

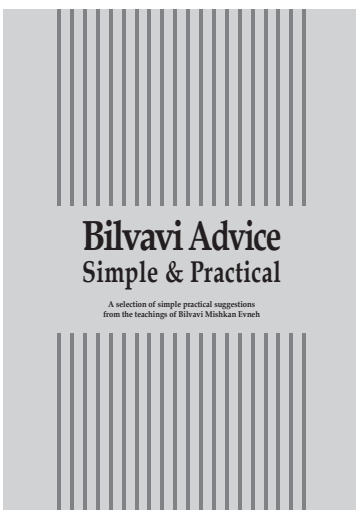


Bilvavi Advice

Simple & Practical

A selection of simple practical suggestions
from the teachings of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh





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The author of the Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh (*Building a Sanctuary in the Heart*) series has written extensively on a vast range of subjects in all areas of serving Hashem.

The approach is to reach the inner wisdom which is the deep root of each subject and then to explain the myriad details that enhance that inner wisdom.

This booklet focuses on small and specific portions from the Bilvavi sefarim which, over time, will help the learner build the broader picture which is the heart of the matter.

Choose a daily source of strength and renewal from among these selected practical suggestions:

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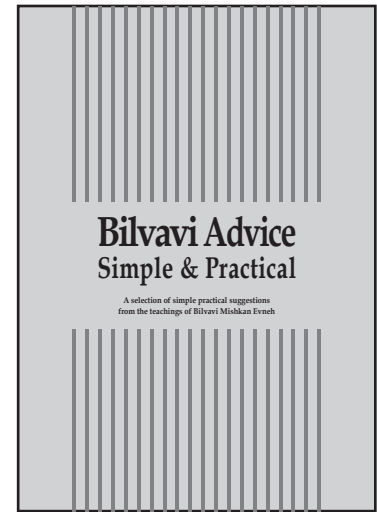
Bilvavi Part One Chapter One ♦ Clarifying the Purpose of Life

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כלבבי-הלך א' 001-008
מספר סדרה בקול הלשון 81062
Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter One
Clarifying the Purpose of Life

1 The primary task of a person's service of Hashem is to clearly identify the purpose of his life.... a person knows that he must keep the 613 *mitzvos*, service of Hashem is not merely the fulfillment of unrelated *mitzvos* whenever they present themselves. Rather, the 613 *mitzvos* must be fulfilled as if one is building an edifice, so that the *mitzvos* will build a person properly.... a person must clarify how fulfilling *mitzvos* builds his soul, and what process to follow in order to achieve this. (#1)

The primary task of a person's service of Hashem is to clearly identify the purpose of his life

2 What, in truth, is the purpose of a man in his world? The words of the *Mesillas Yescharim* are known. He wrote, "The truth is that the only true perfection is *deveikus* to Hashem. This is what David *Hamelech* declared: "As for me, closeness to Hashem is my good..." True perfection, namely, the inner completeness of the soul, is derived from closeness to Hashem. ... **The entire essence of a Jew is to be close to Hashem and to cleave to Him. (#7)**

The entire essence of a Jew is to be close to Hashem and to cleave to Him.

3 It must be clear that **the purpose of life is to feel close and attached to the Creator literally every moment** – an inner attachment with every fiber of one's being. ... it must be absolutely clear which path we are in fact seeking, and where we want it to lead us. There must, therefore, be absolute clarity that the goal is "closeness to Hashem is my good." This is the point that each individual must completely clarify to himself, until he really feels in his soul that this point, the purpose of life, is clear without any doubt. (#10)

the purpose of life is to feel close and attached to the Creator literally every moment

4 A person must understand that his very life depends on this. He must constantly keep in sight the basic knowledge that **the purpose of one's life is to be close to the Creator**. This must not be an ordinary kind of knowledge, rather, one must understand that his entire life depends on this, and if he forgets this knowledge, he places his whole life in jeopardy. (12#)

the purpose of one's life is to be close to the Creator



Bilvavi Part One Chapter One ♦ Clarifying the Purpose of Life

5 The Ramchal teaches that the “Tree of Life” is ... **the essence of life is, “And you who cleave to Hashem....”** That is called life. When, *chas veshalom*, a person does not cleave to his Creator, he is in a state akin to what Chazal say: “The wicked are called dead even when alive.” Even though outwardly and physically, such people are living, they lack the true vitality, which is *deveikus* to the Creator. ... If this is not present, then life is not being truly lived, *chas veshalom*. (#13)

the essence of life is, “And you who cleave to Hashem

6 Everything in the world serves a spiritual end ... The words of the Zohar, which describes the 613 *mitzvos* as 613 pieces of advice, are well-known. What is this advice for? The answer is that they direct us in how to cleave to the Creator! ... **the mitzvos are ... a roadmap ... as to how to achieve deveikus to the Creator.** ... From the standpoint of the inner essence and the ultimate goal, all the *mitzvos* have one end: closeness to Hashem and *deveikus* to Him. (#16)

the mitzvos are ... a roadmap ... as to how to achieve deveikus to the Creator.

