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בלבבי משכן אבנה

KORACH AVOIDING MACHLOKES

Negative Power of Machlokes In *Parashas Korach*, the Torah tells us of Korach's rebellion against Moshe Rabbeinu. Chazal teach us that "An argument that is not for the sake of Heaven – this is the argument of Korach and his followers." Let us reflect into the concept of *machlokes* (arguing and dissension), what its roots are, and what the personal *avodah* in our soul is - of how we can connect ourselves to a reality that is the antithesis to *machlokes*.

The Inner Workings of "Machlokes" In the way that Hashem has designed the world, there are always details within a whole. The many details in a whole are to be viewed as the parts (*chalakim*) that make up the whole. The whole (*klal*) can include all of the many details (*peratim*) and bind them all together, and by way of the whole, all of the details are interconnected, as opposed to being apart from each other and standing on their own.

But when ruination occurs to the whole, the details become separate from each other, and this is very disparateness is already the beginning step of destruction. Instead of the details being *chalakim* (parts) of one

whole, they each become a *chalukah* – a division.

To illustrate, when brothers split an inheritance with each other, this is called a *chalukah*. The monies of their father had been one unit, and until the inheritance, each brother was entitled to a rightful portion in his father's monies. Now that they are splitting up the inheritance and each brother is taking his own share, the money now becomes divided between them; the money has gone from being a *cheilek* (part) to a *chalukah* (division).

A further level of disparity occurs when the division becomes that of *machlokes* (dissension). In a situation of *machlokes*, the brothers will want to take the portions of their other brothers, either totally or at least some of it. A brother may feel entitled to take another sibling's portion either out of malicious intent, or because he is simply blinded by a lust for more money, or he has some rationalization of why he feels deserving of this money. In either case, he wants the portion that is designated for another.

The opposite of *machlokes* is the concept of *someiach b'chelko*, one who is "happy with his por-



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This weekly parsha sheet is based on translations from HaRav Isamar Schwartz, Shlit"a the author of the Bilvavi & DaEs series. The Rav attended the Pachad Yitzhak Yeshiva of Rav Yonasan David, Shlit"a and graduated from the Ponovitch Yeshiva of Rav Gershon Edelstein, Shlit"a. The earliest of more than 50 sefarim of the Rav where enthusiastically endorsed by Rav Gamliel Rabinovitch, Shlit"a, Rav Moshe Sternbuch, Shlit"a, Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlit"a, the Tolna Rebbe, Shlit"a, Rav Moshe Mordechai Karp, Shlit"a, amongst others. Using an eclectic approach, the Rav's teachings speak to the hearts of Jews from all walks of life.

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tion”. When a person can appreciate his own portion and he feels happy with whatever he has received, he is far from *machlokes*, because *machlokes* thrives on a desire to take another’s portion, but if one is happy with his own portion, he feels no need to take another’s portion.

Now that we understand that, we can see that there are two root attitudes that are responsible for *machlokes*. One attitude that shapes *machlokes* is when a person doesn’t recognize what his own portion is. Another attitude that forms *machlokes* is, that even if a person does recognize what his own portion is, if he isn’t happy with it, he will want to take another’s portion.

In order for one to be happy with what he has, he has to first recognize what his own portion is. After recognizing what he has, he then has to be happy with it. When one does not recognize what his portion is in the first place, he cannot be happy with it, because he doesn’t know what he has, and then he may want to enter into *machlokes* in order to be satisfied. Conversely, when one can recognize what he has, he can be happy with it, and then he has essentially uprooted the entire idea of *machlokes* from his perspective.

A Child’s Self-Focused Perspective Now we will explore this from a subtler perspective. In the episode of Korach’s rebellion, the Heavenly Court decided that all of those who took part in the *machlokes* must incur the death penalty, including the children - a matter which requires

explanation. Why were even the children sentenced to die?

The *Maharal* explained that when a person is a “*baal machlokes*” (a collaborator of dissension), he invites *Gehinnom* (hell) upon himself, and not because this is a punishment, but because his very being is connected with *Gehinnom*, when he allows himself to be connected with the very idea of *machlokes*.

