



WINNING THE WAR BY REMAINING ETERNAL

It is the nature of most of us that when a Jewish holiday approaches, we like to learn about the nature of the upcoming holiday, but we tend to put aside our current *avodah* in favor of learning about the holiday at hand.

But we can compare this to one who owns a horse for 20 years and he wishes to give it as a wedding present to his son. The wedding day of his son arrives, and he gets very busy with the wedding preparations, and what happens? He doesn't watch his horse, and the horse runs away.

The lesson from this parable is very clear. If we leave put our *avodah* on hold because we need to learn about the holiday, then our *avodah* will be ignored in favor of learning about the holiday, and then we lose the previous gains of our *avodah* until now.

However, the other option is not either good: if a person ignores the holiday and only focuses on his *avodah*, then this too is detrimental, because if Hashem gives us a holiday, obviously it is His will that we involve ourselves in it.

When a Jewish holiday comes our way as we are in middle of explaining a certain *avodah*, we thus need to see it as a continuation of our own current *avodah*, rather than just see it as a coincidence that happens to fall out in middle of our *avodah*. Therefore, the current holiday that is approaching [in our case, Chanukah] must be viewed by us as a continuation of our current *avodah* of revealing our "Yechidah".

What, essentially, is a Jewish festival all about? The *Yomim Tovim* (Jewish festivals) are really windows that help us see into the inner world of spirituality. The inner world is covered over, but it is not completely covered over; there are windows which we can use to see into it. Each festival offers us the opportunity to access a new window that gives us new perspectives about the inner world.

If we look into a house through many of its windows and we see the same room, we are seeing the same room each time, just through different windows. The festivals are each different windows that look at the same room. Chanukah is one window, and Purim is another window, and Pesach is another window. But they are all windows to the same view. We aren't revealing new realities through each of the festivals – rather, we can keep learning to see

the same reality that exists through different angles, with each festival that we go through.

THE LESSON OF CHANUKAH The holiday approaching us now is Chanukah, and if we are currently learning about how to reveal our *Yechidah*, this is not a coincidence. It must be that Chanukah adds on another important dimension to this *avodah* of trying to uncover our *Yechidah*.

Chanukah is therefore another way for us to learn about how we can view the inner world. Let us reflect, therefore, into how we can reveal our *Yechidah* through understanding about Chanukah.

REAL VICTORY On Chanukah, there was a war between the Greeks and the *Chashmonaim* (Jews who descended from royalty). This was a miracle that defied nature; the Greek were very mighty, but a handful of Jews slew them all in a miraculous defeat. How did they succeed in overcoming nature? We will try to explain this with an inner perspective.

When we are in war, how can we win? How do we overcome the opposition? A simple war, like we see from the world, is when two sides are warring with each other, and might is pitted against might. There were many such wars in history.

However, the Ramban writes that the ideal situation to fight a war is to first try to make peace with the other side. If peace isn't achieved, the side who is trying to make peace may then go to war with the other side. It sounds simply that the problem of war can be solved with placating the other side, such as if we offer the other side a lot of money. But there is a deeper reason. It is because when there is fighting, we need to access the power of *shalom* (peace) in the soul.

Logic dictates the opposite: logic says that if you remain peaceful and docile, the other side will fight you. How can peace win our wars for us?! Why does the Ramban say that we should first try peace in order to win the war?!

If a person is deeply connected to the power of peace in the soul, that affects his outside as well, so inner peace can cause peace upon the world. That is more understandable. But if one hasn't reached his inner peace, how can behaving with peace be a possible way to win a war?!

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The truth is that real peace will only be in the future. It is written of the future, “*The wolf and the lamb shall walk together.*” Then there will be no more wars, because we will all become one unit. It really doesn’t make sense that peace should win our wars. Only in the future will this concept make sense, because the future will be the revelation of the innermost point of the soul, the all-inclusive point, which does not allow for any contradictions, oppositions, or war. The fact that there will be peace in the future will not be a coincidence. The future peace will be the revelation of our essence. It will be revealed that there are no oppositions. Thus, it automatically follows that there will be no wars.

