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## Essence of the Month - 001 Nissan | Speech and Prayer

### ***Nissan - 'Head of The Months'***

Of the month of *Nissan*, the Torah writes, “*This month is to you, as the head of the months, the first of the months of the year.*” The month of *Nissan* is called ‘head of the months’; it is the time of the year when the Jewish people left Egypt. This has ramifications both in time as well as in our own personal soul.

We will try to explain the roots of this matter: what exactly the “head” of the months is that *Nissan* personifies.

### ***The Twelve Months of the Year: The Roots Of Our Soul***

In our soul, there are three [active] elements – wind, fire, and water. (Earth is the element which holds them together, but it is not active). There are also seven powers which branch out from the soul. The Vilna Gaon says that these seven powers are not intrinsic of the soul, and therefore it is possible for a person to part from them at times; whereas there are ‘intrinsic’ abilities of the soul that a person cannot part from [which includes 12 roots].

The seven [branching] abilities of the soul are: 1) *chochmah* (wisdom), 2) *oisher* (wealth), 3) *zera* (offspring), 4) *chaim* (life), 5) *memshalah* (dominion), 6) *shalom* (peace), and 7) *chein* (grace).<sup>[1]</sup>

Here we will not discuss these seven abilities; instead we will focus on the twelve essential roots of the soul, which are represented by each of the twelve months that span Nissan through Adar.

Furthermore, the Vilna Gaon lists a unique attribute to each month of the year: **(1)** *Nissan* is the month of *sichah* (speech). **(2)** *Iyar* is the month of *hirhur* (thinking). **(3)** *Sivan* is the month of *halichah* (walking). **(4)** *Tamuz* is the month of *re'iyah* (seeing). **(5)** *Av* is the month of *shemiah* (hearing). **(6)** *Elul* is the month of *maaseh* (action). **(7)** *Tishrei* is the month of *mishush* (touch). **(8)** *Cheshvan* is the month of *re'iach* (smell). **(9)** *Tevesis* the month of *rogez* (anger). **(10)** *Kislev* is the month of *sheinah* (sleep). **(11)** *Shevat* is the month of *l'eitah* (chewing/eating). **(12)** *Adar* is the month of *sechok* (laughter).

These are the words of our holy Sages, and it gives us the general picture of the 12 months of the year.

### ***Nissan: The Month of Speech***

*Nissan*, the first month, is the month of *sichah*, speech. The month of Nissan is called "first", which implies that it is the root of all the other months; if so, speech is the root of all the other abilities contained in the rest of the year.

We can see how speech is a common theme that runs throughout Pesach. On Pesach, we went free from Pharaoh. The word *Pharaoh* is from the words "*peh ra*", "evil mouth", implying that we were redeemed from evil speech [and gained the holy kind of speech]. *Pesach* is from the words *peh sach*, "a mouth that speaks." There is also a *mitzvah* on Pesach to tell over the story of the exodus, which uses our power of speech.

This is a month all about using the power of speech - and it is not a coincidence that it is like this.

Man is called "*medaber*", a social creature, and this is what sets him apart from other creations. The Jewish people in particular are called "*medaber*", for the Sages state that the Jewish people are called "*adam*" (man), whereas the other nations of the world are not called "*adam*"; and "*adam*" is synonymous with the term "*medaber*", being that "*adam*" is called "*medaber*". The month of Nissan, which contains the festival of Pesach, builds the particular aspect of the Jewish people that is "*medaber*": the power to speak.

It is written, "*And man became a living spirit*", and *Targum* translates this to mean that he became a *ruach memalelah*, a "talking spirit." This is referring in particular to the soul of a Jew, whom the power of speech is mainly manifest with, in contrast to the other nations of the world.

"*Yisrael v'oiraisa*" - the Jewish people are interconnected with the Torah; the two of these uphold the world's existence. The connection between the Jewish people and the Torah is through the power of speech. The *mitzvah* to learn Torah is specifically "*And you shall speak in it*".<sup>[2]</sup> It is a verbal kind of *mitzvah*, unlike all of the *mitzvos* which are fulfilled through an action.