We can also offer the following deep perspective. Chazal define a minor as “one who still relies upon his father’s table” – anyone who is financially dependent on his father is considered to be a minor, even if he is a fully grown adult. The depth of this matter is because a child can only take from others, and he has no portion of his own. Take a look at the average child. Children are not happy with what they have, and they will always want to take away what others have. This is the way Hashem has made the world, and this is the natural orientation of a child. Besides for the problem of not recognizing others’ boundaries, and for a simple lack of decent behavior, there is a deeper reason why children often want to take what others have: they do not recognize what they have, and they cannot recognize that others have their own portion. They do not understand that each person has his allotted share; they cannot relate to this. Therefore, children want everything for themselves.

This is total immaturity (*katnus mochin*), and when a person as an adult

still hasn’t grown past this immature orientation – this total level of *katnus mochin* – he is still living within the “world of disparity” (*alma d’piruda*), and he cannot connect to others, because he thinks that everything must become his. He is totally immersed in his own life, in his own details that he considers important, without connecting them to the greater whole.

That is why Chazal define a person as a “minor” as long as he relies on parental support – it is because he has no portion of his own, and all he can do is take from others. A child has no shame to keep receiving from his parents, it doesn’t feel to him like “bread of shame”¹, and he will keep asking his parents for more and more things. (Teenagers and adult children may do this too, but that is a separate topic). A child’s constant reliance on his parents is not simply because he lacks *daas* (mature understanding), which is also true, but because he thinks that everything in his surroundings must belong to him.

That is the child’s thinking, and this is the immature perspective of *katnus mochin* which may remain in an adult who hasn’t grown past the child’s perspective: “Everything belongs to me.” It is like the person in the *Mishnah* who says, “What’s mine, is mine; and what is yours, is

1 The Ramchal in sefer Daas Tevunos explains that the reason why Hashem created the system of reward and punishment is so that the reward shouldn’t feel to our soul as “*nahama d’kisufa*”, “bread of shame”; that we shouldn’t feel ashamed when we receive our eventual reward, because this would detract from the enjoyment of our reward.

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mine” – he does not recognize that there is such a thing as his own portion and the portion of others.

Such a person invites *Gehinnom* upon himself, as the *Maharal* explains, because *Gehinnom* is a situation of disconnectedness from anything else other than the person's own existence – and that is exactly *Gehinnom*. Unlike Gan Eden, which is a place where Torah scholars sit and learn Torah together, place of connection and friendship, *Gehinnom* is called *Tzeil-Maves* (the shadow of death), because it is a deathlike existence, a place where there is entirely “*alma d'piruda*”, the world of disparity.

A person who cannot connect to others is called a “*bar Gehinnom*”, someone who is destined for *Gehinnom*, and this is the depth of the *Maharal*'s words that *Gehinnom* is not a ‘punishment’ for one who engages in *machlokes* – rather, it becomes the very reality for one who places himself in this “*Gehinnom*”-like state of existence: the immature perspective that is called “*katnus mochin*”.

Rampant Amount of Machlokes In Our Times

There is a force in the world called *machlokes* (dissension), and let us try to understand it. When Korach rose up against Moshe to argue with him, this was not just against Moshe. It was against the entire *Klal Yisrael*, for Moshe is the root of all souls in the Jewish people. Therefore, when Korach instigated the *machlokes*, the damage he had done was that he engraved the idea of *machlokes* into every soul in the

Jewish people. Ever since then, we have been afflicted with the negative character trait of *machlokes*.

Our generation is far away from when we stood at Har Sinai, when we were on a level of perfection. The spiritual level of the generations has been descending ever since, and currently, we are in a generation where there is total *katnus* (immaturity). Our generation is like a child, who does not recognize his own portion or the allotted portion of others.

It is possible that a person learned Torah, keeps all the *mitzvos*, and even does *chessed*, yet he can be very far from his own self - he has no self-recognition at all. He hides underneath the “cloak” of Torah, *mitzvos*, *chessed*, and *kedushah* (holiness) yet he justifies his involvement in *machlokes*, thinking that this is all in the name of Torah and *kedushah*. He might even claim that it is all for the sake of “making *shalom*” (peace), but this can just be another disguise for *machlokes*.

In the times we live in, the world is filled with *machlokes*. The first *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed because of the three cardinal sins, and the second *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed to baseless hatred.² These sins were not just commonplace in those times – they were everywhere; they filled the world. In the times of the first *Beis HaMikdash*, idolatry was so rampant that the Gemara says that every rooftop in Jerusalem had an idol. In the times of the second *Beis HaMikdash*, the world was

steeped in baseless hatred, and that has been the situation ever since, as anyone with even a little bit of sensibility can see.

