



Published on www.bilvavi.net

[Home](#) > Bilvavi Part 4 - Chapter 01 Recognizing our Father

Bilvavi Part 4 - Chapter 01 Recognizing our Father

Introduction

In everything, there are general rules as well as details. The rules are called the *klal*, and the details are called the *p'rat*. When it comes to serving Hashem, this is true as well. There are rules, and there are details, in serving Hashem.

At the beginning of a person's way, it is impossible for a person to know what the rules of serving Hashem are, and what details it entails. It is almost definite that a person will confuse the details and the rules.

Therefore, in order to give a person the picture in which he can see the rules first, the Ramchal writes in the beginning of sefer Mesillas Yesharim what the greatest rule is. The greatest rule, he writes, is that the purpose of man on this world is to become close to the Creator. When a person understands this, he looks at everything through the lens of *d'veykus* (attachment to Hashem): "How will this bring me to have *d'veykus* in Hashem?"

It's possible that a person thinks that he has many things to work on in Avodas Hashem, and he is aware of all kinds of wonderful advice to work on many areas, yet he's still missing the knowledge about the general rule, which is the purpose of it all. The truth, though, is that the Zohar states that the 613 mitzvos are called "advice", because the mitzvos are all advice on how to get to the goal, which is *d'veykus* in Hashem.

When a person builds up his attitude and way of thought in this way, he is reaching the root of the redemption, and now it is upon him to shine the light of that personal redemption – the light of *d'veykus* – onto all the details of Avodas Hashem.

One who learns this sefer should know that this is the outlook that should accompany the learning of this sefer, and that this sefer was written based on that outlook.

In the previous sefarim, it was explained the steps of Avodas Hashem. Now, in this volume, we have devoted our discussion to certain topics: *hisbonenus*, which is to reflect with oneself during times of quiet, building up our power of *ratzon* (will), and other areas.

We should stress the fact that the matters of this sefer are really based on the inner wisdom of Torah, but it has been watered down to our language.

Thus, these matters have to be learned in-depth. They are not meant to be mere inspiration. Through learning these matters in-depth, the soul can become inspired as a result, though. Even more so, if a person accepts these matters with his simple *temimus* (wholeheartedness), he will merit *d'veykus*, as it is written, "You shall be wholesome with Hashem, your G-d." If you have *temimus* and you believe wholeheartedly in Hashem, then you are essentially "with" Hashem as well.

Let us end off with a prayer: May no mistakes come from this endeavor, and may the words be accepted by the hearts of those who learn it, and may Klal Yisrael merit to be attached to the Creator, at all times.

Recognizing our Father

The Common Goal of Every Jew

The most basic point that there is in life is the simple recognition of *Ain Od Milvado* - "There is nothing besides Hashem."

This is the goal which every Jew should be headed towards. This has been our purpose ever since the creation of the first man. The ways to get to this goal differ with every individual. Sometimes the way to get there is opened more, and sometimes it is difficult and closed up. There are always tests and failures in life. But no matter what, there is one point which must always be in front our eyes: We must strive to get to Hashem.

There are many actions we must do - Torah, Tefillah, mitzvos, etc. But the purpose of all of them is only one point: to find Hashem.

"We Are Orphans With No Father"

We all know that we have to search for G-d in our life, but what isn't so clear to us is how to search for Him. Where can we find G-d?

It is clear that Hashem is found everywhere. The only issue is how much each Jew feels that He is next to him, how much he feels Him in his heart.

It's possible that a person is learning Torah, davening, and doing all the mitzvos, yet he is still far from the goal. Even if he isn't far, he needs to always ask himself how close he really is to the goal.

When it comes to spiritual matters, it's not possible to say, "I'm already close to Hashem." Although it's possible that one is close to Hashem, there is no end to the closeness attainable, and thus one should never be satisfied. When it comes to physical matters, you can say, "I have enough", but when it comes to spirituality, there is never enough. Hashem said "Enough" to the world to end Creation, but that was only to the physical creation. There is no end to *ruchniyus* (spirituality), and one has to always seek it. Even when a person feels Hashem, he has to be able to feel Him even more - not just more often, but on a more inner level.

There is a possuk in Eichah (5:3), "*We are orphans, with no father*". This is an amazing description of the life of a Jew who goes his whole life on this world and never feels Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The first part of the possuk says, "*We are orphans.*" We know that an orphan is someone without a father, but if you think about it, even an orphan has a father. Every orphan has a father, because if he wouldn't have had a father, how could he come into existence? It is just that an orphan doesn't see

his father, and that is why he is called an orphan. His father has passed away and is in heaven, while he is on earth, and he doesn't see him.

The lesson from this is to all of us. Hashem is also in the heavens, while we are on the earth. *"For G-d is in heaven, while you are on the earth."* (Koheles 5:1). Since this is so, a person can feel sort of like an orphan. When a person feels that his Father, Hashem, is up in heaven, while he is down below on earth and so far from him, this makes a person feel like an orphan. It is exactly like an orphan, who really has a father (in heaven) whom he can't see. This is the meaning of *"we are orphans."*

The second part of the possuk says, *"with no father"*. This is another point, and it is a deeper kind of problem.

Every orphan longs for his father. Even if he never gets to see his father, he sees how others have a father, and he knows that he must have a father of his own somewhere. He knows that there is a wonderful relationship that a father and son have with each other, and this makes him yearn even more for a father. But unfortunately, there are some people who think that "no father" means to simply not have a father, and thus there are orphans who learn how to deal with the situation of not having a father. The result from this is detrimental, because they don't know that there is such a concept as a father.

