

### **Yud Daled – 14 – We Must Be Totally Clear About This Being the Goal:**

1. Based on what we have said so far, the only good in the world is attachment to G-d. Anything else which people consider to be “good” is really only emptiness and deceptive worthlessness.
2. [Certainly a person is allowed to enjoy many different things in life; but the critical aspect that defines what is “good” is based on “attachment to G-d.” So if any of these enjoyable things direct a person towards “attachment to G-d” – then they are defined as “good.” However, if these things are not part of your efforts to “attachment to G-d,” then they are not defined as “good.”]
3. There is truly nothing else in life besides closeness and attachment to G-d; even the 613 Mitzvos are only for the purpose of reaching that goal.
4. We certainly need a way to experience this concept of closeness to G-d; however, **we must intellectually clarify this idea completely in our minds of this point: that the entire essence of life is closeness and attachment to G-d, and absolutely nothing else.**
5. We must totally understand clearly that all human activity [physical or spiritual] is only a utensil for man to cleave to his Creator.
6. The strongest utensil to cleave to G-d is the Torah and its Mitzvah observance.

### **Tes Vav – 15 – Achieving the Goal Depends on How Badly You Want it:**

1. What is implicit from what we have learned is that a person must have a clear yearning to be attached to G-d every moment of the day, and truly want it.
2. Once a person has such a clear yearning, his service then is to seek a path that will enable him to achieve a lifestyle of attachment to G-d every moment of the day.
3. However, a person must first clearly recognize that this is the goal of his life and clearly yearn to achieve it.
4. **To the extent that a person yearns to live in a way that is constantly attached to G-d, so too he will have the strength to make the effort to remove all barriers that prevent him from true attachment to Hashem.**
5. To the extent that a person’s yearning, to live in a way that is constantly attached to G-d, is weak, then even the slightest barrier will prevent him from true attachment to G-d.
6. [i.e. we have to strive to fit our activities into G-d’s goals, and not try to fit G-d into our goals. Judaism becomes difficult when we try to fit G-d’s requirements into our goals. That is how King Shlomo describes the lazy man in the book of Proverbs.]

### **Tes Zayin – 16 – Can’t see the forest for the Trees?:**

1. There is an expression that people use that says you “can’t see the forest for the trees.” This is an expression used of someone who is too involved in the details of a problem to look at the situation as a whole
2. Let us make use of this expression to explain the lifestyle of attachment to G-d.
3. There are 613 Mitzvos with the study of Torah being primary.
4. **The Zohar tells us that the 613 Mitzvos are really 613 “Aytzos” [pieces of advice].**
5. **What is the advice for? It is advice on how a person can attach himself to G-d!**
6. i.e. The entire essence of Mitzvos are not their individual objectives, rather each Mitzvah function as a map with directions that show you how to get close to G-d.

7. Therefore, a Mitzvah is a combination of two parts:
  - The practical aspect that involves speech or action – “how to”
  - The goal of the Mitzvah, which is to bring the person closer and attach him to G-d.
8. In terms of the practical aspects of Mitzvos, there are many aspects. Each Mitzvah has so many details. These are the “trees of the forest.” [The Hebrew words for tree – “Aytz” and advice “Aytzah” have the same root.]
9. In terms of the inner aspect of Mitzvos, which is the goal; all the Mitzvos lead you in one direction – closeness and connection to G-d.
10. **[Since there are so many trees [the many details of Mitzvah observance], we get lost amongst them, and mistaken them for goals and not means. We no longer are able to see the forest, which is the goal of Judaism – being close to G-d. This is an issue regarding Shuls and schools where people hear about the trees but don't see the forest.]**
11. [See the Sfas Emes in Parshas Toldos that explains the concept of the Patriarchs digging wells. The “dug” deeply through the physical externals of this world to find the spirituality in everything that existed. The Zohar says that nowadays it is the Mitzvos that we do every day which function as our wells.]

