, because since they don't know how their souls work, they end up falling very low spiritually – they fall into the in the 49th level of impurity, and sometimes even into the 50th.

Opening Yourself Up To Freedom

So we need to reveal our power to be free, but it must come along with following the rules of all that we are required to do which we are familiar with; but we must not seek freedom out of a desire to throw off the rules.

I will try to explain how you can use it in a positive way.

There are people who will never buy a lottery ticket. This is an example of being too constricted. Don't buy lottery tickets all the time, but once in a while, you can buy one, just to open your soul to the concept of going free.

We all need to be balanced. If a person is always happy with himself but he never has aspirations to grow higher, this is one kind of negative extreme. Yet if a person only has aspirations and he doesn't know what it means to be content with himself, this is the opposite extreme, and it is also bad. He is too limited.

There are people who are always seeking "success" in everything, because they feel like they have a lot they must know about: "I must become very successful in serving Hashem..."

Others have a different problem, and they are confident that they know their souls very well. They never seek success, because they think they are already successful.

Both people are being extreme, because they aren't balanced. We must know our limits and be realistic, but we must also realize that we do have the power to "jump" in our spirituality to levels that are higher than the current point we are at.

Believing In Your Ability To Take The Jump

If we never believe in it, we will indeed break the key to escaping our limits. We need to believe that we have in ourselves the power to jump. That doesn't mean we must always be jumping. It just means that we need to be aware that there is such a concept, that we are able to jump. We must clearly believe that it exists, or else we will disable it from working.

When a person wants to build up his self – his true “I” – he must know that there is an “I” in him which he can understand. Although initially it is very hard for a person to understand who he really is, know that it is possible, and it is within your reach. When we have *emunah*, when we believe that we can understand ourselves, we have the key. If we give up because we know it’s hard, then we destroy any possibility.

The *Yechidah* in us always exists, thus, we always have the ability to “jump” all the way until the highest point, even though the other layers in our soul are still in the development process and need more improvement. The *Yechidah* in us is already at the Infinite, ready to take the jump into the Infinite, into the complete connection with Hashem that we can have. We just have to use our power of *emunah* and believe that it exists in us! If we don’t believe in its existence, then it won’t work!

Rav Nachman of Breslev said, “There is no such thing as despair in the world.” What is the depth of his statement? Don’t people give up all the time? The deep understanding of it is very clear. What he meant was that if we reach our inner understanding of our *Yechidah*, we will be able to see how there is really no such thing as despair. We can reach an understanding that we can always be successful, and that there is no reason to give up. Our *Yechidah* understands this, but we need to access its understanding, by believing that we are able to reach such an understanding in ourselves.

If we don’t believe we can get to our *Yechidah*, then we definitely will not have hope. If a person doesn’t succeed at reaching it, it’s because he isn’t trying to connect to it.

Only if we believe in our *Yechidah* can we succeed in revealing its deep perspective [that we have described here]. This means for one to believe that he has in himself the deep ability to not be confined to any limits; just like you understand that you are limited, so can you understand, simply, that you also have a point in yourself that can reach the unlimited.

If a person only lives with rules and limits, he lives a very confined kind of life. He focuses on his failures: “I tried to get there, again and again, but I failed and I failed!!”

But when a person reveals from within himself that he can go free from limits and from step-by-step growth, he will have an opening to enter into the inner depths of his soul, which is his actual essence.

This is how you hold onto a little of *achdus* [the concept we elaborated upon in the previous chapter]. If you never believe in it, then you're not holding onto it. If you believe you can do it, though, then you are holding onto it.

In Summary

We are both limited and unlimited. We know we are limited, but we must also reach the understanding that we have in us an ability to be unlimited.

If a person only lives with rules and limits of his soul, with such an attitude, his life has already ended a long time ago. If a person believes that he can reach inner freedom and connect to the Endless, then he has the key.

We have two ways in how we can use the power of *emunah* in our soul. We use *emunah* to believe in Hashem, Who is endless, but we also can use *emunah* to believe in ourselves, that we have in our soul a deep ability to connect to the Endless [in spite of the fact that we must also improve ourselves] - that we can connect ourselves to Hashem, Who is endless.

06 | HAVAYAH – REVEALING A DEEPER REALITY

Reaching the Yechidah: Leaving The View From The Inside

We have begun to explain how we can better identify ourselves as a *neshamah* (Divine soul), and specifically, our *havayah* (our deeper essence). We will try here, with the help of Hashem, to touch upon our innermost point, and to reveal it from several angles, with the hope that these matters will not just be something you hear and read about, but as something you can slowly begin to **experience**. In deeper terms, it is inner recognition (*hakarah*).

The *havayah* point in our soul is called “*ohr makif*” – a spiritual light that “surrounds” a person. There are five parts to the soul, with the lower levels being inside a person, and the higher levels found outside of the person. The *Nefesh* level of the soul is in the liver, the *Ruach* level of the soul is in the heart, and the *Neshamah* level of the heart is in the brain.

The *Chayah* level of the soul surrounds a person, while the *havayah* point of the soul [also called the *Yechidah*] surrounds a person on a more absolute and total level.

How can a person cannot to his point of *havayah*, if it outside him? By exiting the self, one will find it. But as long as a person remains within his own perspective of the self, he will never find the innermost point of the soul.

Learning about the *havayah* point of the soul is therefore not just a superficial reading or intellectual understanding. Rather, you learn about it from an inward connection to the words about this matter. It is not like learning math, where the goal is to simply understand what is being said.

It is not an intellectual matter. You can only understand these matters from an entirely different mode of understanding than what you are used to, and the goal of learning this information should be entirely different as well than what you normally aim for when you try to understand something.

Intellectual Understanding Vs. Heart Connection

If a person gets very sick and was hospitalized, sometimes he has to learn again how to breathe. They teach him how to breathe again, through various techniques and methods. The purpose of this is not to learn on an intellectual level of how to breathe again. Rather, they are teaching him how to actually breathe. Breathing is not something you can do by thinking about it or understanding it. Breathing is only done when you actually breathe!

When we try to learn about the innermost point in our soul, which is our *havayah* point, this is really a kind of learning which cannot be described in the word. It is like trying to teach a person how to love. Can we really teach a person how to love another person? Perhaps we can explain to him what hatred is, how it is a negative emotion, how to deal with this emotion, and how to remove oneself from it. But we cannot teach a person how to love. Even if we tell him 20 times that he should love another person, this will not get him to love. Why? Because this kind of learning isn't acquired through intellectual understanding.

In contrast to this, if any person smells a flower and he breathes in the scent, he will be able to smell it, naturally. Unlike the senses of sight and hearing, the sense of smell is an inner feeling. Smell is called the sense of the soul.³⁵ In the future, Mashiach will judge people with a heightened sense of smell. Whereas all other judges can only judge based on seeing proof and hearing from witnesses, Mashiach will be able to 'breathe' in the smell in front of him and 'sniff out' what the truth is. Thus, smell is an inner sense of the soul. Mashiach is the *havayah* (essence) of the collective soul of the entire Creation. Here we are learning about our own private *havayah*, which applies to each of us on an individual level, and so we must know that this is not something to merely have an intellectual understanding of, but something we must feel.

Deepening Our Listening

As an example, the act of talking can either be experienced on a basic, physical level, and you just hear and understand the words, but if you become connected to what

³⁵ Berachos 43b

lays behind the words, you come to really experience the words that are being spoken, and it a whole different kind of awareness. It is written, “*My soul leaves when I speak with him*”, and Chazal expound upon this verse, “*I have given My soul, in writing.*³⁶” Speech seems to be just the expression of our intellect, but it is also called the “ink of the heart” (*kolmos halev*), as the *Chovos HaLevovos* puts it.

All words we hear really have two layers to it – an outer layer, and an inner layer. The outer layer of the words is when we understand them on an intellectual level, while the inner layer of talking is to realize what is contained in talking, what lays behind it.

To further illustrate, the words being said here are just the wrapping of the concepts that lay behind them. These words I am telling you are not just for the sake of listening to them and understanding them. We should be interested here in what lays behind the words here.

Words are just a tool we can use to enter deeper into what lays behind them. When we hear words, we try to understand them with our intellect, and this is the external layer of the words. But the inner layer of the words is not something you grasp through intellect. It’s a heart matter – it is to get to the root of what lays behind the words you hear.

A New Kind of Listening: Listening With Your Heart

Man received a living soul (*nefesh chayah*) from the Creator, this is translated by *Targum* to mean “*ruach memalelah*”, a “talking spirit” - the power of speech. Speech is the ‘container’ and tool in which the soul, and our inner light, is clothed in. In all speech, there is an external layer, and an internal layer. Often, the inner layer of speech is the intellect or understanding we hear in the words. But when we learn about the *havayah* point in our soul, this is not a matter of the intellect. It is rather an inner recognition – an inner experience.

Just like we cannot weigh the air or see what its color is, because these properties clearly do not apply to air, so is our *havayah* point of the soul an entirely different area

³⁶ Shabbos 105a

of understanding than the normal areas we understand. People are used to hearing on a physical level, and they can absorb what they are hearing, but this is usually with an external and superficial kind of hearing. But in order to become internal, one has to get used to listening from a more inner place in himself.

Let us explain. Surely, if a person wants to hear words, he must use his physical ears in order to hear, but we know that a deaf person also has ears, and yet he doesn't hear what is being said. This is because there is a disconnect between his ears and his innermost point, and therefore he cannot have a sufficient inner experience of the words. So too, in our own situation, in order to have inner understanding of these matters and to absorb them on an inward level, we need "internal" ears in order to hear them.

What does it mean to have "internal" ears to hear with? To get an idea of it, if a person is taught how to get to a certain place, he arrives there using his intellectual comprehension. But if you are listening to a song, is it the same kind of understanding? When listening to a song, you are not intellectually translating what you are hearing. You listen from a more inner place of understanding, which does not pass through your intellect. If someone uses his intellect when trying to hear a song, he is probably trying to learn the art of music, so that he can learn the notes and the technical aspects of how songs are made. But when a person is normally listening to a song in order to relax, he is not hearing this in order to understand it intellectually. Rather, he is hearing it in order to bring it into his heart.

Thus, there are two totally different kinds of hearing: Hearing through our intellect, and hearing through our heart – a "heart that listens." When hearing the directions of how to get somewhere, you do not have to exert your intellect to understand what you are hearing, you just absorb it naturally, when you listen. When you hear a song, you are not exerting your heart to understand it; it is natural. In summation, either we can hear something naturally through our intellect, or, we may hear something naturally through our heart.

If I talk to a person on a purely intellectual level, I ask someone for directions. Maybe I tell him "Thank You", but my words here are not about connecting to him. It's not out of *ahavas Yisrael* (love of Jews). But there is another way to talk to someone – to talk to someone in order to connect with him and have *ahavas Yisrael* to him.

It is thus apparent that there are two kinds of hearing. There is a basic kind of hearing, which we use our mind's five physical senses, our intellectual awareness. There is another kind of hearing which is deeper and more subtle than our physical sense of hearing: when we hear with our heart.

Most people only hear through their intellect, and that is why they don't reach their essence. Hearing from the heart is to hear from a whole different place; it is to **experience** what we hear. It is not about hearing information; it is about allowing your heart to experience.

To illustrate further, people often want sympathy, and they don't always want solutions to their problems. We want others to feel what we are going through. When a person needs therapy, the therapist might give him the best advice, but he can leave very disappointed, because what he really wanted was sympathy. He wanted the therapist to feel what he was feeling. He wasn't that interested in rational solutions.

If a couple has a good marriage, they listen to each other well. They learn each other's language. Of course, we can't build our marriage just through our heart, and if the bank tells us we have an overdraft, we can't tell the bank to feel the stress we are going through. We need an intellect that thinks. But the rational intellect alone will not help us enter inward into our soul. It doesn't help us get to the Infinite, which is a concept beyond the realm of the rational.

So in order to hear about the inner point of the soul, it's not enough to listen to these words with your intellect. You have to experience it. It's heart information, not brainy information; thus, it is perceived in a different way than what you are used to.

So the tool we need is to get used to listening from a different place in ourselves. When a deaf person learns how to hear, he feels like he has received a gift, a new set of ears. We also have a new set of ears that we need to get.

When we just hear with our intellect, it is a desire to know and understand. Our desire for intellect will not be enough to help us understand spiritual matters. Many people make a very big mistake: they try to understand spiritual matters in the same way that they understand intellectual matters, and they think that you can navigate your way through spirituality in the same way that you use a GPS. They erroneously view spiritual matters as intellectual matters.

With hearing spirituality, each person hears differently. Everyone hears spirituality from a different place within themselves, because it is not the same thing as the regular hearing. Some hear spiritual matters only using their intellect (which means they don't understand it), while others hear them in a very palpable way which they can actually sense; they really experience it.

We must point out that one should not only attempt to use his heart to hear and never use his intellectual mind. If a person shuts out his mind and only wants to use his heart, such is a person is acting only according to his feelings, and feelings alone do not amount to anything.

In order to connect to the *Yechidah*, we have to first become the right receptacle in order to receive it. This is done by learning how to listen from a whole different place in ourselves. We have physical ears, *Baruch Hashem*, but you should know that we also have "spiritual" ears.

Believing and Revealing

Chazal say that every day, a *bas kol* (Heavenly voice) goes out and calls out that everyone should repent. Why don't we hear this voice? It is because we are spiritually deaf. We need to open up our spiritual sense of hearing.

Most people are deaf to this kind of hearing. We must first realize that we are spiritually deaf, and then we can learn how to listen to inner sounds.

The first step of this is that we need to simply believe that we have in us the *Yechidah*. After this, we can train ourselves to listen to our *Yechidah*. It sees and hears differently. It smells and speaks differently. We have five senses; these are revealed to us. The *Yechidah* also has five senses which we need to learn about.

To illustrate the concept more, Adam on the first day of creation was able to see from one end of the world to the other. The depth behind this was that he saw from a whole different kind of view than the normal kind of view. From where did he view this from? How could he see endlessly? He viewed this from the point in the soul that is unlimited (which we spoke about in the last chapter).

At *Har Sinai*, there was “a great voice that did not stop”, and it is still going on today. How come we don’t hear it? It is because our hearing is limited, but a spiritual sound is unlimited. You can’t sense the unlimited using the limited. But if someone accesses the sense of hearing in his *Yechidah*, he can hear it – he can hear an endless voice in Creation that never stops.

There is no end to an ability that comes from the *Yechidah*. Talking from our *Yechidah* is the endless voice that does not stop, because it is coming from the unlimited. We don’t have it only because we haven’t revealed our *Yechidah*. However, before revealing the *Yechidah*, first we need to believe that our *Yechidah* has these senses, and we also need to learn how to listen to these deep senses.

So first we must believe that there is a place in our soul where we can hear an endless voice. We must reveal that sound. But we must realize that it’s a different sense. It is not reached through our physical senses we are used to. It’s already in us, and we just need to learn how to listen to it.

Seeing New Perspectives In The Same Thing

To try to understand this better, let’s compare this to a person looking at a painting. If he looks at it for five minutes and then another five minutes, he sees a whole different picture than five minutes ago. The more a person looks at a picture, the more details he notices in it, and it’s not just that he notices more in the picture; he reveals a whole new picture than what he saw five minutes ago. There is always more to uncover in something. This helps us understand the concept we are describing: how we can see that nothing ever really has an end, because there is always more.

A person reads something and thinks he understands the material. He thinks he knows what it’s all about. He thinks that there can’t be more to understand than what he sees. His perception is entirely based on what he has seen or read. But there is always more depth to everything, because there are so many layers to everything in Creation.

Chazal say that there are seventy interpretations for every possuk. Are there only seventy? There is really no end to how many ways there to interpret a *possuk*. Even the

recorder in front of me is full of depth, much more than we understand. There can always be more discoveries to its inner workings. We know that more and more discoveries are always being uncovered about the body. Any scientist knows that the body is an endless study.

Understanding spirituality is not limited to the physical sense of sight. Just because we can't see it with our eyes doesn't mean that it's not there. Spirituality is a whole different kind of sight than what we see physically. Even when it comes to physical sight we see how limited it is, because a microscope can show us much more.

The Ramban says that the root of all mistakes is that people don't see what they believe. He wrote that the philosopher Aristotle knew so much, but he only believed in something if he could see it. "Seeing is believing", people erroneously think. If a person can't see something, he doesn't believe. People think that if they can't see a spiritual matter, it must not exist. That is the root of all mistakes, because understanding spirituality is not at all like how you see something physical. Imagine if they would have said have 1,000 years ago that there will be a microscope which can see further into anything. No one would believe in it...

When people want to always know exactly "what to do" in matters of spirituality, they are using their understanding of the physical to try to understand spirituality. Such understanding is superficial and will not help one to understand the spiritual. If a person reaches an inner understanding from his soul, he understands that really there is no such thing as exactly "what to do" in spirituality. It's not something that can be given exact guidance.

Inner Listening: Experiencing

Let's go further with this concept. Let's say a person reads and learns about something; does he have a hard time reading it again? Some people can easily read something again, because they forgot about it and they won't mind reading it again. It feels like they're learning it for the first time. But other people can't read something again that they have already read; they have no interest in doing so. What is the root of this?

It is really because such people only use their intellect to understand something. They don't know how to really *experience* their knowledge. If people would know that by hearing something again that it is a way for you to experience it again – then there would be no end to what we would be able to hear! We can read the same words of *Chazal* and understand new things each time. It makes no difference if you heard it already, because each time you hear, you can uncover a new depth of understanding to the very same words you keep hearing.

When you eat the same food again, why do you enjoy it? You've already tasted it! It is your heart which is enjoying a new taste each time in the same food. *Chazal* say that a person should have a *lev shomea*, a "heart that hears." What this means is that a person should develop a whole new kind of hearing. It can change a person's entire life around.

When a person gets married, it is a big change from being single. So too, hearing the inner senses of the soul is a huge change from your regular hearing. You can hear a new sound in the same words you hear. This is not just to receive new intellectual understanding in something, but to hear it differently. It is to use the power of "taste" for spirituality, which we mentioned earlier. To give another example, the love that a spouse feels towards the other in a marriage can be a new feeling each day. It's the same spouse, but you experience love in a different way each time that you love your spouse.

Practically Developing This Inner Ability

When a person looks at a picture one day and the next day he looks at it again, he can ask himself what he sees in it today that he didn't see yesterday. This gets him used to the concept we are describing. Or, a person hears a song today, and the next day he can hear the same song, and try to notice something new he didn't hear in it the day before.

After this comes the next, deeper stage: listening to yourself. You will reveal a new "you" with the more you do this. You can keep uncovering more depth to yourself with the more you listen to yourself. The soul is vastly deep. Self-recognition is never the same each day; you can keep noticing more about yourself. You can uncover more layers in yourself. This is how you can begin to enter inward.

Listening To Yourself: Discerning Your Inner Motivations

Our soul has many layers to it. Recognizing yourself doesn't mean to know your weaknesses. That's just a part of it. We are referring to a power of inner recognition.

For example, a person needs to buy a broom, so he can sweep the house for Shabbos. Why is he going to buy the broom? If he looks deeply into himself, he can uncover many reasons he has. There is no one reason that is motivating him. He might even have ten reasons why he wants to buy a broom. It's not just because he wants to buy the broom for Shabbos. There are more inner motivations he really has. He can learn how to feel those inner motivations.

To illustrate this concept, in *sefer Michtav M'Eliahu*, Rav Dessler wrote that once a student of his had a nightmare in which he dreamed that he killed his son. He woke up terrified and ran to his teacher to ask him what such a thing meant, and how could he dream of such a thing. Rav Dessler told him, "Sometimes, you get annoyed at your son, like when he wakes you up in middle of the night for a drink, and you get so frustrated with him that for a few seconds you wish he wouldn't be there. Because you had such a thought, you were able to dream that you killed him."

The source of understanding ourselves is that we believe that our soul has many layers to it, depth within depth. In order to get to our innermost point of the soul, we need to learn about the more outer layers of our soul that cover over it, the map. So we need to come to recognize ourselves.

You can't discover your self-recognition in any *sefarim* store - you can only find it within yourself. You can only understand yourself by being aware that you have many layers in yourself, and that your essence is in the innermost point, which is the *Yechidah*. We need to hear the outer layers of the soul and then to get to hear the soul's essence, so we need to hear from a different place in ourselves.

The Power To Have Inner Experiences

Here we will not discuss how to hear the outer layers of our soul, and we will focus on how we hear the inner layer of the soul. In order to hear it, you can't hear it intellectually. You hear it through your heart. It is called the power of touch in your

soul (*mishush*). The *Yechidah* is really how you “feel” yourself. We feel if something is hot or cold. But we need to use our *Yechidah* all the time to feel it.

The *Yechidah* feels one thing alone, while our hands feel different things. Only our *Yechidah* is the inner way to touch. In order to feel something, we need to have contact with it, and we think about it. But to hear the *Yechidah*, we must learn how to do one thing alone: take one thought alone and keep focusing on it.

To focus on one thought alone is not just about learning how to concentrate (which is also wonderful); it is the tool you can use to enter inward into the soul. That is its purpose. How do we concentrate on one thought alone? Isn’t this impossible? The answer is, if you experience what you do, you will be focused.

A *chassan* and *kallah* are very focused at the time of the *chuppah*. They are not spacing about; they are completely immersed in the experience, thus their thoughts do not wander.

After the wedding, though, the wife is washing the dishes, and her thoughts are elsewhere; she has many things on her mind. How can she concentrate? Her thoughts are in one place, her heart is in another place, and she is doing something else entirely, trying to change the diaper as she’s doing other things. Compare this to the focus she was having when she stood under the *chuppah*. The lesson from this is, when a person is scattered inside himself, he cannot access his inner layers, and then he can’t experience himself.

The inner voice of the *Yechidah* is really the way to experience the actual soul. It is a way to constantly experience. Most people are too busy and don’t have time to experience themselves, thus their *Yechidah* is never revealed. The way to access the senses of the *Yechidah* is to experience what we do, which is to remain focused on our thoughts in one action alone – to be in it totally, which gives us inner unity. This is the tool we can use to enter the *Yechidah*.

A person on this world goes through many experiences and he likes to relay them to others: “I went here, I went here, I saw this and this”. But the truth is that you really can’t relay your experiences to others. No one else can experience what you experienced. You can get another person to feel a pull towards what you experienced, but not more than that.

Experiencing Vs. Renewal/Excitement

What is the main deterrent that holds people back from reaching their *Yechidah*? It is because people aren't really experiencing the moment. People only have experiences at extreme occasions, such as a wedding, or a very sad occasion. But people are not experiencing life itself! In order to experience life, you need to experience it always!

The happy or sad occasions of life come and go. They are subject to change, and they vanish. We need more than those rare exciting experiences. We need to experience the essence of life. When a person has a child, he experiences it. When a person makes money, he experiences it. But to experience each day – people wonder: what is there to experience?! But it means to experience the *essence of life* itself, each day. And this is a *constant* experience.

We can't develop our experiences based on extreme occasions in our life which come and go. If we experience our very daily life itself, we have the tool to get to our *Yechidah*. But if all a person experiences are the major events and occasions of life, which are extreme moments, as well as fleeting - he has no real inner experiences.

We are speaking of how to listen to the inner place in ourselves. It is really about learning to listen to our constant experience of life. The *Ein Sof* (Endlessness of Hashem) is constant. If we want to access its light in our soul, through our *Yechidah*, then we must already be familiar with what it means to experience the same, consistent reality. We must not seek "new" understandings it - rather, we need to learn what it means to truly *experience*.

Constantly Experiencing The Same Reality

The *Yechidah* in us contains everything we need. We have layers and layers to ourselves; we need to experience life, and there are experiences of our *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah*. But the deepest experience you can have is to experience your very self, which is your *Yechidah*. This is what we need to learn how to listen to.

The *Yechidah* is not just called so because it is "one" collective piece. It is because it always experiences one experience. What does that mean? How can you keep experiencing the same thing alone? Doesn't that sound boring?

We can compare this to a person who has a wedding on every night of the week. In the first wedding he goes to, he'll be happy. When it comes the second wedding of the week, he is less excited, and the when it comes the third wedding of the week, even less. His excitement eventually dies down until it is gone completely, and he has no joy whatsoever in attending a wedding with the more and more he attends weddings so much. Why? His happiness was based on a feeling of renewal, and now the renewal is gone, because the joy of the wedding is not "new" anymore to him.

If a person learns how to enjoy his very essence, he can have constant experiences. If not, he will feel like he has no renewal, and that will lead him to feel that he has a void inside, and he won't be able to fill it. Perhaps he will look for some *sefer* to read that will revive him, or some new and exciting idea, but in reality, nothing can help him, because his problem is that he seeks renewal, since he needs renewal to feel content.

Chazal say that the fish keep jumping out of the water to receive new drops. But their real vitality, which they don't realize, is contained in the water they are already in. The Rambam says that all *oneg* (pleasure) is in yourself, in your soul. You don't have to search outside yourself for pleasure. All you need to do is learn about yourself, and you will find the greatest pleasure there. Your "I" does not seek anything new.

We want to get to our inner essence, which we are learning about here. Everything is in it. To learn how to listen to our inner self is really to learn how to recognize that we really don't need renewal! Our inner essence contains everything we need, and we just need to listen to our essence. People always want to hear the news, or what new music CD came out. But you can take the same old things you heard and keep listening to them and hear new things.

Who would want to review the same words again and again? What's new? But the truth is, you can keep experiencing the essence of the same words. You can hear the same *shiur* again and again and hear new things in it each time you hear it; you don't need to give a new look to the room you're hearing the *shiur* in or switch around the tables and chairs to make it feel like a different and fresh experience. Rather, you can hear the same words, again and again, and keep experiencing them anew each time, although they are the same old words.

People tend to seek renewal and changes, but this really prevents the way to reach the *Ein Sof*. The *Ein Sof* of Hashem is unchanging, and you can't keep understanding "new" perspectives in it. It is rather something you experience more and more with

the more you connect with it, even though it is something that always remains the same in its essence.

The outer layers of our soul – our *Nefesh* through our *Chayah* - require renewal. It searches for new things. It's boring when we hear that people are having children, because everyone is having children, because it's not news to us. So we need to have some “new” things going on in our life in order to satisfy the outer layers of our soul. But if we want to get to the inner point of the soul, the *Yechidah*, we must familiarize ourselves with the concept that our essence is not about finding renewal, for it is connected to the *Ein Sof*, which is unchanging. New things are certainly interesting, but they don't get you to the inner point of the soul.

The Baal HaTanya said *Moshiach* will come to reveal how all is one, which will fully reveal the *Ein Sof* of Hashem. You can't feel “new” understandings in the *Ein Sof*.

Renewal Vs. Consistency

So you need to believe that there is a way to keep experiencing the same thing, constantly, which doesn't change, even though it does not feel new each time. The way to get to our essence is to realize that a constant experience is deeper than the feeling of renewal from new things. This is a change in perspective that we are not used to.

Many times people tell me after Tishrei ends, “I miss the Yomim Tovim, when I was on a much higher level.” I tell them, “Winter is better. Winter is the best Yom Tov - because it's the *same* each day, you don't get overwhelmed by the changes of the festivals. You can just keep experiencing the same thing again and again without getting thrown around between all the changes!”

So entering our essence is about seeking to experience something, constantly, and it is not about finding something “new”.

I hope that we will succeed in learning how to listen to the more inner layers of our soul, until we can finally arrive at listening to the very innermost point.

