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בלבבי חלק ה. עמ' שכט אות מג - עצם הנפש ולבושיה וצורת העבודה עמהם

Our Soul's Essence Vs. Our Soul's Garments

The essence of our soul is covered with two garments: *emunah* (simple faith) in G-d (which is also known as "*keser*" [Crown]), and *machshavah*, the power of thought. The actual essence of our soul, though, is a place in ourselves that is above these two abilities.

Our thoughts, and even our *emunah*, is not yet our essence. This is because both our thoughts and our *emunah* contain a silent plea for more understanding, and therefore, there must be more to our soul than just our deep thoughts and even our deepest faith in the Creator. Our thoughts seek to understand more, and our *emunah* seeks to be satisfied as well. But the actual "I" in us that thinks and yearns, our actual essence, is like a rock that is still. Our actual essence does not search for anything – it doesn't want a thing! Our "I" is content with itself and where it is.

Even if a person is always connected to his *emunah* (deep faith) and *temimus* (simple faith), he must not come to confuse these abilities with his actual essence. There is more to who you are than even your deep abilities of *emunah* and *temimus*.

The Concept of Detaching

Therefore, at times, a person will have to remove these garments of his soul. Sometimes one has to remove his *emunah*, and sometimes he has to remove his *machshavah*.

The point is that one has to detach sometimes from his *emunah* or his *machshavah*, in order that they should not become too permanent. A person should recognize that these abilities are not his essence, but merely garments of his soul. They are deep abilities we possess, but they do not define our essence, and because we must recognize this difference between our soul's essence and our soul's garments, we have to detach sometimes from even these abilities.

We need to get used to experiencing our actual essence, and in order to do this, we need to be able to relate to it. Therefore, we need to get used to the nature of our essence, which is to be still.

The General Introduction of How to Detach

To get used to doing this, it is recommended to get used to doing things that you don't like to do so much. Do it simply because you're trying to teach yourself to get used to something.

Normally, "acting by rote" (*melumadah*) is something we are supposed to avoid, but sometimes, acting by rote can be a holy power. The concept we are currently discussing is an example of how we can use "*melumadah*" for holiness. It is to be able to do something without any agendas, and not for the sake of doing *avodah*. It is reminiscent of what we request of Hashem, "*Shetargileinu B'Torasecha*" - "That we become accustomed in Your Torah." Sometimes we have to do something not because we want to, but simply because we have trained ourselves to do so.

By doing this, we are able to have a temporary detachment from our aspirations - even from our holy aspirations - and to instead become still, reminiscent of a rock, which is the nature of our actual essence: nothing but stillness.

Detaching From Thought, Method 1: Saying Tehillim Quickly

Let us explain how we can detach from our thoughts.

One way to work on this is by getting used to the habit of saying *Tehillim*, and to do so very quickly, without having much time to think into what you are saying. In this way, you disconnect from your thoughts, which essentially transforms your thoughts into a way for you to experience your actual essence.

Experiencing D'veykus\Attachment with Hashem

One can keep doing this until he reaches a *total attachment with Hashem*.

When that happens, there are no thoughts going on in a person, and there is no "avodah" going on either. The thoughts and the avodah aspects are just the preparation for *d'veykus*\attachment with Hashem, but they are not yet the actual *d'veykus* itself.

Detaching From Thought, Method 2: Sleep

Another way how you can detach from your thoughts is through sleep.^[1] When a person is asleep, his thoughts are not in progress (except for his imagination). This enables a person to detach from his soul's external layers, and the person is then able to recognize that his thoughts are just a garment atop his essence.

Detaching From Thought, Method 3: Talking Quickly

There is another way as well how a person can detach from his thoughts, and it has an additional gain to the above exercises: to talk quickly. Let us explain how this works.

The soul has three garments over its essence - thought, speech, and action. These abilities wrap over each other like garments, one on top of the other. Thought is the garment of the soul which is attached directly with the soul, but speech isn't attached with the soul, and therefore, the power of speech does not gain its vitality directly from the soul. This is the usual case.

However, if a person talks quickly, without any deep thought involved as he's talking, then his speech bypasses his thoughts (since it is not using any thoughts), and then it can attach itself directly with the soul.