Machlokes fills every corner of the world today! It is everywhere, and the only question is how much, and to what extent. But *machlokes* is found in every place in the world today. It is not simply that each person wants his own *chalukah* (divided portion) – today, it goes further than that. Today, people are demanding the portions of others – because they do not recognize their own portion that they have.

A person may go to a *din Torah* today in *Beis Din* and win the case, but that doesn't necessarily mean that in Heaven he has won. The *Beis Din* here may tell him he is entitled to a certain portion, but in Heaven, they know that it is not his real portion....

When a person doesn't search for the inner world found within him, he has not found his own “portion”. The *Mesillas Yescharim* says that “man is obligated to make true and clarify his obligation on his world” – the emphasis is on the “his”, because each person must find his own unique portion on this world, and that is his personal, unique obligation.

Peace – External and Internal Mashiach will come to the world and make peace throughout the entire world. This will not be just peace in the external sense, but the inner meaning of peace. External peace is when people are behaving peacefully to-

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wards each other, and we certainly should strive for this; as important as this is, it is not yet the main part of the peace process.

Chazal teach that Aharon HaKohen “love peace and pursued peace, loved people, and drew them close to Torah.” He helped others be peaceful to each other, and this was the external part of the peace, but he didn’t stop there – he also “drew them close to Torah.” This refers to the inner meaning of peace, which is to reach one’s own portion – Aharon HaKohen helped people reach their own unique portion, and then there could be true peace between everyone. Aharon HaKohen didn’t just pursue peace. That would have been external peace alone, and the external layer of peace without the inner layer of peace is sorely lacking.

Of course, we should all strive for even external peaceful behavior towards others, even if it is missing the inner level; it is wonderful to behave peacefully towards others. But we must also strive for the inner layer of peace. *Shalom* (peace) comes from the word *shleimus* (completion). Each part of Creation is a part of a greater whole, and when all the parts are unified, the Creation is whole. If each person recognizes his own portion and he can also recognize that others have their own unique portion, this is the inner level of *shalom*.

The inner level of *shalom* (peace) is to see a connectedness in Creation, how each part in Creation makes up a greater whole. It is to see a unified, connected Creation – to recognize

that each part in Creation is joined and connected with all the other parts in Creation.

Avoiding Machlokes The more a person lives inwardly and truthfully, the further he is from *machlokes*. He realizes that whatever he has is from Hashem, and whatever is taken from him is also from Hashem. Even if his rightful portion gets taken away from him, he is aware that “*Hashem has given, and Hashem has taken.*” A person can learn to live with his own inner world, and that is his true portion on this world. With such a perspective, in most situations, he will be far from entering *machlokes*.

Even if he is forced to somehow take sides in a *machlokes*, he will be unaffected by it. It might seem as if he is being hurt – he might have to incur financial loss, and his honor might be attacked, and people may humiliate him. But no one can damage the person’s inner world.

If a person will lose money due to a lack of aggressiveness in the *machlokes*, there is no obligation of “*hishtadlus* (effort)” upon him to try to get himself the money. Being involved in a *machlokes* is not called *hishtadlus*!

The world is filled with lies, flattery, and all kind of falsehood. This is not only referring to the secular world out there, but it is also true even within our own inner circles. We must be wary of this and avoid any *machlokes*, and to realize that being involved in a *machlokes* is not considered doing *hishtadlus* to make money. This attitude is the opposite

of the general attitude of the world today, which is filled with all kinds of situations of *machlokes*.

People who live inwardly and truthfully will not enter a *machlokes*, and even more so, they are far from the very idea of *machlokes*. The great *tzaddikim* didn’t become involved with *machlokes* not just because they had great *ahavas Yisrael* (which was also true), but because they were far from the pettiness of *machlokes*. When a person is clear that he is *someiach b’chelko* (happy with his lot) – when he clearly feels joyful in his own portion on this world – he already avoids most situations of *machlokes*. He is far from demanding his own honor. And if he incurs financial loss rather than involve himself in a *machlokes* to try to get money, he understands that “*Hashem has given, and Hashem has taken.*”

In Conclusion When we look at the world today, either we can see a world full of pains, aches, and lowliness – that is the world today that is full of *machlokes* – or we can see a pure world in front of us, when we are connected to our own inner world.