### **Yud Zayin – 17 – Why Doesn't Mitzvah Observance Accomplish the Goal of Attaching Us to G-d?:**

1. Let us reflect on one Mitzvah as an example – putting on a Talis.
2. A person gets up in the morning, goes to Shul, and puts on a Talis. He has just fulfilled a positive Mitzvah of the Torah.
3. What was he thinking about at the time he was putting on the Talis?
4. Truthfully, the first question should not be “What was he thinking?” Rather it should be: “Was he thinking or was he doing the action with practically no thought at all?”
5. Let us assume that he is thinking – so what is he thinking about?
6. Proper thinking would consist of the following: Since we maintain Halachikly that Biblical Mitzvos need “Kavana” [intent], then the person should have the intention that he is fulfilling a Biblical Mitzvah by putting on his Talis.
7. Let us reflect on this. The Zohar has taught us that the 613 Mitzvos are advice on how to get closer to G-d. **Since a person puts on a Talis every day of his life, why doesn't he feel the closeness to G-d that should result from the many times he has performed the Mitzvah of putting on a Talis?**
8. We know that the words of the Zohar are true definitions of reality. So if a person would have the right intention every day when he put on his Talis, wouldn't he slowly feel closeness to G-d in his heart?
9. Why do we see that most people have not merited a sense of closeness to G-d through the daily performance of this Mitzvah?
10. **We are forced to say that the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of putting on a Talis manifests in a deeper truer fashion.**
11. Since we see that putting on a Talis on a daily basis does not bring a person to attachment to G-d, an attachment one can sense, we must check out what is lacking in this form of putting on a Talis. The main goal of this Mitzvah is to feel closer to G-d, which is not being achieved by most people.
12. [This can be analogous to a baby who is drinking gallons of formula and is not gaining weight. The parent must check out what is wrong – either with the formula or baby.]

### **Yud Ches – 18 - We Lack the Reality of the Goal of Mitzvos - “Bilvavi Mishkan Evne...”:**

1. We have chosen a sample of the Mitzvah of putting on a Talis; but it is only a sample. However, it is a much broader issue. We all learn a lot of Torah and do many Mitzvos; but what is the point that prevents us from feeling His closeness?
2. **Perhaps we externally learn Torah and do Mitzvos, but that inner dimension, which is the goal of closeness to G-d, is lacking by many people.**
3. We need to clarify what is the path to take when learning Torah and doing Mitzvos so that we can merit to feel closeness to G-d.
4. The Sefer Hachareidim [circa 1500s in Tsfat] says: **“Bilvavi Mishkan Evne...”** – **“I will build a sanctuary in my heart...” This is the goal of every Jew: that the performance of Mitzvos will bring him to a condition that G-d is next to you in your heart, that He resides in your heart, and that you really feel it!**

### **Yud Tes – 19 – We Are Ready to Look for a Pathway to Achieve Closeness to G-d:**

1. At this point we need to clarify how a person can continue to learn Torah and do Mitzvos, and at the same time enable these activities to bring a real feeling of closeness to G-d in his heart.
2. i.e. Let us find a way for a person to bring him closer to his Creator, and how the actions that he is already doing, can take on a deeper form which will bring him truly closer to his Creator.
3. The answers will all be included in the words of the Mesilas Yeshorim, which teaches us that we will need to do two things:
  - There are certain actions which we will be required to stop doing.
  - There are certain actions which we will continue to do, but in a deeper and truer fashion.

### **Chuf – 20 – Review of What We Have Learned So Far:**

1. The purpose of man in this world is to be attached to G-d.
2. What is this attachment to G-d? To feel and sense G-d in your heart.
3. For how much time in the day must a person be attached to G-d? Every moment of every day.
4. A person must feel that just like a person can not breathe if he is separated from air, and will then die; so too a person must feel that his entire life depends on being close to G-d; and without that he is considered like a dead person.
5. We need to clarify why the Torah and Mitzvos which we are engaged in are not spawning in our hearts a simple feeling of closeness and attachment to G-d. What is it that is lacking in our study of Torah and Mitzvah observance which is not accomplishing this?

### **Chuf Alef – 21 – Closeness to G-d Can Not Be Understood in a Physical Sense:**

1. Let us begin to paint a broad picture of the concept of “Closeness to G-d.”
2. Who is the Creator? Who has ever seen Him once? Many verses testify that, “No human can see me and live.” Even when Moshe wanted to see G-d’s “honor” G-d

responded that “You may see me from My back, but you may not see My face.” It is clear and obvious that it is impossible to see the essence of the Creator at all.

3. When discussing the concept of a person’s closeness to G-d in the context of “As for me, closeness to G-d is good,” we need to understand what is the meaning of “being close to the Creator.” What is the concept of “closeness to the Creator.”
4. We know the statement of the Rabbis that “There is no place that is devoid of Him.” i.e. G-d is actually found in every place.
5. If we understand the concept of closeness to G-d in a physical sense, like a table that is close to a chair, then we are all close to G-d, because in every place where we are, so is the Creator – so we are always close to the Creator!
6. If that is the case, what is the need for all of man’s effort to achieve closeness to G-d, if you are immediately close to G-d from the moment you are born? So what is the nature of our service in this world all our lives?
7. We must conclude that clearly this physical understanding is not the concept of closeness to G-d. If I sit by the table, then I am close to the table. If I sit on a chair, then I am close to the chair. This sort of closeness is not the kind of closeness to G-d that we are trying to understand.

