
DEFINING ONE'S ROLE IN LIFE

Achieving Greatness

Many of us look at ourselves and may not see anything special. From a Torah perspective this is incorrect. The Torah views each individual as vitally important and understands that each person's role in life is completely unique and distinct. This shiur will help to point the way to making this idea real by helping us discover what one's unique role actually is. By discovering one's role in life and realizing how each one of us is vitally important in the general scheme of things, we will find it easier to overcome the corrosive emotions of envy and jealousy that so easily destroy one's happiness in life.

This class will address the following questions:

- Is every Jew supposed to be doing the same thing?
- How can I determine my unique purpose in life?
- How can I use my profession as a way of serving God in my unique way?
- How can I avoid feeling envious of those whom I feel are more gifted than I?

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rabbi Mattisyahu Rosenblum, Morasha - Each of us is a Chosen One.

The concept of a Chosen One is one of the recurrent motifs in all of literature. From Arthur to Luke Skywalker we read again and again of someone who seems to be nothing special who is revealed to be the Chosen One. This theme has not ceased to resonate. Is anyone not stirred when Arthur pulls the sword out of the anvil and, revealed to be the true king, goes on to lead Britain to a golden age? Does anyone not rejoice when Luke Skywalker turns out to be “the Last of the Jedi” and frees his galaxy from the evil empire? The biggest cultural phenomenon in the last decade has no doubt been the story of Harry Potter. Millions rejoiced when poor Harry, cruelly oppressed by his aunt and uncle, and his true nature kept from him, found out that he was connected to a higher dimension of reality, that he was a wizard. Millions followed intently as Harry slowly discovered that even within that “wizarding world” he was the Chosen One with the unique ability to defeat the murderous Lord Voldemort. And millions rejoiced when Harry fulfilled his destiny and defeated that evil.

Why do such stories have such a universal appeal? By the time this class is over the answer will be obvious. The power of these tales comes because each of us identifies with these figures. In the depths of our soul we recognize that, in God's profound plan, each and every one of us really is completely necessary. Not that we are striving for externally acclaimed stardom. Rather, each and every one of us is a Chosen One who has a unique mission that only we can fulfill in the full revelation of God's glory.

SECTION I. EACH PERSON IS INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT

Many of us look at ourselves and do not see anything special. Even if one has not fallen into the modern cult of empty fame, the question still exists: “In this great world what do I matter? There is nothing special about me.” In the eyes of the Torah, this outlook is simply wrong. The Torah views the importance of each and every individual as being vast beyond human comprehension.

1. Talmud Bavli (Babylonian Talmud), Sanhedrin 37a – Every individual is a world unto himself.

Therefore, man was created alone to teach that destroying one life is tantamount to destroying an entire world; and sustaining one life is tantamount to sustaining an entire world. Therefore, every individual is obligated to say, “The world was created for my sake.”

לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי, ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת ... מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא וכל המקיים נפש אחת ... מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא. ... לפיכך כל אחד ואחד חייב לומר, בשבילי נברא העולם.

Not only is each person of infinite value, an individual even has the capability of sustaining the entire world by refining his character and actions.

2. Talmud Bavli, Yoma 38b – One righteous individual is enough to keep the world running.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, “The world can exist even in the merit of a single righteous person, as it is written, ‘A righteous person is the foundation of the world.’”

[ואמר] רבי חייא בר אבא א"ר יוחנן אפי' בשביל צדיק אחד העולם קיים שנאמר וצדיק יסוד עולם.

3. **Rambam (Maimonides), Hilchot Teshuvah (Laws of Repentance) 3:4 – The world depends upon your actions.**

A person should view himself all year long as if he is half meritorious and half guilty ... If he performs one meritorious act he has tipped the balance favorably both for himself and for the entire world, thus bringing himself and the whole world salvation and deliverance, as it is written, "A righteous person is the foundation of the world."

צריך כל אדם שיראה עצמו כל השנה כולה כאילו חציו זכאי וחציו חייב ... עשה מצוה אחת הרי הכריע את עצמו ואת כל העולם לכף זכות וגורם לו ולהם תשועה והצלה שנאמר: "וצדיק יסוד עולם".

The Rambam teaches in Hilchot Teshuvah (5:2), that each of us can be as righteous as Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses), our greatest leader! Righteousness is developed by overcoming the challenges we encounter in life.

4. **Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, Pachad Yitzchak, Michtavim 128 – Overcoming challenges is the path to greatness.**

There is a common misconception in our midst regarding our attitude to the appreciation of our great individuals. We tend to focus on their current elevated status, neglecting to recall the many mistakes and hardships they encountered on their path to greatness. King Solomon wrote, "A righteous person falls seven times, yet rises again" (Mishlei/Proverbs 24:16). The uninformed assume the meaning to be that greatness can be achieved despite experiencing an occasional stumble; however, the wise know well that the verse's intention is to instruct us that the very path to greatness is solely attained by encountering obstacles and then overcoming them.

רעה חולה היא אצלנו שכאשר מתעסקים אנו בצדדי השלימות של גדולינו, הננו מטפלים בסיכום האחרון של מעלתם. מספרים אנו על דרכי השלימות שלהם, בשעה שאנחנו מדלגים על המאבק הפנימי שהתחולל בנפשם.... החכם מכל אדם אמר "שבע יפול צדיק וקם" (משלי כד, טז) והטפשים חושבים כי כוונתו בדרך רבותא – אע"פ ששבע יפול צדיק מ"מ הוא קם. אבל החכמים יודעים היטב שהכונה היא שמהות הקימה של הצדיק היא דרך ה"שבע נפילות" שלו.

KEY THEMES OF SECTION I

- ☞ Though we might not perceive this truth, the Torah makes it clear that each of us is the hero of an epic. Each of us is called to achieve glory by fulfilling his role in the world.
- ☞ To achieve greatness, we need to be prepared to work to overcome the many challenges that we will encounter throughout our lives.

SECTION II. EVERYONE HAS A UNIQUE MISSION

The reason for the cosmic importance of each person is that each person is completely unique. We may not see this truth. Our eyes only see the surface; we usually only notice “outstanding” talents and abilities. Sometimes we even look outside of ourselves for success when it really exists within us, if we could only see it. Judaism sees things differently – everyone is unique, or else he would not exist.

