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Searching for the “Right Way”

Firstly, let us review a basic fundamental which we have already explained in previous volumes.

It is written (Koheles 7:29), “G-d made man upright, but man searches for many motives.” What are these “many motives” that people have?

Really, everyone knows that he has a true desire to be close to Hashem. We need to figure out what exactly is stopping each of us from actualizing this desire.

The truth is that all of us have “many motives” (*cheshbonos rabim*). It is the general idea of looking for things other than being upright, to look for things that for our own selfish reasons.

Simply speaking, some people are searching to have better character traits, some want to know the Torah in its entirety, and some are trying to attain *Ruach HaKodesh* (the holy spirit). Each according to his own level is searching for something else.

However, each person is being opposed by some force – “*There is no righteous person who only does good and never sins.*” Everyone has times of growth and times of descent; times of light as well as times of less light in their life. Dealing with these situations is not simple, and many times a person does not know how to utilize his soul in these situations; generally, a person’s aspirations remain in their potential state and do not become actualized.

So we need to clarify here what point exactly is holding us back from what we are seeking. Is it because we seeking something that isn’t good, or is it that the **way** we are trying to get there isn’t good?

It’s unfeasible to say that the goal we are seeking isn’t good. We all need good character traits, and Torah is our life – without a shadow of a doubt. These are all necessary. The goal we have is good, so the problem must lie in the way we are seeking it.

But this is also difficult to understand. We learned many *seforim* and try to do everything we see in them, and they are obviously proper instructions. So the problem can’t either be with the ways we are taught to attain what we are seeking.

So a person realizes this and he says to himself, "I must be really lazy", or "I must have committed a lot of sins. Maybe I'm not successful in serving Hashem because of my sins I committed when I was a child, or in a previous life."

However, "*He fashioned light and created darkness.*" Hashem is constantly renewing creation. Just as He created man on the first day, so is He creating man every second, so to speak. If a person thinks that what he did previously should prevent him from getting close to Hashem, then he doesn't believe in how "*He renews constantly in His goodness the act of creation.*"

If a person would sincerely believe that Hashem is renewing all of creation every moment, he would also believe that "*Hashem made man upright*", and nothing would hold him back. Unfortunately, a person's soul thinks that the past mistakes are still here, holding him back.

We can find contradictions in life. For example, we know that we need atonement for our sins – either through repentance, or Yom Kippur. Doesn't this contradict the fact that we can't change?

The truth is that there are many contradictions. We find contradictions all the time – in Gemara, in Tosafos. But we must know that although we find contradictions, the point of the matter still remains. "*He renews constantly in His goodness the act of creation*" – this is a basic, fundamental point. A person needs to repent for past sins, so it is also true that he does have some connection to the past.

But although this is true, still, "*He renews constantly every day...*" Hashem is renewing usevery second! There are apparently many layers holding one back from this truth. We need to clarify how to reveal our purpose – to become always close to Hashem – and to use the light of this understanding to penetrate the layers that holds us back.

Our Purpose Is Attachment to Hashem; Anything Else Are Mere Tools

When a person learns a *sefer* and he knows what it says in the *sefer*, he thinks that he can immediately work on what he sees. But this is a mistake. He will never be successful this way. Why?

There is a fact that serves as a basis to build everything on. The very first thing that a person must clarify before he begins to do anything is: to be clear what he is searching for. Are you searching to better your character traits (*middos*), your learning, or your *mitzvos*? These are all good things, but something else has to be behind all of this. There is more to life than perfecting our *middos*, our learning, and our *mitzvos*!

Let's say a person wants good *middos* – as a goal for itself. "I want to have good *middos*." He certainly has a good kind of desire, but if he wants good *middos* just for the sake of having good *middos*, and not as a means for a greater goal, then he isn't thinking correctly.

The truth is that there is nothing a person should be searching for **except for Hashem!**

When we learn *Mussar*, we receive much advice on how to fix all our character traits, and they are all proper words. But the point of all of it is to take away factors which hold us back from Hashem.

For example, since a person's goal should become close to Hashem, he must understand that this is the point of the statement of Chazal, "Just as He is merciful, so should you be merciful." If he doesn't act merciful, then he isn't close to Hashem. The search for good character traits is only as a means to remove the barriers holding us back from being close to Hashem. There is no such thing as searching for anything else for its sake alone, without the goal of using it to become closer to Hashem.

