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(Summary: We have said that the way to fix the evil imagination stemming from our heart is through using the power of maaseh beraishis – returning each image to its original form. A second method we mentioned, in the last chapter, was to use the power of markiv, as we explained. A third method we mentioned, also in the last chapter, was to destroy the imagination at its root by entering the imagination itself. However, we mentioned that it is not the recommended approach for most people to take.)

Seder/Order and Dilug/Skipping

Let us continue to explain more ways how we can fix our imagination.

There exist two opposite abilities in Creation: *seder/order*, and *dilug/skipping*. We have in us an ability to give order to things, and we also have an ability to skip around between things. Let us explain.

Our mind's thought process (*machshavah*) thinks in an orderly fashion. This is really using the power of *seder/order*. But our imagination uses the opposite power – *dilug*, skipping. Our imagination skips and jumps around between one place and another. A person can be in one country and then with his imagination he imagines that he's in a different country. So imagination makes us jump from one place to another (it's in the imagination, of course, but it makes us jumpy in our minds).

As a result, our imagination is not powerful enough to be used for holiness, because it jumps around too much, and this needs to be repaired. The way we fix this is therefore to go in the opposite direction of our imagination: by getting used to giving order to things.

We need to develop our power of *seder*, giving order to things. Someone who tends to imagine more is jumpy in his mind; if he wants to improve this, he should get used to *seder* – in all of the three major parts of his soul: actions, speech, and thought. Therefore, the way to stop one's tendency to imagine is by having more orderly actions, orderly speech, and orderly thought.

Giving Order To Our Actions: Organizing The House

For example, he can clean his house up and make it neat. This gets a person used to having *seder* in his life. On Thursday afternoons, he should clean off the table in his house.

The point of these actions is to get used to more and more orderliness in his life.

When a person starts to act more orderly in his life, he will begin to see that his imagination has weakened, and it will feel like a miracle has happened in his life. But that's the power of *seder* - it can weaken our imagination.

Order In Our Talking

Another way to stop one's strong tendency to imagine is by speaking in a more orderly fashion.

When a person has a strong tendency to imagine, he tends to leave out words or letters in sentences he speaks, jumping around from one sentence to another, or just simply skipping letters in his sentences. It sounds like he has some communication problem, but there is a more inner reason for this. It's really because his soul is out of order, due to the strong amount of imagination in him that makes him do a lot of mental jumpiness.

To illustrate, there are many children who have *keriah* (reading) problems. Often, the problem is really stemming from the child's heavy amount of imagination, which is causing him to have more mental jumpiness.

(Sometimes it can be for a different reason. It could be because the child is actually very bright - and therefore he thinks too quickly, so he has trouble with the reading. Sometimes it can simply be that he's not concentrating, since he's thinking about something else. Every situation is different, and the father has to get to the root of what exactly is causing the problem, and these are three options of what the problem may be. But our point is that often, the child's reading problems are coming from *dilug*/mental jumpiness, a problem caused by imagining things a lot; and we are saying here to how to weaken our imagination, which will solve the problem at its root).

Practically speaking, one can work on this problem by getting used to reading slowly. This helps a person stop having *dilug*.

We are not simply giving advice here to how a *baal korei* can improve his *leining* by reading the words slowly. We are saying here a general method that can help all people with a tendency to imagine things, which results in a problem in how they talk; reading the words slowly. That will weaken the mental jumpiness.

Order In Our Thoughts

One should also learn how to give orderliness in our very thoughts. This is a deeper kind of internal work.

Someone who tends to imagine a lot is jumping around in his thoughts, from one topic to another, in the blink of an eye. It's a harder problem to fix. The *avodah* of giving order to our thoughts is a vast subject, and it takes hard work. Therefore, if someone finds this *avodah* to be too daunting, he can use the following easy method to start with.

One can begin to give order to his thoughts by simply reading the *Aleph Beis*, slowly - "*Aleph, Beis, Gimmel...*"

Or, one can get used to saying the words of the Gemara by heart. Either of these methods help a person give more order to his thoughts.

A method that can help even more is to go over the *sevaros* (logical understanding) in a *sugya* of Gemara, after learning it.

An even more helpful method is to repeat the *shakla v'tarya* (back-and-forth discussions) of the Gemara – not to say every word of the Gemara over by heart, but to simply say over the general outline of the sugya.^[1]

We have so far discussed how we can give order to our actions, our speech, and our thoughts.

Organized Vision

There is another solution which is more superficial and external than the above solutions, but it can be of help: to use our vision and look at things in an orderly fashion.

Usually, when a person looks at things, his eyes simply dart around in all directions, and there is no specific order to what he looks at. This is also a kind of *dilug* which can spur on a person's imagination and make him have mental jumpiness. If a person learns how to focus on what he sees, he will come to reduce his imagination from jumping around so much, and his imagination will become weakened.

