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## **Bilvavi Part 8 - 01 The Perspective of Achieving Oneness**

### **1.**

“Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people are one.”<sup>[1]</sup>

Chazal state that the world stands on three pillars: Torah, Avodah\Tefillah (prayer) and Chessed (kindness).

It is clear and simple that the purpose of our Avodah is to come to reach the state of *chad*, “oneness” [to become one with Hashem].

For this, Hashem created three ways to get there – Torah, Avodah, and Chessed.

### **2.**

There are three kinds of love we are commanded to have: love for Hashem, love of the Torah, and love for the Jewish people.

In order to connect to something, there must be love. Love, *ahavah*, has the same numerical value as the word *echad*, which means “one.” In other words, in order to become one with something, there must be love.

Becoming “one” with Hashem, the Torah and the Jewish people is achieved through loving Hashem, loving the Torah and loving the Jewish people. These are essentially the three pillars which the world stands upon: Torah\loving the Torah, and Avodah (Tefillah), which is in essence to love Hashem, and Chessed, which is basically to love the Jewish people. The purpose of all these loves is to reach the root of all these loves, which is to love Hashem. The root love, love for Hashem, branches into two kinds of love – love for the Torah, and love for the Jewish people.

Thus, there are three ways how to get to Hashem.

The first way is through the Torah. When a person connects to the Torah, he is on the path to get to Hashem. He uses his mind in order to comprehend the Torah. That is one way.

Another way to get to Hashem is to turn to Him more directly [without anything mediating in between], which is through Tefillah. The essence of Tefillah is to constantly talk to Hashem - to simply speak with Hashem, both during times of quiet as well as throughout the day in general. This is the way to bond with Hashem, directly: through Tefillah.

The third way to get to Hashem is through loving the Jewish people. This is when a person unifies his soul with all Jewish souls – which will lead us to the root of all souls, the *Shechinah* (the Presence of

Hashem). Hashem resides in all souls, and through unifying with all souls, we can reach Him.

These are the three ways of how to reach Hashem.

### 3.

If a person is using the way of *Tefillah* to connect to Hashem (we are referring to a verbal connection with Hashem, and not simply a mental connection with Hashem), this is a simple matter and it doesn't require any explanation. It is a way that involves a person's earnest belief in Hashem – his *temimus* (earnestness) and *emunah* (faith in G-d); his *yashrus* (uprightness) of the heart. Tefillah is called "the service of the heart", as Chazal say.

Generally speaking, there are two primary forces of the soul which rule us – our mind, and our heart. Our heart is called *lev*, which is related to the word *levanah* – the moon. Our heart thus resembles the moon. Our mind is called *moach*, and it is represented by the sun.

If someone's soul is dominated more by his heart\moon, then he doesn't mainly use his intellect in serving Hashem. He learns Torah of course, but the main way how he connects to Hashem and serves Him is through simplicity, through his heart.

But if someone is more dominated by his intellect, then he needs to clarify matters intellectually in order to be able to connect to Hashem. Of course, he has an avodah to internalize his mind's knowledge into his heart, as the possuk says, "*And you shall know today, and you shall place the matter upon your heart.*" The intellectual kind of person needs a step-by-step method of how to reach Hashem, and generally speaking, he isn't able to skip [as this would be too difficult]; he figures out who he is, what Creation is about – from beginning until end – and through attaining clarity, he can reach Hashem.

### 4.

We will try to explain more clearly what we are referring to here.

Before the creation of the world, Hashem was One, and His Name was One. The redemption will return us to this unity, as it is written, "*On that day, Hashem will be One, and His Name will be One.*" Even nowadays, the root of our avodah is to reveal the unity of Hashem over the world, as we declare in Shema: "Hashem, our God, Hashem is One."

Thus, Hashem was One before Creation, and He will be One again after Creation (which will be by the redemption). In between these two eras is our current era, in which our soul can also reveal His Oneness, amidst Creation, in spite of the fact that we live in a world of disparity (*alma d'piruda*).

