

Path to the Tree of Life

VOLUME TWO

Lessons on Tanya by
Zev Reichman

Adapted from the teachings of
Rav **Mordechai Silver**, shlit"א

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- Volume Two -

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Adapted from the Teachings of
Rav Mordechai Silver, Shlit”a

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ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

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כ"ד

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מושׁה וואלפסאן
משגיח רוחני, ישיבה תורה ודעת
רב דביהמ"ד אמונת ישראל

תוצא אצרך תש"ע.

ליצידי יקורי דר"ה נוצו בשערין של תורה ל' זאג ריבאמן שליט"א.
עמתי אראת אג היצוונות של ספרך "דרך פ' החיים" אשר זו
אתה מצותך מספר אידיש לשפת אנאך אלהשימורין בספר התנא
שנאמרו ע' חתני הרה"ק מנה"ג מרדכי מנשה צלגור שליט"א שנאמרו
לשומאי קריתו, ובידו, דבריו המהידיש, מיאיו המתקין, הנודעין
ממזין לך חכם וטהור, רצינות לשגיון עמוקים משמי לך מהקטי ל'
ומצוררם איראג שמיש.

זכית אתה, זאג ידידי, להיות דורג ומקרה מתורתו. נחמציאך
בדבריו נבונים הקולעים אל המערה, כי ספרך כתוב בדור טעם
ודעת, בזהירות נפלא, ומגילתני שבעה: יודה מהפכה לסורה
זכמה וכמה לבנת יהודים, דורשי צ' וצ"ל, ואירו צינתם באור
חמדות גלגלות בספר התנא והיה' לשם בעצ'ו תוצאת חכמה
בזכות השי"ת.

והנני לפרסך שיפולו מזינותיך תולע בהחזות פלגי מים
ומה' תמיד אומף ובה לרומם סם שמיש, ותעבה לתה דהתק
ע' מזווי התורה והיראה בהצמח אסייזתא דשמיא, ותעבה
לאריכות ימיך ושנין טובות אתה ודיתך, ונתת יהודי מפאציאך
מתק עוטר וכבוד.
דודו יבידות
אלם מאנאך

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The Month of *Adar* 5773

To my dear, beloved student, Rabbi Zev Reichman, *shlit"á* who is known in the halls of *Torah*.

I was pleased to see the drafts of your *Sefer*, ***Path To The Tree Of Life***, where you transcribed from the Yiddish to English the lessons in *Tanya* that were taught by my son-in-law, the genius and *tzadik*, our teacher and Rabbi, Mordechai Menashe Silver, *shlit"á*, to listening students. It is well known, that his words inspire, his waters are sweet, and they spring from a heart that is wise and pure. His ideas are exalted and deep, they gladden the heart of those who seek *Hashem*, and they arouse fear of Heaven.

You merited, Zev my dear one, to be one who draws and then waters from his *Torah*, and to make it available in clear sentences that reach their purpose, for your *Sefer* is written with good judgment and understanding, with fantastic clarity. I am certain that with *Hashem's* help it will make a positive revolution in the hearts of many, many Jews, who seek *Hashem* and His strength. Their eyes will light up with the precious treasures from the holy *Tanya* and with *Hashem's* help these ideas will be a great help to them in serving *Hashem*.

Let me bless you that your wellsprings should spread forth to the public squares as rivers of *Torah* water. May you merit added courage and strength to raise the name of Heaven. May you merit to lead your community on the rivers of *Torah* and fear of Heaven with success and Divine help. May you merit length of days and good years for you and your spouse. May you merit Jewish *nachas* from your descendants out of wealth and honor.

With fierce friendship,
Moshe Wolfson

Mordechai M. Silver

Rabbi of Cong.

Toldos Yehuda Stitchin

1446-60th St.

מודכי מנשה זילבער

רב דקהל תולדות יהודה דחסידי

סטיטשין

ברוקלין ניו יארק

דעזע יום צ' אסדר אין חזקן וניחאן (פ' קמ"א) גאון

הי' ראגי קרג מסר השיעורים זסביך פניא אנהארו צו יקינו ונגדו זיו
ה"י מקרא יקרא קדוש ומקדש צור הגדה והחסינות והוא ממקליקים החלודים והנאמנים
אל השיעורים ה"ה הרה"ה המוס' מהר"ר צאנז ר"ב מאן קיאא רד דק"ק צענזשואג נש' פנסי י"ג

והנה כפי אמת מבור אה המחר אש"ט בא בונגו הוא זל"ש אהרנו גדולי הקדוה
אפהיא אור החסינות אפ אהחוקים ואקרו אה אמדני קבא מקום אהז אהז אהינו אלהים אה
אהא אנהן אהרמ' השיעורים דלפת המפתח כפי אהקוב אה היצורים היצנים מהינים אהמני
האויבים' והא אה קאר הגדה כז חזון והנה ויגי קרג מהסר אהמא חן דאני אנהגו
דעומתים נאמרים ודדחיות ודעני מקומן הוסף המחר דיאור כפי אהרמ' הקדושים כפון
והיא אהין י' נתי' אהצור צו בא הסר אה חצקו צו חקר באמו אהם הוא דהיקון כפול
זע"ה אהרר אה נאמרי אש"ט אנה אנה אה הרדים באה אהם אהמוג וינה אהמון כפול
אזאב אהין חזק אמה אנה אהין אהם אהם אה דיאג אהיה אהן

יב"ח ומקירו
מרדכי מנשה זילבער

Mordechai M. Silver
 Rabbi of Cong.
Toldos Yehuda Stitchin
 1446-60th Street

With the help of *Hashem*, the fourth day to the *Torah* reading, “I am your section and inheritance” (*Parashas Korach 5772*).

Behold I have seen a little of the book of *shiurim*, lessons, that we delivered on the holy book, *Tanya*, and were transcribed by this dear individual who seeks and searches for the lights of *Torah* and *Chassidus*, and he is one of those prominent and loyal listeners of our classes, Rabbi Zev Reichman, *shlit”a*, who is a Rav of a holy community in Englewood, New Jersey.

Behold, I know that the author’s only intention is for the sake of Heaven, to extend the boundaries of holiness and to bring the light of *Chassidus* even to those who are far. He seeks to bring our Jewish brethren wherever they might be closer to our Father in Heaven. This is why he found it correct to translate our lessons into the language of the country so that the flocks who do not understand our language of “Yiddish” will also drink from these waters. Behold, *Moshe* translated the *Torah* into seventy languages. I have seen a bit of the *Sefer*. It found favor in my eyes. It was written with a loyalty to what was said and with clarity. In certain places the author added explanations to fully explain matters. Even though I do not have the free time to review the entire *Sefer*, one can rely on a friend like the author that all is correct as it should be. Therefore, I bless the author *shlit”a* that he should merit to bring merit to the masses as is the desire of his pure heart. May he merit to study and teach our holy *Torah* out of much joy and *nachas* for many good years until the coming of *Mashiach*, amen.

His soulful friend who respects him,
Mordechai Menashe Silver

Introduction

The deeper wisdom of Torah teaches that the human mind has three key components, *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Da'as*. *Chochmah* is the wisdom of a matter. It relates to life. In *Koheles* King Solomon taught, “*HaChochmah techayeh be'aleha!*” “Wisdom gives **life** to those who possess it!” (*Koheles* 7:12) One who grasps a matter through *Chochmah* senses the very essence and life of a concept. One whose *Chochmah* has been illuminated by a particular concept may not be able to explain why he is drawn to that thought, however, he feels a deep kinship and passion with that idea. He feels life when contemplating it. *Binah* is the power of understanding and comprehension. One who grasped a concept with *Binah* can define and explain the thought. He might even understand why he found that particular idea compelling. Yet, the feeling of life is less acute in those matters that are merely grasped with *Binah*. Usually, intellectual activity is a *Binah* experience. We are confronted with ideas, our minds struggle to grasp them, and when we master them we feel a deep satisfaction and pleasure. This book, a sequel to Path to the Tree of Life Volume One, contains the words of the holy Tanya, chapters nine through twenty, and adaptations of lessons that Rav Mordechai Silver *shlit”a* delivered on those *perakim*. The Torah thoughts of this work are special. Some of these Torah concepts emerge from *Chochmah* and are grasped with *Chochmah*. Some of the ideas are deeply profound. They also contain deep feelings of life. It is my fervent prayer and hope that study of these lessons will add to the feelings of life and Divine attachment that our souls crave. May this book help us connect deeply to the Tree of Life.

This work owes a debt of gratitude to many. First, thanks to the Stitchiner Rebbe, Rav Mordechai Silver *shlit”a* for teaching the classes on Tanya, allowing them to be recorded, and then allowing me to adapt them to an English speaking audience.

I am deeply grateful to Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Silver and Rabbi Y. Spitzer, members of Congregation *Toldos Yehuda –Stitchin*, who helped review this work for content, accuracy, and sensitivity.

My dear friend, Mr. Brian Haimm, has helped me immeasurably with this project and many others. Many a time, he drove me to hear the Rebbe’s lectures, and for the last few years he has been a lead organizer of a weekly Tanya class in our community in Englewood, New Jersey.

Mr. Seth Gerszberg and his *Eishes Chayil*, Emily Gerszberg, have, virtually

every Wednesday, selflessly hosted the Englewood Tanya class in their home for the last two years. Sharing these thoughts with members of the broader community has helped clarify ideas and formulations. May the merit of chessed and Torah bring many blessings to them and their family members. I have been blessed with exceptional editors. I owe many thanks to Mrs. Sarah Weiderblank and Mrs. Shifra Shapiro for reviewing the manuscript. Thanks to Rabbi Nosson Hirschberg for preparing the index. Finally, I owe a *yasher koach* to Rabbi A. Perl and MasterPage Typesetting and Layout for working diligently to typeset the manuscript.

While working on this volume I was also blessed to serve our shul, East Hill Synagogue, of Englewood, New Jersey and to teach at Yeshiva University. I am most grateful to the leadership of these institutions for their efforts on behalf of this and other worthy projects. In Englewood, the shul officers, leaders, and members have been extremely helpful to me and my family. The leadership of our shul has been unstintingly gracious in their support for this and other Torah endeavors. In particular, I am most thankful to Mr. Gabriel Bousbib and Mr. Zvi Rudman who have each served the community as Shul President while I worked on this volume. Shul President is frequently a thankless job. May the Almighty bless them, their families, and all the shul members with health, good fortune, and closeness to the Divine in the merit of their many efforts on behalf of the Torah and our community.

At Yeshiva I have had the privilege of teaching students in the Isaac Breuer College and in the James Striar School. I am deeply indebted to Rabbi Menachem Penner, Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky, Rabbi Yonasan Shippel, and Mr. Richard Joel for their support and leadership of these institutions.

Many thanks to Mr. Scott Korman for serving as a loyal chavrusa and friend. Scott is always ready to learn and help spread Torah. Many of the ideas in this work were studied with him. This work owes a great debt to the generous donors who helped underwrite its preparation. Mr. and Mrs. Raphael Benaroya, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Straus, Mr. Eric Herschmann, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Kahane, the Schwalbe Family, Mr. Peter Schwalbe, Mr. and Mrs. Mendel Balk, Mr. and Mrs. Nader Bolour, and Dr. and Mrs. Howie Baruch are full partners in the Torah learning that this work will hopefully engender.

Finally, I have no words to express my thanks to the Almighty for the portion He has given to me and my family. May this work bring Him *nachas* and help His children love Him and serve Him more.





The righteous do not have an evil animal urge. Yet an urge for evil is part of the human condition. So how can there be people who do not have an evil urge? The answer lies in understanding the fact that the root of the evil urge is limitations and judgments. In the righteous, the evil urge takes the form of judgments. Rebuke is therefore a holy and elevated form of the evil urge. The more sweetened the judgment the more refined and elevated the urge. The task during the month of Elul and the holiday of Rosh Hashanah is to sweeten restrictions and limitations.

LESSON

21 The Nature of the Evil Urge

Chapter Nine of the *Tanya* reads:

The place of the kelipas nogah, the kelipah which pulls man to all material matters, not to prohibited matters, is in the left ventricle of the heart which is filled with blood

As it is written that "blood is the nefesh"

Hence all lusts and boasting and anger and similar passions are in the heart, and from the heart they spread throughout the whole body, rising also to the brain in the head, so as to cause us to think and meditate about them and become cunning in them, just as the blood has its source in the heart, and from the heart it circulates into every limb, rising also to the brain in the head.

והנה מקום משכן נפש הבהמית שמקליפת נוגה בכל איש ישראל הוא בלב בחלל שמאלי שהוא מלא דם

וכתיב כי הדם הוא הנפש

ולכן כל התאוות והתפארות וכעס ודומיהן הן בלב ומהלב הן מתפשטות בכל הגוף וגם עולה למוח שבראש לחשב ולהרהר בהן ולהתחכם בהן כמו שהדם מקורו בלב ומהלב מתפשט לכל האברים וגם עולה להמוח שבראש

The Animal Soul and Blood

The *Tanya* teaches that the animal soul that emerges from *kelipas nogah* resides in each Jewish soul, in the left ventricle of the heart that is filled with

blood. The Torah teaches, "*ki hadam hu hanefesh*", "for the blood is the soul" (*Devarim* 12:23). *Nefesh* in the verse refers to *Nefesh habeheimis*, the animal soul, as a human being has physical life like an animal does. And this animal soul is likened to blood. Blood spreads from the heart to all the limbs of the body. Similarly, urges such as anger and lust emerge from the *Nefesh habeheimis* and then spread out to the entire person.

The Nature of the Evil Urge

The source of evil urges is the heart, not the mind, and the *yetzer hara* stems from blood, *dam*, from the term *dimyon*, which means fantasy. As a result, the evil urge is both illogical and animalistic. It is composed of fantasies and nonsensical imaginings; it is imagination, *dimyon*, and not correct judgment, *Da'as*. The Torah warns us, "*Rak chazak levilti achol hadam*", "Just be very strong and do not eat blood" (*Devarim* 12:23). Rashi¹ offers two comments on this verse. His first point is that if *Hashem* needed to warn us to be strong and not consume blood, we can conclude that Jews were in fact immersed in eating blood. His second point is, "*Lo ba hakasuv elah lehzahircha ulelamedcha ad kama atah tzarich lehischazek bemitzvos*", which means that, "The verse only comes to warn you and teach you how much you must strengthen yourself in *mitzvah* observance". "*Im hadam shehu kal lehishamer mimenu, she'ein adam mis'aveh lo, hutzrach lechazkecha be'azharaso, kal vachomeir lesha'ar mitzvos*". "If [regarding] blood, which is easy to avoid since man does not naturally desire it, the verse had to strengthen you to overcome the urge to eat it, certainly one needs strength to fulfill other *mitzvos*". A person's soul naturally finds blood revolting, yet the Torah rewards those who avoid it. If that is so, how much more can we anticipate reward for avoiding misbehaviors that we actually desire to do.

1. Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, רב שלמה יצחקי, known by the acronym of his name as Rashi, was one of the greatest Torah teachers in our history. He lived in France and Germany. He was born in 1040/4800 and left this world in 1105/4865. He wrote commentaries that explained the entire Hebrew Bible, as well as the overwhelming majority of the Talmud, in addition to other legal works. Rashi is the premier commentator for all the subjects he explicated. His family and students developed many new approaches to the study of Talmud and Bible and established the unique scholarship of Ashkenazic Jewry.

A normal person would be revolted by drinking blood. What, then, attracts man toward blood? Why did the Torah need to warn us about the need to "strengthen yourselves"? Although to most people ingesting blood is ridiculous and unattractive, there are some whose psyche attracts them to perform illogical actions, and for these people there is a need for the Torah to insist, "*rak chazak*", "just be strong". This is in fact the nature of the root of all misdeeds. What is desirous to one, another will identify as nonsense and repulsive. In truth, *all* evil urges are nonsense, whether or not we recognize them as such. Yet in either case, we will receive reward for avoiding them.

When the Torah includes the proscription against eating blood, it is teaching us about the nature of the evil urge. A person may not initially realize what is going to be his particular challenge. People find different things enticing. But it is important to realize that in truth, all evil desires are nonsensical. When we see things from a more enlightened perspective, we are able to recognize their folly.

Consider the desire for honor. Honor is in fact a silly entity. What is honor really? It offers nothing of substance. The honor given to people is inherently meaningless. A groom who is honored feels pleasure from the expressions of respect bestowed upon him. But will this respect last? Is it unique? Everyone will be a *chasan* and get that type of honor! We think that we are great because we get *kavod*? That is nonsense!

Imagine a case where you are blessed with a good reputation. Pursuing and maintaining this reputation can be a powerful motivator. But does having a good name necessarily make you a better person? Do you serve God more because people talk about you? Are you a better person because you become the son-in-law of a *rebbe*? Is seeking this type of honor really a worthwhile pursuit? Is it helping you with your ultimate goal, *ledavkah bo*, to attach to Him?

God declares, "*hashamayim kis'i vеха'aratz hadom raglai ve'el zeh abit el ani unecheh ruach vechareid al devari*", "The heavens are My throne, the earth My footstool but to this I look, to a poor man, weak of spirit, who trembles at My word" (*Yeshayahu* 66:1-2). God tells us that the broken, poor person who is trying to serve God is the person He seeks out. We too should connect ourselves to that holy individual. We should not vie for the approval and companionship of the arrogant, wealthy or famous individual! What matters is *kavod Hashem*. So why do we run after honor and money? We are like an animal that runs to eat straw. We are running after nonsense!

Honor is just one example of an urge that we have that when we examine it more closely, we see that it does not really make sense. Especially regarding those urges that we desire, we should look deeply and realize that they are nonsense. We should ask ourselves, "Do I want to be a fool?" "*Ki hadam hu hanefesh*", "For the blood is the soul"; man is filled with *dimyonos*, nonsensical desires, and when we realize how foolish the urges are, we can more easily defeat them.

What to Live For

The evil urge is silly. It should make us feel embarrassed about ourselves. Instead of chasing after its directives, we would do better to place our focus on attaining that which really is of value. Each of us has moments like those of King Solomon, when we can ask of God whatever we desire and He will grant it. King Solomon did not use his moment of favor to ask for wealth, honor, or physical urges. He asked the Almighty for the ability to judge His nation. He asked for something truly meaningful. At our special moments we should ask for attachment to God. When we pray on *Rosh Hashanah* we should ask for *deveikus baHashem*. Attachment to God is really the only thing that matters. We have to be stubborn in our insistence that the only thing we are looking for is to be attached to God. We must hope exclusively for "*Shivti beveis Hashem kol yemei chayai lachazos beno'am Hashem ulevakeir beheichalo*", "To sit in the house of *Hashem* all the days of my life, to see the pleasantness of *Hashem* and to discern in His palace" (*Tehillim* 27:4).

King David was a monarch who witnessed much. He saw the vast array of types of people as well as their disparate missions. Having observed so much, he taught us that the one thing worth asking for is the ability to sit in the Almighty's home and to study His Torah. Hence the sentence he composed that is recited throughout the month of *Elul*. "*Achas sha'alti mei'eis Hashem osah avakeish: Shivti beveis Hashem kol yemei chayai, lachazos beno'am Hashem ulevakeir beheichalo*" "One thing I requested of God, that, I seek: To sit in the house of *Hashem* all the days of my life and to discern in His palace" (*Tehillim* 27:4-5). Real success is not becoming a famous *rosh yeshiva*, a prominent businessman, or a powerful person; rather, it consists of being a simple Jew sitting in the corner of a *Beis Midrash* and learning from a stack of *sefarim*. Perhaps no one knows this Jew, but he is the epitome of real achievement.

Where are we heading in life? We are heading towards God. We have to keep reminding ourselves that the purpose of life is to take pleasure in God--*lehisnag al Hashem* (*Mesillas Yesharim*). Once an individual's service to God is such that he is *misanag al Hashem*--when he reaches the point that he is enjoying God through his service of *Hashem*--then he knows he has reached the appropriate level of service to God.

There is a deep pleasure we experience in *avodas Hashem* that is unparalleled. It is the joy of *deveikus baHashem*. Our mission in life is to work for God. Once we are feeling the *ta'anug Eloki* in our service, we will be aware that our service has reached the level that it should. We should be praying for this basic success.

Remember the Basics

When we stop thinking about the basic principles that ought to truly matter to a Jew, we are in danger of getting caught up in nonsense. But being aware of the basics, though vital, is not the final stop. The Ba'al Shem Tov lit up Jewish souls with a great light *after* they were already aware of the basics of Judaism. Today, people neglect both the high levels and the basics.

What is a Jew? The *Mesillas Yesharim* gives us a clear definition in the very beginning of his work. We must remember our mission to serve God, and to reach a level of service to God where we enjoy His presence. This requires us to work hard. Those who truly contemplate *Hashem* in this world will be greatly rewarded in the next world. It is encouraging to note that in our generation, *Hashem* extends special help to those who are sincere and heartfelt. In fact, we can merit to reach levels that earlier generations could not achieve.