War is only possible when there is a concept of separation and disparity in the world; currently, we look at ourselves as having many divided “parts” to our self, which reflects the concept that in the current era, there is disparity. In the future, when the all-inclusive point of the *Yechidah* will be revealed to all, the entire of notion of ever being divided will not exist, thus it will follow that there cannot be war, because there will be no more concept of opposition.

Thus, if we really want to win a war, we need to awaken a point in ourselves which cannot be destroyed. The outer parts of our soul can be destroyed, but the *Yechidah* in us is the all-inclusive point; everything is in it - therefore, it cannot be destroyed.

This is the deep meaning behind the victory of the Chashmonaim, the handful of Jews that won against the Greeks. The Chashmonaim revealed their own inner power of the soul, the non-destructive point contained deep in the soul - and that was why the Greeks couldn’t destroy them.

In the future, it is written, “*Esav will be like straw, and Yosef will be like fire that burns up the straw.*” This will be a deep kind of victory. When fire and water meet, they battle each other, and it takes a long time until one of the elements can overpower the other. But when fire is set upon straw, it takes only a few moments until all of the straw is destroyed; there is no opposition. So too, in the future, there will be no opposition, because it will be revealed how all is one, for Hashem’s Name will be one. Oneness will be revealed – the all-inclusive point will be revealed, therefore, there will be no concept of division.

THE DEPTH OF HUMILITY Chanukah was a war of a few Jews against many Greeks. Simply, this was a miracle, but the depth of it was, that “they made themselves small in their eyes”, as the Rabbis write.

This sounds simply that they had humility, when one makes himself small in his eyes. People think that humility means to

focus on your shortcomings, and that it is arrogance to focus on your qualities. After all, it is true that the power of imagination can cause one to ignore reality, which in turn makes him ignore his shortcomings, while a person who is very aware of reality has humility, because he recognizes his shortcomings. It seems that humility is simply for a person to be aware of reality, thus he is aware of his shortcomings, in the same way that a person has to be realistic when he writes out a check and make sure that he still has money in his bank account.

But there is a deeper understanding of humility: when one recognizes the greater reality, which is the all-inclusive point in the soul, he sees how he is not nothing, for he is part of a greater whole; he is part of a collective essence. And that humbles him as a result.

But how did the small amount of Jews win the Greeks? It is something deeper: that they made themselves “small.” Because “they made themselves small in their own eyes” – because they had true humility - by recognizing the all-inclusive reality – that was how they were able to win the Greeks.

Humility is really to see yourself as part of a greater whole. It is to lessen the “I”, not by weakening it and ignoring your self-worth, but by realizing how your “I” is part of a greater whole. The Chashmonaim nullified their own essence, by having this deep humility, of seeing themselves as part of the greater whole, as part of the reality that is all-inclusive, as opposed to the ‘divided’ kind of reality.¹

(There are people who don’t realize their self-worth. They don’t give enough value to their actual self, because they focus on their many shortcomings. They view themselves as lowly, and they see themselves as just scattered parts inside themselves. But this is not the true meaning of humility. Humility is not to dismiss reality – it is really to recognize your true self-worth of a Jew.

The proper outlook for one to have is that although one shouldn’t pride himself too much about his qualities, he must never lessen

¹ *In middle of this shiur, with regards to this aspect, the Rav clarified to a questioner that in the current reality we live in, we live in a divided reality, not in the all-inclusive reality; only in the future will we all live in an all-inclusive reality. For this reason, our body is obligated in the mitzvos, and there are different parts of our body which require different mitzvos. Our body represents divisions and disparity, because in the physical dimension, there is no concept of oneness. Only in the spiritual dimension there is oneness. In the future this will be fully revealed, and currently, we can have access to that spiritual dimension of the future when we access the deep part of our soul, the Yechidah. The Rav is explaining here how we can access the all-inclusive reality that is contained in our Yechidah.*

his actual “I”. He can be aware of his shortcomings, but he doesn’t have to lessen the value of his essence. A person must always remain with his self-worth.)

Thus, the deep way to win a war is not through fighting a war. It is through revealing the power of *netzach*, eternity – to reveal the all-inclusive point in the soul, the non-destructive point of the soul. When one reveals his non-destructive essence, he indeed cannot be destroyed. And if one tries to destroy it, he is destroying himself.

