



## KI SEITZEI GOING TO WAR AGAINST THE YETZER HORA

### The Opposing Forces Within Creation

Parshas Ki Seitzei begins with, “When you will go out to war against your enemies.”

There are several kinds of wars which are fought. There is an obligatory war (milchemes chovah,) a war fought for a mitzvah (milchemes mitzvah), and a permissible, non-obligatory kind of war (milchemes reshuv).

Soon we shall explain a concept that each thing in Creation has an element that opposes it, and therefore, there are always warring forces within Creation. For each thing, we can find something that opposes it. Whenever there are two sides to a matter, the two sides are in opposition with each other. This opposition is the depth of all wars that take place in Creation.

### Our Life Is A Constant Battle With Internal Forces

The Mesillas Yesharim states that a person is constantly in a war, surrounded from all sides. We don't just go out to war at certain times. Rather, we are always in a state of “war”, because our life is a constant nisayon (test).

The Chovos HaLevovos says it even more clearly: Our worst enemy, the yetzer hora (evil inclination) is within. It is enmeshed into our psyche. It is in our body, our feelings and our senses. It is in our subconscious. It advises us every step of the way to listen to its voice.

In the same way that ingredients mix together with each other and connect with each other, becoming embedded in each other, so is the evil inclination mixed into our being. The evil inclination is a partnering, neighboring force with the rest of our bodily, emotional and mental forces. Its voice is found in our conscious mind, as well as in our subconscious. In the words of the Nefesh HaChaim, before the sin of Adam, the evil inclination was a force that existed outside of man, and after the sin, the evil inclination entered into man, and now it is mixed into the psyche.

The simple understanding of the yetzer hora is, as the Gemara in Tractate Berachos states, that there are two inclinations which reside in the heart: the evil inclination

is in the left chamber of the heart, and the right chamber of the heart is our good inclination.<sup>1</sup>

But from the words of the Chovos HaLevovos, which is based on a statement of the Sages in Tractate Succah<sup>2</sup>, it is apparent that the evil inclination is hidden deep in the heart, for one of the names is Tzefuni, “hidden one” (and Rashi states that this is because it is “hidden” in the heart). Therefore, the yetzer hora is not just a partnering, neighboring force within man. Rather, it is mixed into man's psyche.

The depth of this is because there are two sides to everything. The evil inclination always tells you the opposite of what you should really do. That is its power – it opposes the will of a human being to do the right thing and to do the will of Hashem. So the evil inclination is not just a persuasive force. It is more than that. It wants to do the opposite of Hashem's will, and therefore it tampers with a person's will.

### See The Two Opposing Sides In Every Matter

This perspective is actually the way to deal with the evil inclination. The clearer a person is about what the evil inclination is - that it is not just a neighboring force in man, but a force mixed into his psyche – one can be clearer about the way to fight the evil inclination, which is man's personal avodah.

And what is the way to fight it? One needs to get used to the idea of always thinking the opposite. Whenever you encounter anything, think of what its opposite is. Always see the two different sides and how they oppose each other.

If one doesn't get used to thinking like this, he will only see what the yetzer hora says. The Gemara says that the wicked are ruled by their evil inclination.<sup>3</sup> This means that until one gains control over one's inner drives, one is only seeing what the evil inclination sees!

The exceptions to this are those who are great tzaddi-

<sup>1</sup> Berachos 61b

<sup>2</sup> Succah 52a

<sup>3</sup> Berachos 61b

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kim, such as Dovid HaMelech, who totally emptied out his heart from the evil inclination (as it is written, “My heart is emptied within me”<sup>4</sup>) and many other tzaddikim as well, who also did this. But most people do not merit such a level, so what is the avodah of most people? The avodah of the average person, the beinoni,<sup>5</sup> is, that in whatever he encounters, he must see two sides to it. If he doesn’t see two sides, he usually will see only the side of the evil inclination.

There is a sharp statement by the Chozeh of Lublin, who was asked how to serve the Creator properly. He answered, “Whatever you think you should do, do the opposite.” This is because the average person is naturally inclined to follow the evil inclination’s advice, so he needs to think against the evil inclination. This is known as “The kelipah (the husk) that comes before the pri (fruit)”.

But when one enters a bit more inward than this, in whatever he encounters, he will see two opposing sides to the matter. As soon as one starts thinking like this, he has already left the evil inclination’s view. The yetzer hora is no longer controlling his mind, once he starts thinking of the two sides to a matter.

## Step 2: “What Is The Yetzer Tov Saying? What Is The Yetzer HoRa Saying?”

After one sees the two sides to the matter, now begins a deeper stage of avodah, where he must wonder: “Which side is closer to good, and which side is closer to evil?”

The two chambers in the heart

house the two different inclinations, which are each saying different things. If one clarifies to himself, “What is the yetzer hora saying, and what is the yetzer tov saying?”, he has already won half of the battle. He has made himself aware of what the yetzer hora’s view is, which he didn’t think about until now.

From then on, the rest of the battle is about whose voice he will listen to, the yetzer tov’s or the yetzer hora’s. Hopefully, he will listen to the yetzer tov and not to the yetzer hora. But the main part of the battle is before this, when a person discerns what the voice of the yetzer hora is and what the voice of the yetzer tov is. The depth of the challenge is because a person isn’t clear what the yetzer tov is telling him and what the yetzer hora is telling him.

Understandably, sometimes it is clear. We know clearly that it’s the yetzer hora, when it is a matter of clear-cut halachah or mitzvah which we feel a resistance towards. But if it’s a more subtle kind of matter which isn’t as clear cut, that is where the battleground is. A large part of our spiritual struggles are that we aren’t clear if a certain thought or desire is coming from the yetzer tov or the yetzer hora. Therefore, a person’s main avodah when battling the yetzer hora is to try to clarify to himself if a certain argument or thinking is coming from the yetzer tov, or it’s coming from the yetzer hora.

