

BILVAVI

GETTING TO
KNOW YOUR
SHARE

001

BE
COMING
YOU

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What Are We Searching For And Why?

Whenever we enter into any undertaking because we're trying to reach something, we first need to be clear what we're really looking for. And, at the very least, we should at least know what's motivating us. One aspect is to know what we're searching for, and a second aspect is to know what's motivating that search.

We will first try a bit to analyze what exactly we are looking for, and how we can figure out it out. (Understandably, even when we begin to search for something, our search can change along the way.)

The Universal Search – Seeking Progress

The nature of most people is that they will want to enter into a certain process or curriculum that will enable them to grow and make progress. That's the way of the world. A child goes to school – usually against his will, and not necessarily because he wants to (As Chazal use an expression, “Like a child running away from school”). But when he gets a bit older, he gains understanding, he recognizes a bit more about the reality of life, and what he will need to do on this world. This is what prompts most people to look for various ways that will help them progress through life.

Most people, seeing a material world in front of their eyes, will therefore look for progress in the material world. As a result of this, they will look for how they can earn a profession, job, and the like. There are also those who have subtler goals than the above. They want positions of honor and power. They don't just want temporarily honor or temporary power, they want to be in a position where they will get regular honor or power, and they are prepared to invest a lot of time and energy into this. But most people aren't interested in this. Most people just want to earn a profession so that they will have livelihood. This nature exists both in the nations of the world as well in the nation of *Yisrael* (the Jewish people).

In contrast to this, there are a few people in the world who are looking to go more inward. They want to uncover a deeper and more inner layer of life.

Aspirations

When we leave the superficial perspective and we enter into a more internal perspective, we begin to search for something more inner. But even then, what is the goal? Where should we be trying to get to? We need to have some kind of plan of where we want to get to. “The end of action is first in thought.”

Understandably, each person has his own way of thinking and his own perspective. He has certain concepts he knows about. Based upon that, he has certain aspirations. He has a certain understanding and he has his own capabilities, and based upon this, he has a certain understanding of where he would like to get to – more or less. He sets goals based on what he understands at his own level, along with knowing his capabilities (more or less) and seeing if that goal is for him or not. And then he can set out on his goal.

There are those who want to be great in Torah, avodah, and chessed. Each person has certain aspirations in each of these areas, based on how he understands what Torah, avodah, and chessed is. Others aspire to perfect their *middos*, to refine their character and to increase good deeds. There are many kinds of spiritual aspirations. If a person wants to get an idea of what to aspire for, he can take a look at the sefarim. There are even sefarim which contain resolutions that great people accepted upon themselves. For example, there is a sefer today which records the notebook of resolutions that people in Kelm took upon themselves. You can see there how each person had his own way and took on different things, based upon his unique aspirations of where he wanted to get to. We can relate to this very well.

Now let us think about this. If a person is just starting out the beginning of the way (to serve Hashem), and he is beginning to have aspirations to grow, what should he aspire for? Should he desire to know all of the Torah? Should he desire to become a lover of peace and pursuer of peace, like Aharon HaKohen? Should he become extra careful to guard his tongue from even the slightest form of evil speech? These are all good things to aspire for, and we can say many more examples. But what is the one common aspiration that every soul should have?

It would seem right away that there is no one common aspiration for everyone. After all, every person has different capabilities, and therefore each person can have different

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aspirations. That is certainly true. But if we think about this a bit more, we can see that there's a very clear and simple aspiration for every soul to have, when anyone wants to start growing.

Becoming Who You Truly Are

Hashem created each of His creations with unique properties. No plant, rock, or animal is the same. Every person has a different face and different ways of thinking. No one is exactly the same. What is the avodah then for every person? The entire avodah of a person is: To become who he truly is! That is an inner definition of our entire avodah. In more external terms, this is called reaching one's personal *cheilek* (share).

To say it sharply, the person that we are right now may not even be our true self. There are many things which prevent a person from finding himself, to the point that there are many instances where a person doesn't even want to be himself at all. But our entire inner work is all meant to bring a person to one place - to become who he truly is.

