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[Home](#) > Reaching Your Essence - 011 Non-Movement

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Identifying With the Concept of Non-Movement

We will try here to learn more about the *Yechidah*. Our *Yechidah* is the innermost point of our soul, and in order to reach it, we first need to recognize it. Here, we will explain a particular point about the *Yechidah*.

All of Creation is moving, every moment. All that is in the galaxy revolves, and time as well is always moving. Creation, in essence, is a constant movement. Only Hashem doesn't move - "He was, He is, and He always will be." Hashem is not found in movement, but in non-movement.

We are familiar with the concept of movement, but we are not used to the concept of non-movement. Do we see anything that doesn't move? Our eyes always see things that move. We know that even the planets and stars, which appear to be still, are really always moving, because they are all in orbit. We usually do not see non-movement.

Can our soul as well have a non-moving point? Our emotions and thoughts are always moving, because we keep going through hundreds and thousands of emotions and thoughts. But deeper in the soul, there is a place in the soul that doesn't move at all.

We can't see this non-movement, though. We see the street when it not moving with cars, but we can't see the point of non-movement in our soul, at least with our physical eyes.

Why must we seek the power of non-movement? What is to be gained from it?

Recognizing the non-moving point in the soul is a part of how we connect ourselves to Hashem. In

order to connect to Hashem, we are supposed to resemble Him; Chazal state that in order to cleave to Hashem, "*Hevay domeh lo*", "You shall resemble Him". The non-moving part of the soul is called *doimem* (still, or silent), from the word *domeh*. We begin to "resemble" Hashem's ways by reaching our ability within ourselves to be "non-moving". That is how we can, so to speak, "resemble" Hashem and cleave to Him. When we reveal that, we will have the power to cleave to Him.

There is another reason, an external reason, of why we need to make use of the power of non-movement. When we are impulsive and we have little control over our movements, this causes us to have emotional suffering. So we can recognize that there is a need to still our movements, so that we can learn how to be less impulsive. It teaches us self-control.

The popular way of acquiring non-movement is through learning how to weaken movement. But there is another way, an inner way, of how to acquire it. When a person wishes to free himself from impulsivity or from negative movements (in his emotions or thoughts) that are bothering him, he can leave the mode of movement altogether and enter into a mode of non-movement in his soul. This will in turn silence all his movements as a direct result.

To illustrate, when a person is being swept by a wave, either he can try to fight the wave, or he can stay underwater, and the wave will not take him in, because he has ducked it.

When one is in the midst of some kind of emotional turmoil – each to his own – one method which people try is to weaken the movement somehow, to slow it down. But there is another way: to leave the mode of movement in his soul and enter into non-movement, and this in turn will silence any movements as a result. This is because the entire movement is being fueled by the movement. Once one leaves his inner movements, the movement loses its power to function, so the unwanted movement will cease on its own.

In the past, we have defined how the entire work of man on this world is to learn the art of balancing his inner movements. Our entire problem is when we have extreme movements that are unbalanced, thus our main task is to learn how to balance our movements. This we addressed in *Da Es Atzmecha\Getting To Know Your Self*. In this series, however, we are speaking about the deeper part of our soul, the *Yechidah*, and it requires a whole different kind of inner calm. In order to gain the inner calm that is required to reach your individual *Yechidah*, you need to reach a point of non-movement in yourself, and this in turn will silence your various movements in your soul.

Thus, there are two reasons why we need to gain the power of non-movement. The inner reason why we need it, the purpose, is because non-movement is what helps us "resemble" Hashem, Who is non-moving, which is how we cleave to Him.

The second reason of why we need it, which is the external use of this power, is to learn how to still our movements so that we can know how to leave the mode of movement. After we learn how to balance our movements, we must progress to the higher stage, which is to leave movement altogether.

This is not just about silencing anger or other intense emotions. It can silence emotions, but that's all a result. It's all coming from the power of non-movement. When one reaches non-movement in his soul, it follows automatically that his negative emotions will be silenced. It can help a person calm down from his anger, or let go of a desire he wants badly, etc.