7 ... we also learn Torah and fulfill numerous other *mitzvos*. What is it that prevents us from feeling close to Hashem through these *mitzvos*? Perhaps we fulfill the external conditions of the *mitzvos*, but for many of us they lack their inner essence and purpose, which is closeness to Hashem. We need to clarify how does one learn Torah and perform the *mitzvos* in a way that will generate an inner sense of palpable closeness to Hashem? **“Building a Sanctuary in the Heart.”** This sums up the responsibility of every Jew. The *mitzvos* must bring one to a state where Hashem will be with him and dwell in his heart, and he will really sense it. (18#)

Building a Sanctuary in the Heart

LIVING THE PARSHA – BEREISHIS

(Written by the Rav especially for this weekly publication in Tishrei 5786)

“IN THE BEGINNING, G-D CREATED...”

(BEREISHIS 1:1)

HE RENEWS THE ACT OF CREATION EVERY DAY IN HIS GOODNESS.

Every morning, when a person says “that You have mercifully restored my soul within me,”⁰¹ he should contemplate that he is receiving new life from the Blessed Creator — as it says, “He renews in His goodness every day continually the act of Creation.”⁰²

Therefore, each day one should renew at least one thing in Torah — either by creating an insight of his own or by learning something new. Through this, he connects to “He renews each day the act of Creation.”

PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Each morning, feel — even for a brief moment — that you are a new creation.

THE COMING OF MASHIACH -

“I AWAIT HIM EVERY DAY THAT HE MAY COME.”

When one says, “I believe with complete faith in the coming of Mashiach, and even though he may delay, I await him every day that he may come,” — the more a person truly believes and anticipates “that he may come every day,” especially today, the more he draws vitality from the light of the future — the light of the coming redemption, of which it is said, “A new Torah will come forth from Me.”⁰³

He thereby connects himself to the Torah of Oneness, which is the very light of redemption — the inner light of the Torah revealed in the time of Geulah.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

Each morning, feel — even for a brief moment — that you truly believe and anticipate the coming of Mashiach today — an expectation of complete renewal.

⁰¹ Beginning of Seder HaYom; Magen Avraham §4 sub-section 28; Mishnah Berurah §1 sub-section 8. See also Vayikra Rabbah (Vilna edition), Parsha 13, section 3 (Parshas Shemini).

⁰² Midrash Tehillim (Shocher Tov, Psalm 96): “Sing to Hashem a new song...” Rabbi Avahu said: These three songs correspond to the three daily prayers through which Israel praises the Holy One, blessed be He. “Sing to Hashem a new song” refers to the morning prayer, in which Israel praises the Holy One, blessed be He, Who renews each day continually the act of Creation.

⁰³ See also Vayikra Rabbah (Vilna edition), Parsha 13, section 3 (Parshas Shemini)



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Two ♦ Belief in the Creator

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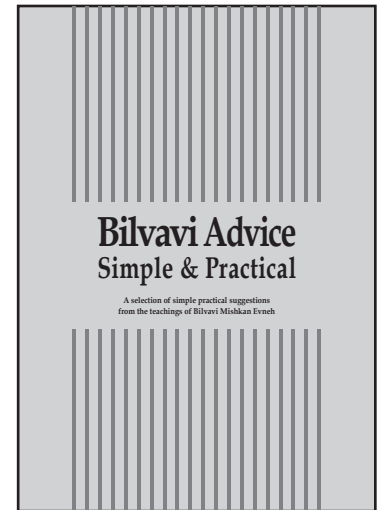
Choose a daily source of strength and renewal from among these selected practical suggestions:

1 **The secret of the inner life is simplicity of the soul**, as it says, “My G-d, the soul you have placed in me is pure.” Just as a child who is still innocent understands things in a simple way, so too the inner soul of a person, the pure element inside him, requires simple ideas. To awaken the element of truth in the soul, the pure element, one must employ the power of simplicity. This is the key point of the entire path with which we will progress, with the help of Hashem. (#44)

2 What is the starting point of all *avodas* Hashem? It is the clear and simple awareness that there is a Creator! It would seem to most people that this fact needs to be impressed only on someone who has not yet merited to enter the threshold of Judaism. ... But people raised in a home with a long-standing tradition of *emunah*, who observe the Torah meticulously and are always immersed in Torah and *mitzvos*, would seemingly not need to be informed about the Creator. Don’t they already know about Him? The basic assumption is that the fact that the Creator exists is not a point that requires work or effort, because it is simple and clear. They believe that one’s *avodah* begins at a much higher point. However, this is an error. The fact is that **every person must work on this simple point, the almost obvious fact – that the world has a Creator!** (#45)

3 All of life must be filled with thoughts of the Creator. To achieve this, **one does not need to be a genius or especially gifted**. All that is needed is a small measure of sincerity in the heart with which to seek truth and to seek Hashem. This is the purpose of life. (#51)

4 **There are no words to express the value of the wondrous treasure of thinking about the Creator**. All the silver and gold in the world do not equal the value of this knowledge. It is a precious and wondrous treasure with no equal. It is a treasure through which one can reach perfection, closeness to Hashem, and *deveikus* to Him. (#52)



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*Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter Two
Belief in the Creator*

The secret of the inner life is simplicity of the soul

every person must work on this simple point, the almost obvious fact – that the world has a Creator!

one does not need to be a genius or especially gifted

There are no words to express the value of the wondrous treasure of thinking about the Creator.



