

**I. Introduction**

- **Definition of "Hitbodedut":** The text begins by defining "Hitbodedut" as a form of individual prayer and communication with G-d. It emphasizes the elevated and significant nature of this practice, suggesting that it surpasses other forms of connection with G-d. The reason why this is so powerful is because it is personal. Unlike formal prayer, the practice of talking to G-d results in communication and prayers that are totally unique, never before spoken. They are private conversations between you and G-d.

**II. Frequency and Setting**

- **Recommendation for Regular Practice:** Hitbodedut is like any other positive activity, like regular exercise, sleep, and healthy eating, that you want to make into a habit. You may have heard that it takes roughly 21 days for something to become a habit. The benefit of something becoming a habit is that it simply becomes part of your routine.
- **Designating Specific Times:** Setting aside time is also important. You know what your day is like, when things get busy, and when it is quieter. You know whether you're an early bird or a night owl. Think about how your life goes. You want to get rid of any excuses, such as "I'm too busy" or "I'm not getting anything out of this". You want it to simply become a natural part of your day.

**III. Encouragement for Solitude:** Do you ever talk to yourself when you are alone? Or sing? Or act silly? What would happen if someone came in from the other room, laughing because he heard everything? You'd probably feel embarrassed. It's easier to have a DMC with a close friend when you are alone with them. Even in a place of communal worship, like a synagogue, it's harder to feel the personal connection you have with G-d because of the presence and voices of all the other people.

**IV. Language of Prayer:** Jewish liturgy was standardized by the Men of the Great Assembly, who were concerned that the continued growth of the Diaspora would mean that Jews would forget the Holy Tongue. So, the Jewish prayer book is a framework for formalized, structured prayer in the Holy Tongue. It's basically all a Jewish person needs for communal prayer. If he or she does not speak Hebrew, at least they have the siddur for prayers. However, "Hitbodedut" is not formal prayer. It is personal. So, Rebbe Nachman advises us to use our mother tongues, the everyday language with which we express ourselves. That is the language of our hearts, and as the phrase goes, *rachmana liba ba'i*—G-d desires the heart. The heart is more drawn to words spoken in one's familiar language.

**V. Preparation and Attitude**

- **Readiness and Desire:** The text highlights the readiness and desire to speak and communicate with G-d. This indicates that engaging in "Hitbodedut" requires a proactive and willing attitude. That doesn't mean that it's easy. Before the amida, which is the central prayer Jews recite three times a day, we say, "L-rd open my lips that my mouth can declare Your praise". We ask G-d for help even with just opening our mouths. And even then, you may find yourself not knowing what to say. That's not only OK; it's already wonderful that you showed up and are standing before G-d. Make this into a prayer. Say, "Hashem, please help me to talk to You. Help me to find the words to express myself", and the like. Or, describe your difficulty to Him. The main thing is to be there and to say what is really present for you at that moment. Now there will be times when it will be obvious to you what you need to say. You might ask Hashem to take care of this or that need, or to help you in your relationships, or

with money, or health, or whatever. Just be real. And if words don't come, know that it is very valuable just to sit quietly or walk with Hashem.

- **It's especially important that you use the opportunity to really pour your heart out, if that's what you need to do.** We get very toughened by life. A lot of people have been burned by their experiences in life, with other people, so they develop a very tough exterior. When we speak to Hashem, we have to try as best as we can to remain open and vulnerable. It's really an important key to spiritual growth in general, and especially when it comes to connecting with Hashem. Rebbe Nachman says that it's good to talk to Hashem as if you were speaking with a good friend.
- **Impact of Habitual Practice:** Consistent engagement in "Hitbodedut" is suggested to impact one's overall disposition positively. It implies that habitual prayer contributes to a positive and receptive mindset. The idea is that this is one way to achieve an overall state of joy. It's amazing that the One Who Created the universe and has the power to change everything listens to me whenever I call upon Him.
- **Caution on Excessive Practice:** However, here's a cautionary note. Since we are encouraged to break our hearts, meaning, the tough wall around our hearts, and to be real with G-d, we have to know how to manage that state, because staying too long in a completely vulnerable state can lead to more negative emotional states. As with all spiritual practices, there has to be moderation, and a balance.

## VI. Accessibility for All

- **Universal Practice:** The text asserts that everyone, regardless of age or knowledge, can engage in "Hitbodedut." This suggests that this form of prayer is accessible to all individuals.
- **Potential for Personal Growth:** Engaging in "Hitbodedut" consistently is presented as a means of personal growth, implying that it is a transformative and accessible practice.

## VII. Examples and Applications

- **Illustrations of Attained Spiritual Levels:** The text provides illustrations of individuals, including righteous ones, who attained elevated spiritual levels through the practice of "Hitbodedut." This serves as examples of the potential spiritual heights achievable through this form of prayer.
- **Benefits of Incorporating Elements:** It mentions the benefits of incorporating elements of Torah study and prayer in one's private communication with G-d. This suggests that a holistic approach to spirituality, including study and prayer, is beneficial.

## VIII. Conclusion

- **Encouragement to Embrace "Hitbodedut":** The conclusion encourages readers to embrace "Hitbodedut" as a universal and accessible means of drawing closer to G-d. This implies that the practice is not exclusive but open to all.
- **Potential for Joy and Fulfillment:** The text suggests that genuine service and connection with G-d through "Hitbodedut" can lead to joy and fulfillment, emphasizing the positive and rewarding aspects of this form of prayer.

## Sources

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, *Likutei Morharan II:25*

*Hitbodedut* is the highest and greatest spiritual practice, namely, establishing for yourself a specific time to seclude yourself, in a room, or in a field, to speak deeply with your Creator, with complaints, excuses, graceful words, supplications, and to ask and beg Him to bring you close to Him to truly serve Him.

הַתְּבוּדוֹת הוּא מַעֲלָה עֲלֵינוּהָ וְגִדּוּלָה מִן הַכֹּל דְּהֵינּוּ  
לְקַבֵּעַ לוֹ עַל כָּל פְּנִים שָׁעָה אִו יוֹתֵר לְהַתְּבוּדָד לְבַדּוֹ  
בְּאַיִזָּה חֹדֶר אִו בְּשָׂדֵה וּלְפָרֵשׁ שִׁחְתּוֹ בֵּינוּ לְבֵין קוֹנּוֹ  
בְּטַעֲנוֹת וְאַמְתְּלָאוֹת בְּדַבְּרֵי חֵן וְרִצּוֹי וּפְיִיס לְבִקֵּשׁ  
וְלִהְתַּחַנֵּן מִלְּפָנָיו יְתִבָּרֵךְ, שִׁקְרָבוּ אֵלָיו לְעַבּוֹדָתוֹ בְּאַמֶּת.