

## DAILY CHESHBON HANEFESH #18

### PART FOUR OF TOOL #9

Today we will discuss the third category of activities that one does in his service to Hashem: Mitzvot Dependent on the Body Parts Alone

As stated earlier, in this category we find mitzvot such as:

- Sukkah
- Lulav
- Tzitzit
- Mezuzah
- Tzedakah
- Keeping Shabbat and holidays

Let's return to the parable of the king: If the king gave you a job to do that would require physical exertion, you would give every possible effort into getting the job done. You would try your hardest in a physical sense. True, but how often do we perform our mitzvot that way? What are we lacking?

The problem with doing mitzvot that are dependent on the body parts alone is that physical work is dull, boring, and unfulfilling. Isn't that what we have always been told? Everyone says, "In order to succeed in society, either get a white-collar job, be a professional, or own a business." What do all these positions have in common? The answer is that you succeed in them by using your mind, the most sublime aspect of the human being. It is gratifying to be involved with something that requires you to use your mind, and the activities of the mind are not physically taxing. Blue-collar work, on the other hand, appears to be degrading it's barely a step above animal work. I remember working in a factory one summer after I graduated from high school. I hated it! My negative experience with robotic work certainly motivated me to put my mind into my studies when I went to yeshiva in the fall.

It seems that mitzvot can also be divided into "white collar" and "blue collar" types. The first two categories of mitzvot we discussed in the previous classes appear to be the "white collar" mitzvot in Judaism, while today's category falls into the "blue collar" type. Who has more status nowadays in the religious circles the Talmid Chacham, who studies Torah and davens all day, the holy Tzaddik, who meditates about Hashem day and night, or a person who does mitzvot? Which of these people is the most desirable shidduch?

You will often hear people say, "Well, anyone can do mitzvot, but is he a Tzaddik? Is he a Talmid Chacham? Can he study in kollel all day?" Unfortunately, these questions seem to imply that doing mitzvot is but a paltry thing.

So how do we raise the public's esteem of blue-collar mitzvot?

Technically, these mitzvot may be fulfilled to perfection without necessarily investing deep thought in the course of doing them. However, the Chovot Halevavot teaches us that our minds can help us elevate ourselves in this area, as well. How?

Before you are about to engage in a purely physical mitzvah, focus on the following concepts in order to create a foundation that will enable your actions to manifest the following objectives:

- 1 You are obediently following the will of Hashem.
- 2 Your actions are elevating Hashem and making Him great.
- 3 Your actions are reflecting gratitude and praise to Hashem for all the generous things He has done for you.
- 4 You are doing this out of a sense of awe for Hashem.
- 5 Your greatest desire is to do that which will be pleasing to Hashem.

By having these thoughts, what have you achieved? You have just shown yourself that a mitzvah is no mere "blue collar," assembly-line task you find people doing every day. A mitzvah is really important stuff! It is no less important than the other 2 categories. You will start the activity with a sense of purpose and mission that will allow you to continue and complete the mitzvah superlatively.

Your brain will not turn off while you are in the middle of the activity. By fulfilling a mitzvah following the above prescription, you will be following the example of the allegoric servant who keeps his duty to the king ever-present in his thoughts until it gets done.

In Derech Hashem, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto tells us something similar to the above 5 concepts. He says: "Love of Hashem and awe of Hashem are powerful means that draw an individual close to Hashem. They enlighten the physical darkness in man, cause his soul to radiate in all its brightness, and elevate him step by step until he attains a state of closeness to Hashem." [1:4:8]

The explanation of the Ramchal shows us that, although love of Hashem and awe of Hashem are but two out of the 613 mitzvot; nevertheless

1. They are two autonomous mitzvot that require the action of achieving closeness to Hashem. The mitzvah itself is a feeling of "Dveikut" (cleaving to Hashem).
2. These two mitzvot are also included in all the other mitzvot. This means that every mitzvah that you do should be done out of love and awe of Hashem. Every mitzvah should be accompanied by a feeling that you are doing the mitzvah because you love Hashem and are in awe of Hashem.

Therefore, every mitzvah you do properly, is actually a group of three mitzvot done at the same time the actual physical mitzvah itself, plus the mitzvot of loving and being in awe of Hashem. Such a 3- for-1 deal is something that everyone should become excited about!

Today's Activity:

Review the last 5 purely physical mitzvot you did. Did you do them with 100% effort and enthusiasm? Focus on your next physical mitzvah. Elevate its significance in your eyes by concentrating on

- a. The 5 points mentioned above
- b. Every mitzvah's 3-for-1 value
- c. Your potential to imbue "blue collar" mitzvot with "white collar" value.