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Two ♦ Belief in the Creator

5 One can learn Torah most of the day, pursue many acts of kindness, and keep the *mitzvos* – the “minor” ones as carefully as the “major” ones – and yet, almost never think of Hashem and not realize with Whom he is involved. The Chazon Ish wrote at the end of a private letter of instruction that “**the main thing is to remember before Whom you toil.**” (#54)

the main thing is to remember before Whom you toil

6 “**The righteous man lives with his *emunah*.**” (*Chavakuk* 2:4) He receives vitality from his very *emunah* in the Creator. When the knowledge is only intellectual, it provides very little energy, but when it is in the heart, a person can draw vitality from the basic knowledge that there is a Creator. (#55)

“The righteous man lives with his *emunah*.”

7 **Throughout the day, a person must go around with the thought that there is a Creator.** This is the simplest of thoughts, without any deep analysis. ... One must live with this simple thought in his mind, and gradually bring it to life in his heart. It is the simplest non-complicated thought, the very clear knowledge that there is a Creator. This is the beginning of *avodah* for anyone who wishes to build a solid inner world. (#63)

Throughout the day, a person must go around with the thought that there is a Creator.

LIVING THE PARSHA – NOACH

(Written by the Rav especially for this publication)

A UNIQUE ARK OF NOACH

Surrounding Noach’s Ark was the flood. In order to protect Noach, his family, and all who entered the Ark, it was necessary to have a *teivah* (ark) to shield them from the waters of the flood. This was the outer reason for the need of an ark in the generation of the Flood. Similarly, in our generation, one must build a personal ark to protect oneself from the spiritual flood that surrounds us.

However, on an inner level, “Therefore man was created alone” (*Yalkut Shimoni, Bereishis* §15). For this reason, a person must build an inner world for himself. To do so, he must, at least metaphorically, spend a year like Noach in the Ark—or something similar—to construct his own inner world: his personal domain, pure and unmixed with others’ influences. Only afterward should his mind and spirit engage with others—and from time to time he must return to his ark, so as not to lose his private, inner world.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Each day, withdraw for a few minutes from everything around you—enter your own private ark—and sense your true self.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לְנוֹחַ

בֹּא-אֶתָּה וְכָל-

בֵּיתְךָ אֶל-

הַתֵּבָה...

(בראשית ז, א)

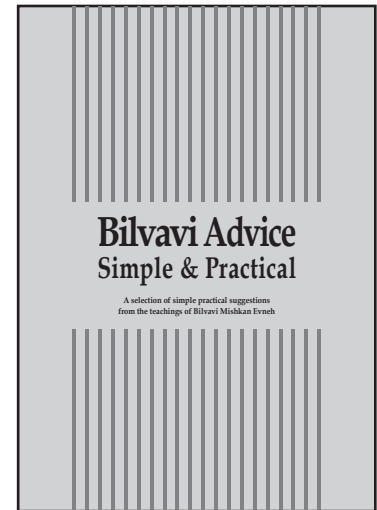


Bilvavi Part One Chapter Three ♦ Emunah - Man & His Creator

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*Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter Three
Emunah - Man & His Creator*

1 One can start various projects and never finish a thing. "A task is accredited only to he who completes it," and in fact, **it is only Hashem who brings each thing to completion. Hence, nothing can really be attributed to man's efforts.** One can only put forth the effort "from below.... No matter what area a person is working on, he must daven. If he is working on being aware of Hashem, he must recall that on his own, a person is forgetful. If he tries to remember by himself, and does not ask Hashem for help, he will never achieve true awareness. (#67)

it is only Hashem who brings each thing to completion. Hence, nothing can really be attributed to man's efforts

2 "Hashem created all that exists. Certainly, this is obvious to any believer, but our task is not to merely know this, our main *avodah* is to actually feel it. **The soul must feel that it and the entire world are creations of Hashem.**" (#68)

The soul must feel that it and the entire world are creations of Hashem

3 "Pharaoh is truly the *yetzer hara*..." which teaches that every soul has a force of evil called Pharaoh ... There is a Pharaoh in the world, and a Pharaoh in the soul. ... **the Pharaoh of the soul exists now in literally each and every Jewish soul...** We must recognize him well and know how to wage war against his false views and the foolish thoughts he sends our way. (#70)

the Pharaoh of the soul exists now in literally each and every Jewish soul

4 ... We must understand that the feeling that we and the entire world are created beings is not at all simple to attain. There is an internal force in a person called "Pharaoh," which prevents a person from feeling this. If we skip this stage, the soul will retain a force that contradicts simple *emunah*. Therefore, **we must work hard to instill inside ourselves the simple fact that we are created by Hashem and to sense this at all times.** (#71)

we must work hard to instill inside ourselves the simple fact that we are created by Hashem and to sense this at all times



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Three ♦ Emunah - Man & His Creator

5 *Harav* Yerucham Levovitz zt"l of Mir once expressed the idea that there exists in a man's soul an entire zoo, containing a lion, a bull, a snake, and so on.... Although each soul possesses all of these forces, they are not necessarily evident in every believing person. If one neglects these forces and ignores their presence, he leaves within himself a vacuum and a missing rung on the ladder. Every vacuum and missing rung causes a lack of stability and permanence in one's avodah. Therefore, **the proper way is to work with each stage, even those that seem simple and unnecessary, because in fact, there is no stage that can be ignored.** (#72-73)

the proper way is to work with each stage, even those that seem simple and unnecessary, because in fact, there is no stage that can be ignored

