



Israel 073.295.1245 4>163
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בלבבי משכן אבנה



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חדש! המאמרים שבאו בספר זה, נבחרו ברובם מתוך סדרת שיעורים שניתנה במוצאי שבתות בשנים תשע"ב-תשע"ח, בעיר בני ברק. על תפלת שמונה עשרה כמאה ושבעים שיעורים - מתוכם נערכו ארבעה מאמרים, ועל סדר פרשיות השבוע כשבעים שיעורים - מתוכם נערכו עשרים מאמרים, וצורף מפתח למוצאם על סדר הפרשיות והתפלה.

כל שיעור מקיף ומברר נקודה אחת בהלכות דעות וחובות הלבבות, ונותן מבט שורשי ומעשי בדרך הישרה שיבור לו האדם. שיעורים אלו נמסרו באופן של בנין, וכל קטע מתחבר לקודמו, ועל כן ישנו צורך בעיון המקיף את כל המאמר בשלימות, ולא באופן של זעיר פה זעיר שם.

מלאכת העריכה נעשתה ביד אומן מתוך תמלול מדויק, וניתנה שימת לב רבה לשמירת צורת מסירת השיעור במקורו. בחלקו האחרון של הספר מופיעים "מאמרי התקופה" - מתוך שיעורים שנמסרו לאור תקופתנו, וכן שיחה נוגעת לתקופתנו מאת הגה"צ רבי שמשון דוד פינקוס זצ"ל, היוצאת לאור לראשונה.

EMOR - RELATIVES & BEYOND

Our Physical Relatives Are Temporary

The beginning of *Parshas Emor* discusses the laws of deceased relatives that a *Kohen* may become ritually contaminated for. These include the seven closest relatives, which are his father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, and son, and wife.

There are other laws in the Torah regarding relatives also. For example, a person must first give *tzedakah* to his closest relatives, before giving to anyone else. Chazal also state that one should "draw close his relatives".

...

There are three levels of closeness – physical connection, emotional connection (which is deeper) and intellectual connection (the deepest).

To whom does one feel closest to? Towards his family and blood relatives, towards his close friends, or towards those whom he learned Torah with? We may consciously feel more love towards our family and blood relatives, but in our subconscious, we are more connected with others whom we feel emotionally closer to.

Going deeper, our deepest closeness is with those whom we share an intellectual connection with, in Torah. A Torah scholar lives in a world of *de'os*, inner knowledge, a world of *daas Torah*, and he can feel closeness with those who share his *de'os*. This is not referring to people who say their own superficial *de'os* (opinions) about all mat-

ters because they like to state their opinions. We are referring to the inner "*hilchos de'os*". The more a person lives in this world of *daas*, the closer he can feel towards those who live with *daas*.

If we wake up a person in middle of sleeping and we ask him whom he feels closer to, what does he answer? Who would he want to be together with in *Gan Eden*? If one is not that spiritual, then one will say that they want to be together with their family. The more inner a person is, the more he feels closer towards those whom he feels emotionally close to. If one is more inner, then one feels even closer towards those who share a connection of *daas* with – he would choose their company over anyone else. The more a person learns words of Torah with others and enjoys their *daas*, he will feel that they are his true relatives, the relatives of his soul.

One can take the quiet time and try to feel whom he feels closest to. Does he feel closest to his family, or to his friends, or to those whom he learned Torah from and with?

Our Closest Relative: Hashem There is also a deeper aspect beyond the above three levels of relationships.

Dovid *HaMelech* said, "*And as for me, closeness to Hashem is good.*" The more that a person enters the inner, spiritual realm, he will find that his definition of "relatives" changes. He first discovers that a soul connection with others is a deeper closeness than with fami-

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ly. Even more so, he feels closer with those whom he enjoys a connection of *daas* with, whom he shares a Torah connection with. But after that, there is a greater kind of closeness to uncover. After one has revealed a connection of *daas* to others, he can then reveal the depth of his soul, where he reveals that it is Hashem, Who is his closest “Relative”.

It is written, “*Hashem is close to all those who call out to Him, in truth*”. This does not just mean that Hashem readily hears our prayers when we call out to Him in truth, but that Hashem is our ultimate Relative – for the verse says “*Karov Hashem*”, Hashem is our *Karov*\Relative. The Torah says, “*You are children to Hashem*”. On this world, it is our parents who raise us, but in our inner world, we have our true, absolute Father.

