

Bilvavi Mishkan Evne – I Will Build a Sanctuary in My Heart:

Section 1: Clarifying the Purpose of Life:

Aleph – 1 – Knowing what Hashem wants from us – building our souls:

1. Every Jew knows that there is a Creator Who created the world, created himself, gives life to the entire world, including himself.
2. The Creator tells everyone what He requires from them. **The root of the problem is that a person does not know precisely what G-d requires from him during his lifetime.**
3. Question: What about the Jew who knows about our receiving the Torah? Isn't it clear what our goal is and what G-d requires from us – fulfillment of the 613 Commandments?
4. The world is called "Olam" from the word "He'elem," – concealment; which means that there is great confusion in this world. That is the will of G-d. **As long as a person does not yearn and make great efforts to clarify precisely what G-d requires from him, he will never know it.** His life will be one of confusion, and he will not have a clear path in knowing how to serve G-d.
5. A person knows that he must fulfill all 613 Mitzvos; however, his service to G-d is not the fulfillment of random Mitzvos as they come his way. Rather, a person must fulfill the 613 Mitzvos with a structural form – **The Mitzvos should be building up the person properly.** Therefore, a person needs a clear path to know how to fulfill the Mitzvos in a way that will produce a structural shape: A person needs to know what the beginning of the structure is, what is the continuation of the structure, and what is the goal of Mitzva fulfillment?
6. Simply put, **a person needs to clarify how does the fulfillment of Mitzvos build his soul?**
7. A person needs to clarify which Mitzvah should he start with [aside from the daily, seasonal, and situational Mitzvos]: Love of G-d, fear of G-d, clinging to G-d, etc. A person needs to make an order.
8. **A lack of clarity of knowing the order of Mitzvah observance – this is "concealment."** It is difficult to reach the goal of Mitzvos when there is concealment.

Beis – 2 – Rest in Gan Eden / Work in this world:

1. Before we begin to clarify things, **there has to be a true desire to clarify things.**
2. We must view our lives in a proper fashion and realize that **the purpose of our lives is to serve G-d.**
3. **We need to understand and feel that Gan Eden is the place of rest and pleasure; and that the entire purpose in this world is to serve G-d.** i.e. This world of "Olam Hazeh" is not the place where the goal is to rest and have pleasure. [Although they are permitted if they are not in conflict with the Torah.]
4. **Our responsibility is to clarify what is the solid path that we must go on in order to serve G-d.**

Gimel – 3 – There is a universal starting point in service to Hashem:

1. Consider the following question: “Which area is fitting and proper to begin our service to G-d?” Based on your present situation, what is the starting point that one should begin with?
2. You will get different answers to this question, based on their different situations, such as:
 - Diligence in Torah study
 - Loshon Hora
 - Shalom Bayis
3. Truthfully, these answers are not correct.
4. **There is a common, universal starting point for all people** [with nearly no exception].

Daled – 4 – Realize your main reason of life:

1. Everyone has been returned from the spiritual to this physical world for the purpose of serving Hashem.
2. The holy Seforim tell us that we are all sent back to correct a specific sin or spiritual flaw – which becomes his primary test and rectification in this world.
3. Even so, truthfully, **our work does not begin with the repair of that sin – it begins much earlier than that.**
4. The word “repair” only applies to an existent structure, which has been damaged. If there is no structure, there is no need to make repairs. Logically, **we first must have a house, and then we need to make repairs.**
5. Spiritually speaking, man’s descent in this world for the purpose of repairing a particular sin, does not mean that that is his entire spiritual purpose in this world. Rather, every person must build a true spiritual structure within himself of service to G-d, and only then his primary service for which he was sent into this world is to repair the specific sin.
6. **There is a general reason why all people are sent into this world. This reason is every person’s primary service to G-d at all times. The unique repair that each person needs to make is not his primary service.**
7. Therefore, a person must first clarify what the reason why all of humanity was sent down in to this world. This reason must be uppermost in his mind at all times.
8. Every moment that you are alive – is due to this reason of why you were sent down. **Therefore, you must daily live with the knowledge of this reason, every hour of the day.**
9. The knowledge of this reason is not merely knowledge per se’ – but it is a knowledge that every aspect of your life must correspond to.
10. **All your thoughts, feelings, and actions, must be coordinated at every moment to this reason.**
11. Once a person knows the reason why he is alive, he will then understand how the detailed repair applies to and is a part of the overall reason of his life

Heh – 5 – Being in Sync/ Living with One’s Purpose in Life Every Moment:

