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Hisbodedus With Ourselves, Then Hisbodedus With Hashem

With the help of Hashem, we explained the first stage of *hisbodedus*, which contains two parts - *cheshbon hanefesh* (making a soul-accounting), and the various methods that help us reach inner silence.

Practically speaking, at first a person needs a few minutes of inner calm, and then he should begin his *cheshbon hanefesh* (which we did not discuss that much)[1], and then he should try to enter deeper within himself, using the methods we gave in these classes.[2] All of this is yet the first part of *hisbodedus*, which is how we become “alone”.

Summary Of Hisbodedus With Hashem

Now we will discuss the second part of *hisbodedus*, which is to have *hisbodedus* with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. This generally contains two parts – **developing our personal bond with Him**, as well as to come to **recognize** Hashem.

Two Stages In Our Bond With Hashem

There is a kind of bond with Hashem in which a person realizes that we receive everything from Hashem, that He is the Giver and we are the receivers. In this kind of bond, we daven to Hashem to give us our needs. We think about what Hashem gives us, we thank Him for it, and then we ask Him for whatever else we still need.

But there is another kind of bond we can have with Hashem, not through give and take, but because we cherish the very connection. It’s about the love itself, not about what we want to “get” from the one we love. (On its deepest level, this is to recognize *Ain Od Milvado*, in which we come to truly realize that “there is nothing besides for Him.”) But on the basic level it concerns the connection that the lover has to his beloved.

Thus, based on this second view, *hisbodedus* is not about thanking Hashem for everything in our past, present or future. It is about 1) **thinking of Hashem’s greatness** as well as to 2) **to speak words of love with Him** – about how much *He* loves us, and how much *we* love Him.

There are two kinds of relationships - a relationship of give-and-take, and a relationship that is

intrinsic. Parents with their children, and husband with their wife, might have any of these kinds of relationships. They can love each other either because they receive and give to each other, or because they enjoy the intrinsic connection. In the business world, it's all about what I get out of this relationship, and any giving here is for the purpose of taking.

Because we are so used to give and take relationships in our life, we must develop a new perception towards relationships, in order to develop a bond with Hashem: where the relationship is all about the love in the connection.

Hisbodedus in particular is about developing these two aspects of our bond with Hashem. First we need to at least realize what Hashem does for us and love Him for it, and then we need to arrive at the higher level, which is to enjoy our very bond with Hashem.

The First Step: Realizing How All That We Have Is From Hashem

The first step, realizing what Hashem does for us, is to realize that everything comes from Hashem. We need to realize what we have, first of all, and then realize that it's all from Hashem. So sit down and make a list of what you have and how it's all from Hashem. Then make a list of what you are missing in life, and that it can only be filled by Hashem.

Hisbodedus is not an intellectual matter - it is a heart matter. Therefore, it's not enough to be aware intellectually of what you have and don't have. Therefore, we need to reflect about it more and more, so that our heart can feel it. Take 15 minutes and reflect about the things you have in your life as well as the things that you need, and realize that they can only come from Hashem. Our tefillos to Hashem will then come from a deeper place in our self, from our heart, and not just from our brain.

Thus, the first stage to review simple matters of *emunah*, to review that Hashem gives us everything so we can thank Him. Then we can realize that only Hashem gives us what we need and we can ask for what we are missing from a deeper place in ourselves.

Why This Awareness Is Necessary For Hisbodedus

Let's try to understand this deeper.

Hisbodedus is to be alone with Hashem. We realize that as we do *hisbodedus*, it's just "me and Hashem" and no else. But in order to be alone with Hashem, we need to believe and internalize that everything we have is indeed from Hashem, and from no one else. Otherwise, one is not alone with Hashem, and it's as if someone else is in the room with us; this is not called being "alone" with Hashem. Such thoughts prevent us from having real *hisbodedus* with Hashem. Therefore, only when we internalize that **only** Hashem gives us all that we have, and no one else, can we truly feel alone with Hashem as we do *hisbodedus*.

Emunah - The Prerequisite To Hisbodedus With Hashem

Now we can understand a major fundamental principle. *Hisbodedus* is based on *emunah* (faith that everything is orchestrated by Hashem). The stronger our *emunah* is, the higher quality our *hisbodedus* will be. The weaker our *emunah* is, the more superficial our *hisbodedus* is.

To clarify, it's not that we have the *avodah* to have *emunah* as well as the *avodah* to do *hisbodedus*, as if these are two independent, separate issues that we need to work on. Rather, *emunah* and *hisbodedus* are really intertwined.

Thus, throughout the course of the day, we need to utilize our *emunah*, and if not, we will [by default]

attribute everything that happens in our life due to various circumstances. “This person hurt me”, “This person insulted me”, or “This person helped me.” The true perspective is that Hashem caused everything to happen to you, whatever it was.