The Sage Hilel never got angry at anyone, because he felt nullified to others. How did he do this? He nullified himself by entering non-movement, thus it was and to get him angry. It was not simply that he reached inner calm. He reached humility, a power that is deeper than inner calm – a power in which there is no movement at all.

Non-Movement: The Inner Method of How To Calm Down

To apply this concept, let's say a person is in midst of getting angry. How can he calm himself?

There are many methods that can work. One method is to take your mind off your problems by thinking about something else (*hesech hadaas*). Another method is to think positive thoughts about people, or to judge others favorably. Another method is to have *emunah* that all is decreed upon me by Hashem. These are all true methods that can work.

But it can be solved with another way – as long as you have access to it: through reaching the power of non-movement, all these problems go away on their own.

Let us try to explore this concept more deeply.

When the Jewish people left Egypt and went to the desert, they essentially entered non-movement. They came to the sea, and they could not move. It seemed like the worse situation. What did they do? They didn't move. They stayed where they were and connected themselves with Hashem, and that was the inner reason why the Egyptians couldn't attack them. The depth of this is that non-movement is the power that can protect a person from any harmful 'movements' coming his way.

People wonder what is there to be gained from non-movement. When a person hears about trying not

to move for a few minutes so he can get calm, what often happens? A person sits on a chair, doesn't do anything, and after a few minutes, he's already going crazy. People do not go for non-movement. They feel like they are trapped in the plague of darkness which the Egyptians were hit with. Why? It is because we are mostly getting all our vitality in life from various movements, so we can relate only to movement, and we are not used to gaining any sense of vitality from non-movement.

But the truth is that movement is only one side of the coin in life. The other side of the coin in our life is non-movement. We need to uncover this power. We need to look into our daily life and see if we ever get vitality from non-vitality.

If you reflect, yes. We have six days of the week, and we have Shabbos. The six days of the week are for action, for movement. Shabbos is for non-movement, because Shabbos is the day of rest, the day where we cease from our movements. From where do we mainly get our vitality from? It is clear to all of us that Shabbos gives us more vitality than the weekdays. Thus, our main vitality needs to be coming from non-movement, not from movement.

We must learn how to derive vitality from both modes of our live – our movement, and our non-movement. Shabbos is called “source of blessing”, so it is our main source of vitality. Just as we gain vitality from actions, so can we gain vitality from non-action. However, non-action only gives you vitality when you access the point of non-movement in the soul.

Do we see non-movement as another source for vitality. If “yes”, then we have both sources of vitality, movement and non-movement, and we will have both the six days of the week and Shabbos in our soul, which are both needed. If a person only gets vitality from movement, then all he will have is the “six days of work” in his soul, and he will have no Shabbos in his soul.

During the week, we mainly live from non-movement, and on Shabbos we live from movement. But in our soul, it is possible for us to live all the time from both movement and non-movement. If a person doesn't know how to gain vitality from non-movement, he will find non-movement to be taxing, because he will grow anxious when he doesn't move.

Therefore, a person should get used to non-movement when he's calm and not wait to acquire it when he's anxious, so that he can give himself the strength to easily enter into non-movement when the time calls for it.

So must one first identify that there is a place in himself in which he derives vitality from non-movement. As an example, we have 248 positive mitzvos and 365 negative commandments; both give us vitality. Just as doing a mitzvah makes us feel more alive, so does not committing a sin provide us with vitality.

Our *Yechidah* is the place of non-movement in the soul. The outer four parts of the soul – our *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, and *Chayah*, are all in movement. The *Yechidah* is where we can derive vitality from non-action; it is the Shabbos in the soul. The other four parts of the soul are like the six days of the week that are in the soul. Thus, our actions help us reveal the outer parts of the soul, while non-action helps one reach the *Yechidah*.

This awareness to the concept of non-movement is the key to accessing the *Yechidah*. It goes against our logic. If you're trying to open a door, don't you need to do something to get into it? How does not doing anything help you get into it?