When one discovers his own unique portion on this world – his own inner world that is unique only to him – he can then reach the level of *emunas chachamim*, trusting the Sages; and specifically, to have *emunas chachamim* in the wise leaders of our own generation. And, more importantly, one can have *emunah* in *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, Who Was, Is, and Will always Be.

[from BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

The True Solution To Low Self-Worth

Many people suffer from feelings of low self-worth. There are generally two different sources of how a person measures his worth: His opinion of himself, and the opinion of others about him. Usually when a person is suffering from low self-worth, it is both – he has a low opinion of himself, and he also thinks of himself based on the opinion of others towards him. If a person thinks poorly of himself, he will usually give that negative feeling of himself towards others, whether consciously or unconsciously, and he is waiting for approval and worthiness to come to him from others (whether consciously or unconsciously). But unfortunately, this is a recipe for failure, because the inevitable reality is that most people have difficulty expressing to another person how much they value him and how well they think of him.¹

In the meantime, the person with low self-worth continues to beam his negative opinion of himself towards others, and others pick up on it. He is waiting for them to make him feel worthy, but this only exasperates everyone else who are picking up on his feelings of low self-worth. He is left empty-handed from what he wants, and the issue ‘snowballs’ – he doesn’t get social approval, and that only intensifies his own feelings of low self-worth which he already has about himself. In his perception (which is incorrect), if others don’t hold him in esteem, he takes this as proof that there is nothing valuable and respectful about him.²

There are all kinds of external factors that contribute to one’s feelings of low self-worth, but the root reason for it (whether he feels worthless on his own or because those in his environment think poorly of him) is because the person isn’t aware of his hidden potential. He has abilities that he doesn’t know about, and he needs to become aware of them, connect to them, and make use of

them. Hashem, in His great compassion, gave wonderful gifts to a person. He gave a person hidden potential in his soul, which are priceless treasures. If a person doesn’t recognize his soul and the treasures that are within it – his capabilities, which are the gifts that Hashem has bestowed him with – he doesn’t value himself, and this will also make it harder for others to value him.

But when a person recognizes his qualities and he connects to them, and especially if he recognizes and makes use of his best quality, his low self-worth will disappear, his self-worth will expand, and he will no longer be hoping to get ‘crumbs’ from the ‘tables’ of others in order to feel that he’s worthy and valuable, thereby saving himself from a life of disappointment.³

True Self-Worth

Once we are on this topic, we shall now digress a bit from the general topic of this chapter and discuss more about what true self-worth is. Today, there are several options by which a person can learn get self-worth.

In one method, a person is “sold” a false version of himself in which he is told that he has capabilities which he really doesn’t have, but the therapist convinces him that he really has those qualities and that he can become a successful person, he can become a person in the big world, he can become strong and self-sufficient, or that he’s capable of anything, etc.

In this method, it’s possible that it can take away the person’s suffering of low self-worth, but it will certainly not provide the person with a genuine self-worth. If a person doesn’t recognize what his true self is, how can he value that self?! Whatever he is being taught to value is not about himself, it is about valuing what he imagines himself to be or what he would like to be. With this ap-

¹ False, flattering compliments which are superficial and not genuine, and which are mostly uttered for some self-serving purpose, are not effective. When a person receives such compliments that aren’t genuine, he doesn’t feel satisfied from it and he remains with his lack of self-worth. And if he is a more honest, no-nonsense type of person, or if his emotions are very refined and sensitive, he can easily feel how such compliments are empty and meaningless. The false compliments are also hurtful to him, and he feels as if he is being stabbed when he hears them.

² When people aren’t feeling valued enough or held in esteem enough by others, this is not proof at all that there is nothing valuable or worthy about the person. This is because most of the time, the other person doesn’t even recognize his own inner world, and certainly he doesn’t recognize the inner world of another and be able to give over a genuine feeling of value to another. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in a world where people are like strangers who act coldly to each other, as if they don’t recognize each other - it is almost impossible to find someone who genuinely recognizes the qualities of his friend and who can make his friend feel valued and worthy.