6 What lies at the root of our spiritual deficiencies, such as our lack of real *emunah* in Divine Providence?...Since the fundamental, simple *emunah* in the existence of the Creator is lacking, there will be a lack in the results of that *emunah*. Therefore, **a person must instill within himself the simple emunah that there is a Creator, and the fact that Hashem created him.** (#74)

a person must instill within himself the simple emunah that there is a Creator, and the fact that Hashem created him

7 One's age is irrelevant. If one has worked on the simple points, he may progress further, but if not, he must return to the beginning and establish a healthy foundation of simple *emunah*. Every person who works in this way and properly establishes simple *emunah* in his heart in a living, palpable and clear way, will immediately feel that many of the difficulties he had previously encountered will disappear – or at least, have been diminished. (#75)

One's age is irrelevant. If one has worked on the simple points, he may progress further, but if not, he must return to the beginning and establish a healthy foundation of simple *emunah*.

LIVING THE PARSHA – LECH LECHA

(Written by the Rav especially for this publication)

לֵךְ לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ (בראשית יב, א)

“Go forth from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house.” (Bereishis 12:1)

BEGIN ANEW

In times of spiritual favor, a person should seclude his soul and imagine himself as if he were Adam HaRishon, the first man—created alone, with no one else in existence. Similarly, this was the act of Avraham, who left his land, his birthplace, and his father's house—as though beginning entirely anew.

This power is rooted within us through Avraham Avinu, our forefather, for we are his descendants. It grants us the ability to feel as though we are a new creation in the world—a fresh beginning.

The power of an entirely new beginning originates from Adam HaRishon himself. The power to begin anew upon an existing foundation—to detach from what was and start afresh—this power is rooted within us through Avraham Avinu. Such a beginning is like that of a convert who converts, for Avraham was the father of converts: one who begins again, free from all the boundaries of his past.

Thus, there is the beginning in which Adam was created, and there is the beginning in which Avraham was born.

The more a person merits to begin anew, each time according to his level, the more he will merit the ultimate renewal—the complete renewal of the world in the days of Mashiach and beyond.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In this final generation, almost without exception, every person has already lived through many incarnations and carries many impressions within his soul from those lives. Therefore, one must take even a single point—however small—and within it, detach from all habit and conditioning, and begin anew, as a new creation, in actual practice.



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Four ♦ Belief in Divine Providence

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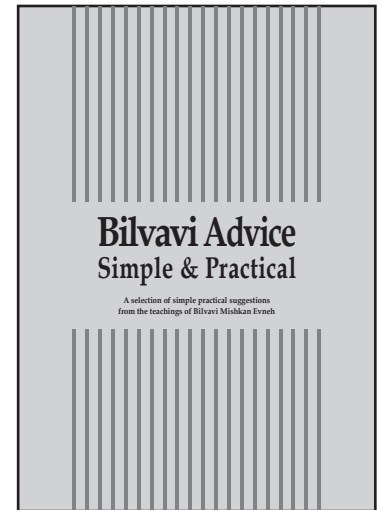
1 "A person's *avodah* is to recognize intellectually and feel in his heart that Hashem has not abandoned His world for even a brief moment and will never ever abandon it. Every believer knows this well, but our *avodah* is to ensure that this knowledge permeates every fiber of the heart, so that a person will feel it during each step of his life. Through this awareness, he will become strongly attached to the Creator." (#88)

2 "A person should train himself gradually that whenever he is about to buy an object or accomplish anything else, he should consider whether the matter is really under his control. In this way, he will instill within himself the fundamentals of simple and pure *emunah*, that **there is one unique G-d, the Master of all the worlds, Who alone determines every single detail Who alone determines every single detail** except for the fear of Heaven (*as Chazal in Berachos 33b*) have said, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven." (#91)

3 "A person's *avodah* is to first nullify the notion, and then the feeling, that he is in control of events in the world. His *avodah* is to weed out this feeling from its roots, to ferret it out and destroy it, until he truly feels that he has control over nothing but the acquisition of fear of Heaven." (#92)

4 "When do I have *emunah*? When I speak!" That is to say, *emunah* is planted deeply in a person's heart by expressing it in words.

The more one articulates one's *emunah* in addition to thinking about it, the more *emunah* will take root deeply in his heart.... As the *sefarim* explain, *emunah* is lost because it is missing from their mouths. Since they were not accustomed to constantly articulate words of *emunah*, in addition to thinking about it, *emunah* became lost from their hearts. (#99)



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Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter Four
Belief in Divine Providence

A person's *avodah* is to recognize intellectually and feel in his heart that Hashem has not abandoned His world for even a brief moment and will never ever abandon it.

there is one unique G-d, the Master of all the worlds, Who alone determines every single detail Who alone determines every single detail

A person's *avodah* is to first nullify the notion, and then the feeling, that he is in control of events in the world.

emunah is planted deeply in a person's heart by expressing it in words



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Four ♦ Belief in Divine Providence

5 "The main thing is that one must avoid the superficial perspective, in which Hashem's Hand and Providence are seen only during very unnatural events and miracles. Rather, **a person must see Hashem during each detail of his life, even the smallest of them, although it may seem to be a very natural happening.** The point is not to rely upon stories of wondrous events. To be spiritually alive, one must live with genuine *emunah* his entire life". (#106)

a person must see Hashem during each detail of his life, even the smallest of them, although it may seem to be a very natural happening

6 "... there is no reason to lose one's anger, because everything is from Hashem. He will realize that if he feels anger at the cause of a disturbance, he is in fact angry with Hashem, which he certainly never intended. **He will realize that all of life is in truth a constant interaction with the Creator, and he will direct his attention toward Hashem, remembering Who is behind each moment and experience.** He will not pay any attention to the many intermediary factors, but to He Who stands behind everything – Hashem Himself."