## Summary of Steps 1-2

So, to summarize, the first step is that a person should always see two sides to every matter. This is the beginning of fighting the evil inclination.

At this stage, we must simply become aware of our two inclinations. If we don’t become aware of our two inclinations, we are being ruled by the evil inclination.

When one is regularly used to seeing two sides to every matter, and slowly progresses with this stage, one eventually graduates from a person ruled by his evil inclination to a person who is on the level of a beinoni, of whom the Sages state: “By beinonim<sup>6</sup>, this one and that one (both inclinations) rule them.”<sup>7</sup> Now is where the main battle with the evil inclination begins. He must now think what the evil inclination is saying and what the good inclination is saying.

## Ex. 1 – Learning More Mussar In Elul

For example, a person is in the month of Elul and he wants to prepare for the day of judgment, Rosh HaShanah, so he decides that he wants to learn more mussar, so that he will be well-prepared for Rosh HaShanah. Does this desire to learn more mussar stem from the yetzer tov, or from the yetzer hora?

At first, this appears to be a desire of our yetzer tov, because it is a desire to awaken ourselves, to become more spiritual, to prepare ourselves for the day of judgment. But on second thought, we can see that it may be coming from a desire to slacken off from in-depth Torah learning, and to instead go after our comfort zone, which, in this case, is to learn mussar, rather than learn Gemara in-depth. Where is the yetzer tov involved with

<sup>6</sup> lit. “intermediate ones”, those who are in between the category of tzaddikim (righteous) and reshaim (wicked),

<sup>7</sup> Berachos 61b

<sup>4</sup> Tehillim 109:22

<sup>5</sup> Editor’s Note: refer to the beginning chapters of sefer Tanya

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this, and where is the yetzer hora involved?

## Example 2 - Honoring Parents

Here is another example. The mitzvah of honoring parents is an important mitzvah. How much should a person honor his parents? This is an everyday issue in many people's lives. The Gemara says that it is impossible to fulfill this mitzvah perfectly, because it is very challenging, and therefore a person who tries his hardest at this mitzvah is considered praiseworthy. But, practically speaking, how much should a person honor his parents? Where do we draw the line?

If a person has a difficult father who deliberately causes him pain, he may not be obligated to honor him fully. There are definitions in the halachah regarding this situation. But in a normal case, how much should one honor his parents? What is the amount, and what are the boundaries? How is the yetzer tov involved in this, and how is the yetzer hora involved in this?

## Example 3 - Chessed

Many people have a desire to do chessed. How far does one need to do chessed? If a mitzvah cannot be done through others and only through him – and the world is full of such cases – how far must one go?

Does a person need to go to hospitals and old age homes to visit the sick and elderly who have no one to visit them, which is clearly an act of chessed? Does a person need to help all the widows and orphans in the world who have no one to help them? There are endless opportunities of chessed in the world, and a person

could be busy with it from morning until night, without learning a word of Torah the entire day, and having no time other than to say Kerias Shema at morning and night. It is clear to anyone that a person learning Torah every day cannot be busy all day with chessed. But how much chessed exactly does one actually need to do?

## The Challenge: Discerning The Voice of The Yetzer Tov vs. The Voice of the Yetzer Hora

We can give more examples if we want to, but there are many questions like this, to anyone who enters more inward into life. The challenge is that people don't know where to draw the line between where the yetzer tov is and where the yetzer hora is. It is unclear.

When it comes to a clear-cut mitzvah or an obvious sin, it is clear if it's the yetzer tov or yetzer hora, and the only struggle is, which voice to listen to. But at least it is clear which part belongs to the yetzer hora and which part belongs to the yetzer tov. But in many other areas of a person's life, it isn't so clear cut.

What is the advice for this?

There are two fundamental ways, as explained in the words of our Sages, and it is the depth of going out to "war against our enemies", as the Torah says in the beginning of Parshas Ki Seitzei.

## The First Way (The Ramban's Advice): Clarity Through Learning Torah

The first way is written by the Ramban: Whenever a person is in doubt about what to do, and he sees two different sides and he isn't sure how to decide between the two op-

tions, he should learn Torah. From learning Torah, he receives the clarity to decide between the two options. This comes from the spiritual light of the Torah.

However, many people try this and they still don't get clarity, and they end up back where they started. What then does the Ramban mean?

The Ramban is only talking about a person who learns Torah lishmah, not a person who learns Torah shelo lishmah. When a person learns Torah shelo lishmah, he is learning Torah for himself, so he remains leaning towards only one side – which is himself. When that is the case, he is missing the "light of Torah" which brings clarity. He is learning Torah because it is his own personal will, and not because it is the will of the Creator. He is choosing the side that is more comfortable for him, so he stays on one side the whole time, and therefore he doesn't achieve clarity.

In contrast to this, when one learns Torah lishmah, he is divested from any personal will of his own. As the Nefesh HaChaim says, learning Torah lishmah means to learn Torah for the sake of Torah, and even more so, to learn Torah for the sake of doing Hashem's will. He is divested of his "I" when he learns Torah. Then he receives a decision which comes from above his "I". This is the depth of the advice of the Ramban that a person receives clarity about his doubts by learning Torah.

But if a person learns shelo lishmah, he cannot receive such clarity from this higher place, because he is still within his "I".

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Firstly, a person needs to be totally immersed in Torah, just as a person must be totally immersed in a mikveh. That is the elementary step, and it is the beginning of coming out of the “I”, when learning Torah. Even more than this, one needs to learn lishmah, to learn Torah because it is the will of Hashem, and in this way he leaves the “I” totally as he is learning Torah. Then he can receive the “light of Torah” which gives him the ability to decide between his doubts, from a place that is above the “I”.