We Can Reach Great Heights

The special attributes of simple service of *Hashem* in our generation must be emphasized. The *Navi* tells us about the future, informing us that, "*vehaya hanish'ar beTziyon vehanosar biYerushalayim kadosh ye'ameir lo*", "It will be that everyone who is left in Zion and Jerusalem will be called holy" (*Yeshayahu* 4:3). This verse seems to imply that in light of the great temptations and challenges of our times, a simple Jew who remains faithful will be considered a holy Jew, comparable to the great Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, who was a holy

being. However, Rav Nachman of Breslov noted that the verse should be read as a rhetorical question. *Kadosh ye'ameir lo?* Is that the *only* expression of praise we can offer such a person? It is in fact too limited! In light of the great darkness that will characterize the time period before *Mashiach's* arrival, loyal and simple Jews will be considered so holy that even the term *kadosh* will be insufficient to describe them! In our day, just being a devoted Jew who wishes to serve God is an amazing feat. The verse is asking, "Can one call him holy?" Is that enough of an accolade for the person who resists the overwhelming temptations of these dark and muddled days? No, he is much more than sacred! We who live in this time period have been given the privilege to reach exalted levels. We can be the ones who are still standing in Zion!

The Divine Soul is Rooted in the Mind

But the abode of the Divine soul is in the brains that are in the head, and from there it extends to all the limbs; and also in the heart, in the right ventricle wherein there is no blood, as is written, "The heart of the wise man is on his right". It is [the source of] man's fervent love towards God which, like flaming coals, flares up in the heart of discerning men who understand and reflect, with the [faculty of] knowledge of their brain, on matters that arouse this love.

אך מקום משכן נפש האלהית הוא במוחין שבראש ומשם מתפשטת לכל האברים וגם בלב בחלל הימני שאין בו דם וכמ"ש לב חכם לימינו והיא אהבת ה' כרשפי שלהבת מתלהבת בלב משכילים המבינים ומתבוננים בדעתם אשר במוחם בדברים המעוררים את האהבה.

Having discussed the nature and challenges of the *Nefesh habehemis*, the *Tanya* now moves on to a discussion of the *Nefesh Elohis*, the Godly soul, which is concentrated in the *mochin shebarosh*, and then extends downward to the right half of the heart. From here we see that while the mind tends towards the *Nefesh Elohis*, the heart can go either way, as the left half tends towards the animalistic while the right leans towards the Godly. The liver, in contrast, is entirely blood and leans solely towards the physical and the animalistic.

Also [of] the gladness of the heart in the beauty of God and the majesty of His glory [which is aroused] when the eyes of the wise

וכן שמחת לבב בתפארת ה' והדר גאונו כאשר עיני החכם אשר בראשו במוח חכמתו ובינתו מסתכלים ביקרא

<p><i>man, that are in his head, i.e., in the brain, harboring his wisdom and understanding, gaze at the glory of the King and beauty of His greatness that are unfathomable and without end or limit, as explained elsewhere.</i></p>	<p>דמלכא ותפארת גדולתו עד אין חקר ואין סוף ותכלית כמבואר במקום אחר</p>
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Notice the language of the *Tanya*. When writing these words he certainly had very powerful emotions. He tried to express overwhelming sentiments in this sentence, "*simchas levav besiferes Hashem vehadar ge'ono*", "the gladness of the heart in the beauty of God and the majesty of His glory". There is great joy in the heart when it recognizes the truth. This is the joy of appreciating the *Tiferes* of the *Ribono Shel Olam*. The enormous joy in the heart comes from the *ChaBaD*, and will be found in the mind that appreciates the absolute truth.

<p><i>as also the other holy affections (midos) in the heart originate from ChaBaD [wisdom, understanding, knowledge] in the mind.</i></p>	<p>וכן שאר מדות קדושות שבלב הן מחב"ד שבמוחין.</p>
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Thus, we see that the *ChaBaD* in the mind sires all of the holy *midos*.

<p><i>It is written, however, "One nation shall prevail over the other nation". The body is called a "small city". Just as two kings wage war over a town, which each wishes to capture and rule, which is to say to dominate its inhabitants according to his will, so that they obey him in all that he decrees for them, so do the two souls- the Divine and the vitalizing animal soul that comes from the kelipah-wage war against each other over the body and all its limbs. It is the desire of the Divine soul that it alone rule over the person and direct him, and that all his limbs should obey it and surrender themselves completely to it and become a vehicle for it, as well as a robe [instrument] for its ten faculties and three garments mentioned above, all of which should pervade the organs of the body, and the entire body should be permeated with them alone, to the exclusion of any alien influence, God forbid.</i></p>	<p>אך הנה כתיב ולאום מלאום יאמץ כי הגוף נקרא עיר קטנה וכמו ששני מלכים נלחמים על עיר אחת שכל אחד רוצה לכבשה ולמלוך עליה דהיינו להנהיג יושביה כרצונו ושיהיו סרים למשמעתו בכל אשר יגזור עליהם. כך שתי הנפשות האלהית והחיונית הבהמית שמהקליפה נלחמות זו עם זו על הגוף וכל אבריו שהאלהית חפצה ורצונה שתהא היא לבדה המושלת עליו ומנהיגתו וכל האברים יהיו סרים למשמעתה ובטלים אצלה לגמרי ומרכבה אליה ויהיו לבוש לעשר בחינותיה וג' לבושיה הנ"ל שיתלבשו כולם באברי הגוף ויהיה הגוף כולו מלא מהם לבדם ולא יעבור זר בתוכם ח"ו</p>
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An ongoing war for dominion thus takes place within the human being, who is likened to a city. This is the war between the *yetzer tov* and its opponent. The animal soul seeks to fully control the body and psyche of the person. The Godly soul also battles to fully direct and permeate every facet of the person.

That is to say, that the three brains that are in the head shall be permeated with ChaBaD of the Divine soul, namely, the wisdom of God and the understanding of Him, by pondering on His unfathomable and infinite greatness; and from them shall be born, through the Da'as (knowledge), awe in his mind and dread of God in his heart, as well as a love of God that shall flare up like a glowing fire in his heart, like flaming coals, so that his soul shall yearn and long, with passion and desire, to cleave to the blessed Ein Sof, with his whole heart, soul and might, from the very depths of the right ventricle of the heart. The latter would be so thoroughly permeated with love to overflowing so as to inundate the left side as well, to the extent of subduing the sitra achra with its element of the "evil waters" (namely, the lust stemming from kelipas nogah) changing it and transforming it from seeking the pleasures of this world to the love of God.

דהיינו תלת מוחין שבראש יהיו ממולאים מחב"ד שבנפש האלהית שהיא חכמת ה' ובינתו להתבונן בגדולתו אשר עד אין חקר ואין סוף ולהוליד מהן על ידי הדעת היראה במוחו ופחד ה' בלבו ואהבת ה' כאש בוערה בלבו כרשפי שלהבת להיות נכספה וגם כלתה נפשו בחשיקה וחפיצה לדבקה בו בא"ס ב"ה בכל לב ונפש ומאד מעומקא דלבא שבחלל הימני שיהיה תוכו רצוף אהבה מלא וגדוש עד שתתפשט גם לחלל השמאלי לאכפיא לס"א יסוד המים הרעים שבה שהיא התאוה שמקליפת נוגה לשנותה ולהפכה מתענוגי עולם הזה לאהבת ה'

When the Godly soul wins in its struggle, the *yetzer hara* goes through a process of change. The first stage is *iskafia*, coercing, and eventually it is followed by *is'hapcha*, transforming. At a time when the Godly soul rules, the animal soul is transformed and it advocates holy actions. How does this change occur? Why can the animal soul change? A clearer definition of the root of the animal spirit will shed light on these questions.

At its root, the *yetzer hara* is in fact a *mal'ach kadosh*, a holy angel. It stems from judgments, *gevuros*, and after going through many further limitations, *tzimtzumim*, it emerges as the *yetzer hara*. At its root the evil urge is the holy angel of great stringencies. Once the Godly soul is victorious, the animal spirit is transformed, for it is returned to its root, the angelic force of holy limits.

The goal of a person should be to become someone who is entirely good. In fact, there are *tzadikim* who do not have a *yetzer hara*. *Seforim* explain that these elevated people actually do not possess the animal-like urge. This is hard to understand—isn't an evil urge part of the human condition? What has happened is that for these *tzadikim*, the *yetzer hara* has become non-sweetened *gevuros*. This is what a person should strive for. Then he is to keep refining his personality with the objective of becoming softer, sweeter, and a source of blessing to others.

Holiness Means Being All Good

Animal urges should be raised to holy judgments. Strict judgments should then be elevated to soft limits. The soft limits should be elevated into loving feelings. A person must ultimately arrive at the level of complete good, *tov*, with almost no judgmental limits, *gevuros*. He should strive to be a person who never gets angry, punishes, or hurts others. *Tzadikim* first conquer the animal within. They are left with judgments. They conquer the urge to be strict and make their judging natures softer, sweeter, and more delicate. Eventually they become people who are almost exclusively loving, charitable, and kind.

Rabbi Yekusiel Yehuda Halberstam, o.b.m., the Klausenberger Rebbe, related two stories about Rav Aharon Rokeach, o.b.m., the Belzer Rebbe, that illustrate the total goodness of this tzadik. "I remember that they once related to my father, o.b.m., that when the Tzadik Rav Aharon of Belz was in Munkatch, policemen came and tried to jail him. They hit him and pushed him, and they treated him very roughly. He could not stand their wickedness anymore and he blurted out, 'They are a bit very strange, these goyim.' For him this was a very harsh statement about anti-Semites. I remember that when they told this to my father he smiled. This is the way of the holy tzadikim, only goodness!"

"Similarly, I heard it said in the name of the Tzadik Rav Aharon of Belz, o.b.m., that when he arrived to the Holy Land, he said, "It is wondrous and awesome that here in the land of Israel even the goyim are Yidden!"²

2. *Imros Tzadikim*, page 22.

Let us elaborate a bit on the concept of punishment, so we can understand the meaning of these stories, as well as the level we are expected to attain. We know that we are to emulate God. Sometimes God punishes. Why then, do *tzadikim* seek to become people who do not disburse punishments? To answer this question, we must better define how punishment takes place.

What is punishment? The prophet declared, "*teyasreich ra'aseich*", which means, "your evil will punish you" (*Yirmiyahu* 2:19). This phrase is expressing the profound concept that evil itself punishes. "*Mipi Elyon, lo seitzei hara'os vehatov*", "From the One on High, evil and good do not emerge" (*Eichah* 3:38). *Hashem* Himself does not mete out punishment. Rather, the sin punishes. The misdeed itself is *mechayeih*, life-giving, to the *mechabel*, the angel of destruction, and this angel delivers the punishment. As he punishes, the angel weakens, because angels of destruction, *mal'achei chabalah*, lose their sparks, *nitzotzin*, as the person suffers from them, and they eventually disappear.

Punishment fixes the damage wrought by the sin. The sin sent holy life into exile, which caused sparks to enter the angel of destruction, and these sparks gave the angel of destruction permission to do damage. The essence of the angel is to destroy, and to seek out permission to destroy. But in fact, destruction can come not only from angels, but also from anti-Semites, and both these destructive agents draw life from our sins. Our sins power their destructive urge, but once this urge is spent, their existence ceases. Thus *Hashem* does not punish man. Man punishes himself. The aspiration of *tzadikim* is to resemble *Hashem*. Great *tzadikim* therefore do not inflict punishments on others. They, like the Divine, are all good. They allow man to punish himself with his misdeeds.

Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk interprets the verse about the Jews at the Red Sea, "*Hashem yilacheim lachem ve'atem tacharishun*", "*Hashem* will fight for you and you are to be silent" (*Shemos* 14:14), to mean: *Hashem* is fighting you. That bit of *Hashem* that is embedded within the Egyptians was something the Jews had to fight. But *atem tacharishun*--you can uproot it and dig it out. Why wait for a punishment to expunge the good spark from the evil? You can repent! Through your *teshuvah* you will uproot this life that your sins have embedded in the forces of evil! You can then be secure without a punishment!

This is how we can understand the idea we saw previously, that punishments do not come from *Hashem*. For holiness is all good, *mei'ito lo seitzei ra'ah!* From Him evil will not emerge!

There are some *tzadikim* who punish sinners. When they see the bad deeds of the sinner, they get angry and punish. Regarding these people, we are warned, "*Gam anosh latzadik lo tov!*" "It is not good for the righteous to punish!" (*Mishlei* 17:26). Just as *Hashem* does not mete out punishment--*mei'ito lo seitzei ra'ah*--a *tzadik* should be someone who does not punish.

A *tzadik* who has overcome the challenge of materialistic and animal urges contends with the challenge of being very critical. Will he rebuke very harshly and thereby cause punishments, or will he sweeten his sense of judgment and become a softer, more loving, and generous personality?

While a *tzadik* is to aspire to be a person who does not cause punishment, this is not to be confused with a *tzadik* who offers words of *musar*, and demands that we must improve and become sincere and heartfelt people. When we hear such words, we think, "These are certainly heavy obligations. But this is not punishment!" Righteous people look for and appreciate such challenges. *Musar* messages are *gevuros kedoshos!* Holy restrictions! They are positive tools to get us to a good place.

Consider: we understand that a punishment rectifies the soul, yet we pray to not be punished. Why do we offer such prayers? Do we not want our soul to be fixed? We pray this way because we aspire for the *tikun* to come through a positive source--through *tov*. We don't pray that we should never hear rebuke, *musar*. Even though *musar* is *gevuros* and sometimes makes us feel bad, we don't pray not to hear it! For we realize that *musar* brings us to a corrected state, *tikun hanefesh*, in a way that is not a punishment, in a way that is *tov*. The *musar* is an example of *gevuros* that are *tov!* A *tzadik* must try to be like *Hashem*, a being who is all *tov*. If he must correct others, he should do it in a way that is *tov* and not in a way of punishments. Rather, he must give *musar*, which a sincere person finds to be inspiring, as well as a source of life and direction.³

3. In his first *shi'ur* on *Mesillas Yesharim* (5769), the Rebbe pointed out that the word *musar* shares an etymological bond with the word *yisurim*, suffering. The easiest way to force a change in behavior is to inflict *yisurim*. In Divine service as well, *yisurim* coerce a person to bend to *Hashem's* will. But this is not the ideal! *Hashem* created a world filled with good. His purpose in creation was *leheitiv*, to benefit creations. *Hashem* never wants to afflict people. There is a way of kindness that also has the effect of compelling Divine service. This is the wisdom of *musar*. Through *musar*, serious people grasp lessons about how to serve *Hashem*, and try to adopt behaviors that lead them in that positive way. Therefore, these people no longer need to undergo physical suffering in order to achieve

Rav Klonymus Kalman Shapiro, the Rebbe of Piasetzna,⁴ also taught that the roots of judgments are to be sweetened through holy rebuke. During the horrors of the Holocaust, when Nazis starved, persecuted and killed Jews, he taught that when we rebuke ourselves we save ourselves from revealed judgments and misfortunes. On Shabbos Zachor 5702, (February 28, 1942), while confined in the starving and desperate Warsaw ghetto, the Rebbe taught these holy words to his disciples that add to the theme of our lesson.

"We must explain the principle that at the level of first thought, even judgment is a source of kindness for the Jewish nation. We have limited minds. We are also currently shattered and limited in the possibilities of serving Hashem. Yet even on our level this principle must be explained.

Rashi taught, 'Initially it arose in His thought to create the world with the attribute of justice. When He saw that the world would not survive, He rose and added to justice the attribute of mercy' (Bereishis 1:1). How could He

spiritual growth; they achieve this growth through *musar*. *Musar* is holy *yisurim*! Unfortunately, the cynic who refuses to internalize words of improvement is bringing *yisurim* upon himself. Our Sages therefore taught, "*kol hamislotzeit, yisurim ba'im alav!*" "A cynic brings suffering upon himself" (*Otzar Gilyonei Divrei Torah*, 5769, page 674).

Kesav Sofer, in his comments to *Parashas Tetzaveh*, explained a Midrashic lesson based on the connection between *yisurim* and *musar*. The Midrash teaches that the verse in *Mishlei*, "*nivchar sheim mei'osher rav*," "Better a (good) name than much wealth" (22:1), refers to the *Purim* story. Better the good name of Mordechai than the great wealth of Haman. This implies that the wealth of Haman was good but Mordechai's good name was better. In what way was Haman's wealth good? *Kesav Sofer* explained that Haman's wealth brought *yisurim* and hard times against the Jews. Due to the difficulties, the Jewish nation repented. That repentance was a great blessing for the Jewish nation. Thus, Haman's wealth was good. However, when the nation repents due to suffering, the change is not long-lasting. With the passage of time, the memory of the stress fades and we usually revert back to sinful ways. Mordechai's good name is a reference to the rebuke he would give the nation. The goal of national repentance can be achieved when the nation accepts rebuke from its leaders. When we change through rebuke, we remain transformed and the change does not easily dissipate. This is the lesson of the verse, "The good name of rebuke"-inspired repentance is better than "wealth of Haman"-inspired repentance, for *musar* lasts longer than *yisurim* (page 337-338).

4. Rabbi Klonymus Kalman Shapiro, 5649/1889-5703/1943, the Piasetzna Rebbe, was one of the great chassidic Rebbes and thinkers in Poland before World War II. He was a creative educator and a prominent expositor of chassidic thought. During the war he was in the Warsaw ghetto. At the very beginning of the war he lost his only daughter, his son-in-law, and his sister-in-law. Despite these losses, throughout his years in the Warsaw ghetto he maintained a secret synagogue and gave talks filled with faith and support for the Jews. As the end of the ghetto neared, his writings of those words of Torah were hidden in a milk container and buried. After the war they were discovered and published as the book, *Eish Kodesh, Holy Fire*.

create a world initially with justice? Did not the prophet Elijah teach in the Zohar that justice is short, meaning it conceals light, while creation is revelation?

*The answer is through a human parable. When man wishes to perform a small act of kindness to his friend, he does not need to overcome or display his internal attribute of justice and strength. However, when he wishes to perform a great act of kindness, such as to donate a large sum of funds to charity, then man must overcome with great strength. Man must use his internal attribute of justice, and with his strength and justice he must conquer himself, and then he donates the funds. This is the key. When man asserts justice over **himself** the justice leads to kindness. Great kindness demands that he first restrain himself with justice. When man allows the attribute of justice to extend beyond himself and he asserts rules over others, then the justice hides and conceals. To create our limited, physical worlds, Hashem asserted justice against Himself. He is transcendent and elevated above any limitation. He has no boundaries. He, therefore, first had to conquer Himself and limit His light, to enable the great gift of physical, limited, life to emerge. This is the meaning of the statement, 'Initially it arose in His thought to create the world with the attribute of justice.' His thought is His essence. It is known that He is united with His thoughts. There, at the essential dimension, there was a limitation in order to create the world. As it were, He conquered and judged Himself, not others. However, once the judgments began to spread, and other creatures were affected by the limitations and justice, He saw that the world would not be able to exist.*

Hence, the initial thought has judgments that cause kindness to the children of Israel, for the initial judgment of conquering Himself enabled blessings to emerge. The Jewish nation is rooted in Hashem's thoughts. At that level, justice is a source for kindly actions.

When the Jewish nation was formed, we experienced Hashem in ways that paralleled the beginnings of the world. Just as the initial judgment was a conquering of self and a fount of kindness, the plagues in Egypt hurt the Egyptians yet were a source of healing for the Jews...

Therefore, when we see, God forbid, judgments, the solution is to conquer oneself. The first judgment was to conquer Himself, and it led to a revelation of kindness. Unfortunately, now judgments are spreading onto others. If a Jewish person now would conquer himself, it would cause the judgments all around us to rise to the level of original judgment. Then Hashem would

conquer Himself and reveal a great kindness to this lowly, physical realm. If we conquer ourselves, He will conquer His transcendence and bring physical blessing, which we so desperately need, to this world.

In the past, our service of conquering ourselves meant to conquer our physical desires and urges for evil. We were like the passage in the Mishnah, 'Who is a hero, gibbor? One who conquers his urges' (Avos 4:1). Now there is a new service that we must engage in. We have to conquer ourselves by defeating the sense of failure and depression that is within us. We need to strengthen ourselves with our attachment to Hashem. **This is a very, very difficult task, the torments are extremely hard to bear, may Hashem have mercy, but at a time when many members of Israel are being burned alive for the sake of Hashem, they are getting killed and slaughtered only because they are Jews, then we at the least must succeed in this trial of ours, we must exhibit this sacrifice of self, to overcome our sense of defeat, and strengthen ourselves with faith in Hashem.**"⁵

Careful consideration of events that have occurred in our recent history can also serve a display of the themes of our lesson. There were times when men conquered and rebuked themselves, and shortly thereafter, they merited to see the external judgments sweetened.

Rabbi Ya'akov-Yosef Weiss of Manchester, England had been a student of the Satmar Rebbe before the war. He had learned Tractate Nedarim with the Rebbe and knew it very well. In the spring of 1944/5704 the accursed Nazis deported hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. When the Jews would arrive, the majority would be led to death in the gas chambers hidden in the back of the camp, and a minority would be chosen for slavery. Rabbi Weiss was initially spared from immediate death. His parents and family were sent to the back of the camp and were martyred in the gas chambers. It is not known why, however, the Nazis created an area of the camp that they filled with young people. The inmates called it the Kinder-lager. Rav Weiss was interred there together with four thousand Jewish teens. Even though he was subjected to starvation by the Nazis, who hardly gave the inmates any food, and he was often forced by the Nazis to work as a slave, at the end of a day of grueling labor, he and his friends in the barrack would conquer themselves and exhaustion and review Tractate Nedarim.