In Kracow there stands a synagogue known as the Shul of Izik Reb Yekale's. Legend has it that Izik was a simple man, a builder by trade, who was haunted by the same dream over and over again, that under a particular bridge in Prague was buried a huge treasure, which would belong to whomever unearthed it.

At first Izik dismissed the dream as absurd, but after a while he became obsessed, and could hardly sleep at night. Although his wife told him to get the crazy idea out of his head, he decided once and for all that he must go to Prague and find the treasure. So, one day he took some meager provisions and set out for Prague.

When Izik was fortunate enough to hitch a ride on a passing wagon, he rode. Otherwise he walked, stopping only at nightfall, sleeping in the shelter of the trees.

After many weeks, Izik arrived at Prague and sought out the bridge he had envisioned in his dreams. But alas, the police were always patrolling the area and there was no way he could begin to dig.

For days he loitered near the bridge, hoping that perhaps there would be a break in the patrol, allowing him to dig for the treasure.

Finally one of the police patrols approached him. “Why are you constantly loitering around this area day after day?” the policeman asked. “What is it you want here?”

Izik was a simple man, and saw no other way but to tell the truth. He related his dream to the policeman, also telling him of the travail of the long journey he had made in order to get to Prague from his humble village near Kracow.

When Izik had finished telling his story, the policeman howled with laughter. “You fool!” he said. “And because of a silly dream you came all the way here? Well, I have had a repetitious dream, too. I have been dreaming that in a tiny village near Kracow there is a little hut that belongs to an idiot named Izik Reb Yekale's, and in that hut there is a tremendous treasure. Believe me, friend, there is no treasure for you here.”

Crushed, Izik returned home, only to find out that in his absence the plans he had set in motion before chasing a dream were actually coming to fruition: his hopes to build a bigger house were finally realized because the price of lumber had fallen drastically; the lot he had set his heart on was available and affordable since the owners had left the area and the rumor was that they had instructed their agent to unload the land quickly, at any price. Best of all, his wife had discovered that they were to have a child. Out of all this good fortune Izik Reb Yekale's prospects flourished, and he was able to build not only a bigger house for his growing family, but a large new synagogue for his community. He regarded building the temple as his mitzvah in return for having learned a valuable lesson.

*Neither wealth, fame, prestige, nor anything external can give us more than a fleeting sense of satisfaction. As corny as it sounds, the only true lasting happiness is within ourselves – which, sadly, is too often the last place any of us look for it. (Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D., *Do Unto Others*, Andrews McMeel Publishing, p. 99.)*

1. **Blessing over the renewal of the moon, ArtScroll Siddur p. 612 – Everything in the universe has a role.**

Blessed are You, God ... Who with His utterance created the heavens, and with the breath of His mouth their legion. A decree and a schedule did He give them, **that they not alter their assigned tasks**. They are joyous and glad to perform the Will of their Creator ...

ברוך אתה ה'... אשר במאמרו ברא שחקים וברוח פיו כל צבאם חוק וזמן נתן להם שלא ישנו את תפקידם. ששים ושמחים לעשות רצון קונם...

2. **ArtScroll Siddur, Commentary, ibid. – The principle of having assigned roles is built into Creation itself, and fulfilling one's unique role is what brings joy.**

"A decree and a schedule did He give them" – after creating the heavenly bodies, God set them in their specified orbits, giving each an unchangeable role in the cosmos.

"They are joyous and glad" – despite the apparent tedium of their permanently assigned tasks the heavenly bodies joyously serve their Maker because they know that by doing His Will they have a role in Creation. This is a lesson to man to revel in his opportunity to serve God.

3. **Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers) 4:3 – Everyone has a place in God's scheme.**

He [Ben Azzai] used to say, ... "There is no one who does not have his hour, and there is nothing that does not have its place."

הוא היה אומר: אין לך אדם שאין לו שעה, ואין לך דבר שאין לו מקום.

4. **Ramchal (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto), Derech Hashem (The Way of God) 2:3:1 – Selections from Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan translation, Feldheim – Everyone has his unique role in vanquishing evil.**

Good and evil were created within this world and man is placed between them. Man's task, in a general way, is to choose good over evil ...

The Supernal Wisdom, however, has distributed various aspects of this test [of choosing good over evil] amongst the individual members of humanity ...

So that each individual has his own share in the battle between good and evil. This is his assignment and responsibility in this world, and within its framework he must strive for success ... Through everyone's efforts together, all of the necessary work will be carried out.

ענין העבודה שנמסרה לאדם תלוי במה שנבראו בעולם עניני טוב ועניני רע והושם האדם ביניהם לבחור לו את הטוב...

ואמנם חילקה החכמה העליונה את עניני הנסיון האלה בין אישי מין האנושי...

ונמצא לכל איש ואיש מבני האדם חלק מיוחד בנסיון ובמלחמת היצר והוא פקודתו ומשאו בעולם הזה וצריך לעמוד בו כפי מה שהוא... עד שבין כולם ישתלמו כל החלקים המצטרפים לו...

5. **Ramchal, Mesillat Yesharim (The Paths of the Just), Ch. 1 – Each person and his own world.**

The very foundation of piety and the root of Divine service is the clarification of one's obligation in his world.

יסוד החסידות ושורש העבודה היא שיתברר אצל האדם מה חובתו בעולמו...

Clarifying one's unique obligation and mission in this world is the cornerstone of Divine service.

6. **Daily Prayer Book – Even within the discipline of Torah study each person has his own unique nature.**

Grant us our portion in Your Torah.

ותן חלקינו בתורתך

7. **Talmud Bavli, Berachot 58a – No two people are alike.**

One who sees a vast number of Jews together recites the blessing, “Blessed is ...He Whose wisdom encompasses (all) the secrets.” For no two people have the same psyches, and no two people look the same.

Rashi:

“He Whose wisdom encompasses (all) the secrets” – i.e. God knows what is in the inner thoughts of each of these people.

ת"ר הרואה אוכלוסי ישראל אומר ברוך חכם הרזים שאין דעתם דומה זה לזה ואין פרצופיהן דומים זה לזה.

רש"י: חכם הרזים-היודע מה שבלב כל אלו.

8. **Avraham Aryeh Trugman, The Mystical Power of Music, p. 111 – Each individual has a part in the symphony of the universe.**

It is taught throughout Jewish tradition that each person has a unique soul and a unique mission in the world. No one can complete another's task for him or her. We all have our special contribution to make, our own instrument to play in the cosmic symphony.