To work on this, we can suggest that a person should look at something slowly, in steps, controlling how much he's seeing. For example, when the Torah is being lifted on Mondays and Thursdays for everyone in shul to look, a person can lift his eyes up slowly from seeing the bottom of the sefer Torah, all the way until the top of the Sefer Torah. This gives a person an idea of controlling his sight, giving him orderliness in what he looks at.

Our physical vision, by its very nature, is jumpy. Our eyes dart back and forth very fast, taking in the full sight of something right away. But we can learn to give some orderliness to what we see – by seeing something slowly, in steps, such as in the above example. This will weaken our imagination.

Often, children have a problem with focusing and concentrating. As we said, this can be because of too much *dilug* in the soul, which is being caused by his heavy use of imagination. If the child is taught how to control what he sees, in the manner we described above (taking in the vision of something slowly, and in steps), his concentration problems will slowly weaken with time. This is proven to be effective by anyone who has implemented this solution.

Coming Out of Our Imagination

The *Eitz HaDaas* contained an evil kind of daas, and this was really medameh/evil imagination. This is the depth of the curse of Adam, "*Earth you are, and to earth you shall return.*" In other words, it's hard for a person initially to come out of his "earth", which represents his earthly physicality. But we are able to disconnect more and more from our "earth" – from our connection to materialism – and come to weaken our imagination.

When a person makes any spiritual progress, it can only be if he has indeed weakened his imagination. Weakening the imagination is not just a side topic – it's the precedent of how we ascend in spirituality.

Someone who is living a more inner kind of life recognizes better what's going on in his soul, and he is able to recognize when his imagination is taking over. He is able to control his imagination by giving himself orderliness, in the ways we described, and he comes to weaken his imagination more and more. The more a person weakens his imagination, the more he will progress in all other areas of spiritual work as well.

Let us continue to the next step.

When Imagination Overtakes You, Remind Yourself of Hashem's Oneness

Before, we explained that our imagination works to take apart details and then combines various images or thoughts in our head, coming up with new information. Let us continue to discuss this.

We know that there exists a problem called stuttering. Stuttering is called "*megamgem*" in Hebrew, which comes from the word "*gam*" – also. This hints to us that when a person stutters, it's due to his imagination, which is seeking to take one thought and "also" another thought. This is the inner reason behind the problem of stuttering – it really comes from when a person "also" wants this and he "also" wants another thing. The solution for the problem will have to be to get rid of this attitude of *gam/also*.

The very attitude in a person that there is *gam/"also"* – the fact that a person can want things other than our goal of Creation – is a deviation from our goal. Hashem is One (*echad*), but when a person wants "more" and "more" things – which is something that his imagination spurs on – he is really distancing himself from the Oneness of Hashem, because he is basically thinking that there are things that are important to seek besides for Hashem. So the very attitude of *gam/"also"* contradicts the idea of *Echad/Oneness* of Hashem. Our purpose is to eventually arrive at *Echad/Oneness* of Hashem, and therefore, our evil imagination is a direct impediment to this, because it is the attitude of *gam/"also"*.

One can work on this by getting used to the concept we first spoke about in the beginning of this series, which is that our evil imagination is trying to break our limits. The solution for imagination-based problems is thus for a person to get used to having limits in his life. Evil imagination is drawing its power from wanting "more"/[od\[2\]](#) (or "also"/*gam*) It's a problem in the person that he is seeking to break his limits, and the way to fix this problem is by getting used to limits.

What we mean is as follows. There is only One Being in Creation – Hashem. Our general mission is for us to slowly more and more get closer to the Oneness of Hashem. Whenever we want things, we are really distancing ourselves from the Oneness of Hashem. This is the deep reason behind why we are meant to stay within our limits and not try to break our limits we were given. It is because our limits help us eventually reach the Oneness of Hashem, while breaking our rules and limits distances us from the Oneness of Hashem.

Therefore, when someone notices that his imagination is overtaking him and gaining control of him, he has a great opportunity. If he's in touch with his soul a bit, he is able to return his imagination to its source – the Oneness of Hashem. As he realizes that his imagination is at work, he can immediately stop imagining, by reminding himself that "there is only One in Creation: Hashem." In this way, one's imagination, which causes a person to want more and more things, returns to its Source; that there is only One whom we must desire - Hashem.

In Conclusion

We have mentioned some advice on how to fix the evil kind of imagination that stems from our heart. Some of the advice given here was very practical, and some of it was less applicable to most people, as we said. In the next chapter, with the help of Hashem, we will speak about the solution of a different kind of evil imagination (which we mentioned briefly before): imagined desires. This will complete the discussion.

[1] Refer to *Getting To Know Your Thoughts*, chapters 4 and 5.

[2] In a similar context, the Rov explained that imagination is fueled on by the attitude in a person of “od” (more); see Da Es Daatcha, Chapter 8: Four Ways To Fix Imagination.

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