

PARSHA FROM THE SOURCE פרשה ממקורה

11 Av 5786

פרשת ואתחנן תשפ"ו

We have in this week's parsha the mitzvah of Ahavat Hashem, to love Hashem. If we were asked on a questionnaire if we love Hashem, we would hopefully be able to respond in the affirmative. Yet, how do we practically do this?

Rambam Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah 2:2

Spain, 12th c.

And what is the path to loving Him and fearing Him? At the moment a person contemplates His wondrous and great deeds and creations, and perceives from them His wisdom, which is without measure and without end, immediately he loves, praises, glorifies, and desires with a great desire to know the Great Name—just as David said: *'My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.'* (Psalms 42:3) And when he ponders these very things, immediately he recoils and is afraid, knowing that he is a small, lowly, and 'dark' creature, standing with a shallow and meager intellect before the One of Perfect Knowledge—just as David said: *'When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers... what is man that You should be mindful of him?'*...

רמב"ם ה' יסודי התורה ב:ב

ר' משה בר מימון

והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו, בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים הגדולים ויראה מהן חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאוה תאוה גדולה לידע השם הגדול כמו שאמר דוד צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי, וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן מיד הוא נרתע לאחוריו ויפחד ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה שפלה אפלה עומדת בדעת קלה מעוטה לפני תמים דעות, כמו שאמר דוד כי אראה שמך מעשה אצבעותיך מה אנוש כי תזכרנו...

The Rambam tells us that a way to get to Ahavat Hashem is to realize how awesome the world Hashem made is.

Rambam (Hilchot Teshuva 10:6)

Spain, 12th c.

It is a known and clear matter that the love of the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not become bound to a person's heart until they are constantly and properly infatuated with it, leaving behind everything in the world except for it—just as He commanded and said, *'With all your heart and with all your soul.'*

One can only love the Holy One, Blessed be He, based on the knowledge with which they know Him. The love is commensurate with the knowledge: if the knowledge is little, the love will be little; if the knowledge is great, the love will be great. Therefore, a person must dedicate themselves to understanding and gaining insight from the wisdoms and understandings that make their Creator known to them, according to the human capacity to understand and conceive, as we have explained in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah.

רמב"ם ה' תשובה י:ו

ר' משה בר מימון

דבר ידוע וברור שאין אהבת הקב"ה נקשרת בלבו של אדם עד שישגה בה תמיד כראוי ויעזוב כל מה שבעולם חוץ ממנה. כמו שצוה ואמר בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך. אינו אוהב הקב"ה אלא בדעת שידעהו. ועל פי הדעה תהיה האהבה אם מעט מעט ואם הרבה הרבה. לפיכך צריך האדם ליחד עצמו להבין ולהשכיל בחכמות ותבונות המודיעים לו את קונו כפי כח שיש באדם להבין ולהשיג כמו שבארנו בהלכות יסודי התורה.

The Rambam tells us that you can also achieve Ahavat Hashem by acquiring knowledge of Him. We can do this through learning His Torah.

Sefer Hachinuch,
Mitzvah 418, The Mitzvah to Love Hashem
13th c.

And it applies in every place and at all times, for both males and females. And anyone who transgresses this and fixes his thoughts on physical matters and the vanities of the world—not for the sake of Heaven, but solely to indulge in them, or to attain worldly honor which is painful, in order to magnify his own name, and not with the intention of doing good to the good and strengthening the hands of the upright—has annulled this positive commandment, and his punishment is great. And this is one of the constant commandments incumbent upon a person, which is obligated upon him forever.

ספר החינוך,
מצוה תיח, מצות אהבת השם
Unknown

...ונוהגת בכל מקום ובכל זמן,
בזכרים ונקבות. ועובר על זה וקובע
מחשבותיו בענינים הגשמיים ובהבלי
העולם שלא לשם שמים רק להתענג
בהם לבד, או להשיג כבוד העולם
הזה הכואב להגדיל שמו, לא לכוונה
להטיב לטובים ולחזק ידי ישרים,
ביטל עשה זה ועונשו גדול. וזאת
מן המצות התמידיות על האדם
ומוטלות עליו לעולם.

The Sefer Hachinuch is telling us something scary. We are charged to make sure our usage of the world Hashem made for and gave to us is proper. For if we don't we have done just the opposite of Ahavat Hashem.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Can we think of some things that we do on a daily basis that we can refocus to help us acquire and increase our Ahavat Hashem?
2. What impact might saying 'I love you Hashem' have on someone's Ahavat Hashem?

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