07 | HAVAYAH – ABOVE THE WILL

The Essence of the Soul Is Above Any Place

We have explained that learning about our *Yechidah* is not an intellectual matter; it is a soul matter, and we need to use an inner kind of listening in order to sense it. We are learning here about how to feel and experience the “I” within us – our very essence.

The *Yechidah* can be understood from many angles, but what we are trying to understand is always one thing alone. We are trying to open up many doors to get to it. But it’s always about one thing alone here that we are seeking. The *Yechidah* is always the same essence, and it is just that there are many angles we can use to try to enter it.

The *Yechidah* is also referred to with the term “*Keser*” (crown). A king wears his crown above his head; from all of the royal clothing that a king wears, only the crown is above him. This is not by chance; it is on purpose. That is the whole concept of a crown – something worn on top of the head. It is distinct from all of the other royal clothes in that way. The crown that a king wears is the main symbol of royalty – it represents his very kingship. A king is above his nation, and the crown is above the king, thus, the crown represents his entire kingship.

This parable can help us perceive the innermost point within us. The innermost point of the soul, which is who we really are, is not really ‘inside’ us – it is rather **above** us. It is called the innermost point, but it is also called the highest point, the point that is **above** the self – like a crown atop the king.

Inside and Above At Once

Where is our essence? Is it deep inside us, or is it above us? The Rambam says that the deepest pleasure is found in our own heart. That seems to imply that the innermost point is inside us, not above us.

But we need to understand the following. The innermost point is not to be understood as “inside” us in the physical sense, like when something is “inside” a certain place. It is not the regular concept of “place” that we are used to. The *Nefesh HaChaim* says that a place, which is called “*makom*”, comes from word “*kiyum*” (existence). The real definition of a “place” is something that exists. Hashem is called *makom*, because He keeps the world existing. Thus, the true meaning of *makom*, a place, is not necessarily a place that we can find. It is rather a plane that exists which we can connect ourselves.

For example, something physical is called *artzai*, “earthy”, because it is on this earth, while something spiritual is called *shameimi*, heavenly. Does that mean that something spiritual is in Heaven and not in this earth? Clearly, not. We call it “heavenly”, not because it is found in Heaven, but because it is above this physical earth. Something heavenly is not connected to this earth, so it is connected to above the physical realm.

The *Yechidah* is either described as the “innermost point” or as the “above” point. These are not two different ways to describe where it is, but rather two ways how to approach it. The *Yechidah* is found everywhere, because it is all-inclusive. The *Ein Sof* of Hashem, which fills everything, is not limited to any place. “There is no place that is empty from Him.” So the *Yechidah* is not in any “place”, thus, we must not think that it is found in a certain “place” that we are trying to get to.

There are people who feel and experience all kinds of experiences and they try to find it in themselves, where it is found. People go through an experience and claim that they can feel it in a certain place in the body. But the experience of our *Yechidah* is not felt in any one place. It is found everywhere, because it is all-inclusive.

To illustrate, the *Beis HaMikdash* had many vessels, which all had certain measurements. In the *Kodesh Kodashim*, there was the Aron, with the *Luchos* inside. The Sages state that the Aron had “no measurements”.³⁷ In other words, our *Yechidah*, which is our personal *Kodesh Kodashim* inside our heart³⁸, has no place it can be found it, because by essence, it is everywhere.

³⁷ *Bava Basra* 99a

³⁸ *Sefer Nefesh HaChaim (Shaar Aleph)* describes the concept of a “*Kodesh Kodashim* within the heart.”

What do we mean by this? How can something not have a place? Even our soul has a place that it is in, because it resides within our body. So why should the innermost point of the soul be different?

Why doesn't it have a place it's in? When people hear about this concept, that the *Yechidah* has no specific place, they think it means that it is unimportant, as if it has "no place" in our life....

The answer is: since it is above us, it has no place. If it would have a place, it would not be the *Yechidah*. The outer layers of our soul do have a place. Our emotions of the soul have a place they can be reached in, but the feelings of our *Yechidah* have no place.

The View From Your Garments and The View From Your Essence

Let's try to explain further what this means, that the *Yechidah* has no place. It is a very deep concept.

When a person gets married, he has a certain place. If he has a happy marriage, he has a happy home. Even if he has fights with his spouse, his marriage still has a place in his life. It is still a marriage. A person has children; his children have a place in his life. Let's go deeper. A person has ambitions and pleasures, things that he likes and hates, and a desire to live well and have a good life – all of these feelings have a place in the soul where they can be found and located. But the essence of the soul, the *Yechidah* – our actual self - has no place where it can be located.

Although we worry about ourselves and we have an ego (except for certain rare individuals who never think about themselves at all), our actual essence has no place. We think our ego has a place only from the perspective of the outer layers of our soul, which are the garments over our actual "I." When you view your family or your children, or when you want something, it's all coming from a garment over your "I".

You Are Not Your Will

Not only are your feelings not who you are, but your will (*ratzon*) is not either who you are. Your will should be viewed as a garment, a *levush*, over your actual self.

All of the abilities in our soul are all garments on top of the soul itself, and they have a place in the soul. But our actual essence, which is the very soul itself – the *Yechidah* - is not contained in any place whatsoever. What we are mainly experiencing in our life is our *ratzon/will*. We are perceiving our self through our will, but our will is not the actual self.

To prove this, we can nullify our will, because we have the power of free will to choose between what we want (*bechirah*). We can uproot our desires for evil. We can train ourselves to want something or to not want something. In addition, sometimes we want something and after some time we lose interest in it; so it can't be that our *ratzon* is who we are. Our actual “I” is deeper than the will itself.

Your “I” can want something, or it can nullify what it wants, thus, your will is not your actual “I”. If you would be what you want, then it wouldn't be possible to ever give up anything you want, because that would mean erasing your existence, which is impossible. Our *ratzon* can go away, but our “I” always remains. Our *ratzon* changes as our life goes on, while our “I” remains the same, until our last dying day, and beyond that, whereas our *retzonos* are subject to change.

Is a person ever experiencing his actual self, or he is only experiencing his *ratzon*? Most people are never experiencing their actual self, and spend their whole life from the prism of the *ratzon*.

Our *ratzon* has a place in our soul, and there are all kinds of *retzonos*, but our “I” itself has no place it can be found in.

“Kayin” and “Hevel” in the Soul

I will try to explain this concept better. People are spending their whole life trying to get rid of the things that aren't comfortable. How much time are people spending on trying to bring in any real content into their whole life...?

This leads us to the following concept. There are two kinds of *avodah* in our soul: there is an *avodah* we have called “Kayin”, and an *avodah* called “Hevel”. All souls are rooted in Adam, and after Adam this divided into two roots: Kayin and Hevel. Thus, all souls are rooted as well in Kayin and Hevel (according to the *Arizal*). We thus need to understand what the soul root of “Kayin” is, and what the soul root of “Hevel” is, because we all come from them. We don’t mean to learn about who Kayin was and who Hevel was; rather we need to see how Kayin and Hevel manifest in our own soul.

The word “Kayin” comes from the word *kinyan*, which means to “acquire”. When a person acquires something, he gets something more. Hevel is the opposite of this concept; “hevel” means “nothing”, to nullify something. These are essentially two different abilities in the soul: one ability that we have is to want more things, and the other ability is to be satisfied and not need anything.

Our actual essence, the real “I” deep within us, lacks nothing. Our soul has everything, because at its root, it is deeply connected to the Creator, where it comes from. This is the power of “Hevel” in us – the ability to feel content with our existence. Our essence has no *ratzon*, but it is already connected with Hashem; it’s already there. But because our connection to Hashem isn’t complete, due to our various desires in life, which exist on the outer layers of our soul – we also have “Kayin” in us.

What we need to do is get through to the “Hevel” deep within us. How can we do this? By giving up the various desires.

Nullifying The Will

“Moshe” has the same *gematria* (numerical value in Hebrew) as the word *ratzon* (will). Moshe is also root of *ratzon*. He had only one desire: to come to the Holy Land. Hashem refused his request. Why didn’t Moshe merit his wish? The simple answer is because of the sin at the Waters of *Merivah*. But the inner understanding of this is because of that one minor sin he did, in some way he wasn’t totally nullified to Hashem, and for this he lost out on coming to the Holy Land.

There is a deep statement from one of the Chassidic Rebbes, who said, “If Hashem would come to me and ask me if I want to become Avraham *Avinu*, I would refuse.”

Why? Who wouldn't want to be Avraham *Avinu*? He explained, "What would Hashem gain from this? If there would be two Avraham *Avinu*'s now in the world, then Hashem would gain from this. But if I am merely switching places with Avraham *Avinu*, then what does Hashem gain this? There will still be only one Avraham *Avinu* in the world, so Hashem gains nothing from this."

The natural response of most people would be: "To become Avraham *Avinu*? Of course! I would gain such a lofty soul and become so close to Hashem and always do His will and reveal Him on the world! I would be able to return everyone to *teshuvah*!"

Imagine if Hashem would come to a person and ask him if he is willing to become an animal, or a plant, or a rock. Would anyone be willing to do this? Most people would not, and the reason for this is, because people are not willing to become nullified to Hashem. People have a desire to acquire, but there is no interest in nullifying oneself.

Having a desire for spiritual levels does not mean that a person is simply willing to do something for Hashem. There are people who want to sin or pursue base desires, while others channel their desires in a holy direction; they want high spiritual levels, Gan Eden, lofty comprehensions, etc. They would not either be able to become a rock if Hashem would ask them to do this. People might understand that they need to nullify their physical desires, but to nullify their spiritual desires?! No one would be willing to do this.

But the truth is, if Hashem would wish for a person to become a wall, that is what he should really do! Most people would react that they are not on the level to do this. But that is what we really should do, if we were even given such a test.

People want and want. All of the layers of the soul are gates to enter more inward into the soul, which we need to open up and get past, so we can get closer and closer to the soul's essence itself. The *ratzon* is the gate that leads straight to the essence of the soul, because it is directly in front of the soul's essence. If a person is willing to give up his *retzonos* for Hashem, he gets past the gate of his *ratzon* and enters more inward into his soul, and there, he will find the "I."

Why aren't people getting to their "I"? Why indeed is it so hard? It is because people do not know how to get past their *ratzon*.

To take this even further, the *ratzon* to get to the “I” might even be what is holding back a person from getting to the “I”! People want to get to their true self and they have a strong will for this, but that itself can be detrimental. The stronger the will is – even if it is the loftiest kind of will possible - the thicker of a wall it creates to really get to the “I”.

Here we come to a very subtle and deep *avodah*, and it is how we penetrate to the *Yechidah*: to nullify the will.

If a person misunderstands this concept and he simply lets go of his entire power of *ratzon*, deciding that he will no longer want anything, then *chas v'shalom*, he won't want to keep Torah and *mitzvos*; he will destroy himself. If he goes in the other direction and he develops the *ratzon* more and more, then he will reveal the *ratzon*, but he is still being held back from reaching the “I”, as we explained. So what should we do? Which way do we turn?

Expanding and Contracting The Will

Here we come to the concept that we began to mention. It is called “expansion and contraction” [which was first mentioned in *Getting To Know Your Self*]. We will now apply the concept of expansion and contraction with regards to how we expand and contract our *ratzon/will*. We can take our will and either expand it or contract it.

Let's say that a person is informed that there are a thousand people in a certain place whom he can be *mekareiv* (draw closer to Judaism). He travels there for 10 hours and when he arrives, there is no one there. He asks around, “Where is everyone?” They tell him, “People were here yesterday, but they all left.” He realized that he miscalculated by a day. How would he react?

It is, naturally, disappointing. “I traveled here for nothing and wasted so much time”, he probably thinks. If he is more spiritual, he would think, “Hashem considers it as if I did it. I meant well, and Hashem will take this into account and consider it as if I was *mekareiv* them”. Indeed, *Chazal* say that Hashem considers a thought for a *mitzvah* to be considered actualized, as long as a person tried to fulfill it and was held back due to circumstances beyond his control.

But the true reaction should be based on the following: The *Gemara* says that Rabbi Akiva expounded the meaning of every word “*es*” in the Torah, until he came to one place where he couldn’t expound. He said, “Just as I received reward for explaining, so will I receive reward for abstaining.”³⁹

The person in the above story is trying to console himself with all kinds of thoughts: “Hashem didn’t want” or “Hashem will count it as if I did it,” etc. All kinds of answers. But the deeper and truer way to react is, that part of our life is about building our will (*binyan haratzon*) and another part of our life involves nullifying our will (*bittul haratzon*). Sometimes, we have to “not” want. Our *ratzon* is a garment (*levush*) in our soul that wraps around our essence. A garment is something you wear and remove. You can wear it, but you have to be able to remove it also.

Even our Tefillin, which is called a “sign” between Hashem and the Jewish people, we do not always wear. We don’t wear it on Shabbos or at night. Tefillin is a very important *mitzvah*, but Hashem tells us that sometimes, you don’t wear it.

A *mitzvah* is never constant. Some *mitzvos* are at night and some are at day. The inner reason behind this is, because the *mitzvos* are also our garments, which we sometimes have to do, and sometimes we don’t do them, because now is not the time.

There is a sin called *bal tosif*, not to add onto the Torah. What is the depth of this sin? It is to train us that although we must want the *mitzvos*, sometimes we need to not want something. We must treasure the *mitzvos*, of course, but there is no *mitzvah* which we can always do, and the reason for this is, because we cannot always be revealing our *ratzon* for holiness. Even the greatest *mitzvah*, learning Torah, which is by day or night, is sometimes forbidden, like on Tisha B’Av. We are not allowed to think Torah thoughts in certain places.

If someone has a *ratzon* for holiness and never limits it, what will happen? He might wish to wear Tefillin on Shabbos or wish to sit in a sukkah for more than 7 days, which is forbidden; it is *bal tosif*. He has a desire for holiness, but he does not know how to limit it, and he is doing something forbidden.

³⁹ *Bava Kamma* 41b

So there are boundaries for everything we must follow, even in *retzonos* for holiness, as we see from the *mitzvos*. We need to open our *ratzon* for holiness, but we must also know how to remove it sometimes when the situation calls for it.

Dealing With Disappointment - Through Nullifying The Will

I met someone who traveled somewhere for a business opportunity which would help him expand his business. He was met with disappointment; it did not help him. He was very bothered at his failure. I asked him, “Why are you so upset?” He told me, “Because I didn’t succeed.” I asked him, “Did you not succeed because you didn’t try hard enough?” He said, “No, I tried as much as I could. But I didn’t succeed even though I tried so hard.”

Why indeed does Hashem place us in such situations, that we try our hardest yet we still fail? It is to give us an opportunity to get used to the concept that just because we try, that doesn’t mean we will succeed. Of course, that doesn’t mean, that we shouldn’t try. We need to always try our best, but when we do fail, we must tell ourselves: “Let go. Stop *wanting*.”

Once there was a shortage of *esrogim* in *Eretz Yisrael*, because the country wasn’t allowing business with other countries at that time, and no one had *esrogim* that year. Someone came to the Brisker Rov *zt”l* and told him that he may be able to secure an *esrog* from Morocco. The Brisker Rov encouraged him to make all the efforts to get the *esrog*, and the messenger succeeded. The next year, again there was a shortage. A messenger came to the Brisker Rov and said, “I can get a letter from the government that will allow me to order an *esrog* from another country. Should I try to do it?” The Brisker Rov complied. The messenger came back, though, empty-handed. He was crestfallen. “I tried all I could. But in the end, I wasn’t able to get an *esrog*.”

The Brisker Rov then started to beam with joy. The messenger was stunned. Everyone knew that the Brisker Rov was very careful with observing the *mitzvos*, and that he would go to great lengths and sacrifices in order to observe any *mitzvah*. “Rebbi”, the messenger said. “Please teach me what is going on over here. How can the Rebbe not be sad that there is no *esrog* this year?”

The Rov responded, “What did Hashem want from me? He wanted me to try all that I could to do His *mitzvah*. I did all I could. Hashem obviously did not want. If Hashem didn’t want the *mitzvah* of *esrog* this year, then why should I want? This year, Hashem wants me not to want.” And he said these words with great joy on his face.

This is the reaction of a great person. Why was he so great? Because in one moment, he was able to remove his *ratzon*. He had a powerful *ratzon* for the *esrog*, to do the *mitzvah*, more than anyone else. But as soon as he realized that his *ratzon* couldn’t be actualized, he let go of it. He was aware that his *ratzon* was a garment, which is sometimes worn, and sometimes it is removed.

Dealing With Tragedy

Sometimes there is a tragedy that takes place – it can happen that a couple loses a child. The parents can be inconsolable at this, and they feel like there is no one to talk to about this who will be able to console them. But if a person knows how to nullify his *ratzon*, he is able to speak to others about it and get comfort.

How? Is it because such parents are apathetic and they didn’t really love their child? *Chas v’shalom*. The parents certainly loved their child. Love is a kind of *ratzon*, so it can be nullified. If a person was used to nullifying his *ratzon* already from beforehand, then if he ever goes through a more difficult situation, such as the loss of a child, he will be able to nullify his *ratzon* even in this kind of situation as well, even though love is a very deep *ratzon*.

If a person never learned how to let go of *ratzon*, then he will not be able to survive a difficult time, because he will feel like something has been unjustly taken away from him, and he will not be able to deal with this.

Getting Used To Nullifying The Will

If we want to reach our *Yechidah*, our deepest part of our self, we must realize this concept of getting used to nullifying our *ratzon* more often.

There was someone who came from Haifa to these classes here, and then something came up that he had to go back home. Imagine what he feels as he's going back home. It can be so disappointing; he traveled all the way from Haifa to get here, for nothing. If a person never learned how to nullify his *ratzon*, then he will feel disappointed and that he has traveled for nothing. But if he is already used to the concept of nullifying the *ratzon*, then he will use this as a learning experience – that he has learned how to actually nullify his *ratzon*! That's what he gained! So he didn't really waste his time!

Every day, all the time, we are going through unfulfilled *retzonos*. The question is how we react to these situations. A person needs money now, so he goes to the bank and he finds that it's closed. It can be very disappointing. These are everyday occurrences, and all kinds of these situations keep happening throughout the day. How do we deal with situations like this?

We can realize that even our constructive *retzonos* don't have to become actualized. This is the key to penetrating into our essence. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't ever want anything. It means, that when the things you want don't happen, you should agree to let go of your *ratzon*. By getting used to this, we have the key to entering our innermost point.

Let's say a person wanted to have a happy Yom Tov, and for some reason, it didn't happen. Not only that, but he's sad from it, because he is disappointed that he didn't get to rejoice. The truer way to react is, "If I didn't merit to rejoice on Yom Tov, I can accept that it is the will of Hashem that I did not reach joy from Yom Tov". Reacting will this will actually help you reach true joy, because you will enter inward into your soul.

How much disappointment do we go through in life! How much difficulty we go through! How do we deal with it?

Once I came to a place where I was supposed to give a *shiur*. When I came, there was no one there, except for me and the person who invited me. The other person was getting anxious; he said to me, "Oh no, people aren't coming..." I said to him, "Okay, so no else will come. What's so bad?" He said to me, "Are you sure?? Will it be okay for you?" I said, "If people come, fine. If they don't, I'll go back home, and it is not a problem."

We need to be able to deal with disappointing situations. Without knowing how to let go of our *ratzon*, life is full of pain. We yearn for things and want things, and many of the things don't become actualized. It is very painful, if we never learn how to let go of what we want. The *ratzon* is the strongest power of our soul, but it is not our soul itself. If we can penetrate it, then we have overcome the strongest barrier in our soul that is preventing us from reaching our essence. If we can't get past our *ratzon*, then even if all our *retzonos* are spiritual, those *retzonos* will be holding us back from getting to our essence.

Moshe Rabbeinu – The Root of Ratzon

No one knows where Moshe is buried. This always bothered me. How could it be that we have no place where we can visit the grave of Moshe Rabbeinu, who gave us the Torah? It's so disappointing. Moshe broke the *Luchos*. How could he do this? Break the *Luchos*, which he had worked so hard to get? Moshe also led the people for 40 years in the desert, gave us the Torah, and went through much difficulty to lead the people. The entire generation died in the desert, when he had gone through so much to lead them, and the purpose of all the 40 years was because Hashem had told him to lead the people into *Eretz Yisrael*, and in the end it didn't happen. How disappointing! It seems that his life was one big disappointment. How could he deal with this?

The answer is: we know that Moshe is the root of the power of *ratzon* [as we mentioned earlier]. He was able to nullify his *ratzon*. If Hashem didn't want the generation to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, so be it. If Hashem doesn't let me enter *Eretz Yisrael*, so be it. That was Moshe's greatness – his ability to let go of his *ratzon*. That is why he embodies *ratzon*.

The Yechidah – Deep Within, and Above

We began this chapter by explaining that the *Yechidah* is within us and it is also above us. What does this essentially mean? It is “in” us because we need to penetrate deeply into ourselves in order to reach it, to get past all the layers until we get to the innermost point. But it is also called “above” us, because the innermost point of the

soul, the “Moshe Rabbeinu” within, is our power to really use the power of *ratzon* – and the depth of using our *ratzon* is to go above our will, to “not” want. This is why the *Yechidah* is called *keser*, crown, because the crown is above the king’s head – it represents the power to go above the will.

It represents the ability to remove the will – to be able to want and not want, to wear our *ratzon* and be able to remove it.

The Menuchah of Shabbos - In The Soul

Deep in our soul, when we reach this point of accepting to let go of our *ratzon* at times, when we get used to this concept, then we reach what is called *menuchah* (inner serenity).

On Shabbos, *menuchah* (rest) comes to the world. This shows us that rest can only come after there is action, which is represented by the six days of the week that involve activity. In our own soul, there is “action” and “rest” as well.

If all we do is want, then we are only involved in activity, and our soul has no “rest”. Only after nullifying our will can our soul feel serene.

It is not only on Shabbos that we have *menuchah*. During the six days of the week as well we can have *menuchah* – in our own soul. This is when we let go our *ratzon* when it doesn’t happen. It makes us serene. Getting what we want doesn’t make us serene, because if we wouldn’t get it, we would be upset. The only way to be serene is, by being prepared to accept the disappointment of not getting your *ratzon*.

The six days of the week and the day of Shabbos represent two kinds of *ratzon* we can access. The six days of the week represent our *ratzon* for holiness, and Shabbos represents the deeper *ratzon*:

I have a *ratzon*, but even if I don’t get it, I accept it – and I am prepared to give it up in one moment. [This is true regarding both physical *retzonos* as well as spiritual *retzonos*].

It is not only in the future Shabbos that we will get our *Yechidah*. We can reach it even now – if we are prepared to immediately give up our will when the situation calls

for it. If we develop this ability, then we will be serene even within our own *retzonos*, because our *retzonos* then will not make us anxious.

A Difficult Task Indeed!

This concept is a way to go through life properly, and these are not just mere words or intellectual definitions. It is a way to live life, and it is a difficult concept to acquire.

It's easier to talk about this than to actualize it. When I speak about this concept, I am talking to myself as well; if I would have come here to this *shiur* room and the door would be locked on me, would I have been able to handle that, and to accept this calmly? No, it would not be easy for me. It would take hard work on my part. But I know that it's a lot more difficult for me if I don't know how to accept disappointing situations. That is a much more difficult life to live.

You can live a life in which your *retzonos* don't take away your *menuchah*. It is impossible to always stifle our reactions. It is normal and expected to get angry, upset, and frustrated; even Moshe Rabbeinu got angry once. So we cannot attain this perfectly. But the issue is: How much are we trying to draw closer to the point of nullifying our *retzonos*?

The words here will apply differently to each person who hears these words, and the concepts here are also not for everyone to work on, because not everyone has the inner fortification to work on this. But what all of us have in common is that we can all try to let go of our *retzonos* sometimes, and that will give us a path to reach our *Yechidah* – the innermost point is us that is attached with Hashem.

08 | HAVAYAH – A CONSTANT INNER EXPERIENCE

The Chayah and The Yechidah: The "Surrounding Lights"

We have so far tried to learn about what our inner point is, our *Yechidah*. It is an attempt to try to learn about the truth inside us, about the innermost point *havayah* (existence) that is in us. We have given a few angles to reflect about which can help us recognize and feel what the inner essence of the soul is. Now we will add another angle to the discussion. As is known, there are five layers to the soul, as we mentioned. The outer three layers – *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, and *Neshamah* -- are found inside the body. The *Nefesh* is in the liver, the *Ruach* is in the heart, and the *Neshamah* is in the brain, while the deeper two layers, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*, are outside the body and surround it.

The Arizal explained that the way the *Chayah* surrounds a person is not in the same way that the *Yechidah* surrounds a person. The *Chayah* surrounds a person either through his prism of the *Nefesh* or the *Ruach* or the *Neshamah*, but it is not powerful enough to surround all of them at once. It surrounds either the *Nefesh*, or the *Ruach*, or the *Neshamah*, depending on the level that a person has uncovered (whether he is at the level of his *Nefesh*, *Ruach* or *Neshamah*).

So the *Chayah* is either used to view your *Nefesh*, your *Ruach*, or your *Neshamah*, but it cannot view all of them at once. The *Yechidah*'s light, however is more powerful and it can surround them all at once. [We will explain the view from the *Yechidah* later, and for now we will explain the view from the *Chayah*]. We will try here to explain what this is and recognize it somewhat in ourselves. This is not about intellectual understanding, and it is rather so we can learn how to recognize how our soul works.

The Chayah: Viewing Yourself From 'Above' Yourself

The *Nefesh* is identified as our actions, the *Ruach* is our feelings, and the *Neshamah* is our thoughts. Why do they need to be surrounded by the *Chayah* and the *Yechidah*?

Why are our actions, feelings, and thoughts ‘surrounded’ by another force? What is all this ‘surrounding’ about?

The concept of being ‘surrounded’ by the light of the *Chayah* and the *Yechidah* is, essentially, that a person can view himself from above the body’s viewpoint. *Chayah* and *Yechidah* are essentially ways to see oneself. Through the view from these deeper parts of our soul, we can see our actions, feelings and thoughts from outside of our self, so to speak.

This is because it is not enough to “know” about our actions, feelings and thoughts; we need to become *aware* of them. In modern-day language, it is called “self-awareness” (in Hebrew, “*mu-da-ut atzmis*”).

In order to become aware of our actions, feelings, and thoughts, we need to view them from above. That gives us a better view of what’s going on in them. We can’t be aware of our actions from just the prism of our actions. We can’t view our feelings accurately when we view them just through the prism of the feelings. And we can’t really view our thoughts from within our thoughts. We need to step outside of them, so that we can view the actions/feelings/thoughts from above, and that view will give us a better view of what they are.

This does not mean to imply that you should cease from all your actions and feelings and thoughts and attempt to view them from the outside. This would hamper your focus and it is detrimental.

Rather, it means that *as* you’re performing an action, you can have a view from above yourself and watch your action unfolding; when you’re experiencing a feeling, you are able to step out of the feeling at the same time you’re experiencing it, and view it from above; and when you’re thinking of something, you can step outside of it, even as you’re in middle of the thought, and view the thought from above it, which will give you a deeper understanding into the thought.

To illustrate this concept, there are some people who have experienced a temporary departure of their souls from their body. There are many reports in which people remember that they were floating on top of their body and seeing it below. [This is called “N.D.E.” – Near Death Experience]. This illustrates what we are describing here: a view from above the body!