If we want to give a definition to what the inner goal of all our avodah is, we can call it *sod he'echad* – this secret of "oneness".

Hashem is One. Man was created at first to be alone, and in this way, he resembles Hashem – just as Hashem is alone Above, so was man (initially) alone on this earth. Man was created at first to be alone so that he can become a proper receptacle to contain the oneness of Hashem. The more a person's soul leaves this world of disparity and enters into oneness, the more a person becomes a tool to reveal Hashem within him.

We do not know what Hashem's oneness is, but one thing we do know is that Hashem is One. He is *echad*. The only means for us to know of Hashem is the fact that His Name is One, and this is all that we know about Him. Because Hashem's Name is One, we are able to receive a connection with Him.

This concept is the root of all Torah, avodah, and chessed. As we mentioned, these three main aspects of our mission represent the three loves that exist – love for the Creator, love for the Torah, and love for the Jewish people. Love, as we said, is essentially oneness, because *ahavah* (love) has the same numerical value in Hebrew as the word *echad* (one).

## 5.

This concept is especially true when it comes to how we should approach learning Torah. We need to realize that Torah is a tool that enables us to bond with Hashem. What this essentially means is that the Torah can be used to reveal Hashem's oneness in the world, and therefore, Torah is the tool which we use to have *d'veykus* (attachment) with Hashem.

Thus, the Torah has to be learned with this awareness, that it is the unifying power in Creation. We must use Torah learning to unify, and not use it as a way to further the disparity in the world. For example, the Gemara is full of contradictions. The purpose of all these contradictions is so that we should see how to unify all the contradictions, and not simply to analyze the contradictions and leave ourselves with more questions. Learning Torah is not just about figuring out what the Torah is saying and finding all the questions and contradictions. Rather, we seek answers to our questions on our learning because we should want to reveal oneness in our Torah learning. If we learn Torah with this attitude, then we use Torah as a way to reveal unity.

One of the Sages, Rav Yosef, forgot all his Torah learning, yet he was still regarded by the Sages as a competent authority (Pesachim 68b). What is the depth behind this? It is because although he forgot the information of Torah that he learned, he still retained the unity that he had revealed when he had learned the Torah. The unity that a person reveals through his learning is something that remains forever; even when the outer information of the Torah is forgotten, its essence – its unity – still remains with the person.

Learning Torah is one of the ways how we bond with Hashem, and thus one has to view it with this deep perspective: that the Torah serves to unify man with his Creator.

## 6.

The concept being described here – the perspective of “unity” – is essentially the root of how we can redeem our soul. It is that we should leave our perspective of disparity and instead enter into a perspective in which we strive to unify.

Naturally, a person thinks and worries entirely about himself. The more a person truly develops spiritually – besides for gaining much knowledge, his own soul grows, and he is more connected to the concept of oneness. He begins to see “oneness” in everything – he gets used to the concept of *echad*.

He begins to see the world, and he sees that there other people in the world. He becomes aware to the concept of *Ahavas Yisrael*, loving other Jews. He begins to see how the Torah is the root of Creation, and thus he gains a love for the Torah. He sees more and more how there is only truly One in the universe Who controls everything: Hashem.

What does it mean to grow spiritually? Is it when a person gains more elated feelings of spiritual inspiration? Elation doesn't yet define spiritual progress, because it's still very possible that the person still worries only for himself, and he hasn't yet entered the perspective of striving for oneness in Creation. A person might be very convinced that he is growing spiritually, but it can all just be in his imagination.

The true barometer that measures a person's spiritual growth is when a person is seeing the oneness

in Creation. Spiritual growth is measured by the more and more a person enters the perspective of unity. It is essentially known as *Ain Od Milvado* – to see how “there is nothing besides for Hashem”.

Our avodah can be summed up with the statement, “We have only one heart, towards our Father in Heaven.”

The concept being discussed here is not just information. It is about how we view our life. The higher soul level a person reaches, the more oneness he strives for in Creation.

