



Derech Hashem: The Way The Soul And The Body Come Together

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

One of the most moving chapters in the Torah is the story of Yaakov's encounter with Esav. When Yaakov heard that his brother was coming towards him with 400 men, fear overtook him and he said, "I am too small for all your kindness and truth." Yaakov was concerned that perhaps he wasn't a fitting vessel to receive the goodness Hashem wanted to give him. In this world we don't see ourselves accurately and *tzadikim* are especially self-critical. The inner anxiety of, "Maybe I'm not ok," is an inherent part of our imperfect world. When the soul leaves the body it lets go of all its limitations and deceptions and its strength and splendor comes forth. Everything that was there subconsciously and hidden by the stresses of life emerges. Even if you had no pleasure in this world for inviting that difficult guest, you'll have pleasure there. All the goodness and truth you earned down on earth will come forth in the world of souls where the soul will get its reward for the choices it made. The act

of trying to perfect oneself, not the end result of perfection, is what makes the soul complete.

There are people whose paths are almost identical, but on the inside they have almost nothing in common with each other. Then there are people who have different paths, but are very similar inside. No two people have absolutely identical roles. What defines a person is how he's developed the balance between his body and soul. In the beginning, the voice of the body is very strong. But as the person grows, his mind grows with him. He is then more capable of conquering his base nature. Having this ability is not related to the influence of environment or to things that happened to the person, but rather to a willingness to define oneself by one's inner life. In the fast paced world we live in today, so many of us don't know our inner life. As an exercise, try for a day to monitor your thoughts. You'll discover how hard it is to be focused on non-material things. You'll also be

surprised to find that there is a deep self underneath that doesn't just relate to the world and its physical nature.

The Ramchal explains that Hashem decreed that on this earth the soul's splendor would be hidden even from itself. The radiance of one's good deeds remains in one's spiritual subconscious until the soul enters the world of the souls. Hashem doesn't let us feel the full spiritual pleasure of a *mitzvah* here because if we sensed its true *simcha* we would never pass it up. This would eliminate free choice. At the time of the revival of the dead there will be immediate illumination, purification, and perfection of the body. The soul will get everything it earned during its first life. However this is dependent on having done good deeds on this world. Therefore let your soul speak louder than your body. Then the perfected self will rise again at *techiyat hameitim* and reach higher levels of elevation.

Tomer Dvora: True Colors #1

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

The Sefer Tomer Devora was written by Rav Moshe Cordevoro. It discusses in great detail the *mitzvah* of *V'halachata b'drachav*, emulating and following in the ways of Hashem. In Parshat Eikev it says, "*V'shamarta et mitzvot Hashem lalechet b'drachav u'lyera oso.*" Follow His ways so that you may fear Him. Further on it says, "*Ki im l'yirah et Hashem lalechet b'chol darachav u'lahavah oso.*" Here *yirah* (fear) is mentioned before going in His way. And going in His way precedes *ahavah* (love). The third verse says, "*L'ahava et Hashem.. lalechet b'chol drachav ul'davka bo.*" The Chofetz Chaim tells us that there are three levels in serving Hashem, *yirah*, *ahava* and *dveikut*. *Ahavah* may only be aroused at certain times, but *dveikut*, the highest level, is an ongoing state. It is like a child who clings to his mother constantly. The Chofetz Chaim explains that in order to reach the first level of *yirah*, it has to be with the prerequisite of *lalechet b'drachav*. One must work on one's *middot* and emulate Hashem's attributes. Then one must still continue

lalechet b'drachav in order to ascend to the second rung of *ahavah* and the third ultimate level of *dveikut b'Hashem*. These verses teach us that the root of our obligation in this world is to work on acquiring the attributes of Hashem. There's something eternal inside of us and one can bring it to the fore by emulating the ways of the Creator. *V'halachta b'drachav* tells us that it is not only a *mitzvah* to follow in the path of Hashem, but if we don't, it as if we falsify His image and shame His name.

The first *middah* of Hashem is *Mi kel komocha* (Who is like You). Hashem is *sovel*, He endures our sins. The Rambam says in Parshat Eikev that Hashem's love for the Jewish people was aroused when He saw our love for Him. The Torah says, "*Lechteich acharei b'madibar.*" The Jewish nation followed Hashem into an arid, harsh, desert. For 40 years, they traveled under difficult conditions constantly pitching their tents and moving on. They showed remarkable forbear-

ance and trust in Hashem. Hashem is *sovel elbon*. He carries the disgrace and embarrassment of our sins. He gives us the ability to go against His will in order to maintain free choice. This is compared to a man who gives his servant money to buy food. Instead, the servant buys a gun and shoots his master. And still the master forgives him. The Almighty doesn't stop a sinner from sinning. He waits for that day when he will repent. We too are commanded to emulate Hashem and to be *sovel*- to be slow to anger and to be patient. Chazal say the *yetzer hara* comes into a baby when it leaves its mother. If it came at the time of the formation of the fetus, no woman would give birth. The *yetzer hara* has no patience to endure, to take the time to understand others, and to be criticized and not take revenge. Man contains within him the image of Hashem and has the power to emulate his Creator. We must work on the *middah* of *Mi kel komocha*. And by emulating the attributes of Hashem we will come to recognize our true selves.



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Ahavat Chessed: The Mitzvot that Relate to Chessed

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

The Chofetz Chaim explains the prohibition of, “*Lo samod al dam reiacha*,” not standing by while a friend is in trouble. He points out, based on the Sefer Hamitzvot, that it applies not only to saving someone from death, but from harm and loss of money. The Rambam writes in Sefer Hamitzvot that if a person has the ability to set someone back on their feet by lending him money and fails to do so, he violates *Lo samod*. The Chofetz Chaim writes that if someone is stingy or miserly, he transgresses the *mitzvah* of *V’halachta b’drachov*, to go in the ways of Hashem. The *mitzvah* is mentioned several times in

Devarim to show its significance. We must emulate the *middot* of Hashem in our relation with other people. In Parshat Yisro it says, “*V’hodata lahem et haderech yelchu bo*,” Chazal say *haderech*, the known path, refers to *gemilat chesed* which was the way of Avraham. The Torah Temimah explains why Avraham was chosen to be the first Jew. Hashem said of him, “*V’shamru derech Hashem lasos tzedakah u’mishpat*.” They will keep the way of Hashem. The Chofetz Chaim says this refers to *chesed*. We learn from here the importance of doing acts of kindness.

We find that the Torah is sensitive not only to a person’s physical wellbeing but also to his feelings. There’s a special *mitzvah* to loan money to a poor person who is in a shaky financial situation but is still holding his own. If one can help him avoid the embarrassment of having to ask people for money by giving him a loan or a job, one fulfills the commandment of “*V’chai achicha imach*.” In the merit of helping others, may Hashem respond in kind and help us to reach higher levels in serving Hashem.