5. Eish Kodesh, pages 168-169.

The Nazis, yemach shemam, sought to attack us on our holy days. Right before Rosh Hashanah, 5705, they selected a large group of the young Jews in order to murder them. They held them for twenty four hours in a barrack. On the night that began the second day of Rosh Hashanah 5705 these holy young men ascended to heaven in flames. The surviving young men were devastated. Unfortunately, disaster struck again shortly thereafter. On Shemini Atzeres, 5705, (Monday, October 9, 1944) they made another selection of young Jews they intended to kill in the gas chambers on Simchas Torah. The following story was recorded by Rav Tzvi Hirsch Meisels, o.b.m.,⁶ in the introduction to his book, Mekadshei Hashem. I also heard it from Rav Weiss, who was there. To hopefully convey a bit of the emotional depth of this event, here are the words of Rav Meisels:

"There is one incident, the most remarkable of them all, that I must recount to future generations. On the eve of Simchas Torah, the murderers grabbed about fifty young boys who still remained in the camp and brought them to the gas chambers. When they entered that terrible place the murderers told them to undress, for they were to wash themselves; this was what they told all the kedoshim who were put to death in the gas chambers. Of course, it was only a ruse to trick the victims into thinking that soon they would be set free.

*But those children, who knew what fate awaited them in a few short minutes, **overcame their lowly spirits and their miserable reality with sublime religious fervor.** One of the boys spoke up, 'Chaveirim yekarim, yetzt iz duch Simchas Torah', '**Dear friends, let us remember that today is Simchas Torah!**' 'Emes mir haben nit du kein Sefer Torah tzim tantzen', '**True, we don't have here a Torah scroll with which to dance**', 'aber, der Ribono Shel Olam iz duch du mit unz', '**but the Master of the World is with us here.**' 'Lammer tantzen mit Eihm, behfahr mir verrin farbrent', '**Let us dance with Him before we are incinerated.**' **Immediately, they all gathered together in a dancing circle and sang the verses, 'Ashreinu, mah tov***

6. Rav Tzvi Hirsch Meisels, 1902-1974, 5662-5734, was a descendant of Rav Moshe Teitelbaum (1758-1841, 5519-5601), the *Yismach Moshe*. Born in Galicia, he served as the head of the rabbinical court and *yeshiva* head in Waitzen, Hungary. After the Nazis occupied Hungary, he was deported with his community to Auschwitz. There he lost his wife and six of his children. He survived the war and served as the leader of the She'eiris Israel congregation in Chicago. He was a man of Torah greatness and warmth. After the war he served as the Rabbi of Bergen Belsen. He established a *yeshiva* in Bergen Belsen and helped resolve many *agunah* questions. His work *Mekadshei Hashem* recorded Torah from the war years and memorialized the martyrs who were murdered by the Nazis.

chelkeinu u'mah naim goraleinu', **'We are so fortunate! Our portion is so good! How wonderful is our fate!' and 'Vetaheir libeinu le'avdecha be'emes' 'Purify our hearts to worship You in truth!'** The voices of song and praise to Hashem penetrated the walls of the gas chamber. The enthusiasm and emotion of the youths, as they sang and danced, surpassed all.

When the Nazi guards in the outer room were ready to turn on the gas, they heard the sounds of singing and angrily stormed into the inner room. They were angry on the one hand, but also amazed and confounded that young boys with one foot in the grave could find the spiritual heroism to dance and sing songs of Godly praise. The contemptible SS commander asked the boys to explain their behavior at such a frightful time, and they replied, 'We know that we will be put to death at any moment, and that is precisely the reason for our joy--we are happy to be leaving such a base, dastardly world led by dogs like you who set the rules and the norms for other human beings. The very thought of being finished with wicked villains like you causes us supreme joy and exhilaration. Another reason for our joyous hearts is that we soon will be reunited with our parents and family members whom you murdered after the heinous torments you inflicted on them. Death will allow us to be together with our families.'

The sadistic Nazi became so angry that he was ready to burst and he shouted at these heroic youths, 'I will teach you a lesson! Instead of killing you quickly, I will transfer you to a special place and then I will cut you each up, piece by piece, until you die a far more horrible death.'

But the boys ignored his words and shrieks, and continued singing and dancing with great enthusiasm. They laughed in his face until he got angry again that they were making fun of him and did not fear him or his words. In his great fury, he halted their dancing and led them out of the gas chambers back into the camp, into an enclosed bunk, until he would carry out the torture he had promised.

With Hashem's help, a great miracle took place: In the early morning of the following day, a large transport of several hundred people was organized to various work places in Germany. Quickly, the vast majority of the fifty boys were able to join the transport and leave Auschwitz for work places throughout the country. The few that remained behind dispersed into different blocks so that they would not be recognized as a group. Thus all fifty boys were saved from death, and this incident was considered a miracle and wonder by the entire camp.

It is known that in the days of Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, o.b.m., there was a decree of the Russians to take young Jewish children away from their homes and communities for lengthy periods of time so that they would forget the Jewish faith. Once it happened that a group of children were taken away right before the High Holy Days. When Rosh Hashanah arrived these pure souls did not have a shofar, or a prayer book. However, they remembered that on the day of judgment Jews recite Psalms. They did not have a copy of Tehillim with them. One child, though, spoke to the others and said, 'We do not have the prayer book, and we do not remember the words of Tehillim, but we remember the tune to which the Tehillim were chanted. Let us hum that niggun.' They sang the tune. The music aroused heavenly mercy and they were all saved and eventually returned to Berditchev. This is what happened in Auschwitz. The young men did not have Torah scrolls. They did not have prayer books. All they had was the song. They sang the song, aroused Divine mercy and were spared".⁷

Any normal man would have despaired as he saw the abyss of death. Rav Weiss and his friends, however, were special. As Rav Shapiro urged, Rav Weiss and his chevra conquered themselves, displayed joy, and then merited that the judgments sweetened and they were given a new gift of life.⁸

We have learned that self-critique is a blessing that can spare us the harm of misfortune.

The following story, recorded by Rabbi Dovid Hoffman, about Holocaust survivor Maurice Shechter, might serve as an example and inspiration to the ideas of our lesson. In it, Mr. Shechter was in a state of great judgments and misfortunes. Heaven arranged that when he critiqued himself, the judgments sweetened, and his life was transformed.

"A religious man, Shlomo Rosenberg, who would travel to Israel each year for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, once found himself on an El Al flight to Israel sitting next to Maurice Shechter. While on the flight the conversation turned to religion. Maurice expressed vehement rejection of religion. He

7. *Mekadshei Hashem* pages 16-17. A translation of Rav Meisels's words appears in *The Forgotten Memoirs: Moving Personal Accounts from Rabbis Who Survived the Holocaust*, by E. Farbstein, pages 279-281. A skeptic might heaven forbid doubt the veracity of this story. In *Beseiter Hamadreigah*, an entire chapter is devoted to this event to prove that it did in fact occur. In fact, more than thirty eyewitness accounts of this event are listed there. See pages 512-527.

8. Heard from Rav Yaakov-Yosef Weiss.

explained that during the Holocaust he had come off a train in the death camp of Auschwitz. He had been separated from his only son and had not seen him since. He was sure that his son had been murdered, and in his pain he had stopped observance. Shlomo and Maurice developed a friendship and agreed not to discuss religion. They both landed in Tel Aviv and shared a cab to Jerusalem, but then separated as they went to different hotels.

On Yom Kippur, during a break within the services, Shlomo went for a walk in Liberty Park in Jerusalem. He thought he would rest a bit under a tree. While there, he was surprised to meet his travel companion, Maurice, who was sitting under a tree eating a sandwich.

A sandwich? On Yom Kippur? He walked over and sat down next to Maurice. 'My friend, I know that you are angry...and want nothing to do with faith. The fact that you are eating on Yom Kippur is your business...but your son, what did he do that you refuse to say a prayer in his memory? You should come to the shul for the memorial prayers.'

Maurice was very upset with the musar he had just received. He sat in a sullen silence for several long minutes.

Then Maurice surprisingly said, 'You might be right. I thought about it. In fact, I've thought about it for a long time. It is true that I was upset but I always have loved my son. Maybe it is time to say a prayer in my son's memory.'

The two men clutched each other and walked back to the shul. The chazzan was standing at the bimah as a long line of people waited patiently for their turn for him to recite an individual memorial prayer, "Keil Malei Rachamim" in memory of their loved ones.

The line grew shorter as Maurice and Shlomo inched forward. Finally, Maurice was standing face to face with the chazzan.

'Please recite Keil Malei Rachamim for my son', Maurice stuttered brokenly.

'What was your son's name', asked the chazzan, gently.

'His name was Pinchas ben Moshe, and he was murdered in Auschwitz.'

The chazzan paused for a moment and looked up from his siddur. 'Tell me again', he insisted, 'what was your son's name?'

'Pinchas ben Moshe.'

'And the last name?'

'Shechter.'

The chazzan heaved a sob. Then he grabbed Maurice in a loving embrace and cried, "Tatte, Tatte, I've been waiting for you!"⁹

Avigayil and David

In *Sefer Shmuel*, when David went to take revenge against Naval *haCarmeli* for refusing to help him, Avigayil went out to meet him and ask him not to punish Naval. She said, "*Vehaysa nefesh adoni tzerurah bitzerur hachayim es Hashem Elokecha*", "And the soul of my master will be bound in the bond of life with *Hashem* your God" (*Shmuel* I 25:29). Therefore, do not commit this sin. What is she saying? Is she trying to say, "You will ultimately die and go to Heaven and reconnect to *Hashem*, so do not sin now"? This is true about all sins! Why emphasize this to David in this particular context?

She was telling him, "You are a *tzadik*. You will merit to attain the level of a day of all good in the world to come! You are supposed to be connected to the high realm where *gam anosh latzadik lo tov*, a level of only goodness. *Es Hashem Elokecha!* With *Hashem* your God! The high place you are to reach is a place that is all good with no punishments. Since you will be united with *Hashem* your God in bonds of life, you should refrain from harming Naval *haCarmeli!*" *Kedushah* is *kulo tov*. In great *tzadikim*, the *yetzer hara* is simply *gevuros*.

At the time of *Mei Merivah*, when Moshe said, "*Shim'u na hamorim*", "Listen you rebels" (*Bamidbar* 20:10), his words of rebuke were a bit too harsh, they were insufficiently sweetened *gevuros*, and this was his sin. For from these broken *gevuros* the *yetzer hara* and *aveiros* emerge. When man conquers his evil he raises his urges to return to their initial level of being judgments.

Thus it is written, "With all your heart'-with both your natures". That is to say, that the person shall steadily rise to attain the degree of "abundant love", a supreme affection surpassing that of "ardent love" that is comparable to burning coals. This is what is called in Scripture "love of delights", which is

כמ"ש בכל לבבך בשני יצריך והיינו שיעלה ויבא ויגיע למדרגת אהבה רבה וחיבה יתרה ממדרגת אהבה עזה כרשפי אש והיא הנקראת בכתוב אהבה בתענוגים להתענג על ה' מעין עולם הבא והענג הוא במוח חכמה ושכל המתענג בהשכלת ה' וידיעתו

9. *Heroes of Spirit*, Rabbi Dovid Hoffman, pages 245-248.

the experience of delight in Godliness, of the nature of the world to come. This delight is in the brain of wisdom, in the intellectual pleasure of comprehending and knowing God, to the extent that one's intellect and wisdom can grasp [Him]. This is the element of "water", and "seed", i.e., light that is sown in the holiness of the Divine soul that converts to good the element of "water" in the animal soul, from which the lust for mundane pleasures had been previously derived.

Thus it is written in Eitz Chayim, portal 50, ch. 3, on the authority of the Zohar, that the evil is converted into and becomes completely good, like the good nature itself, through the shedding of the soiled garments, the pleasures of this world, in which it had been clothed.

So, too, shall the other midos in the heart, the offshoots of awe and love, be dedicated to God alone; and the faculty of speech that is in his mouth, and the thought that is in his mind, shall be entirely and solely the instruments of the "garments" of thought and speech of the divine soul alone, namely, meditation on God and His Torah, which shall be the theme of his speech throughout the day, his mouth ceaselessly studying [it]; and the faculty of action centered in his hands, as also in the rest of the 248 organs, shall function exclusively in the performance of the commandments, which is the third garment of the divine soul.

However, the desire of the animal soul, which is derived from the kelipah, is the very opposite, and it is for the good of man that he may prevail over it and vanquish it, as in the parable of the harlot in the holy Zohar.

כפי השגת שכלו וחכמתו והוא בחי' המים זרוע אור זרוע שבקדושת נפש האלהית המהפכת לטוב את בחי' המים שבנפש הבהמית שמהם באו תאות תענוגי עוה"ז מתחלה וכמ"ש בע"ח שער נ' פרק ג' בשם הזהר שהרע נהפך להיות טוב גמור כמו יצר טוב ממש בהסיר הבגדים הצואים ממנו שהם תענוגי עוה"ז שהוא מלובש בהם וכן שאר כל המדות שבלב שהן ענפי היראה והאהבה יהיו לה' לבדו וכל כח הדבור שבפה והמחשבה שבמוח יהיו ממולאים מן לבושי המחשבה והדבור של נפש האלהית לבדה שהן מחשבת ה' ותורתו להיות שיחתו כל היום לא פסיק פומיה מגירסא וכח המעשיי שבידי' ושאר רמ"ח אבריו יהיה במעשה המצות לבד שהוא לבוש השלישי של נפש האלהית אך נפש הבהמית שמהקליפה רצונה להפך ממש לטובת האדם שיתגבר עליה וינצחנה כמשל הזונה שבזוה"ק

The *Tanya* taught that man has an urge for pleasure. If the Godly soul conquers man, love of *Hashem* can be the new form man's desire for pleasure will take.

Judgments and Their Sweeteners

The prophet Yechezkel teaches that in the future, sweet water will come forth from God's house, the *Beis Hashem*. Then more and more water will pour out, until it reaches the oceans and sweetens their salty waters. The inner meaning of this is based on the idea that all physical matters are referred to as salty waters. From the sweet waters of *lehis'aneg al Hashem*, enjoyment of *Hashem*, the salty waters, the *yetzer hara*, will be transformed.

When *Hashem* separated the waters on the second day of creation (*Bereishis* 1:6-8), the waters below became all the *ta'anugim gashmiyim*, the physical delights. These *ta'anugim gashmiyim* are crying; they are the source of tears. Judgments that are not sweetened produce tears, *mayim meluchim*. Tears are salty water. When the judgments are elevated the salty taste of tears is turned into the sweetness of living waters.

There are two types of judgments, *dinim*, and they are both sweetened with the *shofar*: *פר דיני פר* *par dinim* (280), and *שכ דיני שכ* *shach dinim* (320). Judgments of speech and judgments of thought.

Tzimtzum, contraction, always entails *dinim*, judgments. When Godly life, *chiyus Eloki*, needs to enter vessels, *keilim* - even including a need to enter into the vessels of thought - *tzimtzum* is necessary. There are *dinim* in the *chiyus Eloki* that enable the *chiyus Eloki* to shrink and enter the *keilim* of thought.

The vessels of thought are called the thirty-two paths of wisdom, *lamed beis*, *לב*, *nesivos haChochmah*. *Sefer Yetzirah* says *Hashem* made the world with these 32 paths of *Chochmah*, for in the account of creation the Godly name *Elokim*--א-ל-ה-י-ם-- is mentioned 32 times. *Elokim* is *dinim*, *tzimtzumim*. We multiply 32 times ten because ten is the number for the letter *yud* י, and ten is the number for all matters of *kedushah*; thus we have 320 *dinim*, the *shach dinim*. We can achieve the same calculation another way: the sum of five times the word *din*, *דין*, also equals 320-- $5 \times 64 = 320$. We multiply the word *din* by five because there are five letters in the name *Elokim* (each letter is another aspect of *din*), and they represent the five *gevuros*.

In addition, if we add an *alef* to each iteration of the word *din* - an *alef* to each *din* - we get 325, the sum of *shachah*, *שכה*. *Alef* א-ל-ף represents the *פלא עליין*, *Pele Elyon*, the wondrous will of Above that sweetens judgments. Thus, *shachah* represents sweetened judgments, like we see in the phrase about the waters of Noah's flood, "*Vayashoku hamayim*", "וישוכו המים", "and the waters settled down"

(*Bereishis* 8:1). Similarly the *pasuk* tells us, "*Vechamas hamelech shachachah*", "וחרמת המלך שככה", "And the anger of the king settled down" (*Esther* 7:10).

(There is a meditation, *kavanah*, in *davening* that employs this point. When we say in the *Amidah*¹⁰ prayer, "Return our judges as they were originally", "*Hashivah shofteinu kevarishonah*", "השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה", focus on the word headings, שככה, *shachah*. This is because a prayer for the restoration of correct justice among the Jews is, at a deeper level, a plea that the *dinim* be sweetened. When there is a *din lematah*, there is no *din lema'alah*, for when we have justice on earth, we sweeten the judgments above. From *din* דין we should have *Hashem's* name, א-ד-נ-י. Five names of God, *adna*, from five *dinim*. For each *din* should be sweetened. We begin our silent prayer with the plea, "*Hashem י-ד-נ-י sefasai tiftach ufi yagid tehilasecha*", "God, open my lips and may my mouth say Your praise".¹¹ This plea is also part of this *kavanah*. י-ד-נ-י is *alef* that has sweetened the term *din*. This sentence is repeated five times a day as a *tikun* for the five *gevuros*, a fixing of the five restraints).¹²

Judgments of Speech

In addition to the שכ *dinim*, we also have the פר *par dinim*. The *par dinim* are from the letters *mem*, *nun*, *tzadi*, *peh* and *chaf* in their end-of-word forms (ם, ן, ץ, ף, ך). These letters represent *din*, since they are at the end of the word, and thereby serve to limit the word. When you see an end-*mem* you know the word is not going any further. These are the five letters of *mantzepach*, and they correspond to the five *motza'os hapeh*, sound sources from the mouth.

10. The silent prayer of eighteen blessings which is the main prayer of all our services.

11. The sentence recited as a heading to the silent *Amidah*.

12. *Bnei Yissaschar*, *Ma'amarei Chodesh Tishrei*, *Ma'amar Beis* letter *Chaf Alef*, quoted the holy Rav Pinchas who further detailed these lessons. *Shoteh*, שוטה, the Hebrew word for fool, equals 320 in *gematria*. This is why the holy *Tanna* (Akavia ben Mehalaleil) said "*mutav li lehikarei shoteh kol yamai velo lei'asos sha'ah achas rasha lifnei haMakom*", "Better I be called a fool all my days than to be a wicked person for a moment before God" (*Eidiyos* 5:6). For this is the sweetening of the *dinim* when a person considers himself a fool and nothing before the will of the Almighty. When a person discounts his own honor, he will frequently utter the sound, "aaa!" This is the letter *alef* being added to the word *din*, sweetening it into י-ד-נ-י. When five *alef's* are added to five *din's*, *shach* שך becomes שככה. This is how the *Ari* interpreted the verse, "*Ashrei ha'am shekachah lo*", "Fortunate is the nation that can turn שך, *shach*, into שככה, *shachah*" (page 4).

Just as thought requires a *tzimtzum*, *dibur* requires a *tzimtzum*. Just as there are *tzimtzumim* to enable the *chiyus Eloki* to enter the *keilim* of thought (*shach dinim*), there are *dinim* to enable the *chiyus Eloki* to enter vessels of speech (the *par dinim*, the *mantzepach* letters). Thus, we see that *shach* represents thought and *par* speech.

Through the Divine service of *Rosh Hashanah*, we fix these *dinim* in order to bring life to the entire year. We are grappling with a concept known as *mosaros hadinim*, excess judgments. When there are too many *dinim*, the Other Side is able to attach itself to human life. When there is an overwhelming stream of Godly life, there are *kitrugim*, complainants, who claim, "Who says he deserves this life?" The *mosaros* of these *dinim* must be sweetened; otherwise, they would not allow the *chiyus Eloki* to come down to the world.

The Talmud says that *Hashem* dropped two tears into the ocean after *churban Beis Hamikdash*, the destruction of the Temple. The meaning of this image is that these are *dinei shach* and *dinei par*, and it is from these two *dinim* - from the salt of His tears - that the ocean becomes salty. The two eyes, right and left, correspond to *dinei shach* and *dinei par*, the two judgments that must be sweetened.

Tears Sweeten Judgments

When a person cries he feels a bit better, for the *mosaros haleichah shebemoach*, the excess moisture of the mind, is relieved by the tears. There is a *hamtakah*, sweetening, because the *mosaros hadinim* have been expunged.

In *Parashas Ki Seitzei*, the verse tells us regarding the *eishes yefas to'ar*, the captured beautiful bride, "*uvachsa es aviha ve'es imah yerach yamim*", "She will cry for her father and her mother for a full month" (*Devarim* 21:13). The Rambam explains in *Moreh Nevuchim* that the reason for this *mitzvah* is compassion, *rachmanus*. People feel better after crying, and allowing the *eishes yefas to'ar* to cry for a month enables her to feel better about her situation. Crying makes us feel better, for it sweetens the *dinei shach* and *dinei par*. The *mosaros hadinim* exit a person via his tears. The tears of *Elul*¹³ are a *vachsa es*

13. *Elul* is the month before *Rosh Hashanah*. It is a time for repentance. As the year draws to a close the Almighty makes Himself available so that His children will return to Him and merit a judgment of blessing for the coming year.

aviha ve'es imah yerach yamim, and through them we are *mamtik dinei shach* and *dinei par*.

