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Preface

With the help of Hashem, we have concluded the festival of Pesach, and now we are in the month of *Iyar*.

Our Sages state that the twelve months of the year are parallel to twelve abilities (or senses) of the soul. Each month contains a unique ability that reflects the nature of the month, which is manifest in the soul of man.

There is a dispute about the abilities which each month reflects, but the main view of our Sages is as follows: **(1)** *Nissan* is parallel to the ability of "*sichah*" (speech), **(2)** *Iyar* is parallel to the ability of "*hirhur*" (thought), etc. [\[1\]](#)

The Concept of 'Hirhur': Mental Speech\Thoughts of the Heart

The month of *Iyar* contains the ability called *hirhur*, thought. The rule is that everything has a holy use and an evil use, so there is a way that *hirhur* is used for holiness, and there is a way how *hirhur* is used for evil.

The holy kind of *hirhur* is '*hirhur b'divrei Torah*', 'thinking into the words of Torah' - when a person's thoughts are immersed in Torah. The evil kind of *hirhur* is "*Do not follow after your eyes and after your heart*"; when the heart has thoughts of heresy or sin.

The Gemara [\[2\]](#) says that one of the things that a person cannot avoid each day is *hirhur aveirah* (thoughts of sin).

Before we try to understand what good *hirhur* is and what evil *hirhur* is, let us first understand the very concept of *hirhur*.

The *Vilna Gaon* lists five layers of the soul: *ratzon* (will), *machshavah* [thoughts of the brain], *hirhur* [thoughts of the heart], *kol* (voice), and *dibbur* (speech). Everything begins from the point of *ratzon* (the will): the *ratzon* of a person is found in the essence of the soul, for *ratzon* is identified with the very *nefesh* (soul) of a person. *Machshavah* is found in the mind, and *hirhur* is found in the heart. [*Kol* is in the throat, and *dibbur* is in the lips].

What exactly is '*hirhur*'? The *Vilna Gaon* describes it as '*dibbur b'machshavah*', "mental speech." What is the difference between a *hirhur* and a *dibbur*? *Hirhur* is what a person 'says' in his mind and

heart. We find that "*Haman spoke in his heart.*" It is a kind of speech which takes place in the heart. *Dibbur* is when the speech exits the mouth.

There is a *halachah* that if one is not allowed to say *Kerias Shema*, he may mentally imagine the words, '*meharher b'libo*', and he fulfills the mitzvah of *Kerias Shema* in this way[3]. The person 'says' the *Kerias Shema* in his heart. So *hirhur* is essentially a kind of mental speech: when a person speaks inside himself.

When the prophetess Channah (mother of Shmuel *HaNavi*) prayed, the *possuk* says that she "spoke on her heart". She was speaking with her heart - meaning, she spoke with herself. Eli HaKohen saw her talking to herself and therefore assumed she was drunk. It appears strange when you see a person talking to himself; but in essence, every person talks with himself.

There is a *mitzvah* of "*And you shall speak in it*" - to speak words of Torah - and the Sages expound, "Speak words of Torah, and not idle words." The Gemara brings a *halachah* that it is forbidden for a Torah scholar to walk in an unclean place, because a Torah scholar is always thinking of Torah, and it is forbidden to think Torah in unclean places[4]. The *Acharonim*[5] dispute if a person fulfills the *mitzvah* of speaking words of Torah through thinking. The more simple view is that thinking of words of Torah is considered like speaking words of Torah; "*hirhur* is like *dibbur* (speech)".

But there are two kinds of speech: speech of the mouth, and speech of the heart. Whether one says the words or whether one thinks of the words, in either case, he first 'speaks' with himself, in his mind. So *hirhur* is when speaks within himself. One thinks *to* himself - and *with* himself.

What is the reason that we were given such a power as *hirhur*? The abilities of regular thought and speech make sense: we need to think, and we need to tell others what we are saying in order to have conversations; we cannot survive being a mute our whole life. But in between the faculties of thought and speech is the process called *hirhur*: speaking with oneself. Of what use is it? Why must our thoughts pass through the stage of *hirhur*, before they are released by our mouth in the form of speech?

Another question we can ask is that we see that Eli HaKohen thought Channah was insane for talking to herself. So why is it a good thing to speak to oneself?