III | REACHING YOUR ESSENCE

Chazal say, “Die before you die.” The depth of this is that you can leave your body even as you’re alive – you can leave the body’s viewpoint [at times]. Even as you’re alive and your soul is still inside your body, part of your soul is outside of you, and this does not just mean that part of your soul is simply “outside” of you. It refers to something deeper: that you can have a *deeper view of yourself*, when you *view yourself* from the parts of the soul that are outside the body.

If a person lives through the prism of his *Nefesh*, he lives the actions that he does. If he lives through his *Ruach*, he lives his feelings, and if he lives through his *Neshamah*, he lives his thoughts. But when a person lives through his *Chayah*, he is seeing [either] his actions, feelings and thoughts from a higher view. He is viewing himself from outside of himself.

There is also a way to view oneself from inside himself, and this is the more elementary level of self-awareness towards our actions, feelings, and thoughts. But the view from the outside the self is a deeper kind of view than the basic level of self-awareness viewed from the inside. The deeper awareness towards one’s actions, feelings, and thoughts, the view from the *Chayah*, is a view from *outside* and *above* oneself.

If a person never reaches his *Chayah*, he will only be aware of his actions after he has done them. He will only become aware of his feelings after he feels them, whereupon he looks back at them later and reflects. He becomes aware of his thoughts only after he has had the thoughts. All he can do is look back at the past.

But if a person reaches the view from his *Chayah*, he can be aware of what he’s doing/feeling/thinking even at the very same moment that he is actually doing/feeling/thinking something – he is able to *listen to himself* as he is doing/feeling/thinking.

A person is able to step outside of himself and see himself, and make himself into an onlooker, as if he is another person looking into himself. Understandably, most people do not use this ability, because most people are self-absorbed and stuck inside themselves. They don’t know how to view themselves as if they would be an outsider. That is why most people do not have proper self-awareness.

But there is a deeper problem as well that results from this lack of self-awareness: if we only view ourselves from inside ourselves, then we limit our soul to our body, and

we never access the higher roots of the soul, which are outside of the body. When you listen to yourself, you are using the higher part of your soul, which enables you to connect higher, past the body's perspective and higher into the soul. Without revealing the *Chayah*, a person is stuck inside his body's viewpoint, even if he does actions that are spiritual and he does all the *mitzvos*.

Chazal say, “I have seen those who ascend, but they are few.”⁴⁰ The Baal Shem Tov said, those who “ascend” are those who reside above, like in the attic of a house, and they come down sometimes to take care of something. Some people live below, on the “first floor” of the house, and sometimes go above to their “attic”, but they mainly consider live on the first floor, and they do not reside in the attic. Some people live “above”, in their “attic” – and they sometimes come down to the “first floor” when they have to get things done. The truly spiritually aspiring person, the *ben aliyah*, is someone who resides “above” himself. Someone who lives mainly “below” the above point is someone who lives entirely within either his actions or feelings or thoughts, and he has no higher source that he is connected to.

Someone who lives “above” is someone who is always looking at the below from the above. For example, he does an action and sees himself doing it. He has a feeling and sees himself having the feeling. He has a thought and sees the thought; with thoughts, it is two thoughts at once – he is having a thought, and he is having another thought at the same time: he sees himself thinking.

Changing The Orientation

If someone has never felt this concept, it sounds absurd. After all, how can a person have two thoughts at once? Isn't this impossible?

But let's analyze the following. We see that a person can talk and think at the same time. He's thinking about what he's saying. If he would be too absorbed in his thoughts, he wouldn't be able to talk. When people think as they are talking, their thoughts are flying around from one to another, in the blink of an eye. The truth is that the thought process happens very quickly; one thought comes after another very quickly.

⁴⁰ Bava Metzia 45a

We all do this, and this is not a novel concept. We can all have a thought and then quickly think of another thought, just, we don't process that it is taking place. It is a very simple act that all of us do. But it is really a spiritual power being used for a lower purpose. When people multi-task, they are doing one thing and thinking about another thing; they are using the ability to have two thoughts at once, but they are not aware of it. People are doing actions and having other thoughts at the same time, thus, this spiritual power of being able to think two thoughts at once is often being used solely in the realm of action, and it's a kind of disconnection. It is a lack of focus.

What we need to do is try to focus our thoughts on what we do, at least on a minimal level, and this will open us up to using the power of the *Chayah* to become aware of our actions/feelings/thoughts even as we are experiencing them. This takes our ability of thinking two thoughts at once and channels it in the right direction which we need to use it for, and it gives inner order to our thoughts.

Thus, all of our actions have two factors to them – the action, and the thought. We experience part of our actions in our brain, because we need to think about what we have to do in order to get something done; and part of the action we do can be experienced outside our brain. Don't try to think two thoughts at once in order to achieve this; the aim here is not to learn how to think two thoughts at once. All that would do is ruin your focus. Most people would like to achieve that, but it is not what we need to achieve.

Instead, the way to access your thoughts from the outside [of the *Chayah*] is, that as you are thinking a thought, some if it need to be experienced from inside your body, which is when you simply think [either about the thought you are having or about the action you need to get done], and some of the thought needs to be left outside of the body. In other words: a part of your thinking should be used to simply focus on whatever you are doing/feeling/thinking, and the other part of the thoughts should be used as your awareness to what you are doing/feeling/thinking.

Example: Speech

If many people would pay attention to what they are saying as they have a conversation, they would cut out a lot of words. People often contradict themselves in the very same conversations. This happens because a person was talking and was

thinking of something else as he spoke the words, therefore, it never registered in his mind that he spoke those words. Later in the conversation he will say something else, and he is not aware that he contradicted his previous words. This goes on every day.

“Daas ganuz b’pumei” - “The *daas* (mind) is contained in the mouth.” A person’s words reveal what is really going on his mind. A person might be aware of himself talking as he is talking, but he can be thinking of something else as he’s talking, so he isn’t focused on what he is saying. Even as I’m talking now, I’m also thinking of other things as I’m talking – all the time, and not just sometimes. We all live like this.

The question is how to channel this ability in the right direction, where it can be turned from a lack of self-awareness into a deep ability.

Sifting Out Your Thought Process As You Think

There are two kinds of thoughts we are experiencing all the time; we are basically focused in our thoughts, and we are also thinking about something else at the same time. These two thoughts are often mixed together, alternating between each other very quickly, and it is because initially, we have not yet learned how to separate them and isolate them. Our thought process needs to become sorted out.

We need to identify thoughts that are needed in order to simply perform an act/feeling/thought, and we need to identify another kind of thought that takes place at the same time – the power to be aware of the act/feeling/thought, which is a thought that comes from our *Chayah*. We need to identify them as they occur, or else they remain mixed together in a jumble and we will never be able to have them both simultaneously without losing focus.

If we identify the two different kinds of thoughts as we are in middle of experiencing a thought, then we can begin to separate them from each other and identify them as being two distinct kinds of thoughts, and that will give us the true self-awareness, which is the view from our *Chayah*.

In this way, we can have practical focus on our actions/feelings/thoughts as they happen, and at the same time have awareness towards them from the background -

two different kinds of thoughts at once which don't impede on each other and which do not fracture our focus.

One kind of thought takes place inside us [experienced by our brain] and the other kind of thought is the view from the outside [a thought coming from the *Chayah*]. To better understand it, imagine someone who is standing and looking into something from outside of it. What we need to understand is that we can do that within ourselves – we have the power to step outside of ourselves, at the very same time that we are looking from inside ourselves, and view ourselves as if we are looking at ourselves from the outside, like an outsider.

The basic power of thought in a person is rooted in the *Neshamah*, which is inside the brain. These are the thoughts we use for basic focus on what we do/feel/think. Part of the *Neshamah* is thoughts that are outside the brain, and they are not viewed by our regular thinking process. They are viewed from the *Chayah* which is above the *Neshamah*'s thoughts and sees into them.

The first part of our job here is that we need to first have thought in what we do. The second part of our job is to reveal a deeper kind of thought, which is a kind of thought in which we think from the outside of ourselves. This is the power of thought that is rooted in our *Chayah*. It is the ability in a person to see himself from the side and watch himself like an onlooker.

We need to make use of both kinds of thoughts – the basic thoughts, and the deeper thoughts.

Catching Yourself

To give an example of how to do this, a person gets angry; this is an everyday occurrence in our life. A person might not even be aware of his anger even as he is angry. The next day, when he calms down, he remembers that he got angry yesterday. Yesterday, when he was actually angry, what was going through his mind? Did he not know he was angry? He was busy thinking of how he has been wronged. He was too busy raging to even register that he is experiencing what is called anger.

Such a person, even if he tries to get advice on how to fix the trait of anger, will not be able to fix the anger. He is missing preliminary state of getting rid of anger, because he's not even aware when he gets angry! He's busy with who he's angry at, and he's totally unaware that he is experiencing anger. If he's not aware of his anger while he's angry, he will not be able to implement any advice on stopping his anger, because he is not even aware of it at all when it was happening.

What should he do? The next time he gets angry, if he has revealed his *Chayah*, then he can become aware that he is angry. He can catch himself in the act. This doesn't mean he will attain total self-control over his anger. It means that he will become aware of his anger, and now he has the key to fixing his anger, because he has become aware, and now he can embark on ways on how to weaken it as he's angry.

The Sages state, "The mind controls the heart".⁴¹ When the mind is involved with the heart even as the heart's emotions are dominant, such as when a person is raging in anger, he has the mind involved which he can use to control himself!

A person who accesses his *Chayah* is aware of his emotions as he's actually experiencing them, and not because he remembers about the experience later. He is aware of his anger as he's angry. He is aware of love as he is feeling loving towards another. He is connected to his happiness when he experiences happiness.

There are people who dance at a wedding and are joyous, but they aren't aware that they are experiencing the emotion of joy. They wish a "Mazal Tov" and never pay attention to the reality of the joy at hand. They are unaware of the happiness they are feeling as they dance.

There is a higher level in which a person can be above his own consciousness, but we are not speaking of this level. We are speaking of a more basic level, in which a person can consciously be happy, and he can be aware that he's happy at the very same time.

This applies to thoughts as well – you can have a thought, and be aware of the thought at the same time, seeing it from outside of the thought.

This is the view from your *Chayah*, the view from the outside, which sees the thoughts of the *Neshamah* from outside of the *Neshamah*. You can use the view from

⁴¹ Tanya. In the name of the Zohar

your *Chayah* to surround the thoughts of the *Neshamah* of the brain and see it from the outside.

The Power To Experience

There is a very deep point we will now discuss. We need it to get to our *Yechidah*, but we will start to explain how we reach the *Chayah*, which we first need to get to.

All people are looking for exciting experiences. Who doesn't? We all want to "experience". The truth is that we are always having experiences. We are always experiencing either pain or joy. But most people are not aware of what they are feeling, thus, they don't experience what they are experiencing!

A person gets up in the morning and goes about his day, going off to his job, and he feels no vitality from what he does. He will feel vitality hearing words of Torah over the phone, but not from what he does during the day. Why? It is because people do not know how to really experience anything. People are doing, feeling, and thinking, but they aren't experiencing it!

There are people who are "pathological liars". They have the bad habit of lying all the time. They really have a deeper problem. They lie all the time because they have no self-awareness. They aren't paying attention to the words coming out of their mouth.

For example, a person tells a customer that the order will be ready in two days, and the customer comes back in two days and it's not ready. The problem here is not the owner is dishonest. The root behind this behavior is because owner wasn't even aware as he was talking – that is why he didn't keep to his word. He said words, words of conviction, but it never registered in his head that he is taking upon himself a responsibility, because he was thinking of something else as he was saying those words.

The root of all our problems is a lack of self-awareness - when we are not aware of our actions, feelings, and thoughts. The root of our problems is not that we lie to ourselves. The problem is that we have no inner experiences. We feel what we feel, but we don't experience what we feel, and we think that we have experienced it.

Here is a simple example. A person is eating and enjoying his food. Most people are not even fully tasting their food, because their mind is preoccupied as they eat. Taste is actually a power that is developed in your soul. In order to really experience taste, you have to know what taste in the soul is, which is to remain focused on a taste as you taste it. Most people are not focused as they eat and are thinking about other things as they eat, and they think that they are experiencing the taste of what they eat, while in reality, they are not really experiencing it!

A Lack of Experience Creates A Lack of Vitality

Because most people are not really experiencing their own experiences, what this results in is a lack of real vitality (*chiyus*) in life. People are missing vitality. Almost no one has any real vitality in their life. This world is like one big graveyard!

A Jew can do all the *mitzvos* – he wears *tefillin* and *tzitzis*, lights the menorah, he learns Torah – but still does not feel alive from any of this! He can be like a rock with no life in himself, even though he does all the *mitzvos*! He tries to feel the vitality in lighting the menorah yet he doesn't feel anything special going on. Why? It is because his feelings are already deadened! Why are his feelings deadened? Because he has made himself already into a kind of robot!

If a person isn't aware of his experiences as he goes through them, he doesn't know how to experience. Chavah desired the fruit of the *Eitz HaDaas* and “*saw that it was good*”. A *taavah* – a desire - can either be a totally sensual experience, which is evil, or it can be used for good: the power to fully experience something good.

It is written, “*My soul leaves when I speak.*” Do we feel our soul leaving us as we talk? If we would experience our talking, we would feel our soul leaving us as we talk! There are people who talk and talk; do they feel their souls leaving them as they talk? Who feels this? You go onto a plane and people are talking and talking (especially the women) on no end, yet they don't feel their energy getting used up from this; why not? It is because they are not experiencing their speech. The Chazon Ish said that speaking makes him feel exhausted afterwards. He experienced what he was saying, therefore, it took more energy out of him – “*My soul leaves when I speak.*” When you live and experience what you do or say, it takes up more energy.

We go through countless thoughts each day. If a person isn't aware what he does, when he isn't aware of what he feels or what he thinks, he is missing the revelation of his *Chayah*, and that is why he derives no vitality from anything he does.

For example, a person buys things in the supermarket for his family. Does he experience this? Why is he doing it? He is doing it because he loves his family. But he doesn't feel that love as he goes shopping for them. Rather, he feels forced, as if he must do it. He never experiences the real reason why he goes shopping for them, which is love. So he never derives vitality from shopping for his family, because his not really experiencing what he's really doing when he goes shopping for them.

If a person never sees himself from the outside, he has no *Chayah*, and then he has no *chaim* (life), because *chayah* comes from the word *chiyus* (vitality in life). Without revealing the *Chayah*, a person is devoid of vitality.

We are not speaking about ideas. We are speaking about the soul, which is called a *nishmas chayim*, a soul of life. It is what we all yearn for. You can hear a million shiurim and read a million sefarim, but none of it will help you, because without the basis, nothing will be developed. It's like trying to go around collecting money and having no feet to walk around with.

We are all amazed when we meet someone who seems alive, who looks like he is experiencing life. But how do we get to that? The way is: to be able to see yourself from outside of yourself. How do you do it? You can practically work on this by getting used to being an onlooker. It's very simple.

We are already used to observing all the time. In the house, the kids are playing. Take a few minutes and observe the house as if you are an outsider. You can do this with yourself as well. Take a pen and write down what you are saying. This will open you up to listening to yourself.

A good example of this is to watch a video of your Bar Mitzvah. This is how you can see yourself from outside of yourself. The point is not to watch your Bar Mitzvah. The point is to focus on seeing yourself act from outside of yourself. It gets you used to the concept of observing yourself.

The more a person sees himself, the more he will feel himself, and the more he will live himself. He will then be able to experience his life. After that, he is able to

properly engage in self-improvement. When he does self-accounting on his actions, words, feelings and thoughts. He will experience what he does. He can be aware to himself as he is acting. It is hard to express this anymore with my mouth. But these words are life itself. They are about our very life! The *Chayah* is about what our life is! So we need to get used to observing ourselves from outside of ourselves.

Yechidah: The Power To Constantly Experience

What we have described until now is how to view ourselves from our *Chayah*, which surrounds the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, or *Neshamah*, depending on the situation. It is the power to see either our actions, feelings, or thoughts. After we have passed this stage – and I stress “after” because it can take months to acquire, for it is a very deep avodah – only after that, should a person progress to the next stage, which is to try to get the inner point, the *Yechidah*.

The *Yechidah* is the truly inner experience. It is the way to very experience your *Chayah* – the experience within the experience. And it is a constant experience.

We are always either acting or feeling or thinking, and we cannot disconnect from them. When we begin to experience all the time, we have the true experience (*chavayah*). It is one of the most precious things we can acquire. We have actions, feelings, and thoughts. But the root of all of them all is the power to constantly experience. It is a way to experience either your actions or feelings or thoughts, but it's all the same power to experience.

The actions, feelings and thoughts are the garments of the soul. The *Chayah* experiences only the garments of the soul, so it can only experience the actions, feelings, or thoughts. After you have revealed it, don't just use it to experience the garments. Now is the time to deepen your power of inner experiences – now you can experience an even deeper reality. You can experience the very purity of your soul!

The power in the soul to experience can be used to experience either your actions, words or thoughts; you see them from above and experience them and that is how you become aware of them. But that's all seeing the garments. You can use it to experience your “I” – the *Yechidah*. If a person hasn't acquired the power to have constant experience, he will not be able to experience the *Yechidah*. We explained that the first

four layers of the soul are parts of the soul, while the *Yechidah* has the perspective that it is all-inclusive. The partial view, which comes from the first four layers of the soul, is sometimes active, and sometimes not active. Sometimes you are aware of the actions, feelings, and thoughts, and sometimes you are not. But the view from your *Yechidah*, once accessed, is always experiencing.

The *Yechidah* is above the *Chayah* - which means that it is above our life itself. It is the point connected to the above. It is the tool to get to the *Ein Sof* of Hashem. Our desire is to feel Hashem all the time. All we live for is this. The purpose of life is to always feel Hashem. Feeling Hashem is like "*a constant fire that burns on the Altar*". How do we reach this? By reaching our *Yechidah*, we have the power to constantly experience. But we need to reveal this power.

Most people only know of the power to "experience" only by weddings, trips, and food. Once you attain the power of constant experience, you will find that you won't even get pleasure from these outside stimuli. The Rambam says that all pleasure is found in the soul; it is referring to the ability to constantly experience the reality of Hashem, Who is eternal and constant.

So first we need to reveal the power to experience, and then we need to reveal the power to constantly experience. First we need to view our actions, feelings, and thoughts from the outside, which leads to experiencing them.

To illustrate, a child is happy when he walks, but we observe him from the outside and have a deeper kind of joy when we watch him. We experience the child as we watch him from the outside and rejoice in his walking. After we experience our actions feelings and thoughts, we can then enter more inward, into the "I", and after that, to feel the Creator.

Feeling Reality

These are not words or definitions. It is reality.

The power to experience life and to penetrate deep within ourselves is not intellect, it is not philosophy, it is not inspiration, and it is not even about feelings. It is about grasping reality as it is.

Who feels reality? Man is called *adam* from the word *dimayon*, imagination, because man is drawn after his imagination. Nine out of every ten people feel imagination, not reality. Imagination is fleeting. Thoughts, feelings and actions are always fleeting. The past is always gone. People are feeling their imagination all the time, not reality itself.

We need to feel reality. What is reality? There is only one absolute reality: the reality of Hashem. This is the deepest experience – the ever-constant reality of Hashem's Presence. It is not an experience that is fleeting; it is to feel a constant reality. When a person learns how to constantly experience, he can feel that reality. He can then reveal what reality is. The fact that there is a Creator – it's in our brain. But 99% of people do not feel that reality.

Who feels reality? Only one who feels the reality of Hashem. Everything else is imagination. All other experiences are a tool to get us to the innermost experience – reality itself, which is Hashem's existence.

It is very rare to find a person who constantly experiences. The *Gemara* says that the world stands on 36 *tzaddikim* who greet the *Shechinah* each day. These people feel the reality. If they wouldn't recognize reality, the world cannot exist.

Our *avodah* – all of us without exception – is to realize Hashem's existence. In the future all will point their finger at Hashem and say “*This* is my G-d that I hoped for.” Only someone who really recognized the reality of Hashem on this world will be able to realize, with conviction – “*This* is my G-d, that I hoped for.”⁴²

The *avodah* of our life is to feel the reality itself, the reality of Hashem – first to experience, then to experience constantly, and then to experience the truth of reality, which is the Creator.

⁴² *Taanis* 31a

09 | HAVAYAH – DECISIONS OF A HIGHER PERSPECTIVE OF EMUNAH

The Yechidah Sees No Other Possibilities

We have explained in previous chapters how we can slowly begin to recognize our “*havayah*” point in the soul, also referred to as the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul.

“*Yechidah*” comes from the word “*yachid*”, “individual”. The very concept of the *Yechidah* is the opposite of having “many” things, because the whole idea of the *Yechidah* is to have one, single view on things.

In order to reveal our *Yechidah*, which is a viewpoint that sees only one possible option, we need to understand what the opposite of this would entail. There is a rule that in order to understand a concept, you need to understand the opposite of the concept.

The opposite of the *Yechidah*’s viewpoint is the power of *bechirah* (free will). The *Yechidah* in us sees only one option, while our power of *bechirah* tells us that we have a few options to choose from, and we know that we are supposed to choose good or evil.

Bechirah/free will, by definition, is the power to have many possible options in front of you, and then you choose between them. Mankind was created in order to choose good over evil, as the Ramchal writes in *Derech Hashem*. Man’s very essence is to choose between the many possibilities (and hopefully, he will choose good). All of the time, we are choosing. We choose to get up in the morning and we choose to have a conversation with someone else or to be quiet. We keep making use of our *bechirah*.

The entire concept of *bechirah* is the opposite of the *Yechidah*’s view, for the *Yechidah* sees only one option.

We need to dig deep into ourselves to reveal the *Yechidah*, because it is very deep within. However, not only is it very deep to reach – it seems impossible, because our very *bechirah* contradicts the view of our *Yechidah*. As long as we live, we have *bechirah*; our *bechirah* only goes away at death. So how do we access our *Yechidah*’s

view, which sees only one possibility, when our whole life revolves around *bechirah* – which chooses between “many” views? How do we reach the *Yechidah*, when our whole essence if that of free will?!

When you really recognize your power of free will, you know that you do everything because you choose so. As an example, you came here to this *shiur* because you chose to come.

When you think deeply, you can see how you are a massive contradiction. On one hand, we have *bechirah* - we choose our thoughts, our words, and what we want. Yet, we are also supposed to subjugate our will to Hashem’s will – to reach a state of oneness (*echad*) with Hashem. Husband and wife are meant to become “*echad*,” one, and the lesson of this is that man must reach the state of “*echad*” with Hashem.

One has to reach the inner point of “*echad*” in himself. With two options always in front of you, though, how do you get to “*echad*”?

Beyond The Point of Free Will

We need to reveal a deeper layer in ourselves that is beyond our layer of *bechirah*/free will.

Our power of free will tells us that there are several options, while there is a deeper layer in us that sees only one option. That deeper layer is essentially the view of the *Yechidah*. We need to cross over from the point of *bechirah* in our soul into the *Yechidah* in our soul. We need to reach our inner oneness, our inner place of *echad* inside ourselves, and then we can reach Hashem, who is *echad*.

Let us try to explain how we can get to this place of *echad* inside ourselves.

Free Will Is The Power of Amalek/Doubts

Free will means that there are two options that oppose each other, and that we choose between them.

There is rule that for everything that Hashem created that is good, He created something equally powerful that is evil, in order to allow free will. For example, there is the Jewish people on the side of holiness, and on the other side of evil, there is Amalek. If there would only be the Jewish people and no Amalek, there would be no free will.

Amalek is in the soul as well; the numerical value in Hebrew of “Amalek” is “*safek*”, doubt, because Amalek is the power of doubt, to be at a quandary between two options. The root of all doubts in Creation is when a person is not sure to choose between good and evil. Our *bechirah* is to either connect ourselves to the good, represented by the Jewish people, or to the viewpoint of Amalek, *chas v’shalom*.

This is all in order to allow free will in the world; if Hashem would have only created a powerful amount of good in the world and nothing equally powerful enough that is evil, then there would be no free will, because the good would just overpower the evil.

The power of good in the world is represented by the Jewish nation, while the power of evil in the world is represented by a nation equally powerful in its evil – Amalek. The Jewish nation is called the “first” nation, but so is Amalek.

Amalek bears a striking resemblance to our power of free will. If you think about it, the whole power of free will has a lot to do with Amalek! Amalek is the evil ability of doubt, a power in the soul. There is “*Amalek*” in the soul – the power to have doubts about our faith. Doubt is essentially when a person has many possibilities to choose from. Free will is also when a person has many possibilities to choose from. If so, Amalek, which is doubt, is synonymous with the power of free will in our soul.

How do you erase the ‘Amalek’ in the soul – the doubts inside us?

Faith Opposes Free Will

We need to ‘erase’ Amalek, our perspective of doubt/free will, by introducing its opposite – the power of *emunah* (faith). When I have *emunah*, that means that I have no other choice except the option that is right. When there is *emunah*, when I believe

only in doing Hashem's will, there does not exist a possibility for me to choose evil, because I am following the deeper understanding of *emunah*.

Emunah is the opposite perspective of *bechirah/free will*. When I am going with my free will, even if I choose good or evil, I am still saying that there is a possibility to be evil. But if I reveal the power of *emunah*, I am saying there can only be one option: the right and good thing to do, Hashem's will.

The power of *emunah/faith* is what is able to destroy the power of *Amalek* in the soul. By revealing our *emunah*, we get rid of the evil power to doubt.

Bringing Emunah Into Daily Decisions

For example, a person walks into the store and he is in doubt about what to buy. How do we decide what to buy?

We all have doubts. Some people are in doubts the whole day and are emotionally ill from this. But we all have some degree of doubts every day. How do we answer our doubts we are filled with all day? How do we escape doubt?

Let's say you decide to buy something, then you come home and you realize that you overlooked a detail, and it's not fit for your house. You were sure when you bought it that it was the right thing to buy for your house, and now you discover that you are wrong. How should you view this situation?

Before you buy something, while you buy something, and after you buy something, you can be aware of the following inner understanding. You have a *Yechidah* in you, which sees only one option – that everything you will have is decreed by Hashem.

When you buy a table or a chair in the store, it can be a way of revealing your *Yechidah*. What does this have to do with your *Yechidah*? Doubts about what to decide seem are an ordinary part of our day that seems meaningless, but actually, this is an opportunity for us to work on getting rid of our doubts, thus, it can be a tool for a person to reach his *Yechidah*. When you feel a doubt about something, you have an opportunity now to erase the doubt and thus reach your innermost point of the soul, the *Yechidah*.

So even when you go to buy a table or a chair, it is a time to get in touch with the understanding of the *Yechidah*. Why did Hashem place the doubt in you about what to buy? It is because you can remind yourself now that there is a deep part in you, a *Yechidah*, which can be revealed through the simple act of buying a table.

Our *bechirah* says, “There are two options – choose.” The *Yechidah* in us says, “Have *emunah* - Hashem has already chosen what is good for you. You can’t get it if it’s not coming to you. Everything you will get was already coming to you.”

Practically speaking, as you’re about to buy the table, think to yourself: “I can only get this table if Hashem wanted me to have it.”

The Vilna Gaon said that even a robber, before he steals, prays to Hashem and believes that he will get it. Why? Because the truth is, whatever a person gets is supposed to come to him. The robber has chosen to get it through evil, through stealing, but in essence, the item will come to him as long as Hashem allows it to.