The *Ari* teaches that sweetening these types of *dinim* is a major function of the *Rosh Hashanah* service. During our prayers on *Rosh Hashanah*, we say "*hayom haras olam*", today is the birthday of the world. In *gematria*, הרת, *haras* (605), is *par* (280) and *shach* (320), plus the five roots of the *dinim* - the *hei*, ה - and these combine to enable a *hamtakah* of the *dinim*.

This is also the *kavanah* for *shofar*, שופר. The letters *par* פר in the word *shofar* are the *par dinim*. *Shin vav*, ש, together with a hand that holds the *shofar*, יד, *yad* (14), equals *shach*, for blowing *shofar* is a *hamtakah* of these *dinim*. (The five fingers of the hand also remind us of the five *dinim*). We begin the process of sweetening the *dinim* of *shach* and *par* through our tears during *Elul*, as a preparation for *Rosh Hashanah*.

Let us explain.

Speech is a very holy force. Our Sages teach that *bris kerusah lasefasayim* - there is a covenant to the lips and what issues from them. The pleasantness of holy statements, *diburim kedoshim*, grants great strength to the soul! Yet there are *dinim* to prevent these warm feelings. The *dinim* cause a state of *metamtemim koach hadibur*, defiling the power of speech, so that one will speak but not feel life, *chiyus*. We beg *Hashem*, א-ד-נ-י, *sefasai tiftach ufi yagid tehilasecha*, open my lips so that my mouth will say your praises; sweeten the judgments!

Holy thoughts are also amazing. They give you a feeling of *Gan Eden*. Yet there nevertheless are *dinei shach* to prevent these feelings. If someone cries with real longing to merit to feel holy thoughts and words, he cries because of how far away he is from *Hashem*. By doing so he takes away the *dinei shach* and *par* from himself, sweetening them, and then the *chiyus Eloki* will appear in his speech and thoughts.

Seforim explain that the words "*Vera'isa bashivyah eishes yefas to'ar*", "And you will see among the captives a woman of beautiful appearance" (*Devarim* 21:11), are in fact a reference to the *Shechinah*. *Eishes yefas* אשת יפת is *roshei teivos* for שפתי תפתח, א-ד-נ-י, *Hashem sefasai tiftach*, and פי יגיד תהלתך *pi yagid tehilasecha*. This is what *eishes yefas* hints at. You will see an *eishes yefas to'ar* in captivity - the power to think and speak holy thoughts will be in exile - and the solution is to cry for thirty days, *uvachsa es aviha ve'es imah yerach yamim*, thus allowing this precious ability to return from exile.

To harness the awesome sweetening powers of *Rosh Hashanah*, arouse compassion, *rachmanus*, on yourself. When you have *rachmanus* on yourself you similarly arouse from Heaven a *shefa* of *rachmanus* on you, and then you merit blessings. Have *rachmanus* on yourself for the great distance that you are from *Hashem*, and that will arouse the *rachmanus* of *Hashem*, who will renew you on *Rosh Hashanah* and let you become a new person.

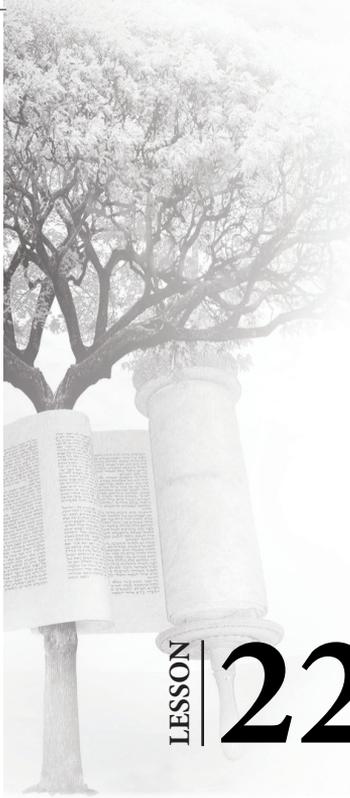
***Rosh Hashanah* is a Time for New Life**

Rosh Hashanah is a great day, so great that it contains within it an entire year. It is the day of the creation of Adam, a man who reached from edge of heaven to edge of heaven. The Ran¹⁴ asks: what is the reason that man is judged on *Rosh Hashanah*? He understood why fruits are judged on the holiday of *Shavu'os*, for that is *chag hakatzir*, the time when fruits are picked. The holiday of *Sukkos* takes place in autumn, right before the rainy season in the land of Israel. Since it is the time of rain, it makes sense for it also to be a time of judgment regarding water. But why should *Rosh Hashanah* be the time of judgment of man? The answer is that everything is judged when it is *mischadeish*, renewed. Fruits are *mischadeish* around *Shavu'os*, so that is when they are judged. On *Rosh Hashanah* man becomes a *beri'ah chadashah*, a new being. This is why it is the time of man's trial!

Remember if you are a man of *Nefesh habehemis*, and you dwell on desires, *ta'avos*, while your *Nefesh Elohis* is asleep, you are not connected to *Rosh Hashanah*! *Rosh Hashanah* is the day of "*Vayipach beapav nishmas chayim*", "And He blew into his nostrils a soul of life" (*Bereishis* 2:8). It is the time of the *Nefesh Elohis*. Prepare for *Rosh Hashanah*. During *Elul*, the main job is to arouse *rachamim*. What do we need *rachmanus* for? Consider how dark a world we live in! Think: God is my light, *Hashem ori*. This should define the *Rosh Hashanah* experience. And yet we feel so far from the Almighty! What a pity!

Let us arouse *rachamim* on how far we are from *Hashem*, and then we will merit to become new creations, beings who are renewed on *Rosh Hashanah*!

14. Rabbeinu Nissim (1315-1376) was a student of Ramban and one of the greatest commentators to the writings of Rav Yitzchak Alfasi (1013-1103). He was an expert physician, philosopher, and Torah scribe, in addition to his primary achievement of greatness in Jewish law and understanding of the Torah.



Often we feel disappointed with ourselves. We might feel that we are not accomplishing enough good, or that we are failing too frequently. Lesson Twenty-Two opens a window of light for the struggling Jew. Real greatness is more than good; it is what the Torah calls very good.

Those who struggle are the ones who can reach a level of very good holiness! Rosh Hashanah is the time when sparks of holiness go free and our natural attachment to Hashem becomes manifest.

LESSON

22

Tov and Tov Me'od: The Hidden Sparks Go Free On Rosh Hashanah

Chapter Ten of the *Tanya* says:

And when someone raises his holy soul over his animal soul and he fights with it so much until he banishes the evil in the left part of the heart, as it is written, "and you will get rid of the evil from your midst", yet the urge for evil has not yet been transformed into a passion for good, he is called an incomplete tzadik.

והנה כשהאדם מגביר נפשו האלהית ונלחם כל כך עם הבהמית עד שמגרש ומבער הרע שבה מחלל השמאלי כמ"ש ובערת הרע מקרבך ואין הרע נהפך לטוב ממש נקרא צדיק שאינו גמור

This person performs good deeds, but his essence is not all good, for in his core an evil urge exists alongside his holy urge.

Classes of People

The *Tanya* is teaching us that a person is classified not only according to his behavior. Man's status is defined by what he is at his core, on an essential level. An individual who does not have an evil urge is a *tzadik gamur*, for his core is entirely good. In contrast, one whose primary urge is for good but also has a secondary urge for evil is an incomplete *tzadik*; he might also be termed a *tzadik vera lo*, a *tzadik* who has evil within him. A person who has core

desires in both directions, good and evil, is a *beinoni*. And finally, one who sins is a *rasha* at the moment that he performs the sin.

The *tzadik gamur*, complete *tzadik*, is fully good, for he has successfully battled his *yetzer hara*. His body no longer desires materialism or sin, and instead he is filled with a passion for holiness and Godliness. In contrast, a *tzadik she'eino gamur* has not fully purified his *yetzer hara*. A *beinoni* has not purified his *yetzer hara* at all. He succeeds in his actions, but his essential nature is still comprised of equal forces towards holiness and its opposite.

The incomplete tzadik has a little bit of evil in the left ventricle of his heart.

But it is bent and annulled by the great amount of good that is in him.

This is why he thinks that he has fully banished the evil urge.

But had he truly banished the evil urge, all the evil would have turned to good.

The explanation of the matter is that "a completely righteous man" is one in whom the evil has been converted to good. He is therefore named "tzadik vetov lo," "a righteous man who prospers". He has completely divested himself of the filthy garments of evil. He utterly despises the pleasures of this world. He finds no enjoyment in human pleasures that merely gratify physical appetites, instead of [seeking] to serve Hashem. For they are derived from and originate in the kelipah and sitra achra, and whatever is of the sitra achra is hated by the perfectly righteous man with an absolute hatred. He has a great love of God and of His Holiness which leads him to abhor the love of the physical, for they are antithetical one to the other. Thus it is written, "I hate them with absolute hatred: I count them mine enemies. Search me, [O God,] and know my heart...". Hence, according to the abundance of the love toward God, so is the extent of the hatred toward the sitra achra, and the utter contempt of evil, for contempt is as much the opposite of real love as is hatred.

וצדיק ורע לו דהיינו שיש בו עדיין מעט מזער רע בחלל השמאלי

אלא שכפוף ובטל לטוב מחמת מיעוטו

ולכן נדמה לו כי ויגרשהו וילך לו כולו לגמרי

אבל באמת אלו חלף והלך לו לגמרי כל הרע שבו היה נהפך לטוב ממש

וביאור הענין כי הנה צדיק גמור שנהפך הרע שלו לטוב ולכן נקרא צדיק וטוב לו הוא ע"י הסרת הבגדים הצואים לגמרי מהרע דהיינו למאוס מאד בתענוגי עוה"ז להתענג במ בתענוגות בני אדם למלאת תאוות הגוף בלבד ולא לעבודת ה' מפני היותם נמשכים ונשפעים מהקליפה וס"א וכל מה שהוא מהס"א הצדיק גמור הוא שונאו בתכלית השנאה מחמת גודל אהבתו לה' וקדושתו באהבה רבה בתענוגים וחיבה יתרה הנ"ל כי הם זה לעומת זה כדכתיב תכלית שנאה שנאתים לאויבים היו לי חקרני ודע לבבי וגו' וכפי ערך גודל האהבה לה' כך ערך גודל השנאה לס"א והמייאוס ברע בתכלית כי המייאוס הוא הפך האהבה ממש כמו השנאה.

Accepting the Yoke of God

A *tzadik* has great love for *Hashem*; he only loves what *Hashem* loves!

Torah purifies a man; it changes his very nature, and redefines what he will find desirable.

Note the language of the Chazon Ish, Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz o.b.m, in explaining why it is so important to labor for peshat, to decipher the plain meaning of Talmudic text:

"Only hard work at learning is elevated service. It was for the sake of these labors that our Sages stressed the importance of Torah study to those who learn Torah. It is this toil that transforms matter to spirit and body to soul. Laboring to understand Torah enters all 248 limbs of a person, leaving him purified and refined to enjoy the Torah life".

Man must be ready to serve God through any means. We must be prepared to accept His yoke and do whatever He wants from us. If God wants me to cut wood all day, that is what I must do! If when I study Torah or perform *mitzvos*, I feel no pleasure, desire, feeling, or inspiration, I must nevertheless continue to perform them! For this is what it means to accept the yoke of serving God. The beginning of Divine service always entails these types of struggles. A beginner must constantly toil, despite the fact that he finds no pleasure in it. For this is what we must do; we must serve *Hashem*, not seek pleasure.

It is known that Reb Zeesha¹⁵ said that he only expected reward for the times when he served God without feeling anything--when it was hard to serve God. Later, when he had come to appreciate the meaning of the service, he no longer felt that his service was anything special--after all, by then he appreciated its significance in a deep way, and was inherently motivated to perform it. But since as a young person he had a strong *yetzer hara* and had to fight hard to serve God, he later felt that those were the experiences for which he truly deserved to be rewarded.

15. Reb Meshulam Zeesha of Anipoli, known as Reb Zeesha, was born early in the eighteenth century and left us on the second of *Shevat* 5560 (January 28, 1800). He was the brother of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk. He was a great *tzadik* whose witty and sharp remarks are recalled for their great inspiration and holiness.

Ultimately, though, Torah is transformative. While a Jew must always accept the yoke of Heaven-and be willing to serve God even if he feels nothing--in reality Torah is so much more than simply just chopping wood. Torah is a great light! It transforms man. It makes a person into a different individual. It brings the light of the *Neshamah* to a person. A Jew who has been transformed by Torah becomes a holy person who can truly experience spirituality. Man becomes a great and elevated creature through Torah and *mitzvos*.

In fact, even unredeemed and natural man is higher than all the animals and beasts. This is true to the extent that we cannot even say that humans are better than animals--a person is an entirely new category of living creature relative to animals, and so the two cannot be compared. And this is true about any person, no matter how simple. How much greater is the level of the person who has been transformed by Torah!

A man can be in an entirely different realm from that of other people. He can become a Godly person, while his neighbor remains animal-like. How does this happen? It happens through learning Torah and fulfilling *mitzvos*! These actions transform the person!

Man must desire great degrees of spiritual experience. He should desire these not for pleasure, but rather because they allow him to feel and know that he is truly serving *Hashem*. Service of *Hashem* brings awesome spiritual delights. If I do not feel these delights, then I am not truly serving *Hashem*! I must work for God, and realize that if I am truly serving God I will feel great pleasure, for great pleasure is innate to Divine service.

In his letters, the Chazon Ish once addressed a student and elaborated upon these themes.

"I wish to speak to your heart and arouse you to notice the truly good for man. Obviously, my wish to see you in a good and happy state is my strongest desire and is very attached to every fiber in my soul! In truth, in this you are my partner, for you too want to see yourself in the best state. However, there is a difference between us. You are confronted with a war when you step forward to try to choose the good. For it is the nature of man to follow that which is sweet at the moment, even though his discerning mind realizes that such a course of action is lowly. Even though it is part of man's nature to praise the refined over the indulgent, and to disparage fully the bodily instincts, it is

very hard for man to actually separate from lowly urges. It is incumbent on the wise man to overcome his urges. As our Sages have taught: tzadikim master their urge, while the wicked are mastered by their urge. However, the friends of a person do not have an urge for his bodily delights; they only desire for their friend the eternal good fortune of true living.

*How my heart is pained when I see you falling in battle with your urge! You are spending all day in emptiness! In truth, all the difficulty of the wise is only at the beginning; **as they taught: all beginnings are hard. However, after a person toils for a short amount of time in studying Torah he acquires a love for Torah, and he desires to learn Torah more than any pleasure of this world!***

Know, my precious one, that everything is dependent on commitment. Many great giants only began their learning in adulthood, when they adorned themselves with a spirit of strength and they made a passionate, strong commitment in their souls to establish themselves in Torah and to throw behind their backs all the stirrings of the world! This commitment stood them in good stead. They progressed and produced great fruit.

Behold, the aftermath of the joy of physical pleasures is mourning and weakness of heart, while if man succeeds in overcoming a temptation he is filled with joy and strength.

Now, my precious one, do for your sake if not for our sake. Make a powerful commitment to learn deeply the Torah, and you will find in this life pleasure that is unparalleled on this earth! And know that at the beginning of the road the Satan will set up obstacles and stumbling blocks for man. For this is part of the challenge of living in this world. However, ultimately man will win, and one who tries to be pure the Heavens help him become pure.

I am writing this letter for I hope to be told you have set yourself in the realm of Torah. For what is man to do in this life? What is life worth if he does not acquire Torah, know his Maker, and know why he was sent from the highest realms to this lowly earth! Man was not given life to live like an animal!

I am signing with blessings for a good new year, with a soul that seeks your peace and welfare,

Avraham Yeshayahu"

Each of us must work on ourselves until we become a *tzadik gamur*. We should reach a level where we love holy matters for the same reason *Hashem*

loves Torah and *mitzvos*, and not simply because *Hashem* said we should love them. We are a piece of the Divine *mamash*, literally! If man works through the temptations of his body well, then the Godly soul will shine through it. The nature of the *Neshamah*, which is Godly, will then become manifest. We will come to want what *Hashem* wants for the reasons *Hashem* wants it!

Why, then, does God love Torah and *mitzvos*? The reason is that Heavenly lights, as well as great *sheleimus*, perfection, are found within Torah and *mitzvos*! A person who perfects and refines himself, and becomes a *tzadik gamur*, comes to love Torah and *mitzvos* for this reason. He is attracted to Torah and *mitzvos* because of the Heavenly light within them. He becomes naturally drawn to the enormous pleasure within Torah and *mitzvos*, and his *Yechidah*¹⁶ shines right through his body.

Why Our Spiritual Horizons Might be Limited

The *Tanya* explains that there are some people who will never become *tzadikim*. While they learn Torah and feel inspired, they battle the evil urge their entire lives. How can this be? Shouldn't the Torah and *mitzvos* of such a person purify his body? How can he fail to become a *tzadik*?

The answer is that in this *gilgul*, soul incarnation, a person might be able to only fix one level, as a result of experiences his soul went through in earlier iterations. There remain in his soul some *chesronos*, deficiencies, that can't be repaired. In some cases, a soul has caused damage in earlier *gilgulim*, and so in its present *gilgul* he must constantly struggle, never getting beyond the level of a *beinoni*. Ultimately, however, each one of us will fix everything. Our souls, although perhaps only after many reincarnations, will reach the level of service to God of *ahavah beta'anugim*, love of Divine delights, the stage when the *yetzer hara* is transformed entirely.

Struggle Is a Sign of Great Potential

In our liturgy we describe the Almighty with the phrase, *Atah mechayeh*

16. *Yechidah* is the name of the highest part of the Godly soul. *Yechidah* is the level of soul that is fully attached to the Divine. It channels Godliness. When *Yechidah* is revealed man only seeks to serve *Hashem*. When man's *Yechidah* is revealed he only seeks religious activities.

es kulam, You give life to them all. God gives life to all, even to evil. Therefore the evil urge derives its life from God.

At the conclusion of the account of the six days of creation the Torah states, "*Vayar Elokim es kol asher asah vehinei tov me'od*", "And Hashem saw all that He had made and behold it was very good" (*Bereishis* 1:31). The *Midrash* notices the unusual doubled phrase "very good" and explains as follows: *tov* refers to good things, like the *yetzer tov*, the urge for holiness; *tov me'od* refers to bad things, like the *yetzer hara*, the urge for evil. *Tov me'od* also refers to a bad angel, such as the *Mal'ach Hamaves*, angel of death. The shard of vitality that gives life to evil is not just good, *tov*--it is very good, *tov me'od*. It possesses even greater good than the *yetzer tov*!

Why is this so? When we shake a fruit tree and cause the fruit to fall, the higher the fruit, the farther it falls. This is a truth of the world. The only reason that a spark of Godly life could descend so low and give life to the forces of evil is that it is in fact a higher good. It came from the top of the tree; it is *tov me'od*. The good that is found trapped in the *yetzer hara*, urge for evil, stems from a higher good than the good that gives life to the *yetzer tov*, urge for good. When a man has a strong *yetzer hara* to contend with, he should realize that he can reach a higher level than the individual who has no such *yetzer hara*! He can reach a level of *tov me'od*! He can elevate a spark to its rightful place where it will once again be *tov me'od*! In contrast to such a person, one who never struggles due to his lack of *yetzer hara* is merely in the realm of *tov*, and thus can only reach a level characterized as mere good.

The verse states, "*Ha'am haholchim bachoshech ra'u or gadol*", "The nation walking through the darkness has seen a great light" (*Yeshayahu* 9:1). If one can keep progressing through the darkness, and if he can go from level to level despite the murkiness of temptation, sin, and failure, then, and only then, can he reach the level of *ra'u or gadol*, seeing a great light.

You must know that the *tzadikim* about whom we relate great stories of the *madreigos*, holy levels, that they reached - had failures! Though there are no books detailing the challenges, failures, and sins of these same *tzadikim*, know that they experienced all these things! It is not *lefi kevodam*, respectful of their honor, to detail their struggles. But know that they failed.

Even the greatest man who ever lived failed! In the Torah, Hashem tells Moshe *Rabbeinu*, "*Ya'an lo he'emantem bi!*" "Since you did not believe in Me"

(*Bamidbar* 20:12). In God's eyes, even Moshe sinned. Our Torah does not hide this truth. Real *tzadikim* had tremendous *nisyonos*, tests, from the worst types of *yetzer haras*, urges for evil. Their tests were far worse than the challenges regular people face. They were not born as *tzadikim kedoshim*, holy perfected individuals. Their challenges, though, did not get them depressed or make them feel hopeless - they fought them. And then they merited the hidden good, which is to reach very exalted stages, and to reach the level of *tov me'od*!

You must not fall into depression. Do not feel bad that you do not learn, or that you feel arrogant, or that you have urges for bad things. Instead of becoming depressed, let this challenge encourage you! The *yetzer hara* attacks those who have something great within them! If there would be nothing within you, the evil urge would leave you alone. If you are contending with setbacks, that means that there is a spark of *tov me'od* within you. Take encouragement and *chizuk* from that!