³ It should be noted that there are many people though who do have a high self-worth for themselves, even though they do not recognize their abilities yet. This can be possible for any of the following reasons. (1) A person may have certain talents and he is aware of it (and a talent comes from any of the soul’s various abilities). (2) Some people are born with a natural balance in their soul (relatively speaking) and therefore they don’t fall in to negative feelings of low self-worth. (3) In others, it is because they are naturally haughty and therefore they were born with a blown up sense of self-worth about themselves. (4) They may be the type who feel fine with whatever they do, and therefore they value themselves even if their achievements are very minimal. They feel good about even the smallest thing they do. (There may be other reasons too why a person can have a positive self-worth even though he doesn’t recognize his soul yet). But, the common denominator between all of these reasons is that they are all superficial sources of self-worth (some more and some less). In any of these cases, though, if a person recognizes his capabilities and connects to them, especially if he connects with his strongest power, he will have a much more fundamental and stronger self-worth.

proach, not only won't the person value himself properly, but he will be fooling himself and he won't be living his genuine self. He will become disconnected from reality and he lives in an imaginary perception of himself, as if he can become anything he imagines himself to be. It won't give a person a positive feeling about himself, and it won't be genuine self-worth. Nor will it be helpful to him.

There is also another method that is used by therapy to give a person self-worth. The person is shown what his natural qualities are, which Hashem has given to him, and how to make use of them. However, the person is also told that there are his own independent qualities, and his ego gets blown up on purpose so that he can get self-worth at any cost. The therapist teaches him to bring out his trait of conceitedness, or the negative version of himself, to make him feel as if he's in control of everything: *"The river is mine, and it is I who made it."*

There is a gain here in that the person is taught how to recognize his qualities, but the problem with this approach, a very big problem, is that the person becomes transformed into a conceited person (*baal gaavah*). Hashem says about a *baal gaavah*, "I am him cannot dwell under the same roof." And, such a person will also lose his friends and he will be disliked by everyone, because nobody wants to be around a *baal gaavah*. People have no tolerance for a *baal gaavah*, because he is so consumed with his own image that he will destroy anyone in his path in order to feel better about himself.

In order for a person to properly gain from such an approach in which he hones in on his qualities, he would have to work hard on uprooting his conceitedness at the same time, making sure that he isn't becoming a haughty person.

Another method used to provide self-worth is that the person is advised to set goals and projects and undertakings, which are way above his current level, and he is told to work hard at it and apply himself fully to it. He gets self-worth from his appreciation to reach higher. Although this is wonderful, it is not recommended for most people, and it's certainly not feasible when a person is just beginning to work with his soul. It is only for individuals who are capable of high levels of being able to sacrifice.

Finally, there is a method for self-worth by which a per-

son can learn to focus on his qualities, especially his strongest quality. In addition, he becomes aware that these capabilities are wonderful gifts from Hashem.⁴ They are his capabilities, but they aren't coming from his own strength and from his own wisdom. Rather, they are gifts which Hashem has given to him. In this approach, self-worth essentially means, "I value the gifts that I have received from Hashem."

This approach for self-worth is the correct and proper path to take, for most people. It gives a person a high level of self-worth, which is genuine and pure, and it fills the soul with vitality and joy. And it causes many problems related to low self-worth to simply dissipate and go away on their own.

Investing In Our Strongest Ability

In order to feel more alive and energized from our strongest ability, we need to become connected to it. We need to invest a lot of effort into this, to nurture, strengthen, and uplift it, and actualize it from its potential state.

The ability which will help us connect to our strongest power and help us prepare to invest ourselves in it is: the power of identification. If a person doesn't identify with something, he cannot feel connected to it, because he will have no will, no push, to invest his time and energy into it. Compare this to an analogy of a person who needs to run a functioning home. He needs to organize it, clean it, upkeep it, go shopping, cook, pay the utility bills, taxes, etc. If the house is not his, he doesn't identify with it and he will have no motivation to put effort in taking care of this house. But if it's his house, he identifies with it, he feels connected to it, and therefore he will be motivated to take care of this house, and he can do it all happily.

The lesson from this is that when we recognize our stron-

⁴ The truth is that even our faults and shortcomings – our negative aspects of character – are also wonderful gifts from Hashem. Our "negative" aspects are in fact not truly "negative" in their essence – they are actually positive abilities which we haven't yet balanced. And in fact, there is an additional "gift" contained in our negative aspects, faults, and shortcomings – the fact that we were given the privilege to repair them. This is how we use every aspect of our soul, combining all of our soul in its entirety (qualities and weaknesses together) to reach wholeness. However, it takes a long time and inner work to get to this perspective of viewing our weaknesses in a positive light. Therefore, at the beginning of working with our souls (which is what this sefer is coming to discuss), when we are taking the path of "Do good" in which we focus on our qualities, we are not discussing how to deal with our weaknesses, and instead we are discussing our positive points and how to connect to them. Only after we have recognized our qualities and we have strengthened them, can we be empowered to view our negative aspects not as negative but as positive aspects that merely require tikkun (repairing).

