

Bilvavi Advice

Simple & Practical

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

Building a Sanctuary in the Heart
Part Two Chapter One

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

We already mentioned in Part One of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh that the principles discussed in this work are based on the inner wisdom of the Torah, not on ordinary intellectual analysis or the author's personal feelings. Here in Part Two we have elaborated on those principles as well as their practical applications for our *avodah*. Thus, this part is really a broader commentary of the principles mentioned earlier. May Hashem enable these ideas to be accepted in the hearts of those who seek truth, and may those seekers merit palpable closeness to Him at all times. **From this chapter are seven sources from the chapter itself with their highlight. Choose a daily source of strength and renewal from among these selected practical suggestions:**

1 When it comes to the service of the heart, the main *avodah* is to attain simplicity – utter simplicity.

SOURCE The ideas we will discuss may seem simplistic at first glance, and therefore (*from a purely intellectual standpoint*) not worthy of too much attention. Yet the truth is, as *Chazal* have said, “The simpler, the better.” **When it comes to the service of the heart, the main *avodah* is to attain simplicity – utter simplicity.**

2 We must understand that the root of all *avodas Hashem* for each person on any level ... is *emunah*!

SOURCE The true path to serving Hashem is hidden from practically everyone. Why? Because such is the nature of this world, the place of *he'elem*. We generally do not know the true path to serving the Creator. ... The most important point to realize is that even before you start, you must identify the foundation: What is the first area to conquer when beginning to serve the Creator? ... **We must understand that the root of all *avodas Hashem* for each person on any level ... is *emunah*!**

3 This is the true “hiddenness” of this world: the notion that people have already attained *emunah*, and that it is already in their pockets.

The more you understand that your *avodah* is to work on *emunah*, and that your Torah and mitzvos must be built upon that foundation, the more you live with the truth. But if you think, “I already believe; I was raised as a religious person and I already know the principles of faith,” you are very far from the truth. ... **This is the true “hiddenness” of this world: the notion that people have already attained *emunah*, and that it is already in their pockets.**

4 The reason we feel far from Hashem – is that the *emunah* we carry from our youth is only intellectual knowledge.

SOURCE When *emunah* is not only in the mind, and not only something that gives you some excitement, but becomes part of you, you will know that you are progressing on the proper path in *avodas Hashem*, and will gain an entirely new perspective on it. **The root of the difficulties we have – the reason we feel far from Hashem – is that the *emunah* we carry from our youth is only intellectual knowledge.** It is not a deep *emunah* through which we can feel that Hashem is the absolute Reality.

5 We must imagine that we are being created anew like a *ger tzedek* who comes to convert and a *baal teshuvah* who repents and returns to Hashem.

SOURCE In this book, we will speak about the simplest fact that a person must always bear in mind. Because this will be a dramatic change, **we must imagine that we are being created anew like a *ger tzedek* who comes to convert and a *baal teshuvah* who repents and returns to Hashem.** ... you must instill in your mind that the focal point of life is *emunah*. ...

6 In order for this knowledge to become integrated within you, you must live with it for a long time....

SOURCE Your thought process must be as follows: "What do I seek? What do I want? What is my purpose right now in this world? What is the most fundamental aspect of my purpose throughout life?" And the answer will be, "It is *emunah*!" **In order for this knowledge to become integrated within you, you must live with it for a long time....** through which a person is attached to the matter with all his soul and being.

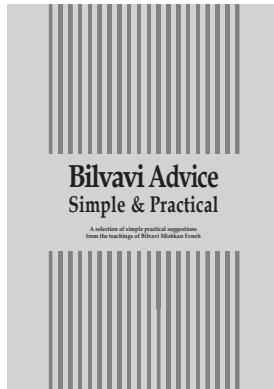
7 You must contemplate and know that the essence of life is *emunah* ... This is our *avodah* and our entire mission throughout life. The details are numerous, but the foundation of everything is *emunah*.

SOURCE "Why am I here? To be a Jew with *emunah*! This was the way of Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, and all the *tzaddikim*. What was their work in this world? *Emunah*! What is required of me in this world? *Emunah*! What must I think about during my life? *Emunah*!" **You must contemplate and know that the essence of life is *emunah*.** ... "Chavakuk came and placed them [the mitzvos] on a single foundation, as it says, 'the righteous man lives through his *emunah*.' (Chavakuk 2:4) **This is our *avodah* and our entire mission throughout life. The details are numerous, but the foundation of everything is *emunah*.**

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The most important contribution of this work is indicated in the one word that has come to refer to the series and its author – "Bilvavi" ("in my heart"). In this work, we learn about the difference between knowledge of the mind and knowledge of the heart. "Heart knowledge" is the ingrained outlook that is responsible for our deepest feelings and instinctive reactions.

This second volume, based on a lecture series of twenty-eight classes, returns to the themes of Part One, but offers even greater clarity by devoting a full chapter to each distinct aspect of spiritual growth. The nature of the "heart" is treated at length, as well as how it can truly be reached and changed. We trust that the reader who studies this work seriously will once again feel enthusiasm about spiritual growth, gain new insights into self-improvement, and find the motivation to really change and to feel closeness to the Creator.



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