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## Bilvavi Part 4 - Chapter 09 Temimus = Simplicity

### ***Our Tefillos Need Temimus***

We will now discuss another point which restrains many people from reaching their *pnimiyus* in Avodas Hashem.

A *bechor* (firstborn) is called “the beginning of your first-born.” Yet a first-born is not the total beginning; it comes from a father and mother. The word *bechor* has in it the letters *beis*, *chof*, and *reish*, which can be rearranged to read “*harkavah*” – mixture. A first-born was originally integrated as a mixture in its father and mother. This shows us that before there is a *harkavah* – a mixture, which connotes something complicated – there is something that comes before. This is the power of *peshitus*, simplicity, in a person. Without *harkavah*, there is no *peshitus*, and without *peshitus*, there is no inner depth to life, and a person will just live life superficially.

That is the concept, and now we will try to draw this matter closer to us.

One of the early sefarim of the Jewish people is *Sefer Tehillim*, which was written by Dovid Hamelech. Chazal say that Dovid Hamelech, in his *ruach hakodesh*, included in *Sefer Tehillim* all of the *tefillos* that every Jew needs to daven.

Since we know this, it would seem that every Jew should be immersed in saying *Tehillim*, and to try to say some *Tehillim* every day. Yet, to our wonder, this is very hard to do. People try to say *Tehillim*, and they find this very difficult!

It is perplexing. There is no one who can say about *Tehillim* that “this is not for me.” When it comes to learning, a person can claim that a certain style of learning is not for him, and that it’s not for his soul. But no one can say this about *Tehillim*. Chazal say that *Tehillim* contains in it every Jewish soul until Moshiach comes, and it can be applied to anyone at any time in any generation. If so, it should follow that every Jew should be very attached to saying *Tehillim*, yet we do not see this. There must be something that is holding back people from connecting to *Tehillim*, something that isn’t letting us pour forth our heart when we say it.

The reason for the difficulty in saying *Tehillim* is because Dovid Hamelech says, “*And I will walk in wholeheartedness.*” (*Tehillim* 26:1). To be wholehearted with Hashem – *temimus* – is to be simple, and it is the opposite of being complicated in any way (*harkavah*). As long as a person can only relate to *harkavah* – complicating matters – and he hasn’t yet reached his *peshitus*, his *temimus* – it is very hard to daven a true *tefillah* of *sefer Tehillim*.

*Tefillah* is the gate to entering all Avodas Hashem. "This is the gate toward Hashem, and the righteous shall come in it." As long as the gates of prayer are closed from a person, he is outside the gate, and he's not even in the entranceway.

We are not speaking of high levels here. We mean that in order for a person to have a connection to *pnimiyus* and *ruchniyus*, this must be preceded by the right kind of *Tefillah*. In order for our *tefillos* to look the way they should, they must emanate from our *temimus*.

### ***Learning Torah with Temimus***

What is holding back our *temimus*?

It is written, "A boor does not know this and a fool cannot understand it." (Tehillim 92: 7). What 'boor' is the possuk referring to? It seems to be speaking about an ignoramus who has never learned Torah, but as for us - we are wise and can understand things...

But the truth is that all of us - from the smallest child to the greatest person - have to realize that we are all in the category of a "boor who does not know"!

Compare this to asking a five-year child about the *aleph beis*, and he is able to point to all the letters correctly. If the child gets all the answers, he feels that he knows a lot. That is a child's outlook. What about the adult who is learning with him? Is he considered smart for knowing the *aleph beis*? Compared to what he is supposed to know, knowing the *aleph beis* bears no accomplishment whatsoever.

Our situation is the same, and it's even worse. The Torah is "wider than the sea." Hashem and the Torah "are one", and just like Hashem is endless, so is the Torah endless. There is no one who can understand the entire Torah, both when it comes to its size as well as its profundity. Whatever we know in the Torah is like a drop in the ocean, so we are all in the category of a "boor."

It's not enough for us just to hear these words; they have to enter our innards. The problem is that people think they are very smart and that they understand everything - each to his own level. A person asks some questions and because of this he thinks that he is unbelievably wise, but it's all very minute in comparison to the depth of the Torah.

A person has to feel deep down that his wisdom is really very lacking and destitute, his concentration is poor, and his thinking is poor. This should not be done in a way that causes a person to feel lowly about himself; it should be used to build oneself, for one can realize that part of our purpose on this world is to realize how limited we are.

A person must learn Torah, but it has to be accompanied with the feeling that he knows nothing. The Chazon Ish wrote that "I am not ashamed to admit that a human being is all about making mistakes."

If these words are internalized in the soul, a person will be able to reveal the innermost point - the *temimus* inherent in every soul.

