



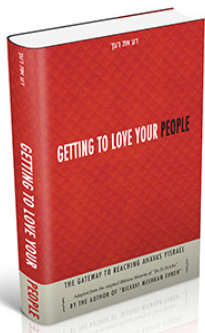
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בלבבי משכן אבנה



IN BOOKSTORES

ספר עולם ברור המאמרים שבאו בספר זה, רובם נערכו מתוך סדרת שיעורים שניתנה במוצאי שבתות בעיר בני ברק. כל שיעור מקיף ומברר נקודה אחת בהלכות דעות וחובות הלבבות, ונותן מבט שורשי ומעשי בדרך הישרה שיבור לו האדם. 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.



IN BOOKSTORES

GETTING TO LOVE YOUR PEOPLE The author shows us the way towards developing our powers of ahavas Yisrael and the emotion of loving another human being in general. By learning this sefer, we can heal ourselves and heal our relationships with others, as we grow in the process of what it means to love another Jew. An additional chapter explains the necessity to hate evil and several chapters explain how to repair unwarranted hatred, so that our ahavas Yisrael will be pure, genuine, and aligned with the will of the Creator.

BAMIDBAR CONNECTING TO OUR BEGINNING

Sanctity of Firstborn & Sanctity of Levites

In *Parshas Bamidbar*, Moshe Rabbeinu is commanded by Hashem to sanctify the firstborns, as well as the Levites of the Jewish people: *"Behold, I have taken the Levites from the among the children of Yisrael, in place of every firstborn, the first issue of every womb among the children of Yisrael, and the Levites shall be Mine. For every firstborn is mine...."*¹

The sanctity of the firstborns of the Jewish people began with the night of Pesach, when Hashem killed all the firstborns of Egypt. Ever since the exodus from Egypt, the firstborns received a sanctified status, and when they stood at Har Sinai, they were destined to do the *avodah* (the service in the *Beis Ha-Mikdash*²).

Rashi states that after the sin with the golden calf, the firstborns were punished, and were no longer allowed to do the *avodah*. Instead, the Levites received the rights to do the *avodah* of the firstborns, in the merit of refusing to take part in the sin. This conferred a status of sanctity upon the Levites.

However, it is clear that the sanctity of the firstborn and the sanctity of the Levites were not the same exact kind of sanctity. It was not simply a transferal of the sanctity of the firstborns upon the Levites. Rather, when the firstborns lost their sanctity to the Levites, there was a change in the concept of this

sanctity. At first it was a sanctity of the firstborns, and later it was a sanctity of the Levites – two different and distinct kinds of sanctity.

The Sanctity of the Firstborn/Beginning and Levites/Connection What, indeed, was the difference between the sanctity of the firstborn and the sanctity of the Levites?

The Torah says that a firstborn is sanctified because he is *peter rechem*, "first to exit the womb". Thus, a firstborn represents a root, a beginning - a *raishis* (first). In contrast, the Levites did not receive any sanctity in the sense of being the first. Although there is a commandment of *"And you shall sanctify them"*³, which gives certain honors and preferences to a Kohen and Levi, the sanctity of the Levites is not because they have any "first" status, but for a different reason.

When Levi [ancestor of all Levites] was born, Leah said, *"This time my husband shall become attached to me, for I have born him three sons"*⁴ – and the depth of this is that the word "*Levi*" is from the word "*levayah*" (escort), which connotes an attachment/connection between two things, the escort and that which is being escorted. The sanctity of the Levite is therefore defined as a connecting point between two previously separated points.

Thus, the sanctity of the firstborn was because they had a status

1 Bamidbar 3: 12-13

2 The Holy Temple

3 Vayikra 21:8

4 Beraishis 29:34

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of being the “first”, whereas the sanctity of the Levites is because they are a connecting point which enables holiness.

Three-Fold Connection With Hashem

There is also a more fundamental understanding of the difference between the sanctity of the firstborns with the status of the Levites, and which can also help us prepare to receive the Torah.

The sanctity of the Levites represents the connection of two sides. Chazal state, “Three ties are bound to each other – *Yisrael* (the Jewish people), the Torah, and *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* (G-d)”⁵. There is Hashem, the Jewish people, and the Torah. The Torah is called the *bris* (pact), for a *bris* connotes a bond and connection, and so the Torah is the “connecting point” between Hashem and Yisrael. This is like the sanctity of the Levites, which connects together two sides.

This is the depth behind the sanctity of the Levites – it is the three-fold connection of Hashem, Yisrael, and the Torah, with the Torah being the middle, connecting point between Hashem and Yisrael.

The sanctity of the firstborn, however, represents the level at the giving of the Torah, when the firstborns still had their sanctified status to do the *avodah*. This was taken away from them only after the sin with the Golden Calf. The sanctity of the firstborn is not about a connection to something after it now exists - rather, [it is more inherent], it is a connection to the very essence of something, for it is a connection to the beginning point of something.

In clearer terms, the sanctity of the firstborn, which is a sanctity of being the first, is represented by the concept that Hashem is called “First”. It is written, “*Ani Rishon*” (“I am the First”)⁶.