But if we reflect, we can see that most of our success comes from not doing something, not from doing something. First we need to see this concept from our own physical world, so that we can relate to the inner world we are describing. (There is always a rule that you need to be able to first identify with a concept from this physical world in order to understand anything about the spiritual world).

There are people who are very action-oriented, and as soon as they get up in the morning, they ask themselves, "What needs to be done today?" Others are less action-oriented, and they focus more on what to avoid that day. In the world of business, you can make money either by taking action – and sometimes, by not taking action. Or, you get a phone call asking you to invest some money in something, and you realize that it's a scam, so you don't react to the caller. This is not just because of *hashgacha peratis* (Divine Providence), even though it is true that all is run by Hashem's Divine Providence. The deeper reason is because knowing how to *not* move is often what saves us from danger. There are many more examples of the concept as well.

Often, you gain precisely when you *don't* do anything. It is the things that we don't *do* which help us much more than the things that we *do*.

When Laziness Is Good And When It Is Evil

Non-action is referred to as the holy kind of laziness. The Sages praised the women for being lazy not to sin with the Golden Calf, which teaches us that there can be a holy kind of laziness. What is holy laziness? It is when one knows how to use the power of non-movement in its proper place. Normally, laziness is detrimental, and this is when laziness stems from any of the outer four layers of the soul. But when one discovers the power of holy non-movement, such laziness is constructive and holy. It is when one knows how to *not* act.

The concept of *menuchah*, to have serenity [on Shabbos], does not come from laziness. If a person

keeps Shabbos because he's lazy and he doesn't feel like working, is that called the *menuchah* of Shabbos? Clearly, not. One who would like to work, but he silences those movements because it is Shabbos - this is called the *menuchah* of Shabbos. Such a person is resting from work. *Menuchah* is a holy power. *Savlanus*, patience, is also a holy power. Laziness, also, can be holy - when it is used in a situation that calls for non-movement.

When one longs for Shabbos and he wishes it wouldn't end, it is because he is enjoying his *menuchah*. This is not laziness. If a person is lazy because he doesn't want to work, that is laziness. But when a person has reached *menuchah* and he is craving it, it is because he has reached the vitality of non-movement, thus, he wishes it could remain Shabbos and not have to go back to work.

Without recognizing the gains of non-movement, he won't be able to reach the *Yechidah* either, and his laziness is evil too. A person needs to learn how to gain vitality from non-movement.

There are people who wait all year for the winter so that they will see the snow, and they gain vitality from this. But this is not what it means to gain vitality from non-movement. We are referring to a deep source of vitality from non-movement that is inside the soul of a person. It cannot be described in words, just like we cannot describe what vitality from actions feels like. You need to enjoy non-movement no less than how you enjoy movement.

As we said before, we have both *mitzvos* and negative commandments, and we have both the six days of the week and Shabbos, because we need both for our vitality. Our actions alone which we do will not bring us to our purpose. If we only desist from movement, this will also not bring us to our purpose. We must combine our actions together with the power of non-movement, and these two abilities together will bring us to our purpose, just as we need both the six days of the week and Shabbos. Shabbos is the situation of the Next World, but in order to merit it, the Sages say that "One who toils on Erev Shabbos, will eat on Shabbos."

Examining Our Source of Vitality In Our Actions

Earlier, I asked you if you ever derive vitality from non-movement. Now I will ask you an opposite question: You are already assuming that you gain vitality from the positive actions you do, such as when you do a *mitzvah*. What exactly is giving you vitality when you do a *mitzvah*?

Before we learn how to gain vitality from non-action, let us first ask ourselves if the actions we are gaining vitality from are coming from a good source or not. If we are gaining vitality from negative kinds of actions, than we are drawing vitality from a negative source, which harms us.

If a person runs after an improper desire, he is gaining vitality from a negative kind of action, and he is drawing vitality from a negative source.

There are also actions we do in which it is not clear if we are really gaining positive vitality or not from the act. For example, if a person is kind to others and he gains honor from this, is he getting vitality from the fact that he is bestowing others, or because he gets honor? It is very subtle discerning that one needs to make. Just as need to know where our vitality is coming from in our actions, so must we discern even in our holy actions where exactly where we are getting vitality from.