CONNECTING TO THE ONENESS OF HASHEM This power of deep unity with the world, known as “*echad*” (oneness), which will be fully revealed in the future, still exists deep in the soul, and is the deepest power of the soul. Hashem in “One”, and when one is connected with Hashem, he is connected to His oneness, and then the disparity in front of him ceases.

How did Dovid HaMelech defeat Golyas? With one rock. The depth of this is that he defeated him with the power of “one”, not simply that he managed to kill him with a small rock.

The war with the Greeks could not be won physically. It wasn’t possible. The only way was through revealing *echad* in their souls – they connected to Hashem, to His oneness; thus they had Hashem’s protection, and no one can fight Hashem. “*And they will see that the name of Hashem is upon you, and they will fear you.*” (Although Hashem is called “man of war”, this is a metaphor).

If two people are having a game with each other, it is not a fight. Although they are against each other, this is not viewed as a fight, but as a game.

When one wins the other, it’s not that he has won the fight, because it’s just a game; afterwards, they laugh with each other. So too, when one is connected to Hashem, he is protected by Him, and no one can fight Hashem – trying to fight Hashem is a joke.

There is no opposition, because any human who tries to oppose Hashem does not oppose Hashem. If it’s not a fight, it can only be a game. When one approaches a fight with the perspective that he is against the other based on his human strengths, this will indeed be an opposition.

VICTORY IS NOT ACHIEVED THROUGH FIGHTING Is there anyone who doesn’t have any fights with others? It is not possible. The Talmud says that if there is a Rav in a city who is never opposed at all, he is not a real Rav, because he’s probably being bribed.

(By the way, even before I came to deliver these *shiurim*, I already prepared myself for opposition. I knew that there were will be those who will fight with me about what I’m saying!)

We all need opposition. There is no person who does not have opposition. For everything good there is, Hashem created some-

thing else in evil that can oppose the good. There is only one whom there is no opposition to – Hashem, Who is One.

The war with the Greeks could have just been like any other war, where the two sides oppose each other. We all have wars. We have internal wars as well, inside ourselves, as well as in our homes, small and big fights. But we all have fights. How can we get out of all these fights?

It is by acquiring the deep perspective that winning the war is not through fighting the other side. That was the miracle of Chanukah – you can only win a war with a miracle, and that ‘miracle’ is for one to realize this deep perspective.

ACCESSING PEACE IN THE SOUL Now we will make this concept more practical in our daily life. How can we win our daily wars and fights with others that we all have? I am asking a very practical question, not a theoretical one. People fight their fights either with their various physical strengths, or with their intellectual abilities. (There is a saying, “If you can’t fight with *koach* (strength), fight with *moach* (brains).” But there is a third [deeper] way to fight, and it has nothing to do with strength or with brains. The Kotzker zt”l said that if you can’t win with strength, keep telling yourself that you do have strength, until you eventually win. That was one view. Another view was to use your intellectual abilities. A third way to win a war is through the power of prayer.

There is a point in our soul in which there are no wars, challenges, or oppositions. *Chazal* say, “Nullify your will to His will.” In other words, when you have no desires of your own, because you are nullified to Hashem, then the name of Hashem comes upon you, and then all those who think of opposing you won’t be able to oppose you, because you will then be connected to the oneness of Hashem.

It is brought in our *sefarim* that Moshiach will come with “weapons of war” and win over the entire world. People interpret this to mean that Moshiach will reveal how good prevails over evil. Will he throw a bomb on the world? Iran can do that too. How would that bring peace to the world?! How will he ‘win’ over the entire world?

He will be connected to the oneness of Hashem, thus, he will connect to all of Creation in his enormous love. Moshiach will win not through the conventional means of fighting, but because he will be utterly connected to oneness of Hashem, and nothing can oppose the oneness of Hashem.

Avraham Avinu was thrown into a fire and was untouched. The depth of this was because he was so connected to the oneness of Hashem that nothing could harm him. It wasn’t just a miracle. It was because he lived in a world where there was no opposition, because he was connected to the oneness of Hashem. Thus, he was

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totally nullified to Hashem, and therefore nothing could harm him. Of course, people fought him. He had wars. But in his soul, he was at peace with others, and that is why he could not be hurt by anyone.

