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## Bilvavi Part 2 - Chapter 28 Simplicity

### ***Doing without questioning***

In this final chapter, we will deal with another concept, without which you cannot attain deveikus to Hashem.

People have all sorts of questions about life: They don't understand the Shoah (Holocaust). They wonder why one person suffers while another leads a happy life, and so on. There are many things they don't understand, and they ask, "Why is this so?"

A question implies that while some things are clear to a person, and therefore, he does not ask about them, there are certain other things that are confusing, about which he does ask.

But the truth is that the whole world is one big question. The answer to all the questions we might have is very simple: Hashem responds, "Don't ask questions!" On Pesach, there are questions and answers. Pesach is the first of the holidays, and the beginning of our avodah is based on questions and answers. But the last of the holidays in the yearly cycle is Purim, which shares the same numerical value as she'eilah (question, i.e., 336).

On Purim we rectify the problem of questioning. In the process of one's avodah, one enters deeper levels and yearns to reach the truth. He must then understand one thing: we don't ask "Why" about the world, we ask only "What?" - "What does Hashem request of me?"

One must know what his responsibility is, but he needs no answer as to why Hashem requires something or why He did a certain act. There are two profound reasons for this:

The first reason is that man is a creation and Hashem is the Creator, and we cannot even begin to understand anything about His acts. The attempt to understand His works - the mere thought of it - reveals the pathetic lowness of the created being who presumes he can understand it. We can't understand anything! We don't know why we wash our hands, why we must learn Torah, or why we must keep the mitzvos! We know what we must do, and we do it because we were commanded to!

Chazal ask, [\[1\]](#) "Why do we blow the shofar on Rosh HaShanah?" They answer, "the Compassionate One said to blow!" That is to say, we cannot question why we blow. Hashem said to blow, so we must blow, without asking questions!

We cannot understand anything! The only thing we can understand is that we must observe the 613 mitzvos of the Torah, the seven mitzvos ordained by the rabbis, and all the other details. Other than

that, we know nothing of Hashem's thoughts.

Our avodah in Torah is to understand what we can, but we must realize that we don't understand the essence of the Torah. Why, then, must we engage in the study of something that we cannot fully grasp in any case? The real answer is that Hashem said we must learn! If He would have said, "Count from morning to night, '1, 2, 3, 4...' until reaching a certain number, and then go to sleep, that is exactly what we would have to do! Why would Hashem want us to count? I don't know, but if He had ordered it, we would do it!

Hashem did not order us to count from morning to night, but He did order us to learn Torah and keep the mitzvos, and that is why we do so! What does He get out of our Torah and mitzvos? It really makes no difference! We can't really understand why we learn Torah or do mitzvos, or why there is even a world, but Hashem tells us, "Listen to what I say, and do it!"

Another reason we should not seek answers to such questions is that every moment and every faculty we have received are given to us so that we can serve Hashem. If we use our time and energy to figure out why things are as they are, we are investing them in matters other than Hashem's will. Hashem does not ask us to understand why; He only says, "Do!" When a person asks a lot of questions, he is wasting his precious time and energy.

Thus, there are two general reasons why we should not ask such questions: (1) We cannot receive answers, because a mortal cannot understand such concepts with his intellect. (2) Our resources and time are limited, and we must utilize them for their intended purpose. Every moment must be devoted to serving the Creator, and if He has not commanded us to ask such questions, it is a waste of time to do so!

### ***Comprehending that I cannot comprehend***

This principle cannot just be heard once if it is to be adequately absorbed. It is not enough to intellectually be aware of the fact that we cannot understand Hashem's ways. We have a heart of stone, which always demands to understand.

We must take this desire for understanding and nullify it. Although the nature of the heart is to understand, our avodah is to understand only what Hashem wants us to understand. Beyond that, there is no need to understand anything! The very desire to understand is a fault!

Although we find that the sefarim hakedoshim do explain much about Hashem's ways, we must know that those explanations are meant only for one who has not yet perfected himself. If we do not give explanations to calm his heart, his heart will oppose the ways of the Creator, and he will not be able to progress in his avodah.