The Kamarna Rebbe said that he suspected himself of gaining vitality from the honor he feels in doing *mitzvos*, and not from the actual *mitzvos* he is doing. A person might be enjoying doing a *mitzvah*, but it's really his ego that he is enjoying. The concept is that one has to know if his vitality from even his positive actions if it is coming from the good deed, or from the ego in the act.

Thus, the question of where we are deriving vitality from applies to both the areas of our actions as well as non-action.

Incorporating Non-Action Within Action

We are slowly understanding that non-movement comes from a deeper part of ourselves, and how it can be a source of vitality for us, just as much as movement makes us feel more alive.

Now we will describe a deeper point about this.

The Mishna in Avos states, "It is not upon you to complete the task, nor are you exempt from it." This describes the concept here. Every action needs to be completed by a non-movement. Part of an action is what I do ("you are not exempt from it"), and after I do it, I must realize that I did not complete it ("it is not upon you to complete"). So in every action, there is a part that I do, and a part that I do not do.

Why must all actions be comprised of these two factors? There are a few reasons. With regards to our current discussion, when a person does any action, either from his *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah* - must the *Yechidah* be absent? Even in the actions you perform, there can be a revelation of *Yechidah*. When you do something, you can gain vitality even from the aspect of non-action in the action.

Take a look at our daily life. We do many actions – do we ever complete any of them? We can all recognize that nothing ever gets finished. We are really never to get anything done. It is to show us that we need to let go of action, even amidst our actions.

Hashem created us so that we can reach perfection, thus we must perfect ourselves. But if we cannot be perfect ourselves anyway, for what purpose did Hashem create us for? If Hashem wants us to reach perfection, why didn't He just create us perfect? The answer is: perfection is not just reached through what I do, but also through what I *don't* do.

This is essentially when is **aware** as he does something that he can also have non-movement at the same time, and he gains vitality as well from the non-movement.

One who does not perform is lazy. One who only acts has no revelation of *Yechidah*. How then must we act? To sometimes act and sometimes not act?! The correct way is that when you act, you can also be aware of non-action, and to receive vitality even from the part in the act that you are not doing. This is how you gain vitality from both the action as well as the non-action.

We gain vitality from our mitzvos, but we can also gain vitality when we don't sin – when we are aware that we can also gain vitality from non-action.

To illustrate further, it is forbidden for one to add onto the *mitzvos* of the Torah; one may not wear five compartments in his *Tefillin*, since the requirement is only to wear four. This shows us that just like we receive vitality from doing *mitzvos*, so do we receive vitality from not doing something.

If we look at our daily life we can see many opportunities in which we can do this. For example, you are trying to cross the street, and it's taking time. Most people get impatient when they are waiting to cross the street. It is not just a time for us to practice patience. It can be a deeper exercise for you: you can learn how to stop your movements and enjoy non-movement.

This is a way for you to gain vitality when you act\expand and don't act\contract. It doesn't just mean to pause your movements and not do anything. Just like a person feels more alive when he expands his soul and does action, so can a person feel more alive sometimes by contracting and not doing anything. Shabbos is about non-action, but it is preceded with six days of the week, because we need both.

We have many times a day in which we can pause our movements – there are extreme movements

as well as small movements that we can halt.

For example, if you wanted to give something to your child and he didn't want it, like if you wanted to give him a kiss and he doesn't want one, instead of feeling suffering at this, you can derive vitality from it, because your movement has been silenced.

I am not saying that you should deliberately silence all your movements! Rather, when the situation comes your way in which you aren't able to perform the movement you wanted to do, you can derive vitality from this.

So as we gain vitality from our actions, which come from the outer four layers of the soul, we also need to learn how to gain vitality from non-action, which helps us recognize what our *Yechidah* is. When we gain vitality from non-action, we learn how to feel nullified to Hashem, and then we will merit to resemble Him and thus cleave to Him completely.

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