ACCESS TO YOUR INNER PEACE The *Yechidah* in us can provide us with entirely new feelings/emotions altogether. Our body and soul are in contradiction with each other. Our soul lives in complete oneness, while our body cannot come to terms with oneness. We cannot live in the state of complete oneness with others, because the peace of the future is not here yet. The view of our soul, this unity with the world, is not yet manifest in the physical world, for the time being. But we can still have some access to the deep peace that is in the soul and make use of it sometimes.

One can learn how to be amongst people who are saying things against him, but in his soul, he is living with inner peace. He hears what they are saying, but it doesn't bother him, because he lives in place of no opposition.

People tend to be either realistic or delusional. Either people are realistic and they do not believe in any inner realities, or they go in the opposite direction and believe in spirituality, but they become delusional and ignore the external, physical dimension of our world. Both perspectives are wrong.

We are really a contradiction; our body tells us one viewpoint, while our soul tells us one viewpoint, and we can't live with one of them alone. We need to fuse them together and handle the contradicting perspectives. There are different layers in us that have different perspectives towards reality. Just as there many opinions amongst people, so are there many opinions within our own selves.

This sounds like we are unstable! But we can be very stable, even though we have different viewpoints going on inside ourselves.² *Chazal* say that one must speak the "truth that is on his heart" (*"doiver emes b'levovo"*) – his mouth and heart should be in line with each other (*"piv v'libo shavin"*). The level of the heart can change each day, therefore, a person's perspective changes each day. We have five parts in our soul – the *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* and *Yechidah*. There are times when we are on high level

² On an interesting note, the *Rav* responded to a questioner in middle of this shiur that often a person will go to a psychologist and try to sort out his contradicting goals he has in his life, and he will be told by the psychologist that he is delusional and a living contradiction. In reality, though, we are all full of contradicting desires – desires of the body and desires of the soul, and there is nothing wrong with this at all, because our soul is structured that way....

and times when we are lower. When we speak out what's on our heart, it changes according to the level we are at.

If someone doesn't speak from his soul, he is talking from his dry intellect. But if one speaks from his heart because he has opened his soul, then he can feel this in himself that he has different opinions towards the same subject, depending on the day, because the level of his soul fluctuates each day.

Thus, the victory over the Greeks was because they revealed their *Yechidah*, the point in the soul where is no oppositions, and that was how they won, because nothing can oppose the all-inclusive point in the soul.

HOW TO WIN OVER ALL OPPOSITIONS Let's apply this now to our own lives. We all have oppositions with others – how do we fight properly when those inevitable fights come? If we just try to win, we won't win. We will just have fights, We won't reach real victory. I am not saying that peace can win everything and that you can sit back and relax that everything will just work out. This isn't feasible at all, because we do have fights. The Torah speaks about fighting wars, either as an obligation or as a choice, but there are always wars and fights with others in our life.

How should we go about our fights, when those inevitable fights come? We need to fight not from fighting, but from using our power of inner peace, to reveal the point in us which has no wars, which is the *Yechidah*. Of course, you can't see this reality in the physical world; it is an inner reality that is deep within the soul.

You can solve a fight in just half a minute, if you make sure to always access this deep power of the soul [when you yearn for peace]. When one accesses this inner peace in himself, his enemies disappear, and people will not fight him!

I am not saying that this will drive away all people who fight you, because the Greeks were certainly trying to fight the Chashmonaim even though the Chashmonaim had reached their inner peace, and in addition, we currently live in a world in which the 50th Gate of Impurity surrounds us, which is very difficult to send off. But the point is that when you access the inner peace of the soul, the enemies around you won't be able to win against you, because the fight will lose its zenith, for the entire fight is being fueled by the fact that there each of the two side is warring against each other. Once one of the sides reaches a place inside himself in which there is no war, the entire war loses its fuel, and thus the war will cease on its own.