Our first task with this is to identify in the first place that we have such an ability called *hirhur*. When we identify it in ourselves, it will then be much easier to realize its purpose. Let us think about the great wealth that is contained in the power of *hirhur*.

Hirhur: The Ability To Lead Oneself

What is the purpose of speaking to others? When two people wish to bond, they speak with each other. However, *Chazal* say there is a deeper reason: "*Daber echad l'dor*" - there is 'one leader per generation', who speaks to them. One leads himself - as well as others - through speech. Sheep are guided through the command of their shepherd, just as humans are guided by speech.

There are two "kings" that reside within man: the brain, and the heart. The heart is the king that presides over all the parts of the body. If someone is not in the category of *tzaddik*, he is ruled by the left chamber of the heart [which contains the evil inclination][6]. With *tzaddikim*, "their hearts are in their control", whereas with the wicked, their hearts rule them.

Speech is both in mouth as well as an ability of our heart. What is speech of the heart? It is the ability in oneself to rule the rest of himself, just as a king rules his country. *Hirhur* is found in the heart, as the Vilna Gaon writes, and it is a kind of speech. So it is a kind of speech in which one speaks with

himself, and through this internal kind of talking, he leads himself. When one wants to lead others, he speaks to them and commands them. So too, when one wants to lead himself, he speaks within himself, so that he can lead himself.

There is a possuk, "*I believed, for I spoke.*" If one wants to acquire *emunah* (faith in Hashem), he must speak words of *emunah*. This is a revelation of the concept of *dibbur* (speech): one leads himself through speaking with himself. Without speaking with oneself, one is not able to lead himself.

"Hirhur": The Power To Internalize Our Knowledge

It is written, "*And you shall know today, and you shall let the matter settle on your heart.*" We might know what the truth is, but our heart contains certain desires which are preventing us from subordinating ourselves to what that knowledge will demand.

We all are familiar with this [inner contradiction in ourselves]. A person can *know* what the truth is very well, but he wants the opposite of the truth. He *knows* he must learn Torah, but he *wants* to chat or waste his time. One might *know* very well that he needs to disconnect from indulging in worldly pleasures, but his *heart* still desires This World very much. The distance between what we know and what we want is like the distance between the sky and the earth.[\[7\]](#)

So the knowledge that our mind is aware of is not strong enough to subordinate our heart. Our mind, our *daas*, is aware of the 'X', for example, while our heart has a desire for the opposite of what 'X' will entail....

This is true with all people, but the difference between knowledge and internalization is not the same distance with each person. In some people, the contradiction is greater, and in others, the facts are closer to the heart. But every person contains in himself a distance between his mind and heart, creating a contradiction between what he *knows* with what he *wants*. In all people, the mind is more mature than the heart, and therefore, the heart isn't capable of understanding what our mind knows.

How, indeed, does a person 'download' the information of his brain into his heart? How do we internalize in our hearts, the knowledge that we know of in our brains? What is the language that speaks to our heart?

It is called *hirhur*. It is the ability to speak to ourselves and within ourselves, using our heart.

'Thinking In Learning': Through Our Brain, Or Through Our Heart?

The *mitzvah* of learning Torah is "*And you shall speak in it*" - it is essentially a *mitzvah* for our heart to think the words of the Torah and reflect into them. Learning Torah, which requires us to speak in learning, is not simply a *mitzvah* to 'talk in our learning' using our physical mouth. It is a *mitzvah* that involves the use of our heart to *think* about the words of the Torah.

Thus, if one is thinking about words of Torah using his brain alone, this is not the ideal kind of learning Torah! In order to speak of the Torah, one needs to speak of it using his mouth or his heart, but what kind of speech must it be? If the brain is thinking about Torah but its knowledge is not yet in the heart's reach, it is not the ideal form of the *mitzvah* of learning Torah.

A wise person, a *chacham*, is called *chacham lev*, one who has 'wisdom of the heart'. It is when one's *chochmah*\wisdom that he learns is on the level of *hirhur*; when it has become speech of the heart.

When wisdom remains in his brain and it doesn't reach his heart, *Chazal* refer to this as one whose "wisdom is greater than his actions". He knows a lot, but it doesn't affect him enough. Wisdom is

only called wisdom when it is in his heart.