We will give another example. Many people aspire to reach *Gan Eden* one day. Let's think what this

really means to a person. The Sages tell us that this world is like a great entranceway to the palace – and that palace is *Gan Eden*. Let's think about this.

How many years will we be in *Gan Eden*? We're towards the end of a 6,000 year period on this physical world, and at its end we will experience the coming of Moshiach, the Resurrection of the Dead, and then all the souls will descend onto this world. We believe Moshiach can come even today; and we are told that the Resurrection will take place 40 years after Moshiach's arrival.

If we make a calculation, we can see that there isn't much time to be spent in *Gan Eden*. We don't know if there will be more time spent on this world or more time to bask in the pleasure of *Gan Eden*. How much is the maximum time to be spent in *Gan Eden*? At most – 235 years. What will be after that? There will be a period until year 7000, and then another period until year 8000, as the Ramchal writes in *Daas Tevunos*.

And then what? What will be after that time period?

It is clear, then, that *Gan Eden* isn't our purpose. Although we aspire to merit *Gan Eden*, we do not live for *Gan Eden*.

Anytime a person is searching for something, he must clarify: What will be after I find that? I want mitzvos; good. What will be after I do mitzvos? I want *Gan Eden*; What will be after I'm in *Gan Eden*? I want to reach perfection. And what will that give me...?

Whatever point we are searching for, we must know what comes next. If a person is only doing everything on this world for ulterior motives – he wants reward in the next world – there's not much to talk about such a person; all he has to do is give up on some of this world's pleasures so he can enjoy the next world's pleasures.

But if a person seeks the truth, he needs to know what will be at the end. For example, if a person learns Torah, he needs to know: "To where is the Torah bringing me to? If I want to know the Torah – what will that give me? If I would be given all of that knowledge – what's after that? Is it Hashem's will that I should just keep knowing more and more – or is there something more behind all of this? Is there more to doing mitzvos other than just carrying them out with every stringency?"

Our words are clear and they are not new. They are stated clearly in the writings of the Ramchal, the Maharal, and in works of Chassidus: the purpose of everything is for the soul to become attached to the Creator!

If the goal isn't clear to a person, he can have all kinds of aspirations – "I need to correct my anger", "I need to become humble", "I need to have a good eye and a good heart on others"; etc. Of course these are all true aspirations we need to have, and they are all stated in the Sages, but we need to know where all of this is bringing us to.

If the exact goal is clear to us, and we understand that developing our character traits is merely a **tool** to connect to Hashem, the Torah is a tool to connect to Hashem, humility is a tool to connect to Hashem, etc. – only then can we have a proper outlook on life.

A Person's Nature Is To Be Far from Being Attached to Hashem

Every person, upon hearing anything, is actually far in his nature from the words he is hearing. The nature of a person contradicts becoming attached to Hashem. The "I" in a person – his self-absorption, his self-worry and self-centeredness – is the opposite of a total attachment to Hashem.

The knowledge of our goal – *d'veykus*, attachment to Hashem – is not a mere fact. It is an inner understanding that one is not on this world for himself.

Regarding the Redemption, it is written (Yeshayahu 48:11), *"I will do it for Myself"*. This is not happenstance. The Redemption will be a revelation that all of the 6,000 years of man were only for Hashem! Meaning, a person is searching for Hashem using the **tools** that Hashem gives us; the **tools** are Torah and mitzvos. Besides this purpose, our learning and mitzvos have no other purpose on this world or in the next world. The tools on this world and the next world can be different, but the purpose is always the same: we need to become close to Hashem.

It follows, then, that if something is lacking in the soul of a person – and it holds a person back from attaining perfection – it is essentially the fact that he isn't attached to Hashem. Any deficiencies present in us (laziness, sins, etc.) are all results of not being attached to Hashem.

Hashem is perfect, while a created being is lacking. When a person attaches himself to Hashem, he won't be lacking, because he is interconnected with Hashem, who is perfect. Any deficiency in us is thus essentially something that holds us back from attachment to Him, and it really comes from not being attached to Him.