### **Chuf Beis – 22 – A Person Must Be Able to Clarify What “Closeness to G-d” Means:**

1. The concept of closeness to G-d is an absolutely different concept. Since the purpose of a person’s life is to be close to and attached to G-d, it is incumbent upon us to first clarify what is the concept of closeness to G-d. What type of closeness is it?
2. As long as the concept of closeness to G-d is not clear to a person, in terms of what type of closeness we are dealing with, how can a person know the path in order to find this closeness?
3. If the goal, which is closeness to G-d, is not clear to someone, then obviously the path to reach the goal will not be clear.
4. A person should be willing to pay millions of dollars for this piece of knowledge. Why? If it is not clear to a person what closeness to G-d is, then the goal of his life is not clear at all, so it will be just as unclear what it is he wishes to achieve in life. In that case, why should he be alive - if he does not know what living is, what is its goal, and what is his service during his lifetime.
5. Do you think a person will merit acquiring closeness to G-d without knowing the concept of closeness to G-d? Can this be attained by itself without requiring to know at all what it is and how to acquire it!
6. **After a person has clarified to himself that closeness to G-d is the purpose of life, then his job is to clarify what the concept of closeness to G-d truly is.**
7. **Only after a person clarifies precisely where his destination is, then his job is to clarify how to get there.**
8. For example: A person is traveling from Jerusalem to Bnei Brak. If he has no idea at all that he wants to arrive at Bnei Brak, how will he know the path that he needs to travel on? There is no reason for him to attempt to know the directions to Bnei Brak, because he may not want to go there – he might want to go to Tsfat! Therefore, a person must first clarify where his destination is. Then he has the task of clarifying the path that will lead him to the destination of choice.
9. **It is incorrect for a person to think that it is impossible to clarify the concept of closeness to G-d – for does one think that G-d would demand something that is impossible for a person to achieve?** It is absolutely certain that a person must be able

to understand this concept – so our task is to clarify what is this concept of closeness to G-d.

**Chuf Gimel – 23 - Lack of the Knowledge of What Is Closeness to G-d, Is the Lack of Knowledge of the Entire Essence of Life:**

1. If a person has not yet merited to clearly know what closeness to G-d truly is, this lack of knowledge isn't merely the lack of a specific piece of information in a certain discipline – **it is a lack of knowledge of the whole essence o life!**
2. The goal of a person's entire life in this world and the goal of all the actions that a person does in this life [whether it is Torah study, Mitzvah performance, or permitted activities] are only to cling to his Creator.
3. Consequently, if a person does not know what closeness to G-d is, he has no clear understanding of what the purpose of his life is, and what is the inner essence and goal of all his actions.
4. **He will be able to learn Torah and perform Mitzvos, but he will not know where his Torah learning and Mitzvah observance is meant to take him.**
5. [We mistakenly think that eve though we don't know what it means to be close to G-d, we believe that we will be close to G-d in the next world after we die, just because we were good in this world. That is absolutely incorrect! The goal of this life is to be close to G-d, and not to be thinking so much of how it will be in the next world.]

**Chuf Daled – 24 – The Analogy of the Person Who has Money to Buy an Apartment, But Doesn't Know How to Buy It:**

1. Let us offer an analogy. A person is lacking an apartment. He saves money every month for twenty years until he has enough money to buy one.
2. He know has all the money he needs and begins his search for an apartment, but he does not know where they sell apartments.
3. He is thinking about where they sell apartments, but he has no ideas.
4. His friends give him advice and tell him where to go, but he does not heed them. He gives trying to figure out where people sell apartments! He goes from place to place with no success!
5. This person has all the money he needs to buy the apartment, but he does not know where they are being sold!
6. We can compare a person who performs Mitzvos and learns Torah to this man. A person has in his hands Torah and Mitzvos, but he does not know how to purchase the "In my heart, I will build a sanctuary" with that Torah and Mitzvos.
7. He does not know how to acquire an inner sanctum in his soul where the light of G-d can dwell – where G-d can dwell in his heart.

**Chuf Heh – 25 – The Yetzer Hora Convinces Us Not to Understand What Is Closeness to G-d:**

1. The Yetzer Hora will allow a person to learn Torah and perform Mitzvos, but he will hide from him the simple concept of "what is the purpose of all this?"
2. The Yetzer Hora will prevent a person from even thinking about what is the purpose.
3. The Yetzer Hora will keep the person in his set routine of Torah learning and Mitzvah observance, without at all thinking about what is the purpose.