Shlomo HaMelech is the epitome of a *chacham*, for he was the wisest person who ever lived, and he himself was the one who said, “*My heart has seen much wisdom.*” True wisdom is when the heart is aware of the wisdom, and it is beyond the intellectual understanding contained in the brain. The heart’s wisdom is not called *machshavah* [brain-thought]; it is rather called *hirhur* [heart-thought] – the “speech of the heart”.

A Torah scholar is defined as one who “sits and thinks (*‘meharher’*, from the word *‘hirhur’*) of it constantly”; the way of a Torah scholar is to always use his ability of *hirhur*, in thinking about Torah. If one finds that he cannot think about Torah all the time, it must be because he only knows how to ‘think’ in Torah using his brain, and the wisdom of Torah he learns is not yet in his heart. But when he has reached his heart, he is able to always speak words of Torah, and he is able to always think of Torah; this is the level of *hirhur b’divre Torah* that is reflected in the ideal Torah scholar.

The difficulty which many people have is that they are either involved in the “world of action” or in the “world of thought”, whereas the “world of speech” is often misunderstood. Speech is mainly used by people either towards others, or in praying and speaking to Hashem; but when it comes to the idea of speaking with *oneself*, most people cannot identify with this. With regards to oneself, we can relate very well to either actions or thoughts that we do with ourselves, but who can relate to speaking to himself? A person almost never speaks with himself.

But this is a problem. The structure of our soul is generally composed of action and thought, and in between these two faculties, is our speech: the ability of *hirhur*, to speak to ourselves. Thoughts are the highest layer of the soul, with our actions being the lowest layer of our soul. Our ability to speak to ourselves is the middle layer. It is the design of Creation.

How did Hashem create us? Through His word. We were formed through His speech. The world was created with His Ten Expressions. First Hashem had the thought of creating man, then He formed Creation and made man – but in between the stage of “thought” and “action”, came His speech: the Ten Expressions. So speech represents the idea of Creation itself that we live in. In addition, the Torah was given through speech: the Ten Commandments.

On a deeper level, the ability to speak to ourselves is an ability that is rooted in Hashem’s act of speaking with Himself, as it were, when He commanded each creation to come into being. When Hashem said, “Let there be light”, of what use did He say this for? He could have created it without saying it. But it is to show us that even Hashem speaks with Himself (so to ‘speak’).

Thus, when we speak to others, it really begins in our ability to speak to ourselves. Those are the words of the Vilna Gaon, that *hirhur* precedes *dibbur*. But this is true with all kinds of speech that exist: speaking to others, speaking to the Creator, and speaking to ourselves.

Identifying “Hirhur” In Your Thinking Process

Although we are always speaking to ourselves before we talk, we are not consciously aware of it, because it is a very quick internal process. In order to become aware of our *hirhur*, we need to consciously become aware of the five stages of speech, as the Vilna Gaon lists them, in this order: our *ratzon* (will), our *machshavah* (thoughts), *hirhur* (speaking to ourselves), *dibbur* (speech), and *kol* (audible voice). The crucial stage we need to become aware of is *hirhur*, because it is often overlooked.

When a person is unaware of the stage of *hirhur* – the fact that he talks to himself in his mind\heart – his speech will be external. It will not be “Words that come from the heart, enter the heart.” When

Chazal tell us that our speech comes from our heart, this is not simply to dismiss the notion that perhaps speech comes from other parts of the body. Obviously, speech stems from our heart. So why are *Chazal* telling us that words must come from the heart? It is to hint to us that we need to think before we talk, of the words that we are about to say.

The *Ramban*[\[8\]](#) writes that one should think about the words he is about to say, before he utters them with his mouth. This is more than just to think *what* you will say and formulate the words in your mind. It is to think *about* what you will say, before you say them.

When one skips over the *hirhur* stage [subconsciously], he lacks the proper structure of the soul, and has omitted one of the essential stages of the mental and verbal process. In fact, when one skips over *hirhur* [by not consciously being aware of it], he has omitted the basic and root faculty of the entire thinking process.

This is not a mere intellectual discussion. It is the entire secret of all inner work we must do with our soul! It is based on the words of the *Vilna Gaon* quoted earlier.