"The End of the Actions Is Originally Planned in the Thoughts"

We are taught by our early Sages, "The end of the action is originally planned in the thoughts" (*sof maaseh b'machshavah techilah*). The goal, which is "the end", is stated in the words of the *Mesillas Yesharim*, that "True perfection is attachment to Hashem." This is the "end of the actions."

A person might say that he knows what the purpose of life is, but "Now I am just doing things as a means to get there, and with Hashem's help, I'll eventually get to the purpose, when I do a lot of such actions."

But this is mistaken, because we have to know that "*sof maaseh b'machshavah techilah*". A person's first thought must be: "What am I looking for? For what reason am I learning Torah and doing mitzvos? Because Hashem commanded me to. What is Hashem's will in all this? How will Torah and mitzvos work for me?" It will work for you in that it will get you to realize that we are only looking for one thing: Hashem!

The Zohar states that "Hashem and the Torah are one." The meaning of this is that the power found in the Torah is the same power that brings one to realize that he must only search for Hashem and nothing else.

This is the essence of life: "Hashem was, He is, and He will always be." He existed before creation, he exists after creation, and He is with creation right now. Our entire job on this world is to search only for Hashem.

A person sees that there are many views on how to serve Hashem. All these views are correct, but they cause a person to scatter his soul. There is no "view" that says that one doesn't have to search for Hashem. There are many ways to get to Hashem, but the point of where all these ways leads to is always the same: Hashem.

This fact, although it is already written, becomes forgotten from our hearts because of life's challenges. Even if someone knows it as a fact, it doesn't necessarily become the way he perceives what life is about. A person thinks that "Torah is the main thing" or "Mitzvos are the main thing", but he doesn't think that the main thing is the goal itself. Of course the Torah is the main thing, (as the Sages say that Torah is more important than all the mitzvos) but what the Sages meant is that the

Torah is the main tool to get to one's goal. The Torah is called a *bris*, a "covenant"; a covenant is meant to connect something to another. The covenant itself is a tool for a greater means - it can bring two things together to reach the goal.

The main point of everything has to be clear. A person has to know clearly why he is on this world.

This cannot be absorbed in a mere day or two. It can take many months to fully absorb this detail. If it was a fact that any baby in his crib can know, we would be able to just tell him over and over, and every baby would grow up with this simple fact, and it would be basic to everyone. But, as much as this fact is known and in writing, it is Hashem's will that we have free will to decide to live by it, and so this fact is hidden and forgotten from our hearts, because people are obviously choosing to ignore it.

Therefore, our Avodah is not to start correcting ourselves or to start doing more good deeds. That is definitely a step of our Avodah, but the root of the matter that we need to work on first is to be clear of why we are living. Ask yourself: Are we living to do mitzvos? What is the purpose of that? Is it to get us to learn more Torah? What comes from that? *Gan Eden*? Is *Gan Eden* the purpose?

The facts are clear - no doubt. Our purpose is to become close to Hashem and be attached to Him. We need to go with this thought for many months.

"Know Him In All Your Ways"

It is written (Mishlei 3:6), "*Know Him in all your ways.*" This rule has no exceptions. "Know Him" comes from an expression of connection to the Creator. It should be our outlook on life.

Before we begin to speak of this Avodah of "*Know Him in all your ways*" - which is the highest form of Avodah, firstly we need to know: For what purpose did Hashem make all creations? The answer is simple: So that they can all be used to connect to Hashem.

Without a shadow of a doubt, it is difficult at first to form an attachment to Hashem; a person is naturally drawn toward materialism. But we need to at first acknowledge the facts. Hashem gave us the ability to eat bread in the morning, or to eat a meal on Shabbos - all in order for us to get closer to Him. Every action we do is really meant to help us get closer to Him.

As an example: a person is sitting in his house. He sees a table, or a chair, or a candelabra, or a window. He can ask himself on each item: Why did Hashem make this? Why did He make this window? The answer is always: in order to get closer to Hashem.

How do we become close to Hashem through a window? That's another question. But the first step is to know that "*Everything is created in My Name to honor*". Everything means everything! Know Him in "*all your ways*" - simply put! If I am sitting on a chair, I should know that Hashem created this chair for me to somehow use it as tool to get close to Him.

The way to get close to Hashem is through Torah and mitzvos. The Sages say (Berachos 6b), "The entire world was not created except for this commandment." A person has to be clear that everything that he has is entirely for one reason - to get close with Hashem.