KEY THEMES OF SECTION II

- Far from demanding uniformity, Judaism insists that each person has his or her unique mission, and all of one's service of God should be based around fulfilling that mission.

SECTION III. DETECTING ONE'S UNIQUE MISSION

A seamstress living in early 20th century Poland, Sarah Schenirer had a profound and invaluable effect on Jewish women. After centuries of pogroms, persecution, and poverty, Jewish learning had drastically declined. Only a small percentage of Jewish men had any real knowledge of their heritage. Women's education was even more neglected. For lack of alternatives, young women from traditional homes attended nonreligious schools and were led away from Judaism.

Greatly disturbed by the situation, Sarah Schenirer cried out, “Watch how the girls pray without motivation, as if it were forced upon them. Some are here to please their parents; others, as if God needs their prayers. My sisters! When will you understand that our main purpose for being on this earth is to serve God?”

A bright and warm-hearted woman, Sarah Schenirer understood that those who left Judaism did so out of ignorance. She wished to show them the great beauty and depth of the Jewish tradition. Leading rabbis blessed her endeavors and wished her success.

In 1918, Sarah Schenirer opened her first school with 25 girls. The girls loved learning about their heritage and religion, and more joined. Within a short time, Beit Yaakov schools opened all over Europe, and she founded a teacher's seminary to fill the need for educators. By 1937, there were 250 Beit Yaakov's with 38,000 students throughout eastern and central Europe, along with youth organizations and summer camps. Today it is the largest Jewish women's educational system in the world. (Jewish Women Speak About Jewish Matters, Targum Press.)

PART A: DISCOVERING ONE'S MISSION

If each person has a unique mission, clearly it is of vital importance to discover what that mission is.

1. Rabbi Shalom Brezovsky, Nesivos Shalom, Vol. I, Netivei Da'at, Chapter 6:2, p. 30 – The obligation to figure out one's unique mission.

Before anything else, a person is obligated to reflect upon and search out what is his unique mission for the sake of which he descended to this world ...

בראש כל האדם חייב להתבונן היטב ולחקור ולדעת
מהי חובתו המיוחדת בעולמו, מהו הענין המיוחד
שבשבילו ירד לעולם...

2. Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen, Tzidkat HaTzadik, # 154 – If one truly understands that God has given him a unique mission, he must believe he has the capability to successfully fulfill it.

Just as one must believe in God, so must he believe in himself.

כשם שצריך האדם להאמין בהשם יתברך כך צריך
אחר כך להאמין בעצמו.

Believing in oneself means believing that one has been endowed with the ability to execute his assignments.

3. Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, Reb Shlomo Speaks, ArtScroll p. 121 – Clear self-knowledge gives one the freedom to grow.

I think back in my own experience to when I finally began to make something of my life, and I can identify the day. In those days I was in yeshivah surrounded by a group of brilliant near geniuses. These were my friends, my associates, my role models, and I tried to pattern myself after them. And then one day, I sat down in a room by myself, put my head in my hands, and had a heart-to-heart talk with myself. "You are not brilliant," I told myself. You are not a genius or a near genius. You have to be who you are. You have to start your learning from the fundamentals and work your way up. There are no shortcuts for you."

Believe me, the experience was painful. I felt as if a dagger had been plunged into me. But it was my liberation, my personal exodus. That day was the turning day of my life.

4. Rabbi Avi Fertig, Bridging the Gap, p. 132 – Finding one's role requires living according to one's internal truth and not for what society says.

Man's essence, the true "I," is within – it is the inner world with which we are primarily concerned. Individuality and originality must be nurtured internally. The modern misconception is that our individuality must be presented externally, displayed for others to see. Otherwise, goes the misconception, by not expressing our individuality to others, we are stunting ourselves. The culture in which we find ourselves lives life on the outside. Torah, however, demands that we build our inner worlds – that we nurture our individuality within – for **that** is the essence of man.

Just because you aren't a famous concert pianist, that doesn't mean that you don't have unique skills ...

5. **Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld, Class for Ner LeElef – Knowing your unique self is the basis for everything else.**

Our Rabbis teach us that among the traits that help us acquire the Torah is the trait of recognizing one's place. The major requirement for real success is knowing who we are. Though it is not clear that one should spend much time looking for one's special path in the earliest stages of one's development, when one is laying the basis for one's future growth, in the long run this must be done. One cannot achieve deep success by just following others. Everyone comes with a unique *shoresh haneshamah* (root of one's soul). One person is deeply affected by the Mesillat Yesharim while what generates change in another is only the Shaarei Teshuvah. For this reason the Chofetz Chaim says that one should not criticize a book or a class since even if it he does not like it (unless it is clearly mistaken) for someone else it might be perfect. Just like a person will look silly wearing someone else's clothes, one will never really succeed by mimicking another's path in life. There is simply no one Platonic ideal of the one perfect man. Everyone's perfection will differ and will be achieved in a different way. The Netziv (HaEmek Davar, Bamidbar/Numbers 15:41) says that if someone asks you to tell him what path he should take, your answer should be that he must pursue the path that *his* heart desires within the broad realm of Torah and mitzvot ...

PART B. LOOKING INSIDE AND OUT TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE

The job of finding one's unique role requires a deep and honest look at many different aspects of yourself and the world.

1. **Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld – Three things to observe in order to detect one's unique mission.**

- Step 1: Draw a circle labeled "What I'm able to do" – include all the things that make you "you," being a good listener etc., or maybe you prefer machines to people.
- Step 2: Draw a circle labeled "What I like doing" – include all the things you're drawn to, that you like doing, without regard to whether you're able to do them or have the resources.
- Step 3: Draw a circle labeled "What my society, community, and God need from me" – include all the things that are practical considering where you come from, where you'll live, the community you're in, and where you're at in terms of religious observance.

2. **Rabbi Akiva Tatz – The Thinking Jewish Teenager's Guide to Life, pp. 79-80 – Since God has given us the tools we need to fulfill our task, clearly looking at our special tools is a means to discover it.**

If you were placed on a building site with a bag of tools by an intelligent foreman, all you need do is look around and see what is being built in your immediate vicinity and what tools you have been given and you will know immediately what you should be doing. Obviously, you have been given exactly the tools you need for the job; life is not a joke – you have a task to accomplish and you have definitely been given all you need to accomplish it. *A careful examination of your place in the world and your personal character tools will give you a clear picture of who you are and what you must do ...*

Again, the tools match the job exactly. We understand that the One who creates the whole enterprise gives every individual exactly what he or she needs to carry out the work that is necessary.