A Unique Connection To Hashem For Each Person

We shall explain this now with the following deep fundamental point. What has to be a person's aspiration? The *Mesilas Yeshtarim* says that the purpose of life is *d'veykus* in Hashem. It seems, then, that a person's entire aspiration should be: to become completely close to Hashem. Included in that closeness is to become attached with the Torah, with Hashem - with reaching one's personal share in the Torah, and from this to become connected with the Creator (as the Nefesh HaChaim explains at length, how learning Torah brings one closer to Hashem). So the simple answer to everyone's general aspiration is, to seek closeness with Hashem, and through the Torah.

But let us analyze this further. There were "seven shepherds", seven great leaders of our people. Avraham became close to Hashem, and so did Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Ahron, Yosef, and Dovid. Did they each have the same *d'veykus* to Hashem? Was it all the same *d'veykus*? It's simple and clear to any sensible person that although the Creator is one, there are different wavelengths of being connected with Him. The

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d'veykus that Avraham had with Hashem was not the same d'veykus that Yitzchok or Yaakov had. The One we become connected to will always stay the same, but the ones who connect with Him will each form a different and unique connection with Him. Avraham connected to Hashem mainly through chessed, Yitzchok through din. It wasn't only that they each connected to Hashem by way of different *middos*. Rather, they each had a unique d'veykus with Hashem. There is no creation that has the same connection with Hashem as another.

So even when we consider the innermost point – the purpose of life, which is d'veykus with Hashem – it is not the same definition for each person. Dovid HaMelech said “And as for me, closeness to Hashem is good.” The commentaries asked, why is he saying “for me”? Isn't it good for everyone to be close to Hashem? Why is Dovid HaMelech saying it's only good for him personally, “for me”? It was because Dovid HaMelech was saying that he has his own personal closeness with Hashem. There is a closeness to Hashem that's meant for each individual to attain, which no one else can know of. Each individual has a unique *d'veykus* with Hashem that only he can attain.

The True Me – My Closeness With Hashem

In order to become who you truly are, it means to become close to Hashem – to reveal how you are a reality of a *“portion of G-d from above.”* In order to reach it, one has to become connected to his own personal “portion” – for it is his own personal portion that's part of the “portion of G-d from above”.

This is not merely a general definition that all of the Jewish people are a portion of G-d from above. In the portion itself, each Jew has his own portion. Each person must take his rightful place in the collective share of being from Above, and therefore each person has his own personal portion in this closeness (without getting into what exactly constitutes what this portion is. That is an expansive topic discussed elsewhere).

Finding Your Personal Portion of Torah

Therefore, each person has to become connected to Hashem from his true self, from being who truly is. That is the first step – to become yourself.

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The next step is to find our personal share in the Torah. We each ask every day in the blessing “Give us a portion in Your Torah”. Everyone has their personal share in the Torah. If one doesn’t reach his own part in the Torah, he is not merely missing knowledge of Torah. He is not becoming himself. He is like a branch without the roots. He is missing his roots! The root of all Jewish souls is in the Torah. Hashem looked into the Torah to create the world from it. We were hewn from the Torah. “Yisrael first arose in the thoughts of Hashem to be created.” We were first conceived in the thoughts of Hashem, in the Torah. We were created from that place where “the Torah and Yisrael are one.” If a Jew can identify well that he is part of Klal Yisrael but he doesn’t have his personal portion in the Torah, he is like a branch without the root. He is missing his the reality of his own self, as it were.

When a person works hard to understand Torah, he is doing the active work of exerting himself in Torah. What is he working hard to attain? When he reaches his personal portion in Torah, he has become himself. It is written, “For in the Torah is his desire, and in His Torah he delves, day and night.” The Gemara says that at first when a person exerts himself in Torah it is called the Torah of Hashem, but after the exertion it is called “his Torah” – it becomes his own Torah. (A higher level than this is when “Your Torah is in my innards.”)

This is not to referring to the “48 qualities” needed to acquire the Torah. That is only the first step, and it is for one who is still found outside of the Torah, he needs to acquire it. But once he has reached the Torah and it is called “his Torah” , he doesn’t need to acquire it anymore with the 48 ways. He has shown how he is rooted in the Torah, how the Torah is his very existence. The true definition of a Torah scholar is one who is connected to the Torah, and then his roots in the Torah become revealed to him. He has become himself, and he has the branch with the root. That is what it means to attain and reach the Torah.