If a chair breaks in the house, we can give all kinds of reasons why it broke, but the truth is: it was decided by Hashem that it would break. There are no two possible reasons why it broke – there is only one reason why it broke: Hashem wanted it to break.

When one is aware of this, he accesses his *Yechidah*’s understanding, through an ordinary occurrence of a chair breaking in his house. And when a person goes to the store to buy something, if he is aware that there is only one reason that he will be able to get the item – namely, that he can only get an item which Hashem decreed that he will get – he reveals *emunah*, the perspective of the *Yechidah*, in this ordinary act.

This does not mean that one should only consider the understanding of *emunah/Yechidah* and ignore your logical thinking process. If you buy something in the house and you see it wasn’t good, don’t buy it again! In this way, you can be aware of both *emunah* as well as the outer layers of your soul at the same time. You cannot only live in your *emunah*, because the *emunah/Yechidah* is one of your five soul layers, and you have other layers in your soul as well which need to be taken into account.

Thus, your decisions must involve both your *emunah* aspect that comes from your *Yechidah*'s viewpoint, as well as your logical aspect that comes from the outer layers of the soul. This is the properly balanced way to live life and go about all that we do.⁴³

Revealing A New Kind of Free Will

How, then, should we utilize our power of free will? What is the proper way to go about it?

Our natural movements are always choosing. We choose if we will buy something in the store or not. This is a constant kind of choosing we do, and it doesn't involve any thought; it is made subconsciously. This illustrates the solution which we are trying to get at: we need to uncover a kind of choosing in which we choose to do the right thing, but not because we put any thinking into it. We have to just do what's good and not see the other possibilities. Our decisions to do good should also be in this way.

This is a power in the soul to make decisions, but it is a more inner kind of decision. This is a kind of decision in which the person decides to do good, but not because he had any doubts whatsoever. It is to decide to do good because you only see one option – you don't see any other option, because *emunah* tells you that there is only one option: that all is decreed from Hashem.

This is a way for how a person can get to the *Yechidah*, the power of “*echad*” (“one”) in the soul. A person reaches it by seeing only “one” possibility – what the

⁴³ During the shiur, in response to a question, the Rov also clarified: “Free will is essentially for a person to connect what he knows in his head, with his heart. The whole idea of free will is essentially a question of, “Will I connect my heart to what I know in my mind, or not?” So *bechirah* is not about changing my will. It is about connecting my heart with what I know in my mind about *emunah* in Hashem. Many people have *emunah* in their minds but their lifestyle doesn't match their *emunah*. It is because they do not use their *bechirah* to connect their heart with their mind's knowledge about *emunah*.”

right and good thing to do is. A person has this ability: to only see one option, because he has no other doubts.

How can a person actually reveal this power? When a person makes a decision, there are two attitudes he can have. One attitude is the skeptical one, which doesn't reveal the *Yechidah*. The other attitude is the correct one to have, which can reveal the *Yechidah*.

If a person buys the item with the attitude that there is no other possibility that exists other than this item he is buying – because whatever Hashem wants him to have is coming to him anyway - such a person truly believes that there is only one possibility. He doesn't doubt Hashem for one second, because he knew from the start that it was decreed on him what he will have. He decides to buy it with such an attitude, and such a decision comes from his *emunah*. This person reveals his *Yechidah* when he decides to buy the item.

Our physical mind decides by seeing two options and then deciding. Our *Yechidah* also decides, but it doesn't see two options, because it only sees one option – the understanding of *emunah*. So for example, before you go into the store, tell yourself that it's already decreed by Hashem what you are getting.

Emunah is a new path to take in how to deal with all issues of life, not just when it comes to making decisions in a store.

Emotions/Desires, Rational Intellect, and Emunah

Some people don't use either their *emunah* or even their *seichel/intellect* – they decide entirely based on their desires. They live based on their emotions. The *yetzer hora* is our evil desires, and it is “evil from a man's youth”; when a person is ruled by emotions, he is essentially being ruled by his *yetzer hora*. At this stage, one must learn to use his rational intellect and make decisions in this way.

A person whose “mind is in control of his heart” lives life sensibly, and makes decisions through his *seichel/intellect*. But he still doesn't yet have *emunah* affecting his decisions.

A third, higher stage is to go above the intellect – to reach one's *emunah*. Our intellect (*seichel*) decides using our power of *daas* (specifically, *daas d'hachraah*)⁴⁴. But our *emunah* is the “G-dly light” in us, which has no doubts - just as Hashem has no doubts.

Amalek creates doubt in Creation. The “Amalek” within the soul causes doubts in our soul, to doubt *emunah*, using our power of free will. How do we erase the “Amalek” within? The Torah records that by the war with Amalek, when Moshe's hands were lifted, Amalek grew weaker; in other words, when there is *emunah* in Hashem, when we have no doubts, the power of evil doubt falls away as a result.

In Conclusion

If we want to get to our *Yechidah*, don't think that that it's way too far from you. There are methods of deep meditation and inner silence that can help a person reach the *Yechidah*, but here we have described how mundane activities in ordinary life can be an opportunity to reach your *Yechidah*. The decisions and doubts we go through every day are a tool to reveal our *Yechidah*, because we can use these opportunities to reveal *emunah*. This can transform ordinary, daily life into a deep way of living.

We have been brief about this, but the concept here describes a way to live life. These are no ideas, but a deep way to live life.

When we get up in the morning, what do we think – that we are just getting up and doing mundane actions, or that we are looking to reveal our *Yechidah* through the various actions we perform? If we live with conscious awareness that we are trying to reveal our *Yechidah*, then even our mundane actions will be transformed into a way to reveal the *Yechidah*.

May we merit from Hashem to yearn to reveal our inner point and the ways of how to reach it, until we reach the highest point of all, which is to be totally connected with Hashem.

⁴⁴ See Utilizing Your *Daas* #01 – Deciding.

10 / HAVAYAH – NULLIFYING ALL DISPARITY AND OPPOSITION

Viewing the Imminent Festival as a Continuation of our Avodah

In the previous chapters, we discussed at length the ways of how to reveal the *Yechidah* in the soul.

It is the nature of most of us that when a Jewish festival approaches, we like to learn about the nature of the upcoming festival, but we tend to put aside our current *avodah* in favor of learning about the festival at hand.

But we can compare this to one who owns a horse for 20 years and he wishes to give it as a wedding present to his son. The wedding day of his son arrives, and he gets very busy with the wedding preparations, and what happens? He doesn't watch his horse, and the horse runs away.

The lesson from this parable is very clear. If we put our *avodah* on hold because we need to learn about the festival, then our *avodah* will be ignored in favor of learning about the festival, and then we lose the previous gains of our *avodah* until now.

However, the other option is not either good: if a person ignores the festival and only focuses on his *avodah*, then this too is detrimental, because if Hashem gives us a festival, obviously it is His will that we involve ourselves in it.

When a Jewish festival comes our way as we are in middle of explaining a certain *avodah*, we thus need to see it as a continuation of our own current *avodah*, rather than just see it as a coincidence that happens to fall out in middle of our *avodah*. Therefore, the current festival that is approaching [in our case, Chanukah] must be viewed by us as a continuation of our current *avodah* of revealing our "Yechidah".

What, essentially, is a Jewish festival all about? The *Yomim Tovim* (Jewish festivals) are really windows that help us see into the inner world of spirituality. The inner world is covered over, but it is not completely covered over; there are windows which we can use to see into it. Each festival offers us the opportunity to access a new window that gives us new perspectives about the inner world.

If we look into a house through many of its windows and we see the same room, we are seeing the same room each time, just through different windows. The festivals are each different windows that look at the same room. Chanukah is one window, and Purim is another window, and Pesach is another window. But they are all windows to the same view. We aren't revealing new realities through each of the festivals – rather, we can keep learning to see the same reality that exists through different angles, with each festival that we go through.

Chanukah – Another Way To Access The View of the Yechidah

The festival approaching us now is Chanukah, and if we are currently learning about how to reveal our *Yechidah*, this is not a coincidence. It must be that Chanukah adds on another important dimension to this *avodah* of trying to uncover our *Yechidah*.

Chanukah is therefore another way for us to learn about how we can view the inner world. Let us reflect, therefore, into how we can reveal our *Yechidah* through understanding about Chanukah.

Real Victory

On Chanukah, there was a war between the Greeks and the *Chashmonaim* (Jews who descended from royalty). This was a miracle that defied nature; the Greek were very mighty, but a handful of Jews slew them all in a miraculous defeat. How did they succeed in overcoming nature? We will try to explain this with an inner perspective.

When we are in war, how can we win? How do we overcome the opposition? A simple war, like we see from the world, is when two sides are warring with each other, and might is pitted against might. There were many such wars in history.

However, the Ramban writes that the ideal situation to fight a war is to first try to make peace with the other side. If peace isn't achieved, the side who is trying to make peace may then go to war with the other side. It sounds simply that the problem of war can be solved with placating the other side, such as if we offer the other side a lot

of money. But there is a deeper reason. It is because when there is fighting, we need to access the power of *shalom* (peace) in the soul.

Logic dictates the opposite: logic says that if you remain peaceful and docile, the other side will fight you. How can peace win our wars for us?! Why does the Ramban say that we should first try peace in order to win the war?!

If a person is deeply connected to the power of peace in the soul, this affects his outside as well; therefore, inner peace can cause peace upon the world. That is more understandable. But if one hasn't reached his inner peace, how can behaving with peace be a possible way to win a war?!

The truth is that real peace will only be in the future. It is written of the future, "*The wolf will dwell with the lamb.*"⁴⁵ Then there will be no more wars, because we will all become one unit. It really doesn't make sense that peace should win our wars. Only in the future will this concept make sense, because the future will be the revelation of the innermost point of the soul, the all-inclusive point, which does not allow for any contradictions, oppositions, or war. The fact that there will be peace in the future will not be a coincidence. The future peace will be the revelation of our essence. It will be revealed that there are no oppositions. Thus, it automatically follows that there will be no wars.

War is only possible when there is a concept of separation and disparity in the world; currently, we look at ourselves as having many divided "parts" to our self, which reflects the concept that in the current era, there is disparity. In the future, when the all-inclusive point of the *Yechidah* will be revealed to all, the entire notion of ever being divided will not exist, thus it will follow that there cannot be war, because there will be no more concept of opposition.

Thus, if we really want to win a war, we need to awaken a point in ourselves which cannot be destroyed. The outer parts of our soul can be destroyed, but the *Yechidah* in us is the all-inclusive point; everything is in it - therefore, it cannot be destroyed.

This is the deep meaning behind the victory of the Chashmonaim, the handful of Jews that won against the Greeks. The Chashmonaim revealed their own inner power

⁴⁵ Yeshayahu: 11

of the soul, the non-destructive point contained deep in the soul - and that was why the Greeks couldn't destroy them.

Of the future, it is written, "*Esav will be like straw, and Yosef will be like fire that burns up the straw.*" This will be a deep kind of victory. When fire and water meet, they battle each other, and it takes a long time until one of the elements can overpower the other.

But when fire is set upon straw, it takes only a few moments until all of the straw is destroyed; there is no opposition. So too, in the future, there will be no opposition, because it will be revealed how all is one, for Hashem's Name will be one. Oneness will be revealed – the all-inclusive point will be revealed, therefore, there will be no concept of division.

The Depth of Humility

Chanukah was a war of a few Jews against many Greeks. Simply, this was a miracle, but the depth of it was, that "they made themselves small in their eyes", as the Rabbis write.

This sounds simply like they had humility, when one makes himself small in his eyes. People think that humility means to focus on your shortcomings, and that it is arrogance to focus on your qualities. After all, it is true that the power of imagination can cause one to ignore reality, which in turn makes him ignores his shortcomings, while a person who is very aware of reality has humility, because he recognizes his shortcomings. It seems that humility is simply for a person to be aware of reality, thus he is aware of his shortcomings, in the same way that a person has to be realistic when he writes out a check and make sure that he still has money in his bank account.

But there is a deeper understanding of humility: when one recognizes the greater reality, which is the "all-inclusive point" in the soul, he sees how he is not nothing, for he is part of a greater whole; he is part of a collective essence. And that humbles him as a result.

But how did the small amount of Jews win the Greeks? It is something deeper: that they made themselves "small." Because "they made themselves small in their own

eyes” – because they had true humility - by recognizing the all-inclusive reality – that was how they were able to win the Greeks.

Humility is really to see yourself as part of a greater whole. It is to lessen the “I”, not by weakening it and ignoring your self-worth, but by realizing how your “I” is part of a greater whole. The Chashmonaim nullified their own essence, by having this deep humility, of seeing themselves as part of the greater whole, as part of the reality that is all-inclusive, as opposed to the ‘divided’ kind of reality.⁴⁶

(There are people who don’t realize their self-worth. They don’t give enough value to their actual self, because they focus on their many shortcomings. They view themselves as lowly, and they see themselves as just scattered parts inside themselves. But this is not the true meaning of humility. Humility is not to dismiss reality – it is really to recognize your true self-worth of a Jew. The proper outlook for one to have is that although one shouldn’t pride himself too much about his qualities, he must never lessen his actual “I”. He can be aware of his shortcomings, but he doesn’t have to lessen the value of his essence. A person must always remain with his self-worth.)

Thus, the deep way to win a war is not through fighting a war. It is through revealing the power of *netzach*, eternity – to reveal the all-inclusive point in the soul, the non-destructive point of the soul. When one reveals his non-destructive essence, he indeed cannot be destroyed. And if one tries to destroy it, he is destroying himself.

Connecting To The Oneness of Hashem

This power of deep unity with the world, known as “*echad*” (oneness), which will be fully revealed in the future, still exists deep in the soul, and is the deepest power of the soul. Hashem in “One”, and when one is connected with Hashem, he is connected to His oneness, and then the disparity in front of him ceases.

46 In middle of this shiur, with regards to this aspect, the Rav clarified to a questioner that in the current reality we live in, we live in a divided reality, not in the all-inclusive reality; only in the future will we all live in an all-inclusive reality. For this reason, our body is obligated in the mitzvos, and there are different parts of our body which require different mitzvos. Our body represents divisions and disparity, because in the physical dimension, there is no concept of oneness. Only in the spiritual dimension there is oneness. In the future this will be fully revealed, and currently, we can have access to that spiritual dimension of the future when we access the deep part of our soul, the Yechidah. The Rav is explaining here how we can access the all-inclusive reality that is contained in our Yechidah.

How did Dovid *HaMelech* defeat Golyas? With one rock. The depth of this is that he defeated him with the power of “one”, not simply that he managed to kill him with a small rock.

The war with the Greeks could not be won physically. It wasn’t possible. The only way was through revealing *echad* in their souls – they connected to Hashem, to His oneness; thus they had Hashem’s protection, and no one can fight Hashem. “*And they will see that the name of Hashem is upon you, and they will fear you.*” (Although Hashem is called “man of war”, this is a metaphor).

If two people are having a game with each other, it is not a fight. Although they are against each other, this is not viewed as a fight, but as a game. When one wins the other, it’s not that he has won the fight, because it’s just a game; afterwards, they laugh with each other. So too, when one is connected to Hashem, he is protected by Him, and no one can fight Hashem – trying to fight Hashem is a joke. There is no opposition, because any human who tries to oppose Hashem does not oppose Hashem. If it’s not a fight, it can only be a game.

When one approaches a fight with the perspective that he is against the other based on his human strengths, this will indeed be an opposition.

Victory Is Not Achieved Through Fighting

Is there anyone who doesn’t have any fights with others? It is not possible. The Talmud says that if there is a Rav in a city who is never opposed at all, he is not a real Rav, because he’s probably being bribed.

(By the way, even before I came to deliver these *shiurim*, I already prepared myself for opposition. I knew that there were will be those who will fight with me about what I’m saying!)

We all need opposition. There is no person who does not have opposition. For everything good there is, Hashem created something else in evil that can oppose the good. There is only one whom there is no opposition to – Hashem, Who is One.

The war with the Greeks could have just been like any other war, where the two sides oppose each other. We all have wars. We have internal wars as well, inside

ourselves, as well as in our homes, small and big fights. But we all have fights. How can we get out of all these fights?

It is by acquiring the deep perspective that winning the war is not through fighting the other side. That was the miracle of Chanukah – you can only win a war with a miracle, and that ‘miracle’ is for one to realize this deep perspective.

Accessing Peace In The Soul: Nullifying Yourself To Hashem

Now we will make this concept more practical in our daily life.

How can we win our daily wars and fights with others that we all have? I am asking a very practical question, not a theoretical one.

People fight their fights either with their various physical strengths, or with their intellectual abilities. (There is a saying, “If you can’t fight with *koach* (strength), fight with *moach* (brains).” But there is a third [deeper] way to fight, and it has nothing to do with strength or with brains.

The Kotzker *zt”l* said that if you can’t win with strength, keep telling yourself that you do have strength, until you eventually win. That was one view. Another view was to use your intellectual abilities. A third way to win a war is through the power of prayer.

There is a point in our soul in which there are no wars, challenges, or oppositions. *Chazal* say, “Nullify your will to His will.” In other words, when you have no desires of your own, because you are nullified to Hashem, then the name of Hashem comes upon you. And then all those who think of opposing you won’t be able to oppose you, because you are connected to the oneness of Hashem.

It is brought in our *sefarim* that *Moshiach* will come with “weapons of war” and win over the entire world. People interpret this to mean that *Moshiach* will reveal how good prevails over evil. Will he throw a bomb on the world? Iran can do that too. How would that bring peace to the world?! How will he ‘win’ over the entire world?

He will be connected to the oneness of Hashem, thus, he will connect to all of Creation in his enormous love. *Moshiach* will win not through the conventional means

of fighting, but because he will be utterly connected to the oneness of Hashem, and nothing can oppose the oneness of Hashem.

Avraham *Avinu* was thrown into a fire and was untouched. The depth of this was because he was so connected to the oneness of Hashem that nothing could harm him. It wasn't just a miracle. It was because he lived in a world where there was no opposition, because he was connected to the oneness of Hashem. Thus, he was totally nullified to Hashem, and therefore nothing could harm him. Of course, people fought him. He had wars. But in his soul, he was at peace with others, and that is why he could not be hurt by anyone.

Access To Your Inner Peace

The *Yechidah* in us can provide us with entirely new feelings/emotions altogether.

Our body and soul are in contradiction with each other. Our soul lives in complete oneness, while our body cannot come to terms with oneness. We cannot live in the state of complete oneness with others, because the peace of the future is not here yet. The view of our soul, this unity with the world, is not yet manifest in the physical world, for the time being. But we can still have some access to the deep peace that is in the soul and make use of it sometimes.

One can learn how to be amongst people who are saying things against him, but in his soul, he is living with inner peace. He hears what they are saying, but it doesn't bother him, because he lives in place of no opposition.

People tend to be either realistic or delusional. Either people are realistic and they do not believe in any inner realities, or they go in the opposite direction and believe in spirituality, but they become delusional and ignore the external, physical dimension of our world. Both perspectives are wrong.

We are really a contradiction; our body tells us one viewpoint, while our soul tells us one viewpoint, and we can't live with one of them alone. We need to fuse them together and handle the contradicting perspectives. There are different layers in us that have different perspectives towards reality. Just as there many opinions amongst people, so are there many opinions within our own selves.

This sounds like we are unstable! But we can be very stable, even though we have different viewpoints going on inside ourselves.⁴⁷

Chazal say that one must speak the “truth that is on his heart” (“*doiver emes b’levovo*”) – his mouth and heart should be in line with each other (*piv v’libo shavin*). The level of the heart can change each day, therefore, a person’s perspective changes each day. We have five parts in our soul – the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. There are times when we are on a higher level of the soul, and times when we are on a lower level of the soul. Whenever we verbalize the worries that are on our heart, the words we say will vary, depending on the particular level of the soul we are on at the moment.

If someone doesn’t speak from his soul, he is talking from his dry intellect. But if one speaks from his heart because he has opened his soul, then he can feel this in himself that he has different opinions towards the same subject, depending on the day, because the level of his soul fluctuates each day.

Thus, the victory over the Greeks was because they revealed their *Yechidah*, the point in the soul where is no oppositions, and that was how they won, because nothing can oppose the all-inclusive point in the soul.

How To Win Over All Oppositions

Let’s apply this now to our own lives. We all have oppositions with others – how do we fight properly when those inevitable fights come?

If we just try to win, we won’t win. We will just have fights, We won’t reach real victory.

I am not saying that peace can win everything and that you can sit back and relax that everything will just work out. This isn’t feasible at all, because we do have fights.

⁴⁷ On an interesting note, the Rav responded to a questioner in middle of this shiur that often a person will go to a psychologist and try to sort out his contradicting goals he has in his life, and he will be told by the psychologist that he is delusional and a living contradiction. In reality, though, we are all full of contradicting desires – desires of the body and desires of the soul, and there is nothing wrong with this at all, because our soul is structured that way....

The Torah speaks about fighting wars, either as an obligation or as a choice, but there are always wars and fights with others in our life.

How should we go about our fights, when those inevitable fights come? We need to fight not from fighting, but from using our power of inner peace, to reveal the point in us which has no wars, which is the *Yechidah*. Of course, you can't see this reality in the physical world; it is an inner reality that is deep within the soul.

You can solve a fight in just half a minute, if you make sure to always access this deep power of the soul [when you yearn for peace]. When one accesses this inner peace in himself, his enemies disappear, and people will not fight him!

I am not saying that this will drive away all people who fight you, because the Greeks were certainly trying to fight the Chashmonaim even though the Chashmonaim had reached their inner peace, and in addition, we currently live in a world in which the “50th Gate of Impurity” surrounds us, which is very difficult to send off. But the point is that when you access the inner peace of the soul, the enemies around you won't be able to win against you, because the fight will lose its zenith, for the entire fight is being fueled by the fact that there each of the two side is warring against each other.

Once one of the sides reaches a place inside himself in which there is no war, the entire war loses its fuel, and thus the war will cease on its own.

There are two ways to get rid of an enemy. Either you can fight with him and try to drive him away, or you can make peace with him, by uncovering your own ability of inner peace. When you uncover a peace in your own soul, your opposition will feel somewhat that you want peace, and when he feels your wish for peace, he will stop fighting you.

There will be no place for a fight. Your opposition might not be aware why he is losing interest in fighting you, but he will still feel somewhat that there is no place now for a fight.

I will repeat and emphasize again that this inner solution does not work 100%. If it would, then our body would cease, and we would only be souls with no body. This is not possible in the current situation in the world, where we are not yet in the future.

But if you make use of this point of the soul, it will greatly affect even your physical situation and radiate some of its light.

Living With An Inner Contradiction

When we reveal our *Yechidah* of the soul, we gain a new perspective on reality, and the old reality has no bearing on us anymore.

Of Shabbos, *Chazal* say that you should consider it “as if all your work is done”.⁴⁸ What does that mean? To pretend that your situation at work is fine just because it’s Shabbos? We all know good and well that Sundays can be stressful and full of problems we have to deal with. But it’s because there is a part in our soul which has the ability to view all our work “as if” it is done. The *Yechidah* is the point inside us which tells us that all is finished and done, that there are no problems,

If a person doesn’t want to accept that there can be inside him this deep perspective on reality, then indeed, he will have no way of relating to this concept. He might feel that he is a realistic person who faces the facts of reality and that the view of the *Yechidah* is an escape from reality, so why fool yourself with it. After all, when a person hears about the *Yechidah*’s view on reality and he tells it over to others, what kind of reaction does he usually get from others? He will be told that he is being delusional, that he is trying to run away from life, that he can’t deal with reality, that he is too idealistic in his aspirations, that he’s not being realistic...

But in the future, it will be a day that is entirely Shabbos, and there will be peace and serenity for the entire world; nowadays, that reality hasn’t been realized yet, but we still can have some access to it and touch it. Therefore, while we certainly have to be realistic in our life and not pretend that we have no problems or challenges, there is a point in our soul in which there exists *no challenges*.

Of course, we cannot live entirely in that place in our soul, because that is running away from the external layer of reality. We do not mean at all for one to become delusional and run away into himself and escape reality. Rather, what we mean is to

⁴⁸ Mechilta 7

believe that there is such a power in yourself, and when you believe in this feeling, you will feel the reality that is behind that feeling.

When you feel that reality, you will discover a contradiction. On one hand, you have a point in yourself which is telling you that there are no problems, but at the same time, you see problems in front of you in the world that you live in. You can learn how to live with contradiction, however.

There are some days in which we feel completely serene and that we have no problems, and the next day, we feel like our entire world has come crashing down. What is the inner reason for this? It is because there are some days in which we live very internally, and our perspective on our life is then coming from our deep place in the soul that feels how there are no problems.

So I am not saying that you should run away into yourself all the time. I am merely trying to tell you that there does exist a place in yourself in which you can return to every here and there to draw vitality from, and that will give you the strength to go back into your problems and deal with them with renewed vigor.

If a person only knows of the problems in his life, and he has no inner place of refuge in himself, he will have no vitality at all in his life. He only lives within his problems, and problems do not provide us with vitality. A person has to know how to escape the stress of life to a place in himself where he can draw forth vitality [when he accesses the calmness in his soul], and then when he returns to his problems, he will be able to feel alive even amidst his problems; he will not get drained from his problems and lose his vitality.

When you access your inner peace in the soul, you get used to the concept of a world in which there are no problems, and then when you return to the problems, you will know how to deal with them properly, even as you are amidst a problem. As you are going through the problem, you will be able to be above it.

In Conclusion

The Greeks were defeated because the Chashmonaim accessed this deep power, of recognizing that there is only one reality, in which there are no oppositions. They

“made themselves small”, in other words, they nullified their existence and did not see themselves as apart from others, therefore, they arrived at the deep perspective that there is a place in which there are no wars. Because they reached this place in which there are no wars, nothing could oppose them, and that was how they achieved victory.

May we merit to be granted by Hashem the power to connect deeply into our souls and from that we will be able to escape all our wars, and from that, we will merit the complete revelation of the days of *Moshiach*.

II | HAVAYAH – THE POINT OF STILLNESS - NO MOVEMENT

Identifying With the Concept of Non-Movement

As it has been explained thus far, a person consists of five layers of the soul – *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah*, and the “*havayah*” point of the soul [*Yechidah*]. The “*havayah*” point of our soul is the innermost point of our soul, and in order to reach it, we first need to learn how to recognize it. In the previous chapter, we explained several applications of the *havayah* point of the soul. In this chapter, we will try to learn about another application of it.

All of Creation is moving, every moment. All that is in the galaxy revolves, and time as well is always moving. Creation, in essence, is a constant movement. Only Hashem doesn’t move – “He was, He is, and He always will be.” Hashem is not found in movement, but in non-movement.

We are familiar with the concept of movement, but we are not used to the concept of non-movement. Do we see anything that doesn’t move? Our eyes always see things that move. We know that even the planets and stars, which appear to be still, are really always moving, because they are all in orbit.

Does our soul as contain a non-moving point? Our emotions and thoughts are always moving, because we keep going through hundreds and thousands of emotions and thoughts. But deeper in the soul, there is a place in the soul that doesn’t move at all.

We can’t see this non-movement, though. We see the street when it not moving with cars, but we can’t see the point of non-movement in our soul, at least with our physical eyes.

Why must we seek the power of non-movement? What is to be gained from it?