(#115)

He will realize that all of life is in truth a constant interaction with the Creator, and he will direct his attention toward Hashem, remembering Who is behind each moment and experience.

7 "This is a person's *avodah* – to fully internalize these ideas of *emunah* into his heart. The first step is to give it a lot of thought. The next step is to speak about it often, repeating the concepts time after time. He should say to Hashem, **"I know that You caused this event, I know that You love me, and I know that this was for my benefit. Enable me to feel all this."** A person should repeat such words thousands of times, and even more, until he really feels them and that they have penetrated to the depths of his heart. (#119)

"I know that You caused this event, I know that You love me, and I know that this was for my benefit. Enable me to feel all this."

LIVING THE PARSHA – VAYEIRA

(Written by the Rav especially for this publication)

לֵךְ לֶךְ מֵאַרְצֶךָ וּמִמּוֹלְדֹתֶךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ (בראשית יב, א)

"And behold, three men were standing by him; and he saw, and he ran to meet them." (Bereishis 18:2)

KINDNESS ROOTED IN FATHERLY LOVE

Our forefather Avraham's trait was love. Out of his love for people, he would do acts of kindness with them. Kindness was his constant way of life—his home was always open to guests in every circumstance: cold or heat, summer or winter; he never ceased.

Yet the inner source of this conduct lay in a deeper "ancestral home" within his soul—from where he drew the strength and vigor to act this way even in times of difficulty. That root was love—love of Israel and love of all creatures. The love was in his soul, while the hospitality was the body that expressed that soul, the vessel for his love.

For a person to cleave to Avraham Avinu's trait of hospitality, he should begin by hosting guests whom he already loves deeply; then gradually, he can host those he feels less close to—but he should do so with the intention to awaken love through the act of hosting. As our sages famously taught, "After the actions, the hearts are drawn." If one acts this way intentionally, to draw the heart along with genuine feeling, then slowly he will be able to host those more and more distant, as his love grows.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Once a month, host guests according to your ability, and make an effort—even just a little—to awaken love for them in your heart.

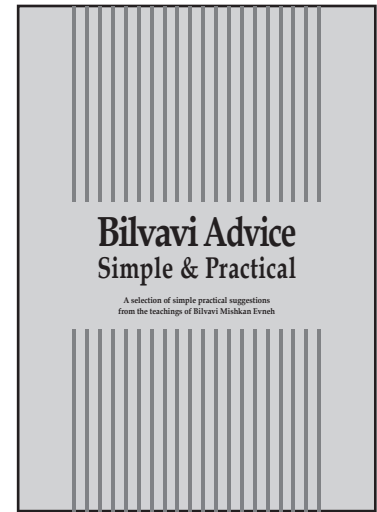


Bilvavi Part One Chapter Five ♦ Fear of Hashem

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Choose a daily source of strength and renewal from among these selected practical suggestions:

1 "*Yiras ha'onesh* (fear of punishment) is the foundation of one's spiritual growth. It is referred to as "inferior fear" in the *sefarim hakedoshim* (as opposed to awe of Hashem's greatness, which is called "superior fear"). *Yiras ha'onesh* is divided into two parts: 1) fear of punishment after death, such as *Gehinnom*; 2) fear of retribution here on earth, through various forms of suffering. " (#139)

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Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter Five
Fear of Hashem

Yiras ha'onesh (fear of punishment) is the foundation of one's spiritual growth.

2 "One must expend effort in acquiring *yiras ha'onesh* because this is the will of Hashem. ... To do this he should remember: 1) Who created and still creates *Gehinnom*; 2) Who decrees the punishment in *Gehinnom*; 3) the purpose of that punishment, which is to bring a person closer to Hashem; 4) the purpose of the fear, which is to prevent a person from sinning and becoming distant from Hashem; 5) the reason for working on acquiring *yiras ha'onesh* (at least partially), which is because such is Hashem's will." (#144)

One must expend effort in acquiring *yiras ha'onesh* because this is the will of Hashem.

3 "The most important thing is that, while one is working to acquire *yiras ha'onesh*, he should pour out his prayer to Hashem is his own words. ... Each person should elaborate according to his ability to express himself from the depth of his own heart. He should detail all of his innermost feelings, the reason he is striving to attain *yiras ha'onesh*, and the difficulties that he is encountering. He should then beg for help from Hashem in this." (#145)

The most important thing is that, while one is working to acquire *yiras ha'onesh*, he should pour out his prayer to Hashem is his own words.

4 "Just as a person has times when he feels that he is growing spiritually and times when he feels he is falling, so there exist different pathways for each of these times. The pathways for spiritual service for times of growth are awe of Hashem's greatness, love of Hashem, and the like. The pathway for times of regression is *yiras ha'onesh*. This is how Hashem made the world. Therefore, each

Just as a person has times when he feels that he is growing spiritually and times when he feels he is falling, so there exist different pathways for each of these times. ... The pathway for times of regression is *yiras ha'onesh*.