Most people are learning Torah shelo lishmah, and therefore the advice of the Ramban doesn't help them achieve clarity, because the Ramban's advice can only work for a person who learns Torah lishmah. They don't get past their “I”, and therefore they stay within their own will which comes from their “I” when they are learning Torah, so they remain on this one side.

## The Second Way (Chovos HaLevovos): Nullifying The Will

A second method of advice in clarifying our doubts is written in sefer Chovos HaLevovos, that the purpose of all our service on this world is to reach hishtavus, equality. This is personified by a person who nullifies all of his personal desires.

Whenever a person wants something, he is stuck in it. The evil inclination takes over whenever a person acts shelo lishmah, and as long as a person has a personal will for something, he is acting shelo lishmah and the yetzer hora can control him. One needs to reach hishtavus, meaning he must be prepared to do the will of Hashem no matter what, and he

must not personally want anything of his own. He must want to do something only if it is the will of Hashem to do it, otherwise, he shouldn't want to do it.

The classic example of this is what the Sages said regarding a person who walks by a non-kosher store and he smells the aroma of pork. Instead of saying, “This is disgusting, because it is a sin to eat it,” one should instead say, “Really I want to eat it, but what can I do already, if my Creator decreed I can't eat it!”<sup>8</sup>

So, one must be prepared to go against one's will, and he should train himself to let go of any personal will that he has. The yetzer hora uses the will of a person to want what it wants, and that is how it brings a person down. Therefore, one must leave his own will, by wanting nothing of his own, so that the yetzer hora cannot take hold of him.

When a person uses his power of bechirah (free will) when he is in the midst of a nisayon (spiritual struggle), by being prepared to nullify all of his desires, with a complete heart, to do only Hashem's will - this self-nullification is not just another quality to have, but it is the way to penetrate past the “I”. This brings a person past his own “I”, where there is nothing but Hashem's presence, and from that higher place, a person gains the power to decide between doubts.

From a deep understanding, the advice of the Ramban and the advice of the Chovos HaLevovos are the same advice, but they are just coming from two different angles. The

Ramban is addressing the positive aspect which needs to be done: to learn Torah. The Chovos HaLevovos is addressing which factor needs to be negated: that one should nullify his desires. Either method brings a person to the same place, where one penetrates past his “I”.

The power of lishmah in Torah learning is when a person penetrates past the “I”. The same is for a person who nullifies all of his desires and desires nothing other than to do Hashem's will (as explained above). In that way, one gains the power to decide between his doubts, from a place that is above the “I”.

## In Summary of The Two Approaches To Fighting The Evil Inclination

The Sages state, “One cannot free oneself from one's own prison.”<sup>9</sup> How then can a person remove himself from the imprisoning voice of the evil inclination? How does one choose to do the right thing?

One way is to use the depth of our power of bechirah. The Sages taught that when the yetzer hora attacks, “Pull it into the beis hamidrash”<sup>10</sup>, meaning that a person should learn Torah – and as explained above, this refers specifically to learning Torah lishmah. This changes one's personal will to be solely the will of Hashem, and then one can overcome evil.

The other way is that a person can nullify each of his personal desires, so that he only wants to do Hashem's will.<sup>11</sup>

When one has both these aspects

<sup>9</sup> Berachos 5b

<sup>10</sup> Kiddushin 30b

<sup>11</sup> Editor's Note: refer to Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh (Building A Sanctuary In The Heart) Part IV, Chapters 15-21

<sup>8</sup> Toras Kohanim, cited in Rashi parshas Kedoshim (20:26)

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together – learning Torah lishmah, and bittul haratzon (nullifying the will) - this is the depth of truly fighting the evil of the yetzer hora.

## The Secret of Life

One can reach this inner place in the soul of going to war against the yetzer hora. As Rashi in this week's parshah states, regarding yefas toar (the captive maidservant), "The Torah is only speaking here to counteract the yetzer hora."<sup>12</sup>

There is a deeper part to life, of penetrating past one's "I", and herein is the secret to success in life. The secret is: Torah lishmah, and nullifying one's will for Hashem's will. These are the two powers that enable one to penetrate past his "I", and that he is how he can overcome the yetzer hora.

The Mesillas Yesharim says that only one who is above the garden maze can navigate his way through life. This means that a person needs to go above his own "I", in order to succeed in life and at serving Hashem. Every time a person becomes confused, he can go above the confusion by going above his "I" [either through learning Torah lishmah, or through nullifying his will].

This is the depth of fighting the war against the yetzer hora, and this is the secret to all of man's inner avodah. There is a verse in the Torah, "I stand between you and Hashem", which is also interpreted on a deeper level that it is the "I" of a person which separates him from Hashem. That is why when one can get past his "I", he finds Hashem there...

The secret of our avodah during these days of Elul, "Seek Hashem,

12 Rashi to Devarim 21:11

where He is found",<sup>13</sup> is when one nullifies his very "I". That is how one reveals the malchiyos (kingship) of Hashem unto the world. To the degree one nullifies his "I", one breaks the barriers on one's soul and subjugates evil. One can then merit a truly "good judgment", and, most importantly one can sense Hashem.

## Hashem Dwells In The Heart: Where There Is No "I"

The sensing of one's own "I" conceals Hashem's presence from a person. Hence, the more that a person lessens his "I", the deeper the layer of the soul that is beyond his "I" will be (the place where Hashem resides). This is the place of it which it said, "I will dwell amongst them – within the hearts of each of them",<sup>14</sup> and that is the meaning of "The rock of my heart and portion is G-d",<sup>15</sup> and how "Hashem is the heart of the Jewish people."<sup>16</sup> Hashem resides in the "heart" of a Jew when one reaches the space in himself that is above the "I" – that is where the "heart" is, where He dwells.

