

HITBODEDUT

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Hitbodedut is on a very high level, indeed a level above all levels (*Likutey Moharan* II, 25).

One of Rebbe Nachman's major teachings, perhaps his most important and best known, focuses on private, secluded prayer. This practice, known simply as *hitbodedut*, is the ultimate level in our relationship to God.

Likewise, *hitbodedut* is the tool with which to seek out and find our place: in the world at large; in our family; among friends and within the community; and, most importantly, within ourselves. It gives us the opportunity to release all

our inner feelings – the joys and depressions, the successes and frustrations, that greet us each day.

Through *hitbodedut*, we examine ourselves and re-examine ourselves, correcting the flaws and errors of the past, while seeking the proper path for the future. It cannot fail! Reb Noson wrote that Rebbe Nachman attained the level he did primarily through *hitbodedut* (*Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom: His Praises* #10). However, it wasn't only the Rebbe who rose to such great and lofty levels of spirituality because of *hitbodedut*. Rebbe Nachman himself said: All of the Tzaddikim were only able to attain the great levels they did because they practiced *hitbodedut* (*Likutey Moharan* II, 100).

Do your utmost to spend at least an hour every day in private prayer and meditation. Express yourself in your own words in the language you understand best. Talk about all the things you are going through. Admit your sins and transgressions, both intentional and unintentional. Speak to God the way you would to a close friend: tell Him what you're going through – your pain, the various pressures you are under, your personal situation and that of others in your home, and also of the Jewish people as a whole. Talk about everything in full. Argue with God in whatever way you can.

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Press Him, plead with Him to help you come genuinely closer to Him. Cry out, shout and groan, sigh and weep. Give thanks to God for all the love He has shown you in both spiritual and material matters. Sing to God and praise Him and then ask for whatever you need, spiritually and materially. Have faith that the satisfaction God derives from such conversations with even the lowliest of all people is more precious to Him than all other kinds of devotions, even those devotions of the angels

in all the worlds.

Even if you can't open your mouth at all, just the fact that you stand there putting your hope in God, lifting your eyes upwards and forcing yourself to speak and even if you say no more than a single word the entire time – all this endures forever (*Likutey Moharan* II, 95-101 etc.).



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If you've been practicing *hitbodedut* for years and are convinced there's been no improvement, continue doing it. In the end, you will reach your goal, as King David did. He cried every night and continued to do so until he was answered (*Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom* #68).

"Though my enemies encamp against me... I rely on this. One thing I asked of God that shall I seek – that I dwell in the House of God..." (Psalms 27:3,4). The best protection against the forces of evil is prayer and the desire to serve God. King David knew this. Although he was surrounded by a multitude of enemies – forces that sought to destroy him – King David did not fear. He beseeched God to help him retain his faith and always come before Him: to "dwell in the House of God." His

great desire to serve God and his unfaltering faith in prayer were his strength and fortitude against his enemies (*Likutey Halakhot, Netilat Yadayim li'Seudah 6:55*).

Reb Noson also said: We find exceptional advice throughout the Rebbe's teachings on how to serve God and draw closer to Him. But, sometimes the advice itself is extremely difficult to follow. The only advice that has the power consistently to elevate us to all the great levels that we desire to reach and fulfill is *hitbodedut* (*Likutey Moharan II, 101*).

(Taken from the book [Crossing the Narrow Bridge: A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman's Teachings](#), chapter 9 – *Hitbodedut*)