The lesson from this to all of us is that a Jew may not even recognize that he has a Father. It's almost as if he thinks he was born on his own, without a Creator. Of course, nobody will be an open heretic and deny that there is a Creator, and everyone knows in their mind that there is a Creator. But it's the feeling of it that is missing – when a Jew doesn't feel that he has a Father, he goes through life like an orphan.

It's possible that a Jew will go his whole life and keep all of the Torah, and he listens to all the rabbis and does everything he is told to do, yet he still feels like an "orphan." He doesn't feel how Hashem is his Father. He might even feel even worse, that he has "no father"...

How to Change Our Attitude

The question is: How do we get to that point? How can we uproot this "orphan" attitude we have towards Hashem? And for those of us who we don't actually feel like orphans, how can we at least strengthen our relationship with Hashem at all times?

Without a shadow of a doubt, a person has to learn Torah and keep all the mitzvos. We are not coming to detract from this in any way. But alas, our eyes can all see that although people learn Torah and keep the mitzvos, this doesn't give more awareness to a person that Hashem is watching over him more. There is a kind of learning Torah which draws a person closer to Hashem, but there is also learning which doesn't create a feeling of closeness with Hashem. So learning Torah doesn't necessarily draw a person close to Hashem.

The same goes for davening (prayer) as well. When a person davens, he is supposed to feel that he is talking to his Father in heaven, Who created him and runs his life. However, people daven all the time and they do not feel this closeness.

We can explain this problem from the following parable, which is a simple example in life.

Let's think what it means for a person to have a father. Someone with a father doesn't always live with him in the same house. Children get married and often live in different countries than their parents. If a son is distant from his father, what can he do to maintain a bond with him?

Hashem helps us for this and made it possible for people to write letters to each other. Now we have telephones and we can even hear our father's voice even when we are far away. Even more recently, there is voicemail, and now people don't even have to talk to their father – they just leave a voice message on the phone and when the father wants, he can choose to listen to it.

Imagine a child gets married and lives far away from his father, and he wants to keep up his bond with his father. He leaves a message on his father's answering machine that he wants to get together with him – but his call never gets returned. He leaves several messages on his father's machine, but his father never calls him back. He begins to wonder: Maybe something is wrong with the system? Maybe the phone number has changed? Even worse, maybe something happened to his father...?

From this parable, we can learn about our own situation when it comes to our relationship with Hashem. A person davens three times to Hashem, as Chazal enacted, but often, he is just leaving "messages" for Hashem: I need this, I need that. "I need understanding, health, livelihood, mercy on Jerusalem, etc." For some reason, he isn't getting back an answer. Maybe he should ask himself, though, if perhaps something is wrong with his 'answering machine'!

In other words, before a person wonders why Hashem isn't answering his prayers, he should first ask himself if he is communicating properly with Hashem. A person should ask himself: "Do I have a personal relationship with Hashem, or am I just leaving messages on the 'answering machine' and waiting for Him to get back to me...?"

These are two totally different ways of communicating with Hashem. If a person really checks himself (and most people will indeed find this is true), he would realize that he is usually concerned about his own personal welfare, and the way he talks to Hashem is thus dry and lacking any real feeling. Compare this to the difference between someone talking on a phone to someone who's leaving a message on the voicemail. When a person talks to another on the phone, his voice is full of life and excitement.

Sometimes when people call America, they have to scream into the phone. Is this because the connection is bad? No – it's because since the other person is so far away, the caller feels a need to yell louder into the phone so he can hear him better. This reflects how Chazal say that one should not daven *Shemoneh Esrei* loudly. If a person would really feel that Hashem is beside him, he wouldn't need to raise his voice so that Hashem will hear him. Why does a person daven loudly? It must be that he thinks that Hashem is so far from him...

The people of Ninveh, when they were in danger, "called out mightily to Hashem". The Kotzker Rebbe zt"l said that this is the non-Jewish attitude – that you have to yell to G-d in order to be heard. When a person is at the true level, he knows that "Hashem is not found in a noise, but in a *kol demamah dakkah* (soft, subtle voice)." A person needs to realize that Hashem is found right next to him.

"And you shall seek Hashem your G-d and find Him, for you have searched for Him with all your heart and all your soul." Every Jew must seek only Hashem – to want that Hashem be found next to him, at any moment.

Recognizing Hashem In Our Life

Is there any one of us who wants to end life without ever feeling Hashem?

Feeling Hashem in your life doesn't happen by itself, no matter how long you live. If a person doesn't work with all his strength to reach closeness with Hashem, he will go his whole life and never even taste this awesome feeling.

Of course, even if a person never feels Hashem in his life, he will still get rewarded in Gan Eden for all his learning and mitzvos. But when Hashem reveals Himself to the world in the future and all the *tzaddikim* are pointing to Hashem, saying, "This is Hashem Whom I hoped for", a person who hasn't felt Hashem in his life won't be clear about who Hashem is.

Only someone who already recognized Hashem in his own life will be able to point with all the *tzaddikim* and say, "This is Hashem." He searched for Hashem, so he can recognize Hashem when Hashem will reveal Himself. He never saw Hashem physically - He saw Hashem in his heart, and he felt His reality.

But without recognizing Hashem beforehand, a person will not be clear in the future that Hashem is revealing Himself! He will say, "Who says this is Hashem?"

We must be able to recognize Hashem already on this world, and without this, we are very far from the purpose of creation. Without this recognition, maybe a person won't go to Gehinnom, but he never reaches the purpose of creation.

We must recognize Hashem, not only intellectually, but to feel Him. The Chovos HaLevovos describes this ability as "eyes of the intellect".

May each of us recognize the Creator and truly come close to Him.

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/bilvavi-part-4-chapter-01-recognizing-our-father>