## Our Battle - and our Goal

The good and evil inclinations, which also reside in the heart, are only on the outer layer of the heart. In the inner layer of the heart, there are no warring forces. There is only Hashem's presence. The depth of our avodah requires us to battle the yetzer hora and conquer it from our hearts, but the purpose is to get to the inner depth of the heart, where there are no

13 Yeshayah 55:6

14 Alshich to Shemos 25:8

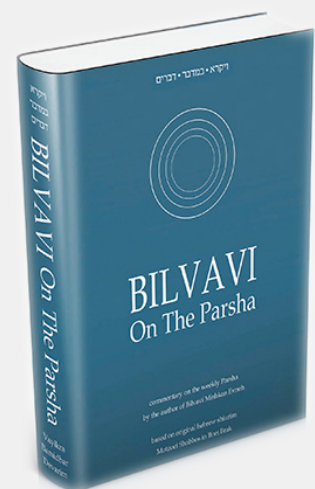
15 Tehillim 73:26

16 Pesikta Rabbasi 15

internal wars, no "I", only Hashem's presence.

The Ramchal in Mesillas Yesharim laid out a ladder of steps in spiritual growth, beginning from zehirus (watchfulness) all the way until kedushah, sanctity. The depth of the final stage and the purpose, kedushah, is to reach the inner layer of the heart, where there is no "I". The war we have with our evil inclination is therefore not all that there is to our personal avodah. It is a stage that we have to traverse. The purpose of our avodah is to get to the inner layer of the heart, which is the place past one's own "I", and there one can find Hashem and sense His presence.

To succeed at the stage that comes before that - the war against the evil inclination - one needs to use either the power of Torah lishmah, or the power of bittul haratzon. And when one has both of these aspects together, he touches upon the true, complete level of sensing Hashem Himself, which is called nochach pnei Hashem, "opposite the presence of Hashem".



[from BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

**Now that the need for self-recognition has been explained, as well as what a person's essence is and what the way to recognize oneself is, it is now upon the reader to attain the proper perspective on what his soul is. This is so that a person will enter into a path of practical inner work that will be accurate.**

**Two Worlds – The Outer and Inner** When Hashem created everything, He created many worlds. To be more precise, He created many spiritual worlds, with only one physical world. The spiritual worlds are found in an inner dimension within the physical world. For this reason, the spiritual worlds are simply given a general title “inner world” (olam pnimi), while the physical world is given the general title of “external world.”

Getting more into detail, Chazal explained that Hashem created everything in three different dimensions of existence: Space, time, and soul.<sup>1</sup> If there is something that exists in any of the spiritual worlds, it also exists from the perspectives of time and soul. Just as space (the world) contains both an outer and inner world to it, so does our soul contain two worlds – an outer and inner world, to it. (That is, through the perspective of our soul.) For this reason, the soul is called “an entire world”, hinting that our soul is all-inclusive of all the spiritual worlds.

When we think of what the physical world is, essentially we can see that most of it consists of action. People are doing things all day, from day until night. Superficially, we can say that it's like this coincidentally. However, Raboseinu define our external, physical world as the “world of action” (olam ha-maaseh). It is not by coincidence that our world consists mainly of actions. The very concept of our physical world is that it is a world of action.

**The Physical World – An Action-Oriented World** Since the physical world is all about doing action, the very way of thinking on This World is action-oriented. When a person lives through the perspective of this “world of action”, he sees the entire Creation in front of him as a place for doing things, constantly looking for what to do. His five senses are constantly absorbing action. His relationships with people are about getting things done together. His entire worldview is about doing. He can only relate to something if he can do something practically with it. For example, a person moves an object from one place to another. He turns the knob on the oven, and a fire appears. He perceives reality on this world as doing certain action and getting certain results.

In contrast to the physical world of action, the inner world is not physical action, but a reality of soul movements: The

<sup>1</sup> Sefer Yetzirah 3:1

desires, thoughts, and emotions of the soul. But if these movements of the soul do not manifest in any action, a person will not consider them to have any kind of reality, if he views everything through the prism of the physical world of action.

For example, every person experiences emotions (love, joy, etc.) but most people do not consider these emotions to be an absolute reality. They don't view feelings as something that bears certain results, and instead a person views feelings as something that just begins and ends with the feeling, but not more than that. Now, if our emotions would always bear actual results in the physical world, then all action-oriented people would indeed view emotions as an absolute reality. But since our emotions have results only sometimes and not in every case, people think that emotions are not an absolute reality, because the emotions aren't consistent in bearing actual results.<sup>2</sup>

The same is true for our thoughts. When people can only relate to action as a reality, they do not see their thoughts as a live, functioning reality, and instead they view their thoughts as nothing but flash of intellect that quickly runs through their mind. And it is the same with all other soul-faculties, for a person who only lives in the world of action – the soul-faculties are not seen as working, functioning powers that bear results, but as mere stirrings that come and go.

Furthermore, when a person is living with the perspective of the world of action alone and he attempts to enter into the inner world – the soul – he will meet up with a great difficulty. The inner world is not a physical world of action, but a practical, action-oriented person thinks in terms of action will always be looking for “what to do” with his internal world, and he's trying to quickly make it all very practical, and he will then conclude that the inner world must be something abstract and ethereal, which is not tangible or realistic. The inner world doesn't seem to be bearing any practical results. In his perspective, the inner world is therefore not absolutely real. It is for this reason that many people have great difficulty leaving go of the reality of the world of action, and to grasp that the inner world as well is no less a reality than the physical world (and even more real).

### **The Connecting Point Between The Inner and Outer Worlds**

Even when we recognize the existence of our inner world, there can still be a difficulty with relating to it as an absolute reality. A person might think that the inner world can only be real if it's integrated with the external world – if it is leading to some

<sup>2</sup> The truth is that our emotions always bear results, but not always in the “active” sense. Our emotions will always lead to “inner” (or emotional) results which affect the state of our soul, and therefore, internally speaking, our emotions are indeed an absolute reality.

action – and only then will he consider the inner world as real.