If one is getting Torah that doesn’t belong uniquely to him, even if he knows a lot, he can still be called ignorant in a sense, because he’s not learning yet his own part of Torah. He has a branch without his root. He has gotten Torah in the same way that a person can acquire anything else on the world. But this achievement isn’t really his. He is not yet becoming himself!

We need to become who we truly are – both in our root, which is our unique, personal connection to Hashem – as well as in the branch of this, which is the

connection we have with the Torah (in relation to Hashem, the Torah is a branch. But in relation to anything else, the Torah is the root of everything).

Our Unique Character Improvement

It is the same with repairing our character. Superficially speaking, we need to gain good *middos*. But the truer way to define it is that each person needs to reach his own good *middos*.

All good *middos* come from Hashem, and therefore each person has to reveal the good *middos* that Hashem bestowed him with. A person may be learning about the subject of *middos* or he is doing inner work together with a group of people working on self-improvement – and yet (or anyone else in his group) may not be able to fix even one of his *middos*. Even if they learn a certain sefer which gives them guidance, the guidance may be good and proper, but they still will not reach their unique good *middos*. Everyone has his own good *middos*. No two people are the same in their chessed, or in their compassion, etc. One has to reach his own good *middos* that Hashem has graced him with, and then he reaches his personal share of *middos* – where he is becoming himself. From there, he can also know how to act according to his personal share as well.

Finding Hashem From Our True Self

From our own *havayah* (our existence) we can become connected to the greater *Havayah*, the Existence of Hashem. Without being connected to our own *havayah*, we cannot be connected to the *Havayah* of Hashem. In order to become connected with our *havayah* – our very existence – we need to be who we truly are.

Becoming yourself does not mean to reach your own independent existence apart from Hashem, *chas v'shalom*. Your true self is to become “a portion of G-d from above”, to become integrated with Hashem’s Existence. That is your true self.

It would seem that it should be the opposite – we should leave ourselves out of the picture and just surrender our existence to Hashem. There is certainly such a stage that we will need to traverse in our avodah. It is called *bittul* (nullifying the self). But if we analyze it deeper, the depth of our avodah is always to become who we truly are. That will lead us to acting how we should, keeping all of halachah with all its details,

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having good *middos*, learning our part of Torah, and reaching *d'veykus* in Hashem and becoming *miskalel* (integrated) in Him. When Avraham was *miskalel* in Hashem, it wasn't the same as when Yitzchok was *miskalel* in Hashem. Each of them had their own revelation. Just as there 70 facets of understanding in Torah, so are there many ways of *d'veykus* and *hiskalelus* in Hashem.

Obstacles That Prevent Us From Becoming Ourselves

What prevents a person from becoming who he truly is? Many times, it is simply because a person lacks knowledge. He wants to improve at everything, at Torah, avodah, and chessed, but he lacks knowledge about these areas. But there is also another factor that gets in his way. A person has many wishes – not just material wishes (which we are not coming to tackle here) but spiritual ambitions. He wants to cover ground in his learning. He wants to gain deep understanding. He wants to acquire Torah. He wants to acquire good *middos*. He wants to gain *Ruach HaKodesh*. He wants to get certain attainments. He has so many spiritual desires that he has.

If the desire isn't genuine, the person is simply running away from himself. The word *ratzon* (will) is from the word *ratz* (run) because the will and desires of a person can really be a form of running away from his true self, and hence it is running away from the Creator. But if one's desire is genuine, he runs towards the Creator.

The few people in our world who are searching to go inward are often plagued with so many different spiritual desires they have. This is usually because of so many different concepts they have heard of over the course of several years, or from things they have read or learned about. Or, they developed these wishes on their own. But these spiritual wishes are not coming from “Who I truly am.”

Ulterior Motives Getting In The Way

Usually a person begins with *shelo lishmah* (ulterior motives) – meaning that he is not focused on just the goal of his *avodah*. He has other desires too along the way (though they are spiritual). Although there is a rule that “*Shelo lishmah* leads to *lishmah*”, the *Nefesh HaChaim* brings from the *Gra* that one has to have the intention to reach *lishmah* (serving Hashem for pure reasons) at the start. So if a person is desiring other

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things that are external, other than desiring to reach his true self, even if he's not conscious of this, or if he temporarily got sidetracked into wanting other goals, then although he may get to his goals, he won't uncover his true self.