Non-Movement: Resembling Hashem

Recognizing the non-moving point in the soul is a part of how we connect ourselves to Hashem. In order to connect to Hashem, we are supposed to resemble Him; *Chazal* state that in order to cleave to Hashem, “*Hevay domeh lo*”, “You shall resemble Him”. The non-moving part of the soul is called “*doimem*” (still, or silent), from the word “*domeh*”. We begin to “resemble” Hashem’s ways by reaching our ability within ourselves to be “non-moving”. That is how we can, so to speak, “resemble” Hashem and cleave to Him. When we reveal that, we will have the power to cleave to Him.

There is another reason, an external reason, of why we need to make use of the power of non-movement. When we are impulsive and we have little control over our movements, this causes us to have emotional suffering. So we can recognize that there is a need to still our movements, so that we can learn how to be less impulsive. It teaches us self-control.

The popular way of acquiring non-movement (or becoming calm) is through learning how to weaken the force of movement in a person, such as by slowing down one’s physical movements, which in turn provides a person with an ability to calm his movements and thereby become less reactive to any negative feelings. But there is another way, an inner way, of how to acquire it.

When a person wishes to free himself from impulsivity or from negative movements (in his emotions or thoughts) that are bothering him, he can leave the mode of “movement” altogether and enter into a mode of “non-movement” in his soul. This will in turn silence all his various “movements” as a direct result.

To illustrate, when a person is being swept by a wave, either he can try to fight the wave, or he can stay underwater, and the wave will not take him in, because he has ducked it.

When one is in the midst of some kind of emotional turmoil – each to his own – one method which people try is to weaken the movement somehow, to slow it down. But there is another way: to leave the mode of “movement” in his soul and enter into “non-movement”, and this in turn will silence any movements as a result.

This is because the entire movement is being fueled by the movement. Once one leaves his inner movements, the movement loses its power to function, so the unwanted movement will cease on its own.

In the past, we have defined how the entire work of man on this world is to learn the art of balancing his inner movements. Our entire problem is when we have extreme movements that are unbalanced, thus our main task is to learn how to balance our movements. This we addressed in *Da Es Atzmecha/Getting To Know Your Self*.

In this series, however, we are speaking about the deeper part of our soul, the *Yechidah*, and it requires a whole different kind of inner calm. In order to gain the inner calm that is required to reach your individual *Yechidah*, you need to reach a point of non-movement in yourself, and this in turn will silence your various movements in your soul.

Thus, there are two reasons why we need to gain the power of non-movement. The inner reason why we need it, the purpose, is because non-movement is what helps us “resemble” Hashem, Who is non-moving, which is how we cleave to Him.

The second reason of why we need it, which is the external use of this power, is to learn how to still our movements so that we can know how to leave the mode of movement. After we learn how to balance our movements, we must progress to the higher stage, which is to leave movement altogether.

This is not just about silencing anger or other intense emotions. It can silence negative emotions, but that's all a result. It's all coming from the power of non-movement. When one reaches non-movement in his soul, it follows automatically that his negative emotions will be silenced. It can help a person calm down from his anger, or let go of a desire he wants badly, etc.

The Sages teach that one should be as humble as Hilel, whom it was extremely difficult to anger.⁴⁹ How, indeed, can we reach such a level? We must understand that Hilel did not overcome his anger by slowing down his movements, nor did he reach this through calming himself down a physical level. Rather, his humility was because he completely nullified himself – meaning, he reached a place where there is no movement at all, and where there is no movement there is no possibility for anger.

⁴⁹ Shabbos 30b

Non-Movement: The Inner Method of How To Calm Down

To apply this concept practically, let's say a person is in midst of getting angry. How can he calm himself?

There are many methods that can work. One method is to take your mind off your problems by thinking about something else (*hesech hadaas*). Another method is to think positive thoughts about people, or to judge others favorably. Another method is to have *emunah* that all is decreed upon me by Hashem. These are all true methods that can work. But it can be solved with another way – as long as you have access to it: through reaching the power of non-movement, all these problems go away on their own.

Let us try to explore this concept more deeply.

When the Jewish people left Egypt and went to the desert, they essentially entered non-movement. They came to the sea, and they could not move. It seemed like the worse situation. What did they do? They didn't move. They stayed where they were and connected themselves with Hashem, and that was the inner reason why the Egyptians couldn't attack them. The depth of this is that non-movement is the power that can protect a person from any harmful 'movements' coming his way.

People wonder what is there to be gained from non-movement. When a person hears about trying not to move for a few minutes so he can get calm, what often happens? A person sits on a chair, doesn't do anything, and after a few minutes, he's already going crazy. People do not go for non-movement. They feel like they are trapped in the plague of darkness which the Egyptians were hit with. Why? It is because we are mostly getting all our vitality in life from various movements, so we can relate only to movement, and we are not used to gaining any sense of vitality from non-movement.

But the truth is that movement is only one side of the coin in life. The other side of the coin in our life is non-movement. We need to uncover this power. We need to look into our daily life and see if we ever get vitality from non-vitality.

Vitality From Non-Movement

If you reflect, we can see that we do. We have six days of the week, and we have Shabbos. The six days of the week are for action, for movement. Shabbos is for non-movement, because Shabbos is the day of rest, the day where we cease from our movements. From where do we mainly get our vitality from? It is clear to all of us that Shabbos gives us more vitality than the weekdays. Thus, our main vitality needs to be coming from non-movement, not from movement.

We must learn how to derive vitality from both modes of our live – our movement, and our non-movement. Shabbos is called “source of blessing”, so it is our main source of vitality. Just as we gain vitality from actions, so can we gain vitality from non-action. However, non-action only gives you vitality when you access the point of non-movement in the soul.

Do we see non-movement as another source of vitality to us? If “yes”, then we have both sources of vitality, movement and non-movement, and we will have both the six days of the week and Shabbos in our soul, which are both needed. If a person only gets vitality from movement, then all he will have is the “six days of work” in his soul, and he will have no Shabbos in his soul.

During the week, we mainly live from non-movement, and on Shabbos we live from movement. But in our soul, it is possible for us to live all the time from both movement and non-movement. If a person doesn’t know how to gain vitality from non-movement, he will find non-movement to be taxing, because he will grow anxious when he doesn’t move. Therefore, a person should get used to non-movement when he’s calm, and not wait to acquire it when he’s anxious, so that he can give himself the strength to easily enter into non-movement when the time calls for it.

So must one first identify that there is a place in himself in which he derives vitality from non-movement. As an example, we have 248 positive *mitzvos* and 365 negative commandments; both give us vitality. Just as doing a *mitzvah* makes us feel more alive, so can refraining from committing a sin provide us with vitality.

The Yechidah: The Non-Moving Point of the Soul

Our *havayah* point of the soul is essentially this place of non-movement in the soul. The outer four parts of the soul – our *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah*, are all in movement. The *havayah\Yechidah* level of the soul is where we can derive vitality from non-action; it is the “Shabbos” in the soul. The other four parts of the soul are like the “six days of the week” that are in the soul.

Thus, our actions help us reveal the outer parts of the soul, while “non-action” helps one reach the *Yechidah*. This awareness to the concept of non-movement is the key to accessing the *Yechidah*.

The Gains of Non-Movement

The concept of non-movement seems to goes against our logic. If you’re trying to open a door, don’t you need to do something to get into it? How does ‘not’ doing anything help you get into something?

But if we reflect, we can see that most of our success comes from not doing something, not from doing something. First we need to see this concept from our own physical world, so that we can relate to the inner world we are describing. (There is always a rule that you need to be able to first identify with a concept from this physical world in order to understand anything about the spiritual world).

There are people who are very action-oriented, and as soon as they get up in the morning, they ask themselves, “What needs to be done today?” Others are less action-oriented, and they focus more on what to avoid that day. In the world of business, you can make money either by taking action – and sometimes, by not taking action. Or, you get a phone call asking you to invest some money in something, and you realize that it’s a scam, so you don’t react to the caller. This is not just because of *hashgachah peratis* (Divine Providence), even though is true that all is run by Hashem’s Divine Providence. The deeper reason is because knowing how to *not* move is often what saves us from danger.

There are many more examples of the concept as well. Our point is that often, you gain precisely when you *don't* do anything. It is the things that we don't *do* which help us much more than the things that we *do*.

When Laziness Is Good And When It Is Evil

“Non-action” (or non-movement) is referred to as the “holy laziness”. The Sages praised the women for being lazy not to sin with the Golden Calf, which teaches us that there can be a holy kind of laziness. What is holy laziness? It is when one knows how to use the power of non-movement in its proper place.

Normally, laziness is detrimental, and this is when laziness stems from any of the outer four layers of the soul. But when one discovers the power of holy non-movement, such laziness is constructive and holy. It is when one knows how to *not* act.

The concept of *menuchah*, to have serenity [on Shabbos], does not come from laziness. If a person keeps Shabbos because he's lazy and he doesn't feel like working, is that called the *menuchah* of Shabbos? Clearly, not. One who would like to work, but he silences those movements because it is Shabbos – this is called the *menuchah* of Shabbos. Such a person is truly resting from work. *Menuchah* is a holy power. *Savlanus*, patience, is also a holy power. Laziness, also, can be holy – when it is used in a situation that calls for non-movement.

When one longs for Shabbos and he wishes it wouldn't end, it is because he is enjoying his *menuchah*. This is not laziness. If a person is lazy because he doesn't want to work, that is laziness. But when a person has reached *menuchah* and he is craving it, it is because he has reached the vitality of non-movement, thus, he wishes it could remain Shabbos and not have to go back to work.

Without recognizing the gains of non-movement, he won't be able to reach the *Yechidah* either, and his laziness is evil too. A person needs to learn how to gain vitality from non-movement.

There are people who wait all year for the winter so that they will see the snow, and they gain vitality from this. But this is not what it means to gain vitality from non-

movement. We are referring to a deep source of vitality from non-movement that is inside the soul of a person. It cannot be described in words, just like we cannot describe what vitality from actions feels like. You need to enjoy non-movement no less than how you enjoy movement.

As we said before, we have both *mitzvos* and negative commandments, and we have both the six days of the week and Shabbos, because we need both for our vitality. Our actions alone which we do will not bring us to our purpose. If we only desist from movement, this will also not bring us to our purpose. We must combine our actions together with the power of non-movement, and these two abilities together will bring us to our purpose, just as we need both the six days of the week and Shabbos. Shabbos is the situation of the Next World, but in order to merit it, the Sages say that “One who toils on Erev Shabbos, will eat on Shabbos.”

Examining Our Source of Vitality In Our Actions

Earlier, I asked you if you ever derive vitality from non-movement. Now I will ask you an opposite question: You are already assuming that you gain vitality from the positive actions you do, such as when you do a *mitzvah*. What exactly is giving you vitality when you do a *mitzvah*?

Before we learn how to gain vitality from non-action, let us first ask ourselves if the actions we are gaining vitality from are coming from a good source or not. If we are gaining vitality from negative kinds of actions, than we are drawing vitality from a negative source, which harms us.

If a person runs after an improper desire, he is gaining vitality from a negative kind of action, and he is drawing vitality from a negative source.

There are also actions we do in which it is not clear if we are really gaining positive vitality or not from the act. For example, if a person is kind to others and he gains honor from this, is he getting vitality from the fact that he is bestowing others, or because he gets honor? It is very subtle discerning that one needs to make. Just as need to know where our vitality is coming from in our actions, so must we discern even in our holy actions where exactly where we are getting vitality from.

The Kamarna Rebbe said that he suspected himself of gaining vitality from the honor he feels in doing *mitzvos*, and not from the actual *mitzvos* he is doing. A person might be enjoying doing a *mitzvah*, but it's really his ego that he is enjoying. The concept is that one has to know if his vitality from even his positive actions if it is coming from the good deed, or from the ego in the act.

Thus, the question of where we are deriving vitality from applies to both the areas of our actions as well as non-action.

Incorporating Non-Action Within Action

We are slowly understanding that non-movement comes from a deeper part of ourselves, and how it can be a source of vitality for us, just as much as movement makes us feel more alive. Now we will describe a deeper point about this.

The *Mishnah* in *Avos* states, “It is not upon you to complete the task, nor are you exempt from it.”⁵⁰ To put it deeply, in these words our Sages, there is written in a very clear definition about the way we must live our entire lives. “The task is not upon you to complete” because we cannot finish everything; if we could, then the task would be upon us to complete. Thus, every action that we do is complete by another aspect – the part that we can’t do. Yet, “you are not exempt from it” – you must act, but you cannot complete the act, for it is not within your power. Thus, every act consists of action and non-action – there is part that I must do, and there is a part that I can’t do.

Why must all actions be comprised of these two factors? There are a few reasons. With regards to our current discussion, when a person does any action, either from his *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* - must the *Yechidah* be absent? Even in the actions you perform, there can be a revelation of *Yechidah*. When you do something, you can gain vitality even from the aspect of non-action in the action.

Take a look at our daily life. We do many actions – do we ever complete any of them? We can all recognize that nothing ever gets finished. We are really never to get anything done. It is to show us that we need to let go of action, even amidst our actions.

⁵⁰ *Avos* 2:16

Hashem created us so that we can reach perfection, thus we must perfect ourselves. But if we cannot be perfect ourselves anyway, for what purpose did Hashem create us for? If Hashem wants us to reach perfection, why didn't He just create us perfect? The answer is: perfection is not just reached through what I do, but also through what I *don't* do.

This is essentially when is **aware** as he does something that he can also have non-movement at the same time, and he gains vitality as well from the non-movement.

One who does not perform is lazy. One who only acts has no revelation of *Yechidah*. How then must we act? To sometimes act and sometimes not act?! The correct way is that when you act, you can also be aware of non-action, and to receive vitality even from the part in the act that you are not doing. This is how you gain vitality from both the action as well as the non-action.

We gain vitality from our *mitzvos*, but we can also gain vitality when we don't sin – when we are aware that we can also gain vitality from non-action. To illustrate further, it is forbidden for one to add onto the *mitzvos* of the Torah; one may not wear five compartments in his *Tefillin*, since the requirement is only to wear four. This shows us that just like we receive vitality from doing *mitzvos*, so do we receive vitality from not doing something.

Daily Opportunities To Access Non-Movement

If we look at our daily life we can see many opportunities in which we can do this. For example, you are trying to cross the street, and it's taking time. Most people get impatient when they are waiting to cross the street. But it is not just a time for us to practice patience. It can be a deeper exercise for you: you can learn how to stop your movements and enjoy non-movement.

This is a way for you to gain vitality when you act/expand and don't act/contract. It doesn't just mean to pause your movements and not do anything. Just like a person feels more alive when he expands his soul and does action, so can a person feel more alive sometimes by contracting and not doing anything. Shabbos is about non-action, but it is preceded with six days of the week, because we need both.

We have many times a day in which we can pause our movements; there are at least 20 times a day where we are prevented from doing something - ranging from more extreme situations to lesser situations. These times can be utilized as opportunities to work on this concept of deriving vitality from non-movement. In a more extreme example, there is a snowstorm and the electricity has been cut off, and you can't do anything. A less extreme scenario is when you are driving on the highway and then you hit unexpected traffic, which causes a half-hour delay. You were doing something, and now you are prevented from doing anything. Can you derive vitality from this non-movement?

The following is an example that anyone with children will relate well to. If you wanted to give something to your child and he didn't want it – for example, if you wanted to give him a kiss and express some love to him, and he doesn't want a kiss – how do you feel about this? All parents know of a feeling of wanting to give more love to their children, but they find themselves unable to give it as much as they would like to. (Hashem has made us this way, and if one does not feel this guilty feeling, this is a sign of a deep emotional problem). But how can we deal with the disappointing feeling, of wanting to give love to our child, and we weren't successful?

Some people suffer so much unconscious guilt from this that when they are putting their children to bed, they give them an excessive amount of kisses, to make up for all that they haven't given to them from throughout the day. But from a deeper perspective, the times in which we aren't successful in expressing our feelings to our children enough are really opportunities for us to receive vitality from the non-movement.

Each day, we can identify different scenarios throughout the day in which we are stopped from doing something, and these times can become a source of vitality for us. We can use the non-movement to enter all the way into the deepest part of ourselves, where there is no movement, which resembles death, where there is no more control. The day of death is a total state of self-nullification, where one cannot do anything to change its time.

I do not mean to imply that you should deliberately silence of all your movements throughout the day. It just means that when the situation comes your way in which you aren't able to perform the movement you wanted to do, you can use it as an opportunity to derive vitality from this.

So, as we gain vitality from our actions, which come from the outer four layers of the soul, we also need to learn how to gain vitality from non-action, which helps us recognize what our *havayah* point is. When we gain vitality from non-action, this gives us the power to learn how to feel nullified to Hashem, and then we will merit to resemble Him and to cleave to Him completely.

12 | HAVAYAH – BEYOND CHOOSING

Concepts of Bechirah (Free Will) & Yediah (Higher Knowledge)

We will try here with the help of Hashem to explain another view and application of the *havayah* point in our soul.

One of the well-known questions – and perhaps we can say that it is the question of all questions – is the issue of “*bechirah*” (free will) vs. “*yediah*” (“the knowledge”, the fact that G-d knows everything).

Chazal state that everything is known to Hashem already before a person is born; “All is seen from Above” (*hakol tzafuy*).⁵¹ All is known to Hashem – everything. Hashem knows what every person will ever do, even before the person has done it. On the other hand, *Chazal* also state that man has the power of free will (*bechirah*) to choose to do an action or not.

It’s a contradiction. If Hashem knows what a person will do, then there is no free will! And if there is free will, how can Hashem know what the person will do, when he hasn’t chosen yet? This question is actually found in *Tikkunei HaZohar*, and there is an answer there. There is also another answer in Rambam’s *Hilchos Teshuvah*. There are tens of answers to this question.

Firstly, we must know: Of what relevance does this issue have to us? The Baal Shem Tov says that Torah is from the word *horaah* because everything in the Torah teaches us something. Therefore, even if one feels that this question doesn’t pertain to him, it still has some relevance. We will reflect on how this matter has relevance to each of us.

Bechirah - Free Will To Choose

Free will is called *bechirah*, and the concept that Hashem knows all is called *yediah*. The two concepts contradict each other. However, there is a rule that whenever there

⁵¹ Avos 3:19

are two points, there is always a third point between them that serves as the connecting point in between them. In other words, there is a way to reconcile the two contradicting concepts when we discover the third, middle area between them, which will harmonize them together. There must be a point between them which answers the contradiction, which we will try to discover.

First we will analyze what *bechirah* is, what *yediah* is, and how the two concepts can merge harmoniously. Then we will be able to see how this matter is relevant to us with regards to learning about our *Yechidah* of the soul. Free will is a basic, fundamental power that we all have. Hashem created the world in order to bestow good upon us, and we would be embarrassed to take from Him without having to work hard for it. It would be “bread of shame”, as the *Talmud Yerushalmi* states. For this reason, Hashem gave us free will, so that we will choose good on our own, by working hard; in this way, when we are eventually rewarded, we can enjoy our reward, feeling that we have deserved it, as opposed to taking it undeservedly [and thus shamefully], which would ruin our joy of reward.

So it is clear to us why there must be a rule of free will. There are many other reasons as well why there must be free will, but this is the main reason. If someone denies that there is free will, he is basically denying the whole design of Creation, as was explained.

Yediah – Hashem Knows Everything That Will Happen

Hashem knows everything. Why does Hashem need to know everything? Hashem is all-knowing, so this is not a question. Rather, our question is: Why did the Sages reveal to us that He knows everything? Why was it necessary for the Sages to let us know this fact? It was so that we should know that since Hashem knows all that we will do even before we do it, that reveals to us how Hashem is present in our very action.

The purpose of Creation is to recognize Hashem, and this revelation has to be felt in our minds and hearts. Therefore, if one has the mindset that his actions are due to his own power, his actions do not reveal Hashem. But if one realizes that all his actions are being enabled by Hashem, even though it is person who chose according to his own free accord to perform the action, then this reveals to the doer Who is

behind the action: Hashem. That is why it is important for us to know that Hashem knows all that we will do; it is part of our *emunah*. So when I attribute my actions to my own power, I am missing a recognition of Hashem in the act; therefore, it is necessary for me to know that Hashem knows all that I will do, and in this way, the act that I do reveals Hashem.

The Question of Yediah Vs. Bechirah

We have explained what *bechirah* is, what *yediah* is, and why both are needed. The question we still remain with, though, is: How are these two concepts not a contradiction? If Hashem knows everything that a person will do, then how do people have free will? For example, you *davened* in the morning. Who enabled this – you, or Hashem? If you chose to do it, then who let it happen - you, or Hashem? Perhaps the answer is that when you choose to do an action, it is being enabled by you, and when you don't choose, Hashem is enabling it to happen. If that is true, then the understanding is that sometimes we act upon *bechirah* and sometimes we act upon *yediah*.

However, this cannot be the answer. If the purpose of Creation is that Hashem be revealed in all of man's actions, then He must be revealed in *all* of a person's actions, not just in some of them. So this is our question: If I choose how I will act, then how is Hashem revealed through all of my actions (*yediah*)? And if the answer is instead that Hashem is enabling all of my actions, even when I choose, then where is my *bechirah/free will*?

There are all kinds of answers, as we said earlier; there are more than 20 answers found to this question. But I am not coming here to tell you all those answers. In relevance to us, the answer has to do with our *Yechidah* of the soul, which is our discussion.

We Are A "Double Existence"

The deep answer is that we are able to live a “double” kind of life, as we will explain. The outer four layers of our soul (*Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah* and *Chayah*)

experience *bechirah*, while the inner layer of our soul, the *Yechidah*, is the part in us which is at the view of *yediah*.

Earlier, we explained this concept in several angles: that since man is comprised of layers, there are two views going on in us at once: the view of our body, and the view of our inner being, our soul. We applied this concept to different areas. One example was that even as one does a physical action, he can still be above the action he is performing; he can be calm even as he's amidst movement. This was also the concept behind the topic of Chapter Ten, in which we explained the inner perspective of how one can fight his opposition yet still be at peace with them.

We see from these above two examples that a person experiences two contradictory layers in himself at once – we are able to view the same exact situation with two opposite perspectives: the perspective that comes from our body, and the inner perspective on reality, which comes from our soul.

If we only live with the outer layers of the soul – otherwise known as our power of *bechirah* – than we cannot handle how we are both a body and a soul, and we won't be able to go beyond the “either or” way of thinking. “Are we a soul, or a body? Either, or.” We won't be able to understand that we really contain in ourselves two different perspectives towards the same situation.

But the deep understanding, as we have explained in the previous chapters, is that Hashem created us a “double” kind of existence, which includes a body (otherwise known as the four outer layers of the soul) and a soul (or the innermost layer of the soul, which is the *Yechidah*), and therefore, we have in ourselves two completely different views at once towards the same reality.

The *Midrash* recounts that when Rivkah *Imeinu* was pregnant with Yaakov *Avinu* and Esav and she did not know that she was expecting twins, when she would walk by a *beis midrash*, Yaakov would try to come out, and when she walked by the idol houses Esav wanted to come out. She was confused: Is the baby going to be righteous, or wicked? She did not know the meaning of this, so she went to the leaders Shem and Ever to ask them what kind of child she was having. They told her that there were two nations growing inside her, and then she understood. We see from here that it is hard for us to accept that we can have two perspectives at once.

We tend to think that we are “either, or”, but that we can’t be both. In reality, though, we are a multi-layered existence, and so there exists two completely different views inside us.

The Ability To Deal With Paradox

If we just view ourselves as exclusively a *Yechidah* and with no other outer layers in our soul, then we cannot either deal with the contradiction and paradox that we are. Instead, we must view ourselves with the awareness that there are really two completely different dimensions going on inside at us at once, and then it will be easier for us to accept the inner contradiction inside us.

To illustrate how we deal with a contradiction, when a person is informed of his father’s death, the *halachah* is that he must make the blessing of *Baruch Dayan HaEmes* (Blessed Is The Truthful Judge), but he must also make a blessing of *Shehechiyanu* if he is receiving an inheritance. This is a total contradiction - at the very same time that one must express his sadness, he must also make a blessing over his happiness at receiving an inheritance. He is experiencing contradictory emotions - and both of them are valid.

If one makes a *bris* for his son on *Tisha B’Av*, there is a festive meal at night. And at every *bris*, although the baby is in pain and therefore we don’t prolong the blessings, we still recite a *Shehechiyanu* blessing, which expresses happiness that we have reached such a time. A *bris* on *Tisha B’Av* also requires a *Shehechiyanu* blessing. How can that be? How can we express joy during a time of sadness? The answer is: A Jew has the power to live with contradictions. If one cannot deal with contradictory concepts taking place at the same time, he spends his entire life in a closed corridor.

Hashem made a separation between day and night. Day and night are called “one day”, because together, they comprise the day. With regards to our soul, there is also a mix of darkness and light as well in our own soul. It is a contradiction, but there is nothing wrong with this. It is how we recognize ourselves. If one denies the fact that he is a contradiction, because he cannot come to terms with it, he is denying that he is human, and he thinks he is like an angel. (On a deeper note, an angel also has contradictions, but we won’t get into that now).

If we can deal with the fact that we are a contradiction, the fact that we are a paradoxical kind of existence, then we will be able to better understand ourselves.

So there is a part in our soul which has the view of *bechirah*, and another part of our soul that has the view of *yediah*. Just like a person's mood can change depending on what time of the day it is, and therefore a person has different perspectives on a situation depending on what his mood and age is, so too does our soul have different perspectives at once, because it has layers.

There is a layer in our soul which lives in *bechirah*, and a layer which lives in *yediah*. We need to identify which part of us is the view of *bechirah* and which is the view of *yechidah*, without mixing them up.

Only The Yechidah Can Totally Reveal Hashem

In the earlier chapters, we explained that the outer layers of our soul feel a divided kind of reality (*cheilek*), while the inner layer of our soul, the *Yechidah*, has a view of an all-inclusive reality (*kol*). The purpose of Creation is that Hashem be revealed in everything. If He is only revealed partially in Creation, He is not revealed in the entire Creation, because a divided piece cannot reveal something that is all-inclusive. Only something all-inclusive can reveal Hashem entirely.

Now that we have explained the above, we can understand the following: The outer layers of our soul, which are divided parts - thus they are not all-inclusive – can only reveal a “partial” revelation of *emunah*.

For example, using the *Nefesh* part of the soul can reveal a “partial” level of *emunah*. From the viewpoint of the *Nefesh*, it is up to me to act properly, and I must also believe that all is up to Hashem, but this does not permit me to refrain from acting. Although Hashem is always revealed in one’s actions, He is not revealed *completely* in the action - from the view of the *Nefesh*.

The same is true with the view from our *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah*. The *emunah* in Hashem, through these outer layers of the soul, is only partial *emunah*, not complete *emunah*; therefore, the *emunah* that we reach through these outer layers of the soul does not allow us to withhold *bechirah*.

The *Yechidah*, however, is not another division in the soul; it is an entirely different point in the soul which contains an all-inclusive and undivided reality, a reality in which complete *emunah* in Hashem is revealed and realized. It reveals Hashem completely, and that is indeed the purpose of the *Yechidah*.

As long as the *Yechidah* hasn't been revealed in the world, the complete revelation of Hashem will not either be revealed on the world.⁵² Thus, the *Yechidah* in our soul is the point of complete *emunah* in Hashem [or *yediah*], and its very essence does not allow for *bechirah*. If it would allow for *bechirah*, there would still be an "I" present, and the "I" would prevent the revelation of Hashem.