"Heavenly Assistance" is to Be Helped Directly from Hashem

This way of thinking can get one to realize his purpose. In order to reach the purpose, he needs to have inner strength in his soul to do this. From where can a person draw strength to get close to Hashem?

The Sages say that there is such a thing as “*Siyata D’Shmaya*” – Heavenly assistance. What is the inner meaning of “Heavenly assistance”?

It is written (Tehillim 51:12), “*A pure heart Hashem created in me, and a proper spirit He renewed in my insides.*” Heavenly assistance is not found outside of anyone. Hashem is present in everyone, and when He is revealed in our hearts – **that** is Heavenly assistance. “*A pure heart Hashem created in me*” is the same as saying “*The rock of my heart and portion is Hashem*”.

That is the meaning of a “*pure heart.*” What does a “*pure heart*” actually mean? It means “*As for me, closeness to Hashem is good.*” A pure heart means that one is searching for only good, and “*Anything else that people regard as good is nothing but foolishness*”, as stated in *Mesillas Yesharim*. A pure heart is the same heart that is searching for the ultimate good – Hashem. Who awakens this within us? Hashem – when He is revealed in each of our hearts. “*I will dwell among you.*”

If a person doesn’t awaken within himself the knowledge that Hashem is found in him, how will he get Heavenly assistance?

Simply put, Heavenly assistance is a spirit that comes from Above and clothes itself on a person, pushing him to serve Hashem. This is a true definition, but there is more that lies in it: the one who is pushing a person to serve Hashem is Hashem Himself. He does everything.

Heavenly assistance is, on a more clear note – Hashem’s push. If a person isn’t thinking about Hashem, then Hashem hasn’t become revealed in his heart; from where will his Heavenly assistance come from...?

What is the reason that we have so many failures, difficulties, and depressions? It’s simple: Hashem is missing from our life! If Hashem would become more revealed in one’s heart, He would be doing everything. Although Hashem left a small amount of room for a person to have free will, it is still clear that one can’t attain anything without Heavenly assistance. Everyone knows this.

Heavenly assistance doesn’t just mean “help” from Heaven, in the simple sense. Who is in “*Heaven*” anyway? Is “*Heaven*” helping a person?! **Hashem** is the one who is helping. He can come in the guise of an angel or anything He wishes, but it is all a garment in which Hashem disguises Himself to assist a person.

It follows then that the more a person reveals Hashem in his thoughts, the more he is applicable to “*A pure heart Hashem created in me.*” Hashem is then found in his heart, and He can help him get close to Him. But if a person merely knows about the goal of getting close to Hashem, yet he doesn’t actually involve himself in it – he can never reach Heavenly assistance. He is not thinking about Hashem, so from where will his energy to succeed come from?

“If not for Hashem’s help, we would not be able to overcome”

The truth is that these words are really simple. Every one of us knows the words of the Sages (Berachos 35b): “Many tried to do like R’ Shimon Bar Yochai and did not succeed.” Why didn’t they succeed?

R’ Shimon Bar Yochai himself reveals the secret of this matter. Before he died, he testified about himself that in all his days, he was connected to Hashem.

Many tried to do like him and didn’t succeed. Why? Because there is no one who has the strength on his own to climb on that same ladder of growth the way that R’ Shimon did; only if Hashem wants someone to succeed will he do it. If Hashem is doing it, He can do anything. He can turn someone into

the greatest person in the generation in one second – if He wants; nothing is stopping Him. He can do anything.

So what is a person's Avodah? **To bring Hashem into the heart.** *"Open for me an opening the size of a needle, and I will open for you an opening like an entrance."* What is an "opening the size of a needle"? What does a person have to "open"?

The true opening that a person must open in his heart is to bring Hashem into his heart! The Sages add onto the statement, "And I will open it for them." This doesn't mean that Hashem is sitting in the heavens and opening our heart. It is like an "opening the size of a needle" – in other words, when we bring Hashem into our heart, so to speak, only then will Hashem Himself create an opening. By us bringing Him in, that itself is the key to open our heart to Him. Once a person brings Hashem into his heart, Hashem can begin to work with him there, in his soul.