3. **Rabbi Yeruchom Levovitz, quoted in Alei Shor, Vol I, p. 146 – Before any particular skills are developed, one must first find the deepest positive traits that one has been given as one's own. These are the basis for everything one does.**

... Only through guarding the qualities that are already his naturally does a person become complete, because in truth the entire basis for a person's service is only the qualities that exist in him naturally. If he will only guard them and use them in the right way, never veering from his own essential nature, he will reach his ultimate completeness. He will fully change to be good and even his bad traits will be reversed to being fully good.

Every person has a unique quality that is naturally so perfectly good that he cannot even understand another person who is defective in that respect. For instance, a naturally patient person will scoff at someone who has the defect of anger and gets angry about everything. And that person will have some other quality that the first is defective in. Every person is given some particular quality through which he can change himself to being fully good, and this comprises all of his work through which he will achieve his completeness ...

..... רק ע"י שמירת מעלותיו הקנויות אצלו בטבע בלבד זוכה אדם לכל שלמותו וזכותו, משום שבאמת כל יסוד עבודת האדם אינו אלא במעלות הטובות אשר הנם אצלו בטבע, שאם רק ישמור עליהן ויחזיק בהן כראוי שלא יזוז מטבעיו הטובים, מתוך זה יגיע לכל תכלית שלמותו, שכולו יתהפך לטוב ואף טבעיו ומדותיו הרעים יתהפכו לגמרי לטוב.

כל אדם יש לו מעלה מיוחדת שהנה אצלו בטבע בתכלית הטוב, עד שבמעלה זו אינו משיג כלל את חברו המושחת ומקולקל, וכמו איש מתון שלועג על חברו המושחת במדה של כעס ומתכעס על כל דבר קטן, ולעומת זה חברו הכעסן יש לו מדה אחרת טובה שבמדה זו הוא הנהו מושחת. שלכל אדם ניתנה מדה ומעלה מיוחדת שעל-ידי מעלה זו ישנה ויהפך עצמו כולו לטוב, וביזה היא כל עבודתו שמתוך זה ישיג את כל שלמותו....

4. **Rabbi Mattisyahu Rosenblum, Morasha – Recent thinkers have moved in the same direction as Rav Yeruchom Levovitz and view knowing and focusing on one's strongest traits as the key to success (see Christopher Peterson, *The Handbook of Positive Psychology*, pp. 137-162).**

In this idea of knowing and focusing on one's positive traits, Rav Yeruchom presaged a recent development in the field of psychology. Though they obviously don't base their idea from a confidence that a perfect God gave each of us our precise role and the tools to perform it, the founders of the Positive Psychology movement have found that a shift of focus onto our strengths – something that is for most of us by no means natural – leads to far greater success in life (as they define success).

The problem is that most of us do not find it very easy to recognize our strengths. For this reason these psychologists have generated a list of character strengths that are widely valued across many cultures. They found that even people who are not fully conscious of their strengths if they are presented with this list of 24 possible strengths can usually find between two or five such characteristics. This discovery can feel like an epiphany as they recognize that such a strength feels authentic ("this is the real me"), is associated with excitement when using it, and rapid learning in themes associated with that strength. (Christopher Peterson *The Handbook Of Positive Psychology*, pp. 137-162). This list is found on their website <http://www.viastrengths.org> and could be a useful tool to start searching for these character strengths. Similarly, the book *Now, Discover Your Strengths* argues that the greatest growth in one's professional success lies in discovering and perfecting one's strengths and provides a list of thirty-four natural strengths to help discover one's own.

5. **Pirkei Avot 2:9; Rabbeinu Yonah ibid.** – This idea that one can achieve greatness by first perfecting one pre-existing quality is discussed in the early authorities.

“What is the straight path that one should cling to?”

Rabbeinu Yonah:

Clearly one should cling to all good character traits. Rather, [the Mishnah] means that one should stick to a specific trait and become complete in it, because it is better for a person to focus on one trait and become complete in it, since it will then be easier for him to attain other traits by means of that one, rather than working on several traits and not become complete in any of them.

אי-זה היא דרך ישרה שידבק בה האדם.

בכל המדות הטובות והישרות יש לאדם להדבק בהן אלא זה רוצה לומר: להדבק במדה אחת להיות שלם בה, כי טוב לאדם לאחוז באחת בשלימות ונקל אליו להשיג ממנה אל כל המדות החשובות, מהיותו בו כמה מדות ואיננו שלם באחת מהן

6. **Rabbi Shalom Brezovsky, Nesivos Shalom, Netivei Da'at, Chapter 6:2, p. 30-31** – One's natural talents are a major sign of one's special task.

One needs to have clarity about which unique strengths God has given him that he can utilize to draw close to Him... As long as he does not have this clarity he is like a blind man... For example, one who has been blessed with superior abilities in Torah study must know that his mission in life is to succeed in Torah study. Similarly, for one who has a love for performing acts of kindness this is a sign that this quality is at the root of his soul.

צריך שתהיה לו בהירות מה הם הכוחות המיוחדים שחנן אותו השי"ת שעל ידם יוכל להתקרב אליו... ואם אינו מכיר את הכוח הטוב שבו, הריחו כסומא... ולדוגמא האיש שחננו השי"ת בכשרונות מעולים בתורה, עליו לדעת שיעודו בעולמו שיצליח בתורה, וכן זה שיש לו אהבת חסד, אות היא כי ענין זה שייך לשורש נשמתו...

7. **Netziv, HaEmek Davar, Bamidbar, 15:41** – Another rule in finding your proper role: make your primary focus those things that attract you.

... If a person comes to ask what is the straight path that he should choose for himself in the way that he should learn or with which mitzvah he should be most careful, the answer is found in Kohelet/Ecclesiastes: “Walk in the paths of your heart.” What your heart is pulled after is clearly what your soul perceives to be good for you.

.... ואם בא אדם לשאול איזהו דרך ישרה שיבור לו בדרך לימודו או במה להיות זהיר טפי. ע"ז אמר קהלת והלך בדרכי לבך. מה שלבו נמשך אחריו. ברור שמזלו חזי כי זה ענין טוב לפי כח נפשו.

8. **Rabbi Avraham Pam, Atarah LaMelech, p. 176** – Your natural inclinations show your portion in God's plan.