Therefore, in the beginning, we must explain to the heart, just as on Pesach we ask questions and give answers. But you must know that this is not the goal; it is only a means, in order to calm the heart while one is on the path! You can utilize information from these sefarim to answer particular questions that bother you. Question: "Why would such a terrible thing happen?" Answer: "It is to rectify a certain sin." Question: "Why did that tragic event happen to him?" Answer: "It is to rectify something from the previous gilgul...."

But if one asks why he was punished, and is not calmed until he learns that he is punished for a certain sin or a previous gilgul, he does not possess simple faith in the Creator! What difference does the answer make to you? Did Hashem do it? Yes! Does He know what He is doing? Yes! Then why must you know His reason?

If you wonder, "Now that I have suffered, perhaps I need to correct something," that may be an appropriate request. But there is no place for merely asking, "Why did this happen to me?" All the explanations written in sefarim are just to calm a person who is still progressing in avodah. But when you want to reach the deepest level of avodah, "the goal of knowledge is to know that we do not know." You must comprehend that you cannot comprehend anything.

This work of understanding in our heart that we cannot understand is an inherent contradiction to the heart's deepest desire to be a lev meivin, an understanding heart. The nullification of one's sense of knowing is essentially a nullification of a created being's natural yearning. But this itself is the secret of transcendence: To the extent that one nullifies himself and literally becomes his emunah, he is no longer a separate creation, but rather an agent of the Creator. But if he insists on understanding things and tries to fit Hashem's acts into human containers (our way of thinking), he separates himself from Hashem and cannot be one with Him.

Every one of us must eventually reach this level of emunah, but the question is if it will be in this world or the next. The path to this level is long, and you must first fulfill all that has been presented up to this point, but the ultimate goal is to realize that you are here for one purpose: to do the will of Hashem and to understand that you cannot understand!

This comprehension that you cannot comprehend is an awesome level that only very few people truly attain. Many can say the words, "I understand that I don't understand," but their hearts completely contradict that affirmation.

### ***"Be Simple - with Hashem your G-d."***

If one is truly on the level where he is not bothered by the fact that he does not understand, then, even if suffering does come to him, not only will he not be angry, but he will have no questions! He will say to Hashem, "Even if this suffering does not rectify any sins, I am not troubled. If You did this, Hashem, it must be perfectly fine!"

As long as one seeks answers, he is far from this level. If, when experiencing some form of suffering, one thinks, "Thank G-d, this is rectifying my sins" (or, as people say, "an atonement for sins"), he should know that he is not yet on this level. If he thinks that suffering must atone for sins, and needs to calm his heart that way, he still has a desire to understand suffering.

A person must feel inside that he doesn't care why he suffers! One thing must be clear to him: Hashem sent the suffering, and He knows very well what He is doing! That is all there is to know! One need not understand anything else. Even if Eliyahu Hanavi would come and reveal to him that there is no such thing as reincarnation and rectification of sins (he wouldn't say that, because the sefarim hakedoshim have already stated these truths), he would not be bothered at all. It is clear that the One who brought the suffering was the Creator, and there are no questions on Him!

We are familiar with innumerable questions: "Why does that individual have such a hard time finding a spouse? Why does that kind person have financial troubles?" The truth is that there isn't even a single question in the world.

One must live with true simplicity with the Creator, as it says, "Be simple with Hashem your G-d."[\[2\]](#) A simple person has no questions. It is not that he doesn't understand enough to ask, because such a person is on the lower level known as "he who knows not how to ask." This simple person is on the level where he doesn't ask because he understands that there is no need to ask. He has no need to receive answers. He yearns only to do the will of Hashem, even without knowing reasons.

When a person lives this way, he reaches the inner state of simplicity. With simplicity, he has no

questions at all throughout life. By fulfilling, “Be simple,” he is “with Hashem your G-d” – in awesome deveikus!

### ***The inner recognition of “He said, and it came to be”***

As in all areas of middos, which exist both on the conscious and the subconscious levels, so, too, there are questions in the conscious mind and questions in the subconscious. Even if you think that you have no questions, you must check very deeply within: is there really nothing about life that bothers you, or are there certain details that do bother you?

If you feel emotional pain due to any problem in life, you are not yet fully at this level. Certainly, to reach this level, you need tremendous effort, and each person should take these ideas and progress with them as much as he can, but the goal is to live with simple emunah in the Creator without any questions. No matter what happens, you should truly accept it with joy, with the faith that “He said, and it came to be,” and Hashem knows what He is doing.