There are many details pertaining to how we serve Hashem that one can know, and it’s a lot of information. There are many matters that make up our Avodas Hashem (service to the Creator). The word Torah comes from the word *horaah*, to “teach”, because we need the Torah to show us which way we need to go in.

In order to know which way are going on, we have to know that our avodah is to keep unifying. We have to keep striving for oneness, and the ultimate level of oneness is reached when we come to the most complete Oneness of all – Hashem.

## 7.

At Creation, things went from high to low. First there was light and dark mixed together, and then Hashem split them apart. In other words, at first everything was in one unit, and then everything got separated. The purpose of Creation is to return to the original state of oneness that existed, just as everything was at the beginning of Creation.

In the current state of affairs – which is the middle point in Creation – we can also reveal unity, and this is achieved when we unify all the disparities. The more a person enters the perspective of oneness, the more he will know where he is heading in his Avodas Hashem – as we say in *Kaballas Shabbos*, “*Sof maaseh b’machshavah techilah*” – “The end of the actions is first in the thoughts.”

## 8.

We have many mitzvos, but we need to seem them all as one unit. If we have the attitude that we have “many” various responsibilities we need to carry out – as the Torah ordains us to – then that very attitude itself will prevent us from reaching our goal of unity.

Therefore, before we learn about any internal matters of the Torah [in this sefer], we must first know our goal. Our goal is: We need to leave our ego, which is a viewpoint of disparity (*alma d’piruda*), and instead widen our perspective on reality, incorporating other facets into our being that are **beyond** our ego.

Our goal should be clear from the start: we need to include others into our existence if we are to ever connect with the Creator. The true *d’veykus* with Hashem can only be achieved when others are included in our life, when we aren’t living a self-absorbed and selfish kind of existence.

## 9.

With the help of Hashem, we will begin, but as we said, we must be clear what our goal is. Our goal is to attain true *d’veykus* with Hashem, and the path to get there is through Torah. We are referring specifically to the kind of Torah that is *Torah ohr*, “the Torah of light”, which is when a person learns Torah because he attempts to unify.

The Vilna Gaon wrote that the entire Torah is contained in the letter *Beis* of the first word, *Beraishis*;

and even more so, it is contained in the dot inside the letter *beis*. What is the depth of his words? It is because the Torah serves as a tool to unify. If we look at Torah with a superficial perspective – that is just 600,000 letters containing information – then the Torah to use will be just that: 600,000 “separate” letters. But since all the letters of Torah are rooted in one source – the dot inside the letter *beis* of the word *Beraishis* – that is how we need to see Torah. Torah is all unified into one point.

This fact is not just another random piece of information. It is the root of all knowledge! It is the root of all our understanding in our learning (It is reminiscent of what Rav Saadyah Gaon wrote, that all of the Torah is contained in the Ten Commandments).

### **10.**

The 600,000 letters in the Torah represent the 600,000 souls in the Jewish people. If all the 600,000 letters of the Torah are really unified by one source, then that in turn means that all 600,000 souls of the Jewish people are unified by one root, the Torah.

The Torah is life itself. If a person understands that Torah is life itself, and he uses his Torah learning as a way to increase unity in the world – if he keeps going in this direction, he will eventually arrive at the source of the Torah, the dot in the letter *beis* of the word *Beraishis*. This will happen when Moshiach comes; Moshiach will come and unify all souls.

In the future, the Name of Hashem will become one – how? Moshiach will reveal how the entire Torah is somehow contained the letter *beis* of the word *Beraishis*. When the Torah becomes ultimately unified – and when all souls will be unified by Moshiach – Hashem will then come and settle upon this unity, and that will reveal Him to the world.

### **11.**

The above words of the Vilna Gaon shows us the deep concept of unity\echad.

Our souls were created before the world, so when we speak of how our mission is to return to the original unity, we are really referring to returning to our own soul (not to our body).

From our physical perspective of our body, it appears that we are living after the sin of Adam, and that we are at this current point in history, accumulating all the after-effects of every sin of our ancestors. But we really exist on a higher plane than all this, because our souls were around before time – long before the history of the world began, long before what is written about us in the *pesukim* of the Torah.