One who feels a special pull toward a specific area of good deeds, whether it be Torah study, prayer, or acts of kindness for others, he must realize that this is his connection to the Tree of Life [i.e. Torah] and through that area he is

כל מי שיש לו נטייה בנפשו לאיזה ענין טוב, אם בתורה אם בתפילה או בחסד, היא אחיזתו בעץ החיים, והוא שרשו בקדושה, ומנקודה זו יכול להבנות ולהתעלות הרבה, אם יתאמץ בה תמיד ולא ירפנה לעולם.

rooted in holiness. It is through this point that he can build himself up and become elevated [in all areas], if he takes care to invest great effort in it constantly, never abandoning it.

9. **Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld – Another major way to grasp who you are is by studying what moves you when looking at the world.**

... The Maharal understands that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was concerned that his students might just try to grow great by following the path of their *rebbe* or by their intellectual understanding of what is important. For that reason he told them to leave the study hall and go out to look at the world. Everyone sees the world differently and whatever each one saw as the key quality for success would be the quality that that student was naturally connected to and which he should perfect to achieve greatness.

10. **Pirkei Avot 2:9; Maharal, Derech HaChaim p. 93, ibid. – A person can find the quality he is uniquely connected to by observing what he praises.**

Every man is pulled after his natural trait and praises it in others ...

וכל אדם הוא נמשך אחר מדתו לשבח אשר מדתו...

PART C. BECOMING A COMPLETE, REFINED INDIVIDUAL

Of course, the Torah never allows us to go to an extreme. Even if we must work with our strengths, we can never try to permanently ignore our weaknesses since one of our major tasks in life – probably *the* major task – is to refine our negative character traits.

1. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. I, p. 146 – Immediately after Rav Wolbe quotes Rav Yerucham Levovitz on the need to develop one's natural strengths, he discusses using them to fix up our weaknesses.**

One of the profound truths in Creation would seem to be that each man's nature fits his task in life so that it is specifically his best natural quality that can overcome the most basic fault that he has. One who succeeds in grasping his chief quality and knowing his chief fault has attained a tremendous thing, for now he knows what God asks from him.

ומסתמא מעמקי היצירה היא שהותאם אופי כל אדם לתעודתו בחיים כד, שדווקא מעלתו הטבעית המיוחדת תוכל להכריע את המדה הרעת השרשית אשר בו. מי שהצליח לעמוד על מעלתו העקרית ועל השחתתו העקרית זכה לדבר גדול; מעתה הוא יודע, מה ה' אלקיו דורש ממנו.

2. **Rabbi Beryl Gershenfeld, Class for Ner LeElef – Rav Dessler shares the same idea that the first step is to know and work on one's natural strengths, but then one must go further.**

We have to first discover our root-trait and work to perfect it. But of course the Torah does not allow us to only develop our natural trait. We clearly should not remain too weak in what is harder on us and therefore after, say, five years of developing our strength, we have to work on our backhand. Rav Dessler says that first everyone must discover his main trait and work to perfect it. Then, after perfecting our natural trait, we are obligated to develop the other necessary traits.

3. **Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. II, p. 161 – A person should strive continually towards completion.**

The starting point of a person's service is to recognize and reveal his prime characteristic and develop it to its completion through the paths of the Torah and be faithful to it. But he should not be satisfied with this perfecting his natural trait] since he is obligated to develop his other qualities in order to reach completion.

וראשית עבודת האדם היא שיכיר ויגלה את מדתו העיקרית הזאת, יפתחה לשלימותה על פי דרכי התורה, ויהיה נאמן לה. אך אל לו להסתפק רק בזאת, כי הרי גם המדות האחרות טמונות בחובו, וכדי להגיע לשלמות עליו להשתדל לפתח גם אותן.

4. **Rabbi Akiva Tatz – The Thinking Jewish Teenager's Guide To Life, p. 85 – Even if we all have a unique mission, we must all work on a shared base.**

THE CIRCLE STANDS ON A BASE

Of course there are some basics we all need. Before you begin the serious work of defining your unique circle, there are some fundamental qualities you need to acquire. Your circle stands on a base which is essential, and that base has two parts:

First you must be a decent, refined human being. And second, you must live up to your Jewish obligations. These are the universal qualities and elements that are necessary before your circle can become meaningful: we all need to be working on self-control and refining our characters. We all need to learn consideration and concern and many other qualities. The circle is the unique constellation of features that makes each of us distinct, but before you work on becoming distinct you need to be sure that the basics are in place so that your circle has a place to stand.

As an illustration: certain requirements of clothing must be met before you can consider the question of personal style – you must ensure that you have the essential items of clothing needed to be decently covered before you turn your attention to the particular style of those clothes that appeals to you: you would look ridiculous choosing elements of style in your clothing if you are not yet decently covered! First, the basics must be in place; then one can begin expressing personal taste and style.

5. **Rabbi Yehudah Nachman, Derech B'lev Ish, p. 153-156 – Indeed, working on one's basic obligations may be a necessary stage toward finding one's unique role.**

The proper way to search for one's path in serving God is not through experimenting and endless thinking. Rather, remember the following rule: the more one devotes himself to Torah and serving God, and meets all of his obligations joyfully and conscientiously – the more his path in life will become clear ... When a person immerses himself in the four areas in which our Sages instruct us to constantly strengthen ourselves – Torah study, prayer, good deeds, and one's vocation – God lights up his eyes and helps him find the best possible approach in serving Him.

הדרך הנכונה לחפש אחר דרך העבודה הראויה ללכת בה אינה על ידי ניסוי ותהייה. אלא היא כלל זה מסור בידך: ככל שאדם משקיע בתורתו ועבודתו ועושה מלאכתו בנאמנות ובשמחה – כך דרכו ונתיבותיו יאירו ויבררו יותר... כאשר אדם משקיע באופן תמידי בד' הדברים הצריכים חיזוק: תורה, תפילה, מעשים טובים ודרך ארץ, ממילא השי"ת מאיר את עיניו ומסייע לו למצוא את דרך העבודה וההתקדמות הרוחנית הטובה ביותר עבורו.

6. **Shevet Mussar, Ch. 1, Paragraph 14 – Your rough spots are probably the most important.**

If one feels an unusually strong tendency toward one particular activity that the Torah prohibits, this is an indication that part of his unique mission is to overcome that inclination ...