The Torah is also called “*raishis*/first”, as *Rashi* in the beginning of *Parshas Beraishis* cites from *Midrash Rabbah*, that “The world was created for the Torah which is called *raishis*/first.”⁷ *Rashi* there also cites the statement of Chazal, “The world was created for the sake of Yisrael, who are called *raishis*”.

Thus, the nation of Yisrael shares a bond with Hashem [and His Torah] on two levels – a bond through the power of “connection”, as symbolized through the sanctity of the Levites, and a [deeper] bond, through being connected with “*raishis*/first”, as symbolized by the sanctity of the firstborn.

The Torah – Our Connection of “Raishis” With Hashem Through the Torah, which is called the *raishis* (beginning, or first), there is a bond of the nation of Yisrael with Hashem. For at the giving of the Torah, there was the revelation of Hashem and His Torah, to the nation of Yisrael.

On Pesach, Hashem revealed His presence, as well as the firstborn status of the Jewish people. On Shavuot, 50 days later, there was also this revelation of Hashem, when “Hashem opened all the heavens and showed them *Ain Od Milvado*”, that there is nothing else besides Him.⁸ At the giving of the Torah, the Creator, Who is the ultimate *Raishis* (First, or Beginning) was revealed. The Torah, which is also called the *raishis*, was revealed. The nation of Yisrael is inherently connected to the *raishis* – to the Torah, and to the ultimate *Raishis*, Hashem.

This was the kind of *d’veykus* (connection) that the nation of Yisrael had with Hashem when they stood at Har Sinai.

A Deeper Level of Bonding With Hashem: Finding Our Beginning Point In This World, in whatever a person is involved with, there are two ways of how he may

relate to and connect to it. He could either have a love towards it, or relate to it with awe. In the spiritual realm, there are also these two ways of connecting. There is both a love and awe towards the Creator, and a love and awe towards the Torah. From a superficial standpoint, the nation of Yisrael is outside of Hashem and His Torah, and they [we] have a task to connect to that reality.

That, however, is but an external, superficial level of bonding with Hashem and the Torah – if only people could merit just this level. According to this understanding, there is Hashem, there is Torah, there is the nation of Yisrael whom I am a part of, and my task is to connect myself to that reality.

But there is a deeper view. In whatever we are involved with, we can really find its root, or its *raishis* (beginning point). We can look into what came before it, and then we are led to its source. ...

When one views Creation superficially, one only sees that there is a world in front of him. But if he looks deeper into Creation, he will see the source of everything. “Hashem looked [saw] into the Torah and created the world”⁹ – and so, too, does man have the *avodah* to “look and see” that there is a Creator of the world; and from this contemplation, he can be led to the root of creation, which is the Torah. ...

In Conclusion May we merit together, as well as the entire Creation, to once again receive the light of the giving of the Torah. It should be revealed completely, the revelation of Hashem in His world, through the revelation of His Torah, and through the nation of Yisrael, [which is] the extension of this spiritual light - and from there, may it spread to the rest of the Creation.

[from BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

5 Zohar parshas Re'eh 73a

6 Yeshayahu 44:10

7 Beraishis Rabbah 1:1, cited in Rashi

8 Rashi to Shemos 15:35

9 Zohar parshas Shemos 361a

SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Self-Recognition Is A Lifelong Process

When a person wants to understand his soul solely because he wants to solve his issues or because he wants to wage war with the evil forces in him, usually he will be focused on that alone – solving the problematic aspects of himself. He is not actually learning about his soul for that long, because his focus is on trying to find solutions to his issues or on waging war with himself.

In contrast, if the motivation for self-recognition is because one wants to build a proper way of living that's aligned with his soul, he will be learning about himself all the time and not just for the sake of taking a course and then being done with it. He understands that it is an ongoing, lifelong process of learning about himself. It is still possible, however, for a person to reach a high level of self-recognition even during a short amount of time. One can learn the process of how to recognize his abilities and how to actualize them from their potential. Gradually, one can build a proper lifestyle for himself that's aligned with his soul. But the work of recognizing the soul cannot end there. It is a lifelong process. A person can always learn to recognize more abilities in his soul, and his recognition can become deeper and deeper. He can keep utilizing his potential and repair and balance his abilities, more and more. He can keep refining his ability to live in a way that's true to who he is. And therefore, his happiness and vitality can deepen as he goes through life.

The soul has in it a similarity to the Torah. Just as the Torah cannot be measured and its wisdom is vast, so can a person learn about himself and keep reveling newer depths to his soul, which improves the quality of his life. The Ramchal¹ said “It is the way of the wise to go and think constantly”, and by the same token, when it comes to recognizing one's soul, those who have an inner view are able to constantly recognize themselves better and better, for all of their life.

When Self-Recognition Isn't Possible Right Now

As we have been explaining, the ideal way to engage in self-recognition is to first recognize one's abilities so that that he will be able to live his life in a way that's aligned with his personal soul and thereby live properly. Only after focusing on his strengths and utilizing them, can he begin to recognize his impaired abilities in order to solve his issues. However, there are situations where a person has no choice but to approach self-recognition solely for

the purpose of solving his issues.