The Jewish people personify the aspect of man that is *medaber*: the power to speak. There were Ten Commandments said by Har Sinai, where the Torah was given, parallel to the Ten Utterances of Creation.

Thus, the root of the entire year for the Jewish people begins with the month of Nissan. Nissan is the month of the conception of the Jewish people. Although the month of *Elul* is also considered the beginning of the year, that is true with regards to our actions; with regards to our speech, it is *Nissan* which is the root of the year, for the Jewish people.

Within the month *Nissan*, there is the festival of Pesach, which contains the words "*peh sach*", "a mouth that talks". It is the time of the year which builds each of the souls of the Jewish people, each of us on a personal level, with specific regards to our power of *medaber*\speech.

### **Three Kinds of Speech: 'Amirah', 'Dibbur', and 'Sichah'**

We find several terms for speech in the Torah. There is *amirah* (to speak softly), *dibbur* (to speak harshly), and *sichah* (conversation).

It is written, "*So shall you say to the house of Jacob [the women] and so shall you speak to the children of Israel [the men]*." *Rashi* explains that the women needed to be addressed in a softer manner, *amirah*, whereas men need to be addressed in a harsher manner, *dibbur*.

We find the difference between *amirah* and *dibbur* with regards to the difference between Creation and the Torah. The world was created through Ten Utterances, "*maamaros*", which is from the word *amirah*, whereas the Torah was given through Ten Commandments, "*dibros*."

A third form of speech is called *sichah* (conversation). The word *sichah* is contained in the word Pesach, which is from the word "*peh sach*" (a mouth that talks). The Gemara says that "There is no *sichah* except in prayer<sup>[3]</sup>, for it is written, "*Tefillah l'oni, ki yaatof, v'lifnei Hashem yishpoch sicho*" - "A prayer for the afflicted man when he swoons, and pours forth his supplications before Hashem."<sup>[4]</sup>

Thus, different kinds of speech are used, depending on the situation. The term "*dibbur*" is used in reference to Torah, whereas the term "*sichah*" is used in reference to *tefillah*, prayer.

Being that Nissan is called the month of *sichah*, it follows that it is a month of *sichah*\tefillah - times of speaking with Hashem, in prayer, in conversation.

What is the depth that lies behind this?

### **'Sichah': When There Is No 'Daas'**

In the Gemara, there is a *halachah* of '*masiach l'fi tumo*', "conversing casually": if two people are overheard talking with each other, and in midst of their casual conversation they mention certain facts about someone, we can rely on what has been overheard during this conversation and accept it as testimony in *Beis Din*, because there is no reason to assume that they are lying. The concept of *masiach l'fi tumo* is rooted in the term *sichah*.

Elsewhere, the Gemara says that ten measurements of *sichah* (talking) descended onto the world; nine of these measurements were taken by women." Here we also see a usage of *sichah*.

What is the depth behind this matter? It is because there are two kinds of speech [as we are about to explain].

The Gemara says that an impoverished person is one who lacks *daas* (knowledge of Torah).<sup>[5]</sup> There, the Gemara says, "*Dida bei, kula bei, u'do lo da bei, ma bei?*" - If one knows the Torah, he has everything, through it; and if he lacks Torah, what does he have?" The Gemara brings proof to this from the *possuk* we quoted before: "*A prayer for the afflicted man, when he swoons, and pours forth his supplications before Hashem.*"

So it is a lack of *daas* that epitomizes *oni*\poverty; and that being the case, the impoverished man, the *oni*, pours forth his *sichah* (supplications) in front of Hashem. Thus, we learn from this that '*daas*' is the opposite of '*sichah*' [so when there is no *daas* (knowledge), a person is left with nothing but *sichah* (conversation)].

We have learned thus far that *daas* is used in reference to knowledge of the Torah, whereas *sichah* does not flow from one's *daas*.