There are two ways to get rid of an enemy. Either you can fight with him and try to drive him away, or you can make peace with him, by uncovering your own ability of inner peace. When you

uncover a peace in your own soul, your opposition will feel somewhat that you want peace, and when he feels your wish for peace, he will stop fighting you. There will be no place for a fight. Your opposition might not be aware why he is losing interest in fighting you, but he will still feel somewhat that there is no place now for a fight.

I will repeat and emphasize again that this inner solution does not work 100%. If it would, then our body would cease, and we would only be souls with no body. This is not possible in the current situation in the world, where we are not yet in the future. But if you make use of this point of the soul, it will greatly affect even your physical situation and radiate some of its light.

LIVING WITH AN INNER CONTRADICTION When we reveal our *Yechidah* of the soul, we gain a new perspective on reality, and the old reality has no bearing on us anymore. Of Shabbos, *Chazal* say that you should consider it “as if all your work is done”. What does that mean? To pretend that your situation at work is fine just because it’s Shabbos? We all know good and well that Sundays can be stressful and full of problems we have to deal with. But it’s because there is a part in our soul which has the ability to view all our work “as if” it is done. The *Yechidah* is the point inside us which tells us that all is finished and done, that there are no problems,

If a person doesn’t want to accept that there can be inside him this deep perspective on reality, then indeed, he will have no way of relating to this concept. He might feel that he is a realistic person who faces the facts of reality and that the view of the *Yechidah* is an escape from reality, so why fool yourself with it. After all, when a person hears about the *Yechidah*’s view on reality and he tells it over to others, what kind of reaction does he usually get from others? He will be told that he is being delusional, that he is trying to run away from life, that he can’t deal with reality, that he is too idealistic in his aspirations, that he’s not being realistic...

But in the future, it will be a day that is entirely Shabbos, and there will be peace and serenity for the entire world; nowadays, that reality hasn’t been realized yet, but we still can have some access to it and touch it. Therefore, while we certainly have to be realistic in our life and not pretend that we have no problems or challenges, there is a point in our soul in which there exists *no challenges*.

Of course, we cannot live entirely in that place in our soul, because that is running away from the external layer of reality. We do not mean at all for one to become delusional and run away into himself and escape reality. Rather, what we mean is to believe that there is such a power in yourself, and when you believe in this feeling, you will feel the reality that is behind that feeling. When you feel that reality, you will discover a contradiction. On one

hand, you have a point in yourself which is telling you that there are no problems, but at the same time, you see problems in front of you in the world that you live in. You can learn how to live with contradiction, however.

There are some days in which we feel completely serene and that we have no problems, and the next day, we feel like our entire world has come crashing down. What is the inner reason for this? It is because there are some days in which we live very internally, and our perspective on our life is then coming from our deep place in the soul that feels how there are no problems. So I am not saying that you should run away into yourself all the time. I am merely trying to tell you that there does exist a place in yourself in which you can return to every here and there to draw vitality from, and that will give you the strength to go back into your problems and deal with them with renewed vigor.

If a person only knows of the problems in his life, and he has no inner place of refuge in himself, he will have no vitality at all in his life. He only lives within his problems, and problems do not provide us with vitality. A person has to know how to escape the stress of life to a place in himself where he can draw forth vitality [when he accesses the calmness in his soul], and then when he returns to his problems, he will be able to feel alive even amidst his problems; he will not get drained from his problems and lose his vitality.

When you access your inner peace in the soul, you get used to the concept of a world in which there are no problems, and then when you return to the problems, you will know how to deal with them properly, even as you are amidst a problem. As you are going through the problem, you will be able to be above it.

IN CONCLUSION The Greeks were defeated because the Chashmonaim accessed this deep power, of recognizing that there is only one reality, in which there are no oppositions. They “made themselves small”, in other words, they nullified their existence and did not see themselves as apart from others, therefore, they arrived at the deep perspective that there is a place in which there are no wars. Because they reached this place in which there are no wars, nothing could oppose them, and that was how they achieved victory.

May we merit to be granted by Hashem the power to connect deeply into our souls and from that we will be able to escape all our wars, and from that, we will merit the complete revelation of the days of Moshiach.

