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בלבבי ז. אמונה ותשובה עמ' ו

Preface: The State That Is Above Free Will

The sefer *Pri Tzaddik*^[1] describes a concept called “*ohr olam habah*” (the light of the World To Come), in which we will enter a state that is above our *bechirah* (free will – the state of *yediah* (knowledge of Hashem (in which there are no room for any questions, and thus there is no possibility of choosing evil, because the truth is so clear).

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

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

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

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

There is a middle part of our soul in between the lower and higher layers, and it serves to help us transform our *Yeish* into our *Ayin*; that we are able to transform our egotistical existence and instead come to negate our sense of self, attached only with thoughts about Hashem and doing His will.^[2]

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

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

In this state - *Ayin* – a person reaches a level in which there is no need for him to do *teshuvah* (repentance). Just as the *mitzvos* will go away in the future, so is it possible for a person to reach a state in which his need to do *teshuvah* disappears (because he is so utterly connected to the sublime – he’s truly there.)

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

However, when a person is only at the lower level of his existence, *Yeish* (meaning, he still has not left

his ego yet) – he has to carry out *teshuvah* in all its details, because his the kind of existence he is living obligates him to do *teshuvah*.

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

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

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

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

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

Teshuvah By Realizing We Can Become Anew Again

There is another way to do *Teshuvah* from the perspective of *Emunah*, and it is described in *sefer Kedushas Levi*^[3]: “Each Jew must believe with perfect faith that every moment he receives vitality from the Creator, as Chazal say, that “*for every breath, Hashem is praised.*” Every second we exist, our life wants to escape us, but Hashem sends us new life every second to keep us alive. Since this is so, *teshuvah* can help for any person, because when a person does *teshuvah*, he believes that he is becoming a new creation.”

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

^[1] *Pri Tzadik, Vol. I, kedushas Shabbos, maamar 4.*

^[2] *In other volumes, the author explains (based on the sefarim hakedoshim) that our entire existence is made up of three stages. First we exist, which is Yeish. We must divest ourselves of our ego more and more, which is Ayin, when we feel like nothing. Ultimately, we must transform even our Ayin into our Yeish – our perfected form of existence, which will exist in the future. This will be a sublime kind of existence in which we recognize that our existence is all nothing, because we are completely integrated with Hashem. This is explained in Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh, Volume IX, Chapter Five.*

^[3] *Kedushas Levi, Eichah.*

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