

Fascinating INSIGHTS

יד' אייר תשפ"ג
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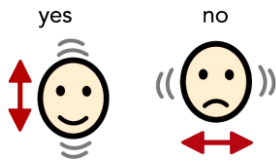
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The Yes and No Movement

Innately we shake our heads sideways to express negation (“no movement”) while we shake our heads up and down to express affirmation (“yes movement”). Why is this?



Man understands deeply within his soul¹ which direction leads to improvement and progress (expressed by the yes movement), and which direction leaves him without progress (expressed by the no movement). The yes movement points in a straight line, without diversion to the sides. When a person shakes his head in negation, he communicates that there is no continuance of the line, no progression and no addition or forward moment. It is

as if he is saying, “We are still at the same spot.”² Affirmation of something stems from the importance one attaches to leaving mundane reality and advancing. An affirmation expresses a natural feeling that is innate to man — to progress and ascend spiritual heights.³

Glorious Globe

Hashem created a world that forces us to ask who created such a beautiful world, as it says שאו מרום עיניכם וראו מי ברא אלה, raise your eyes and see who created these.⁴ Although Hashem hid himself (as is implicit in the word עולם which is related to העלם, hidden), He hid himself in the way a small child hides behind a couch — protruding and is very noticeable.

Based on this we can translate the words that speak of creation, בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ, in the beginning of Hashem's creating the heaven earth:⁵

¹ Although we do these motions unintentionally, but as the gemara says תוון דאנינו לא חזו מזלייהו תוון, even though they didn't see it, their Mazel did (Megila 3a). That is to say, there is a deep spiritual reason as to why we do this that is embedded within our soul.

² When we observe humans and animals we notice that while humans are vertical, animals are horizontal. Why is that? Humans are vertical because their purpose is to refine themselves, to progress in spirituality. Therefore their head is placed above their body symbolizing that the intellect must

govern their body and use what they have for spiritual elevation. In contrast, animals are horizontal. Their head is level with the rest of the body. An animal doesn't refine itself. In fact, the Maharal points out that the word בהמה is comprised of the words בה, in it is what it is, meaning to say that an animal doesn't rise above the way that he is born.

³ Atzmosai Tomarna, pp. 82-83.

⁴ Yeshaya 40:26.

⁵ Breishis 1:1.

Since the word **מי אלהים** can be rearranged to spell **אלהים**, (it is comprised of the same letters), **ברא אלהים** can be read as **מי ברא אלהים**, who created these. That is to say, see the magnificent beauty that Hashem put in the world.



Sensational Spirituality

The pasuk states **כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב**,⁶ we are from dust and we will return to dust. The Chidushei Harim explains that we may be “dust” yet we have potential to conquer worlds. What a shame it would be if **ואל עפר תשוב**, we return to the grave not having accomplished⁷ with our lives.⁸

The Gra⁹ tells us that we are either ascending or descending in this world, as we can't remain static. This is alluded to in¹⁰ **ואין מורידין ואין בקדש** — If we don't want to fall and want to live the reality of **ואין מורידין**, then we must be **מעלין בקדש**.¹¹ With this we can explain why we are referred to as a **הולך** whereas a **Malach** is called a **עומד**.¹² This is because a **Malach** stays on one level as he doesn't grow, contrary to a human.¹³

In the summer of 1992, a Rabbi visiting prisoners told them that you are limited only because you can't get whatever you want. But the truth is everyone is like that as

everyone has boundaries. We can't walk past the ocean and the like. These are just horizontal borders. Vertically though, we are the only ones who stop ourselves.¹⁴

There are many lessons we can obtain from observing the natural world. The Pnei Menachem pointed out a message learned from gravity: We are pulled down to the earth, physicality. To physically raise ourselves, we need to fight the gravitational pull. Likewise, to elevate and raise ourselves spiritually, we need to fight the material world that brings along base desires.



Adam was created **בצלם אלהים**, in the image of Hashem. If we spell out the name of Hashem, **יהוה-וה**, we get **יהוה, הא, ואו, הא**. This comes to a total of 45, the Gematria of **אדם**. The greatness we can attain¹⁵ is because we have an infinite soul within us,¹⁶ a piece of Hashem — **חלק אלוהים**.¹⁷ Nothing can attenuate our worth. Just as if a person crumpled a 20-dollar bill and threw it in the dirt, people would still want it since it didn't lose its value, likewise even if we stumble and fall,¹⁸ we still have our value.