In learning Torah, the mitzvah to speak of Torah is *dibbur* ("And you shall speak in it") which comes from one's '*daas*'; as it is written, "*For the lips of the Kohen, guard daas*". This is referring to the Torah learning, which stems from his '*daas*'. The term '*daas*' is also associated with the concept of *hanhagah*, to lead [for Moshe Rabbeinu it is the epitome of *daas*, and he was granted the power of *hanhagah* over the Jewish people].

Thus, *daas* is the power of Torah, and it is the power which "leads"; and from *daas*, comes our *dibbur*, an orderly kind of speech which is fused by holy intellect of the Torah.

*Sichah*, however, is the lack of *daas*; as we brought before from the Gemara, an impoverished person is defined as someone has a poor amount of *daas*.

## ***Sichah: Speaking From The Heart, To Hashem***

If *sichah* doesn't stem from one's *daas*, where does it come from? The answer lies in the term, "*masiach l'fi tumo*" – "casual conversation" – it stems from 'tumo'<sup>[6]</sup>. This does not stem from one's *daas*.

*Sichah* does not come from *daas*; it comes from the *lev*, the heart. The Sages said that "Words that come from the heart, enter the heart." This is the essence behind the power of *tefillah*\prayer. In contrast, learning the Torah uses a completely different ability: the ability of *daas* (knowledge). Torah is all about *daas*, whereas *tefillah*\prayer is all about an absence of *daas*.

*Sichah*, the power of the month of Nissan, is the concept behind its festival, Pesach. Leaving Egypt (Pesach) was the beginning of our path, and we ended it when stood at Har Sinai to receive the Torah (Shavuos). So our path began with *sichah*, with Nissan\Pesach – a month in which our power of *tefillah* was revealed – and it ends with *daas*, with the giving of the Torah\the festival of Shavuos, in which we received the Ten Commandments, the *dibbur*\speech that stems from *daas*.

The exodus from Egypt did not take place due to the merit of the Torah, for the Torah was not given yet. It was entirely achieved through prayer! Of course, they had Torah learning as well, for the Sages state there was a *yeshivah* in Goshen. But there was no giving of the Torah yet, so there wasn't enough of a level of Torah for them to be redeemed. It was prayer which redeemed us from Egypt: "*And their supplications arose.*"

When Moshe told the people that they would be redeemed soon, they did not listen, from their "*koitzer ruach*" – they were "short of breath." In other words, they were not yet connected to *daas*; they could not yet connect to the words of Moshe, who is *daas*, for they had not reached *daas* yet.<sup>[7]</sup> They were at the level of *tefillah l'oni*, "A prayer for the afflicted man." Although they certainly possessed *dibbur*\speech, it wasn't a *dibbur* of the giving of the Torah yet, and instead all they had in them was their ability to cry out to Hashem in prayer: "*And their supplications arose.*"

Every year, when the month of Nissan returns, this power of *sichah*\*tefillah* (earnest prayer and conversation with Hashem) comes back with it. It is the power which brings us redemption; it returns to us every year, enabling us a new chance each year to merit redemption.

### ***Telling Over The Story of the Exodus: The Power of 'Sichah'***

In the *Hagaddah*, we say, "Even if we were all wise sages, even if we were all understanding, it is an obligation to tell over the story of the exodus from Egypt." There are many explanations of this matter, but we will present an explanation of this according to the lines of our discussion.

Telling over the story of the exodus – *sippur yetzias mitzraim* – is not a *mitzvah* accomplished through the powers of our intellect. It is very unlike the *mitzvah* of learning Torah, in which we use our powers of the intellect, *chochmah* and *daas*. The *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias mitzraim* it is reminiscent of the concept we brought earlier from the Gemara: the idea of "*masiach l'fi tumo*" – "casual conversation". It is a kind of simple speech, which flows from pure earnestness in ourselves, and not from the area of the rational intellect.

"*Even if we were all wise sages, even if we all understand, it is an obligation to tell over the story of the exodus.*" This *mitzvah* is not dependent on being a Torah scholar or not! It is not about wisdom. It is about being able to tell over the story just as when you are having a casual conversation, simply, earnestly – '*masiach l'fi tumo*'.