For example, any person is prepared to pay money for a physical necessity such as a house, car, or clothing. These are tangible objects and we have to what to do with them, and they bear results. But if someone will ask us for a certain payment in order to be able to experience a certain emotion, we will probably make it conditional: If the emotion will have some physical expression to it, like if we will be taken to an amusement park for entertainment, then perhaps we will be willing to pay money for this. But if the emotion can't be expressed in anything, then we will not to pay anything for it.

Here is another example. A person meets someone who looks happy. Usually, the person will think: "This person is happy because something very happy must have happened in his life. Either he has a great marriage, or he is proud of his children. Or he is very successful at his business, or he has plenty of money." Even though happiness is an emotion, a matter of the soul, no one thinks that happiness can come just from one's internal world. Instead, people will always attach some other factor to happiness, assuming that happiness has to come from such external factor that prompted the person to be happy.

And, even when one does have an inner feeling of happiness which was not caused by any external factor, a person will feel that he has to give some outward expression to it. For example, if a person suddenly feels a strong feeling love for his child, he will feel obliged to show it in some way. Either he will give a hug or kiss to his child, or he will buy him a present. But it is unthinkable for him to just remain with the feeling of love for his child & not express it in some way.

**The Inner World, By Itself** When a person lives through the prism of this world of action, even if he knows that there is also an inner world of the soul which is real, he is still apt to feel that his inner world must be expressed outwardly in the world of action, in order for him to feel connected to his inner world. It does not make sense for him to simply enter into his inner world without "doing" anything.

But, while it is true that the inner world can and should be connected to one's world of action, that is not the only possibility of accessing the inner world. The more accurate way of relating to our inner world is as follows. There is an outer world which is by itself, and it is a world of action, and there is also an inner world by itself, a world of feelings, thoughts, and wishes. There is also a connecting point between these two worlds. A person who lives the inner world is able to be happy or feel any emotion regardless of what his external world is like. He doesn't have to go through a certain event in order to access his emotions (but when he understands that there is

a need to express his emotions as actions, then he will do so). For example, a father can love his child simply by sitting with himself and experiencing the very love he has for his child, and whenever there is a need to show his love, he will hug and kiss his child or buy him a gift.

**Getting Tips Vs. Developing A Way Of Life** In order to enter the inner world, a person needs to realize that it is a real world which stands on its own, even when it is not necessarily being outwardly expressed. If a person thinks that the inner world is not "realistic", or if he thinks that the inner world only has substance to it when it is expressed by some action, this makes it difficult for a person to enter it, leaving the person outside of it.

When people go to hear a lecture or a course on internal matters that involve the psyche, usually they are looking to walk out with practical advice, with a tool box of some sorts, of techniques at their disposal. If they tried the first lesson and the speaker didn't give practical exercises or any "tips for life", they stop going to the series of lectures, because they feel like they are not walking away with anything from it. Certainly learning about the inner world should enable a person to improve his deeds, but we cannot build our life from mere tips, techniques, tools, and tidbits of advice. As long as a person thinks that life and begins and ends with "what to do", his entry into the inner world ends there.

In order to build a proper lifestyle, a person has to tackle the areas of his actions, feelings, thoughts, and wishes, each of them as a study on their own. He also needs to be able to combine these areas together, as needed.

**A Ticket To Gan Eden** If a person doesn't build an internal world of his own (which is independent from the area of his actions), he will only experience the realm of action. When a person builds his own internal world, he can live in more than one realm. He will gain both in this world and in the next. A person who builds his own internal world will live a resemblance of the Next World, already in this world. There is a blessing given in Chazal, "Your world can be seen in your lifetime." Even when one leaves to his eternal home in the next world, he takes with him a 'ticket' to Gan Eden – the internal world that he has developed while being on This World.

When the day comes for a person to leave the world, he becomes separated from this world, which is a world of action. The body returns to its source, in the earth, while the soul goes up to give an accounting. The soul goes through a purification process from this, and then reaches a more spiritual place, called "lower Gan Eden", a world of the soul's feelings, which is bliss for the soul. Now, if a person on this world never gave

any kind of reality to his feelings, or if feelings only had value to him when attached to some action (and otherwise, feelings were meaningless to him), what will he do upstairs when he is longer in the world of action? He cannot enter even this lower area of Gan Eden, because the world of the soul's feelings was never real to him. Even if he is allowed in, he won't feel that it's Gan Eden, because he will be looking all the time of what to do, and he won't be able to!

But if a person already realized on this world that there is a reality of the soul's feelings, then when he eventually takes leave of the world and rises to lower Gan Eden, he will be able to enter it and feel 'at home' there. He won't be able to do anything in the active sense there, but he will have a world of the soul's feelings there, and this is what he will take bliss in there, and it will be Gan Eden for him.

A person who lives the internal world already on this world can be called a ben aliyah (a person who lives above). The soul (and those who live in their internal world already on This World) can be compared to those who live in the top floor of a house. The attic and ground level of the house are separate floors, which are connected together by some stairs. Those in the family who lives on the first floor will sometimes they go up to the attic, while those living in the attic are mainly found in the attic and coming downstairs when they need to. So too, the soul has different 'floors' to it with a 'flight of stairs' connecting the different layers together. There is the faculty of action as well as the emotive faculties, and there is a possibility of combining together both of these 'floors'. Most people on the world are living on the 'first floor' – the realm of action. But those who are bnei aliyah (whom there are few of<sup>3</sup>) are living on the 'top floor' – the world of the soul's feelings. When they need to take care of doing something, they 'come down' from the attic and go down to the 'first floor' to go do it, allowing himself to use the faculty of action. But he is mainly living in the attic – in the world of the soul's feelings (as well as the higher soul-faculties, the areas of thought and will).