Without this, there is no way to succeed. Nothing else will work if Hashem is not found in one's heart. We know that "Every day the evil inclination gets stronger, and if not for Hashem's help, we would not be able to overcome him." We wouldn't have the ability to deal with the evil inclination at all without Hashem. The Sages revealed it to us: Hashem helps a person!

But if a person just thinks that Hashem is only found in Heaven and not on this world, we can compare this to some raindrops that a person catches in his hand. How much drops can he catch already? Maybe a few. But when a person believes wholeheartedly that *"The rock of my heart and my portion is G-d"*, that Hashem is found in his heart, and he thinks all day: "What is my purpose? The purpose is Hashem! Where is Hashem found? Not on the outside, not in heaven – but inside the heart!"

If a person does this, Hashem will definitely help him. This is not some new concept; it says so in the possuk.

A person has to form the basis of his Avodas Hashem by first bringing Hashem into his heart, believing that the purpose is to be close to Hashem; and then he must believe that Hashem is found right next to him.

Even if he doesn't feel it, that doesn't change the fact of it. If a blind person comes and announces that he doesn't see a table in the room, that doesn't mean there is no table. He just doesn't see it.

Hashem is found everywhere, as the Sages say, "There is no place that is empty from Him." Without a shadow of a doubt, He is found in the hearts of everyone.

How Do We Reveal Hashem In Us?

How do we reveal Hashem within us?

If we believe in the words of the Sages, we believe that Hashem can be found near us. This also tells us that it is in our power to reveal Him in our hearts; when Hashem is revealed in us, then He helps us. If a person just tries to work on himself and that's it, he will be unsuccessful. The Sages warned us that it's impossible to succeed without Hashem: "If not for Hashem's help, we would not be able to overcome." A person can't do anything by himself.

This point is clear. Hashem made man naturally helpless. Man only has some weak resources, and they can't help him withstand powerful opposing forces. The only force that can help a person is Hashem, and if Hashem is in one's heart, then *"Hashem will fight for you, and they will be silenced."*

Does This Contradict Free Will?

What about free will? Doesn't this contradict free will?

Free will means to bring Hashem into your heart! *"Make for me an opening the size of a needle"*. A person doesn't have free will if he will be successful in a fight; Hashem isn't asking something that can't be done. So what is Hashem asking of a person? That he should allow for Him to enter the heart. This is done by first reflecting on the purpose of life. Then a person must begin to believe that Hashem is next to him in his very heart, and that He helps him from within – not as some outside assistance.

Anyone who lives by these words finds them very simple. They are not new ideas; they are necessary for existence. So what mistake do people make? The mistake is that people have grown accustomed to living alone, thinking alone, working alone, and fighting alone.

Sometimes a person goes to a *tzaddik* to receive guidance. He thinks that the *tzaddik* is bestowing on him all kinds of power. Instead of going to Hashem and receiving power directly, he goes to a *tzaddik*...

But who is giving the *tzaddik* any success? Any power comes from Hashem, and no one else. Of course, there is such a concept that a person can receive help from a *tzaddik*, but this is a very subtle point. The main part of our soul, however, needs power from Hashem alone!

Hashem - The "Place" of the world

If not for our belief that it is Hashem's will that the world should be a place of confusion (the world is called *olam*, which is rooted in the word *he'elam*, which means confusion), we wouldn't be able to understand how such a simple thing can be overlooked.

Many people are searching for something – some are a little successful and some are less – but they aren't being helped.

Let's say we hear an inspiring lecture every week, and then we become inspired and feel like we want to work on ourselves. Then Yom Tov comes and goes. What do people do after Sukkos ends? They wait for Chanukah.

If so, people are living only for Yom Tov! This is not a way to live.

It is not either a way to live from our inspiring lectures that we hear from time to time. People who only search for a self-awakening will end up getting awakened, but they aren't building themselves up from it.

A structure can only be built in one way: Hashem is called "the place of the world." If a person doesn't have a foundation, can he build on it a structure? Hashem is the foundation that we are built on. We can't build anything unless Hashem is at our foundation.

If a person hears some inspiration, he wants to inspire himself from it; but where is Hashem in the picture? Without Hashem in the picture, there is no structure here, and he's just being pushed by wind.