1. An analogy of a carpenter who is about to saw a piece of wood. He knows exactly what the task he is about to do, what the purpose of the task is, and how to do it. However, if his mind wanders while he is sawing the wood, he will not succeed in accomplishing the task.
2. Our Rabbis tell us that a judge must be very careful, and should always consider himself living with a sword drawn against him – should he err in judgment.
3. R’ Yisrael of Salant: “Every person is a judge over himself.”
4. The service of a person in this world is analogous to the carpenter. A person is in great danger every moment if he allows his mind to wonder from thinking about why he is alive and what the purpose of his life is.
5. Therefore, **once a person has clarified his purpose of life, he is obliged to daily live with this knowledge every moment of his life.**
6. This knowledge should not be treated merely as “useful information” that is stored away in long term memory, which is accessed from time to time.
7. **This must be a knowledge that one feels with his senses, that one breathes, whose whole being is in sync with this knowledge.**

Vav – 6 – Purpose of Life is a Difficult Concept to Live With:

1. The purpose of life is something that is known and is not known.
2. It is known because a person reads about it and hears it. It is common knowledge.
3. However, this knowledge is also not known. Why? If a person is really intimately aware of this knowledge, he would really have to change his entire lifestyle. [This is difficult to do due to the cognitive dissonance which we have against total lifestyle changes.]
4. If a person really was honest with the truth of this knowledge, he would write down the purpose of his life on a piece of paper, put it in his pocket, and read it every 15 minutes, so that he would never forget it and lose focus.

Zayin – 7 – The Purpose of Life is Attaching Oneself to G-d At All Times:

1. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto tells us what the purpose of life is in the first chapter of his work ‘Mesilas Yeshorim’: **“Truthfully, when you look further into the matter, you will see that only bonding [attaching oneself] with G-d constitutes true perfection. This is what King Said meant when he said, ‘But as for me, the nearness to G-d is my good.’”**
2. King David has defined what a wholesome, complete, and functional person is; which is the best situation for a person to be at. That perfect state is being attached to G-d.
3. **Just like a person has no need or interest in a broken table, chair, or bed; a fortiori a person’s inner soul does not want to be a broken person, but a complete and whole person.**
4. What is a “complete and perfect Jew?” We are not speaking about a lack of physical deformities, as that only deals physical perfection which is external. **True perfection, which is inner, spiritual perfection, is a perfection of closeness to G-d.**
5. Luzzatto continues, “For this alone is true good, and anything besides this which people deem good is nothing but emptiness and deceptive worthlessness.”

6. **The entire essence of a Jew is to be close and attached to G-d; not only in the World to Come, but even here in this physical world.**
7. **Any moment that a person is not close to G-d, is a moment that the person is not complete, since he is lacking the true perfection of cleaving to G-d.**

Ches – 8 – Constantly Refer to These Words of Luzzatto:

1. An honest person, who accepts this knowledge, should write down these words of Luzzatto on paper, put it in his pocket, and refer to it every 15 minutes. This will remind him as to the purpose of his life. He should keep referring to these words until they are indelibly etched into his being, and then he will no longer need to refer back to the paper.

Tes – 9 – Attaching Oneself to G-d and His Torah is “Life” Itself :

1. A person is really only alive at the time that that he remembers the purpose of his life. [With the exception of the time that he is engaged in torah study.]
2. **All other times, when a person is engaged in other things, without remembering G-d, are compared to death!**
3. **A person needs a ‘resurrection of the dead’ at every moment.** He comes back to life when he remembers why he is alive and what his purpose is in this world.
4. A person must remember the purpose of Mitzvos at the time that he is doing them. The word ‘Mitzvah’ comes from the word ‘Tzavta’, which means “Attachment.” This means that **the whole purpose of Mitzvah observance is to become connected to G-d – to become close and to cleave to G-d.** Without that understanding, the Mitzva loses its primary inner essence, and is like a body without a soul.
5. The Zohar teaches us that “G-d, the Torah, and the Jewish People are one.” This means that **the Torah and its learning and fulfillment through Mitzva observance must be in a path of “oneness” – a path where the person is “at one” and attached to the Torah and to G-d.**
6. This is the purpose of life: Attachment to Torah and to G-d.

Yud – 10 – We must definitely want to be attached to G-d and be certain that this type of life-style is attainable for us:

1. “Nearness to G-d is my good” is not just useful information or a saying – it is the reality of life. It is not only a concept that is appropriate during holiday times, but it pertains to every moment of a person’s life. [365/7/24 possibly even in our sleep] This is the whole reality of mankind – to be close and attached to G-d.
2. **In order to live in such a fashion, one certainly needs a clear path of service to Hashem, detailing what one is required to do in order to achieve this goal of being attached to G-d every moment.**
3. However, before one can explain this path, one must first be absolutely clear, without a shadow of doubt, what is the goal of one’s life.
4. It must be clear to one self that the goal of life is to be close and attached to G-d literally every moment – an inner attachment with every fiber of one’s soul.
5. In other words, **before we begin searching for and explaining the path to take, it is necessary to first be absolutely certain which path we are looking for and where we want this path to take us. It is certain that one must have the ultimate clarity**

that the goal one seeks is “Nearness to G-d is my good.” One must have no doubts about this.