Now we can see where *yediah* and *bechirah* are located in our soul. *Yediah* is in our *Yechidah*, not in the outer layers of our soul. *Bechirah* can only exist on the outer four layers of the soul, and not in the *Yechidah*.

We Are A Multi-Layered Existence

We have seen how we are a multi-layered existence.

However, we still remain with the question that we began this chapter with: Which is the true view on reality – *yediah*, or *bechirah*?

If a person would be made up of just one soul layer, the answer would be simple. But we are made up of five soul layers, so the answer is therefore complicated. *Yediah* is the view from our inner layer of the soul, and *bechirah* is the view we see through the outer four layers of our soul.

Maybe a person will still ask: "In the end of the day, does Hashem know everything that man will do, or not?" The answer is, though, that Hashem is endless, so He is beyond our understanding. If so, why are we trying to know if He knows everything or not? It is not to tell ourselves that Hashem knows everything. It is so that we can tell ourselves how we should live, according to this concept.

⁵² See *Sukkos* #009 – *A Jew's Inner Seal*.

Thus, we have learned that we are a double kind of existence. Our soul is not one piece – it is multi-layered. Compare this to a person riding a horse has to whip the horse so it will run, and he also has a rope to pull back the horse.

So too, we have different parts in our soul, and each part needs to be fed in a different way. The *Yechidah* is fed through the *emunah* in the concept of *yediah*, that Hashem knows everything; and the other four layers of the soul are fed through making use of our power of *bechirah*, to know that you are responsible for your actions and thus choose to act properly – as one of the Sage said, “The matter is dependent on me.”

Misconceptions

However, normally, what happens? People usually think they are just one piece, viewing themselves in terms of “either, or”, not realizing that the soul is multi-layered.

As a result, we usually find two kinds of people in the world: one kind of person places all his emphasis on the power of *bechirah*/choosing and ignore *emunah/yediah*/faith in Hashem, and another kind of person will emphasize only *emunah/yediah* but he will dismiss his *bechirah*.

One type of person thinks that *bechirah* is everything; he considers himself to be in charge of all his choices. When he succeeds, he attributes success to himself, and he becomes haughty with his successes. If he has failures, he also attributes it to himself (And as for when *others* fail him, in his eyes, that's a different problem...) The haughtier his nature is, the more he will blame others and not himself, and the less haughty he is, the more he will be inclined to blame himself. If he's somewhere in between, he's not sure about who is at fault – himself, or others. In either case, such a person only knows of his *bechirah*, and he never accesses *emunah*. He attributes everything to himself, his own decisions, etc.

We can definitely say that there is a gain to this, because when one utilizes *bechirah* properly, he is choosing to keep the Torah and *mitzvos*. This is the meaning of the possuk, “*And you shall choose life.*” Such a person is accepting responsibility upon himself, which is good. [However, he is only making use of one side of himself.]

The other kind of person goes in the opposite direction. He learns in the holy sefarim about *emunah*, that Hashem is in charge of everything, and he goes overboard with this, deciding that he will let faith rule him, never feeling responsible for his actions. What will happen? He will become a living contradiction. When a person thinks that Hashem will do everything for him, he throws off all his responsibilities, even the entire yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*, G-d forbid – and it's all in the name of “*emunah*”....

As an example, if a person accidentally hurts someone else, normally, he will feel bad about it, and try to work on himself to make sure that such a thing shouldn't happen again. But there are some people who won't even feel bad after hurting others – their thinking is, “I am not responsible. Hashem wanted this person to get hurt.”

Going overboard with *emunah* can make a person uproot the entire Torah, *chas v'shalom!* One way how a person uproots the entire Torah is through denying it, but another way is through misguided *emunah!* *Emunah* as well is used for evil – when a person uses *emunah* to deny his responsibilities. There are times when it is actually forbidden to use *emunah*.

Reb Zusha of Anipoli said that there are times in which a person can use the power of denial for holiness: there are times in which one has to deny even his own *emunah*. *Emunah* is evil when a person doesn't want to give to others in need, like if a pauper comes to his door and he refuses to help him, because after all, he has *emunah* that Hashem will help the pauper. Here, the person must believe that if he doesn't give to the person in need, it is he who is responsible for the pauper's suffering, not Hashem.

What usually happens in the way that most people live their life? Interestingly, we switch around the rules of *emunah* and *bechirah* and misuse them. When it comes to helping others, people like to choose *emunah* and not be responsible for others, instead “having faith in Hashem” that Hashem controls everything. And when it comes to our successes, a person tends to attribute success to himself, and not to Hashem.

The correct way to live is exactly the opposite! With others, we are mainly supposed to use *bechirah*, and realize that we are responsible for others, even though it is true that Hashem runs the world and can do anything He wants. And with ourselves, we are supposed to mainly make use of *emunah*. There are more details to every situation, of course, which also need to be deeply examined.

When one lives only with *emunah*, he won't do *mitzvos*, because he says to himself, "If Hashem wants me to put on *tefillin*, then I'll wear it; If I didn't put on *tefillin* today, it must that Hashem didn't want me to wear *tefillin*..."

When To Use Bechirah And When To Use Emunah

One of the Sages said, "The matter is not dependent except on me." This describes the part in yourself which must feel responsible for your actions. Hashem created us with layers; we have inner and outer layers. Our outer layers (our *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah*) are choosing what we do, and thus we are responsible for our actions. The inner layer of our soul, the *Yechidah*, is the power of *emunah*, to believe that all is from Hashem.

When should we make use of the outer layers, which is *bechirah*, and when should we make use of the inner layer, which is *emunah/yediah*? Before you do any action, your task is to realize that you are responsible to choose correctly, to use your *bechirah* sensibly. After you do your action, however, now is the time to use your *emunah* and believe that everything is from Hashem, that Hashem enabled you to act. There is also a part in ourselves which knows of *emunah* in Hashem, and this is the inner layer. This is also a difficult concept to live with.

Living With The Inner Contradiction

Thus, we are always living amidst an inner contradiction. On one hand, we are always responsible for our actions, so we must choose properly. At the same time, we also have to know that everything is from Hashem. We live a double life. We choose, we are responsible, but at the same time, we must also know that everything is from Hashem. So before we act, we need to use our *bechirah*; after we act, we need to access our *emunah*.

People find it hard to live with this contradiction, and they find it hard to accept this truth. But the reason for this, as we have explained in the past, is because people are usually living extreme. But there is a middle, balanced path in which a person can harmonize both extremes together. Without revealing the *Yechidah*, one's *emunah* is

superficial, and it doesn't emanate from within himself. We must believe that all is from Hashem, but at the very same time, we must choose the right choices, every day, all the time.

Practically Applying This Concept

Look at the following example. If a pauper comes to your door, you have a *mitzvah* of giving *tzedakah*. You must make use your *bechirah*, make the right choice, and give him *tzedakah*. After he leaves, though, you must now tell yourself that it is not you who supports him, but Hashem, for Hashem is the One who is providing for everyone.

What will happen, though, if I only make use of either *bechirah* or *emunah*? If I only have the viewpoint of *bechirah* and I don't make use of *emunah*, then the act of giving *tzedakah* is solely because "I chose", and while I certainly made the correct decision in giving to him, but, with the more "I" give *tzedakah*, "I" will only inflate my ego; it will not be an act that brings me closer to Hashem. But if I go in the other extreme and I only have the viewpoint of *emunah*, then I won't give to others and I will justify this with *emunah*, that Hashem is running the world anyway.

Practically speaking, before you do any action, realize that you are responsible. After you do it, realize that only Hashem enabled it to happen, and leave it up to Hashem. (However, this is all a very subtle matter, because a person might use this concept as well after he commits a sin, and then say to himself, "It was all from Hashem." This is clearly a misconception. If a person wouldn't be responsible for his actions, there would be no *mitzvah* to do *teshuva*h for his sins. The fact that we are required to do *teshuva*h shows that we are responsible for our actions. And you can't just repent in your heart – if someone steals, he has to give the money back, or else it is not *teshuva*h.)

Emunah Alone Will Not Work

We must get used to living with a double perspective. We are responsible in how we act, and after we act, we must feel that the outer layers of our soul feel that we

chose to act, and that the inner layer of our soul knows that Hashem enabled it to happen. If a person only lives with the inner perspective of the *Yechidah*, then he might come to uproot the entire Torah and mitzvos, *chas v'shalom*. Besides for that, he has a misconception about himself: he denies the reality in front of him. Such a person, if would go into his house and find a robber there – will he act so content and just have *emunah*? And if he wouldn't do anything against the robber, would he just remain calm...?

Here is another example. If a person were to write entire volumes explaining that we really don't need to eat in order to survive, practically speaking, there is still no way for him to deny his need to eat. Even if every scholar in the world approves of his book and agrees that his conclusions make sense, still, the author will still need to eat. Reality cannot be denied.

So too, the concept of *emunah*, although it is true, does not change the fact that Hashem designed certain natures that we live with on this world, which we inevitably face and we must deal with. If we would only have been created with a *Yechidah* and with no other outer layers in the soul, we would feel only *emunah*. But the fact is, that we have other layers in our soul as well, which cannot survive on just *emunah*. And we have a physical body that needs to eat.

Another example: If a person has bad *middos* and he denies it, he is denying his nature. He is denying the reality in front of him. One must know his nature, to realize that he chooses, that he is responsible. This is because we have outer layers in our soul, and we are not living with just our *Yechidah*.

Every moment of our life is really a multi-layered experience of our soul. If we want to understand ourselves, we need to know what our soul layers are, and what each of them needs, and then, our daily life must reflect that awareness to our double existence.

Seeing Yourself From Outside/Above Yourself

Earlier, we mentioned the concept that a person can see things from inside himself as well as from outside of himself. The question on this is obvious: How, exactly, can

one do this? How do you see from outside of yourself, when you are clearly inside yourself?

If a person lives only through *bechirah*, he only knows how to live from inside himself and have a view from inside himself. One must instead use his very “I”, which tends to think inside itself, and instead to think from *outside* of himself. So how does one view himself from outside himself? It is that as you are doing something, you can be aware that you are not doing it, for everything is enabled by Hashem.

To illustrate, just as you look at a friend doing something and you have the view of an outsider, so can you look at yourself like an outsider.

This is the meaning of the statement of our Sages, “All can be seen (*tzafuy*) from above.” Even as you are in the action, you can be above it, when you are aware that it is not you who is doing it, but that it’s all being enabled by Hashem.

In Conclusion

As we explained earlier, we are discussing many angles of how to understand our *Yechidah*. The purpose of these chapters is not coming to explain how we get by layer after layer in the *Yechidah*. Rather, we are explaining one perspective the entire time, just through different angles. We are not penetrating further and further into it – rather, we keep circling it, through the different angles that were explained, in each of the previous ten chapters (Chapters 3-12). Each of the previous ten chapters are interconnected, because each of these concepts directly fuel each other.

May Hashem help us to merit to realize that we have opposing views inside our soul, and that we merit to give each soul layer what it needs, without mixing up what their needs are; and that we reach connection with the Creator through a properly balanced soul.

13 | HAVAYAH -UNCHANGING & INVINCIBLE POINT IN THE SOUL

The Five Parts of the Soul Are Always Present In An Action

There is a well-known statement: “Nothing stands in the way of the will.”⁵³ In this chapter, with the help of Hashem, we will try to understand the root of this concept.

The “*havayah*” point in our soul, which we have begun to describe, is really the deeper aspect that takes place in all our actions we do. Either we act from our *Nefesh*, or our *Ruach*, or our *Neshamah*, or our *Chayah*, or from the very innermost point of the soul – our *havayah*. In addition to this, in every act we do, we can find these five aspects of the soul manifest.

If every act contains the five parts of the soul, what is the difference between each act? The difference is which part of the soul is being revealed more openly in the act. All of the parts of the soul are present in every action, and the only question is which part of the soul is more consciously revealed in the act.

We have our conscious awareness, as well as our subconscious, and our superconscious. In every act we do, we are consciously aware of a certain reason why we are doing it, but there are also additional reasons motivating us that are completely different than the reason we are conscious of, which may come from either the subconscious or the superconscious.

Therefore, every act that we do will somehow have the *havayah* point in it. Not only are there certain actions we do which emanate from our *havayah* point, but in every act as well, there is always a degree of the *havayah* point revealed, and the only issue is in the percentages. Thus, we can reveal the *havayah* point of our soul in anything that we do – and not only in certain specific actions.

⁵³ Editor’s Note: This statement of our Sages does not appear in the words of the Talmud. It is first brought in one of the works of our Rishonim (early commentators who spanned the 10th-15th centuries).

Although the *havayah* point is present in all that we do, if we do not become consciously aware of it, we don't access it. Most people are not consciously aware of their *havayah* in their actions, and that is why most people do not reveal their *havayah* point in their day-to-day activities.

Many Angles Of One Concept

Based upon the above, we can understand that there were some statements of our Sages in which the *havayah* point was hidden and playing more of a background role, whereas there were other statements of our Sages in which the *havayah* point is clearly at the forefront of the statement – for anyone who is attentive to listening to it.

When learning any of our *sefarim hakedoshim*, any person can notice that there are different ways of talking. Some *tzaddikim* would speak in a way where the *havayah* point is more apparent in their words, and other *tzaddikim* spoke in a manner where the *havayah* point is left hidden in the words and much less apparent.

Most of the *tzaddikim* would speak and write in a way that did not openly reveal the *havayah* point in the soul, where the *havayah* point is only hidden in their words; only a person who has revealed his *havayah* point, who naturally sees the *havayah* point in everything, can see *havayah* in their words. But there were some individuals amongst the *tzaddikim* who spoke in a manner which was clearly speaking of the *havayah* point. One of these individuals, as is well-known, is Reb Nachman of Breslev zt”l. There were actually those who opposed him because of this. The general style of Reb Nachman of Bresslev's words is always speaking, on some level, from the *havayah* point of the soul.

There are several famous statements of Reb Nachman of Bresslev where this is apparent. One such statement is, “**There is no such thing as despair in the world.**” This is not because Reb Nachman of Bresslev was an optimistic kind of person who thought that there is “a great *mitzvah* to always be happy” and therefore a person should never give up. Rather, such a statement was uttered from the innermost point in his soul – from his *havayah* point.

Since the *havayah* point was revealed in how he spoke, it follows also that there is “No such thing as despair in the world”, and it follows then that **“Nothing stands in**

the way of the will." This follows with another statement he said: "The eternity of Yisrael does not lie." He also said, "A Jew, even if he sins, is still a Jew."

Are these all a bunch of random statements? They are all different angles of the same concept. They are all saying: There is a point in the Jew's soul which is never destroyed. "Nothing stands in the way of the will" – the inner will of a Jew's soul never ceases. "There is no despair in the world" – a Jew never ceases. "A Jew, even when he sins is still a Jew." A Jew is always a Jew and that point never ceases. "The eternity of a Jew does not lie". All of these statements bear a connection, for they are all stemming from the *havayah* point in the soul. They are all saying how there is a **point in the soul that cannot be destroyed**.

If the *havayah* point remains concealed within our actions and it doesn't become openly revealed from its hidden state, then a person in this state will exist, but he places himself in a state that eventually ceases. However, if a person reveals the *havayah* point in his actions, he is living in a state in which he cannot cease.

The revelation of the *havayah* point gives a person an inner perspective which is constant, stable, unchanging, and indestructible.

Unfulfilled Wants

There is a famous question on the statement "Nothing stands in the way of the will." This is very hard to understand. Don't we have many desires which don't get fulfilled?

Some people answer to this that if a person wanted something and he didn't get it, then that shows he didn't really want it. That makes sense, though, is he had a weak desire for something, but what is there to say if a person really wanted something very much, and he didn't get what he wanted?

A similar answer to our question is as the *Ibn Ezra* says, that "the pauper is never jealous of marrying the princess". The pauper doesn't even dream to marry the prince, because he knows it's impossible. Some people have dreams of becoming a millionaire. Why don't these people ever become millionaires? Don't they really want to be? What happened to the rule of "Nothing stands in the way of the will"? Why don't all our

dreams happen? Maybe it's because they really don't want it, because deep down, a person knows that it's unrealistic, so that means he doesn't really want it, even though he says that he does.

If so, however, why don't people just increase their *ratzon* for it, and then it will happen? Why don't we train people to develop their *ratzon* and then everyone will become millionaires?

There is one simple reason why this doesn't happen. It is because the rule of "Nothing stands in the way of the will" doesn't apply to every kind of *ratzon*. Most people's *retzonos* do not become fulfilled, so obviously, there are things that can prevent our *ratzon*.

We must know how to apply this statement of "Nothing stands in the way of the will". It is only referring to a will coming from our *Yechidah*. (The inner point of the *Yechidah* is above *ratzon*, while the outer layer of the *Yechidah* is the *ratzon*). The things which we usually want are only coming from the outside layers of the soul; when our *ratzon* is coming from the other four parts of the soul, such a *ratzon* doesn't necessarily get fulfilled. There are things which can get in the way of such a *ratzon* and prevent us from getting what we want.

But if the *ratzon* a person has is coming from his *Yechidah*, such a *ratzon* will always get fulfilled. Only of such a *ratzon* is it true that "Nothing stands in the way of the will", because the *Yechidah* is the point that cannot cease, and therefore nothing can get in the way of this *ratzon*.

So when a person only lives through the prism of the other four parts of his soul (*Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, or *Chayah*), his willpower isn't necessarily going to last. His will weakens over time. But when one lives with his *Yechidah*, he lives an everlasting kind of existence, and thus his *ratzon* will never cease.

Yechidah – The Power of Consistency

If we reveal the *Yechidah*, we reveal an everlasting *ratzon* which nothing can stop. If it remains unrevealed, then this *ratzon* can get prevented. (If our material *retzonos* don't happen, this is good – the world would be a better place if all these *retzonos*

wouldn't happen. But we are referring to a *ratzon* for holiness). Without revealing the *Yechidah*, then even if we have a *ratzon* for something holy, the *ratzon* can get prevented.

Every person has times in which they experience holiness, holy thoughts, and a will for holiness. But with one little fall, a person can lose all his holiness in one second. How can we come to a state in which we always have a *ratzon* for the holiness? How can we keep ourselves inspired forever?

The Chazon Ish said that "The secret to holiness is consistency." That describes the *Yechidah* – it is the power of consistency in the soul, the ability to be constant. When a person reveals his *Yechidah*, he will have a will for constant holiness.

"The eternity of Yisrael does not lie." The Jewish people are eternal and unceasing, while the nation of Amalek is called *mikreh*, happenstance, because Amalek is not eternal. "*Mikreh*" happens and sometimes doesn't happen. The opposite of *mikreh* is *yetzivus*, stability. The Jew has a point in his soul which always remains solid and stable, for it is eternal.

The nation of Amalek will be destroyed in the future, when *Moshiach* comes. Why can't Amalek be destroyed now? It is because nowadays, we do not have our own power of eternity revealed. But in the future, our inner point of the soul will be revealed in all of us, and it will counter all the *mikreh* in the world. Holiness will be constant, something that is stable and not happenstance, and this will destroy all *mikreh*. Not only will this destroy the *kelipah* (evil forces) on the world, but it will affect each of our own souls.

When a person forgets something, that shows he only has it temporarily. When a person remembers something, that shows that he has it always. Of Amalek we are commanded to never forget what they did to us. The depth of this is because if a person forgets about Amalek, that gives strength to Amalek! Amalek thrives on our forgetfulness, when we forget about remembering what they did to us. It thrives on our lack of consistency.

The power of good in us is forever, and it cannot cease. The power of evil in us is only temporary, and it will one day be destroyed. That is what we need to realize.

Rav Nachman of Breslev said that forgetfulness was created so that we can forget about our troubles, so that we can remind ourselves that evil can go away.

There are actually two abilities in our soul – the power to feel eternal, and the power to feel temporary. The *Yechidah* is our eternal point, while the outer four layers of our soul can cease.

Evil Consistency

However, the *Yechidah* is not all that we need to make use of. The power of eternity/consistency [the *Yechidah*] needs to be used in the right place, and the power of forgetfulness/temporariness [which exists in the outer four layers of the soul] also needs to be used in its right place.

For example, *Chazal* say that there are four kinds of anger.⁵⁴ One kind of anger is when a person doesn't get angry so fast and is easy to appease; another kind of person angers easily and is hard to appease. Is there anyone who never gets angry at all? No, there is no such person. Even Moshe *Rabbeinu* got angry once. We all get angry, but the question is how much. If someone is getting angry on a constant basis, though, he is using the power of consistency for evil.

There are also people who will use this power of eternity for evil, by bearing a grudge forever against someone, and they will never forgive, no matter what. There have been stories of brothers who did not get along well, and at the funeral of one of the brothers, the other one is still seething and cursing. Such a person might go to the burial and throw stones at the coffin they are lowering the body into the grave! He wants one last act of revenge. People act like this at times - they won't forgive, no matter what. A person who does this is really taking this power of eternity and using it for evil: to be “eternally” unforgiving.

For everything good that Hashem created, something else that is evil was created to challenge it. Just like there is a power of eternity in the soul which is good, so is there a power of eternity in the soul that is evil, and this is called “*yechidah d’kelipah*” (the *Yechidah* on the side of evil).

⁵⁴ *Avos 5:11*

If someone is always getting angry and hating people and he never forgives, this comes from the evil side of his *Yechidah*. Such a person takes the power of eternity and brings it down to the lowest possible level.

By contrast, when someone is angry but he forgives, he uses the power of *mikreh* for good. He looks at the insult as *mikreh*, and this is the holy way to use the power of *mikreh*.

Knowing How To Use Eternity and Forgetfulness

We must know how to use our power of consistency/eternity and our power of *mikreh/happenstance*.

Many people have aspirations to grow spiritually, but they don't fulfill their aspirations. Why don't their aspirations become realized? It is because their willpower doesn't come from the deeper part of their soul. Their willpower comes from the outer four layers of the soul, which can cease. If their willpower would be coming from the power of eternity in the soul, such willpower would never cease, and they would be able to fulfill what they want.

The Mishnah in *Avos* says that “jealousy, honor and desire remove a person from the world.” Simply speaking, this is because when a person is running after honor, he suffers from this desire, and he can't take it when he doesn't receive honor. But the depth to this matter is because obsessive jealousy, endlessly seeking honor, and endlessly pursuing lusts desire are constant forms of desire that never cease. It comes from the evil side of the *Yechidah*; it a power of eternity that is used for evil.

When a person cannot part from pursuing more and more honor, he is really a power that comes from G-dly light - in the wrong place. If it's a desire that temporarily overtakes him, though, then it is much less severe, but if he feels like he cannot part it and that he must take it with him to the grave, he is using the power of the eternal in the wrong place, and such a desire removes him from the world.

Some people feel that they cannot uproot a certain nature. “This is how I am, and I cannot change”, the person feels. Such an attitude is really using the power of eternity for evil. The person is saying that the evil in him is forever. If he would be able to view

the evil as nothing but a temporary force in him which eventually ceases, he would be able to rectify his character. The worst kind of situation for a person to be in is when he truly believes that he can never change. As long as a person believes he can change, there is hope that he will change. If he doesn't believe he can change, there is no hope for him.

The power of eternity in us is the essential "I". "I" cannot cease; "I" am forever. But we also have another ability in us, which is the ability to feel "temporary". How should we use it? The evil in us is temporary, thus, it can be destroyed. But if a person feels that his "I" as his four outer layers in the soul, he places his "I" in that place - and then his "I" can indeed be destroyed. When a person realizes that he is good in his essence and all evil is happenstance, then his "I" is constant and eternal.

So we must realize these two abilities in our soul. We must identify our *havayah* point as being the part of us that is constant, intrinsic, and eternal, while everything else in our soul, including any of the evil that is found in us, is only *mikreh* (temporary) and it can eventually cease.

Identifying Yourself As Eternally Good

The words here are not ideas or definitions. First think about them on an intellectual level, and then internalize them with your soul, and if you do this, **you can uproot all evil in yourself and you have the root of rectifying your entire soul.**

Reb Nachman of Breslev said that "There is no such thing as despair in the world." Why? This is a perspective you can only reveal from your own inside. It is because you must realize what you are made out of. If you would really know what you are, you would never give up. Realize who you are – that you are intrinsically good. You need to awaken this from within yourself, and it is not enough to be told about it.

The more you believe in something, the more you access it. "There is no despair in the world" – do we believe this because we have *emunah* in the *tzaddik* who said it? This would be nice, but what is the depth of what he was saying? He must have been coming from somewhere in the Torah, which we need to know. How are we to understand this? Would we be able to understand these words if Reb Nachman of Breslev wouldn't have said it? It is an understanding that you should be able to have

even if Reb Nachman wouldn't have said it! You can understand the concept when you reveal the "I", and then you will understand this concept from within yourself.

Separating Negative Desires From Your Essence

Thus, we have the deep and inner work to identify these two forces in our soul: The eternal aspect, and the temporary aspect. We should examine various desires throughout the day which we encounter, and discover which one of these two forces the desire is coming from.

For example, if a person passes by the pizza store and he suddenly feels a desire to eat pizza, what does he do with this desire? One kind of person will go and immediately buy himself the pizza, as long as he has the money to do so. We all recognize this as a gluttonous and detrimental way of living, for if a person is so impulsive and never stops to think and reflect on what he is about to do, there is clearly not that much hope for him to lead a sensible life. Let's instead consider though a person who does stop to think before he is about to do something. What does he do about his desire to eat the pizza?

If he is on a higher spiritual level, he can feel that he doesn't really need to eat the pizza and that it's gluttonous for him to buy the pizza, he continues walking by the store and he doesn't buy it. But the average person, who is not on this level of refraining from giving in to his desire for pizza, will probably buy the pizza when he feels a desire for it. The real issue is: What is he thinking, as he consumes the pizza?

Firstly, he should identify where the desire for the pizza is coming from. He should understand that the desire to eat the pizza is a physical desire; that part is clear and simple to understand. Now is the time for him to reflect about the following: This desire to eat the pizza is surely not an eternal kind of desire! (Some people, though, think that their desire for pizza will be forever...) As he is eating the pizza, he should be aware that it's only a temporary and fleeting form of desire. It is only something he wants temporarily.

Now, if he is the kind of person who doesn't think at all when he is about to do something, then of course, there is nothing here for him to do. But if, while he is

eating the pizza, he can identify that his desire for the pizza is only a temporary kind of desire, and not something intrinsic and eternal, he has broken the root of the desire.

Chazal state that “Desire removes a person from the world”, and this is when a person never thinks about all before going about his desires, or in a case of a person who thinks his physical desires are eternal; such a person is uprooted from the spiritual. But if a person is eating something he desires (obviously we are only talking here about eating something permissible, not about something forbidden), and he is aware that the desire is only temporary and fleeting, and he would really like to be free from this desire and it is just too hard for him to do at the moment, as long as he is confident that this desire will not be here forever, he has broken the inner root of the evil desire that has been aroused within him.

The root of evil in a person is awakened when a person never thinks before doing anything. The evil will become awakened from the subconscious and superconscious levels of the person, and then when a person eats the pizza, he will be eating from a place of deep desire in himself. Since he doesn't think before he does anything, he allows the evil subconscious drives in himself to take root, and then he identifies with the desire for pizza on a very deep level. It will then be much more difficult for him to uproot such a desire.