In the previous chapters, we dealt with emunah: “Chavakuk came and placed the mitzvos on a single foundation, as it says, [\[3\]](#) ‘the righteous man lives through his emunah.’” This is the inner sense of the emunah: there are no questions! This faith is not just the emunah that there is a Creator, and not just the sense of Hashem’s presence, but much more: an emunah that makes a person calm and serene his entire life!

As we said, the numerical value of Purim is 336, the same as that of she’eilah (question). It is also the value of shalev (serene), because when one nullifies all his questions, he has true serenity – “a repose of truth and faith, a repose of peace and serenity” (Shabbos afternoon tefillah). This is the deepest level that a created being can reach. At this level, one totally nullifies himself before Hashem. He asks no questions, but walks with Hashem with simplicity. The closer one is to the awareness that he can have no questions, and is always happy with Hashem’s actions, the closer he is to Hashem. The further one is from this awareness, the further he is from Hashem.

### ***The goal is one – “I shall walk before Hashem in the land of the living”***

Throughout this entire work, we have had one goal: to bring you to the state of being attached to the Creator. The reader must take one important message from this book: there is nothing to do in life other than to serve Hashem and truly become close to Him!

We must, of course, work with all the methods that have been presented at length, but the main impression you must receive from all of this information is that there is nothing to do in this world other than to serve Hashem! Anyone with a pure soul will feel in his heart the words of the wisest of men (Shlomo Hamelech), “Vanity of vanities, said Kohelles.” [\[4\]](#)

The Mashgiach, Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, zt”l, said that every Jew must write “with the blood of his heart” the passuk, “vanity of vanities, said Kohelles, vanity of vanities, all is vain.” It is not enough to just trust Shlomo Hamelech. Of course, we must trust our Sages, but you must really sense that there is nothing else that is worthwhile to pursue here in the world! It is normal to have a fleeting pleasure when eating, but you must in general have a tremendous sense that something is still missing from your life, a feeling that there is nothing to do here in the world other than to serve Hashem and become close to Him!

This does not only apply to people on a high level. Anyone who considers the world a bit sees all in a constant state of flux. Nothing has permanence. If someone has bright expectations about the material world, he must be very delusional. You must reach a simple discovery about life: either we serve Hashem, or we are lost even in this world!

We must instill this truth deep in our hearts. On one hand, there is nothing to do here, but on the other hand, there is much to do: we can become close to Hashem here in this world!

Our avodah must be based on one simple goal: to renounce the material side of the world while truly reaching the awareness that there is something significant to do here, namely, "I will walk before Hashem in the land of the living." This is all we can do here – to walk only with Hashem!

Certainly, the way to get there is through Torah and mitzvos and the methods we have discussed, but the goal is one: to live with the Creator. There is nothing else to do; either we live with the Creator, or we have nothing!

David Hamelech said, "Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, for You are with me."[\[5\]](#) If we don't live with the Creator, we are in the shadow of death. We have nothing.

One who thinks a little sees that our world is literally a valley of the shadow of death. Everything is like a fleeting shadow. If you have attained "for You are with me," you have everything; if not, you are totally empty.

Even if you have the gifts of this world, such as a family, it is nice, but that is not the goal! The goal is one: to use everything in this world for coming close to the Creator!

(The goal is one, but the means change from one person to the next. The pace one adopts for his own growth is not the pace required when guiding family members. Not everything written here is appropriate for everyone. It can be most harmful if you try to impose levels on your family for which they are not prepared. One significant distinction is that they are not necessarily as motivated to grow as you are. Therefore, their growth will be much slower. You must think very carefully about this when trying to guide them, and daven from the depth of your heart for success.)

May Hashem give us success in all of our avodah, and may each one of us receive from this book what he must (because there are certain points that might not be applicable to everyone). May we all have the privilege to become close to the Creator and please Him – as it says,[\[6\]](#) "Happy is he who is raised with the Torah, toils in Torah, and pleases his Creator" – and may we have the ability to draw every single Jew close to Him.

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[\[1\]](#) Rosh Hashanah 16a

[\[2\]](#) Devarim 18:13

[\[3\]](#) Chavakuk 2:4

[\[4\]](#) Kohelles 1:2

[5] Tehillim 23:4

[6] Berachos 17a

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