FROM THE ORIGINAL HEBREW SHIUR
דע את הוינתך 010 ליהלחם עם שלום בלב

2C) DEEPENING YOUR EMOTIONAL CLARITY

Deepening your emotional clarity of a concept is comprised of three factors: (1) Becoming clearer about a particular emotion on a very general level. (2) Becoming clearer of how often you experience a concept on an emotional level. (3) Becoming clearer of the particular quality of the emotion. [We will go through each of these now.]

1) Clarifying A Feeling On A General Level: After you have skimmed through the intellectual definitions you have written down in your notebook about each of the different aspects of the soul that you learned about, the next step is to skim through the notebook again to analyze something else: Your general emotional understanding of something.

First, read the feelings you have written down in your notebook, and try to experience those feelings again. Then, think about the feelings again from a quieter place in you.

Next, ask yourself the following questions: (1) Do I still feel these same feelings that I wrote? Do I feel differently now? Are my current feelings more accurate? Are they stronger or less intense? Are my feelings about it more internal or superficial? (Generally, with time, your feelings about any topic will become more precise, subtle, and inner). (2) Did my recorded feelings match the definition that I wrote down about it? Or would these feelings be more appropriate for a different aspect of the soul? (3) If my intellectual definition of the concept has changed, do my recorded feelings match the new definition? Or is it not matching my new intellectual definition of the concept?¹

Let us repeat again that we should not erase anything in our notebook. If we notice that we were

1 For example, as mentioned earlier, when you notice that having a "love" for ice cream does not match your current definition of "love" and instead it falls under the category of "desire".

mistaken about something, we should just write, "In the past I used to think or feel this way. But today I understand/feel differently. My new definition (my new intellectual understanding of it and my new feeling of it) is..."

2) Becoming Clearer How Often You Experience The Feeling. There is a big difference between skimming through the intellectual definitions about the topics in your notebook, versus your feelings about each of the topics.

When it comes to analyzing your definitions, mostly you only need to examine if the definition makes sense or not, and perhaps sharpening it and deepening your understanding (and even if you discover new definitions, both definitions can still be describing the same thing). However, when you are reviewing your emotional understanding of a matter, you need to discover as much as feelings as possible that can be associated with the topic. This is because emotional understanding [is more complex than an intellectual understanding of it, because] it can be manifest in many different instances and multi-colored occurrences.

We will use the emotion of love as an example. [It is clear-cut when we try to give an intellectual definition of what love is.] We may intellectually define love as either an emotional bond with something, or a desire to do good for another, or as a will to get closer to someone, or a desire for connection, or a desire to unify with another. The bottom line of any of these definitions, though, is that we are coming to define one thing – the emotion of love.

But when we try to identify our own personal experiences of love, we can see that although there are many instances of love (love for Hashem, loving the Torah, love between spouses, love of parents for their children, love for one's extended family, loving the Jewish people as a whole, loving a convert, etc.), each of these loves is experienced differently.

For example, a person doesn't love the Torah in the same way that he loves his children. He doesn't love Hashem in the same way that he loves his wife. A mother doesn't love her children in the same way that she loves her husband.

Even within the same love, we can find varying degrees of the intensity of the love. For example, in the love that a parent has for their child, the parent may love one child in a different way than he loves another child. His love for his son Shimon may be different than the love that he has for his daughter Sarah. A person loves each of his beloved ones in a different way. Although it's all one emotion of love, there can be many different expressions of this emotion. For any faculty of the soul, there can be one intellectual definition that exists with many different emotional expressions of it.

Therefore, when skimming through each of the intellectual definitions we have written down in our notebook, we should see if there are any additional feelings that we haven't yet written down. Sometimes when we skim through the notebook again, we will remember how we experienced something and then we will identify new feelings about it. This may happen because of certain events in our life which, when we remember them, awaken certain feelings to resurface. Or, sometimes we can identify new feelings when we change our intellectual definition of something. There can also be additional reasons.

After we have identified the additional feelings associated with a particular aspect of the soul, we should write them down in the notebook.

3) Becoming Clearer About The Quality of the Feeling. After we have seen the different instances in which we experience a certain feeling, we can move on to the next step: With each aspect of the soul we learn about, we need to clarify the quality of the feelings associated with it.