If a person succeeds with this, he resembles the level of "The *Shechinah* (G-d's Holy Presence) speaks

from his throat.” His talking will be coming from his very soul, because there are now no garments in between his speech and his very soul. Even if a person doesn’t merit this high level, he will at least merit what the Gemara^[2] says that if a person wakes up in the morning and suddenly he finds himself saying a *possuk*, it’s a small prophecy.

By reaching this level, a person is able to learn things from what he’s saying. Normally, a person talks only after thinking beforehand, and therefore there is nothing for his mind to learn from his words. But when a person gets used to talking from his soul - by getting used to talking quickly - then his mind will be learning new information from the words he is saying, because the words were never thought about previously. He will be able to learn new things in his mind from the words he is talking.

Every person has already revealed this ability somewhat, because many times when we talk, we suddenly realize things in our mind. For example, sometimes we think a certain thought, and then as we verbalize it, we realize that what we thought about wasn’t totally accurate.

The root of this is because our intellect (*seichel*) is our innermost garment of the soul, and therefore, usually we think things through before we talk; but sometimes, there are little tiny holes and passageways in our mind, so to speak, in which a matter can pass through and get by our thoughts. When the words then come out of our mouth, the mind never realized the information, and it can now learn new information from the words.

A Few Reasons Why This Works

Another reason for this is because as we talk, our intellect is actually able to comprehend things better than when it is using the thinking process. This is because all of our abilities are rooted in our soul; thought, speech, and action are merely garments of our soul, and they are not the soul itself. Sometimes our thoughts work calmly and they do not require any mental strain to work, but sometimes our soul feels weak, and then we can’t think so hard, and then we don’t comprehend things. But when a person talks, he puts his soul into action, and then the soul can get even more inspired, which will then fire more illuminations (“*ohr*”) onto the intellect and thus enable it to receive higher understandings. (This is reminiscent of the words of the Zohar, that “*daas* (understanding) is hidden in mouth.”)

Another reason for this is because as long as a person is within a matter, he cannot see the matter clearly, unless he enters outside the matter and views it from the outside. As long as a person is still in thinking mode, he can’t see a matter totally, because his thoughts are trapping him within the matter. But by talking, he leaves his thinking mode a bit and he can begin to see the matter a bit clearer.

On a deeper note, talking uses up less of our thinking; by talking, our power of thought returns back to its source, which is called “*Ayin*”, the point of “nothingness” in the soul. This point is also known as *Keser*. When the thoughts return to its source, *Ayin*, the thoughts receive a new kind of mind to think.

Finally, there is another reason why talking helps us detach from our thoughts. Thoughts contain an external and an inner layer to them. The inner layer of thought is a silent kind of thought, while the outer layer of our thoughts is a loud kind of thought. For this reason, most people have a hard time sitting and thinking calmly, because the outer layer of their thoughts naturally demand some loudness.

When a person begins talking, what happens? The external layer of his thoughts stop thinking and they instead are being used to talk. The inner layer of the thoughts, the quiet part, can then be accessed. A person is able to use this as an opportunity to reach higher understandings of a matter.

The Benefits of Writing, Or Listening To Music, and Or Taking A Walk

This can be practically felt when a person writes down what he's thinking. When a person writes down his thoughts, the external layer of his thoughts are being used for the writing, and for this reason, often it happens that sudden thoughts fall into a person's head as he's writing something. These thoughts might even have nothing to do with what he is writing about. Where does this come from? It is because the person has calmed his thoughts as he writes, and when the thoughts become calmed, a person accesses his inner thoughts.

There are other ways as well in how to calm the thoughts, such as by listening to music, or by talking a walk.

An even more effective way to calm the thoughts is by talking a walk at night, because it's quieter then, and it can be used as opportunity to gain the quieter, inner thoughts.

[1] The avodah of "sleep" is explained in [The Essence of Chodesh Kislev: The Depth of Sleep](#) [1].

[2] Berachos 55b

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/bilvavi-part-5-043-concept-detaching>

Links

[1] <https://bilvavi.net/english/essence-month-011-kislev-depth-behind-sleep>