



**MOTIVATION:  
THE LONG WAY**  
CHAPTERS 16–17



With long-term investment and daily reflections, it is “close to you” to literally create enthusiasm and emotions of love and awe of G-d. You can think your way to these feelings by meditating in detail about G-d’s greatness, and even if you are not filled with the greatest passion for G-d, your daily investment will yield enough love and awe to motivate you to serve Him. This method is known as The Long Way, because it takes lengthy and consistent practice to yield results.

## A BRAINY EMOTION

YOU DO YOUR PART, AND G-D WILL DO HIS

You follow a recipe to the T, and yet it royally flops. You adhere to the formula faithfully, but somehow it doesn't yield the results you anticipated. Is there something wrong with what you are doing—or worse, with you?

While a failed pastry may reflect on a faulty recipe or on a person who did not follow it exactly, when it comes to following Torah's directives, there is something else at play.

If you follow the Torah's protocol for serving G-d, then even if you don't experience the kind of results you anticipated, you need not feel frustration over not seeing tangible results of your efforts. The results are G-d's department.

Say you are a spiritually hardworking Jew who spends a considerable amount of time meditating about the greatness of G-d in the hopes of creating a deep love and awe of your Creator. You may be successful and feel an intense awe and fiery love of G-d. Your emotions then supplement the act of the mitzvah with spiritual wings, which lift the mitzvah to higher spiritual worlds. (*This will be discussed more in later chapters.*)

However, you may also find, to your surprise, that while you may develop an appreciation for G-d and intellectually understand that you “should” be drumming up a palpable love in your heart, no such love develops. You might be disappointed, but you are not at fault.

In Chapter 16 of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe reassures you that that's OK. Some souls are just not the “type” to be gushing with passionate love for G-d, even after praying and meditating at length. The most they experience is *tevunah*, an intellectual or “brainy” emotion.

If you are such a person, then this *tevunah* suffices as sufficient motivation to perform the *mitzvot* and acts as “wings” to the *mitzvot*, enabling them to rise heavenward, as if motivated by a conscious love.

This is the meaning of what it says in the Talmud, “The Holy One, blessed be He, joins a good thought to the deed.” If a Jew has a “good thought”—meaning, invests in meditating about G-d—then even if he or she does not reveal tangible emotions in their heart, G-d allows the *tevunah* to function as if it’s a real feeling. And so, He links the “brainy emotion” with the mitzvah it motivates. It is considered like “the real thing.”

*(Inspired by Chapter 16 of Tanya)*



**TANYA BIT:** I am responsible for the effort. G-d is responsible for the result.

# MOTIVATION TO ACT

## WHAT “CLOSE TO YOU” REALLY MEANS

Despite the hefty price tag, many successful companies invest in motivational speakers and workshops to inspire members of the company to work as a team. The expense is necessary because a motivated team maximizes productivity. And productivity is the bottom line in the business world.

The Torah describes serving G-d as follows: “For this thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.”

This seems to be the opposite of human experience. Maybe it is “close” for us to serve G-d with our mouths (by praying or saying words of Torah) or by acting as G-d wants (by doing *mitzvot*). But how is it “close” or accessible for us to serve G-d with our hearts? Isn’t it difficult to generate feelings of love and awe of G-d?

Yet the Torah is not demanding that we feel exploding fireworks of passion towards G-d. It’s simply telling us to motivate our hearts to want to do the acts commanded by G-d. How? By choosing to think about and focus on G-d’s greatness as the Creator of us and of our world. (*In later chapters, the Tanya provides specific meditations to do this.*) This should help us muster the motivation necessary to tear ourselves away from a computer screen or get off the couch to pray—or do whatever G-d wants from us at this moment.

While it’s nice to be able to feel totally in love with G-d, if that is not possible, we can at least feel motivated to serve G-d; we “just” have to actively use our brain.

There is one exception to this. When a *rasha* repeatedly gives in to every one of his heart’s whims and desires, the system malfunctions. He no longer can control his heart via his brain. He desires something, and he automatically gives into it, without any ability to put on the brakes. How then is it “close to him” to be motivated to serve G-d? He first must repent and shatter the hold that

the *kelipah* (negative spiritual forces) have on him. Once he sincerely repents, he, too, can think his way to love and awe of G-d, enough of both to motivate him to fulfill G-d's *mitzvot* and refrain from transgressing.

That's why it says "in your heart," followed by "that you may do it." We're definitely capable of creating a minimal amount of emotion so that we want to do what G-d wants, as well as to keep away from what He doesn't want.

Because in Judaism, action is the bottom line.

*(Inspired by Chapter 17 of Tanya)*



**TANYA BIT:** I can use my mind as a tool to motivate myself to do what G-d wants from me.