6. As one deliberates on this goal of closeness to G-d, one may have some reservations. **One may mistakenly think that in order to be attached to Hashem, one need to be an ascetic like Moshe Rabbeinu and be required to totally detach one self from this physical world.** [Therefore, one may think that this life style change of being attached to G-d is not for him, as this will require a complete lifestyle overhaul.]
7. One should know that **these thoughts come from the Yetzer Hora who wants to distance man from the truth, which is G-d. Therefore, it attempts to picture closeness to G-d as a black picture, which is only suitable for unique individuals – but not for normal people like us.**
8. Truthfully, from the words of the Mesilas Yesheraim, we see that the opposite is true. After Luzzatto explains how an individual can grow step-by-step until the highest levels of Divine Inspiration and Resurrection of the Dead, he explains: *“And now, dear reader, I realize that you know just as well as I that I have not exhausted in this work all the provisions of Saintliness and that I have not said all there is to say about it...It is understood that each individual must guide and direct himself according to his calling and according to the particular activities in which he is engaged. The path of Saintliness appropriate to one whose Torah is his calling is unsuited to one who must hire himself out to work for his neighbor, and the path of neither of these is suitable to one who is engaged in business. This holds true for all of the particulars in the affairs of men, each calling for a path of Saintliness corresponding to its nature. This is not to say that Saintliness varies in nature. It is unquestionably the same for everyone in that its intent is the doing of that which brings pleasure to the Creator. But in view of the fact that circumstances vary, it follows, of necessity, that the means by which they are to be directed towards the desired goal vary in kind. One, who out of necessity plies a humble trade, can be a true Saint, just as one whose mouth learning never departs.*
9. We see from the above that one can be a “Chasid” who is connected to G-d at the highest levels regardless as to what pursuit he is engaged in – whether Torah or physical work. “Chassidus” is open t every Jew, and does not require you to change your basic life-style.
10. This is true with the following conditions:
 - **All your actions are truly altruistic for the sake of G-d**
 - **You are engaged in Torah learning according to your ability and availability of time**
 - **You only engage in physical work that is necessary and also for the sake of G-d [i.e. You don’t get lost in this worlds pursuit of luxuries.]**
11. We have learned that **every person can be attached to G-d, and this is not merely reserved to ascetics who are detached from the world.**

Yud Alef – 11 – The Analogy of Clinging onto a Tree for Dear Life:

1. We mentioned earlier that when the purpose of life becomes clear to a person, he should write it down and review it every 15 minutes; so that he should always remember what the goal is all his life.
2. Now that we have clarified that the purpose of life is to become close and attached to G-d, **a person should write down on a piece of paper that his purpose in life is to become close to G-d, and he should try to remember that all day long.**
3. This knowledge is not merely useful information; it is knowledge of the essence of life, which gives you purpose and excitement in life.
4. This can be compared to a person who climbs a tree and rests on a branch. Suddenly, the branch breaks and the person immediately grabs hold of the tree. The person senses that he must hold on to the tree every moment, lest he fall and die.
5. **That knowledge that he has to hold onto the tree is not merely useful information; rather his whole life depends on it!**
6. If he forgets this information, he will not naturally cling onto the tree, and his entire life will be in danger.

Yud Beis – 12 – Application of the Analogy:

1. So too we apply this analogy to our lives. A person has to understand that his entire life depends on the following: That simple knowledge that the purpose of his life, which is to be close to G-d, must constantly be before his eyes.
2. This is not just useful knowledge; rather his entire existence depends on this knowledge. He will be in grave danger should he forget this.
3. **One must have this knowledge constantly before him, at all times, that his goal of life is to be close to G-d, before he gets involved in knowing the details of how to achieve this goal.**

Yud Gimel – 13–The Wicked Are Considered as Dead Even During Their Lifetimes:

1. “It is a tree of life for those who grasp it.” [Proverbs 3:18]
2. “But for you who cling to Hashem, your G-d – you are all alive today.” [Deuteronomy 4:4]
3. These two verses are understood in light of what we have said above. The reality of being alive is only when a person clings to Hashem.
4. The implication is if a person does not cling to his Creator, then the following words of the rabbis are appropriate: “The wicked, while they are alive, are called ‘dead.’”
5. This is true because even though they may have physical, external life, they are still lacking a human’s primary life, which is clinging to G-d. Since they are lacking an attachment to G-d, they are defined as “dead” people.
6. Only when you have achieved the first half of the verse of “But for you who cling to Hashem, your G-d,” can you be defined as the second half of the verse of “you are all alive today.”
7. [Story with R’ Yeruchom Levovitz who told his students to look out of the window and tell him what they saw. They responded that they each saw different people in the street that had different occupations. The Rabbi said that he was looking at a ‘Living Cemetery’, as so many of those people were physically alive, but not with an attachment to G-d.]