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Five ♦ Fear of Hashem

5

"...Chazal said, "Where there is joy, there must be trembling."
(Berachos 30b) **When a person toils and attains *yirah* for the sake of Heaven, then together with the *yirah*, he feels glad to be fulfilling the will of his Creator.** If so, there is *yirah* together with joy. The joy comes about through the closeness to Hashem generated by *yirah*. This is a deep idea that requires careful thought." (#147)

When a person toils and attains *yirah* for the sake of Heaven, then together with the *yirah*, he feels glad to be fulfilling the will of his Creator.

6

"... **The *avodah* of acquiring true desire is the root of everything.** When there is a strong and true will, it is said that "nothing stands in the way of the will." When the will is weak, the entire structure lacks a foundation. A person must therefore strive to truly want to be close to Hashem, and not merely say so outwardly. ... Therefore, the beginning of a person's *avodah* is to ignite the *ratzon* more and more." (#153)

The *avodah* of acquiring true desire is the root of everything.

7

"How can a person strengthen his *ratzon*? ... For us, the most effective method is for a person to designate a quiet place to speak to Hashem in his own language. For example, he might say, "Master of the world, You know that I want to be close and attached to You. However, my *ratzon* is too weak. I know that my entire purpose here is to become close and attached to You, and this is dependent on my really wanting it. In my present state of not really wanting it very much, it is impossible for me to attain closeness to You. **Please, Master of the world, help me and plant in my heart a true *ratzon* to be close to You.**" (#154-155)

"Please, Master of the world, help me and plant in my heart a true *ratzon* to be close to You."

LIVING THE PARSHA – CHAYEI SARAH

(Written by the Rav especially for this publication)

וַיִּתֵּן לִי אֶת מְעֵרַת הַמַּכְפֵּלָה (בראשית כג, ט)

"And he shall give me the Cave of Machpelah" (Bereishis 23:9)

TWO DWELLING PLACES

The **Cave of "Machpelah"** – its very name, "Machpelah," meaning "double" – is explained by our Sages in two ways: either as a room within a room, or as one level above another.

This teaches us that every person needs to have **two dwelling places** within himself: an *outer place* and an *inner place*, a *lower place* and an *upper place*. There are times of *outwardness* and times of *inwardness*, times of *descent* and times of *ascent*, each according to his spiritual level- "ascending and returning."

In order for a person to withstand times of externality or descent, he must prepare for himself times of inwardness and ascent- and then again, the cycle repeats. During those inner and elevated times, a person draws forth abundant vitality; and from this vitality, he gains the strength and courage to face every situation. Whenever the difficulty intensifies and becomes very great, he must return to his inner place, to his higher source where he finds rest, and from there he draws new life, and the cycle begins anew.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Every person needs to set aside **time each day** to cleave to the innermost part of their soul according to their own ability, and also a **time to engage in lofty matters**, from which he will draw his vitality.



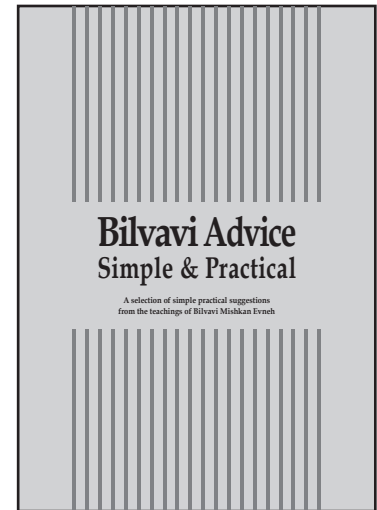
Bilvavi Part One Chapter Six ♦ Love of Hashem

The author of the Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh series has written extensively on a vast range of subjects in all areas of serving Hashem.

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Choose a daily source of strength and renewal from among these selected practical suggestions:



כלבבי-הלך א' 001-008
מספר סדרה בקול הלשון 81062
Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter Six
Love of Hashem

1 "The *mishna* in *Avos* explains that there are two kinds of *ahavah*, conditional love and unconditional love. Conditional love means that one's love is a result of receiving something, but when this ceases, the love ceases. On the other hand, unconditional love is an intrinsic bond. *Ahavah* has the numerical value of *echad*. This *ahavah* stems from an inner unity between the lover and the beloved. ... Unconditional love, of the sort we are discussing, is only present in the Jewish people. This love is unity with the Beloved, and **only the Jewish people have unity with Hashem.** ("Yisrael and Hashem are one")." (#161)

only the Jewish people have unity with Hashem

2 "It is clear that **when attaining the attribute of *ahavah*, one must first attain *ahavah* that is dependent on something, and afterwards, *ahavah* that is not dependent on anything.** The soul of a Jew contains both of these qualities, conditional & unconditional love, & a person must work to bring this latent love into action." (#161)

... "when attaining the attribute of *ahavah*, one must first attain *ahavah* that is dependent on something, and afterwards, *ahavah* that is not dependent on anything."

3 "A person's *avodah* is to understand and to perceive that he himself owns nothing. Every single thing he possesses – everything – comes from Hashem. It is not enough to have the awareness that Hashem has given him many gifts and is very kind to him. He must **recognize that every single thing is from Hashem, and that each thing he has is only an expression of Hashem's kindness.**" (#163)

... "recognize that every single thing is from Hashem, and that each thing he has is only an expression of Hashem's kindness."