Therefore, closeness to the Creator is not an *avodah* to try to become closer to Him. It is simply a return to Him, for there is an inherent closeness. It is like a person returning from jail and going to see his parents again. He is not discovering them as new relatives, he is just returning to them.

Before we came to this world, when we were souls in Heaven, we felt our greatest closeness towards Hashem, our second greatest closeness towards those whom we share *daas* with, and a third greatest closeness towards those whom we feel emotional closeness with. When our souls descended into this world, the order gets turned around. We think we are closest to our physical relatives, mainly towards our parents.

We may then discover a deeper closeness with friends, and we can discover a deeper closeness towards others whom we enjoy Torah with. As for our closeness to Hashem, even if we do sense this closeness, it seems the furthest from us, in comparison to all of our other relationships. The reason for this is because the physicality of this world conceals the truth about our true,

spiritual world of the soul. Therefore, we identify our main closeness with our parents, as we are on this world, whereas our relationship with Hashem is seen as secondary in our life, or far away from us.

But when a person merits an elevation to his spiritual level and he becomes purer, he discovers a different sense of closeness, and his priorities change. He feels closest to Hashem, and hence, the least close with blood relatives and anyone else whom he is bound together with only in the physical sense.

Dovid *HaMelech* said, “*For my father and mother have abandoned me, and Hashem will gather me.*” Dovid *HaMelech* realized that the true closeness is with Hashem, and the least with his parents. He was ridiculed by others for his questionable status, and in this sense, he felt separated from his lineage, as if abandoned by his parents. He also said “*As for me, closeness to Hashem is good.*” His feelings of estrangement from his parents, and his being ridiculed by others for having no lineage, was a tool for him to uncover the greatest closeness, the true good, which is closeness to Hashem.

When one feels deeply in his soul that there is nothing other than Hashem, this is the depth of closeness to Hashem. One’s love for Torah should be an extension of one’s love for Hashem.

One should also give financial support towards blood relatives and community members, as the Torah commands, and indeed, there is a certain order of priority when it comes to this. But he must go beyond the level of blood relatives. The more a person enters inward into the soul, the deeper kinds of “relatives” he uncovers, until he discovers the truest closeness of all – his relationship with Hashem.

Closeness With Hashem Includes All Aspects of Relationships Closeness to Hashem is an all-inclusive kind of closeness. It includes every aspect of closeness men-

tioned above – being connected to Him through physical space, through emotional connection, and though intellectual connection.

When one feels close to Hashem, he is connected to how His glory fills the world, so a person will feel Him next to him all the time. The *Mesillas Yeshtarim* says that a person can talk to Hashem as if he is talking to a friend in close proximity. A person can discover that he is a child of Hashem, who can turn to Him whenever he wants.

In this way, a person is always connected to Hashem in every place, so he is connected to Him always even in whatever physical space he is in.

One can also feel an emotional closeness to Hashem, by feeling love of awe of Him. He also feels a connection of *daas* to Hashem, by learning His Torah, and his own *daas* becomes aligned with the *daas* of Hashem. From there, he can uncover a sense of oneness with Hashem, which is the deepest level of the closeness – when he is *chad* (one) with Him, so to speak.

Thus, closeness to Hashem is not just the highest and deepest form of closeness possible, but it also includes all aspects of closeness possible – spatial connection, emotional connection, intellectual connection, and oneness.

In Conclusion The depth of the entire concept of “relatives” is for us to discover deeper and deeper kinds of “relatives” – beginning with priorities in our relationships [i.e. family first, then community members], then discovering deeper “relatives”, those whom we share a bond of souls with – and our even deeper “relatives” than this, whom we share a bond of Torah learning with.

Finally, we should discover the deepest closeness of all – “*As for me, closeness to Hashem is good*” – which includes all of the above levels of closeness, for only He is our true “Relative”. [FROM BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

If a person turns to non-Jewish sources in order to recognize himself or to treat his issues, he is like a person who wants to learn the Torah and fulfill its mitzvos, and he goes to a non-Jewish professor to learn it. It's clear that he won't find what he's looking for there. At best, he can find the 7 Noachide Laws by the goyim, and not more than that (and the laws of these mitzvos are even different for a Jew than they are for a goy).¹

The root of the soul is in the Torah, as written by the Ramchal in sefer Derech Etz Chaim, for the Torah and the soul were created as one structure. The Torah is the single source which explains, clearly and precisely, the entire structure of the soul.