So there are two reasons why people don't become who they truly are. One reason is because they aren't aware that the goal of our *avodah* is to become who we truly are. They simply lack knowledge and awareness about it, so they will never engage in it. A second reason is because people have other wishes and desires, either because of what they heard, read, learned, or developed on their own – and these other wishes get in the way of reaching of their true self.

Chazal said that one of things which take a person out of the world is jealousy. What is jealousy? Upon analysis, jealousy is really a desire to acquire and get something because “I do not want to be myself.” Jealousy is *kinah*, from the word Kayin, who was jealous of his brother – because Kayin was not satisfied with himself, and because of that void, he wanted to acquire, get, and attain. A jealous person isn't trying to gain his true self. If he would be, then he would want to just be himself. If he wants to get something that he doesn't have, it is because he wants something that's not meant for him, and that is jealousy. Once someone wants to get anything other than his true self, he can become jealous, desiring things that other people have.

A clear example of this is reading stories of Gedolim and *tzaddikim*. This seems to be a wonderful thing, but there are two sides to the coin here. When a person reads a story of a Gadol or of the qualities that *tzaddikim* had – the Baal Shem Tov said that stories of *tzaddikim* is like studying the biggest secrets of the Torah – he wants to attain what the *tzaddik* attained. Becoming jealous of a Torah scholar makes one wiser, but *Raboseinu* taught that it still doesn't save a person from “Rotting of the bones is jealousy.” Jealousy makes the bones, the *atzmus*, rot – but it is also a hint that jealousy erodes the *atzmiyus*, the true self of a person. This is because when a person is jealous, he is not looking to be himself.

In Summary and In Conclusion

Let us now summarize the lesson. We need to first realize it and then agree deeply, that all we truly want is: To become who we truly are. That is all that we should be searching for. This is not simply so that we won't be jealous of others who have

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attained what we don't have yet. It will certainly help for jealousy, but that's not the point. The point is that we need to be building the root so that we can reach our desired purpose, of where we want to get to.

When a person agrees to want solely that he should become himself – and he wants nothing else other than this – he will have removed more than half of his problems that he struggles with in his internal world.

If you recognize well what goes on when others try to work on themselves in their internal and spiritual areas of life, and you know of those who are trying and working hard at growing in their internal worlds (each person at his own level), you can see the main struggles they grapple with. You can understand that most of the struggles that people deal with is stemming from wanting to be involved with something that's not meant for them.

Even when people are indeed involved with something that's meant for them, they still need clarity of how to go about it properly. That's already the next step. But the main issue lays in the fact that people aren't involving themselves with their own personal portion. They won't be able to reach anything genuine if they keep going that way.

There are many facets to this first step that we are explaining in this lesson, but we will just say one very fundamental and deep aspect. The goal of all our *avodah* – to become who we truly are, to reach our true self, our *havayah* – is to reach what Chazal say “Therefore, man was created individual.” It is to reach the *Yechidah*, the “individual” in us – to reach our own personal portion, and nothing else. Although this can only come at the end of everything, it has to be our desired goal from the start.

We first need to agree to this intellectually and then we should agree to it deeply, in the depths of our soul. Externally speaking, we need to “let go” of everything else so that we can reach this goal, but in more internal language, it is that we need to “agree” that it's impossible to reach anything that's not suitable for us personally. One must agree to want to reach only his personal portion – not to want to “reach” it simply, but to reach the depths of one's own self, to reach one's very *havayah*. That is all a person needs to be looking for, and nothing else.

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One who reaches this ‘agreement’ will be able to feel a deep sense of serenity. He is no longer searching for what’s found outside of him. Rather, he’s looking only for his own internal world. Recognizing this will calm a person deep in his subconscious, when he disconnects from everything else around him and becoming involved only with what’s uniquely his.

This will also enable his *neshamah* to radiate more, because pure intentions awaken the light of the *neshamah*, enabling the *neshamah* to guide him more. “*The soul of the Almighty, will teach them.*” (When a person is acting *shelo lishmah*, with intentions that are self-serving and for ulterior motivations, the body’s forces are awakened, and there will only be ‘sparks’ of the soul, which won’t be enough to allow the person to have a more internal perspective). The *neshamah*’s light, once exposed, will give a person clarity to see the truth of his own inner world. “A clear world you see.”

That is all the first step, and the outline, of how we can begin to reach “our portion in Your Torah.”

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