4 "One must accustom himself to this way of thought time and again, realizing that in all areas of life, he is a guardian over things that really belong to Hashem. The children are not his, but a gift on loan from Hashem. The wisdom is not his, but a deposit. This money is not his, but a deposit. He must not entertain the thought that something is "mine." Everything belongs to Hashem, and all is from Him. If something is mine, it just means that Hashem gave it to me as a deposit in order to serve Him with it, but nothing more than that."

One must accustom himself to this way of thought time and again, realizing that in all areas of life, he is a guardian over things that really belong to Hashem.



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Six ♦ Love of Hashem

5 "After a person has acquired conditional *ahavah* in his heart, his *avodah* is now to acquire the kind of *ahavah* that is not dependent on anything. We have mentioned that this attribute is already deep within us, because "Yisrael and Hashem are one." Of course, this is something that can only be perceived by the soul, not by the body. Therefore, the whole essence of this *ahavah* is a revelation of the inner essence of the Jewish soul.... For a person to attain this level of unconditional love in a solid way, and not merely pick up small fragments of it, his whole life must revolve around Hashem. **All of his thoughts must be focused on Hashem.**" (#168)

... "All of his thoughts must be focused on Hashem."

6 "The inner path towards unconditional love requires contemplation and speech. One must contemplate well the nature of unconditional love, consider examples in this world, and consider our spiritual underlying essence, until the ideas are fixed well in his mind, and he possesses **complete faith that unconditional love exists between Hashem and the Jewish people.**" (#169)

"The inner path towards unconditional love requires ... complete faith that unconditional love exists between Hashem and the Jewish people."

7 "After that, comes **the *avodah* through speech ... is a very precious and wondrous *avodah*, in which one selects pesukim that mention Hashem's love toward the Jewish people and their love toward Him.** Alternatively, he might select his own words, according to his ability, and repeat a phrase many times, for half an hour, or an hour, or more, each person according to the affinity of his soul. These words must emanate from the heart, not just from the mind, and one must persist with them for a very long time. In this way, his soul will be greatly fired with the love of his Creator." (#169)

"the *avodah* through speech ... is a very precious and wondrous *avodah*, in which one selects pesukim that mention Hashem's love toward the Jewish people and their love toward Him."

LIVING THE PARSHA – TOLDOS

(Written by the Rav especially for this publication)

וַיֵּשֶׁב יִצְחָק וַיַּחֲפֹר אֶת בְּאֵרֵת הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר חָפַר

בְּיָמֵי אֲבִרָהֶם אָבִיו וְגו' וַיַּעֲמֵק מִשְׁשֵׁם וַיַּחֲפֹר בְּאֵר אַחֶרֶת (בראשית כ', יח. שם, כב)

"And Yitzhak again dug the wells of water which they had dug in the days of his father, Avraham, ... And he moved away from there, and he dug another well" (Bereishis 26:18, 22)

INTEGRATING YOUR UNIQUENESS WITH THE PATH YOU RECEIVED FROM YOUR PARENTS AND REBBES

Yitzhak dug two types of water wells. He fixed and redug the wells that his father dug years before, and he also mined his own wells. These two types of wells represent two approaches of serving Hashem that everyone should do.

Yitzhak reopened his father's wells. This represents that everyone should continue on the paths, and to do the good deeds, that he saw and received from his parents and teachers. Additionally, Yitzhak also dug his own wells. This represents the unique strength that each individual has. Because everyone has something special in him, that no one else in the world has. He should integrate and serve Hashem with that specialness. Primarily, each person has one outstanding and rare strength, and he should serve Hashem with it. When he does so, it isn't a continuation of the traditions he received from his parents and teachers. It is his own, unique way.

A person must go on both paths. The traditions he received from his parents and teachers must be emulated and followed, and additionally, each person should develop his own unique route, using the distinctive feature and strength that Hashem placed in him.

Before establishing one's own, exclusive approach, one has to first know himself well, and to recognize the extraordinary strength that are uniquely his. When he will serve Hashem in this way he will connect to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, without any separation. But one must be very cautious to correctly define his special "*nekudah*" (point-of-greatness), because it is very easy to err, and many have stumbled, as a result.

. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

In addition to continuing the paths that one received from his parents and teachers – which, for most people, is what they do for the bulk part of their day – one should also recognize the special strengths of his personality, and to find a way to serve Hashem in this way. Ideally, every day, he should do something that is uniquely his portion, even if all he does is a small deed. This will strengthen his soul, and thereby, he will connect himself directly with the Creator blessed be He.

