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בלבבי. חלק ה. פתיחה

Author's Preface to the Fifth Volume of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh (Do Not Skip This Introduction!)[1]

1.

The style of this *sefer* uses two approaches: one thing we will be doing a lot is to constantly review each point many times, and the other thing we will be doing throughout this *sefer* is to always talk to Hashem about everything.

If your *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) comes and tells you that this is something new and thus incorrect to do, know that this is a foolish argument. The method here is not new, and it is found as well in the last will and testament of the author of *sefer Yesod V'Shores H'Avodah*.

2.

We will quote here some of his words[2]: "My beloved son, I am writing you all this so that you can place your hearts towards this lofty *avodah* (service). We should always have a *tefillah* (prayer) prepared on our lips - whether a long one, or a short one - to the Blessed Creator. From all the *mitzvos*, only *tefillah* is called *avodah*. Therefore, my beloved son, remember and do not forget this lofty *avodah*. The *tefillos* which you utter must always come from your heart, and then they will surely be accepted by Hashem. Such a *Tefillah* comes to the heart of a person who greatly loves Hashem. This is the main will of Hashem in the creation of man on this lowly world; remember, my beloved son, and do not forget this *avodah*, and then you will be one of the true servants of Hashem."

He also writes[3], "It was always on the tip of my tongue to constantly mention Hashem, and even when I would learn Torah or daven or do a *mitzvah*, I would say it openly and happily, these three words: "You are my Creator!" I would see these three words many times, again and again, from longing for Hashem. After saying these three words, I would say, "My Creator, I believe wholeheartedly that You created all the upper and lower worlds, endless universes, and I am accepting Your G-dliness upon me. Before I would do a *mitzvah*, I would also say these words..."

3.

We do not mean here that we need to simply copy what the author of *Yesod HaShoresh V'Avodah* did.

First of all, only he could practice such a thing, because he was on a very exalted level. We do not

compare to him.

Also – and this is the main reason – when a person talks to Hashem, it has to come from within himself, and to copy someone else is being superficial, and it is almost pointless. Every person has to speak from his individuality – what a person says has to be from his own language, and he every person must also speak to Hashem from his heart, from his true inner desires, and not from his intellect. When a person just says what’s on his *mind* to Hashem, but he’s not talking from his **heart**, it is almost pointless. A person has to use his own original feelings for this, and not copy other people.

This is the basis of the entire method of this sefer – everything must come from within your own feelings, and not from copying others.

This point should be absorbed well, and it is the inner point of this whole sefer. ***Don’t just “copy” what the author is writing here*** – use your own language to speak to Hashem; I have only written here how to talk to Hashem so that reader can learn how to avoid certain mistakes when talking to Hashem. Please bear in mind this point and don’t forget it. Without remembering this point, there will be almost no gain from this sefer.

4.

In order to talk to Hashem, we must mention another introductory point, which we will be discussing a lot in this sefer.

One has to know that it is usually impossible to *immediately* begin talking to Hashem. First, a person needs to sit in solitude with himself, and arrange his thoughts properly. (Arranging one’s thoughts applies to every topic in this sefer, and it is a matter which also requires explanation. Without crystallizing our thoughts, a person’s way will lack foundation. These chapters, however, are not about how we can arrange our thoughts, but on the point of how we can talk to Hashem).

After one arranges his thoughts, he can then speak out detail after detail in his life to Hashem. But before a person does this, one needs to first build up his self properly, and this is done by being alone^[4]. Without building the self, a person might only be involved the whole time with matters that are outside himself, and he will not be experiencing himself.

(The truth is that Hashem is actually part of a person, because our soul is called a “piece of Hashem.” However, if a person doesn’t feel this, he views Hashem as a force outside himself).

Many times throughout this sefer, we will mention how one must arrange his thoughts and then speak to Hashem. However, we usually will not go into how to do this, because it would take too long to explain. But the reader should know that one must always arrange his thoughts properly before talking to Hashem, and only after that should he speak out everything. (On a higher level, it’s possible for a person to talk to Hashem directly even without preparing the thoughts beforehand. But this level can only come after many years, and even in this, not all situations are the same.)

That is the general rule – but for every rule, there are some exceptions to the rule. This can be, for example, when a person has a situation in which he cries out to Hashem out of a particularly painful situation that arouses him, and he doesn’t have much time to think beforehand about what he will say to Hashem. This is called *tzaakah*, (crying out), and in these situations, it is actually better not to think, and one should instead immediately daven to Hashem (The source for this is the possuk in Eichah (2:18), “*Their hearts cried out to Hashem.*”).

These matters are very subtle and refined, and a person has to really know his situation well to consider if maybe this is indeed the case (that he doesn’t need to think at all, and that he just needs

to daven and cry to Hashem). For this, a person needs to know his soul well, and he also needs to know well what his specific situation. If one is truly seeking Hashem, he will arrive at the truth, for it is written, “Hashem will not hold back good from those who walk wholeheartedly.”[\[5\]](#)

5.

Another thing the reader should know is that this sefer does not bring a person to the ultimate goal of being a true *oived Hashem* (servant of Hashem) unless one uses his inner world. Let us explain what we mean.

A person has a soul, and the soul is covered with “garments” – which are our actions, our emotions, and our thoughts.[\[6\]](#) First a person needs to work with the garments over his soul and perfect them; one needs to perfect his actions, his emotions, and his thoughts.

After this, a person can then enter more inward – to the soul itself. This is the inner *d’veykus* (connection) one can have with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* – it is a *d’veykus* that is above our thoughts.[\[7\]](#)

This *sefer* mainly deals with the level of someone who is still working with the “garments” of his soul – not with the soul itself; after perfecting our “garments” of the soul, there is a more inner work to do, and this is how we reach our very soul. However, this higher stage is only meant for certain individuals to work on.[\[8\]](#)

6.