'Hirhur' - The Expression of the Heart's Thoughts

Man is called *medaber*, a social creature. The Sages state that the animals, trees, and birds can also converse with each other. If so, why is speech considered to be the defining nature of man? There are many explanations given, but we will say the answer that pertains to our discussion. It is because "*medaber*", which is our trait of *dibbur*, is not simply to say words using our mouth. It is preceded with the stage of first speaking with our heart. This is unique only to humans.

By contrast, animals and trees do not have the heart as a factor in their speech. There is only speech, with no heart involved. When speech only comes from the mouth and it does not first pass through the heart, it is not called *dibbur*. Thus, animals and trees are not called *medaber*, even though they converse. The title of '*medaber*' refers to the inner essence of speech: the speech that takes place in the heart, before the words leave one's mouth. The superficial layer of speech is the words that exit the mouth, but the essence of speech is the speech that takes place in the heart, before the words exit.

This is the unique ability of man, who is called *medaber*, one who can speak: only man has the ability to speak with himself, to speak in his heart, before he speaks with his mouth.

Furthermore, man is also called *maveh*, which is identified with prayer[\[9\]](#). Prayer is called the 'service of the heart'[\[10\]](#). Prayer is not simply when the heart concentrates, nor is it limited to being an expression of the heart's desire; although this is all true, it is not the essence of prayer. Prayer is the speech that flows from the heart. It expresses the *hirhur*, the thinking process, of the heart.

Thought Vs. Visualization

Let us think into the depth of the concept of *hirhur*, the ability of man to think before he talks.

The Gemara states that a person dreams at night about what he thought about during the day. Because of this fact, elsewhere the Sages warn that a person should not entertain lewd thoughts during the day, so that he won't become contaminated at night[\[11\]](#). This is because our heart imagines what we thought about during the day. A person dreams about things that he has [mentally] visualized during the day, not about things he has merely 'thought' about. The heart imagines various fantasies.

At night, when imagination is more dominant, a person will fantasize about what he imagined about

during the day. And if a person has a very imaginative nature, he will fantasize like this even during the daytime, when he is perfectly awake.

At nighttime, when people have dreams, there is a kind of 'videotape' that a person visualizes as he's dreaming, which is experienced as a visualization, not a mere abstract thought. That is essentially the dreaming process: it is the imaginative faculty presenting various visions to the mind. When we dream at night, these are not simply thoughts - they are visions which we can palpably experience.

Being that a person dreams at night about what his heart imagined about during the day, *Chazal* warn that a person should not look at improper sights during the day. Our heart is full of visions, whereas our brain is filled with thoughts; there is very big difference. The heart's ability to imagine, *tziyur*, can have a mental picture of things; whereas our brain can only conceptualize a thought, and it cannot conjure any kind of mental image.

These are two distinct mental abilities: *choishev* (or *machshavah*), and *tziyur* (visualization)^[12]. To give a simple example of the difference, if you think about an apple, you can either 'think' about what it is, or you can envision what it looks like. They are two different kinds of thoughts. [The first kind of thought is called *machshavah*, and the second kind of thought is called *tziyur*.]

The Torah says that those involved in building the *Mishkan* were called "*chacham lev*", those who possessed 'wisdom of heart'. It refers to those who were able to envision - the ability of *tziyur*.

When There Is A Disconnection Between The Mind and Heart In Learning Torah

When one is 'thinking' in learning, using only in his brain, and not his heart - this will mean that his mind can be immersed in Torah, but his heart is entrenched in the desires of This World at very same time! These words are deep and penetrating to anyone who understands them.

It is possible that a person is regularly involved in learning Torah, *davening*, and doing all the right actions he needs to do, but it's all in his brain, and his heart is disconnected from all of this. His *heart* might be filled with all kinds of fantasies about This World even as his *brain* is immersed in Torah and in doing *mitzvos*! And even worse, his heart might very well be filled with sinful thoughts and images that are outright forbidden by the Torah to think about, even though his *brain* is immersed in Torah.

The brain of a person might be thinking about Torah, but at the very same time, his heart might be filled with fantasies of This World; some of these fantasies are simply vain, while other fantasies are worse than just fantasies: they are sinful and evil.

If one wishes to truly purify his heart, his only weapon against this problem is to develop an imagination for holiness [as we will soon explain].