Similarly, if one encounters unusual inner difficulty in fulfilling a particular mitzvah, he was most certainly sent into this world to do precisely this mitzvah and his evil inclination opposes him to stop him from fulfilling his obligation and to ensure he leaves the world empty-handed.

וכשם שבדבר שחושק האדם יותר ללמוד משם יבין שעל דבר זה נתגלגל להשלים...

וכדי שיבין יראה באיזה מצווה תקיף יצרו יותר לבטלה ויתחזק לקיימה, כי בוודאי על מצווה זו נתגלגל, וכדי שלא ישלים חוקו מנגדו יצרו לבטלה ולהוציאו מן העולם בידיים ריקניות.

Exercise: Make a list of the areas in which you feel the greatest difficulty.

7. **Vilna Gaon, Mishlei 14:2 – Make sure that your program of self-improvement is tailor-made to your individual spiritual needs.**

“One who follows his own straightness is a God-fearing person.” Since people have different character traits, each individual is prone to sinning in certain areas more than others. Therefore, a person must develop his own path, erecting safeguards for himself in the areas that he is more vulnerable, although others who do not face the same struggles will not need those safeguards. This is the idea of “following his own straightness,” i.e. following one’s own straight path. One who does this, in spite of the fact that others who do not understand his reasons frown upon his ways, is truly God-fearing.

הולך בישרו ירא ה'. כי כל אדם צריך לילך בדרכו הצריך לו, כי אין מידות בני האדם שוים זה לזה, ומחמת זה הוא רגיל בעבירה הבאה מאותה מידה, וצריך לגדור עצמו מזה מאד, ומה שאין חבירו צריך לו השמירה וחברו צריך לדבר אחר, ולכן הולך בישרו, בדרך היושר שלו, אעפ"י שבעיני הבריות הוא רע כי אינם יודעים מה שהוא צריך, ואעפ"כ הוא הולך בישרו-הוא ירא ה'.

8. **Pirkei Avot 2:5 – Despite all the careful analysis to decide on one’s special role, at times, through force of circumstance, God gives one a different role. In such a case, one may have to step far away from what feels like one’s natural role.**

Where there is no man, try to be a man ...

במקום שאין אנשים השתדל להיות איש.

KEY THEMES OF SECTION III

- ☞ Knowing that God has created each of us with a unique role empowers us to search for that role.
- ☞ While fulfilling one’s basic duties, a person should work over time to detect his special strengths, what he yearns to do, and what makes him happy. Following these clues one can begin to grasp and live one’s unique role.
- ☞ In addition, one of our major tasks is to also refine our negative character traits.

SECTION IV. ONE'S VOCATION AS A MAJOR PART OF ONE'S MISSION

Finding one's role in life does not only consist of choosing paths within one's personal development, Torah study, and performance of mitzvot. One should also find a vocation that suits one's unique nature, and not just view it as a means to earn money.

PART A. SELECTING A VOCATION

1. **Chovot HaLevavot, Gate of Trust, Ch. 3, p. 322, Leiberman Edition – The affinity one has toward a particular vocation is a Divine signal pointing him in that direction.**

Each person has a natural inclination toward a specific area of work more than another; for God has imprinted this affinity into each person's nature ... When one finds within himself a desire for a particular type of pursuit, and believes that he is well-suited for it, he should invest himself in that pursuit and use it as a means for earning a livelihood. And he should not give up that pursuit when at times he fails to support himself, rather he should trust in God that He will give him enough to live all the days of his life.

ולכל אדם יש חפץ במלאכה או סחורה מבלתי זולתה,
כבר הטביע האל לה בטבעו אהבה וחיבה ומי
שמוצא במידותיו וטבעו כוסף אל מלאכה מהמלאכות
ויהיה גופו ראוי לה ... יחזר עליה וישים אותה סיבה
להבאת מזונו. ויסבול מתקה ומרירותה. ואל יקוץ
כשימונע ממנו הטרף בקצת העתים, אך יבטח באלהים
שיספיק לו טרפו כל ימי חייו.

2. **Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, Careers, Hobbies & Sports for a Ben Torah, Aishaudio.com – Select a vocation that will allow you to maintain priorities in life.**

When you select a vocation, make sure that it leaves you ample time for Torah study, for thinking about what life is really all about, for living a full Jewish life. Make sure you don't lose sight of life's purpose and make your vocation the sum total of your life, and make sure the career you take allows for this.

PART B. THE POTENTIAL FOR SERVING GOD THROUGH ONE'S VOCATION

A Jew must always remember that one does not just reveal God's glory in the study hall or the synagogue. A person's vocation is also an avenue for serving God.

1. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. I, p. 269 – Any occupation, when utilized properly, can be invested with religious significance and sanctity.**

The Sages relate that (the Biblical figure) Hanoch was a shoemaker. "Over every stitch that he sewed in a pair of shoes, he would perform unifications of the heavenly realms." Rabbi Yisrael Salanter explained what form these unifications took: Hanoch invested careful thought and intent into each stitch – his intention was that each stitch go toward creating a comfortable and

איתא בחז"ל: "חנוך תופר מנעלים היה, ועל כל תפירה
היה מיחד יחודים" (מדרש תלפיות, ערך חנוך). רבי
ישראל סלנטר זצ"ל מבאר מה היו הכוונות ביחודים
אלה: על כל תפירה התכוון שתהיה נעל חזקה וטובה,
ומי שינעל אותה יהנה ממנה.... כאשר אדם מכוון
במעשי ידיו לחסד ולהאבת הבריות – אין לך יחוד גדול
מזה!

sturdy shoe so that the owner would be able to get the maximum benefit out of it ... When an individual infuses loving-kindness and love of other human beings into his work, this is the greatest form of “unifications”!

It simply does not make sense to think that we only serve God in the synagogue. The same God gave us every moment of our lives and every moment is meant to be invested with meaning.

2. **Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. I, p. 313 – Every moment carries a mission.**

Every moment in the life of every creature facilitates a unique revelation of Godliness ... This is the idea behind the concept mentioned in our daily prayers, that God “each day, constantly, renews Creation.” For each moment is a self-contained universe [i.e. the creation of each moment is the creation of a new world.]

כל רגע ורגע אצל כל אחד מהבראים, גילוי מיוחד הוא, דלא ניתנו שני רגעים לגילוי אחד. וזהו ענין “המחדש בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית, שכל רגע עולם אחר חדש הוא.

3. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. II, p. 270 – Every pursuit has the potential for holiness.**

In God’s world, there is nothing or no type of pursuit that is devoid of holiness. Wherever refined character traits, kindness, and love of fellow man can be found, the work being done is elevated to the level of Divine service!

בעולמו של הקב"ה אין שום דבר או עסק חילוני. במקום שיש מידות טובות, חסד ואהבה, מתקדשת כל המלאכה ומתרוממת לעבודת ה' ממש!

4. **Ibid. – Any vocation is an opportunity to apply Torah values to real life situations.**

Each vocation brings its own store of challenges, whether it be the temptation to overcharge or underpay, the difficulty of always keeping one’s word, making sure to avoid selling forbidden things, or avoiding unacceptable business tactics, etc. When a Jew encounters such a situation, he must know that this is his mission – to rise to the occasion and observe the *halachah* (law) ...

כל מקצוע ונסיונותיו. אם באונאה, או בהן צדק, אם ביחס אל הלקוחות או אל הפועלים, אם במניעה ממכירת דברים אסורים או במניעת שיטות מסחר פסולות. בבוא דבר מדברים אלה לידיו של התלמיד חכם ידע, כי זהו עבודתו, לעמוד בנסיון זה ולשמור את ההלכה....

5. **Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, the “Elder” of Slabodka, printed in Chut Shani, Vol. II p. 31 – Connecting to God is not restricted to religious ritual, Torah study, and prayer.**

Many people think that service of God and fear of heaven are restricted to specific actions at specific times, such as religious ritual, Torah study, and prayer. Thus, when someone finds himself outside of a formal Torah context, he feels empty and distanced from God ... But one must ask himself the following question: Since, after all, the world is filled by God’s Presence, this means

העולם חושבים כי עבודת ה' ויראת שמים נצטמצמה במעשים ידועים מיוחדים בזמנים ובמקומות מיוחדים כמו מעשי המצוות, העסק בתורה...תפילה, וכו'. וכשרואה האדם את עצמו מוצא מחוג זה ומכלל זה של המעשים הידועים לעבוד ה' יתברך, הרי הוא מרגיש את עצמו ריקן ומורחק מעבודה ומעשים טובים...אבל הגע עצמך הרי כיון שמלא כל הארץ כבודו ולית אתר פנוי מיניה, הרי כל מעשי האדם בכל מקום שהוא

that one's every action is done in the presence of God. Everything in the world is directly dependent upon God's Will for its very existence, and everything that happens is under God's direct supervision. That being the case, how is it conceivable that there can be any area of life which is devoid of the potential for fulfilling God's Will?

ובכל זמן וזמן הלא המה במקום כבודו ית'. ובדברים שתלויים ומתקיימים ברצונו ית' והכל נעשה ונחתך בגזירתו ית', איך אפשר שלא יהיה שמה מקום לעבודתו ולמלא רצונו ית'.

It is inconceivable that any area of life is outside of the bounds of serving God.

Rabbi Finkel proceeds to cite the following teachings of the Sages as evidence for this principle:

6. Talmud Bavli, Ta'anit 21b – Working as a doctor requires Jewish medical ethics.

Doctor Abba used to receive a greeting from the Heavenly Academy every day. Abaye [the Torah leader of the generation] would receive such a greeting only once a week, before Shabbat ... Abaye was distressed by this state of affairs ... He was informed [from Heaven]: "You are not capable of doing the sort of things that he does."

אבא אומנא הוה אתי ליה שלמא ממתבתא דרקיעא כל יומא ולאביי כל מעלי יומא דשבתא הוה קא חלשא דעתיה דאביי משום דאבא אומנא. אמרו ליה לא מצית למיעבד כעובדיה.

What was Doctor Abba's routine? When he would practice medicine, he would have the men and women sit separately. When he would treat a woman, he had a special cloak that had a hole in it through which he would treat the affected area, so that the woman would not have to be undressed in his presence. He had a special box in a private place into which anyone who wanted could place payment, but someone who could not pay would not have to. When a student of Torah would come for treatment, he would refuse payment, and he would even give him some money and tell him, "Use this to recover fully."

ומאי הוה עובדיה דאבא אומנא? דכי הוה עביד מילתא הוה מחית גברי לחוד ונשי לחוד ואית ליה לבושא דאית ביה קרנא דהוות בזיעא כי כוסילתא כי הוות אתיא ליה איתתא הוה מלביש לה כי היכי דלא ניסתכל בה ואית ליה דוכתא דצניעא דשדי ביה פשיטי דשקיל דאית ליה שדי ביה דלית ליה לא מיכסיף כי הוה אתרמי ליה צורבא מרבנן אגרא מיניה לא שקיל ובתר דקאי יהיב ליה פשיטי ואמר ליה זיל בריא נפשך

(Please also refer to the Morasha classes on Jewish Medical Ethics.)

7. Ibid. 22a – One can employ proper ethics and Jewish values in any profession you choose.

Rabbi Broka would often pass through the market of "Left." He was visited frequently by Elijah the Prophet. Rabbi Broka asked him, "Is there anyone in this marketplace who is [especially] worthy of eternal life?" Elijah answered in the negative. Presently, a man ... entered the marketplace, and Elijah pointed to him, saying, "This man is worthy of eternal life." Rabbi Broka ran after the man and asked him, "What do you do?" ... The

רבי ברוקא חוזאה הוה שכח בשוקא דבי לפט הוה שכח אליהו גביה א"ל איכא בהאי שוקא בר עלמא דאתי א"ל לא אדהכי והכי חזא לההוא גברא דהוה סיים מסאני אוכמי ולא רמי חוטא דתכלתא בגלימיה א"ל האי בר עלמא דאתי הוא רהט בתריה א"ל מאי עובדך א"ל זנדוקנא אנא ואסרנא גברי לחוד ונשי לחוד ...

man answered, "I am a prison warden. I make sure that the men and women are incarcerated separately" ...

Soon afterward, another two men passed by. Elijah remarked, "These men are also worthy of eternal life." Rabbi Broka approached them and inquired of them, "What do you do?" "We are happy people," they replied. "We cheer up people who are sad and when we see people quarreling, we try hard to make peace between them."

אדהכי והכי אתו הנך תרי אתי א"ל הנך נמי בני עלמא
דאתי ניהו אזל לגבייהו אמר להו מאי עובדיכו אמרו
ליה אינשי בדוחי אנן מבדחינן עציבי אי נמי כי חזינן
בי תרי דאית להו תיגרא בהדייהו טרחינן ועבדינן להו
שלמא.