Sometimes an inspiring individual comes to a community and causes a self-awakening in a certain area in our life which we need improvement in. It's better than nothing, but in order to build something from it, we need to reveal Hashem in life.

When a contractor wants to build a house, he first purchases the real estate to build on. What is our

“real estate” that we need to build on? Chazal say that Hashem is called “The place of the world.” If Hashem is not our “real estate”, nothing will happen.

This needs to be clear, without a shadow of a doubt. These words are stated clearly in the Sages. The beginning of anything first needs a place to be built in, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* writes. It is to bring Hashem into one’s life.

Hashem Is Life Itself

What does it mean to bring Hashem into one’s life?

Torah is one of the 613 mitzvos, and all the mitzvos are one. There is a sharp expression that was said by the Admor of Rizhin zt”l that even if he would be placed in a forest for 100 years, he still would not ever forget Hashem.

We don’t come near that level, but we can see how our holy leaders lived life. Their entire life was about Hashem!

We usually think of Hashem’s existence as a kind of lofty “Avodah” of trying to get close to Him. (Indeed, if only we could be even on this level.) But even when we finally realize Hashem’s existence, He is usually to us like a mere source of assistance or a supreme being that we serve, and nothing more. It’s all true, but it’s not everything.

Hashem is not only a source of *Siyata D’Shmaya* Heavenly assistance to us, and He is not just the source of our prayers. Hashem is the very essence of life itself! Although we see other things in life, there are always two views on how to view those things: either it is a tool to reveal Hashem in our lives, or it is as the *Mesillas Yesharim* writes, that it can further us away from Him. There is only true existence: Hashem!

What is “life”? “*And you will cling to Hashem your living G-d, all of you, on this day.*” The essence of life is *d’veykus* clinging to Hashem. It’s not like we are used to thinking on simple terms, that a living being attaches himself to Hashem; it is more than that. Life itself is Hashem, and a person *lives* the Creator. Hashem is called “He who lives forever”, and life itself for any created being is this very point: that Hashem can be found and revealed inside a person. “Life” is essentially Hashem!

“Life” means eternal life. A created being dies eventually; he doesn’t remain forever, as a result of Adam’s sin. Even if Adam wouldn’t have sinned, creations would have still ceased to exist eventually at some point. The only one who truly lives forever is the Creator of the world. “On every breath that a person breathes, he should praise the Creator; what is the reason? “*Every soul will praise Hashem*” – this means every “breath” will praise Hashem.” (See *Midrash Rabbah: Beraishis 14, 9*).

What is the hidden depth of these words? This is not just an external praise. Hashem is giving Himself. The Torah is called “the Torah of life”, which means that Hashem and His wisdom are one, so to speak; this is why life itself is Hashem. One needs to understand that in every breath that he breathes, he is breathing Hashem, so to speak!

Although a person thinks he breathes air, it’s a mistake that everyone makes. The truth is that “There is nothing besides for Hashem”; Hashem is the true essence of everything, but He has many garments that He cloaks Himself in. The Zohar says that all of creation is actually a garment of Hashem. The *sefer Tanya* says that if a person extends his hand to greet a king, even if he’s only touching the king’s robe he’s essentially extending his hand to the King of the world.

One must understand that any point that he delves into is essentially delving into Hashem’s

existence. Our physical senses see, think and feel differently. But the truth is that everything is, in essence, Hashem. So, what is our Avodah? Our Avodah is only to stop being a fool who doesn't recognize the facts. We are used to thinking simply that our Avodah is to "become close to Hashem". Although that's absolutely true, the depth of this matter is that this is a clear fact. The fact is Hashem; that He is found here and everywhere.

It is written (Shemos 20, 20): *"In every place that My Name is mentioned, I will come to you and bless you."* The blessing is a result, but what comes before that? *"I will come to you."* It's a fact - Hashem is found near every person. Even though people feel physical things and they don't feel Hashem, it's really all a fantasy that comes from not feeling the truth that He is the essence of everything.

Serving Hashem - Revealing the Essence of Life

We are saying in these words that "Avodas Hashem" means essentially to clarify for oneself that the essence of life itself is Hashem. Hashem is found near **you**. It's not that we have to come close to Him. Hashem is **already here!** One needs to only recognize, with a palpable feeling, that Hashem is found near me and inside me.