To give some practical examples, when we buy a car or if we buy a sofa or a table for the house, we tend to think it’s from the store we bought it from, or because your parents or in-laws gave you the money to buy it. Let’s say we sit down to make *hisbodedus* with Hashem and we want to thank Him for those items. It will be very hard for us to feel thankful to Hashem when we never realized in the first place where these items come from. We need to realize during the day that all these things are given to us from Hashem, and not from people, and then we can properly thank Hashem when we do *hisbodedus*.

We will give another example that brings out the point. Chazal say that one should love Hashem no matter what *middah* He measures out to you. The only way to do this is when we realize that everything is from Hashem. If someone does something bad to us and we think it’s from the person and not from Hashem, then we aren’t able to realize how everything that happens to us is from Hashem.

Make A List of Major Things In Your Life and Realize Who The Provider Is

Thus, throughout the day, we need emunah, that it is Hashem who does everything. This is the basis of *hisbodedus* with Hashem!

We can give a few examples of how to work on this. First we will start to notice the major things in our life which we have, and to realize that Hashem gave them all to us. Take a pen and paper and write down who gave you all the items in your house, such as who gave you: your life, your senses, your house, your children, your livelihood, your health. For each thing, say to Hashem, “Hashem, you gave me this, this, and this (fill in all the big things).”

Verbalizing Your Thoughts of Emunah; Saying The Words With Calmness and With Feeling

Don’t do this as a lip service; say the words from your heart. “Words that come from the heart enter the heart.” Do this calmly. Do so with a **calm mind**, and then say the words with feeling, **with your heart**, and with **joy**. Keep saying the words from your heart, and you will then reach deeper and deeper into your heart, where the words will then keep coming from a deeper place in yourself.

This alone can take days and weeks to work on until it penetrates [your innermost self].

After you feel that the *emunah* has become deepened in your heart, you can then proceed to the next step, which is to thank Hashem for all that you have, from a truer and deeper place in yourself. [This will be the later stage, which we have not yet discussed].

Bear in mind that each step of *hisbodedus* can take at least 2 months to work on. Think about both the big things and small things that Hashem does for you, then verbalize it with Hashem, so that your words of *emunah* can implant the *emunah* deeper and deeper into your heart each time.[\[3\]](#)

The avodah to work on for this month, as a result of this discussion, is to recognize what you have, as well as what you need, and to speak to Hashem about it.[\[4\]](#)

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH THE RAV

Q: Since Hashem gives me everything, even my bad middos, how do I thank Hashem for my bad middos, when my bad middos clearly cause me to act improper?

A: Thank Hashem even for your bad *middos*. Even our bad *middos* can help us have good *middos*, because it can cause us to work on ourselves. However, you can't thank Hashem for what results from bad *middos*, because that is your free will, but as for the bad *middah* itself, you should definitely thank Hashem for it.

Q: Aside from the avodah of today's month, I have the following question regarding next month's avodah, which will be about thanking Hashem. How do we thank Hashem for situations that are impossible to change according to Chazal, such as someone who is blind or childless, who are considered to be dead while alive?

A: Although this was not related to today's class, I will answer you; the answer contains two aspects. First of all, we know that Chazal say that "*HaKol D'Avid Rachmana L'Tav Ovid*" - "Everything that Hashem does is for the best." First we must realize that everything is good, since everything comes from Hashem, and this is how we can thank Hashem for anything. Included in this is a deeper belief we need to internalize, that even the "bad" things are also for the good, since they were all done by Hashem. We do not understand this with our intellect, yet we have an avodah to internalize with our heart that everything is really good, that even the "bad" things are really good, and thus we can thank Hashem for even the "bad" things.

Q: How do all of our actions come from Hashem, such as when a person sins?

A: Hashem gave us the power of free will and He even enables us to live even if we perform an evil act, as *sefer Tomer Devorah* writes; but just because Hashem sustains us we do evil doesn't mean that we are not responsible for our actions. We are still responsible for our actions, even though Hashem is in control of all our actions, as we do them.

See Rav Dessler's *Kuntres HaBechirah* (Essay on Free Will) in *sefer Michtav M'Eliyahu* where it is discussed that there are points that are above our free will and below our free will. However, it is very hard for a person to know which parts of his life are above his free will.

Q: Let's say my son didn't call me and I'm upset. How do I realize that this is all from Hashem?

A: If your first reaction is that it's from Hashem, it's a sign that you have begun to recognize how everything is from Hashem.

[1] See class #07 - Becoming Aware of Our Actions

[2] Refer to Classes #07-#011.

[3] See [Bilvavi Part 5- Talking To Hashem About Emunah](#) [1].

[4] Refer also to Woman's World #013-[Awareness of What We Lack and Have](#) [2].

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/getting-know-your-hisbodedus-practice-012-foundation-speaking-hashem>

Links

[1] <https://bilvavi.net/english/bilvavi-part-5-025-talking-hashem-about-emunah>

[2] <https://bilvavi.net/english/womans-world-12-awareness-what-we-lack-have>