But if a person first thinks before he acts, his act of eating the pizza will not be coming from a deep place in himself, but only from a thought to eat it, and not as much from his will. When he identifies in his thoughts that the desire for the pizza is an external force and that it is not him, he has separated his essential being from the physical desire. If one has somewhat of a strongly developed power of thought, when he identifies that the desire for the pizza is not “me”, he will, in turn, uproot any desire for the pizza which had been coming from a more deeply rooted place in himself.

But there are other people whose power of thinking is not that strong, and for them, this kind of thinking will not do anything for them. For such a person, thoughts are experienced as passing fantasies that do not mean anything. But if a person strongly develops his power of thought and he is more in touch with it, these kinds of thinking exercises will be very effective.

The Root of All Rectification – Identifying Your Evil As Only External

We have learned here that we must identify the part of our soul that is eternal and realize that is our very *havayah* – the essence of who we truly are – and also realize that there is a part in us which eventually ceases, which includes any of the aspects in our soul other than our very *havayah*.

When we identify our “I” as being the eternally good, and that all evil aspects of our character are only *mikreh/happenstance* and not a part of ourselves – which includes our sins as well (as the *Maharal* explained) - **this is the root of rectifying our entire soul.** If we come and define how the entire Creation is rectified, this is the very root of it.

This is the depth of the words of the *Nefesh HaChaim* that after the sin, evil entered man. Before the sin, evil was considered to be on our outside. After the sin, evil entered man - in other words, now man thinks he is evil: “I” am a glutton, “I” am an ill-tempered person, etc. Our *avodah* is to change our initial perspective and instead identify our “I” as completely good.

Giving Inner Order To Our Soul

The root of all ruination is when our five layers of the soul are mixed with each other and there is a lack of order to one’s inner forces – when we don’t know how to use each of our inner forces properly, and when each power is being used in the wrong place.

The *Eitz HaDaas Tov VRa* (Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil) was evil because it was a mixture of the knowledge of good and evil; had good and evil remained apart from each other, everything would have been fine and Creation would have become rectified. The problem is that ever since with the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas*, we have mixed together good and evil, and our own souls as well. When we use the power of *havayah* in place of using our *nefesh habehaimis* (animal level of the soul), and when we use our *nefesh habehaimis* in place of using our *havayah*, this disrupts the entire system, and that is where all inner destruction comes from.

We contain a mixture of forces in ourselves, both good parts and bad parts, and therefore, we must sift out the good parts in us from the evil. Compare it to filtering a sink from dirty water that is coming through the pipes. We first need to make sure that the pipes carrying the water and the pipes carrying the dirt are each separate from each other, and then the water that arrives to our sink will be clean. In the same way, we must first identify the proper location of each force in our soul, and not use any of them in the wrong place.

Identifying the inner forces is the root of rectifying the problems in the soul. If a person would believe that the evil in him is only happenstance and temporary (*mikreh*) and that it eventually ceases, he would already rectify most of his soul. In order to really believe it, one needs to go through much self-purification.

The very root of rectifying all of the issues [in our soul], both our material issues and our inner and spiritual issues, lays in clearly identifying and sorting out each of our inner forces, knowing where each power should be used and where it shouldn't. We must see the evil in us as something that eventually can be destroyed, and in that way, we actually use the power of destruction to destroy 'itself', the evil that is in us.

These words are very deep for anyone who reflects into them. The very awareness of identifying the evil in me as a force that eventually ceases, can awaken the soul's power of destruction, in a way that destroys all inner evil. As long as I continue to identify the evil in me as external, I am sustaining the evil in me – and as long as I identify the evil in me as something that can be destroyed, I awaken the destructive force of the soul and that is exactly how I can kill the evil in me. One needs to also identify the good in him as his eternal aspect, and he thereby reveals its eternal power – and that is how one can indeed awaken the good in him to become eternal and unending.

If one wishes to have constant *kedushah* (holiness) throughout all of his inner *avodah*, he must believe deeply, within himself, that the good in him is an eternal force which never ceases. That is how we were originally created, and the more one has pure belief that this eternal force of good is existent within him, the more it will be revealed. As a result of this as well, he will also find that he will have much less falls in his spiritual level.

In summation, we must identify the evil in us as nothing but a "garment" which is temporary, which is not an intrinsic part of who we are – and that is the root of how

we destroy it. At the same time, we also need to identify the good within us as the very essence of who we are.

This is the best possible source from which we can draw forth our inherent good from. Any of the other aspects of our *avodah* (spiritual task) on this world are all but branching details of this understanding. There are many kinds of *avodah* that we have, but the root of all them is one – to know what the source of each force is, and to reveal the source of the power in each thing.

And so, we need to identify with the good in us and strengthen it to the point that we identify it as eternal, and, simultaneously, we need to reveal that all evil in us can eventually cease, and from that understanding, we will be able to actually destroy it.

The Secret of Tzaddikim and Separating Ourselves From Evil

People often think that *tzaddikim* are stronger in their souls and that is why they easily can always overcome any evil temptations. But this is actually not the clear reason. What is the real secret of their power?

The real reason why *tzaddikim* succeed is because they believe in their *havayah* point, in their G-dly essence. Since that is their perspective, they will therefore never allow themselves to fall to an abysmal level of descent in which they are disconnected from all *avodah*. If they do happen to fall, it will be like slipping on a banana peel in middle of the street – you falter a little bit, but you quickly regain your balance, throw the banana peel into the garbage can, and you move on.

The *tzaddik* also slips a little bit in his level, but he never allows himself to fall completely, and even when he is slipping, he quickly regains his balance and he continues on his path. Most people, though, as soon as they slip a bit, will fall as well – for several months – until they can get back up again.

The more a person believes in the innermost point in his soul, the less his spiritual failings will succeed in disconnecting him eternally from his innermost point. Reb Nachman of Breslev once said something very deep: “Even if I were to commit the worst possible sin, *chas v’shalom*, although I would have to do complete teshuvah, as

the halachah requires, I would never allow myself to become disconnected from the innermost point to which I am connected with.”

This was a deep statement, for the average person who commits a sin will think to himself, “How can I possibly go *daven* now, in front of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*?” He will feel unease about it. (If he does feel confident enough to go *daven* anyway, this is usually stemming from the evil that has taken hold of his soul from sinning, which causes him to have blockage of the heart and which makes him indifferent towards his sins).

In *sefer Toras Avos* of the Slonimer Rebbe zt”l, it is brought that if a person sinned and therefore he feels unease *davening* for the *amud*, it is a sign that he has never begun *chassidus*. This does not mean *chas v’shalom* that a person shouldn’t do *teshuva*, nor does it mean *chas v’shalom* that a person should feel indifferent after he sins and be to give himself a false, conceited sense of security. Rather, a person must certainly feel bitter over his sins, but even with all of this bitterness, he can still be aware that none of this has damaged his actual inner essence.

When a person is aware that no sin can damage his own essence, he can then always feel connected to the reality of Hashem, “like a son who has sinned against his father” – who surely needs to ask forgiveness from his father, but never stops acknowledging that he is his father’s son.

In Conclusion

Thus, we need to identify the five parts of our soul, using each level of the soul in its proper place. This is the root of revealing the soul’s inner essence, which will result in a constant connecting to our Higher Source, at the same providing us with the ability to disconnect from evil at a root level.

May Hashem give us the merit to perceive any inner evil in us as nothing but a temporary force, which can be changed and uprooted, slowly with time, and that we should perceive the good in us as being the eternal part of who we are – in ourselves, and in the souls of every created being.

14 | HAVAYAH - CENTEREDNESS

Focusing On One Thought

In this chapter, we will learn about an additional path which we can take in order to reveal the innermost point of the soul.

One of the fundamentals which the Baal Shem Tov taught is that a person throughout his life, in his service to the Creator, needs to learn how to use just one thought at a time.

It's possible that a person is involved in serving Hashem, and is always involved in doing good things; he is always growing spiritually, but he has a problem - his service is built on all kinds of good things which he is doing, and this will just confuse him. Man is like Jacob's ladder, and he grows step-by-step in his ladder of growth, but along the way, there can be things which throw him off; or it could be that his beginning was based entirely on something that can throw him off.

For example, all of us experience the bad *middah* of anger sometimes, and we would like to uproot this. We also have other bad *middos* which we want to get rid of very badly, as well as a certain good *middos* which we want to acquire, such as having a good heart, etc. We are looking to acquire many good *middos*; either we really want to get rid of our bad *middos*, or we are building up good *middos*. But what happens with many people? People work on too many things at once: overcoming anger, acquiring patience, acquiring happiness, acquiring zeal...as a result, people take on too much than their abilities are capable of.

All of these matters are important to work on, but if a person works on too many things at once, he goes into overdrive. Whatever gains a person has through this, he still harms his soul in the process. He places his soul in stress. Just like our body can get stress, so can our soul get stressed, when we give it too many things to work on.

The inner attitude to have is that a person should involve himself in only one thing at a time. The simple way to begin this is to make sure not to do two things at once.

No more multi-tasking! People think they save time when they multi-task. But it causes more harm than good, because it harms the soul, by fracturing one's focus.

So this is the first step: do one thing at a time. If you're talking, don't do something at the same time. If you're doing something, don't talk at the same time.

How many thoughts does a person go through since the time he gets up until he goes to sleep? An endless amount. People have all kinds of thoughts and fantasies in one day. In one day alone there are thousands of thoughts we go through. But the true kind of life to live is totally the opposite of this! The truer way to live is that a person should just let one specific thought fill him the whole day, and that will get you closer to the inner point of the soul.

The *Yechidah* comes from the word *yachid*, from the word *echad* (one), because it is reached through focusing on one thing alone.

Practical Focus and Deeper Awareness

This does not mean, of course, that a person should wash the dishes one day and do nothing else, and the next day he should only do the laundry, and the next day he should only eat, and the next day he should only drink. Life is full of many actions we need to do. When you go shopping, you should of course buy everything the house needs, and not limit yourself to buying one thing alone. Rather, the inner point, being focused on one thing alone, means as follows.

Whenever we think, we have two kinds of thoughts. We think about what we have to do or if we shouldn't do it. The other kind of thought comes from our soul.

To illustrate, when you wash the dishes and you are thinking, you are using the first kind of thought. You are thinking about what has to get done. But when a person wants to get married, he might think about this all day and lose sleep over it. This is a deeper kind of thought than your usual thought. It is a thought coming from the soul, and it makes you involved with it all day.

Rav Hutner *zt"l* once remarked that a person is saying *Slach Lanu* and all he is thinking of getting a *shidduch*. He wants to be forgiven for sins, but solely as a means

to get his *shidduch*, because all he thinks about is his *shidduch*. The only thing that bothers him is that he finds a *shidduch*.

Similarly, a person all day might worry about paying his debts. He thinks all day about money, not because he lusts after money, but because he is nervous about repaying his debts, and that is why he thinks about money all day.

This is actually an ability that comes from the innermost point of the soul: the ability to be focused. But to our chagrin, it is not revealed in our spiritual matters, and it is instead only used when it comes to material matters, or in our stressful problems of life that bother us. We are very focused on the day we marry off a child, but on a normal day, our thoughts are scattered and unfocused. Our thoughts are usually not coming from the soul – they lack inner vitality to them.

Focusing On A Thought of the Soul

Thus, a person should get used to thinking one thought during the entire day about a certain spiritual point that is important. This thought should be about something which is within your level, not about a point which your soul has no connection to.

A *chosson* thinks all day about his wedding because it has relevance to him; his soul is thinking about his marriage, thus he thinks about it all day. The more a person is involved with something, the more can think about all the time.

Examining What We Want

We need to learn how to think all the time about a thought that our soul is already thinking about. Most people are unfocused in their thoughts because their soul isn't connected to their thoughts. Therefore, if we want to learn how to think of one thought all the time, it needs to be the kind of thought in which our soul is already there. We can all identify thoughts that our soul feels connected to and thoughts that our soul doesn't feel connected to.

A person has many things which he wants: children, a *shidduch*, source of living, health, etc. Make a list of what you want and which one you want more than the other. Whatever we want the most is what we think about the most, and the less we want something, the less we think about it.

So a person needs to identify what he wants the most. When you identify what you want the most, you will be able to think about it all the time.

If a person, let's say, wants children more than anything else, now what? Should he go running around to doctors and think all day about wishing to have children? All he will do is become frustrated. So what kind of desires are we referring to that a person should discover? We are not talking about desires that are outside of us. Our outer desires are endless, and there is nothing we can do to get them. So you can't focus your thoughts on any desire that comes from outside of yourself, because all it would do is scatter your thoughts even more, making you anxious and frustrated.

If a person wants children more than anything else, and he would be told that he will need his feet amputated and then he will get children – and he refuses – that shows that his deepest wish is not children. He values his health more than his children, because he is not willing to give up his health for his children. When he's healthy, he'll say he wants children more than anything else, but deep down, he wants his health more than having children. So although he claims that his greatest desire in life is to have children, it is not the innermost desire a person can have. Even his health is not his innermost desire, because the soul wants things even more badly than the things that our body wants.

There are thousands of desires that each person has. A person has to look into himself and ask himself what his deepest desire is, and then, he needs to identify if it is an outer desire, or an inner desire of the soul.

Wanting Vs. Really Wanting

Let's say a person says that he wants to acquire patience more than anything else. How can we tell if he really wants this or not? How much time all day does he think about it? When was the last time he thought about this – two weeks ago? He might claim that he wants patience more than anything else, but he doesn't live with this as a

conscious awareness. He gets caught up with other things in life. He says that he wants this more than anything, but he doesn't think about it and doesn't try to get it – which shows that it is not what he wants most.

When a person does discover what he wants more than anything, he needs to schedule his day around trying to get it. Without getting into details of how to do this, the point is that a person's schedule should be mainly centered around this goal. After you see how much time you are willing to spend on it, make it into the goal of your daily life.

A person might say that the main thing in his life is to learn Torah. After all, that's what *Chazal* say. But does his daily life reflect that? Another person says that the main goal of his life is kindness. How much time of the day does he practice kindness with others? He usually gets caught up with his family and job. If it would be the main goal of his life, he would try to actualize it every day in his life.

If a person who has no goals in life at all, that's another problem. But even when someone does have value for certain things, he also doesn't always pursue what he values. People tend to give excuses why they don't pursue their goals. But excuses do not build you in life.

The Chofetz Chaim said that Torah and *mitzvos* are called "garments" (*levushim*), as the Zohar says; they are like our clothing. A person might come up to Heaven after he dies and claim that he didn't learn enough Torah and do the *mitzvos* and he can have the best excuses, but they will tell him, "You have very good excuses. But the fact is that you don't have any clothing on you." If a person is walking through Tel Aviv and he is not wearing his clothing, he might give the best excuses in the world, but the fact is, he's not wearing clothing. It's inexcusable, no matter how many excuses he gives and no matter how much he claims that it wasn't his fault.

Excuses cannot build our life. If a person says that his life is about a certain goal but he does not pursue it, he will not develop in his life. The daily schedule of a person has to reflect what a person values. Otherwise, a person will never reach what he values.

This is not philosophy. It is to live, practically speaking, about what you value – and to schedule your day around trying to get it. Don't do this because I'm telling you

so. Let this decision come from yourself – you need to decide, personally, what you really want of our life, and to let your goal carry over into your daily life.

This is how you work on focusing on one thought. It is by knowing about what you mainly want, and then by trying to get it on a daily basis, with conscious awareness that you're trying to get it.

Centeredness

For example, let's say a person feels that the main thing he needs to work on in his life is acquiring a *lev tov*, a "good heart." If that is what he feels is the most important quality to have in life, then he should take this seriously and let it become his constant thought throughout the day.

Such a person should live by his ideals and greet each person with "Good morning" – he should greet every person, with no exaggeration. We all say "Good Morning" to each other, but it is often without awareness. If you consider *lev tov* to be your main focus, then when you say "Good Morning", say it with intention that the person should really have a good day.

The Alter of Slobodka would work on this. Once he was seen practicing saying "Good morning" to himself when no one was around. When asked why, he said that it was because he was trying to acquire a *lev tov* and put himself in that positive frame of mind. His main focus of the day was on acquiring a *lev tov*.

From morning until night, be focused on one point. You do many things in between, but as long as you are focused on one point, your entire day will be connected through this one 'string' that holds it all together.

When a person builds a house, it has to be built sensibly. The bricks must be stacked in a certain way. They must be connected properly. There are people who do many wonderful things throughout the day, but their actions don't connect. There is no structure in their life, nothing connecting together all the good actions they do.

How can a person think only one thought the whole day? Isn't this impossible? How does our life allow this when we have so many things to do?

It means for a person to do each thing he does with an awareness: “I am doing this because of one reason alone [fill in the goal that you are aiming for]”. It can be about a goal you consider the most important, or it could be about the desire to reveal your *Yechidah*. But in whatever you do, you must do each action with awareness that you are trying to get to your goal.

To give an example, let’s say a person is working on improving his patience. How can a person think all day about patience? It means as follows. He gets up in the morning slowly and calmly, and he walks slowly and calmly. (Most people, unless they are very lazy, run). When he eats, he should do so calmly, and when he thinks, he thinks calmly. He does everything in this calm way, slowly getting used to the *middah* of patience. (This is a very high level to be on.) The whole day for him should be all about patience.

The same goes for a person who feels that the most important thing is to do things enthusiastically. All of his actions throughout the day should be about improving this area. He should do things quickly. All day, he should view his actions as being a means of getting himself to move quickly.

It is hard for a person to know where to improve first, for any normal person who looks deeply into himself and makes a self-accounting. Many people want to grow spiritually, but they don’t reach their goals. Why not? It is because they don’t think about what their most important priority is that they want to grow in. They don’t clarify how much they should really work to acquire a certain point. They just take one point in spirituality and work on it, seeking to grow in it – but they don’t work on this point throughout the day.

In order to improve, it has to be a point which is very important to you which you consider to be priority. It’s not enough that you consider it important; it has to be what you consider to be the main thing you want to work on. It has to be thought about throughout the whole day. You can rest of course; you are allowed to rest between all the goal-oriented actions. But don’t try to work on other areas except for the main point you are working on, and make sure that you return to focusing on that goal after you get up from taking a break.

When people don’t focus on what they really want to work on, they start working on a bunch of areas of self-improvement all at once, and they aren’t focused on what

they really want to work on; and this leads to giving up on ever growing at all in anything.

Improving Our Actions and Thoughts

So we need to focus throughout the day on what we do, and on what we think.

When it comes to our actions, a person shouldn't do two things at once. Be focused on what you do right now. Do one thing the whole day and be focused on it. Of course, the house is noisy and can hamper your focus. I can't tell you how to solve this problem. But you should still strive for this goal.

When a person isn't focused on what he's doing at the moment, it seems that it's just a lack of paying attention to what he does, but really it is a much bigger problem – it makes him lose his soul.

A person should improve his thoughts by only doing actions that are done with thought. He should do every action throughout the day with the same awareness. The point is to do something, then stop, and then continue to do it. It helps you become consciously aware throughout the day of why you live. Most people are not actually trying to get to the goal of life, even though they can know what it is.

In Conclusion

So when you get up in the morning, the first thought in your head should be about the goal of the day. This should be clarified to yourself before you rise out of bed in the morning. This does not mean of course that a person should lie in bed for an hour and a half each morning before he gets up and to think philosophical thoughts about what his goal of the day will be, until he finally decides what he wants to focus on. Rather, you need to have clarified it from beforehand, throughout the day, so that when you get up the next morning, you are merely reminding yourself of what your goal is.

This is how we access the *Yechidah*: by doing one thing alone. Man was created “individual”, to show that he must involve himself with one thing alone – that all of his actions should be directed to one goal alone. It is a conscious awareness throughout the day of what goal we live for.

When you live this way, there is almost no need to make a self-accounting at the end of the day, because you will already be living with a conscious awareness and you will be well-aware of your successes and failures as they happen.

So you have to figure out which area in spirituality you consider to be the most important to work on, and then upon discovering what it is, you should focus on that area the whole day. When you get used to thinking like this, and when you concentrate on one point throughout the day, you will be able to reveal what you truly want. This is the thought you need to think about when you get up in the morning, and throughout the rest of the day as well.

We really all have one will - the desire to become attached to Hashem. Why is it, then, that we feel like we want other things? It is only because we are unfocused! Once we develop the power of inner focus and we remain focused on one goal throughout the day that we want to acquire, we will draw ourselves closer and closer to be able to want the innermost desire of the soul, which is the desire to do Hashem’s Will.

15 | THE CONDITIONS FOR REVEALING HAVAYAH

We have merited, with *siyata d'shmaya*, to learn and explain several facets of the point of “*havayah*” in the soul [the deepest essence of the Jew’s soul]. This deep matter is really about something unbounded, for it is essentially about the light of the Infinite. In this chapter, however, we will explain the boundaries and limitations which we must apply to this power, which we have been learning about until this point.

The Inner Silence In The Soul

The *havayah* point of the soul is essentially the innermost point that exists within us. We explained several ways of how to reveal it, as mentioned in the previous chapters. But the basis of all these ways, the root, is to reach a deep, inner silence (*sheket*) in the soul.

It is written, “*For Hashem is not found in a wind, and not in a noise...a silent, subtle sound.*”⁵⁵ The *havayah* point of the soul is only revealed within one who has reached a deep inner silence in his soul; if one does not know of this inner silence, he will not be able to reveal his *havayah*. If one has revealed his *havayah* point, it is a sign that he has attained a deep inner silence in the soul.

In summation, either a person will reach his *havayah* point through first reaching an inner silence in the soul, or, it can work in the opposite way - the revelation of his *havayah* point will bring him to an inner silence in the soul.

A Calm Soul, With A Drive To Perform

Generally speaking, we find two kinds of personalities in the world – those with a louder kind of a personality, and those who are naturally drawn towards the quiet. Just as with everything else in Creation, each of these personalities contains its advantages, as well as its drawbacks. The quiet, reserved kind of person has the quality of inner calm, but often, he does not have high aspirations or the inner drive to grow. That is why a person cannot base his entire life around the power of inner calm. If he

⁵⁵ *Melachim I: 18*

does, he will not reach the purpose of Creation. “*Man is born to toil*” - a person needs to exert himself in order to achieve anything, and this is only possible when one overcomes his will. In contrast to this, there are those with louder personalities, who are usually better at overcoming their will, in order to perform properly and to do what has to be done. But they are often missing the ability of inner calm.

The innermost faculty in our soul – *havayah* – integrates both of these aspects together. Its external use is the will, and in the inner layer, it is the quiet calmness of the soul. In order for a person to live an inner and spiritual life, he must live a calm, tranquil life. But this quiet calmness should not be compromising on the performance and will of a person to do things.

There are several ways to reach the inner silence in the soul – there are external methods, and internal methods. The external methods to get there are very clear: A person needs to set aside time every day where he separates from civilization. He should find the quietest place he can (and it is even better if he can find a place where no person has ever set foot in). The quieter and more serene that the place is, the easier it will be for a person to reach his inner silence. In contrast, the noisier a place is, the more his own inner ‘noises’ will be awakened, and he won’t be able to reach the quiet place in his soul.

That is all but the external way in reaching the soul’s inner silence. As for the inner ways to get there - they are already existent within us.

The Danger of Inner Silence

However, the task of reaching the inner silence in the soul is one of the most spiritually risky paths to take when trying to reach the soul. This is because when a person reaches the deep inner silence, he will reach a state where there is no will and no desire to act. If a person’s unwillingness to do anything is stemming from the deep inner silence, on one hand, this is truthful, because it is coming from a place of genuine tranquility in the soul; on the other hand, if he is being even a little bit lax where he shouldn’t be, he loses the ability to perform at all.

Sometimes a person neglects keeping the mitzvos that require action, and the reason for this may be simple laziness. And even if a person is passive in order to avoid sinning, this unwillingness to act is not stemming from his inner point of silence, but

from laziness. It is a superficial, apathetic attitude of ‘calmness’ which has formed in him.

To give an example, if a person is lying underneath his blanket on a wintery, cold, rainy night, if he would get out of his bed and go outside, this would be going against his nature. We cannot say that the reason he is staying underneath his blanket is because he has reached a deep, inner silence of the soul and he is making sure not to lose it. While there may be instances in which this may be the true reason, in most cases, it is not the reason, and he is usually staying under his blanket because it is simply warmer and more comfortable. The reason he doesn’t want to get out of bed and go out of the house is not because he is guarding he has reached a place of deep calmness in his soul, but because he is simply lazy, and it is more comfortable for him to stay in a place where it’s warmer for his body.

So on one hand, this *avodah* of reaching the soul’s deep place of inner silence contains a degree of reaching our purpose in Creation, but on the other hand, Chazal state, “Whoever is greater than his friend, his evil inclination is greater.”⁵⁶ The more exalted and elevated something is, the more there will be danger associated with it. It is like a person who falls from a tall ladder. If he only fell from the first step of the ladder, his fall will not as hard, but if he fell from the top rung of the ladder, the impact of his fall will be much harder. The more elevated and more inner a point is, the more it is correspondingly dangerous.

Every person needs to reach the innermost point of his soul, but at the same time, one must know that there is a danger while trying to reach it. The more you become familiar with the deep calmness of the soul, the less of a will you will have to perform and be active, and this may cause you to become apathetic and unwilling to do anything after that. If we ask a person, “Why aren’t you performing? Why aren’t you doing anything??”, he may rationalize his behavior by saying, “I have *bitachon* (faith in the Creator)”, or, he may claim that his innermost point is telling him not to act....

There are all kinds of similar excuses and rationalizations a person may claim when it comes to explaining his passive behavior. In a sense, there is some truth contained in his arguments, because if he was totally incorrect, it would be clear to us how to refute his arguments; we could tell him not to listen to the inner voice in his soul, and that he must act and do things. But we can’t say that to him, for there are times where,

⁵⁶ *Succah* 52a

indeed, a person must pay attention to his inner voice and listen to what it is telling him.

Thus, when a person identifies the innermost point of his soul, which is a place of tranquility (*menuchah*) in himself, he must be careful not to lose the power to perform.

A prime example of how we can know about the revelation of our soul's innermost point, *menuchah*, is in the way we will feel towards the holy day of Shabbos. The day of Shabbos is the time where we rest and are tranquil from all work, where we return to our root, to our source.

But how do most people spend Shabbos? On an average Shabbos in the winter, many people are exhausted after the Friday night meal, especially from all of the Friday preparations for Shabbos. They go to bed as soon as the meal is over and sleep until the morning. They get up late on Shabbos morning, and after davening, they eat some *cholent* and go back to sleep again. Then they *daven Minchah*, and before they know it, Shabbos is over. Is this the deep tranquility, the *menuchah*, of Shabbos? Does it cause a person to return to his root? Perhaps it is *menuchah* disguised under physical lethargy and sleepiness, manifest as an unwillingness to do anything...?

True Menuchah – A Tranquility That Leads To Proper Performance

Yissocher is compared in the Torah to a donkey, which bears a heavy burden and then finds tranquility, *menuchah*. The Sages stated that this is referring to bearing the yoke of Torah. The tribe of Yissocher is known to bear the yoke of Torah, therefore, he finds *menuchah*. We can learn from this that if a person wants to know if he has truly reached his *havayah*, his inner *menuchah*, he should check and see if he is having a corresponding amount of exertion, to match the amount of tranquility he has uncovered. Then he will know if the tranquility is genuine or not.