### ***Nissan, The Tribe of Yehudah, and Temimus\Earnestness***

The month of Nissan is explained in our *sefarim hakedoshim* as being represented by the tribe of Yehudah[8]. Upon the birth of Yehudah, our matriarch Leah expressed her gratitude to Hashem, “*This time I thank Hashem.*” [We will explain the depth behind this matter].

There are two roots of the twelve tribes: Rachel and Leah. Yaakov Avinu possessed two uniquely different qualities: he is called the ‘*ish tam*’, (wholesome man), which refers to his power of *temimus*\earnestness, and he is the one whose “hand grips onto the heel of Esav”, which refers to his power of destroying Esav in the future. The two main wives of Yaakov Avinu, Rachel and Leah, received one of these two powers.

Yosef, the son of Rachel, received Yaakov’s power to destroy Esav in the future. In one of the prophecies about the future, Yosef is compared to a fire that will destroy the “straw” that is Esav. This is not the *temimus* of Yaakov Avinu; it is Yaakov’s other power, his power to destroy Esav, and it is essentially this power which Yosef received from the Torah that he learned from his father Yaakov. It was Yehudah who received the *temimus* from Yaakov Avinu. His mother Leah thanked Hashem upon his birth, which hints to the *sichah*\*temimus* which she connected to in Yaakov and received from him.

So Yosef received the *chochmah* (wisdom) from Yaakov Avinu, while it is Yehudah who received the *temimus* (earnestness) from Yaakov Avinu. Yosef received the Torah from his father Yaakov Avinu, through *daas*. This enabled him to receive the *chochmah* of Yaakov Avinu. But Yehudah received from Yaakov Avinu the power of *temimus*.

The power of *temimus* is a whole different kind of understanding. It is written, “*Toras Hashem Temimah, meshivas nafesh*” - “the Torah of Hashem is complete, it settles the soul.”

This concept does not mean to imply that Torah\*daas* and prayer\*temimus* are separate from each other, *chas v’shalom*. Rather, it means that there is a part of Torah which is attained through *daas*, and there is a part of Torah which is attained through *temimus*.

The power of the month of Nissan, which is *sichah*, is essentially the power that is identified with “*temimus*” (earnestness). [Thus, *sichah* flows from our *temimus*.]

### ***The Holy and Evil Uses of ‘Temimus’***

The power of *temimus* exists both in the side of holiness as well as in the side of evil. So there is a good and holy way to use *temimus*, and there is also a negative connotation of *temimus*.

The negative implication of *temimus* implies a lack of *daas* when it is detrimental to the person. Chazal say, “Women have light *daas*”, therefore, women naturally have more *temimus*, because they are less inclined towards *daas*. But when there is a lack of *daas*, a person will develop an uneducated and foolish kind of earnestness, [“pseudo-*temimus*”], such as becoming naïve and other negative attributes. This is an evil [and undeveloped] kind of *temimus*.

In contrast, the holy kind of *temimus* is to be an “*ish tam*”, as it was said of Yaakov Avinu - which implies *shleimus*, wholesomeness and completion. A *tam* is an unblemished animal, whereas a *baal mum* is a blemished animal; thus the term “*tam*” implies being whole and perfect.

Many people think that *temimus* is a negative term, something that implies foolish naiveté. But *temimus* is an entirely different idea than how most people think of it. *Temimus* is indeed superficial when it stems from a simple lack of *daas*. Such *temimus* flows from incompleteness. It is holy when it stems from the power to be wholesome and perfect, and to be earnest from that place in oneself; such *temimus* is stemming from completion.

It is brought in the words of the Sages that Yaakov Avinu's 'wholesome image' is carved into the Throne of Glory. Elsewhere, the Gemara says that the beauty of Yaakov Avinu was reminiscent of the body of Adam HaRishon. The meaning of this is that Yaakov had reached *shleimus*, completion, which was symbolized through his trait of being an *ish tam*; in that way, he resembled Adam HaRishon, the epitome of perfection [before the sin].