The Imagination Process

As we explained, the brain thinks about thoughts in the form of abstract conceptualization, whereas the heart imagines, in the form of mental pictures.

The Torah commands us not to stray after our hearts and eyes. The Sages learn from this that the heart desires what the eyes see, and this leads a person to the act of sin. Let us think into these words of the Sages. The heart has desires for certain things which are improper. How does it desire? It imagines something. It uses the ability of *tziyur*, visualization, and not the ability of *machshavah* that's in the brain. The heart can only imagine what the eyes have seen, however. It can only receive images from the lens of the eye. It is not capable of thinking in the abstract.

Thus, even if a person is very accustomed to 'thinking in learning', this might only be involving his brain's thoughts; his heart remains empty from any content of visions that are holy. As we explained earlier, there is a huge distance between the brain and the heart. The brain is thinking about Torah, and at the same time, the heart is immersed in a fantasy; sometimes the heart is completely visualizing a sinful image even as the brain is thinking in learning.

What is the remedy to this problem?

Method 1: Holy Visualizations

One method, brought in the works of our *sefarim hakedoshim*, is for a person to imagine holy pictures. Examples of this include looking at pictures of *tzaddikim*, imagining what the *Beis HaMikdash* looked like, or to imagine the song of the angels on High.[\[13\]](#)

Method 2: Picturing The Letters of the Gemara

However, there is an alternative method brought, which is even clearer and simpler to implement, as a means of purifying the heart. It is as follows.

All of the letters of our *Aleph Beis* are essentially pictures. Each letter of the *Aleph Beis* is a *tziyur*, a visualization, of the letter that you see or read. The Sages state, "*Oisiyos Machkimos*" - "Seeing the letters [of the *Aleph Beis*], brings wisdom." To view the letters of the *Aleph Beis* is to view a holy kind of vision.

In every letter of the *Aleph Beis* that you read, there are two aspects contained in it: the thought or idea that it tells you, as well as the holy image that it appears in. The letter of the *Aleph Beis* that you see is its *tziyur*, and the information it imparts to you is its *chochmah*\wisdom.

When a person does not see letters of the *Aleph Beis* in front of him, all he views is the *chochmah* that is contained in the letters and words he is reading. He can comprehend the meaning of the words, and he will understand the message that the letters and words are forming, but he is missing a vision of holiness that he could have seen in it.

That is the "*hirhur*" stage of learning Torah, and if it is skipped over, a person is lacking a holy visualization of the words of Torah he has learned. He might have gone through the other stages of *ratzon*, *machshavah*, *dibbur* and *kol* in his Torah learning, making sure to 'think in learning' and 'talk in learning', but he is missing the stage of *hirhur*. An important element of the process has been missed. His thoughts and his speech have touched holiness, but his actual heart is still far from the words of Torah he has learned.

It is written, "*The inclination of man is evil from his youth.*" The evil inclination from youth refers to the evil desires that are present in the heart. A person's brain might think of Torah and the person's mouth can speak Torah (and other words of holiness, such as prayer), but if one's heart is not included in the process of one's Torah learning [when *hirhur*\visualization is skipped], then his heart remains at its initial and immature state of fantasizing the desires for This World,

But if one makes sure to build his soul in the order of the stages presented by the *Vilna Gaon* (*ratzon*, *machshavah*, *hirhur*, *dibbur*, and *kol*)- in particular, when he makes sure to think of what he will say, before he says the words - this is "*hirhur*".

'Hirhur': Using Our Heart's Visualization, As We Learn Torah

How, indeed, does one use the power of *hirhur* [in his Torah learning]? He can use his heart to

imagine the holy letters of the *Aleph Beis* of the words he is reading. This internal process is what cleanses and purifies the heart from within.

This is really the secret behind learning Torah. Our entire *avodah* is “*And purify our hearts, to serve You in truth*” – and how, indeed, is the heart purified? We know that the mitzvah to learn Torah is the greatest mitzvah, equal to all the other *mitzvos*; and *Chazal* state that “Hashem wants the heart.” How do we reconcile these two facts? Does learning Torah have anything to do with our heart? It would seem that they are two completely separate issues, and that they have no relation to each other. After all, we can all see that there are many people who spend a lot of time learning Torah, but it doesn’t purify their heart.