As we have explained throughout these chapters, we have two lines that run throughout our soul. We have the area in the soul of *havayah*, which is the inner quiet and tranquility in the soul; and we have the rest of the layers running through our soul, which involve action and performance. If we are performing in greater proportion to how much we are connecting to our inner silence, we will lose the inner silence, but if we are connecting too much to our inner silence, we are not doing any performance. Either of these situations is dysfunctional and problematic.

True *menuchah* is when a person is willing to bear the burden of the Torah's actions that the Torah requires, and it is only then that it can be applied, "And he saw that tranquility was good". When a person is willing to bear the yoke of Torah, only then does the Torah consider his *menuchah* (tranquility) to be "good" when he seeks it.

If a person's *menuchah* is causing him to refrain from having any action in his life, part of this may be stemming from his place of *menuchah*, but part of this is stemming from the evil trait of *laziness*, which is rooted in the element of earth, the element in the soul that is known to weigh a person down and prevent him from spiritual progress.

In order to have true *menuchah*/inner serenity, a person's actions must match the amount of serenity he has. If one reaches his point of deep *menuchah*, he needs to match it with actions that are equal in strength to the depth of the *menuchah* that he has reached, or else all the *menuchah* becomes translated into laziness, and thus it is not real *menuchah*.

We see something amazing. Moshe would go out from Pharoah's palace and saw the people suffering, to see their pain; he involved himself with actions towards them. Then he had to run away to Midyan, where he lived a life of being a quiet shepherd. What did Hashem tell him after that? "Go back to Egypt" - lead the people. First he did actions, then he went into calmness, and from there, he was able to go back to action with a renewed perspective. When he reached his calmness, he became worthy of prophecy. But it didn't end there. Hashem made him go back to Egypt and lead the people, and the depth behind this was, that Hashem was really telling him: "If you have reached such *menuchah*, then you need to act upon it. Therefore, you need to go back and lead."

He needed the *menuchah*, but after that, he has to build upon that and be able to act properly from all that he achieved from his *menuchah*. Here we see that *menuchah* is only worthy when a person is able to act afterwards upon it.

Hisbodedus: Finding Time For Solitude With Hashem

After a person reaches high levels, he is apt to lose his spiritual gains. In Kelm, they would have self-introspection for every ten days after Yom Kippur and check

themselves to see if they were still keeping to their resolutions. This custom was called “*Asirei Kodesh*”. We see from here that when a person reaches very high levels, he has to make sure afterwards that he is acting upon that depth he has reached.

The *sefer Chareidim* writes that if a person wants to purify himself and to do *tshuvah*, he should meditate once a week, in solitude (*hisbodedus*) and connect himself to Hashem. He writes that a person should have one day a week in which you are cut off from the world so you can connect with Hashem.

Hisbodedus In The 21st Century

This *hisbodedus* should be done only once a week, though, and not every day of the week.

If *hisbodedus* is so crucial, why can't we spend the whole week in *hisbodedus*? There is a simple, practical reason. We all have a family to take care of; it's impossible to live a life of total serenity and solitude. If a man were to spend his entire week in *hisbodedus*, his wife would want a divorce; he has children to support, and he has a job that he can't just leave.

But although these reasons all make sense, there is also a deeper reason why such behavior would be evil. We can't spend so much time being alone, because we were not created in order to separate ourselves from society and become alone. *Chazal* say that one has to be *daato me'ureves im ha'beriyos* (his mind should be pleasantly mixed with others – that he should get along with others). In addition, we see that Moshe Rabbeinu had to leave the camp in order to receive prophecy, but he did not pitch his tent outside the camp. Moshe Rabbeinu dwelled in society, and he had times in which he entered into solitude in order to reach his high levels, but he did not remain all the time in his solitude.

People who live in deserts are acting incorrectly, because they are misunderstanding the concept of serenity. On the other hand, people who only live in civilization and never get away to spend some time alone are also missing the purpose of life. Hashem created quiet places, such as deserts and forests, and He also created cities and towns; why? It is to show that part of our life needs to be spent around people, and part of

our life needs to also be spent alone. This is because serenity needs to be balanced with a life of action, and our actions need to be balanced with serenity.

And what does a person need to reflect about when he indeed has quiet time? He has to check himself and see if he is acting properly in his life, so that his actions are just as prominent in his life as the *menuchah* that he has reached; he has to become aware if he is acting balanced in his life, or if perhaps he is being extreme with either the ‘action’ side to his life or the ‘serenity’ side to his life.

Yaakov *Avinu* had already been secluded already for 14 years, in the yeshivah of Shem and Ever, before he went to Charan to build his family. We see from this that only after reaching his inner serenity did he acquire the strength to build his great family. After that, he was able to fight with an angel “alone”. We learn from this that the point of acquiring serenity is so that one will be able to carry out his responsibilities in a truer and deeper way, and from that, his power of “alone” becomes deepened as well, whereupon the person keeps repeating the cycle: Alone, back to society, alone, etc.

The true way to live life is to live a life of *rotzoh v'shov*, “running and retreating”, a cycle of progressing and pulling back from progress, back and forth. We are ideally meant to live in society, then leave it temporarily so we can get back our serenity, and then return to society, and repeat the cycle.

There is a *sefer* written by Rav Moshe Kordovo called *Sefer Gerushin*, “The Book of Divorce.” No, it’s not a *sefer* about names of people who got divorced. It is the *chiddushim* (Torah thoughts) that he wrote when he was in seclusion and away from society, in which he was temporarily “divorced” from the world. The serenity that he reached there enabled him to write his *chiddushim*. However, he didn’t stay there. He came back to town and continued on with normal life, because the purpose was not to leave society. The purpose was to gain serenity from the seclusion and then return to society renewed with the serenity that he acquired.

Why is it that most people are not succeeding in life? It is because most people are too involved with their obligations they have to take care of in civilization: taking care of their families, visiting their parents and grandparents, working at their jobs...and they end their life at the “obligation” level.

There is also a minority of people who have the opposite problem - they are not involved at all with society. They don't get married, and they wish to be like the Sage Ben Azai, who never got married because he was always learning Torah. These kinds of people love to be alone; there are even people who live in caves because they do not like to be in society. They don't like to do anything at all and would prefer to spend all their time in solitude. *Baruch Hashem* these people know of inner serenity, but...

Either of these lifestyles is not truthful. If someone is too involved with his life obligations and he never has time to himself, he has no time to reflect about truth, and he will definitely never grow in life. The other kind of person, who spends too much time alone, will also not get to the truth, because he is not doing Hashem's will in life.

Hashem wants a person to radiate himself outwards towards other people and give to others; if a person spends all his time alone, he never reaches the intended purpose in life that Hashem created the world for.

Shabbos – A Missed Opportunity

In the ideal state of life, when Hashem first created man, the plan was to enter Shabbos forever, where we would have had eternal rest. But look at how we spend Shabbos. People on Shabbos are busy with their families, with meals, and there is almost no time for anyone to think on Shabbos about priorities. And, understandably, they surely don't attain any serenity as a result.

Someone once met me on a Sunday and told me he's been completely exhausted since Friday. I asked him, "You didn't get to rest at all over Shabbos?" He told me, "Shabbos? Shabbos is the hardest day of the week for me!"

People on Shabbos aren't arriving at any serenity, tied up with eating and conversation, and often they don't even get to rest. Even when people do get their rest on Shabbos, it's just sleep on their beds, and they don't reach a deep feeling of inner serenity. Shabbos is really the day in which we can find solitude and become totally serene in our soul. But in our generation, this is almost unheard of.

The Decision That Will Change Your Life

So what should we do? If we are not getting any serenity on our Shabbos, we will have to get it from somewhere. We need a practical way to get serenity.

We all have responsibilities during the week; there is no time to ourselves. We are either out shopping or taking care of family members. What we need to do is live in civilization and take care of our responsibilities, but we also need some time during the week to get away from civilization so that we have time to reflect with ourselves, alone.

Some people will counter that we don't need to get away from civilization in order to be serene, and that we can become serene in our house. This is a nice idea, but it doesn't really happen. There are always noises in the house, such as the telephone and the neighbors, which do not allow for serenity.

What it all boils down to is: If a person is willing to *actually set aside some time in his life* in which he can have some solitude, to be totally alone from society. The way of our earlier Rabbis, and before that, our prophets and our forefathers, was to spend time in solitude. We need to go in their footsteps and also have solitude; once a week, find a day of solitude, in which you are totally separate from society. This advice is written about by the Ramchal in *sefer Derech Eretz Chaim*, where he writes that this is easy to follow advice that bears tremendous results.

Without doing this weekly *hisbodedus*, it is impossible to succeed in life nowadays. It is **impossible** to succeed in life without setting aside this time for *hisbodedus*! Life today is noisy and it bombards us. If we never try to get some serenity, the noise of life will prevent us until the end of our life from ever seeing success in our life.

There is no one to whom this doesn't apply; we are all very busy from life. If we are too busy from life, we won't succeed in life, so what is the solution? The answer is that you have to realize that all of our lives are filled with constant strain from all the hard work. Life is not easy; if we work hard and we have a livelihood, that means that we have a hard life from working hard, and if we don't work hard enough and thus we don't have enough livelihood, then our life isn't either easy. So either way, our life is not easy – whether we are making money, or not.

So what should we do about this? The curse of hard work is something we can all relate to. Because we are so bombarded with life, we have no time to ourselves. How do we get out of this ‘Egyptian slavery’ kind of life that we are forced into? It’s simple: take a bus or a taxi and get away from this civilization [once a week]!

So the question is if we can have this incorporated to our daily schedule. I’ve never met anyone yet who is willing to give up his sleep and do *hisbodedus*; it’s too hard to do this. It’s way too pressurizing, and the person will end up skipping it altogether. However, you can definitely give up some of your sleep for it – you don’t have to cut out an entire night’s sleep. *Chazal* say that it is impossible to go three days without sleep, so we all need our sleep. The question is how much sleep one really needs, though. You can definitely give some of your sleep for *hisbodedus*.

What we need to do is incorporate some *hisbodedus* into our day, and then we can build upon that. That is the basis for everything.

If we don’t have this basis, I can talk and talk and talk about spirituality, but all the words here will simply enter one ear and leave the other. It’s like trying to put something into a cup with a hole at the bottom; everything you put in will simply fall through the hole. There must be a basis to hold the contents of the cup together, or else everything will fall out through the bottom.

If a person makes sure to **set aside time, every day** during the week for *hisbodedus*, he has the firm basis which he can use to get to an inner kind of life. **This does not mean that he will for sure reach it** - but he definitely has an advantage, for he will be building the tool for himself which enables him to enter inward. If a person never has this time set aside, he might always be running after higher spiritual levels, trying to grab onto more and more spirituality, but spirituality cannot be grabbed. If a person really wants spirituality, he needs to acquire it with patience, slowly, and with *yishuv hadaas* (a settled mind). In order to have that, a person needs to practically set aside time every day for *hisbodedus*.

Returning To Our Nature of Being “Alone”

Chazal say, “Man was created individual”. What is the meaning behind this concept? To show us that man has to reach his *Yechidah*, the “individual” aspect in his

soul, his innermost point. When Adam was first created, there was no Chavah yet, no other person in the world to talk to, to show us that man has a point in himself which is alone and individual.

For a person to reach his *Yechidah*, he has to find a quiet place and attain total quiet there, and to be alone. In this place, he can quiet himself down more and more. When he reaches the inner silence – and there are many levels to this inner silence – he can begin to reach his inner point at least minimally, and from that, he will be able to build upon that and implement all of the knowledge that we have described until now.

When a person reaches his inner silence he can return to his inner state of “alone”, which is the natural state of man, since we were originally created individual. When Adam was alone, before Chavah, there was no one else to talk to; he was completely alone. That was his pure state, and thus there was no possibility to sin. The possibility of sin only began with the creation of Chavah, who spoke to Adam to eat the fruit. As soon as Chavah was created, there was no more a state of “alone”, thus the Snake was able to come speak with her and tempt her. The natural, pure state of mankind – our very nature – is to be alone.

However, as essential as it is to return to our state of “alone”, being “alone” is not the purpose. It can’t be, because if it were, then why did Hashem create Chavah? Obviously, Hashem intended that man to marry woman. So our life is a double-sided coin; there are two different facets to our life. There is a part of us which needs to relate with others and is responsible for others – and these are the side of our responsibilities in life, in which we deal with people - and there is a part in us which is “alone”, which we use for *hisbodedus*.

According to the Arizal, the *avodah* of Adam *HaRishon* was to attain the state of *Yechidah*; he already had the levels of *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah*. After the sin, he fell many levels. It was possible for him to reach the *Yechidah*, though, because he was created in a state of being alone. In the way we are created, we have the inner task to return, somewhat, to the original structure of things, to fix the first sin, and

receive our *havayah* point again. We cannot reach the general and all-inclusive *havayah* point, but each of us can reach it on a private level.⁵⁷

We need to return to the root state of Creation, which was a pure world, unlike the world today. There was no “noise” then in the world. When we speak about *hisbodedus*, we can’t reach the total *hisbodedus* that Adam had, in which there was no “noise” at all, for there was no sin yet. We live in a very, very noisy world; it’s so noisy that people aren’t even aware how noisy it is, because we are so used to it. This world is like one giant alarm clock; constant noises that are saying “Go, go, go out into the world.”

As much as the noise is, we need to counter it all with a deep, inner silence. If we have *hisbodedus* that counters the noise, the noise won’t be able to drag us down with it. And the kind of *hisbodedus* we need is no less of a need than air for the body.

Internalizing What We've Learned In These Chapters

Baruch Hashem, everyone who has come to learn about these matters has grown, more or less, in their spirituality (We aren’t giving out awards here; maybe in the near future we will). We can safely say that each person here has come to some inner understanding, on their own respective level.

If the words here would just be for the purpose of having a lecture, and not about really making them practically affect our life, then those who are interested in the lectures would come, and those who aren’t interested in a lecture will not come. But I think that all of you came here not because you simply wanted to hear a lecture. I think that all of you are searching how to really grow from this series of lectures, and that is why you came here to hear these words.

But now that we are at the end, let’s ask ourselves: What are we really coming out with over here? What are we practically walking away with from these lectures?

⁵⁷ Editor’s Note: The Rav explains elsewhere that there are two levels to the “Yechidah”. There is a “private” level of “Yechidah” that each person can reach individually, and there is the collective “Yechidah” of the entire Jewish people, which will not be revealed until the future. See the shiurim of Succos #007, #008, and #009 (A Jew’s Inner Self, Parts 1-3) for further explanation on this matter.

If you have a will to put these words into action, you can do it. If so, you need to think about how you can make all these words practical: How do we put this concept into practice? How do we actualize our *Yechidah*? How do we internalize these last 15 chapters and make them practical?

The first thing you need to know - I think this part should come pretty simple to you - is that hearing these lectures just once in your life will not do anything for you. If you heard or read these chapters only once, it will simply go into one ear and leave the other ear.

Chazal say that it takes four times to learn something. It is tried and proven that people hear new things the second time they review the same words, and they hear new things the third time. There are two reasons for this. People simply don't hear all the words the first time when they hear something, because it's hard to pay attention to every word. Even if you did hear every word here, you still need to hear it another two or three times simply for the sake of understanding these words.

After hearing this four times, the next step is to see all the ways brought here in how to reach the *Yechidah* and to really *think* about the words over to yourself, and the reason why you need to do this is for the following reason. It is not enough to hear these words and know about them. They have been told to you from an outside force, thus you need to come to an understanding of these concepts from *within yourself*, after you have heard it. These concepts have to be experienced from within yourself, and not because it was told to you.

Compare this to a taxi driver who is told by his passengers to get to a certain destination. Does he know the way only because he's listening to the directions that the passengers are giving him, or because he is already familiar with the roads by now? He knows the way a lot better if he already knows how to get there, because he recognizes how to get there from within himself, rather than being told how to get there.

Thus, if you just hear and believe in these words because they are based on the words of our Sages, that's wonderful, and it shows that you have *emunah* in the words of the Sages. But it still won't be enough to really understand the concepts here. Of course, first you need to be told how to get there, but eventually, you need to understand the matters from within yourself. Compare this to a child, who first has to be taught things, but later at some point, he needs to recognize information from

within himself, and it is then that he really understands the information we have taught him.

To illustrate, once a year on Sukkos, we read *Sefer Koheles*, which was written by Shlomo *HaMelech*, in which he writes that this entire world is futile. Reb Chatzkel Levenstein *zt"l* would say that each person needs to write his own *Sefer Koheles* – in other words, each person needs to write his own journal in which he recognizes how vain this world is, and he shouldn't just believe in Shlomo *HaMelech*'s words. It's not enough for a person if he reflects once a year on Sukkos when he reads *Koheles* on how this world is futile. Rather, each person needs to understand that from the viewpoint within himself, from his own life experiences, and come to that understanding on his own.

Therefore, you need to take all these words of the last 15 classes and experience them for yourself, because in order to understand these matters, it's not enough if you just hear them and believe in them. If you don't try to make this experiential, then even if you try to do all the different ways of avodah described here on how to reach the *Yechidah*, it will be almost pointless.

First you need to **keep reviewing these words** so that you absorb them, and after that, you must **experience these concepts from within yourself**, to have an inner understanding of these matters. Your inner world can be reached only from understandings that you have reached within yourself - it cannot be reached through anything you have heard, which comes from outside of the self.

Many times I hear all kinds of questions from people about how to reach spirituality, but they are all the same kind of question: People want someone else to come and give them some spiritual light that will open up their inner world. I am very bothered by these kinds of questions, and therefore I don't like to answer questions of this sort.

Why? Because you are a soul, and you need to experience yourself, who you actually are! It can't be told to you. You can only understand yourself from within yourself! Feel who you are, *realize who you are!* It's almost worthless to get any "spiritual illuminations" from outside of yourself.

Of course, *Chazal* tell us that a person needs to have a *Rebbi* (teacher) in order to be saved from doubt. But does that mean that the *Rebbi* has to live every aspect of the

person's life? Must one ask a *Rebbi* about what time he needs to leave his house in the morning? We all understand that a person does not have to ask his *Rebbi* for every nitty-gritty issue. Why? A question has to come from within yourself that you have thought about; the point is not that as soon as a person has a problem, he immediately calls his *Rebbi*. There must be questions, but they must be questions that are formulated from within yourself. To illustrate, children cannot cross the street by themselves. An adult, who is mature, can cross the street by himself, because he knows how to think for himself.

Thus, in order for a person to actualize the matters here, he has to first hear/study the words of these 15 classes *at least four times*, and then, he must seek to make this knowledge experiential, and the way he can know this is by seeing if he identifies with these concepts from within himself.

Who Can Gain From This Series, and Who Cannot

Therefore, if the reader isn't identifying the concepts of these chapters *within himself*, then the reader must seek a different path - a different *avodah*. If you feel that these words don't speak to you, if you don't feel that you are connecting with these words after you have reviewed them, it shows that the path here is not meant for you to take. It could be that at this point in your life, you are not meant to take this path. Or, it could mean that the paths delineated here are not meant for you at all to work with, no matter what stage you are at in life.

If you find yourself identifying with the words here, then you can succeed on implementing these concepts. If not, then forcing yourself to try to agree with these concepts will not work either, and it will be pointless to try any of the *avodah* that was said here.

Finding Times of Quiet Every Day

In addition to the above aforementioned condition, in order for a person to actualize these concepts, a person needs quiet time every day. Once a week, a person should set aside one day in which he spends even more time in *hisbodedus*.

During this time, realize that you are leaving the noise of the world. Besides for this, realize that this is the time of the day in which you can feel your inner point. You need *yishuv hadaas* in order to reach it, thus you must have quiet time every day.

It should be like when Yaakov left Beer Sheva and he went to Charan. He left for two reasons. He ran away from Esav, and he needed to find a wife. In other words: there is reason to leave the noisy world, and in addition, there is reason to enter inward. During this time, you enter your soul – and focus on this thought alone: ***remember that you exist!***

There are people who have forgotten that they exist; they live their life as if they are a leaf. They don't feel their existing self. Without time of *yishuv hadaas* every day, a person simply never sees himself at all! He doesn't see himself! Of course, he will still have emotions, but he doesn't feel himself as an existing reality. He is not aware of the true meaning of his existence; he doesn't feel it.

To illustrate, when a couple seeks help in how to have marital peace, many marriage counselors advise that couples need to spend time with each other. When they have quiet time, a lot can be accomplished. Some couples spend too much time together and that's why they have so many problems, but with most couples, the problems are because they don't spend enough quiet time with each other; each spouse is immersed in his/her various activities, and that is the root of all their quarreling. When they have quiet time, they remember that they are married to a spouse, and they remind themselves that the other exists. To put it sharply, many married people don't even remember they are married. Of course, everyone is aware that they are married; but the husband or wife can be so busy with taking care of the home and the kids that they forget about their own relationship with each other. They are so busy taking care of the home, but there is no home! But the problems started even before that. The spouses forgot about their own existence. They won't remember that the other one exists either.

If you ask anyone if he knows he exists, the answer of course will be "yes". We will know we exist, but a person can still be forgetting that he exists, because he is so bombarded from life. If each of the spouses would begin to have quiet time to him/herself, they would be able to remember that the other one exists also, and then all of their problems would vanish.

In summation, if we really want to have an inner understanding of ourselves in a way that will practically affect us, the **basis** is that one needs to have times of quiet every day, where he is alone and he silences his soul. From that point onward, each person's *avodah* will be different, and we will not discuss that here.

The lower levels of the soul – *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah* - are the layers in our soul which involve performance, doing, action. The innermost point of our soul, the *Yechidah* – our *havayah* point - is the actual essence of our soul, our innermost point, and since this point is who we actually are, it is there that our true *avodah* emanates from. Our entire inner *avodah* can only come from our *havayah*\essence, and such *avodah* is considered to be the kind that is alive and full of *chiyus* (inner vitality). It will then be emanating from a place of depth and truth in the soul. If our *avodah* is not coming from our *havayah* point, from a place of inner silence in ourselves, from a settled mind - then it is like having branches of a tree with no root, which loses its source of vitality.

Only when a person is, in the general sense, making sure to act and perform the deeds he must do - and in more specific terms, after having reached the place of inner silence in his soul, thereby being able to act and perform from this deep place in himself – can he truly grow. The roots will then be firmly plated and he will be able to build upon those foundations, and then whatever he builds upon it will last. He will grow both in the external sense and in the inner sense. He will be paying more attention to what he is doing, and his actions will be emanating from an inner source of vitality that empowers it.

Thus, if we want to come to reach an inner place of understanding within ourselves, which will produce a solid way of *avodah* and which will be a container that will hold onto everything we have learned here, we must set aside time every day to silence the soul, as well as once a week for a longer amount of time.

EPILOGUE

Reaching Our Essence

In this *sefer*, we have learned about the inner task of revealing and reaching our point of “*havayah*” in the soul. We should know that this *avodah* differs with each person.

Generally speaking, the proper path for most people to take [in working with the soul] is to work their way upwards, starting from the lower levels of the soul and progressing to the higher levels of the soul. In this path, one cannot attempt to reach his *havayah* point [the *Yechidah*] unless he has acquired the lower levels of the soul, which are the areas of the soul known as *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah* and *Chayah*. We have explained these levels of the soul in previous *sefarim*.⁵⁸

However, there are certain types of people who may begin their inner work by first trying to reach the *havayah* point in the soul. This includes any of the following:

- 1) Some people were born with the power to naturally access this deep place in themselves, but they do not clearly understand it, and they would like to become clearer about what it is and how they can fully reach it. (Even in such people, there are also times where their innermost point becomes hidden from them.)

- 2) There are also people who, although they were not born with great inner strength of their soul, were still able to penetrate very far into their deeper self, because they went through certain experiences in life that uncovered great depth to themselves. Either they went through a very traumatic experience, or they went through a deeply joyous one, which enabled them to penetrate straight into the deepest layer of their existence.

These kinds of people cannot be told to ignore their inner point; they live with it as an existing reality. To tell them to ignore their inner point and to instead

⁵⁸ Refer to the Rav's *Da Es Atzmecha* (*Getting To Know Your Self*)

work with the lower parts of the soul would be like asking the person if he minds if his leg would be cut off. For such people, their *avodah* is to receive further guidance in how to use their *havayah* point, to clarify more of the ways of how they can properly connect to it.

- 3) Similar to the above category are those who are born with great inner strength in their souls, who have the ability to easily and quickly penetrate deep into their soul.
- 4) There are also people have entered very deep within themselves, but they used methods from impure sources that came from strange places of the world.⁵⁹

Any of the people in the above four categories can begin their inner work by starting to implement the ideas in these chapters which explained the “*Yechidah*” level of the soul. As for most people, who are not any of the above three exceptions, they will need to start to understand their soul through the previous series⁶⁰, and **only after reaching their layers of *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah* can they attempt to do any of the *avodah* that was described in this series.**

We are emphasizing this so that you will be aware of this and save yourself from damage. If you are like most people (who are not of the above three exceptions we described), you need to make sure that you begin with working on your *Nefesh*, then with your *Ruach*, then with your *Neshamah*, then with your *Chayah*, and only after that should you begin to try to get to your *Yechidah*, as described in this series.

Having The End Goal In Mind

However, even if you cannot begin implementing any of the ways of *avodah* explained in these chapters, it is still beneficial for most people to hear the words of this series and to simple become aware of these concepts, because even if you cannot absorb it fully at this point, it is still important to know the goal of where you are supposed to end up at.

⁵⁹ Refer to the Rav's derasha entitled "The Void"

⁶⁰ Refer to the Rav's sefer *Da Es Atzmecha* (*Getting To Know Your Self*). Editor's Note: Refer also to the Rav's series "Da Es Nishmasecha" (*Torah Way To Enlightenment*), which explains how to expose the five layers of the soul (*Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*).

When a person hears about concepts he needs to work on, the initial reaction is that he has to act upon them afterwards, but there is another way to hear: even though you will not be able to implement these matters right after hearing them [if you are not one of the three exceptions listed], you can still hear it just for the sake of building your soul, by absorbing these concepts. There is a purpose in just hearing concepts so that you can build your soul, even though you can't act upon these matters right away.

It is important for you to at least hear about these concepts, even if you can't work on actualizing them yet, because it is good for you to know what your eventual goal is. "*Sof maaseh b'machshavah techilah*" (The end of action if first preceded with thought). When you hear about the goal, that itself is constructive. First of all, it gives meaning to your current level of *avodah*, because you know where you want to end up at eventually, even though you're not there yet.

In addition, it builds your aspirations. There are people who only act with what is in front of them; they live for the moment, and they never try to develop themselves for the future. A deeper kind of person will build himself up each day with the goal in mind that he wants to form a certain path that will lead him to his goal. This does not mean that a person should become a dreamer, immersed in his fantasies of the future. A person needs to be involved with the here and now, but along with this, he also should expand his future, by building himself a path that will lead him into his future goal.

When a person hears a *shiur*/Torah lecture solely so that he can arrive at the practical conclusions from it, he is limiting himself in the process. It is detrimental to a person when he needs to know what has to be done as a result of what he has heard, and when he wants to know the practicality of it right now, immediately. Rather, the sensible approach is to hear about concepts even if they won't be immediately applicable in your life, so that you can at least absorb the end goal and be aware of the goal you will eventually head towards.

So if you have absorbed these concepts, even if you aren't yet at the level of actualizing them, that itself is a great accomplishment, because it helps you acquire a deeper perspective to know where you want to get to.