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[Home](#) > Bilvavi Part 2 - Chapter 06 Gentle Words

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Returning to Hashem through an Awakening from Above

As we mentioned in the beginning of our words, the fundamental point, which we must constantly repeat, is "Chavakuk came and placed [the *mitzvos*] on one foundation, as it says (*Chavakuk* 2:4), "and the righteous one lives by his *emunah* (faith)." We explained at length that *emunah* is not only an intellectual acceptance based on tradition and proofs, but primarily it is in the heart.

Emunah in the heart is an awareness of the existence of Hashem. It is not merely a matter of emotions and excitement; rather, just as one is intimately aware of his hand and foot, so should one be aware of the existence of Hashem.

It is the soul that has this sense. The soul is a "Divine portion from Above," but the body is not. The body is separate, but the soul is a Divine portion, and so, it yearns for and seeks its partner, Hashem: "Hashem is my portion, says my soul" (*Eichah* 3:24). Hashem is the "portion" of Israel.

Therefore, one's main work in *emunah* (which is one's main task in life, as it says, "the righteous lives by his *emunah*") is the clear recognition that there is a Creator, and that He is bound with our souls and is the reason for our holiness.

How do we expose this?

In *Kiddushin* (2b) there is a principle that "the way of the male is to seek out the female; it is not the way of the female to seek out the male." It is known that the Jewish nation is compared to a woman, while Hashem is compared to a man, as when He is called "a Man of War" (*Shemos* 15:3). That being the case, it is the way of Hashem to seek the Jewish people, not the way of the Jewish people to seek out Hashem.

In other words, of course each Jew must seek out Hashem and find Him, as the *pasuk* says, "And you will seek from there Hashem, your G-d, and you will find Him, if you search with all your heart and all your soul" (*Devarim* 4:29). However, the root of it all must be an awakening from Above.

This awakening from Above comes from that Heavenly voice that daily goes forth and proclaims, "Return, wayward children." The essence of repentance is a return to Hashem, an uncovering of "Hashem is my portion, says my soul." This is really a return to the true condition. Just as if, *chas veshalom*, a hand is dislocated, it must be restored to its position so as to make the body complete, so must each Jew uncover his true essence, the Divine portion. This is *teshuvah* ("return," repentance).

How do we awaken this?

We elaborated in the previous chapter that the soul's condition is "So shall you say (with the verb *amirah*) to the house of Yaakov," using gentle words, while the body is addressed in the manner of "and tell (with the verb *dibur*) to the children of Israel," words harsh as sinews. Through the power of gentle *amirah*, one can awaken the soul, and through harsh words, one can break through the screen that covers over the soul, which is the body.

What are the gentle words?

Here is an example: Reuven and Shimon are walking on the road together. Suddenly, Reuven stops Shimon, points to the ground, and says, "Look, there is a hundred dollar bill here!" Shimon hears, and immediately bends down to pick it up. Reuven didn't need to speak harshly to convince Shimon to pick up the money; he only needed *amirah*, speaking simply and gently. Why? The money was real, and the person's need for money is real, so once he is aware that the money is there, it only takes a small hint to get him to do the act which he will be happy to do.

Harsh words are needed when the act opposes one's nature, and the person is not interested and is trying to avoid it. When you want to break through such nature, and uncover the true inner will, so the person will be drawn to the matter, you must employ harsh words.

The soul's condition is "So shall you say to the house of Yaakov." This *amirah* comes from the soul's high level of clarity. The soul sees things clearly. It has nothing inherently stopping it from wanting holiness, so once it finds some guidance, and one points the way, it naturally goes to the holiness.

A Clear World

In order for a person to awaken his soul, his soul must be in a state of a "clear world." The words cannot be "dim," vague, and unknown. He should only discuss points that are clear to him, as *Chazal* said about Torah (*Shabbos* 145b): "Say to wisdom, 'You are my sister'" (*Mishlei* 7:4) - If it is as clear as the fact that your sister is forbidden to you, say it; if not, don't say it." Here, too, if the message emerges from a very clear understanding, it is a basic point, but if said at a time or state when the soul doesn't have it clear, the message does not come from the soul.

This can be further clarified through this example: A person is driving a car, and he wants to reach a certain place. He was never there, so he doesn't know the way. Before he embarks, he receives instructions: "Go to the light, turn right, etc." Even after he gets clear directions, he worries that he hadn't heard clearly, or didn't exactly understand, or didn't remember everything precisely. He doesn't know what a particular street looks like, maybe the sign is covered by the trees so he can't see it, and so on.

On the other hand, if the person was there once, even though it was a long time ago and he doesn't exactly remember the way, once they remind him of the directions, he will recall the old information and then, know clearly the proper way to get there.

There is a fundamental difference between the two cases. If the person was never there, even when he hears the directions, he still doesn't know them clearly, and his heart is not satisfied. But if he knew it, but forgot, once he is reminded, his heart is at peace and he confidently knows the proper way to proceed.

The soul is in the state of a "clear world." The *gemara* (*Bava Basra* 10b) states that Rav Yosef the son of Rav Yehoshua returned from the World of Truth (after a severe illness). He told people that what he observed there was a topsy-turvy world, because the higher people were low, and the lower people

were high there. He was told that in fact, he saw a clear world.

What is the meaning of a clear world?

When the soul departs the body, it sees a clear world. This clarity must revive and awaken the soul. As long as a person uses for *avodas Hashem* concepts that are not totally clear to him, these dim matters cannot awaken the soul, because they are not words of the soul. The soul can only be awakened by points that are one hundred percent clear and simple to the person.