### ***Prayer - Standing Before The King: A Glimpse At Shleimus\Completion***

The Sages said that "There is no *sichah* (conversation) except prayer." [9] Prayer is to "stand before the King". All creations are lacking; no one is complete. There is only One who is complete: *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. When one truly stands before Hashem in prayer, he is coming into contact with a *hakarah* (recognition) of what it means to view *shleimus* (completion). In contrast, one who does not "stand in front of the King" is one who does not have any recognition of *shleimus*.

When one truly senses that he is before Hashem as he prays, he recognizes the reality of Hashem's existence. His heart is alive and awake to the fact that Hashem resides in his heart. That is the true, inner definition of "standing in front of the King". He can then feel what *shleimus* is.

Of course, even with this perception, that doesn't mean that the person has reached *shleimus*. There is no such thing as a perfect person, so it is impossible to actually reach *shleimus*. But at least one can have a recognition of what it is.

When one is engaged in prayer, he is aware that he is lacking, and that the Creator is the complete One who can fill whatever he lacks. In *Shulchan Aruch*, it is brought that one should reflect upon the greatness of the Creator and on the lowliness of man, as a prerequisite to prayer. However, this does not mean for a person to simply compare his lowliness to that of the greatness of the Creator (which is also true, on the simple level). It is deeper than that: it is for one to realize that Hashem is perfect and complete, while I am lacking and incomplete. That is the perception which must accompany one's feelings as he prays.

This is the true depth of "standing in front of the King": to recognize that I am lacking, while Hashem is complete. This is the depth behind all of prayer.

When a person is praying with this perspective, his prayers to Hashem are not stemming from a mere will to complete what he lacks, for that would not be '*sichah*.' Rather, '*sichah*' is to be like "*the afflicted man when he swoons, and pours forth his supplications in front of Hashem.*" It is to recognize that "I am lacking, for I recognize that I am in front of Hashem - Who is perfect", because that allows me to recognize what *shleimus* is.

*Sichah* is to be '*masiach l'fi tumo*'. The more a person is lacking, the more he will pray to Hashem, and that is true; but this is not yet the depth of prayer. The depth of prayer is for one to recognize that he stands before Hashem, and from that perception, one prays. This is the *sichah* that is *tefillah*: "*masiach l'fi tumo*", to be able to let the words flow casually and freely, in recognition of the perfect *temimus* of Hashem.

### ***'Temimus' Stems From 'Shleimus'***

So we must not have the mistaken notion that *temimus* is to simply lack *daas*. It is rather to recognize what *shleimus* is; out of a recognition that I stand before Hashem, aware that He is complete and perfect, which means that I am not complete.

When *temimus* does not come from this perspective, such *temimus* is the kind of *temimus* that came about after the sin of Adam, a *temimus* which connotes deficiency, and such *temimus* is not holy.



Only the *temimus* that stems from “*In front of Hashem, he pours out his supplications*”, is the *temimus* which comes from the depths of [recognizing] *shleimus*.

### ***The Incomplete, Facing The Complete***

When we were enslaved in Egypt and we cried out to Hashem to be saved, such prayer stemmed from how we felt lacking in our situation. Therefore, it did not represent the depth of our salvation from Egypt. The redemption from Egypt is rather epitomized by the possuk, “*I, Hashem, am going out, amidst Egypt.*” When Hashem revealed Himself at the end of the plagues, this was the apex of the exodus; it was what made that night into Pesach. From this episode came our redemption.

Egypt is *Mitzraim*, from the word *meitzar*, “confinement”, which implies a situation in which we are missing and lacking. When Hashem revealed Himself in Egypt at the end of the plagues, this was the revelation of perfection amidst all that was lacking. It was the revelation of the Endless amidst the limited and confined. It was the stark contrast of the absolutely complete against the backdrop of the utterly incomplete.

It is not by coincidence that Hashem chose to reveal Himself in that manner. It was to show us that as we are aware of our own incompleteness, we need to view what Completion is. On one side of the coin, we must be aware of our deficiencies, and on the other side of the coin, we must be aware of the great Perfection that exists: the perfection of the Creator. This is the depth behind prayer.