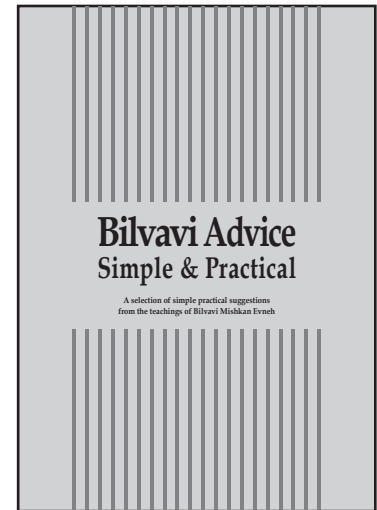


Bilvavi Part One Chapter Seven ♦ Closeness to Hashem

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*Building a Sanctuary
in the Heart
Part One Chapter Seven
Closeness to Hashem*

1 " ... The main thing is to remember at all times, both through words and thought, that Hashem is right nearby. Without this *avodah*, a person may feel that Hashem is only in the high heavens, while I am on the earth. But this is not at all true. **Hashem is everywhere, including next to each person at all times.** This *avodah* will help one remove the erroneous thought that Hashem is only in the heavens. "
(#172)

Hashem is everywhere, including next to each person at all times.

2 "No being has a perception of Hashem, and so He is perceived as being hidden. But our teachers have said, "He is hidden from their intellects, yet revealed in their hearts." ... He is revealed in the hearts of the Jewish people ... In the heart, one can feel that he is relating directly to Hashem. This is the depth of **the inner essence of a person's *avodah* here in this world - to live with Hashem, relating directly to Him at all times.** " (#173)

... the inner essence of a person's *avodah* here in this world - to live with Hashem, relating directly to Him at all times.

3 "One must fix in his mind and heart the basic concept that the whole purpose of our involvement in Torah study and fulfilling *mitzvos*, with all their details and minutiae, and the purpose of every spiritual and material endeavor, is only for this end. **The goal is to bring a person to a way of life in which he lives with Hashem, relating to Him directly, literally each moment.** " (#174)

The goal is to bring a person to a way of life in which he lives with Hashem, relating to Him directly, literally each moment.

4 " ... During anything he does, he should communicate with Hashem, saying, "You," and ask for His help. This is not primarily for the sake of fulfilling the *mitzvah* of prayer, but mainly, in order to get used to saying "You" to Hashem at all times. **Prayer is a means of achieving a direct connection with Hashem in the second person.** "
(#175)

Prayer is a means of achieving a direct connection with Hashem in the second person.



Bilvavi Part One Chapter Seven ♦ Closeness to Hashem

5 "Besides praying, one must accustom himself to say things like, "You, Hashem, are with me," "You are near me," "I am not alone here, because You are with me" ... He should employ various different phrases appropriate for the occasion. ... He must do this many times, both during brief free moments and during designated times. This must continue for a very long period, for months and for years. In this way, he will break through the barrier that blocks the Creator from him, and he will feel at all times that Hashem is with him. His life will be focused on this idea, and every action will be directed toward this reality. " (#176)

Besides praying, one must accustom himself to say things like, "You, Hashem, are with me," "You are near me," "I am not alone here, because You are with me" ...

6 "This *avodah* should not be separate from one's other acts of *avodas* Hashem, whether they are Torah, prayer, or acts of kindness. One should understand that the purpose of everything is the awareness of Hashem's presence nearby, and he will always cleave to this direct relationship, never ignoring it for a moment. " (#176)

This *avodah* should not be separate from one's other acts of *avodas* Hashem, whether they are Torah, prayer, or acts of kindness. ...

7 " ... this *avodah* is not as difficult as it may seem at first. It is a matter of habit. If one will just accustom himself to follow our instructions with simplicity and consistency, he will definitely earn the privilege to live this way. " (#176)

this *avodah* is not as difficult as it may seem at first. It is a matter of habit

LIVING THE PARSHA – VAYEITZE

(Written by the Rav especially for this publication)

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שְׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חָרָנָה (בראשית כח, י)

"Yaakov left Beer Sheva, and he went to Charan" (Bereishis 28:10)

THE EVER-CHANGING PATH OF LIFE

Life, in this world and in the next world, is never stagnant. There are ups and downs, better times and harder times, struggles and salvations, including, at times, when one must move to entirely new locations, with all the changes and adaptations that are involved in this move. Regarding Adam haRishon the Torah tells us, "Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife" (Bereishis 2:24). Yaakov Avinu did this also when he left the home of his parents, Yitzhak and Rivkah, and moved to Charan, to get married. This is an example of the ever-changing path of life, with its many experiences and circumstances.

At times, the changes bring relief. Life becomes better for the person than before. And at times, the changes are painful and difficult. This is represented by Charan (the city to where Yaakov traveled) because Charan stands for חָרִין אַף, Hashem's anger (as our Rabbis tell us).

Also, in heaven, the existence isn't stationary. Some rise to higher worlds and to a better place in Gan Eden, and there are the souls that are sent to Gehinom (chas v'shalom), the location created to hold those who angered Hashem.

What is man's *avodah*? How should he react to all these changes?

He must know that his present situation is temporary, merely a temporary rung on the ladder of life. He shouldn't feel attached to "the place," or to the situation, because it isn't permanent. Instead, he should feel attached to the journey of the changing-life, and he should serve Hashem, as best as he can, in his present circumstance. This will prepare him for the upcoming stage.

Most importantly, one should remember that wherever he is, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is with him. As it states, "If I ascend to the heavens, You are there, and if I make my bed in the grave, behold, You are there" (Tehillim 139:8). This is because one's place is temporary, while *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* is permanent [and eternal].

. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Wherever a person finds themselves, he must sense that the Divine Presence is with him. God is here beside him now, and will accompany him to the next stage. Yet each place is but temporary — a passing step along the greater journey.



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Kol HaLashon

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