KEY THEMES OF SECTION IV

- ☞ Judaism is not limited to the synagogue. If it takes more strength and creativity to serve God while occupied with activities that are not overtly spiritual, for that very reason these activities present a unique opportunity to serve God. There is no moment without significance to the God that gave you that moment.

SECTION V. THERE IS NO ROOM FOR ENVY

Rabbi Meir of Premislan once heard the complaint of a congregant who worried that another retailer had opened a store in competition with him. "Did you ever watch a horse drink from a stream?" the Rabbi asked. "You will notice that he taps with his hoof while drinking.

"The horse sees his reflection in the water and thinks that there is another horse there that will drink all the water and there will be none left for him. He therefore taps with his hoof in an attempt to scare the other horse away.

"Don't be like the horse. There is enough in the world for both you and your competitor. He will not take away what is destined for you."

After this the storekeeper gave help, tips, and advice to the other retailer and both of them prospered, each store as is often the case, fueling the other. (Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D., Do Unto Others, Andrews McMeel Publishing, p.99.)

1. **Rabbi Akiva Tatz – The Thinking Jewish Teenager's Guide to Life, pp. 79-80 – Faith in the perfection of God's plan allows for greater personal growth as one focuses on his own unique task instead of wasting his energy thinking about someone else's.**

... If you think you lack the tools you need for life, you are wrong. You are mistaken either because you have those tools but you are simply unaware of them, or you are mistaken about your task in life: you have the tools you need to fulfill your role but you are pursuing the wrong role. The role you imagine to be yours is in fact someone else's. In other words, you are unaware of your tools, or you are unaware of your role. You need to do some serious work to discover exactly the nature of your tools (and to discover all of them; nothing has been given to you to be wasted). And you need to do some serious work to discover your role: *stop longing for someone else's role* and get busy finding yours.

Again, the tools match the job exactly. We understand that the One who creates the whole enterprise gives every individual exactly what he or she needs to carry out the work that is necessary ...

And [with a grasp of your unique task] if you have ever felt jealous of anyone who has gifts or talents that you wish you had, *you will lose that jealousy*: if they have been given those talents it is only because they need them for their role. If you do not have those particular gifts, it is because you don't need them – you have been given the tools you need; you could not use someone else's tools because they are irrelevant to your life's purpose. That person needs them; you do not.

As you develop your true personality, character, and abilities, you are liberated from worrying about the life you shouldn't be leading.

2. Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. I, p. 37 – Awareness of your unique nature protects you from being envious.

An individual who knows himself and is aware of his nature, and who knows that whatever God has given him is a wondrous gift – if he will only take advantage of his talents and strengths he will attain all desirable traits. Such an individual does not suffer from jealousy or envy another person's lot in life! ... Do not compare yourself to others. Have faith in your Creator that He has given you all of your spiritual needs!

המכיר את עצמו ויודע תכונותיו, וידע כי מה שחננו הבורא ית' – מתנה גדולה היא, ואם רק ינצל את כחותיו יגיע לכל מעלה חמודה... אדם זה אינו סובל עוד מקנאה...אל תמדוד את עצמך בקנה המדה שלהם [אחרים]. דע והאמין לבוראך, כי נתן לך כל צרכך הר וחני!

This vision of the world not only encourages huge growth by empowering us to find and focus on our unique job, it also comforts us in what seem to be our failures. We can never be so confident that we are failing our task.

3. Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv, Sefer HaDei'ah 5:5:5 – Do not measure success in your life's mission by outward success only.

The reason for the constant spiritual upheavals that take place in a person's life is that one's mission is to descend to the lower levels in order to refine and elevate them. This allows the sparks of holiness trapped in those levels to be released and restored to their proper place.

This should teach you how careful one should be not to become embittered about the spiritual lot God has bequeathed him, whether small or great. Or if one feels that he is not as successful in spiritual matters as he should be, or if he feels that he has more challenges dealing with his evil inclination than he should have [he should not become bitter].

For one can never know what task he was sent into this world to perform. One person may have

וזהו סוד כל הירידות והקטנות, אשר עוברים בכל עת על כל אדם. כי הנה הוא כדי לירד ולהתקרב אל אשר למטה הימנו, וכדי להעלותו, כי נעשה בזה עליית ניצו"ק מבליעתו, להוציא יקר מזולל.

ומזה תראה כמה צריך האדם לזוהר מאד מלהרהר אחר מדותיו של הקב"ה, להתרעם ח"ו על חלקו, אם קטן ודל הוא. או כשרואה עצמו שאינו מצליח ח"ו בחפצי שמים, וכן כאשר יש לו התגברות היצר ח"ו יותר מהראוי לו לפי דעתו.

כי אין אדם יודע על איזה מלאכה שולח בעולמו; זה שולח לגרוף את הביבין, לטהר אותם ולנקותם מכל

been sent to [metaphorically] clean the gutters, to purify them of all pollution, and is constantly in a position of unease and constriction; while another was sent to adorn the king's chambers and make a crown upon his head, and thereby enjoys all of the comforts of royalty at all times.

Thus one's heart should never sink because of life's vicissitudes; rather he should constantly strengthen himself. Only God knows the secrets of His plans, giving each individual the appropriate tasks, allowing each individual to repair his supernal root; and together everyone shall bask in the light of the Living God.

חלאה וזוהמא, והוא תמיד במצור ובמצוק. וזה שולח לקשט את היכלי המלך, ולעשות עטרה על ראשו, ומתענג על זה בסגולות מלכים.

ולזאת, אין לאדם ליפול בשביל ירידות ה"ו, אלא יתחזק את עצמו תמיד כו'. כי רק לו ית"ש לבד נתכנו עלילות, לחלק לכ"א ואחד את מלאכתו הראויה לו, לתקן את שורשו במקום עליון. וכולם יאירו באור פני מלך חיים.

KEY THEMES OF SECTION V

- ☞ Many of us spend a lot of time looking at the talents and success of others in various aspects of life. Though at times this may inspire us to become more fully what we should become, more often than not it just depresses us. Our eyes do not see what God sees. Each of us has a unique task.
- ☞ If we do not enjoy the "success" we see in others it may be because that is simply not the success we were created to achieve.
- ☞ The take-home lesson of this entire class is one thing: each of us is considered by the Torah to be a world of our own and our only focus must be to achieve glory by fulfilling our own individual role.