4. This is the power of the Yetzer Hora. He gives everything to man – except the main thing. The purpose of it all is missing.
5. Even if the Yetzer Hora allows the person to think about the goal of closeness to G-d, he will hide from him the essence of what is closeness to G-d.
6. The Yetzer Hora may show him some abstract definitions of closeness to G-d, thereby distancing the person from a true understanding of what closeness to G-d really is.
7. The Yetzer Hora may convince a person that he can only merit closeness to G-d in Gan Eden and in the World to Come, but it is beyond human understanding while living in this world.
8. **The Yetzer Hora will cause a person to think that he does not need to know what closeness to G-d is, and it is something that automatically comes to anyone who toils in Torah and performs Mitzvos; where the person suddenly feels a great closeness to G-d upon leaving this world and entering the heavens.** It is something that one need not engage in thinking about while in this world.
9. The Yetzer Hora persuades the person that he need not engage in mystical concepts that happen in the heavens that is in the hidden future.
10. The Yetzer Hora tells the person that instead of engaging one's curiosity about the unknown future, it is better to serve G-d now simply with Torah study and Mitzvah observance, and to not enter into understanding the essence of closeness to G-d.
11. These and many more are the arguments of the Yetzer Hora – they are unlimited. **However, the common denominator of them all is that they distant a person from wanting and yearning to understand what closeness to G-d is and they distant a person from apprehending in his heart a real sense of closeness to G-d.**

### **Chuf Vav – 26 – Closeness to G-d Can Not Be Understood in a Physical Sense:**

1. Let us begin to explain in simple words what the essence of clinging to G-d is. What is this closeness to G-d which King David was referring to when he said, “And for me, closeness to G-d is good.”?
2. The first question we need to ask is: “Where is G-d found?”
3. When I want to be close to a person, it is incumbent upon me to first clarify where he is found. When I know the place where he is found, I can go to that place; I can stay in his area, and be close to him.
4. Similarly, when a person searches and wants to be close to G-d, he must first clarify where the Creator is found. If a person does not know the place where G-d is found, how is it possible for him to be close to him?
5. Our Rabbis have told us that “There is no place that is devoid of him.” i.e. he is found in every place. As it says in the Siddur: “You are the one until the world was not created, and You are the one from when the world was created.” Just like G-d was in every place before the world was created, so it is in the same way after the world was created. Even though there is a world with created beings, G-d is literally found in every place. There is nothing that prevents G-d from being in every place.
6. It is therefore clear that G-d is literally found in every place, and in order to be close to G-d, there is no need to travel outside of Eretz Yisroel, not even outside of one's city, not even inside one's own city; “because this thing is very close to you” – Hashem is found in all places. Therefore, **a person can find G-d in all places, and be close to him in every place.**
7. One who ponders these words will have a question on King David's statement: “And for me, closeness to G-d is good.” Why does he use the word “closeness to”? Since G-

d is found in all places, He is found also where the person is found and even where his body is found! G-d isn't only close to man – He and man are literally one!

8. The expression of closeness is appropriate when something is next to something else.
9. However, you do not use the expression of closeness when something is found at one with something else!
10. However, such a question stems from the intellectual definitions that man uses when defining where G-d is found and where He is – then we find that the expression of closeness does not adequately explain the connection that exists between G-d and man from a spatial perspective.
11. Since closeness and attachment to G-d is not understood in a physical way, the question is moot, and will be soon explained.
12. However, the essential question needs to arouse man to clarify what closeness to Hashem truly is. Only after a person clearly understands and perceives in his soul what closeness to G-d is, then he is in a position to understand the difference between “closeness to G-d” and “united with G-d.”

### **Chuf Zayin – 27 – Physical Closeness in Place & Deeper Rooted Spiritual Closeness:**

1. From all of the above, it is clear that closeness to G-d is not closeness from a perspective of space, but the essence of the closeness is much deeper than that.
2. Let us first understand what is the concept of “Karov” – closeness – in this world; and from there we will try to understand closeness to G-d in a deeper way in the spiritual realm.
3. Let us give an example: A person is sitting in his house and talking on the telephone. A person enters the room while he is having his conversation on the phone. The person tells the guest to wait until he finishes his call. After he finishes the call, he apologizes for making him wait because he was taking to a “karov” – a relative – of his. The guest asks: Who is the relative? Where does he live? The host replies what his name is and that he lives out of the country. The guest wonders: “If he lives out of the country, why do you call him a “karov” [literally means ‘a close one’]. The host responds that I did not mean that he was a “karov” in terms of place, but karov” as a relative – as he is my cousin.
4. i.e. there are two types of ‘closeness’ in the physical world:
  - Closeness in terms of place
  - Closeness in terms of family – father, son, uncle, cousin, etc.
5. The latter type of closeness has no relationship to place at all; but since they are close in terms of family, there is a deeper inner closeness from birth. Therefore, they have a deeper spiritual connection.
6. Therefore, this meaning of closeness has a deeper relationship than the closeness of place. The former is a rooted connection. Since their root is from the same place, that creates a deeper spiritual closeness.
7. We find that there are two types of closeness:
  - Closeness in terms of place
  - Closeness in soul until we have a spiritual connection.