Rabbi Alt merited to learn under the tutelage of R' Mordechai Friedlander ztz"l for close to five years. He received semicha from R' Zalman Nechemia Goldberg ztz"l. Rabbi Alt has written on numerous topics for various websites and publications and is the author of five books including the recently released *Magnificent Marriage Insights*. His writings, some of which have been translated into Yiddish, Hebrew, German and French, inspire people across the spectrum of Jewish observance to live with the vibrancy and beauty of Torah. He lives with his wife and family in Kiryat Yearim (where the Aron was for 20 years [Shmuel 1, 7:1,2]) where he studies, writes and teaches. The author is passionate about teaching Jews of all levels of observance.

⁶ Breishis 3:19.

⁷ In the laconic 36 years of the Maharam Shif's life, he accomplished a tremendous amount. At the age of 17, he was appointed rabbi of the community of Fulda, a center of Torah, where he also headed a notable yeshiva. It was there that he composed his commentaries covering the entire shas, between the years 1627 and 1636. Sadly, most of it was destroyed by fire in the year 1711. He was also a great kabbalist, and wrote sefarim on kabbala and a commentary on Chumash.

⁸ R' Zusha of Anapoli (1718-1800), the brother of the Noam Elimelech, remarked, “When I ascend to heaven, I am not afraid that they will ask me why I wasn't like Moshe or Dovid. I will say I couldn't be like them. I am afraid that they will ask me, ‘Why weren't you Zusha?’ And then what will I say?”

⁹ Mishlei 15:24. Also Ruach Chaim 1:13. See Mesilas Yesharim 1.

¹⁰ Horiyos 12b.

¹¹ This answers the question of why it says **ואין מורידין**, since it suffices to say merely **מעלין בקדש**. Another way it can be read is that a person should be **מעלין בקדש**. If he isn't (**ואין**), then **מורידין**, he is descending.

¹² Zecharya 3:7.

¹³ See Bnei Yissaschar Kislev Teves 2:50.

¹⁴ There is a quote that reads, “If we are part of His design, then no doubt we are beautiful!”

¹⁵ In R' Shlomo Freifeld's yeshiva, there was a boy that was caught smoking on Shabbos. The boy was summoned to R' Freifeld's office whereupon R' Freifeld began to cry. The boy thought that R' Freifeld was distraught because now it would give the yeshiva a bad name. R' Freifeld told the boy, “I am crying because what you did was my fault. How was I unable to bring out your greatness? Where did I mess up that I could not let you see who you really are?”



¹⁶ There is a saying, “We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark. The real tragedy of life are men that are afraid of the light.”

¹⁷ R' Shabsai Sheftel Horowitz (1565-1619), who was a nephew of the Shela, writes (Introduction to his sefer Shefa Tal) that we know the Jewish people are a part of Hashem as it says **כי חלק ה' עמו** (Devarim 32:9). A piece of an object contains all the elements of that object. For example, a small chip of a large rock contains all the components of that rock. The only difference is that since the object is the whole item, it is larger than the fragment, but the fragment has the same chemical composition as the object from which it originates. In the same way, there is no essential difference between the soul of a man and Hashem — except for the fact that Hashem is the totality of existence, the all-embracing infinite light and the soul is a tiny particle of that great light.

¹⁸ R' Yitzchak Isaac Yehuda Yechiel Safrin of Kamarna (1806-1874) was the only son to his parents. His father died when he was 12. He was then raised by his uncle, R' Tzvi Hirsch Zidichover, where he studied in great poverty and distress. He writes, “All my joy was due to the great sweetness of the awesome lessons that my holy uncle revealed.” He writes that he had a special room which was so cold and wasn't warmed up even once during the winter. “I was in the habit of sleeping only two hours out of every 24. I would spend the rest of the time in that room immersed in Torah, gemara, legal writings, Zohar, Kisvei Arizal and the writings of R' Moshe Cordevaro. Then I fell from all this. I was in a very limited state for more than three months. Many tough and bad *klipos* stood against me. They tried to entice me to leave my Torah study. Worst of all, they dropped a depression on me. My heart became like a rock. I didn't enjoy anything during those days. I only had a little bit of bread and water each day; I had no pleasure in the learning and davening that I was doing. The *klipos* became very strong and I was very embittered from all these enticements. It was literally worse than a thousand deaths. After I overcame all these enticements, suddenly in the middle of the day, when learning *Mesachta Yevamos*, a great light fell upon me. The whole house was filled with an awesome light, the glow of the Shechina. This was the first time that I truly tasted a bit of His light. (Megilas Setarim, entries 21-26).” After his marriage at 16, they were so poor that they were unable to afford two candles for Shabbos. One way R' Yitzchak Isaac's piety was expressed was in his tefillos which lasted three hours. Another unique ability of his was that he would have dreams where he would converse with various souls.