gest power and we identify with it – when we become aware that our strongest ability is who “I” am, and in turn that “I” am my strongest ability – that makes us connected to our strongest ability and then we will want to invest ourselves in actualizing it. After all, a person loves himself and he worries about himself, and he wants to be successful, so he is prepared to do whatever is needed in order to benefit himself. Once he realizes that his true “I” means his strongest ability, he will want to connect to his strongest ability and invest himself in it, doing whatever is needed in order to actualize it, and he is more than happy to do it.⁵ To the degree that one identifies with his strongest ability, he will connect to it more, and he will keep investing himself into actualizing it.⁶

Soul-Perception Vs. Intellectual Perception

[Now we will go a step further.] We will be much more connected to our strongest ability if we have a “soul” identification with it – when we are identifying it through the perception of our soul – as opposed to merely identifying it intellectually.

In the previous chapter, we were learning about the step of listing our abilities in order of how dominant they are. We learned how to intellectually identify our strongest ability. But this will not suffice. If we only identify our strongest ability on an intellectual level alone, we will be able to make use of it a little, but we won’t be able to connect to it enough and invest our energy into it, and then we won’t be getting enough vitality that we really need to be getting from our strongest point. So we also need to identify it with a “soul” perception, which is deeper than intellect.

To illustrate the difference between intellectual percep-

tion versus soul perception, when a father identifies with his children, he doesn’t just intellectually identify with them, he identifies with them through his soul. He can know and feel in his soul how these are his children and that they are part of him. In the same vein, we should relate to our strongest ability as something which “Hashem has given it to me as a gift, and it is part of me.” Just as when we ask a father “Who are your children?” and he will immediately answer “These are my children”, so too if we would be asked “What is the real you?” we should immediately be able to answer, “The real me is - my strongest ability.”

When we can identify with our strongest ability through our soul’s perception, we can then receive wondrous vitality from that identifying. It is also the key to the next stage, which is the stage of actualizing the potential of our strongest ability. Only when our soul can identify with our strongest ability, when we can say on our strongest ability that “That is me, and I am it”, can we be able to do all that’s needed to actualize the potential of our strongest ability.

Every person has a great desire to actualize and materialize his true self and find his capabilities. In more precise language, every person has a deeply rooted will to produce himself, to actualize his very self from its potential state. And a person is prepared to do all that’s needed, in order to self-actualize. But what happens? Usually a person is not clear who he really is and what he really is, and what he needs to be investing himself in. As a result of that, either he loses his drive to self-actualize, or he spreads himself out over many different directions and he doesn’t focus that much on one particular point, instead ‘spreading himself out too thin’ over many different points. Or, he spreads out all his efforts through all sorts of “suggestions” and programs of growth.

But when a person recognizes his unique share on this world, he will then want it and focus on it and put all his energy into it, more than anything else (no matter how good those other goals may be). After all, Chazal said “A person prefers his own one measurement, rather than having ninety measurements of his friend.”⁷ Therefore, the more that one’s soul is perceiving and identifying with our strongest ability and seeing what his true “I” is – his and no one else’s – the more he will direct his will and invest all his efforts, time, and money, into this area.

⁵ From a deeper perspective, the true self of a person is the innermost point of the soul, the soul’s very essence, which is called “portion of G-d from above”. The strongest ability of a person which is the closest point to the soul’s very inner essence, because it is the very first “extension” of the soul’s innermost essence, making the strongest ability of the soul directly attached and connected to the soul’s very essence (the innermost self), directly clothing it and serving it. However, at the beginning stage of self-recognition, it is very hard for a person to identify with the very innermost essence of the soul, and therefore our focus at the beginning has to be on identifying with our strongest ability, which is the point just below our very essence itself, and which is much closer for us to identify with.

⁶ In the next chapter, we will be explaining how to utilize the potential of our strongest ability. But already at the stage of identifying our strongest point, we are beginning to actualize it somewhat. This is because when we identify with it, we are touching the root of our soul. And once we genuinely touch it, it “moves” the soul root and causes its potential to be awakened, leading to a degree of actualized potential.

⁷ Talmud Bavli Bava Metzia 38a

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