**The Inner World – A World of Soul Movements** Now that we have explained that the inner world is an absolute reality, we should understand its very concept. The inner world is an ongoing movement of soul (emotive) faculties. The soul is comprised of many faculties, which are always in constant movement, and these movements affect a person, depending on their level of intensity.

In the world of action, we perceive anything with any of our five senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. We cannot

relate to anything physical or connect with it unless we use any of these five senses. The more senses that a person uses, the more he can connect with it. We also define anything physical through our senses – on how something is seen or heard, on how it smells, on how it tastes, etc. We will naturally think that it is defined by how our senses perceived it.

But the inner world is not perceived through any of the five senses, which are used to feel outer stimuli. The five physical senses are not able to sense an inner dimension. The inner world is a world of moving faculties, which the five physical senses don't pick up on. For this reason, a person will have to use certain tools in order to keep track of these movements.

**Degrees of Soul Movement** The faculties in the soul are in a constant state of movement. Some faculties are moving with stronger intensity while other faculties move at a subtle pace. Some faculties we are conscious of, and other faculties are only found in our subconscious, while there are other faculties that are above consciousness. These latter two categories (sub-conscious and above the consciousness) are not within a person's awareness – one usually is not aware that they exist, and certainly he doesn't sense their movements. But many times, a person is not even aware of the soul-faculties he can be conscious of.

One may or may not be in control of the movements of these soul-faculties. If one is not aware of his soul-faculties and isn't directing them properly, he will not be control of their movements, and the soul-faculties will move according to their default nature. As a result of this, one will find himself being influenced and controlled by the movements of the soul-faculties – namely, of his nefesh habehaimis (animal level of the soul) – even if he is barely doing anything to awaken them. But if a person recognizes his soul-faculties and is channeling them properly, they are found within his control and then he can move them as he wishes, and then their influence on him will only be as he wills.

When one only has the perspective that comes from the "world of action", he views everything in terms of action, and when he considers the faculties of the soul, he will also look at this as something that must involve some kind of action. The soul-faculties are real to him only if he can actually do something with them, otherwise they are not an absolute reality to him. This is in the same way that he views anything in the physical world – it only has value if he can do something with it, just as a hammer is used to bang in a nail and a fire is used in order to cook with. The problem is that if a person might also use this perspective in order to understand the faculties of the soul, and he does not realize that the soul-faculties are

<sup>3</sup> Talmud Bavli Succah 45b: "I have seen bnei aliyah (those who ascend), but they are few."



moving and influencing him even when they are not being practically used and they aren't leading to any kind of action. A person might view the abilities of love, joy, hate, sadness, etc. as nothing but a means of getting something done, and if he cannot "do" anything with these emotions, he just views them as passing, temporary feelings that are meaningless to him.

But if one has the inner perspective - which is that the soul-faculties are an absolute reality and they are moving and influencing a person all the time, he understands that just as the sun, moon, stars, earth, oceans, and everything else physical are all an absolute reality in the world of action, so are any of the soul-faculties an absolute reality, and they are constantly moving in the inner world.

**Example 1 - Discovering Our Aspects of Fire** In order to get used to this perspective of our inner world, we need to see that there are soul faculties and we need to see how they are in movement. Let us use the following example, to help us relate to the concept.

As mentioned, fire is one of the four physical elements that comprise this world. When we see a fire, either we can see the physical properties of the fire - its height, color, etc. or we can see the powers of the fire, such as the ability of fire to destroy, illuminate, give warmth, etc. We can learn to identify the components in anything. When we see a certain ability, we can learn to see which element it comes from. For example, when we see something getting destroyed, we can know that this comes from the element of fire. When we study our soul, we won't find a physical fire there, but properties of the element of fire. We will find an ability to destroy, and we can realize that it comes from our element of fire. And it is the same for the rest of our elements and abilities. We won't find any physical earth, water, or wind in us, but we will find properties - various aspects of our character - which come from any of these elements.

**Example 2 - Analyzing The Emotions of Love (Connection) and Hate (Separation)** Here is a second example, to make the concept more tangible, of how our soul-faculties are always in movement.

In the world of action, whenever there are two sides or two opposites, we can do something that will either separate or connect together the two sides. For example, in a marriage, a man and woman are coming together to become a husband and wife. Here are two sides becoming connected together, through the act of marriage. In contrast, we also see that it's possible for two sides to become separated when someone kills another (G-d forbid), resulting in the soul separating from the

body. Another possibility of separation between two sides is when a husband and wife are divorced, through a bill of divorce (get) which severs their marriage. Either of these scenarios (marriage, death, divorce) are all perceived by people as an absolute reality, because we can see it happen and we are aware of the forces that are at work here (either connection or separation, depending on the scenario).

Through the perspective of our inner world, connection is really an expression of the movement of our ability to love, while separation is an expression of the movement of our ability to hate. Love, a faculty of the soul, is able to move in a way that brings about connection. Hatred is able to move in a way that brings about separation. As a hint to each of these concepts, the Hebrew word for love (ahavah) is equal to the word echad (one), because love connects people into one, while the Hebrew<sup>4</sup> word for hatred (sinah) is from the word sheini (two) and shoni (different), implying separation.

Just as there is able to connection in the world of action, and people perceive it as an absolute reality, so is there an ability of connection in the inner world, and it is an absolute reality. In the inner world, connection is simply called by a different name - the movement of the soul-faculty of love (The movement of love is: connection). And just as there is a reality called separation on our physical world of action, so does this reality exist in our inner world, where it is called the movement of the soul-faculty of hatred. (The movement of hatred is: separation). We can also view it the other way around: Our ability to love is really an ability of connection, while our ability of hatred is really an ability of separation. This is true even if these movements do not lead to anything in the actual sense, and this is because they have a reality even if they are not expressed physically.