Moving Forward

Anyone who searches for truth should understand that in spite of all these errors that cause Jews to turn to non-Jewish knowledge for help about the soul, this shouldn't discourage one from learning about and recognizing his soul and working with it. Rather, a person should try to live in a clear world, a truthful life, and to remove all his doubts and confusion. The difficulties that exist about self-recognition should only serve as a catalyst to cause us to yearn for the truth and to reach our purpose, and to joyfully attain it.

One should know clearly that just as we have the obligation to fulfill the action-related mitzvos, like putting on Tefillin and wearing Tzitzis and keeping Shabbos, so do we have the obligation to fulfill the mitzvos that use our soul. And just as we need to learn the halachos of the action-related mitzvos, so must we learn about the inner world, our souls, so that we can know how to fulfill the soul-related mitzvos. And we can only learn about this from the Torah and Chazal, and from no other sources. And if we have to work hard at this, it is our duty and our privilege. With this path, one can fulfill the Creator's will and serve Him with a full heart, both in his physical and spiritual aspects of life.²

Part II: The Benefit of Self-Recognition For Oneself

Up until this point we have been explaining how self-recognition is needed to serve the Creator. Self-recognition is also needed for one's own gain (not as a goal unto itself, but for the greater purpose of serving the Creator.) The Creator has given many different capabilities to the soul, so that one can recognize them and thereby use them correctly, at-

tain self-actualization, and live properly, a life of emotional health and happiness.

There are generally two personal gains of self-recognition: It solves personal issues, and it helps a person live properly. Let's explore the first gain of self-recognition: solving one's issues. Every person comes down onto the world with so many different soul faculties. Some of these abilities are not yet revealed, or they aren't yet repaired or balanced. This is true for every person, with some less and some more, but without almost any exceptions. In addition, just being on this world and going through all of one's major life events, challenges, and failures, and conditioning to various situations of life, with all the feelings and beliefs that created from one's conclusions that he has come to (which are off-mark) are all contributing factors that increase one's unutilized potential and which further the impaired state of the soul's abilities. This causes a lot of inner turmoil³, difficulty of dealing with various situations of life, external disturbances, and other problems. In order to solve these issues, we need to learn about the soul and recognize its abilities.⁴

This is only natural, and it is correct. The nature of a person, since he is born, is that he wants pleasure and he runs away from suffering. Nobody wants to suffer in his soul or deal with difficulty. In many cases, the need for self-recognition to solve one's personal issues is very important. This is because many people find themselves in difficult suffering of the soul, and they need specific solutions to the issues that are preventing them from being serene and calm and which is wreaking havoc in their lives (and this is the main reasons why therapists and clients engage in self-awareness – it is for the purpose of solving their issues).

The second reason for engaging in self-recognition is for necessity of building a proper, balanced life (and not necessarily for the purpose of solving issues). There isn't any person who doesn't want to live a good, proper life that's filled with vitality and happiness. But in order to do it, one needs to build a life for himself that will be aligned with the structure of his soul. Every person has a different spiritual level, a different pattern and combination of abilities and

3 Whenever issues of the psyche are discussed in this sefer, we are not referring to any of the professional or medical terms that are used by the world, but to general situations in which a person is suffering internally in any way, no matter the issue.

4 There is a popular mentality today that people don't have to know about themselves at all, if they want to solve their issues. Instead, this mentality is of the view that people can just go to someone else who will "enter" into their soul and fix their soul for them, and that's it. But it is mind-boggling that intelligent people can think this way. How can a person go to someone who barely knows him, who will deal with matters that are closest and most important to him, when he himself doesn't know what's happening to him and exposing himself to something that will impact his life entirely? Logic says that a person has to know his own soul in order to understand what's happening to him and to think about the results.

1 On the flip-side, the ways of the Torah can benefit even a non-Jew's soul. If the Torah can help the nefesh habehaimis of a Jew, it can certainly help the "resemblance" of the nefesh habehaimis of a Jew, which is the non-Jew's soul.

2 A person should be happy and thank Hashem, for the privilege which has been given to him, to recognize himself and actualize his soul. And one should daven to Hashem that he succeeds in learning about the soul and recognizing it. And if one can find someone to guide him in recognizing his soul and working with his abilities, according to the Torah – the gain of this will be great.

SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

their balance. Everyone has a different soul makeup – each person's souls is built differently and uniquely, and each person gets his vitality and happiness from a different source, from their particular soul root. Each person also has certain abilities which haven't been brought to the fore yet, so each person has particular imbalances in their soul, and it is different with each person.

Thus a person has to recognize himself – the know the structure of his soul, to utilize his positive potential and actualize his abilities, to strengthen and uplift his "I", to self-actualize and reveal the hidden powers that lay within him, via repairing and balancing his soul faculties and branching abilities. This is how can build for himself a life that will be aligned with his personal soul structure and materialize his potential, and to become full of vitality, fulfillment, and joy.⁵ Here are some examples, to make it clearer.

A person who recognizes his soul's structure, his abilities, and his talents, will be able to have the following benefits:

(1) Through self-recognition, one can find the path in serving Hashem that is suitable for his soul. (2) He will be able to focus on topics in his learning that are appropriate for his soul. (Though every person must learn all the parts of Torah, every person also has a unique part in the Torah, and a person who recognizes his soul well will be able to learn it). (3) He will be able to repair his middos with precision. (4) He will be able to do *chessed* for others with his unique abilities⁶ and according to what he can do, not too little and not too much, so that he doesn't lose himself in the process of always going out of his way for others. (5) It enables him to connect to his strongest power – to the root of his soul, which he will receive vitality and joy from. (6) It enables him to utilize his potential abilities, and in areas that are compatible with him. (7) It enables him to strengthen the abilities that need to be strengthened, and to place boundaries on the abilities that need to be limited. (8) It enables him to build the struc-

5 While it is true that "everything is in the hands of Heaven" and every person is guided by Hashem's Divine Providence, Hashem has given free will to each person, and it is also His will, that a person should try to fix his soul and do all that's in his ability to build a proper life for himself, aligned with his personal soul. When it comes to making effort for physical necessities, one needs to do less effort and rely more on Hashem, but when it comes to taking care of our spiritual needs, one has to try his hardest.

6 When a person recognizes his soul and his abilities well, it is easier for him to understand others as well and to help them based on what they need. And in some cases, he will also be able to help others recognize their souls and utilize their potential.

ture of his soul, in all its layers – his wishes, his thoughts, his feelings, etc. (9) It enables him to recognize his individuality and improve his self-worth, self-confidence, and being happy with whatever he has – not out of being haughty or fooling himself, but from recognizing a clear reality (he stays humble). (10) It enables him to earn livelihood in a way that utilizes his unique talents (as the *Chovos HaLevovos* says, that one's livelihood should ideally come to him by way of using his own talents). (11) It enables one to be a good husband or good wife, to have marital peace, and have a home of the *Shechinah*.⁷ (12) It enables one to be a good parent, to develop healthy relationships between the parents and children, and to give the children their needs and within the abilities of the parents. (13) It enables one to get along with his family, siblings, neighbors, friends, and community, without losing his own identity in the process. (14) And in general, it enables one to be involved properly with any area he desires or needs, in a way that is aligned with his abilities, not more and not less.⁸

In order to develop a proper lifestyle that's compatible to your soul, it is not enough to have a basic understanding about yourself which you are born with. Such recognition is superficial, and many times it is even inaccurate. And most of the time, people are living in a way that's not aligned with their souls. Rather, people have a perception of themselves that's full of experiences which they haven't yet sorted out, aspirations and wishes that aren't true to who they are, conclusions they came to which aren't precise, socially influenced beliefs, financial considerations, and other external factors, which have shaped their current lifestyle. Therefore it's no wonder that so many people are not living in a way that's aligned with their souls and they don't feel satisfaction and joy in their lives.

In order to build a proper lifestyle which will be compatible to one's soul and to receive vitality and joy from it, one needs to recognize his soul and its abilities. If a person doesn't recognize himself well, how can he build his life properly?!

[מהספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש]

7 On condition of keeping the mitzvos in general, and the laws of family purity in particular.

8 It is clear to any sensible person that it takes a lot of effort to reach these goals. But we must understand that self-recognition and self-actualization is the key to all of these doors. Although not everything is in our control, and we cannot get everything perfectly, a person who learns about his soul and recognizes it and tries to build a life that's aligned with his personal soul, will be a lot closer to reaching his goal, in contrast to one who doesn't learn about his soul.



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