First of all, there are certain issues a person may have which are very strong and problematic, and if a person doesn't deal with them, he won't be able to live a balanced life at all, and certainly he won't be able to live in a way that's aligned with his soul. Also, there can be pressing circumstances where a person needs a very specific kind of therapy for his soul and he doesn't have the luxury of learning about his soul and gaining a comprehensive understanding of himself. His issue is so difficult that he has to put everything else aside and go treat it. And there are also extreme situations in which a person doesn't have basic serenity in his life, which prevents him from learning about his soul the way he should.

In any of these circumstances, there is a need to find a specific solution for the sake of solving the issues at hand, or to minimize the extremity of the issue or to provide the serenity which will enable the person to engage in learning about himself.² And even in situations where a person is looking for quick and easy solutions, he will sometimes need a very specific solution that focuses on a particular issue that's severely hampering him. He might have gotten so used to having everything come quickly and easily to him, and therefore he doesn't haven't the inner strength to work hard and be patient (though he is certainly able to, he hasn't yet revealed his inner strength and it's not working for him as it should). In such cases, the person has no choice but to engage in specific or easy methods of treating his issues, and gradually he needs to transition into the process of learning about himself in-depth.

If, for whatever reason, a person chooses to solely focus on solutions to his issues and he has no other purpose for seeking self-recognition, he should still try as much as he can to go in the ways of the holy Torah. One needs to also bear in mind that these methods will never bring him to the desired goal, and that he won't be able a proper lifestyle from using any of these methods.

It can be compared to a person who is very ill, who also suffers from side effects of the illness and he needs to take medication for it. Certainly the medication doesn't help for his illness, it is only solving the symptoms. Even worse, sometimes the medications for the difficult side effects can hamper the person's health even more, if they are not prescribed sensibly. The person has to treat both his illness and his symptoms, and he may need to

1 Sefer Derech Etz Chaim

2 This particular point (the need for basic serenity) will be explained more in Chapter 15.

SELF-RECOGNITION & SELF-ACTUALIZATION

first treat the illness or the symptoms, or both at the same time. But in either case, at a certain point he will need to focus on treating his illness, his general health.

The lesson from this is that a person may have to engage in problem-solving only as a step in the process of self-recognition, or at a later stage so that he can complete his inner work, or at an elementary stage so that he can ease an issue getting in his way and then he can begin to do inner work. But in any case, the general focus and goal always has to be that one wants to know and understand oneself better for the purpose of building a proper lifestyle for himself.

So, before one engages in self-recognition, he should clarify what his motivation is. It will make a very big difference in how he learns about his soul and how he works with it, and what the results will be, depending on if his motivation is to merely solve his issues - or to build a proper, balanced lifestyle. If the person is motivated in self-recognition solely because he wants to solve issues, he will need a path that brings him to such a goal. He will need to learn about the soul faculties that he hasn't yet revealed or balanced, and then he needs to find appropriate solutions.³

And if a person realizes that his motivation in self-recognition is because he wants to build a proper life for himself, he should learn the comprehensive approach of self-recognition and self-actualization, step after step, beginning from the elementary steps and progressing to the higher stages, from the basic level of self-recognition and all the way until the deeper levels of self-recognition.⁴

As mentioned earlier, even when a person wants self-recognition because he wants to solve his issues, he should still strive to have the aspiration of knowing how to build a proper way of living for himself. After he has solved his pressing or extreme issues that were getting in his way, he should begin to understand himself more comprehensively.

3 This is the purpose of the 4 Elements series (which includes, to date, the series of "Fixing" Your: Earth-Sadness, Earth-Laziness, Water-Desires, Wind-Speech, Fire-Conceit, Fire-Anger, Fire-Honor).

4 It is for this purpose that this sefer (Self-Recognition) is coming to explain.

A Practical Outcome Of This Chapter

In this beginning chapter, we have explained the need for self-recognition. In order to enter this process, we need to first know clearly the need for it. We should know that it is Hashem's will to recognize oneself and actualize his soul, in order to serve Him and fulfill His mitzvos properly, and so that we can live properly and sensibly, solve issues, and live a happy life.

With that, we should awaken our will to begin the process of learning and recognizing our soul and working with its abilities. But in order to progress and be consistent about this process, we should think about this often and let it penetrate into our heart, so that it becomes a strong desire in us and so that our heart will simply want it.

So, this chapter is not the end of clarifying the need for self-recognition. It requires more than one read of this chapter. It needs to be thought about and internalized. Practically speaking, after beginning the work of recognizing our soul, we should make sure to have times every day in which we think about, and internalize, the need for self-recognition, so that we can keep our interest in it.

When a person will be consistent about this, his desire for self-recognition will intensify, and his practical work on these concepts will take on greater meaning. The will to recognize oneself, when strengthened, will give one the energy to continue the practical work, and that in turn will reveal a new world to a person – a self-discovery, where one will discover his true self.

And gradually, a person like this can become connected to his abilities and be able to actualize them from their potential, building and strengthening his soul and becoming filled with vitality and joy. And, as a result, he will search for a fundamental way of living that produces effort, consistency, and a desire, in recognizing oneself more and more.

[מהספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש]



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