Keep on struggling! Don't let him convince you to despair! If you persevere and succeed, you will merit tremendous light, great spirituality, and powerful feelings of holiness.

The Chazon Ish pointed out in his letters that a strong evil urge is actually a sign of the potential for greatness:

"A certain student was accepted to Yeshiva,... however they demanded a letter from him. His nature is that of a very gifted person. He is also pleasant. He is also challenged with his urges - as is the norm with healthy gifted individuals - and he demands a lot from his teachers. Therefore he needs constant vigorous supervision. However, it is particularly from these that joyous greatness will emerge! Therefore, first tell the administration the pleasant aspects so that they will easily accept him, and only after he is in the school perhaps it would be correct to reveal a bit of what else was said. I repeat my blessings and seek your welfare and peace.

Avraham Yeshayahu"

The Jewish calendar has its time that is especially suited for attaining the great heights and brilliant light for which a person is always striving. *Rosh Hashanah* is a time of *Hashem ori*, God is my light. On that day the light of God is revealed. Beginning in *Elul*, we prepare ourselves for the great days to come. *Tishrei* is a month packed with brilliant lights, which culminate in the

highest level, *Shemini Atzeres/Simchas Torah*. On *Shemini Atzeres/Simchas Torah* the *Yechidah shebenefesh* is revealed. This is when the *Keser* of a person, the *ratzon Hashem*, will of *Hashem*, appears. This inner will leads us to want what *Hashem* wants, simply because He wants those things. We dance *hakafos*, Torah dancing circles in the center of the synagogue, on *Shemini Atzeres/Simchas Torah*, for it is a time of *oros makifin*, enveloping lights. We receive lights that the body cannot internalize; they are a treasure above and around the person.

Keser means a crown that goes around a person, as the verse describes, "*kitru es Binyamin*", "surround Binyamin" (*Shoftim* 20:43). These are great achievements, and we begin to actualize them with the *or* of *Rosh Hashanah*.

In Vilna, during World War II, the Jews were persecuted and confined to a ghetto. Zelig Kalmanovitch, a great expert in Yiddish and history, who before the war had not been most observant, responded to the persecution with a great teshuvah and return to Jewish living. He kept a diary of his experiences. The following description of his, about the joy of Simchas Torah in the Vilna ghetto, helps illustrate how Simchas Torah is a time when the inner and highest holiness of a Jew can be accessed:

Friday, October 2, 1942 - I heard the terrible news about the large community, (Warsaw). "Heavens pray for me!" Today I got the news that they took out of there 500,000 people...Once there were 500-600,000 people there. Master of the World, remember your mercy! They say that in the factory city (Lodz), the cup is about to be poured out. They are telling about decrees against cities and towns in Pabianice. Rachem bechasdecha al amcha, Tzureinu, Have compassion on Your nation, O Rock of support.

On the night of Simchas Torah, I arrived, due to the invitation of the Rabbi, to hakafos, celebrations with the Torah scroll, that were taking place in a building that before the war had been a shul. Now it has been turned into a school for music. The remnants of yeshiva students and Torah-learned gathered. There were a few children; all sang and danced. They honored me with leading the first hakafah...I said a few words: "Singing and dancing is a service to Hashem, avodah. Joy is a lesson and a message to the One who decides life and death. Here in this small community, in an improvised and ruined shul, we connect to the Jewish nation. Not only are all of us here connecting to each other, but with this joy we connect to those who are already in the Garden of Eden. With this joy we connect to all that is holy and pure.

We connect to myriads; we connect to all the Jews who ever lived in the generations before us. With the joy that we rejoice today, we thank those earlier generations, those wonderful earlier generations that we wish we had lived in. We sense now that with our singing today we are mekadesh sheim Shamayim, sanctifying Hashem's name, exactly as the fathers of our fathers did. And I, a lost Jewish soul, feel here, now, my root. You with your joy are sheltering a generation that is being attacked by forces of annihilation. Seeing tonight, I know that the Jewish nation will survive and thrive. Behold it is written 'Keyemei shamayim al ha'aretz, like the days of Heaven on earth.' And even if we would be the last generation, we could whole heartedly praise and thank Hashem and say, 'Dayeinu - It is enough for us to be descendants of these giants!' Each day Hashem gives us is a blessing. Let us accept it with joy".

Postscript: Zelig Kalmanowitz never wavered in his faith and Jewish pride. He was eventually deported from the ghetto to a slave labor camp in Estonia. From the camp he smuggled out a letter in which he wrote, "I feel fortunate to be in the company of the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov". Eventually he was forced to clean latrines and handle human waste. This great delicate soul had the conviction to state: "I kiss the waste that comes from the holy Jewish nation!"¹⁷

Why Evil Can Be Transformed

Evil has no independent existence. We see this on *Yom Kippur*, when the *yetzer hara* becomes an angel of *tov*. The *kateigor*, prosecutor, becomes a *saneigor*, defender. The reason for this is that bad does not really exist!

We can concretize this principle by considering the role that language plays in the world. There are twenty-two letters in Hebrew. Through these letters of the Torah the world was created and is sustained. These letters must be combined to create words. An *aleph* + *beis*, א+ב, combine to produce אב, *av*, father. The letters themselves are all good; they are holy. However, they have the ability to combine, and letter combinations can serve as a root for evil. If *reish*, ר, is connected with *ayin*, ע, it becomes the source for *ra*, רע, bad. Until the two combined, they simply existed as an independent *ayin* and *reish*. There was no evil; they were only good.

17. Rabbi Yehoshua Eybshutz, *Devarim Keksavam*, pages 296-300.

Combinations of the same letters, depending on their order, can be either good or evil. Consider the word *negah*, נג, plague. The letters נג can be rearranged to become *oneg*, נע, pleasure. The same three letters can combine to form words that have opposite meanings. And yet each one on its own is always holy. It is only when they are combined that they can become *ra*.

Thus we see that the existence of *tov* is based upon individual letters, whereas the existence of evil depends upon letter combinations. Combination without letters is impossible. It does not exist. Evil begins only with combinations. This tells us that evil has no independent existence and is not real. One can rearrange a bad combination of letters, and transform the evil to good. Evil can be rearranged and transformed into all good. You can annul the combination of *ra* and turn it to good.

Eisav is called *shav shebar'asi be'olami*, the waste I created in My world. (*Bereishis Rabbah* 63:8). Eisav and his evil are not real! They are illusory. This is more easily visualized when we consider darkness. What is darkness? Does it exist? It is emptiness; it is nothingness. It is a lack of light. Light exists; evil is empty nothingness. And since evil is not truly a reality, it can be transformed and rearranged into good!

On *Rosh Hashanah* we experience *Hashem ori*. It is the day upon which all the sparks of life, the true life of each created thing, wake up and are renewed. The *shofar* awakens those who are slumbering. As the Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4) says, the meaning of the call of the *shofar* is "*uru yesheinim misheinaschem*", "awaken sleepers from your slumber". The *shofar* awakens what is truly real, which is the Godly life inside everything and everyone.

The *shofar* is a symbol of freedom. During the Jubilee year, the *shofar* blast sets the slaves free, for the *shofar* engenders freedom. We blow the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah*, and it was on a *Rosh Hashanah* that Ya'akov's son, Yosef *haTzadik*, was freed from jail. In Psalms, jail is identified with darkness. Consider the following verse, "*yoshvei choshech vetzalmaves asirei ani uvarzel*", "Those who reside in darkness, in the shadows of death, are jailed, impoverished, in irons" (107:10). Jail is a place of darkness. When we are in darkness the Godly spark, the true reality, is trapped in a jail.

On the first day of creation *Hashem* created a great light. "*Vayar Elokim es ha'or ki tov*", "*Hashem* saw that the light was good" (*Bereishis* 1:4), and He

hid this light away for the *tzadikim*. This light is the truest reality. It is the reality of the first day of creation. It is now hidden, however, and visible only to the righteous. Yosef was filled with this light because he was the ultimate *tzadik*. Thus we can understand Yosef's time in jail as symbolizing the great light trapped in darkness. It makes perfect sense, then, that it was on *Rosh Hashanah* that Yosef was released from jail! On *Rosh Hashanah* all the Divine light, even that light that was hidden away since the beginning of creation, is freed from bondage and darkness!

***Gadlus HaMochin* and the Call of Freedom**

The *Ari* explained that all things can be compared to the various parts of the body. Egypt is compared to the neck. The neck represents limited intellects, *katnus hamochin*. *Hashem's* name *Elokim* also represents limited intellects. This is alluded to by the fact that *Elokim* ם-י-ה-ל-א equals *hateva*, ןהטבע, the natural. This is in fact the essence of Egypt. The Egyptians were obsessed with the natural world and felt that everything in it had a natural or physical explanation.

In contrast to *Elokim*, *Hashem's* name *Havayah*, ה-ו-ה-י represents *gadlus hamochin*, elevated consciousness. A person has *Chochmah*, wisdom, *Binah*, understanding, and *Da'as*, internalization. He can have a *Havayah* of *Chochmah*, a *Havayah* of *Binah*, and a *Havayah* of *Da'as*, if his intellects are in an elevated state. However, when there is *katnus hamochin*, limited intellects, the elevated levels of cognition depart, and man becomes *Elokim* times three, which represents the *katnus*, minimized form, of *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Da'as*.

These three representations of the name *Elokim* are embodied by the three *sarei Paroh*, ministers of Pharaoh. While in Egypt, Yosef had to contend with the *sar ha'ofim*, minister of baking, *sar hamashkim*, minister of drinks, and the *sar hatabachim*, minister of slaughtering.

The *sar ha'ofim* represents bread, which comes from wheat. Bread corresponds to *Chochmah*. In fact, when we eat *matzah* we are *mechavein Chochmah*, we think about *Chochmah*. Thus the *sar ha'ofim*, minister of baking bread, represented limited *Chochmah*. The *sar hamashkin's* business is wine, which corresponds to *Binah*. And the theme of the work of the *sar hatabachim*-blood-corresponds to *Da'as*.

Of these three ministers, the one with whom Yosef most interacted was the *sar hatabachim*, minister of slaughtering. He was the master who purchased Yosef, and Yosef later spent time in his jail. Yosef's main interactions were with this officer because the main limited mind in Egypt was the limited *Da'as*. The intellects of Egypt were limited, for these three leaders caused limitations in the revelations of *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Da'as*. However, Yosef's presence in the land changed that: "*Vayehi Hashem es Yosef*", "and *Havayah*, ה-ו-ה-י, was with Yosef" (*Bereishis* 39:2). Yosef drew *Havayah*, a light of *gadlus hamochin*, elevated intellect, into the limited land of Egypt.

Before the arrival of Yosef and the growth of his influence over the land, the *sheim Elokim* was known and appreciated in Egypt. Even Pharaoh believed in *Elokim*, which is why Yosef told him "*Elokim ya'aneh es shelom Paroh*", "*Elokim* will answer Pharaoh peacefully" (*Bereishis* 41:16). Obviously Pharaoh was familiar with *Elokim*. We also see that the ministers appreciated the name *Elokim*. That is why Yosef told the *sar hamashkim*, "*Halo le'Elokim pisonim*", "Behold to God, *Elokim*, are the interpretations" (*Bereishis* 40:8). It would only have made sense for him to speak this way if the Egyptians were already familiar with *Elokim*.

But although the Egyptians knew the name *Elokim*, for they were *yoneik*, nourished, by *sheim Elokim*, they failed to acknowledge *sheim Havayah*. This is reflected in Pharaoh's response when Moshe first came to request the release of the Jewish slaves. Pharaoh responded, "*Mi Hashem asher eshma lekolo*", "Who is *Havayah* that I should listen to Him?" (*Shemos* 5:2). With these words he denied the concept of *Havayah*, the concept of *gadlus hamochin*.

The *Ari* explains further how the neck represents these concepts. The neck is a *tzimtzum*, a constricted space, for it constricts the parts of the intellect that are in the head. The neck has three main parts: *kaneh*, windpipe; *veshet*, esophagus or food pipe; and *veridin*, veins, especially the jugular vein. (*Hilchos shechitah*, the laws of ritual slaughter, refer to these entities). These three parts correspond to the limited forms of the three *mochin*. The *kaneh* is represented by the *sar hamashkim*, the *veshet* by the *sar ha'ofim*, and the *veridin* by the *sar hatabachim*. Yosef went with the light of three *Havayos* into the Egyptian exile - the realm of limited intellects - the neck - but on *Rosh Hashanah* he got out!

When we blow the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* we remember Yosef's release from jail on that day. The act of blowing the *shofar* requires the use of the cords in our neck. We begin with a narrow breath and eventually produce a

broad sound. Similarly, we introduce the liturgy of *shofar*-blowing with the sentence, "*Min hameitzar kara'si Kah anani bamerchav Kah*", "From the narrow straits I have called out to *Hashem*, answer me in the expanse of *Hashem*" (*Tehillim* 118:5). On *Rosh Hashanah* the *or haganuz* leaves its jail!

Only the *or haganuz* shone on the first *Rosh Hashanah*, for even after mankind ate from the Tree of Knowledge, *Hashem* allowed the hidden light to shine for thirty-six hours. Every year on *Rosh Hashanah* the hidden light is freed from its jail, and Jewish souls can sense the exodus from Egypt--the move from constricted intellect to the expanses of *Havayah*.

Only Nature Can Overcome Nature!

The true nature of the soul is revealed on *Rosh Hashanah*. To overcome physical naturalism, one must discover spiritual naturalism. The soul that naturally seeks to fulfill the will of God must find its expression. The innate nature of the soul expresses itself in the *shofar* blasts.

What is the *shofar* sound?

Breath.

What is man's soul, his *chelek Elokah mima'al*, piece of the Divine from Above, his *Yechidah*?

God's breath!

On *Rosh Hashanah*, God blows into us a new breath of life; we blow that life, the *nekudah*, point, of *chiyus*, life, right back to *Hashem*.

Through the *shofar*, the innate will of the soul is freed and expressed. Yosef went free on *Rosh Hashanah*. The sparks go free. The innermost will of all, the desire to serve God, is revealed in some measure. We are *mamlich Hashem*, we make God sovereign, with our *etzem chayim*, essential life!

Rosh Hashanah is a time to accept the yoke of Heaven, and *lehamlich haMelech*, to accept Him as sovereign. A true commitment requires a natural attraction and not simply an intellectual agreement. We are intelligent beings. Were we to accept the Almighty with our intellect alone, it would not be a truly strong commitment, because the intellect insists on following its own understanding. What it does not understand, it will not fulfill. Sometimes I will understand what the king does, but sometimes I won't, and I will have questions for the king. Especially because the King of Kings is higher than we,

there will inevitably be times when we will not understand why He does what he does, or why He demands certain actions. To maintain commitment at all times we must accept His yoke with a natural animal-like loyalty, and not with our *mochin*.

Chochmah and *Binah* will not lead to a long-term commitment, for they do not have the strength to fulfill what they do not understand. Nature, though, is very strong; the nature of an animal is very tough. When we accept the yoke of Divine rule, *ol Malchus Shamayim*, we do it with the deepest nature of man! On *Rosh Hashanah* a natural pull to *Hashem* that is higher than *mochin* emerges. Without this pull, our acceptance of His yoke would remain incomplete.

So we see that it is not the mind, but rather the *chiyus* of the *Neshamah* that is drawn to *Hashem*. It is an attitude of *mesimin atzmam kebeheimah*, making themselves as beasts (*Chulin* 5a), that leads to a true acceptance of His yoke. Because on *Rosh Hashanah* we are drawn to *Hashem* with a natural attraction, we use a piece of an animal -- the ram's horn -- and blow it. The moment when we hear its sounds is the moment when we are to accept His yoke. We are to be like sheep that naturally follow the shepherd! We are to remember that the *teva hanefesh*, nature of the soul, is emerging, and the point of our being is to make *Hashem* king! And when we do this, all aspects of life in the world come out and are drawn to *Hashem*.

We can learn a great deal about these ideas by considering the nature of animals. Animals are very intelligent and also possess spiritual sensitivity. When the Besht used to *daven*, animals would sway along with him. They would feel the holiness, and naturally vibrate to it! Spiders spin complex webs, and bees build sophisticated hives. All of these abilities are part of their innate natures. In the future, in the time of *tikun*, when people will *daven* to *Hashem*, the animals will also sing to *Hashem*! They will sense holiness and conform to it, even though they are not blessed with wisdom and intelligence. *Perek Shirah*, a work in our literature, teaches that the whole creation sings to *Hashem*. Even the animals sing to *Hashem*. Now their songs are hidden, but in the future they will be revealed.

Animal nature is very wise. In the future, a horse will accompany a Jew to the *beis midrash*, since it will sense that *Hashem* is being served! Animals will not serve *Hashem* with *mochin*, but with their natures. Animals know naturally how to look for food and prepare it, and this ability stems from the

sheim Elokim. *Elokim*, however, is a cover. Beneath *sheim Elokim* is the *sheim Havayah*, the *hamtakah*, sweetening, of *sheim Elokim*. It represents the *teva* at its root, and at that point there is only *Elokis*.

When Sparks Go Free

Rav Pinchas ben Yair¹⁸ had an illumination of this future. Think of his famed donkey: it would not eat food that was not kosher! It was no coincidence that his animal behaved so; it related in fact to his very essence. Rav Pinchas ben Yair was exceptionally devoted to *pidyon shevuyim*, redeeming captives. He freed those who were jailed. His name was *Yair*, which means "will illuminate". He was a source of light for people; he was connected to the *or haganuz*, the hidden light. That is why his animal had religious sensitivity toward forbidden actions.

This level of making *Hashem* king occurs on *Rosh Hashanah*. All the Divine sparks get out of jail and go free on *Rosh Hashanah*! Even the lowest and most neglected spark feels the special message of *Rosh Hashanah* and manifests itself in a small way how it will appear in the ultimate future. As we say on *Rosh Hashanah*, "*Vehayah bayom hahu, yitaka beshofar gadol uva'u ha'ovdim beEretz Ashur vehanidachim beEretz Mitzrayim, vehishtachavu laHashem behar hakodesh beYerushalayim*", "It will be on that day that the great *shofar* will be blown and the disappeared ones in the land of Ashur, and the ones who are pushed away in Egypt, will return and they will bow to *Hashem* on the holy mount in Jerusalem" (*Yeshayahu* 27:13, and the *musaf Amidah* prayer of *Rosh Hashanah*).

It is the through the blowing of the *shofar* that the release of light we have been describing takes place. The Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a) states "*Imru lefanai Malchuyos kedai shetamlichuni aleichem, imru lefanai Zichronos kedai sheya'aleh zichroneichem lefanai letovah, uvameh? Be-shofar!*" "Say before Me the verses of kingship so that you will make Me Sovereign over you, say before Me the verses of remembering so that your memories will rise before Me for good, and with what? With the *shofar*!" To make Him king through the *shofar* means that we make Him king with the essence of natural life. *Hashem ori*,

18. Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair was one of the great sages of the second century. He was the father-in-law of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

God is my light. The light, the inner point of life, is revealed on *Rosh Hashanah*. As this inner point escapes its bondage, freedom ensues. We realize that all other matters are not really life. The *shofar* blasts reveal real life. That is why we pray, "*veyeda kol pa'ul ki atah pi'alto veyo'mar kol asher Neshamah be'apo Hashem Elokei Yisrael Melech uMalchuso bakol mashalah*", "And each created being will know You created it and each who has a soul in his nostrils will declare, *Hashem* the Lord of Israel is King and His kingdom rules over all" (*Machzor*).

On *Rosh Hashanah*, not only does the inner life of a person emerge--the inner life of every created thing, the *Neshamah* of each item, comes out, and everything wishes to serve *Hashem* and declare that *Hashem* is the king and sovereign!

A story about Reb Yisrael Vizhnitzer¹⁹ illustrates the desire of all things to serve *Hashem*. People once noticed that during the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Rosh Hashanah*, Reb Yisrael was playing with the window shade. After the *davening* the *chassidim* talked about this, wondering to one another, "Why was the *rebbe* playing with the window shade?" During his *devar* Torah, Reb Yisrael explained, "During *musaf* I was 'playing' with the window shade, for I was concentrating on the thought, 'when will the window shade take action to demonstrate that *Hashem* is king?'"

I once heard something so powerful from the Rebbe, o.b.m.²⁰ It was on the *Shabbos* before *Rosh Hashanah*, and I can't forget it; the words went straight into my bones. The Rebbe said, "When *Mashiach* will come, we will merit that each worm will know that there is a Creator in the world, and each worm will have *kelos hanefesh*, a pining soul, for *ahavas haShechinah*, love of the immanent Almighty". At that time, all of creation will be involved with revealing *Malchus Shamayim*.

Rosh Hashanah, when Yosef went free, is also the time when we stress the fact that *ameich kulam tzadikim*, your entire nation are *tzadikim*. There is an inner light in each of us, and this inner light is released from its jail on *Rosh*

19. Rav Yisrael Hager (1860-1936) was the third Rebbe of Vizhnitz. He was a great *tzadik* and one of the leaders of the Jewish nation in Romania and Hungary in the era before World War II. He authored the work *Ahavas Yisrael*.

20. A reference to Rav Yehuda Horowitz, the Rebbe of Stitschin.

Hashanah. Even though a *bochur* may not feel this, know that this is happening--*Hashem ori beRosh Hashanah*. Do not feel bad if you do not feel this. It is the reality of what is happening; *Hashem* is our light on *Rosh Hashanah*.