But the truth is that the *mitzvah* of learning Torah, and the fact that Hashem wants our heart, are interdependent on each other. When a person learns Torah in the true manner, (which is to go in the order of the *Vilna Gaon* (first *ratzon*\will, then *machshavah*\brain-thought, then *hirhur*\heart-thought\visualization, then *kol*\sound, and then *dibbur*\speech), then it can be said of his Torah learning that “It [the Torah] is life, to those who verbalize it with their mouths.” We just have to make sure that we do not skip over the crucial stage of *hirhur* as we learn Torah. When we are in touch with ‘*hirhur*’ in Torah as we learn the words of Torah,

Hirhur in our Torah learning means that the words of Torah we are learning are passing through the visual lens of the heart, [which pictures the holy letters of the *Aleph Beis* contained in the words what we are learning]. This in turn weakens the evil and forbidden images that have become stamped onto our psyche. As we get used to this holy visualization technique more and more, it slowly weakens and conquers the improper images which our heart contained.^[14] It is then that it can be applied the concept of “*Oisiyos Machkimos*” – “Seeing the letters [of the *Aleph Beis*], brings wisdom”.

In this way, we arm ourselves with the power of *tziyur d’kedushah*, holy visualization, which can counter the images of *tziyur d’kelipah* (fantasies that are improper or evil).

If one is not aware of the stage of *hirhur* in his Torah learning – in other words, if he is not using his heart to visualize the letters of the words he is learning – what will happen? He only remains with thoughts of Torah, which are conceptual and abstract, and he does not palpably envision them. His brain has learned Torah – but his heart did not.

Concentration In Prayer

The same problem exists with *davening* as well. A person might be thinking of the words he is saying as he’s *davening*, and he’s concentrating on the meaning of the words, but his heart is fantasizing about all kinds of things.

The *Nefesh HaChaim* writes that the main “*kavanah*” (concentration) we need to have when we daven is to think of the meaning of the words. This does not simply mean to mentally think of the meaning of the words. Thinking of what we are saying is *machshavah* (thought), but it is not yet the heart. We can call it ‘*iyunah shel tefillah*’, ‘analyzing the prayers’, which is certainly an accomplishment, but it is not yet called having “*kavanah*” when we *daven*.

Real “*kavanah*” in *davening*, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* writes, is to vividly picture the words of what we are saying, in our heart. When the words of prayer then exit the mouth, it is called prayer, which is called the “service of the heart.”^[15]

Tziyur D’Kedushah: Infusing The Heart With Holy Images

When a person learns Torah in this way, making sure to use his heart’s power to visualize the letters,

his heart becomes filled with the holiness contained in the 22 letters of the *Aleph Beis*. These 22 letters were used by Hashem to create the heavens and the earth. It brings wisdom into the heart, transforming it into *"The heart of the wise person, is to his right."*

What does it mean that the *"heart of the wise person, is to his right?"* It means that his heart is filled with visualizations that are holy. By contrast, the *"heart of a fool is to his left"* – when the heart is not fused with holiness, it is filled with all kinds of unholy images.

We cannot live [spiritually] without the ability of *tziyur d'kedushah* (using our heart to envision holiness images).

Generally, women are stronger when it comes to the area of the (spiritual dimension of the) heart, and therefore, they are naturally more inclined towards using their imagination and mental visualization. But every person has the *bechirah* (free will) to choose what kinds of images will fill his heart – if he will be filled with holy images, or with unholy images.

The Avodah of the Month of Iyar: Gaining Control Over Our Imagination

The [previous] month of *Nissan* contained the power of *sichah*, conversing; to tell over the story of the exodus to our children. The month of *Iyar* contains the power of *hirhur*, to think. [We have explained that *hirhur* refers to the thoughts of the heart, which mentally visualizes something].

It is harder to gain control over our thoughts than what comes out of our mouth. We have an easier time restraining our speech, but restraining what we will think is quite difficult. When our mind is filled with fantasies, it is very hard to stay focused on what we are doing at the time, even for a timespan of one minute. This is because it is very difficult to fight the fantasies of our heart.

Animals can communicate, but they have no *bechirah* (free will). They do not decide what they are going to say. But people have *bechirah*. We have two "hearts" to decide between, whenever we are about to talk: a 'right side' of the heart, and a 'left side' of the heart. We have the *bechirah* to transform the visualizations of our heart from evil images to holy images.