**Viewing The Soul-Faculties As Real** In the physical world of action, when we consider a matchmaker or a marriage counselor, we can easily understand the value of such a person, because we see that this person is doing constructive kind of actions to help people. And, likewise, if we hear of a person who murdered, or if we know of a person who sowed contempt between a husband and wife and caused them to get divorced, we can easily feel disgust for such a person's actions.

But if we consider a person who has a love for another person, though we may see this as constructive, we usually do not give

<sup>4</sup> **Editor's Note:** Our use of the word "Hebrew" here does not refer to the Hebrew language per se, but to Lashon HaKodesh, the Holy Tongue, the mother language of the Jewish people. This is true for any time in this book (and in anything else from this author) when we use the word "hebrew".

this the same value that we have for a matchmaker or marriage counselor. And when we consider a person who hates another, though we know this is negative, we do not see the weight of this, in contrast to the disgust we feel towards a murderer or a person who caused a divorce.

This is because we view the world of action as an absolute reality, while the inner world is usually just regarded as mere fleeting emotions. We can easily give a lot of value to the actions done by a matchmaker and marriage counselor, and we understand the severity of a person who murders or who causes a divorce, but if one merely hates another person, he may easily rationalize this by saying, “So what if I hate him in my heart? I’m not bothering anyone by doing this.” This is because he easily understands that actions are real, but emotions are not deemed by him to be real, only temporary and fleeting.

The more a person grasps that the inner world has an absolute reality to it, and he understands that there is great meaning to the movements of the soul, he will be able to value not only people like the matchmaker and the marriage counselor (who are ‘doing’ constructive things), he will also know the value of a person who loves another (because he knows that love is real). He will also understand the severity of a person who hates another, not only seeing the severity of a person who murders or causes marital strife and divorce.

Going deeper with this, when learns to see the reality of the inner world, he can see the abilities that are behind the matchmaker and marriage counselor – in this case, the ability to love and unify people together (that is, assuming that this is indeed their intentions!). He also understands that the person who kills or causes a divorce is being motivated by the power of hatred, which causes separation.

Thus, it is ultimately the inner forces in the soul that produce all of a person’s actions. The faculties in the soul are the moving, motivating factors behind why a person does what he does, while the actions that a person does are merely the results of those movements in the soul.

If we learn to see things this way, we can understand that the soul’s faculties carry much more weight than a person’s actions. A person who lives in the inner world therefore will relate much more to the soul’s movements than to actions (or at least regarding them both with equal value).

**Example 3 – Analyzing Sadness (Contraction) and Joy (Expansion)** Here is another example to help us relate better to the concept of the soul’s movements. A family with many chil-

dren living in a small-sized apartment have now gotten even bigger, and it is time for them to expand their apartment, or move to a larger one. At first their living space was limited, and now they are living with more room. In the soul as well, there is contraction and expansion, and these are the emotions of sadness (contraction) and joy (expansion). When the soul is in a state of contraction, a person is sad. When the soul is in a state of expansion, a person is happy. Just as in the physical world there is a reality of either being cramped together (contraction) and then later finding expansion, so is there a reality in the soul of first being contracted and then becoming expanded.

**Feelings Attached To Action And Feelings That Are Not Attached To Action** Usually, when someone expands the size of his home, he is happier. When a person views physical expansion, it awakens his soul’s ability to expand. This is like the rule, “After the actions, the hearts are drawn after.”<sup>5</sup> But this joy is limited, because it is dependent on the physical expansion. It is not an internal and intrinsic joy, it is rather a joy that’s hinging on something. If, for example, he would have to move into a smaller apartment now, his joy would fade away quickly, as if it was never there.

But when a person is connected to his inner world, he is able to bring his soul into a state of expansion – and resulting intrinsic joy – even without any physical means to make it happen. He doesn’t have to “do” anything, in order to be happy. For example, he can be happy with the mere internal connection that he has with his own self – such as by feeling satisfied with himself about something.

Let us now think about the following. If guests get invited to an expanded apartment where a large family lives, and everyone sees how happily the family is, the guests can easily join the family’s happiness. This is because they see the reason here to be happy – the fact that there is an expanded apartment here. But if they were to see a person who is simply happy with himself, for no external reason at all, they would have a hard time feeling happy for him. They don’t see a reason for his happiness. Not only that, but they may even view him as strange, and they will be wondering, “What is he so happy about?” Like the verse says, “And what is this celebration they are making?”<sup>6</sup> What happened to him that he’s so happy...?”

This is because most people live with the perspective of the world of action alone, and not with the perspective of the inner

<sup>5</sup> Sefer HaChinuch 16  
<sup>6</sup> Koheles 2:2

world. They can easily relate to the joy of a large family that expands their apartment, but they cannot easily relate to a person who is simply “happy with his share”, which is something inner that has nothing external attached to it.

As explained earlier, our inner world can either be attached with the world of action (where our soul-faculties are being expressed in some action) or it can stand on its own. But the truth is that even when our inner world (i.e. our feelings) are attached with some action, we are always able to remove the action that it’s ‘dressed up’ in.

For example, every father is happy for his child’s success, like if the child did well on a test or withstood a difficulty. In these cases, he is happy for the child due to some external reason. If these external factors wouldn’t be present, usually the father doesn’t feel a joy and pride in his child. But if a person is connected to his inner world, he can continue to be happy with his child long after the “reason” is no longer here.

Similarly, one’s joy can be awakened through some outer factor, and later one can simply experience the joy itself, after it has been ‘undressed’ from the external factor that caused. For example, a father can think about how his child is happy and proud of himself, and then he can find himself being happy for his child’s joy. Later he can take that joy that he has experienced, and use it to enter into his own inner world, in order to experience the joy with no external reason attached to it and even with nothing active that results from it.

**Three Kinds Of Feelings** Generally speaking, there are three kinds of feelings. (1) The feeling itself. (2) How the feeling is expressed - not necessarily in the realm of action, just the outward expression of the feeling. (3) A feeling expressed in action.