When employing such ideas, there is an agreement between the knowledge of the intellect and the recognition of the heart (the soul) and the soul can awaken and emerge.

If one hears a very deep idea, he tries to awaken the soul with it, he has a small chance of success. Only people with very subtle perception can awaken their souls in such a manner, because generally, the deeper concepts are more complex, and one cannot sense with them real simplicity, so there is no way to awaken the soul.

We will provide a wonderful example of a very simple point that can be used to awaken the soul. Approach Hashem and say to Him, "Master of the World, You are our Father!"

This fact, that Hashem is our Father, is fixed in every believing Jew. Even if it is not so settled in the heart, the awareness that Hashem is called "our Father" is a well-known concept, and can be used to awaken the soul.

If a person takes a simple point and analyzes it in depth, he loses its simplicity and falls from the soul to the body. To awaken the soul, each person must take the simplest points and say them, not with intellectual analysis, but with an understanding that these are clear realities.

A Real Feeling and Clarity - Conditions for Uncovering the Soul

We will summarize. We made two points about the nature of the soul: 1) The soul can sense the spiritual-Hashem-as a reality, as opposed to the intellect, which only knows that there is a Creator, but doesn't sense Him. 2) The soul is in a "clear world."

Naturally, to awaken the soul, both of these conditions must be met: The person must clarify to himself to the extent possible that these facts are clear and lasting. For example, we mentioned the point that Hashem is our father. Just as one recognizes his physical father well, so in the spiritual world, one must contemplate and reach the awareness that Hashem is no less a "father" than one's own physical father! In fact, *Chazal* said (*Niddah* 31a), "There are three partners in man: Hashem, one's father, and one's mother." The parents supply the physical limbs, and Hashem blows in the soul of life.

The body recognizes its physical father, and so, precisely, must the soul recognize its spiritual father. In fact, it does! However, the soul is dormant. To awaken and uncover the soul, one must try to approach the awareness that the spiritual Father is every bit as real as the physical father.

The second condition needed to awaken the soul is that one should not have "doubtful lineage," not realizing Who his Father is. Just as in the physical realm, it is generally clear to a person who his father is, so must this be very clear in the spiritual realm. If there is not this degree of clarity, the soul cannot be awakened!

With such points, we may continue and try to uncover the soul. We will only employ very simple points, which are already known by the mind, as it says (*Devarim* 4:39), "And you shall know today."

These are at least superficially known by all, but the heart does not yet sense them. With them, we can try to awaken "and you shall settle it in your heart," so that anyone can uncover his soul.

If, however, we will need to delve into the depth of the concept, it is valuable for the *mitzvah* of Torah study, but for awakening simple faith, it will not be effective (except for people with subtle minds, as explained above).

The truth is that even in the material world, if one senses "taste" in something, he can repeat it many times.

For example, with regard to the sense of taste itself (the highest of the senses, as is written), if one enjoys a particular food, even if he already ate it many times, and there is nothing new about it now, such as eating fish every *Shabbos*, he nonetheless enjoys eating it each time.

A person can continue with a certain food for a long time, and the food will always taste pretty much the same, and yet he will desire it from week to week, and enjoy it.

Similarly, a person can hear a song which touches him deeply, and he is able to listen to it again and again, even tens of times. Although he is listening to the same recording, and there is nothing new from one time to the next, since the soul connects to it, it loves it!

We see, then, that even in the material world, if one enjoys something and finds it meaningful, he will want it again and again, and never tire of it.

Where is the root of the problem with regard to our *avodah*?

So that a person will want to review something again and again, he must live up to the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 33:4), "Taste and see that Hashem is good." When one feels this "taste," it will be no less enjoyable than a food enjoyed time and again.

The root of the problem is that as long as the soul is not exposed, it is difficult to sense this "taste" of Hashem. Even if one does sense it, it will be on very rare occasions. Naturally, it will be difficult for him then to use simple points time after time.

But simplicity will only be hard in the beginning. After one is privileged to achieve this "taste," he will be drawn after it like "iron to a magnet" (to use the words of the Ramchal in *Mesillas Yesharim*, ch. 1).

We have said that to awaken the soul, one must employ two powers: 1) the power of perception, to perceive the reality of the matter; 2) the matter must be clear in his mind. If there is no sense that the matter is real, or one does not have a clear idea about it, the soul cannot awaken.

From here on, we will try to use some simple and clear ideas, and clarify each point in detail.

What is the need for all this? Why must we go down to the smallest details?

As we have said, if the matter is heard superficially, and there is no absolute clarity, the soul cannot be aroused and uncovered. For example, Hashem is called "our Father." Every Jew who observes Torah and *mitzvos* knows and recognizes this description of Hashem. But we would stop a person and ask, "Your biological father is called your father because he caused your birth, but why is Hashem called your Father if he is not like your biological father? What is it about the relationship between Hashem and us that makes Him our Father?"

Some will respond that this is only an allegory, but the opposite is true. A human father is the allegory

for the Father in Heaven, but He is inherently our Father.

Some will respond that He is like a father because He has compassion like a father has on his children. This is correct, but not complete, because the compassion is only an outgrowth of fatherhood. A father is a father because that is the reality, and once he is a father, he naturally shows compassion. If we say that Hashem is a Father only because He is compassionate, we lose the real understanding of "Father."

So even an idea as simple as the fact that Hashem is our Father is not understood clearly, unless one has invested effort in study or heard something clear about it.

Let us consider, then, the true meaning of Hashem's Fatherhood, because we cannot even begin to work on awakening the soul with this concept until it becomes clear.

In summary, we will try to make every point clear, and we hope that Hashem will give us the privilege to awaken the soul to uncover the Creator among each and every one of us.

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