We can transform the heart from its initial state of *"the inclination of the heart of man is evil from his youth"* - the heart ruled by the *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) - into a heart that can conjure images of holiness, *tziyur d'kedushah*, the heart that is ruled by the *yetzer tov* (the good inclination).

Both the *yetzer tov* and the *yetzer hora* are from the word *yetzer*, which is from the word *tziyur*, to visualize. The *yetzer tov* in our heart can visualize images that are holy, and our *yetzer hora* is the source of fantasies (*dimyonos*) that strengthen the hold of This World on us. When a person's imagination dominates, the root of the problem is that his heart needs fixing; as *Chazal* say, "The wicked are ruled by their hearts." The "wicked" refers to those who are not in control of their hearts, and it is rather their hearts which control them; they are stuck in evil kinds of fantasies.

The *Vilna Gaon* says that the month of *Iyar*, which contains the power of *hirhur*, has the power of rectify the trait of *taavah* (indulgence in desires). As we brought earlier from the words of *Chazal*, Desire begins in the eyes and continues into the heart, and the heart continues to visualize the image more and more until a person eventually sins. But our heart also contains an ability to counter this: *hirhur*, or *tziyur d'kedushah*.

Hirhur, the ability of our heart, and the special power of the month of *Iyar*, is the ability to receive visualizations of holy images; it is the power that can essentially help us eliminate improper desires.

In Conclusion

This concept is really describing the inner root behind the purpose of Creation, which is, "Hashem wants the heart." It is how we can reach, "*And purify our hearts, to serve You in truth.*"

The genuine kind of *Yiddishkeit* is to live a sanctified kind of life. It is not just actions that we do. And it is not just about going to *shiurim* (which is of course commendable). It is mainly about being able to use our heart to visualize images that are holy!

May Hashem merit us to turn our hearts and visualize the truest image of all: "There is no Rock (*tzur*) like our G-d." Our Sages expound this to mean, "There is no artist (*tzayar*) like our G-d." Then we can come to the truest possible recognition: to recognize Hashem, in the depths of our heart.

Amen, and Amen.[\[16\]](#)

[\[1\]](#) [(**3**)*Sivan* is the month of *halichah*\walking, (**4**) *Tamuz* is the month of *reiyah*\sight, (**5**) *Av* is the month of *shemiah*\hearing, (**6**)*Elul* is the month of *maaseh*\action,(**7**) *Tishrei* is the month of *mishush*\touch, (**8**)*Cheshvan* is the month of *reiach*\smell, (**9**)*Kislev* is the month of *sheinah*\sleep, (**10**) *Teves* is the month of *rogez*\anger, (**11**) *Shevat* is the month of *le'itah*\eating, and (**12**) *Adar* is the month of *sechok*\laughter.]

[\[2\]](#) Bava Basra 164a

[\[3\]](#) Berachos 20a

[\[4\]](#) *Tractate Berachos*, Chapter II

[\[5\]](#) "Later Sages", the great Torah scholars spanning from the 15th-19th centuries

[\[6\]](#) *Sefer Tanya*

[\[7\]](#) A statement of the Alter of Kelm

[\[8\]](#) *Iggeres HaRamban*

[\[9\]](#) Bava Kamma 3b

[\[10\]](#) Berachos 31a

[\[11\]](#) Kesubos 44a

[12] For more on the difference between thought and imagination, refer to **Getting To Know Your Thoughts_05_Intellect and Picture**, and the Hebrew audio file of **מדמה 036_את כוחותיך_דע** and **דע את כוחותיך_039_מחשבה**

[13] Mentioned in *Sefer Chovas HaTalmidim* of Rav Kolonomis Kalman zt"l, the "Aish Kodesh"

[14] Editor's Note: As explained before, however, the heart only 'contains' what the eyes have laid sight upon; it does not conjure any images on its own. According to the approach here, we have a way of uprooting the evil images that our eyes have seen and, in turn, what our heart has desired.

[15] For more on this concept, see **Tefillah #0137 - Inner Prayer**

[16] For more on the topic of imagination and how it relates to the brain and the heart, refer to **Getting To Know Your Imagination_05_Fantasies of the Heart.**

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/essence-month-002-iyar-thought-visualization>