As long as a person thinks that intellectual prowess is where he will find perfection, he is being held back from *temimus*.

### ***Temimus Brings D'veykus***

Let us expand the implications of this discussion even more.

Let's say we go over to a person and we ask him to sit for a half hour and say *Tehillim*. What will be the response? He will likely think, "What will I gain from saying *Tehillim*?! I need to learn Gemara in-depth and come up with *chiddushim* (insights), but to say *Tehillim*?! You just say a few *pesukim* and nothing remains of it."

Why do people have this mistaken mentality? It is because people erroneously think that using your intellect is more prestigious than using your simple *temimus* of a Jew. But the truth is that **temimus is worth much more than all intellectual matters!**

Some people even think that *temimus* is a bad *middah*! This is a very superficial outlook. The truth is that there is no greater *middah* than *temimus*. Yaakov Avinu, the "choicest of the Avos," is called an *ish tam*, a "wholesome person"; he is praised for his *temimus*. When a great person has *temimus*, its quality is brought out, and through it, a person has *d'veykus* (attachment) with Hashem. When people have *temimus* but they don't use it to connect to Hashem, then *temimus* is improper, but when *temimus* stems from the fact that there is a Creator – and from this recognition, a person understands that he has no comprehension of the Creator – such *temimus* embodies *emes* (truth), and this is the meaning of *Toras emes*, a "Torah of truth."

Instead of aspiring for intellectual matters and to sharpen the brain, one should instead aspire to become a Jew who acts with *temimus*. "You shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d" (Devorim 18:13). *Temimus* brings a person to become attached with Hashem, to gain the quality of *emes*.

As long as a person places emphasis on being brainy and he feels that this is what will perfect him, he loses the purpose of life.

"And you shall cleave to Hashem your G-d, and you shall all live today." (Devorim 4:4). A true kind of life is to be attached to Hashem, and the only way to get there is "you shall be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d." If you want to be "with" Hashem, you need to be "wholehearted" – to have *temimus*.

### **"Talking in Learning" With Others**

When two people meet who and they have merited to taste the enjoyment of learning Torah, they will usually ask each other, "What are you learning?" They will then get into lengthy Torah discussions and come up with *chiddushim*, and they will engage in *pilpul* (back and forth discussion) with each other.

We need to make a small change, though when it comes to this axiom.

Chazal say (Kiddushin 30b) that when a father and son or a teacher and student learn Torah together, in the beginning they are like enemies toward each other, and they don't budge from their opinions; but in the end, they come to love each other. Our eyes can see, though, that although people carry out the first part of this statement of Chazal – learning Torah with another person – the second part, which is the love that they are supposed to come to, unfortunately never happens. What is the reason for this?

When people engage with each other in *pilpul*, they are using a power in the soul called "*daas hamavdeles*" – the power to "separate" information using your mental capabilities. The problem that often comes from using our *daas hamavdeles* is that it creates separation as well with people! In order to unify with others, our *daas* will not do it. We need *temimus* for this.

When a person comes to his friend to "talk in learning" with him, and his entire mind and soul is immersed in the learning – but he lacks *temimus* – it will be very hard for them to come to love each

other at the end of the give-and-take discussion. Only when the innermost point of our soul, *temimus*, is alive and working, can the talking in learning bring about a unity between them; if they are talking in learning with each other because they *really want* to learn Torah, then the *temimus* will be reflected in how they talk with each other, and only then will they come to love each other. But if this is not the intention in the conversation, they won't come to that love.

### ***Understanding the Torah Is Only Possible By Connecting To Its Giver***

How can we make this matter practical for us?

As we said before, every word in the Torah is a part of Hashem; "Hashem and the Torah are one." Just like Hashem is endless, so is His Torah endless.

Thus, whenever one learns Torah - whether it is Chumash or Gemara - he is involved with Hashem, with the Infinite, Who cannot be comprehended. Not only is it impossible to have a complete understanding of anything in the Torah, but we never even begin to understand, because it is impossible to understand the G-dly wisdom of the Torah from our human comprehension.

How, then, can we ever hope to understand anything in Torah?

Only if we receive the understanding from Hashem! If a person is connected to Hashem and he is one with Him, of him it can be applied, "Hashem and the Jewish people are one", and from that attachment with Hashem, he will receive true understanding.

### ***The Proper Attitude To Have Towards Learning Torah***

We need *temimus* in general, as well as when it comes to specific areas. There are two different areas of comprehension in the Torah. One is called *chochmah* (wisdom), and the other area is *kedushah* (holiness). *Chochmah* are the intellectual matters, while *kedushah* are matters of abstinence. The Jewish people are called a "holy nation", and thus we mainly have to connect with Hashem through *kedushah*.