It is not Torah which reveals this perspective; it is only prayer where this concept is revealed. Torah is all about perfection, for it is perfect and complete, whereas prayer is all about the incompleteness of man. In the exodus of Egypt, we were utterly incomplete and lacking, and we came into contact with perfection: the revelation of Hashem, amidst all the incompleteness we were in. It was not about just revealing the state of perfection or about showing us how incomplete we are. None of these alone is the lesson. Rather, the purpose of it was to show us how the incomplete must recognize that which is Complete.

In the laws of telling over the story of the exodus, the *Rambam* writes that we must “begin with disparage, and end with praise.” [We begin the *Hagaddah* by saying how dismal the Jewish people had become, and we end with praise, describing the greatness which we became.] This is the idea of the concept we are describing, in which perfection is revealed amidst incompleteness.

This idea is what lies behind prayer: for one to recognize that because Hashem is perfect, I am lacking, as I stand before Him. It is that perception which truly enables one to pray and pour out his heart to Hashem. It is not simply for one to feel that he is lacking; although it is certainly true when one prays, he needs to feel that he is lacking. It is to recognize that because *Hashem is perfect*, I am not, therefore, I pray. [Thus, the main emphasis of a person during prayer should therefore be, on the fact that “Hashem is perfect”, as opposed to dwelling on one’s own imperfections].

For this reason, the entire *Shemoneh Esrei* is composed as a public prayer, and not in the private and individual language. It is because prayer is not about turning to Hashem from my own personal imperfections; rather, it is that because we turn to Hashem, from there, we recognize how lacking we are.

### ***The Difference Between “Daas” and “Temimus”***

During this time of the year – the month of Nissan, and on Pesach specifically, we can reach the depth of the power of *sichah*.

*Sichah* is also from the word ‘*shach*’, to bend, to be lowered. The Gemara learns out that *shechitah*

(ritual slaughter) on animals is the place of the body which is “*shach*”, a part of the body which bends over, which is the neck<sup>[10]</sup>. We also find this term with the word ‘*shiach*’, a burrow in the ground, which is a low place. *Sichah* is thus about lowering oneself and being subservient.

The Sages praise one who lowers himself “like an animal” and is able to engender high qualities of character because of this. This is referring to the trait of *temimus*. It does not come from a lack of *daas*; to the contrary, it comes from *shleimus*, from perfected character.

*Shleimus* – self-perfection – is not able to be achieved through *daas*. Our *daas* is limited. Even Moshe Rabbeinu, who achieved the highest level of *daas* possible, was only able to comprehend as far as his *daas* could understand. It was his *daas*; it was not the *daas* of the Creator. *Daas* can understand only so much, but it cannot grasp the plane of *shleimus*. Only through *tefillah*\prayer, which stems from *temimus*, can a person reach *shleimus*.

This is because *temimus* is above *daas*. It can be said that at the point where *daas* ends, that is where *temimus* begins.<sup>[11]</sup> Therefore, one’s *temimus* can grasp perceptions that his *daas* cannot grasp.

The Egyptian exile is called the “exile to our *daas*.”<sup>[12]</sup> It follows, then, that the redemption from Egypt meant that our *daas* had been redeemed. Yet, besides for this aspect, there was even deeper revelation: the revelation of our power of *sichah*\*temimus* – which is higher than *daas*.

### ***Telling Over The Story Of The Exodus, All Night Long: The Power of “Sichah\Temimus”***

The *mitzvah* to tell over the story of the exodus, ideally, is meant to span the entire night of the *seder*, for as long as one is capable of doing so. This is the spiritual light that is *temimus*: the state of perfection that was revealed from Hashem’s Presence appearing in Egypt, the peak of our exodus. The *mitzvah* to tell over the story of the exodus is not something you read, hear, or merely “learn”. It comes from a deep recognition in our souls of “*I, Hashem, will go out, in the midst of Egypt.*”

The deeper the recognition of this, the deeper the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of the exodus will become.