Waking from the Sleep of Physical Nature

On *Rosh Hashanah* the *shofar* wakes us up. The Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:7) writes that this is the essential goal of the blowing of the *shofar*: "*Uru yesheinim misheinaschem venirdamim hakitzu mitardeimaschem*", "Arouse, sleepers, from your sleep, and slumberers, awaken from your slumber". The word *tardeimah*, which is commonly translated as "slumber", has another meaning. It refers as well to *derech hateva*, natural living, which is a state of slumber when compared to spiritual living.

The *Ari* explains that there is an *achorayim*, a secondary *hashpa'ah*, "hinder part", of *Havayah*. It is hinted at in drip-by-drip revelation, (*yud*) + (*yud* + *keh*) + (*yud* + *keh* + *vav*) + (*yud* + *keh* + *vav* + *keh*). All these letters together equal 72 in *gematria*. The *Ari* says that sometimes we should only reckon nine *Sefiros*, for *Malchus* is merely a *hiskalelus*, a generalization, not a *Sefirah* on its own. Thus, all nine *Sefiros*, representing all the forces of the world, times 72, the drip-by-drip form of the name that made the world ($9 \times 72 + 1 = 649$, plus One, for *Hashem* adds Himself to complete a *gematria*), equals *tardeimah* תרדמה. The word for nature, *teva*, טבע, is *tes ayin beis* 9, 72, ט, עב. For nature is similar to sleeping spirituality. A *hanhagah*, behavior, of *tev'iyus*, naturalness, is sleep-like: hardly feeling, conscious, or thoughtful.

Other Languages to the Holy Tongue are like Sleep to the Awake State

The Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah* 33b) notes something interesting about blowing the *shofar*: we derive the blowing of the *shofar* from a translation. The verse says, "'*Yom teru'ah yihyeh lachem*', *umitargminan 'yom yebava*,'" "It should be a day of *teru'ah* for you' and we translate *teru'ah* as *yebava*".

Why should we derive such an important *mitzvah*, blowing the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah*, from *targum*, translation?

To answer this question, we must understand *targum*, translation, as it relates to *lashon kodesh*, the holy tongue. Most languages are natural

phenomena; they are human constructs. People use languages as tools to communicate with one another. The holy language, in contrast, is unique. *Hashem* made it. It preceded the world and was used to create the natural world. *Targum*, an Aramaic word, is *derech hateva*, the way of nature, while *lashon kadosh* is *lema'alah miderech hateva*, beyond the realm of nature. *Targum* is *tardeimah* in relation to *lashon kodesh*. *Targum* תרגום in *gematria* equals *tardeimah*, תרדמה. *Tardeimah* is the *achorayim*, drip-by-drip manifestation, of *Havayah*, *Hashem's* transcendent name of creation. *Targum* manifests as an *achorayim* to *lashon kodesh*. The message of the *shofar* is, "Wake up on *Rosh Hashanah*". We have to take all the *achorayim* and, through the rise of sparks, restore them to *lashon kodesh*.

Maseches Rosh Hashanah includes a fascinating discussion about deriving word meaning from other languages. This discussion is found when the *Gemara* starts to talk about *shofar*.

Amar Reb Akiva keshehalachti leAravya hayu korin ledachra yovla. Ve'amar Reb Akiva keshehalachti leGalya hayu korin leniddah galmudah. Mai galmudah? Gemulah da miba'alah. Ve'amar Reb Akiva keshehalachti le'Afriki hayu korin lema'ah kesitah, limai nafka mina? lifrushei me'ah kesitah de-Oraisa

Rabbi Akiva taught, when I went to Arabia I noticed they would call a ram *yavla*. And Rabbi Akiva taught, when I went to Gaul I noticed they would call a *niddah*, menstruant, *galmudah*. Why *galmudah*? It is an acronym of *gemulah da miba'alah*, this one is separated from her husband. And Rabbi Akiva said, when I traveled to Africa I noticed they would call *ma'ah, kesitah* (*Rosh Hashanah* 26a).

In what way is this discussion relevant to *Rosh Hashanah*? Why tell us how Rabbi Akiva learned the meanings of Hebrew words from other languages?

The Sages traveled in order to retrieve *nidachim*, lost sparks. Occasionally we are faced with a Hebrew word for which the translation is unknown. When the *chachamim* discover that the nations use a similar word for a particular meaning, and thereby restore the original Hebrew meaning, they have discovered an instance wherein the *lashon kodesh* fell into the hands of the *sitra achra* and was lost to us. On *Rosh Hashanah*, though, these trapped sparks are freed to return to us. The *Tanna'im* traveled to discover the meaning of these words, so that they could return sparks to *lashon kodesh*.

This Talmudic narrative has a particular emphasis on Rabbi Akiva,

because it was Rabbi Akiva who so hoped that his generation would witness the revelation of *Mashiach*. Rabbi Akiva famously supported the Bar Kochva revolt, and he thought Bar Kochva would eventually be accepted by everyone as the redeemer. This is why he went out *lekabeitz nidachim*, to gather in the dispersed sparks, from the far places: he wanted to return them to *lashon kodesh* and *Malchus Shamayim*, Divine sovereignty!

Rosh Hashanah is called *Yom HaZikaron*, the day of remembering. It is a time for all the forgotten aspects of holiness to be remembered and returned to *Malchus Shamayim*, Divine sovereignty.

The *poskim*, legal authorities, call the units of *shofar* sounds, *trumitin*, טרומיטין. *Tarmit* (258) טרמט, equals three times *Elokim* ($86 \times 3 = 258$) representing the three ministers of Pharaoh. The three parts of the throat, representing limited intellects, derive nourishment from the *sheim Elokim*. When we blow the *shofar* we blow from the throat. "*Min hameitzar kara'si Kah anani bamerchav Kah*", "from the narrow straits I called out to You *Hashem*, answer me in the expanse of *Hashem*" (*Tehillim* 118:5). We begin with the throat, the jail of *teva* and *Mitzrayim*, and then *anani bamerchav Kah*, *Hashem* helps us and we reach a *gadlus hamochin*, expanded intellects. The throat, the *garon*, is the *sarei Paroh*. *Shofar*, שופר, is letters *shin reish, sar*, שר, minister, and *peh vav* פו - the *gematria* of *sheim Elokim*. These are the *sarei Paroh*, ministers of Pharaoh, that are *yoneik* from the *sheim Elokim*.

The *Ari* says that the word *shofar* refers to the three *katnus hamochin*. The *shin* ש in *gematria* is *Elokim* in its *mil'ui*, the filled-out form of the word where each letter's *gematria* is the sum of its name, i.e., א.ל.ף + ל.מ.ד + ה.י + יו.ד + מ.ם. The *reish* is the *gematria* of the *achorayim*, drip-by-drip form, of *Elokim*, (alef, א) + (alef+lamed; ל + א) + (alef+lamed+hei, ה + ל + א) + (alef+lamed+hei+yud; י + ה + ל + א) + (alef+lamed+hei+yud+mem; מ + י + ה + ל + א). The *peh vav* represents the numerical sum of simple form of the name *elokim*, *elokim pashut*. (alef+lamed+hei+yud+mem; מ + י + ה + ל + א). One reference to a form of *Elokim* is for *Chochmah*, another is for *Binah* and the third hint to *Elokim* is for *Da'as*. The *shofar* hints to the three *sarei Paroh*, limited intellects represented by the name *Elokim*, and then it becomes a *merchav Kah*, the expanse of *Hashem*, a *shofar* sound with breadth.

This is the meaning of the *pesukim* "*Tik'u baChodesh shofar...Eidus biYehosef samo betzei'so al Eretz Mitzrayim*", "Blow the *shofar* at the new moon time... It is a testimony to Joseph when he was freed and went out in the land

of Egypt!" (*Tehillim* 81:4,6). The blowing of the *shofar* represents Yosef's freedom from the Egyptian jail.

Shofar and Beauty

There is yet another point we can make about the meaning of the *shofar*. *Shufra* means beauty. The beauty of holiness is called *shofar*. We find descriptions such as, "*shufrei deRav Avahu*", and "*shufra deYa'akov Avinu*", the beauty of Rav Avahu and the beauty of our ancestor Ya'akov. There is a beauty to *kedushah*, the *Tiferes* of holiness. *Shofar* is the *targum* for the word *Tiferes*. Yosef was *yefei to'ar* and *yefei mar'eh*, beautiful of appearance and form. The *sitra achra* tried to grab this great beauty, and so Yosef ended up in jail.

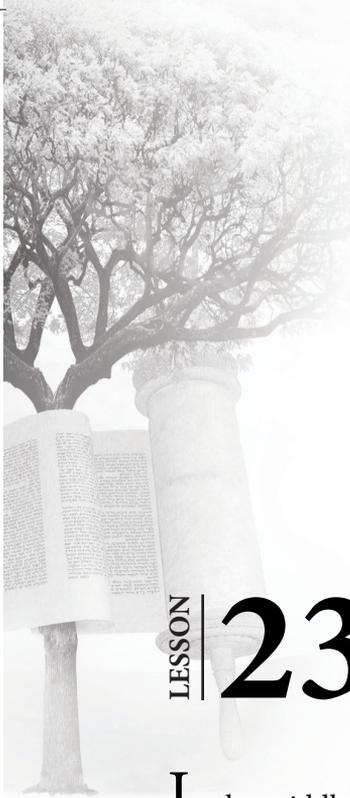
On *Tishah be'Av* we read an elegy devoted to the story of the son and daughter of Rabbi Yishmael. Using vivid and evocative language, the poet describes how they were both taken captive to Rome, where each was purchased by a different master. The masters were once talking about their beautiful slaves, and they decided to force the two into a room. All night each of them sat and cried, "How could the child of Rabbi Yishmael the High Priest commit a sin?" In the morning, they discovered that they were siblings.

As a child I never understood this story. What was the big deal? Ultimately, they did not sin. The catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem, which was accompanied by the deaths of millions, must have seen thousands of worse tragedies. Why is there an entire elegy devoted to this episode?

Now it is clear to me. This story is describing how the beauty of holiness has gone into exile, and the Other Side seeks to attach itself to it and to use it for its own unholy purposes. Rabbi Yishmael's beauty was the beauty of the Jewish people, and that beauty was being grabbed at by evil, as the *Gemara* points out with the words, "*al hai shufra devali be'ar'a kabachina*", "for this I cry, for this beauty that decomposes in the earth" (*Berachos* 5b). Rabbi Yishmael was a possessor of the beauty of *kedushah*, and yet when he was in exile, the beauty became superficial, so much so that the *kochos chitzonim* sought to be *yoneik*, draw nourishment, from it.

When we blow the *shofar*, the beauty of truth is revealed. The *Tiferes* of *Hashem* leaves the forces of evil! The *or penei* Ya'akov, light of the face of Ya'akov, is revealed! *Be'or panecha yehaleichun*, the light of Your face to which we walk, appears. We feel then the beauty in truth, for truth is *Hashem's* seal.

In *Elul* we are to realize that great days are coming. We must prepare through the recitation of *selichos* for the days of *Rosh Hashanah* and further levels of holiness until we get to *Shemini Atzeres*. On *Shemini Atzeres*, the *Yechidah* is revealed and that is a level that is akin to the level of *tzadik vetov lo*, a realm where there is no *ra* and the *Yechidah* is manifest. May we merit to reach this level!



Lesson Twenty-Three teaches us about tzadikim. Tzadikim transform the physical. They turn darkness to light. Even tzadikim fail. In our tradition, our holy leaders tried to accomplish great levels of holiness. They engaged with lowly people and lowly physical matters. Therefore, sometimes they sinned. Do not despair from your setbacks. Even the greatest failed. Continue to toil and grow!

LESSON

23 Tzadikim Fail! Take Risks!

In the middle of Chapter Ten, the *Tanya* states:

And behold this level [of tzadik vera lo - one who has transformed his urge for evil to an urge for good] can be divided into thousands of levels according to how much evil is left from one of the four evil elements.

והנה מדרגה זו מתחלקת לרבבות מדרגות בענין בחי' מיעוט הרע הנשאר מאחת מארבע יסודות הרעים:

The four physical elements - energy, wind, water and dust - emerge from *kelipas nogah*; they stem from the *Nefesh habehemis* and they lead a person towards evil, laziness, anger, haughtiness and similar negative qualities. A person must strive to get rid of the evil contained in these elements.

There are many levels of bittul, nullification, of this evil, just as we find in the Code of Jewish Law that there are types of bittul: there is bittul beshishim, nullifying in sixty times more, and there is bittul be'elef, nullifying in a thousand times more. (According to the Yerushalmi, elef is mivatel even a beryah, a whole organism which usually does not lose its identity). So too there are levels of tzadikim, each with a different measure of annulling the evil within

ובענין ביטולו במיעוטו בששים עד"מ או באלף ורבבה וכיוצא עד"מ והן הם בחי' צדיקים הרבים שבכל הדורות כדאיתא בגמ' דתמניסר אלפי צדיקי קיימי קמי' הקב"ה

him. Some are in the category of the 36 righteous; then there are members of the class of 18,000 tzadikim that stand before God. All of these are different categories of tzadikim.

However, a tzadik gamur, someone who has completely gotten rid of his evil, is what R. Shimon B. Yochai called "ra'isi bnei aliyah vehein mu'atin", "I have seen those who ascend, and they are very few". The reason they are called sons of ascent is that they transform the evil and raise it to holiness.

אך על מעלת צדיק גמור הוא שאמר
רשב"י ראיתי בני עליה והם מועטים
כו' שלכן נקראים בני עליה שמהפכין
הרע ומעלים אותו לקדושה:

The Talmud in *Maseches Sukkah* explains this concept: *bnei aliyah* are those who can enter the highest of realms without first obtaining permission. The *Tanya* explains that they are called *bnei aliyah* because *aliyah* means elevation, and these people elevate the evil--they transform physical nature into goodness and holiness. The *bnei aliyah* are a very small group. In fact, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashbi) said that if there were only two *bnei aliyah* in his generation, they would be himself and his son.

As the Zohar mentions in its introduction: when Rav Chiya wished to enter the palace of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, he heard a voice that came out and announced, "Who among you has transformed darkness to light and bitter matters to sweet? If you have not, you may not enter here!"

כדאיתא בזהר בהקדמה שכשרצה רבי
חייא לעלות להיכל ר"ש בן יוחאי
שמע קלא נפיק ואמר מאן מנכון די
חשוכא מהפכין לנהורא וטעמין מרירו
למיתקא עד לא ייתון הכא וכו'

Rashbi Turned Darkness to Light

The *Zohar* sheds light on this tale when it relates that Reb Chiya wondered how Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, such a great light, could possibly leave this world. Reb Chiya said to the earth, "Earth, you are so *keshei oref*, stubborn and unfeeling. All the lights of the world are descending into your darkness! How can this be? Rashbi is *butzina kadisha*, a holy luminary. He illuminates the world, and yet he is going to end up interred within you?" Reb Chiya struck the earth and said, "No! The pillar of light will not be ruled over by you!"

Soon Rashbi left this world, and Reb Chiya fasted twice, for forty days each time, in order to be able to see Rashbi. He went up to heaven, came to a palace, and heard a voice proclaim that only one who transforms darkness to light and bitter tastes to sweet ones is allowed to enter this palace. Someone who has not transformed the bitter to sweet cannot enter here! He then saw *Mashiach* together with Rashbi, and he witnessed how Rashbi taught *Mashiach*.

Apparently, Reb Chiya had arrived at the palace of Reb Shimon bar Yochai, and once there he experienced a great revelation. The lesson of the palace is that Rashbi had transformed his *yetzer hara* entirely. A *tzadik gamur*, Rashbi had entirely transformed his inborn evil into good; he had raised all the holy sparks of *Elokus* that sustain the evil. That is why he was designated a member of the *bnei aliyah*, for he is one of those who is *ma'aleh*, who raises sparks, turning evil into good.

The *Tanya* then adds that the *bnei aliyah* even raise the *mitzvos* they perform.

A further explanation of the title "bnei aliyah": their service is in the category of "do good", in the fulfillment of the Torah and its commandments, in that it is for the sake of the Above, the ultimate of highest degrees. It is not merely in order to attach themselves to God so as to quench the thirst of their [own] soul, which thirsts for God, as is written, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come ye to the waters", as is explained elsewhere. Rather [is their service] as explained in Tikunei Zohar: "Who is kind?- He who conducts himself with benevolence towards his Creator-towards His nest, uniting the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah within those who dwell in the nethermost worlds". As also explained in Ra'aya Mehemna on Parashas Ki Seitzei: "In the manner of a son who ingratiate himself with his father and mother, whom he loves more than his own body and soul... and is prepared to sacrifice his own life for them, to redeem them" and as is explained elsewhere.

ועוד נקראים בני עליה מפני שגם עבודתם בבחי' ועשה טוב בקיום התורה ומצותיה הוא לצורך גבוה ומעלה מעלה עד רום המעלות ולא כדי לדבקה בו ית' בלבד לרוות צמאון נפשם הצמאה לה' כמ"ש הוי כל צמא לכו למים וכמ"ש במ"א אלא כדפירשו בתיקונים איזהו חסיד המתחסד עם קונו עם קן דיליה לייחדא קב"ה ושכינתי בתחתונים וכמ"ש ברע"י מהימנא פ' תצא כברא דאשתדל בתר אבוי ואימיה דרחים לון יתיר מגרמיה ונפשיה ורוחיה ונשמת' כו' ומסר גרמיה למיתה עלייהו למיפרק לון כו' וכמ"ש במ"א.

<p>(And both interpretations are complementary, for through acts of refinement of the good out of the nogah, one elevates the "feminine waters", causing "supernal unions" to bring down the "masculine waters", which are the flow of [Divine] kindness contained in each of the 248 positive precepts, all of which are in the nature of kindness and "masculine waters"; that is to say, the flow of holiness of His blessed Divinity from above downward, to be clothed in those who live in the lower worlds, as explained elsewhere).</p>	<p>ושניהם עולים בקנה אחד כי ע"י הבירורים שמבררים מנוגה מעלים מ"יין נוקבין ונעשי' יחודים עליונים להוריד מ"יין דכורין שהם מימי החסדים שבכל מצוה ומצוה מרמ"ח מצות עשה שכולן הן בחי' חסדים ומ"יין דכורין דהיינו המשכת קדושת אלהותו יתברך מלמעלה למטה להתלבש בתחתונים כמ"ש במ"א</p>
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Every *mitzvah* ascends on high and fixes. How high it ascends, as well as how much it will repair, is dependent upon who did the *mitzvah* and with what intent he performed it. A *ben aliyah's mitzvah* travels very high and engenders tremendous repair, for repair is a function of both the *kavanah*, intense concentrated devotional feeling, and the level of *lishmah*, sincere motivation, that are contained within the act. Because the *ben aliyah's* level is even above the level of those whose only desire is attachment to God, his actions ascend extremely high. *Bnei aliyah* do kindness with their nest. They perform this kindness for the sake of God's seat; they do each *mitzvah* for the sake of the *Shechinah*.

Certainly someone who conquers his physical urges and only desires *deveikus*, attachment to *Hashem*, is a *tzadik*, but he nevertheless has not reached the level of *ben aliyah*. *Ben aliyah* is one who does *Chessed* with the seat of *Kudsha Berich Hu*; in other words, he does *Chessed* with the *Shechinah*, for the *Shechinah* is also called the seat of *Kudsha Berich Hu*.

Let us define the terms, *Kudsha Berich Hu* and *Shechinah*, or *Shechintei*. *Kudsha Berich Hu* is holiness that is beyond the world. *Kadosh* means *mufrash umuvdal*, separated and set aside. Another term for this concept is *Soveiv Kol Almin*, transcending all worlds. It is something that is not clothed within the creation. *Shechinah*, though, is the *chiyus Elohis*, Godly life, that is *michayah*, animates, the world. It is the revelations of God that sustain the physical and are clothed within the world. The term *hisgalus haShechinah* refers to times when the *Malchus*, kingdom, of *Hashem* is revealed in the world.

The entire world is *Hashem's* kingdom. This is *Shechintei*. Our mission

is *leyached Kudsha Berich Hu* and *Shechinteih*--to unite the transcendent with the immanent. This involves taking the life within the world and raising it to a level that is beyond this world. It requires us to connect the life that is in the world with *etzem chiyus Elokis*, essential Godly life, and make it one. When a man truly feels, "I am nothing and the world is nothing, when I compare the world to *Mahuso* and *Atzmuso Yisbarech*, it is absolutely nothing", he is entirely *battel* to the root. At that point he is unifying the level that is above the world with that which is within this world. What is in the world is *battel* to the light of the Infinite! What is contained in the world does not take up any space relative to *Kudsha Berich Hu*! Thus, it is *battel* fully to *Kudsha Berich Hu*. The two levels became one!

Let us summarize the concept of *yichud Kudsha Berich Hu* and *Shechinteih*. If one serves God for his own attachment to God he is inserting himself into his service, and wherever one inserts himself one causes a division. The result will not be one; it will not be a full *yichud*. In contrast to this, *tzadikim* forget about themselves. They are only concerned with *Shechinteih*, with forging a connection between *Shechinteih* and *Kudsha Berich Hu*.