When a person sits down to learn Torah, he has to also realize that there is *kedushah* here, not just *chochmah*. If a person learns with this awareness, the way he learns will be totally different, and the difference will come to play when he can't understand something. If he's only interested in *chochmah* and not in *kedushah*, then when he can't understand something, he won't learn it. But when a person aims for *kedushah* as well, he will learn it even when he can't understand it. He learns whether he understands it or not.

We do not mean to imply that we don't need to understand what we learn. We have a *mitzvah* to try to understand what we learn, but our main search has to be directed towards the *kedushah* of the Torah, not in the *chochmah* of the Torah.

Therefore, one should think about this point for a long time and realize that as long as he is missing *temimus*, his Torah learning will never amount to anything. One has to awaken his inner yearnings and to reach simple *temimus* with Hashem.

To work on gaining *temimus*, one has to get used to learning parts in the Torah every day which he doesn't understand. We should mainly work on saying *Tehillim* every day, which contains every Jew's soul; one has to say each word happily. Even if you don't understand what you're saying, realize that you are dealing with holy words, composed by one of the greatest people in history.

At first, you won't be able to feel this. We must think to ourselves, however, that to be involved with

Torah only an intellectual level is actually what distances one from Hashem, and that only *kedushah* together with *chochmah* can bring a person close to Hashem; from that, a person will find that he can learn parts of Torah that he doesn't understand or doesn't enjoy.

Sometimes a person is learning and he comes across a difficulty, and it bothers him a lot that he doesn't understand. On one hand, this is commendable, but on the other hand, one has to also realize that it was Hashem who brought him to this situation that he doesn't understand, so that he will remember that it's not humanly possible to understand the Torah, and that we don't have to always understand everything.

Concerning Moshe Rabbeinu, it was said, "Moshe is true, and His Torah is true." Moshe was called the "servant" of Hashem, and a servant doesn't ask questions about what his master tells him to do; so did Moshe act like a true servant, never questioning Hashem. If Hashem wants you to understand, then you will understand, and if not, then you won't understand.

We cannot have any comprehension in Torah on our own. We are required to **search** for the understanding, however, because that is our *mitzvah* of learning Torah. But our soul must not be concerned if we understand or not; on a deep note, it's really *gaavah* (arrogance) if a person is upset that he doesn't understand something. This is a very subtle point, because in the end we still have to toil in Torah and try to understand it. Yet, at the same time, our desire to understand must come from *lishmah* (acting for pure motives), because we want to give pleasure to our Creator - and the desire to understand should not be coming from a personal desire to understand.

Many people who learn Torah are bothered and pained at the fact that they don't learn enough. They think that for this reason, they aren't becoming *gedolim*. We cannot say this is incorrect, but many times people aren't growing in their *ruchniyus* for a different reason: because a person is missing the *pnimiyus* which the *gedolim* lived with. When a person lives a superficial kind of life and he isn't really connected to Hashem, his Torah learning isn't either connected to Hashem.

It is not only how much we learn that brings us closer to Hashem. The main thing is *what we are feeling* as we learn. A person has to feel that when he is learning, he is involving himself with the Torah of the *Ribono shel olam*! One is not only learning the words of Abaye and Rava; it is G-dly wisdom, and it is not humanly possible to understand. We are supposed to learn Torah to give a *nachas ruach* (satisfaction) to our Creator, and not out of a personal desire for knowledge.

If a person is learning and all he's concerned about is understanding it, his learning will not bring him to the desired goal. Before a person sits down to learn, he should gather his thoughts together and talk to Hashem: "*Ribono shel olam*, I am learning because You commanded me to. If You would command me not to learn, I wouldn't learn, just like on Tisha B'Av when we don't learn. I am sitting and learning to give You a *nachas ruach*. Even in what I do understand, I am still missing the true understanding and I haven't yet reached the inner depth of the matter."

Whenever a person encounters a difficulty in the Gemara and he is trying to understand it, he should first know that it was Hashem who brought him to this situation that he doesn't have to understand everything. After this, he should daven to Hashem, saying, "*Ribono shel olam*, if You want that I remain with the difficulty and not understand it, then I am prepared to remain that way. But if it is Your will that I should understand, please, grant me *chochmah*, *binah* and *daas* so that I can understand Your words of Torah."

When you daven to Hashem like this, it has to come from a feeling that you are willing to give up everything. Each person should search inside himself and see if he is prepared to remain an ignoramus who cannot learn, if that is what Hashem would will from him.

It is hard to reach this point, but we must try to draw close to it, to live with the feeling that we are willing to remain a simple boor if Hashem wills us so.

This is a lengthy topic, and one chapter alone doesn't encompass the entire matter. We have only mentioned here the roots of the discussion, and we will try with the help of Hashem to expand on these words, as Hashem allows us to.

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