The feeling itself is when a person experiences the actual feeling, in and of itself, regardless of how this feeling extends towards others. For example, a person may feel love towards his child as a simply feeling of being unified with him. Before he has even done anything with this love, he is able to experience the unity he feels towards his child.

There is also a feeling that is beginning to become expressed outwardly, even before a person has done anything with the expressed feeling. For example, the person feels love for his child even without physically expressing the love – he feels the love that is coming from his desire to be unified with his child.

Finally, a feeling can also be expressed in action, where a per-

son experiences a feeling as well as its outward expression, and he gives expression to it with some action. For example, he feels love towards his child and because of what he feels, he gets up and goes to do something or his children, either giving his child a hug or kiss, etc. Here the love has been actualized from its potential, and it has been expressed through action.

When a person lives with the perspective of the inner world, he sees and experiences a feeling and he can direct it. Depending on whatever is needed, either he will simply connect to the feeling itself, or he will direct it outward towards another person in some way, or he will express the feeling with some action.

**Inner Work First Requires Changing Our Perspective** Until now it was explained that the outer world is a world of action, while the inner world is a world of soul faculties that are in movement. If a person tries to recognize the world of the soul before he has understood this properly, he will be attempting to use ‘practical tools’ of the world of action that he is familiar with, using them in a place where action cannot be applied.

The entry into the inner world does not begin with applying practical advice, but with a change of perspective. First we need to learn how the inner world is full of moving soul-faculties, as opposed to action. Then, we need to internalize this perspective, so that our heart agrees with what we now know in our minds.

Clearly, it is not possible to change our perspective completely before we have entered into the inner world. To the contrary, we will understand it much better after we have entered into the inner world. In any case, though, there must be some degree of internalizing this change of perspective even before we have begun to do any inner work with ourselves.

To the extent that we reach this change of perspective, we will more precisely enter into our inner world. And, accordingly, the more accurately we enter our inner world, the more our perspective will change. Upon reaching a changed perspective, we begin to think about everything differently than how we were used to thinking until then. We won’t just see the surface layer of things. We won’t merely judge something based on how we are sensing it. Rather, we will see the different soul-faculties that comprise something, and how those faculties move and function. We will be seeing the inner world in anything that we come across – which is always about seeing the moving soul-faculties that are present in anything.

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.

**BILVAVI PART ONE # 163**

...you should say to yourself, "the feeling that I am in control and can decide whether or not to move my hand is in error, according to *Chazal*. This mistaken notion comes from spiritual blindness and from the egocentricity of my *yetzer hara*. This is not a feeling that originates in my soul, but rather in my body. The absolute truth is that only Hashem determines whether or not I will move my hand! 'No one even lifts a finger down below unless a proclamation is issued from above.' If so, at the moment that I am moving my hand, Hashem Himself is determining that I will do so!"

**BILVAVI PART TWO pg.99**

However, a person was not created just for himself, but for his Creator. His entire existence is to fulfill the Creator's will and not his own. Even if a person wouldn't receive reward, he would still have to serve the Creator, because that is the Creator's will, and a person just has to His will. This is the truth. A person must internalize this, and it is impossible to escape this reality. A person has to humble himself to this fact of life. Anything that a person wants to do for himself is far from the truth, and to deviate even a little from the truth is to be totally far from the truth.

**BILVAVI PART THREE PDF pg.18**

The Arizal writes that before davening, one should say that he is accepting upon himself the *mitzvah* to love all Jews. If a person really wants to connect to Hashem, he needs to integrate with the Jewish people, because a person cannot find Hashem on his own. He cannot be all about his ego.

**BILVAVI PART FOUR PDF pg.72**

What does it mean to have connection with Hashem? There are two layers: The first layer is that a person has to recognize that he is living in Hashem's world, and that everything as we know it belongs to Hashem. ... you can see that the entire universe is calling out the Creator. A person should reflect into this a lot, until he naturally develops an outlook at everything from this recognition – that he is only a creation of Hashem. This attitude has to envelope a person in every part of his life, 24/7. The second layer, which is higher than the first, is to realize the inner point of life – that Hashem is our Father, and we are His children. ... In short, all of life is really the *mitzvah* of "honoring your Father" – our Father in Heaven. We need to view every situation of life like this. To live life on such a level is the whole depth of Teshuvah.

**BILVAVI PART FIVE PDF pg.35**

Perfection is not about building your "I"; it is rather about negating your "I". This does not imply that one should feel low about himself; it is instead that a person should realize that he doesn't live for himself, and that he is not meant to think and worry about himself. ... just think about the simple fact that He exists. This will reveal the true "I", who is Hashem, and it will slowly remove your ego more and more.

**BILVAVI PART SIX PDF pg. 29, 40**

When a person gets rid of his "I", he then comprehends how there is simply nothing besides for Hashem. Any doubt about the concept of *Ain Od Milvado* is only possible when a person is still confined to his "I"; it is always a person's "I" that holds back one's perception of *Ain Od Milvado*.

**BILVAVI PART SEVEN PDF pg.11**

"You exist before the world was created", the state of Before Creation, is essentially for a person to enter the state in which he goes above his "I", as if his "I" does not exist at all. ... this does not mean simply that one does not have an "I" that exists, but rather that one learns how to negate his ego.

**BILVAVI PART EIGHT PDF pg.32**

Our highest sense is our ability of *daas*. Our *emunah*, however, can show us matters that are beyond our *daas*. Our *emunah* can show us the inner layer to reality – the viewpoint of *Ayin*. Our *daas* tells us that are limits, while our *emunah* tells us that there are no limits. Our *daas* tells us that we have an ego, while our *emunah* tells us "*Ain Od Milvado*" – there is nothing to our existence other than Hashem.

**BILVAVI PART NINE PDF pg. 9**