First, think about all the feelings you wrote down about a particular aspect of the soul, and divide it by topic. Until you wrote down your feelings in detail, and now you will be writing them down in order of topic. You can do this either by (1) Think about all the topics associated with the particular aspect of the soul that you have taken notes on. (2) Learn about this topic in the sefarim. (3) Think about all the details you have written about and see if you can group together some of the topics into one general underlying theme.

After you have made a list of topics, the next step is to arrange them in a chart and write under each topic column any of your feelings that are associated with the topic that it is written under.² For example, if we are analyzing love, make a list of topics such as love for Hashem, love for the Torah, love in marriage, parental love, etc. Then graph them out in a chart. Under each of these different topics, write down how each of these loves are expressed. In what way do you love Hashem? In what way do you love the Torah? How does one express their love of their spouse? In what ways do the parents express their love for their children?

The next step is to notice the differences between these types of love. For example, what is the difference between your love for Hashem and your love for the Torah? What is the difference between your love for your spouse with your love for children? Then you can take the differences even further. In your love for your children, you can notice that your love for one child feels different than your love for a different child. To the degree that you take note of all these subtle differences between the different feelings of the same emotion (in this case, love), you will increase your awareness of how

² To make this easier, there is no need to write a lot, and it will suffice just to jot down brief notes without getting into details.

you personally experience the emotion, and in turn, your connection to your internal world of feelings will strengthen.

After practicing this for a considerable period of time, we will receive greater clarity on our feelings, and they will be turned into an inseparable part of us. Our soul will become more connected to these feelings. The feelings will gain more permanence and stability, unlike the types of feelings that are quickly awakened with intensity and then disappear as if they were never there.³

Although in this chapter we have brought several ways of how to clarify the quality of our feelings, the truth is not all of them are equally applicable to every kind of soul. Some of these methods are simpler (relatively speaking) and some are more complicated, deeper, and subtler. Therefore, each person has to try to clarify his or her feelings based on his or her own capabilities and based on what he or she feels more drawn to.

2D) SEEING OUR SOUL'S JOURNEY

Learning about our soul is like learning a book – it has many details to it, which combine together to form one long “story”.⁴

A person can write a book about his own soul, and he can keep adding to it more details, but if he never skims through every so often what he has written in his book, and he is not trying to clarify his definitions and feelings that he has written there, then he cannot learn the “story” that’s unfolding in his book, because he won’t grasp how his soul is taking a certain process. He will only be seeing one detail and another, and he doesn’t see how these details are not randomly dispersed but how they are actually all part of one structure.

He will merely view himself as a bunch of random

³ as explained in Chapter 7

⁴ as explained in Chapter 6

parts that are not connected. He won’t see how each part is really another part of his personal “story” – a part of his soul’s journey. In contrast to this, when we are writing down daily in a notebook our definitions and feelings on something, and when we are skimming through it every so often, we slowly begin to ‘connect all the puzzle pieces’ of our soul together into one complete piece – one story. And we see the journeys that our soul has taken. It is wondrous when we see, with one glance of a notebook, of all the steps that our soul has been through as part of a long, ongoing journey that it is on.

We may have been writing for one complete year about a certain topic, and with just one perusal of our notebook, we can see the entire process of how our soul has progressed throughout the year. We can notice how “A year ago, I thought/felt a certain way about this, and a month later, my understanding and feelings on it deepened. Half a year ago, I became even clearer about it, and today I see it even differently. I understand it differently and I have a whole different feeling on it.”

Our soul never rests. It is always going through parts of a certain process or journey that it is on, as it moves through the continuum of time. When we skim through our notebook, we can identify the journeys that our soul is taking, and we begin to absorb our own personal story. After we are beginning to see this, we can no longer see all our parts as individual from each other. Rather, we can now see how all the parts of ourselves that we notice are really all part of one process – they are all parts of our soul, and the story that is escorting us throughout all of our lives.⁵

NEXT WEEK: Recognizing The Soul's Faculties

5 In conclusion, this chapter has explained the first part of hands-on work of self-recognition and self-actualization: Recognizing our soul faculties. This contained two parts – writing down a notebook on ourselves, and skimming through it every so often. In the next chapter, with Hashem’s help, we shall be explaining these two steps in greater detail.