Many times throughout this sefer, we will be making use of a quality called *temimus* (simplicity, or wholeheartedness).

Many people think that *temimus* means that you’re not smart or unlearned. When a person has been used to learning for many years, he is used to deep analysis and taking matters apart intellectually, and thus he might view *temimus* as something to be frowned upon (see the introduction to *Mesillas Yesharim*). But the truth is that true *temimus* – not imaginary or temporary *temimus*, but real *temimus* – is something which is an awesome quality to have when it comes to serving Hashem, like it is written, “And you shall be wholehearted with Hashem.”[\[9\]](#) It is a very exalted quality to have, and it is actually very hard to attain, because most learned people do not have *temimus*.

We need **both** to be analytical as well as to have *temimus*. When people are used to being analytical, though, they naturally disdain *temimus*. It is indeed hard for a person to both be analytical as well as to have *temimus* at the same time, because the two concepts contradict each other. However, this is the goal of this sefer – that a person should both be very learned and sharp, as well as to be very simple in his relationship with Hashem, relating to Him with childlike innocence.

7.

When a person doesn’t have *temimus*, he will think that this sefer is for unlearned people, or that it is for people who were born with *temimus* as a natural part of their personality. But the truth is that real *temimus* comes from the depths of the soul, and it is a very deep intellectual awareness as well for anyone who believes in it. Real *temimus* is not foolish naiveté. The purpose of a Jew is two-fold: to become a *Talmid Chochom* (Torah scholar) who can think sharply, balanced with the quality of a strong *temimus* with Hashem – “as an infant upon its mothers lap.”[\[10\]](#)

The quality of *temimus* was epitomized by Yaakov Avinu, who was called an *ish tam*, “a wholesome man.”[\[11\]](#)

8.

The *Mesillas Yesharim* (chapter 18) describes how a person can have a false kind of piety, in which a person acts very piously and devout, but it's all because he is unlearned, and how such a person makes others think that being pious means to be foolish, which in turn makes people look at piety with disdain.

The same can be applied to the quality called *temimus*. When people act with *temimus* but they do not act in compliance with the Torah and they are unguided, they cause others who see them to think that *temimus* is a sign of fools. This results in a misconception toward *temimus*, which is really a holy quality by essence (when it is done with guidance). This is part of the plan of the *yetzer hora*, who seeks to distance people from the truth; it shows people that *temimus* must be something that only blundering fools must be into, and not for people learned in the Torah.

Don't fall into its argument. Build up your inner world. This is the two-fold mission you have: make sure you are rich in Torah knowledge, and learn the Torah very in-depth; but with this, make sure you also acquire for yourself a deep and stable kind of *temimus*\wholeheartedness with your Creator.

This is the goal of this sefer: to bring a person close to his Creator using a holy kind of *temimus* - the power to have wholehearted simplicity towards Hashem - and not to act with foolish naiveté, which is a base kind of *temimus* that stems from the animalistic part of the soul (the *nefesh habehamis*).

May Hashem merit us to reach the holy kind of *temimus*.

[1] This chapter deals with the fundamental Avodah that the Rov frequently stresses: *Hisbodedus* (Jewish meditation). There are several places in which the Rov discusses this Avodah; it might be helpful to see those other sections and see which kind works best for you: *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*, Volume IV, Chapters 3-5; the *derashah* entitled "Heart of the Jewish Woman," and most notably in his recent series given to women, "Getting To Know Your Individuality". The English translations of these *sefarim**derashos* are all available at www.bilvavi.net/englishtranslations. [1]

[2] *Tzavooh of Baal HeYesod V'Shoresh H'Avodah (11-12)*, printed in *sefer Yesod V'Shoresh H'Avodah*

[3] *ibid*, 34

[4] This is called the power of "levad"; see *Getting To Know Your Self* by this author.

[5] *Tehillim* 84: 12

[6] *The actions are the outermost garment of the soul, and they cover over the emotions. The emotions cover over the thoughts, and the thoughts cover over the essence of the soul. By penetrating the garments, we can arrive at the core of our soul. We need to first perfect our actions,*

which is our most external garment of the soul. Then we need to perfect our emotions, and then we need to perfect our thoughts. When we perfect our thoughts, we have bypassed all the garments of the soul, and it is then that our very soul can be reached. This is explained in "Getting To Know Your Self."

[7] *In other words, it cannot be reached by "thinking" about it.*

[8] *In the Hebrew version of this sefer, the author writes that some of these matters are mentioned in the last two sections of the sefer (which have not been translated in English, due to its high level content), but that these matters can only be understood by rare individuals. **Editor's Note:** In sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh: Sukkos (page 101) the author writes that there are two parts to Hisbodedus: an external stage, and a later, internal stage. The first stage of Hisbodedus, which is the external stage, is for one to silence his five soul garments: the actions, the speech, the feelings, the thoughts, and the will. The later, internal stage of hisbodedus is to feel alone with Hashem, and this is the stage in which one can reach his inner self. The author writes that in our times, there is almost no one who totally reaches his inner self, as all all the five soul garments must be silenced in order to reach the self, and few can do this. But the more and more we silence our soul garments, the closer and closer we are to our inner self - and thus the more we learn how silence our psyche (actions, speech, feelings, thoughts and will), the more and more we get in touch with our true self.*

[9] *Devorim 18: 13*

[10] *Tehillim 131: 2*

[11] *Beraishis 25: 27*

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Links

[1] http://bilvavi.net/english_trans