There is no shadow of a doubt that one has to purify himself, learn Torah and do mitzvos. But what should be the direct result of all this? To truly recognize the truth - that Hashem is found everywhere; He is found in everyone's heart. Life is sustained by our heart, and therefore, our heart's very power to keep us alive is Hashem Himself.

We're not coming to say anything new here. We are coming to reveal the facts, and that is that there is a Hashem, who is nearby us. Our entire Avodah is merely to feel Him with a palpable sense.

It is true that a person's sins and bad character traits get in the way of feeling Hashem's existence. But what is our Avodah? That each person should reveal how Hashem is found in **"my"** heart. It is that He is found in every creation, without exception.

A non-Jew can't feel this, but a Jew can. It is written, *"And I will dwell among them."* This is referring only to the Jewish people, and not the non-Jews.

(However, Hashem is still found in everything, and therefore in the future, all of creation will feel Hashem, including non-Jews.)

Avodas Hashem means to reveal the facts; it is not to reveal new feelings we have or to have self-awakening. When a person starts out, he needs to remove himself from his earthly element, so that he can start with the true kinds of feelings.^[1] But when one starts serving Hashem, it's not enough to remain on a level of a self-awakening. He needs to search for the facts, the fact that Hashem is the essence of existence, and that it is one's job to feel Him in his heart.

This is a person's entire Avodah. Anything else written in the *seforim* is merely a tool to remove the obstacles that are covering the soul from feeling Hashem.

If a person would truly believe this, he would feel Hashem immediately. The moment a person believes that he has become a renewed creation, he will not have any obstacles anymore. A renewed creation doesn't have bad character traits, as it is written, *"G-d made a man upright."* The Individual who gives a person this faith is Hashem!

It is written (Beraishis 15:6), *"And he trusted in Hashem, and he reckoned it to Him as righteousness."* Righteousness here means that Hashem gave Avrohom the gift of *emunah* - faith. If a person doesn't live with the realization that Hashem is the essence of all existence, he won't be able to feel that he

has become renewed, because he is absorbed in himself and only feels himself. He remembers all his failures and difficulties, and sees his bad character traits. How can he possibly decide that he has changed and become renewed?

The truth is, it's impossible! The only one who can make a person feel that he has changed is Hashem.

It follows that the only Avodah of a person is to enter Hashem into his heart, and when he does so it is written of him, *"He made, makes and will make all actions."* Our job of free will is to enter Hashem into our heart, and to make sure that every moment we are entering Him into us and not making Him leave, G-d forbid.

Practical Avodah Takes A Lot of Thought

What is our actual Avodah here?

Before anything, we need to reflect largely on the purpose of life. This reflection needs a lot of time; in fact, it needs a very long amount of time.

After doing so, one should reflect that it is not the person that is coming close to Hashem, but that Hashem is found near Him in his heart. He should strengthen his clear faith that Hashem is found near him, by thinking constantly about Hashem – each person according to his ability. He should believe that Hashem is found in his heart.

If a person reflects on this for a long amount of time, day after day, month after month, constantly – and he cries and begs Hashem that he should be worthy to feel Him, as the Sage who said, "I am not leaving this place until Hashem fulfills my request," only then will he truly merit to feel Hashem in his heart, and he will be able to succeed in everything.

During the time that a person doesn't have Hashem revealed in his heart, he won't have the strength to deal with problems. What is the source of giving up? People usually think that giving up means that one has a low recognition of Hashem. The truth is that if one thinks that he can be successful on his own, he's deluded. But one who falls into despair actually is the one who starts to realize the facts, so despair can actually be a catalyst for one to recognize how much he needs Hashem. He realizes that he can't do it alone, and he needs Hashem's help. If a person has fallen into despair, it is his job after realizing this to think, "What does Hashem want from me?"

We can talk and talk forever, but there is only true point in life: the essence of everything is Hashem, and He is found in the heart of every person, and our entire Avodah is to reveal Him from within; it's just that there are many ways to do so.

Hashem should merit all of us, all the Jews and all of creation, that all of us should uncover the fact that Hashem is behind everything, and every person's job is only to search for Him and reveal Him from within us.

[1] See Getting To Know Your Soul for more about the "element of earth".

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/bilvavi-part-6-chapter-02-purpose-everything---searching-hashem>