### ***From Pesach To Shavuos: From “Temimus” To “Daas”***

These days of the month of *Nissan* are days in which we have the special opportunity to acquire the power of *sichah*. Through our power of *daas*, we cannot reach anything perfectly, because *daas* cannot reach *shleimus*, as we explained. *Shleimus* can only be reached when a person has a recognition of it, which comes from his *temimus*.

When Shavuos comes, it is the time to accept the Torah, and the Torah is a “*Toras Hashem Temimah*”, a Torah that requires *temimus*. It is written, “*Wisdom, from where is it found?*” The *posuk* is saying that the source of all *chochmah*\wisdom is *ayin*, “nothingness”, which is really referring to the *temimus* that must precede all of the *chochmah* of the Torah. It is *temimus* which is the deep source of all *chochmah*. If one has reached *temimus* on Pesach, he has the prerequisite to be able to receive the Torah on Shavuos.

The next month, *Iyar*, contains the power called ‘*hirhur*’, deep and reflective thought. If *hirhur* is not preceded with this *sichah*, though, then *hirhur* becomes superficial: one will only be thinking about various personal issues that are not of real importance.

The true way to prepare to receive the Torah is only through *temimus*: to recognize the *shleimus* of Hashem. “*Remember the day in which you stood before the mount of Sinai*” – the deeper meaning of this is that Torah must first be nursed from an inner source: from “standing at Har Sinai.” In other



words, in order to accept the Torah and learn its wisdom, one must first have some recognition of perfection: to view the perfection of the Creator.

*“Follow after Me, into the desert.”* This is referring to the *temimus* which a Jew must have towards Hashem: to realize that Hashem is perfect and complete, so I will follow Him, wherever He takes me and wherever I must go.

The essence of Pesach, besides for its many other aspects and *halachos* which are also important, is this concept: to be *‘masiach l’fi tumo’*, to let our conversations with Hashem flow, freely and naturally, from our point of *temimus*.

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[1] In different terminologies, the seven powers of the soul are known as *chesed* (kindness) *gevurah* (restraint) *tiferes* (harmony) *netzach* (eternity) *hod* (beauty), *yesod* (foundation), and *malchus* (royalty). In a different system, the seven are known as *chessed\ahavah* (kindness\love), *gevurah\yirah\din* (restraint\awe\judgment) *rachamim* (compassion), *nitzuach* (victory), *hodaah* (nullification), *hiskashrus* (connection) and *shiflus* (lowliness).

[2] Editor’s Note: We also find that the mitzvah to learn Torah is fulfilled mentally, when one “thinks in learning”, and indeed, thought is the essence of Torah, as the Rav explains in many places. (See Getting To Know Your Thoughts – Chapter 3). However, there is also a specific command of the Torah to not only learn the Torah and to delve in it, but to speak of it.

[3] Berachos 26b

[4] Tehillim 102:1

[5] Nedarim 41a

[6] Editor’s Note: Later in this *shiur*, it will be explained that *“tumo”* is referring to *“temimus”* – “earnestness.” It will also be explained that *temimus* does not stem from our *daas*, and it is rather ‘above’ our *daas*.

[7] Editor’s Note: This is in line with the words of the *Arizal*, that the Egyptian exile was an “exile of the *daas*”. In **Pesach #002 (Redeeming Our Soul)**, the Rav elaborates further upon this concept of “exile of the *daas*.”

[8] There is an entire series devoted to explaining the avodah of the 12 months of the year based on each of the 12 tribes; see **Tribe of Rosh Chodesh #001 - Nissan -Yehudah**

[9] Berachos 26b

[10] Chullin 27a

[11] Editor's Note: This statement is reminiscent of a statement of Rav Dessler, "In the place where *seichel* (intellect) ends, that is where *emunah* (faith) begins."

[12] A statement of the *Arizal*. For further elaboration of this concept, see ***Pesach #002 - Redeeming Our Soul***

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**Source:** <http://bilvavi.net/english/essence-month-001-nissan-speech-and-prayer>