### **12.**

In other words, we can reach a place deep within ourselves that is before time, before we were even applicable to Torah. How can we reach this place? It is above the written word – it is above all the “letters” of the Torah, and therefore, it cannot be described in writing! It is reminiscent of the Oral Torah, which was not put into writing. It is a point that is above all thought; similar to the concept of how the idea of the Jewish people was conceived before Creation.

### **13.**

How do we reach the perspective of unity?

There are two ways. One way is to ascend towards Heaven, step-by-step, beginning from the lowest realm (called "*Asiyah*") until we get to the highest realm, *Atzilus*. However, this path will take us too long. There is another way to reach *echad*, and it is through reaching the reality of our soul. Through this, we can actually jump over the lower stages.

#### 14.

We do not mean to negate the first path, which is to ascend step-by-step. But what we mean is as follows. The *sefarim hakedoshim* ask: How will Moshiach come in the later generations, which are so lowly? How will the generation be able to contain the awesome spiritual light of Moshiach?

The famous answer given is that each generation is adding on another "brick", and eventually, all the bricks will add up. We do not know when Moshiach will come (Sanhedrin 49a), but we are already at 5765 years, so it must be that it's taking 6,000 years for all the bricks to add up until we eventually reach the *achdus* of Creation. The *achdus* has been piling up for many generations, and it is still being stored in each generation - it is just hidden.

So on one hand, we are in a lowly generation, but on the other hand, we have all the *achdus* stored up from all previous generations until now. If so, most of the *achdus* has already been achieved by the previous generations, and what is left for us to do is to remove and break the subtle barriers holding us back, and reach the structure which they have built.

#### 15.

However, this perspective is still problematic, because the fact is that we are in a very lowly generation, and in addition, we are beginning our *avodah* always from the lowest point. It is too far to reach our goal...

Therefore, we need to gain a deeper perspective. We need to realize that we are merely continuing what the previous generations did, and therefore, we are really beginning from a much higher point. We are really beginning from a higher point, and therefore, our goal is actually a lot closer.

The *achdus* "perspective of unity" we are trying to reach should therefore not be attempted with the attitude that everything is separated and that we must unify all the disparities of the world.

Rather, we must believe that most of the *achdus* has already been done. The spiritual light of Moshiach has already begun to be revealed, and it will be total when he comes. But even now, it is revealed to a certain extent. Thus, although we are living in a very lowly generation, we are actually beginning our *avodah* from a much higher point than the previous generations began from, because we are continuing from where they left off.

#### 16.

This concept, essentially, is the secret of *Emunah* - as it pertains to our *avodah*.

Without revealing this *Emunah*, a person thinks he is far from heralding the *achdus* in the world, and he doesn't believe he can get there. But if a person believes in the words of the Torah and Chazal concerning our generation, then he knows that we are actually very close to achieving oneness with Hashem!

With the belief that it is possible to achieve *achdus* in the world, even though it seems so impossible in this lowly generation - a person is able to take a great leap in his *Avodas Hashem* and skip over many levels. It is a deep perspective in which a person believes that *achdus* can be accomplished,

even though we don't really feel that way. This is actually the depth of *Emunah* - to believe the truths, even when we can't feel the truth.

## 17.

We are very close to revealing *achdus* onto the world. It has already been mostly achieved by the previous generations. It is hidden within us, and we only need to reveal it outwards from within ourselves. We can reveal it by having *Emunah*, by believing that the *achdus* is indeed close within our reach - and if we do that, we will be able to take a great leap in our avodah.

May we be helped by Hashem and receive *siyata d'shamaya* (Heavenly assistance) that we should continue to speak about matters that are meant to be spoken about, and that the matters that our soul needs to absorb should indeed be absorbed in us. Everything being said here in this sefer should only be according to the will of Hashem, and it should only be to give satisfaction to our Creator.

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[\[1\]](#) *Zohar*

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