The real *yichud* is the thought *ein od milvado*, there is nothing other than *Hashem*; there is only *Elokis*. If one has totally nullified oneself, then he can cause a true union to take place. A *ben aliyah* has no reality other than uniting *Kudsha Berich Hu* and *Shechinteih*, and this is what makes him into a *ben aliyah*.

The *Tanya* is teaching that a *tzadik* destroys and transforms evil. He then points out that there are different gradations to uprooting the evil urge. There are those that are in the category of the thirty-six, others are in the category of the eighteen thousand that greet the Almighty every day, and there are still others who are *bnei aliyah*.

No One Is Perfect

The term *tzadik* means "one who is correct" or "one who is right". It derives from the term *tzedek*. In Ecclesiastes King Solomon revealed, "*Asher asah ha'Elokim es ha'adam yashar veheimah vikshu chishvonos rabim*" "God made mankind straight yet they sought many calculations" (*Koheles* 7:29). A *tzadik* is like that original natural creation: he is uncorrupted, straight.

To reach the level of living uncorrupted, which is the way *Hashem* made Adam, is very challenging. Since the sin of Adam *Harishon*, the sin of eating from the forbidden tree, there has been no real *tzadik*. The *tzadikim* we have had, like Rashbi and others, achieved the highest level that was possible since Adam's sin. But since that sin took place, "*Adam ein tzadik ba'aretz asher ya'aseh tov velo yecheta*", "There is no righteous man on earth who only does good and never sins" (*Koheles* 7:20). Adam had no personal name. He was the essence of man. He contained all souls within him, and therefore all souls sinned in the sin of the Tree of Knowledge.

This is a deep matter. Can we say that Moshe *Rabbeinu* or Rashbi sinned in the sin of the Tree of Knowledge? The answer is yes! All souls sinned! This is true even about great people who only sinned for the sake of the masses, so that they should be able to attach themselves to people and provide them with inspiration. Had they not sinned, they would have remained too elevated for the community. But they too sinned.

This concept can help us achieve a deep understanding of the sin of Moshe when he hit the rock, and the waters of *Mei Merivah* emerged. Heaven sent a sin down to the righteous Moshe, so that he should sin and thus be able to have a relationship with his generation. This is true for the great people of any generation. The principle of *kol Yisrael areivin zeh lazeh*, all Jews are responsible for each other, requires that the great ones sin. On their own, if the great *tzadikim's* service was entirely isolated from national concerns, they would not have sinned.

From this idea we can understand that in reality, all souls were part of the sin of Adam *Harishon*, and thus there has been no *tzadik gamur* as was possible before the sin of Adam *Harishon*. This is why the *pasuk* states, "*Ki Adam ein tzadik ba'aretz asher ya'aseh tov velo yecheta*", "For there is no righteous man on earth who only does good and never sins" (*Koheles* 7:20).

Our Sages find fault in all people - even in Avraham *Avinu*, even in Moshe *Rabbeinu*. Why? This is part of the reality of man, *ein tzadik ba'aretz asher ya'aseh tov velo yecheta*. However, the Talmud states that there were some Biblical figures who were faultless. They had no sins. They died because of the advice of the serpent, *etyo shel nachash*, which means that since Adam sinned, all humans must die, so they died too. Doesn't the fact that these people died because of the advice of the serpent indicate that in fact there *are* those who have no sins?

The answer is no! To reach a level of faultlessness also entails a form of sin! The *Chozeh* of Lublin notes that both in the Torah and in *Chazal*, Moshe appears to be greater than Yishai,²¹ Kilav,²² or Binyamin,²³ even though these three died only *be'etyo shel nachash*, unlike Moshe who is not listed in that faultless category. The *Chozeh* explains that great *tzadikim* sacrificed a great deal to engender enormous corrections, and therefore sinned a bit in the process as well. They went into deeply dark places to fix things, and they fixed great things, but they also sinned. It was virtually impossible not to sin. The *etyo shel nachash* is itself a sin to some degree-these people did not do as the *tzadikim* like Moshe did, and did not engage with the world and sanctify God in the material realm.

The *Tanya* explains that one of the two major approaches adopted by *tzadikim* involves taking risks. Some *tzadikim* will take risks. For example, they might eat before prayers, taking a risk that their prayers will be so much better as a result of having eaten that this fact would render it permissible to eat before *davening*. Their *davening* was on an awesomely high level; it was *kelos hanefesh*, and so they ate before, even though there was a chance that they might eat and then end up not praying appropriately. If that happened, it would mean that retroactively, the eating would have been forbidden. One can find other examples of this approach, where *tzadikim* performed actions that were seemingly *kulos*, leniencies, while in truth they were really *chumros* in relation to other values.

The *Me'or VaShamesh*²⁴ explains that Noach initially had no connection to his generation. The Torah labels him first a *tzadik tamim*, and only after he built the *teivah* was he called *tzadik*, and not *tzadik tamim*. Before the ark he was like Chanoch, of whom it says "*vayis'halech Chanoch es ha'Elokim*", "Chanoch walked with God" (*Bereishis* 5:24). Like Chanoch, Noach prayed and learned and had nothing to do with average people. It was only through the *teivah*, ark, that he was forced to have a relationship with his generation. The

21. The father of King David.

22. A child of King David.

23. The son of our father Ya'akov who fathered the tribe of Benjamin.

24. A work of great inspiration and chassidic thought authored by Rav Klonymous Kalman Halevi Epstein (1753-1825), who was a student of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk.

building of the ark was itself a rebuke to the generation. To give rebuke he had to learn the entire creation, and once he did this he was no longer a *tzadik tamim*, but rather just a *tzadik*.

The *teivah* was a miniature universe that forced him to understand the natural realm and get to know the *yetzer hara* well. When the flood destroyed the world, everything that remained was compacted inside the *teivah*. Noach needed to study and absorb the concepts underlying realms of *choshech*, darkness, and *tohu*, emptiness, and realize the nature of the created physical world, and this is what he learned from the *teivah*. Through this labor he got to know the world, but he also became less of a *tamim*, for now he knew the *yetzer hara* well.

Many *tzadikim* follow the model of Noach, the model of involvement in the creation even though it includes inherent risk. Some *tzadikim* ate to fix sparks, like the Apter Rebbe²⁵ and others, and some *tzadikim* spent time taking walks to meditate on God, because these *tzadikim* knew how to raise *nitzotzos* that are scattered in the material, physical world. Why did they need to learn about physical things? Why didn't they simply remain in the *yeshiva*? Because sparks are hidden in the physical realm, and one must go into that realm in order to raise Jewish souls that have fallen and need to be lifted.

Consider the example of Ya'akov *Avinu*. He had to work in the house of Lavan, with sheep and other worldly matters, in order to elevate sparks. Before embarking on this task, though, Ya'akov filled himself with holiness; he learned Torah for fourteen years in the *yeshiva* of Shem and Ever. The Torah tells us more about Ya'akov's time in the house of Lavan than his uninterrupted years of service sitting in the tents and learning in *yeshiva* because the greatest level is to serve God in the material. To find sparks in the physical is greater than to find them in a place of holiness, and so that is what the Torah emphasizes! The Torah does not tell us about Ya'akov's learning and *davening*; the Torah mainly tells us about Ya'akov's labor in Lavan's home, the sheep he cared for, and the sticks he used at the watering hole, for this was his main *avodah* of raising sparks.

Yitzchak loved Eisav "*ki tzayid befv*", "for game was in his mouth"

25. Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apt (1748 - 1825) was a disciple of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk. He was filled with love for fellow Jews and was known for his service of elevating material matters.

(*Bereishis* 25:28). Is it possible that Yitzchak did not know who Ya'akov was? Did he not realize that Ya'akov was continually studying? Why would he love Eisav more? Yitzchak thought Eisav was involved in the physical *avodah* of raising sparks, and it is that task, not study alone, that is the real achievement. He thought that Ya'akov, meanwhile, was performing the more limited function of simply sitting down to learn and pray.

After building the ark, Noach became a mere *tzadik* and no longer a *tamim*, but this was actually an elevation. He learned how to be *meyached* the Almighty in the material. Those *tzadikim* who enter the material realm take great risks, and they can stumble very badly. When Noach planted the vineyard, he created a disaster on par with the disaster of the Tree of Knowledge. He had intended to accomplish great things with the wine. He was trying to reclaim the stored-away wine of the Garden of Eden.

As we know, had Adam not sinned, he would have used the grapes of the Garden of Eden to make wine and said *kidush* on this wine. Wine is the world of *Binah*, comprehension. Through drinking wine one can enter into the world of *Binah*, which is a world of joy. Our Sages teach that *ein simchah ela beyayin*, joy requires wine (*Pesachim* 109a), as well as the idea that *ein omrim shirah ela al hayayin*, song is only recited on a cup of wine (*Berachos* 35a). Noach was trying to drink wine with the correct intent and to achieve the joy of creation, the joy of understanding, the joy of turning chaos, *olam hatohu*, into understanding, *olam hatikun*. Unfortunately his plan did not work out that way. He took a risk, and he failed. The danger of failure is always a possibility with a *tzadik* who attempts to elevate the physical realm. Nevertheless, in spite of the ever-present risk of failure, *Hashem* wants these *tzadikim* to take risks!

The *Chozeh* notes that those *tzadikim* who take risks to fix the material world are actually higher than those *tzadikim* who avoid the world. Even though they may sometimes fail, they are still on a higher level.

This is always the way of *chassidim*. As Noach and Ya'akov made choices that seemed less exalted, in order to achieve even higher levels than they could without taking those risks, *chassidim* permit leniencies, *kulos*, that are really stringencies, *chumros*. For example, they are lenient, *meikil*, about the time to pray, *zeman tefilah*, to be strict, *machmir*, in devotion in prayer, *kavanah hatefilah*. But if someone is not going to fulfill the *chumrah*, then for such an individual the *kulah* was never given!

In *Devarim* 17:11 we are commanded by God to do as the sages instruct us and not stray from their words to the right or left. Rashi explains that this mandate obligates us to do as they guide us even when they are saying, *al semo'l shehu yamin*, about the left that it is right. *Semo'l* is a *kulah*; *yamin* is a *chumrah*. Our Sages sometimes tell us to do *semo'l*, to do a *kulah*, while what they are truly telling us is to perform a *chumrah*, to be strict about something else.

The Flood and Sinai

Hashem created man *yashar*.

The *yetzer hara* is all imaginary nonsense. Honor is nonsense. The innate nature of man, the way he was created, was to be straight and to follow the law of God. Great *tzadikim* are individuals who walk straight; they follow the innate simple path that God has set out for man.

The Torah relates that when mankind was terribly corrupted by physical sins in the days of Noach, *Hashem* sent a flood. The floodwaters rained down for forty days and forty nights. They erased the sinful world.

The flood was intended to serve as a ritual bath, *mikvah*--to engender purity and bring the world back to *yashrus*. There are forty *se'ah* (a Talmudic measure) of pure water in a *mikvah*. The flood began with forty days of rain to display a *mikvah*-like dynamic. The Torah describes the time of the *mabul* as one characterized by "*vayimach es kol hayekum asher al penei ha'adamah mei'adam ad beheimah ad remes ve'ad of hashamayim vayimachu min ha'aretz, vayisha'er ach Noach*" "And He erased all existence that was on the face of the earth--from man to animals to creeping things and to the birds of the heavens, and they were erased from the earth; only Noach survived" (*Bereishis* 7:23). The earth was being erased to clear the way for a new creation. The forty days of the flood correspond to the forty days for the *yetziras havelad*, formation of the child, and forty days of *matan Torah*. At *matan Torah* the nations asked Bil'am, "*Hashem lamabul yashav*", "Is God bringing another flood?" (*Tehillim* 29:10). For the *mabul* was akin to *matan Torah*, a time to wipe away one existence and bring another reality to life.

The *Zohar* notes that the verse tells us that when Noach was 600 years old, the heavens opened with rain. This hints to the fact that in the year 600 (of each millennium), great gates of wisdom open. Apparently the *mabul* was gates of wisdom and was intended to purify man. Before the flood the world

was perverted: "*Vayar Elokim es ha'aretz vehineih nishchasah*", "And Hashem saw the land and behold it was perverted" (*Bereishis* 6:12). Yet it was also a time characterized by people with great potential. The average life span was close to a thousand years, for these were souls with great abilities.

In spite of their great potential, though, the people of the time of the flood were not righteous. They brought about great evil, evil so great that it was supported by bad ideologies, *dei'os*. They misrepresented what life was about. They made *ta'avos*, physical desires, the reason to live; they made them their existential identity. They internalized these bad *dei'os* to the point that they transmitted them to their children as a genetic inheritance! Their children physically inherited these evil ideas. There was no hope for such a world; *vayar Elokim es ha'aretz vehineih nishchasah* (*Bereishis* 6:12). The only hope that existed was the hope for Noach.

The Torah introduces *Parashas Noach* by speaking of his children. It states, "*Eileh toldos Noach*", "These are the offspring of Noach" (*Bereishis* 6:9). After speaking of Noach's children, the Torah tells us "*Noach ish tzadik*", "Noach was a righteous man" (*ibid*).. Noach was able to have good children, for he had not fully corrupted himself. However, nothing good could have come from the other members of his generation, who were incorrigibly perverted.

Even Noach was not perfect. He fathered Cham, a man of terrible habits who negatively influenced Noach. But Noach also had Shem, the ancestor of Abraham, someone from whom great good would come. There was hope from Noach, but only after the *dei'os ra'os* were removed from the earth so that humanity could once again rise against the backdrop of a purified world.

All the souls of the generation of the flood keep returning to the world. These souls were reincarnated into the Jews who left Egypt, and they appeared at other times in history as well. But before these reincarnations could happen, they had to let go of the old *tziyurim*, the old pictures they made of the world, and so *vayimachu min ha'aretz*, they were erased from the earth. It took forty days to remove the impure imprint that they had placed on their souls, and so there were forty days of rain and flood. As Rashi points out, they were *matriach Hashem*, burdened the Almighty, to make *mamzeirim*, illegitimate children. It takes forty days to form a child, so they needed a flood for forty days. A *mamzer* is a child who absorbs the bad *tziyur* that the father has

internalized and made part of himself. Through the forty days of the *mabul*, this *tziyur* was removed. This is the purification of *Da'as*.

Water has no form. Through forty days of water, all the incorrect forms, the wrong *tzuros*, were annulled.²⁶ This is the essence of immersion in the *mikvah*. When a convert goes to the *mikvah* he goes to become a new creation. Until that point he looks at the world from the perspective of a non-Jew, but conversion means that his perspective must change. As a result, he must go to a *mikvah*, for a *mikvah* of water wipes away all the *tziyurim*, all the old interpretations of reality, and enables one to emerge with a new *Da'as*.

We go to the *mikvah* because of a lack of preserving the covenant of Abraham, *shemiras habris*, which stems from *bilbul haDa'as*, confusion of the intellect. Before the sin of Adam, a woman did not arouse such *ta'avos*, as *Hashem* told Adam, "*mi higid lecha ki eirom atah*", "Who told you that you are undressed?" (*Bereishis* 3:11). Why are you so confused with your *Da'as*? However, following the sin, these *ta'avos* affected people. The generation of the *mabul* did not have strong and correct *Da'as*; they were thoroughly confused by these *ta'avos*.

A gentile looks at the world in a different way than a Jew does. A convert who wishes to get rid of his *goyish* perspective must go to the *mikvah*, to let go of the old definitions and accept the new perspectives on reality. The *segulah* of the *mikvah* is to create new life; it enables a person to acquire the *Da'as* of a *Yid*. The Rambam in fact identifies the *mikvah* as the *meimei haDa'as*, the waters of internalization (*Hilchos Mikva'os* 11:12).

At Sinai our teacher Moshe spent forty days and forty nights atop the mountain receiving the Torah. The forty days of revelation parallel the forty days of rain to start the flood and the forty measures of water in a *mikvah*. Torah itself is also a *mikvah*. If one toils in Torah, *yegi'as haTorah*, and invests his mind in penetrating the ideas of Torah; if he is working hard at such a depth that there is nothing occupying his mind other than thoughts of the Rashba or the Rambam; then a union, a *yichud*, is created that gives him a new

26. Consider the *Maharaḥ's* interpretation for *Ma'oz Tzur*. He explains that *chomeir* / materialism is a *nishpa*, influenced creature, while *tzurah* / form and spirit, is a *mashpi'a*, one who impacts. The generation of Noach had false ideologies, false forms; hence the need for a flood to erase the false forms and replace them all with a new form, an ironclad commitment to the Almighty. (*Afikei Mayim, Chanukah*)

Da'as. This is the meaning of the correlation between the *mabul* and getting the Torah. Torah is like a *mikvah*. It removes mistaken perspectives and misinterpretations of reality and transforms the person into a *yashar*, into one who is straight without any of the silly nonsensical fantasies of evil.

The Windows of Wisdom

Just as in the days of Noach, says the *Zohar*, in each millennium in the year 600, the windows of wisdom, *Chochmah*, open. In the year *heh tav reish*, 5600 (1840 according to the secular calendar), there were tremendous revelations that changed the way people looked at things. It was a special time. We could have merited enormous revelations that would have transformed everything. Most of the *yeshiva* approach to learning Torah came from the *Ketzos*,²⁷ the *Nesivos*,²⁸ Rabbi Akiva Eiger,²⁹ and the *Chasam Sofer*,³⁰ and they all lived in that generation. They opened the gates of wisdom. In Kabbalah as well there were tremendous revelations; it was the time of the *Chozeh*³¹ and the

27. Rav Aryeh Leib Hakohen Heller (1745-1813). His works *Ketzos Ha-Choshen*, *Avnei Milu'im* and *Shev Shmait'sa* helped transform the way Jewish law is studied and analyzed.

28. Rav Ya'akov Loberbaum (1760-1832) served as the Rabbi of Lissa. His works *Nesivos Ha-Mishpat* and *Chavas Da'as* are classics that also helped transform the way students analyze the Halachah. To illustrate the impact of the *Ketzos* and *Nesivos*, it was said that when one would arrive at the train station of the Lithuanian city of Telshe, since it housed a *yeshiva*, one could smell the *Ketzos* and *Nesivos* in the air.

29. Rav Akiva Eiger (1761-1838) was one of the greatest scholars of his time. Rav Akiva Eiger served as the Rabbi of Posen. He was unusually brilliant and kind. When a cholera epidemic swept into the town of Posen in 1831, parts of the city were quarantined. Rabbi Eiger ignored his personal safety and entered those parts often to care for the sick. King Frederick III of Prussia heard about his heroism and awarded him a special medal.

30. Rav Moshe Sofer (1762-1839) was the son-in-law of Rav Akiva Eiger. He was the rabbinic leader of Orthodox Jewry in Hungary. His depth of learning, personal piety, and commitment to exacting observance of Jewish law have left a lasting impression on the Jewish nation.

31. Rav Ya'akov Yitzchok of Lublin (1745-1815) was a monumental figure in the history of Jewish observance. He was a great *tzadik* who was called the Seer for his miraculous ability to see spiritual truths and future events with his holy power of sight. He was the teacher of many great *tzadikim*, such as Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov and Rav Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha.

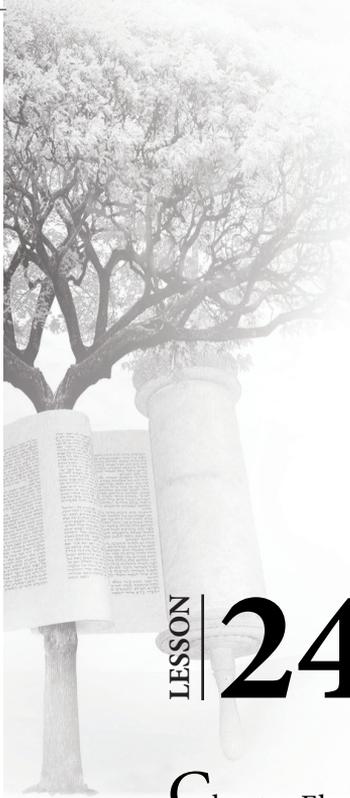
Rebbe R. Mendele.³² There was a tremendous revelation of inner Torah. But we did not merit to actualize the full potential of the times.

Even regarding the wisdom of the nations, old assumptions were completely shattered. 1840 heralded the beginning of the scientific and industrial revolutions. As a result of new ideas from that era, the whole world changed. Look around you - you will see cars, telephones, computers, sinks, bathrooms; these are all results of that flood of wisdom that began around 1840.³³ The year 600 of the life of Noach was a time when the gates of wisdom were also opened, yet instead of all perspectives changing by dint of holy wisdom, mankind did not receive the divine flow in its blessed form. It did not even take on a form of secular wisdom; it took a form of water. They all changed because of that flood of water. When we merit the full revelation of our year six hundred we will see how everything changes for the better.

Hopefully, we will merit soon the days of "*tzadik Hashem, tzedakos aheiv, yashar yechezu paneimo*", "Righteous is God, He loves acts of righteousness, the straight will see His face" (*Tehillim* 11:7). Soon we will see the real wisdom, the *penimiyus Elokis* that exists in the world. For this to happen, the main thing we need to do is focus on learning Torah with *yegi'as haTorah*. Work hard in learning and all the false nonsense will dissipate, and we will merit connecting to the true inner nature, the way *Hashem* made us!

32. Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov (1745-1813) was a great *tzadik*. He was one of the primary students of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk and was the teacher of Rav Naftali of Ropshitz and Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov.

33. It was the shell that preceded the fruit. Now with *Hashem's* help, we are seeing how the inner Torah is being revealed and how it is shattering all the old views and bringing an entirely new way of looking at things into the world.



Lesson Twenty-Four explores the themes of regret. The wicked are filled with regrets. Many sinners compromise and settle. A religious life is demanding. Even the righteous are frequently not as great as they should be, but the righteous do not settle. They seek to grow, while recognizing that they are not yet perfect. Lesson Twenty-Four provides guidance for living a life of constant growth.

LESSON | 24 The Wicked are Filled with Regrets

Chapter Eleven of the *Tanya* states:

"One is the opposite of the other"- the "wicked man whose good is his" is antithetical to the "tzadik whose bad is his". That is to say, the goodness that is in his divine soul, which is in his brain and in the right part of his heart, is subservient to, and nullified by, the evil of the kelipah that is in the left part.

וזה לעומת זה. רשע וטוב לו לעומת צדיק ורע לו. דהיינו שהטוב שבנפשו האלהי שבמוחו ובחלל הימני שבלבו כפוף ובטל לגבי הרע מהקליפה שבחלל השמאלי

The *Tanya* is teaching us that a *rasha vetov lo* is the exact opposite of a *tzadik vera lo*. The *tzadik vera lo* does good deeds, but he has not fully uprooted the evil within him. Similarly, the *rasha vetov lo*'s behavior is evil, yet he has not transformed all his good to bad. He still retains some good, and as a result he is filled with regrets for his bad actions.

We have explained that the reason why the *tzadik* can transform himself entirely, and rid himself of that which is physical and animalistic, is because evil is a mirage. It is described as *shav shebara'si be'olami*, the nonsense I created in My world. A person has the ability to transform evil, and that allows the innate good, the sparks of God's light, to shine through. The body will express the beauty of the soul, and man will be truly, innately straight.

But how is the reverse true? How can man transform his soul into evil?

How is it possible for a wicked person to turn his piece of Heaven into evil? Shouldn't this piece of Heaven always stay pure, no matter what? After all, unlike evil, his pure soul is real! The *Tanya* answers at a later point with an idea that we will mention only briefly here, without fully elaborating. He explains that the urge for holiness can change from a *penimi*, inner state, to an *or makif*, an encompassing light. The difference between these two states is that the *or makif* is not an actual part of the person. This is the *rasha vera lo*: his behavior is evil, and he turns his soul into an *or makif*. His soul is no longer internalized within his body and psyche.

This type, too, is subdivided into myriads of degrees which differ in respect to the extent and manner of the nullification and subservience of the good to the bad, God forbid.

There is the person in whom the said subservience and nullification are in a very minor way, and even these are not permanent or recurring at frequent intervals; but on rare occasions the evil prevails over the good and conquers the "small city", that is the body-yet not all of it, but only a part of it, subjecting it to its (evil's) discipline, to become a vehicle and a garment wherein one of the soul's three garments mentioned above is clothed,

וזה מתחלק גם כן לרבות מדרגות חלוקות בענין כמות ואיכות הביטול וכפיפת הטוב לרע ח"ו.

יש מי שהכפיפה והביטול אצלו מעט מזער ואף גם זאת אינו בתמידות ולא תדיר לפרקים קרובים אלא לעתים רחוקים מתגבר הרע על הטוב וכובש את העיר קטנה הוא הגוף אך לא כולו אלא מקצתו לבד שיהיה סר למשמעתו ונעשה לו מרכבה ולבוש להתלבש בו א' משלשה לבושיה הנ"ל

The *Tanya* teaches that some wicked people are fully controlled by their evil spirits. Other wicked ones are mostly controlled by their animal aspects.

namely, either in deed alone, in the commission of minor transgressions and not major ones, God forbid; or in speech alone, in the utterance of something that borders on slander and scoffing and the like; or in thought alone, in contemplations of sin, which are more serious than actual sin, or even when he does not contemplate committing a sin, but indulges in thoughts about the attraction between male and

דהיינו או במעשה לבד. לעשות עבירות קלות ולא חמורות ח"ו. או בדיבור לבד לדבר אבק לשון הרע וליצנות וכחאי גוונא. או במחשבה לבד. הרהורי עבירה הקשים מעבירה. וגם אם אינו מהרהר בעבירה לעשותה אלא בענין זיווג זכר ונקיבה בעולם שעובר על אזהרת התורה ונשמרת מכל דבר רע שלא יהרהר ביום כו'. או שהיא שעת הכושר לעסוק בתורה והוא

female in general, whereby he is guilty of violating the admonition of the Torah, "Keep thee from every wicked thing", meaning that "One must not think impure fancies by day," or, when it is a fitting time to study the Torah, but he turns his heart to vain things, as we have learned in the Mishnah in Avos, "He that wakes in the night [or that walks alone by the way], and turns his heart to vanity [is guilty against his own soul]". For, by reason of any one of all these things and their like, he is called wicked at such time that the evil in his Nefesh prevails over him, clothing itself in his body, inducing it to sin and defiling it. Presently, however, the good that is in his divine soul asserts itself, and he is filled with remorse, and he seeks pardon and forgiveness of God. Indeed, God will forgive him if he has repented with the appropriate penitence according to the counsel of our Sages, of blessed memory, namely, the three-fold division of atonement which is expounded by Rabbi Ishmael, as is explained elsewhere.

מפנה לבו לבטלה כדתנן באבות הניעור בלילה כו' ומפנה לבו כו'. שבאחת מכל אלה וכיוצא בהן נקרא רשע בעת ההיא שהרע שבנפשו גובר בו ומתלבש בגופו ומחטיאו ומטמאו ואח"כ גובר בו הטוב שבנפשו האלהי ומתחרט ומבקש מחילה וסליחה מה'. וה' יסלח לו אם שב בתשובה הראויה על פי עצת חכמינו ז"ל בשלשה חלוקי כפרה שהיה ר' ישמעאל דורש כו' כמ"ש במ"א.

The *Tanya* is teaching that when a person sins in the realms of thought, speech, or action, for that moment he is controlled by the evil urge and is a *rasha*. If he then does the correct repentance, *teshuvah*, however, he becomes a righteous person. In the Talmud at the end of tractate *Yoma*, we are taught that there are different types of sins, and they require different forms of penance. For instance, violation of a positive command can be forgiven with *teshuvah*, while violation of a prohibition can only be forgiven through *teshuvah* combined with experiencing *Yom Kippur*. If a person does the appropriate *teshuvah* for his particular sin, he will be forgiven.

The power of *teshuvah* is that the sin is uprooted. When one does proper *teshuvah*, it is as if he never sinned. This is similar to the process of the nullification of vows. A vow is nullified because the person uproots his will from the vow, which means that the vow never existed. So too *teshuvah*, when performed as our Sages mandated, changes the past, after the return, in fact, no sin was committed! This is the incredible power of *teshuvah*.

The truth, however, is that one can become a non-*rasha* even without full *teshuvah*. Even without changing the past, a person can change his current status and be considered a *tzadik* for the future. The *halachah* is that if a man betroths a woman on condition that he is a complete *tzadik*, she is betrothed, even if it appears that the husband-to-be is quite sinful, for "perhaps he had a thought of return at the moment of sanctifying her" (*Kiddushin* 49b). A thought of return is not the full *teshuvah* our Sages have prescribed, but it is enough to render a person a *tzadik* from that moment and onward. He is a *tzadik* from now and on since he has resolved not to sin again!³⁴

There are those in whom the evil becomes more powerful and it clothes him in the three garments (thought, speech, action),

But inevitably he regrets his actions and thoughts of repentance come to him from the good aspect of his spirit,

However, the good has not arisen with enough power to defeat the evil and completely leave sins, to be one who admits and leaves and is therefore beloved. About this our Sages have said the wicked are filled with regrets. This is true about most wicked who still have an element of good in their souls.

ויש מי שהרע גובר בו יותר ומתלבשי
בו כל שלשה לבושים של הרע

אך בינתיים מתחרט ובאים לו ההורי
תשובה מבחי' הטוב שבנפשו

אלא שאין לו התגברות כל כך לנצח
את הרע לפרוש מחטאיו לגמרי להיות
מודה ועוזב ועל זה אמרו רז"ל רשעים
מלאים חרטות שהם רוב הרשעים שיש
בחי' טוב בנפשם עדיין

34. Rav Shmuel Borenstein, (1855-1925, 5616-5686), in his work, *Shem Mishmuel on the Mo'adim*, used the theme of two types of *teshuvah* to resolve a difficult passage in Tractate *Rosh Hashanah*:

"The Talmud in *Rosh Hashanah*, on page 15, quotes Rav Yitzchak who taught, "There are four things that can change a person's decreed fate: charity, calling out to *Hashem*, changing one's name, and changing one's actions.' *Rashi* explained that change of one's actions means to return from one's evil. The *Ritva* asked: if one did not change his evil actions when he changed his name, gave charity, or called out to *Hashem*, how could those behaviors have helped him? It is like one who immerses himself in a *mikvah*, ritual bath, while holding the dead rodent that creates impurity?! If one has changed his actions, then why would he also need to give charity, change his name, or call out to *Hashem*? The change of behavior should have been sufficient!

The answer is that there are two types of *teshuvah*. Imagine a man who is walking on a road and then realizes that he took the wrong road and is in the wrong place. One traveler might stand where he is and not walk any further. Another walker will turn back, retrace his steps, and start anew. So it is with *teshuvah*. Some accept on themselves to stop sinning and resolve not to perform those sins anymore. Of such people it was said, '*ya'azov rasha darko*,' 'the wicked will leave his road' (*Yeshayahu* 55:7). Such individuals must couple their *teshuvah* with a change of name, giving

The wicked are full of regrets, because the good within their souls is unhappy about their sins. Yet these thoughts are not true thoughts of return, *hirhurei teshuvah*, because they are not strong enough. They are not decisive thoughts of change, and what is necessary for a true *hirhur teshuvah* is, at the very least, a mental decision to change one's path in life. The *Rambam* teaches that the definition of *teshuvah* is that "*ya'id alav yodei'a ta'alumos shelo yachzor lezeh hacheit le'olam*", "The One who knows the hidden matters will testify about him that he will not return to the sin again". In other words, repentance entails a decisive commitment that he will never again do the sin. Only such a firm decision can qualify one's mental intent as a *hirhur teshuvah*. The wicked do not have such decisive feelings; they merely feel bad.

However, one who never regrets and does not have a thought of teshuvah at all is in the category of rasha vera lo, for he only has evil within him. The evil nature has become so strong that the urge for good has been pushed away from his midst and is merely a makif, a hovering canopy above him, and that is why our Sages taught that every gathering of ten Jews has the Divine presence above it, (for even the sinner always has good, although for some the good is in a makif state).

אך מי שאינו מתחרט לעולם ואין באים לו הרהורי תשובה כלל נקרא רשע ורע לו שהרע שבנפשו הוא לבדו נשאר בקרבו כי גבר כל כך על הטוב עד שנסתלק מקרבו ועומד בבחי' מקיף עליו מלמעלה ולכן ארז"ל כל בי עשרה שכינתא שריא:

When there are ten Jews there is a revelation of *or makif*. Therefore, even ten sinners will feel the presence of the *Shechinah*, Divine presence, for they can sense the *makif* that is surrounding them.

Regrets of the Wicked

Each soul is a piece of holiness. The soul naturally seeks good. Its very nature desires to attach to God and fulfill the will of God. This is an illustration of one of the rules of the created world: every item is attracted to its root! Solid

charity, or calling out to *Hashem*. However, there are some who retrace their steps, regret all of the past, and begin anew. If they performed bundles of sins, they now perform bundles of *mitzvos*. The one who has retraced his steps and left the way of evil has performed a true *teshuvah*. With it he needs nothing else, for *teshuvah* preceded the creation of the world" (page 13).

objects fall towards the foundation of the earth, which is their root. Fire seeks to rise towards the sky above, which is its root. Similarly, every *chelek Elokah mima'al*, piece of the Divine, seeks to attach itself to God, and fulfill the mandate "*uledavkah bo*", "Be attached to Him". *Hashem* is the root of the soul.

This is the meaning of the verse, "*Mayim rabim lo yuchlu lechabos es ha'ahavah*", "Great waters will be unable to extinguish the love" (*Shir Hashirim* 8:7). "Great waters" is a reference to all the sins of the world. Even the soul of one who has performed many, many sins has not extinguished the love that soul feels for *Hashem*. This is the *ahavah mesuteres*, hidden love. It is this hidden love that fills *resha'im* with regrets. Their inner voice advocates holiness, but since their actions are not holy, they are left with regret. Thus, the wicked make a foolish compromise; they accept living in this paradoxical state.

Every soul has an attraction to God. No matter what, the soul cannot resist this attraction, and it seeks God. Consider some of those who may not be so observant. They may perform all types of sins, but they are very *makpid*, careful, about the laws of mourning, *aveilus*. They may sit *shiva* and say *Kaddish*. What is the logic in this? Why keep these *mitzvos*? Why bury the dead? Because the soul lives on! If there is no eternal soul, then the body is like an animal; you can eat it like you eat a chicken. Why is a funeral such a big deal to people who deny God and the soul? Somewhere inside of them, they believe in God, the eternity of the soul, and the fact that good deeds performed in this world add benefit for souls in the next world.

Some people live a paradoxical existence. They have become accustomed to a life of paradoxes! They profess not to believe in God, but on *Yom Kippur* they show up in a synagogue. *Yom Kippur* is a holy day, and the soul senses this and compels the person to attend, even though such worship is a contradiction to his professed beliefs and external behaviors. But if a person does in fact believe, where is he all year? His behavior is contradictory. It is inconsistent. It is wrong to live a life of paradoxes.

We say regarding the future, "*Shir hama'alos beshuv Hashem es shivas Tziyon hayinu kecholmim. Az yimalei sechok pinu*", "A song of ascents, when *Hashem* will return the returnees to Zion we will be like dreamers. Then our mouths will fill with laughter..". (*Tehillim* 126:1-2). What are we laughing about? We will laugh because at that point we will realize that our whole life in exile has been a dream. A dream can contain many contradictions; it can

be filled with impossible paradoxes. In exile we are not consistent; our lives are like dreams! When *Mashiach* will arrive, the light of truth will shine on earth. *Az yimalei sechok pinu*; then we will laugh about what we did in exile. Now, we don't fully perceive how this type of accommodation between the soul and reality is foolish. And this is not just the problem of *resha'im*-even those who are not *resha'im* are filled with contradictions.

No One Is Perfect, But Never Settle!

We believe that God fills all of creation, but what do our prayers look like? If we believe that God is with us in *shul*, do we say the blessings with a true sense of addressing the Deity before whom we are standing? Do we really feel that He has thousands and billions of *ofanei hakodesh*,³⁵ and that they are afraid and too awed to immediately say *Hashem*; they first must say *kadosh, kadosh, kadosh*, holy, holy, holy? Do we live with the awareness and fear of the holy *chayos*, living angels, whose sweat creates a river of fire which punishes the wicked, the *nehar dinor*? Do we have the *yir'ah*, awe, that our supposed beliefs should inspire? And perhaps most critically, how is it that we perform sins if we truly believe that God sees and knows all?

The truth is that a real *tzadik* is constantly trembling. He is aware that he is in the presence of the infinite King. What about me? Why don't I tremble? How can I say a *berachah* without *kavanah*? Is that the way to talk to the King of all Kings? *Hashem* is here and I am making light of holy matters?

We, too, contain contradictions.

In truth, a regular person cannot constantly think about the presence of God, and really, *mamash*, feel the *eimah*, dread, and *yir'ah*, fear, that the Belzer Rav³⁶ or Sanzer Rav³⁷ would feel. Such constant fear is too overwhelming; it is

35. The *ofanim* are a type of angels.

36. Rav Aharon Rokeach, 1880-1957/5640-5717, was one of the greatest *tzadikim* in the last century. He was known, even among gentiles, as a wonder rabbi, whose blessings and presence engendered many miracles. He lost nine children and his wife during World War II. While he suffered many personal losses in the war, it is known that he would not recite *Kaddish* for them, for he taught that the martyrs of the Holocaust are so exalted and holy that they do not need memorial prayers to be recited for their benefit. He was a very gentle man who would never allow anyone to utter words that would hurt other Jews in his presence.

37. Rav Chaim Halberstam, 1830-1876/5590-5636, was one of the greatest *tzadikim* of Poland and

above our level. We would not succeed with such an intense approach to life. And when something is beyond the reach of a person, his mind naturally forgets it. So we put the truth of our beliefs out of our minds and we live a life of contradictions. We know that "*Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu ba betrunya im beriyosav*", "God does not come with impossible demands to His creations" (*Avodah Zarah* 3a). *Hashem* does not expect that a simple Jew tremble constantly like the *tzadikim*, with a constant awareness of the overwhelming and ever-presence of God. He did not make us like that, and He will not criticize us for not reaching that level.

However, it is key that one should not simply shrug his shoulders and accept the paradox and contradiction. One must realize, "I have not yet reached the ideal level of service of God. My vessels cannot reach such a high level, even though I know that level is the truth. Nevertheless I will try to reach it in a slow and steady way!"

There were *tzadikim* who exerted themselves greatly, and similarly expected their *chassidim* and students to reach a level higher than their real level. They would travel to dangerous locations and force themselves to feel high levels of trust and faith in *Hashem*. Some of these *tzadikim*, in order to acquire humility, would invite upon themselves public humiliation. Perhaps they would walk into a *beis midrash* and spout nonsense so that people would ridicule them, and then their humility would develop. However, other *tzadikim* did not demand these behaviors of their students, for these things are often higher than one's true *madreigah*, level, and if a person tries to behave this way, he will go crazy. A person should not attempt to exceed his level. Doing so can engender madness.

Rather, a person should try to grow using the methods recommended by the *Mesillas Yesharim*. One who proceeds step-by-step, day-by-day, with a lot of learning, can rise from one level to the next. Such even, pleasant, consistent daily service has within it the potential to move us to the level we described before, of experiencing all-encompassing *yir'as Shamayim*. If a person is working steadily at his own level, then he is not living with compromises.

Hungary. He had seven sons and seven daughters. All of his sons became great chassidic Rebbes, and his daughters married great chassidic Rebbes. Even to this day, chassidic communities such as Bobov, Sanz and Klausenberg are led by his descendants. He was a person who was exceptional in all realms: Torah study, kindness, and prayer.

Although we should never give up on the ultimate goal, we need to realize it will take work to get there. A religious Jew should never say, "This is what I am. There is no point in trying for more". Rather, he should say, "I know that where I am is not ideal, but I am developing slowly and steadily". Always remember the principle that "*Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu ba betrunya im beriyosav*". Yes, you do have to toil and desire intensely to reach higher levels in Torah, *midos*, and breaking physicality, *chomeir*, but you have to do it the right way. Use your mind; if you jump to a level that is too far above you, you will quickly fall.

I heard from the Amshinover Rebbe³⁸ that most of his grandfather's³⁹ words of Torah (until he was in midlife) devolved upon the theme that a person should not try to go too high. There are people who learn with so much *hasmadah*, diligence, and with so much exertion and depth, that after two weeks they collapse and stop learning entirely. The *yetzer hara* is smart. Sometimes he sells *hasmadah* in Torah!

God does not expect from man that which he cannot achieve. If you think *Hashem* is a taskmaster with a threatening stick, demanding of you levels you cannot reach, you are making the mistake of Kayin;⁴⁰ it is not so! *Tov Hashem lakol*, *Hashem* is good to all (*Tehillim* 145:9). God wants us to serve Him with pleasantness! True, it is never easy, but it is hard work that has pleasantness to it. We feel good when we work hard. And we must never fall into the trap of thinking that we are incapable of service, *avodah*.

The wicked have given up on reaching the true life. That is why they live a paradoxical life, and that life should be criticized. The sinners have made an accommodation with evil, and so they are filled with regrets, for they never succeed in actualizing their potential.

38. Rav Yitzchak Kalish (left this world in 1993/5753), was the Rebbe of Amshinov in Boro Park; our Rebbe was a close disciple of his.

39. A reference to Rav Menachem Kalish of Amshinov, 1860-1918/5620-5678, a great *tzadik*, who left this world right after World War I, during which he was immersed in helping the wartime refugees and needy Jews.

40. Kayin was the first child of Adam, the first man. His warped sense of *Hashem* led him to depression and the first murder.

Life in Two Dimensions

The Stitchiner Rav⁴¹ used to tell the following story: The *Imrei Noam*⁴² had a custom to give a *derashah*, Torah sermon, before *Kol Nidrei*, the opening prayer of *Yom Kippur*. His general approach was to speak highly of himself. This is in and of itself a lengthy subject; a number of *tzadikim* were accustomed to talk of their great spiritual levels, *madreigos*, and he was one of them. He would praise his own achievements in learning and his *hasagos*, comprehensions, of *Elohis*. The year this story took place he was delivering his *derashah*, and he said, "When I once thought that the day of judgment was coming, I trembled. If I trembled, certainly all of you should tremble!"

People told the *Imrei Noam's* brother, the Razvadover Rav,⁴³ of this speech. When the Razvadover and the *Imrei Noam* met after *Yom Kippur*, the *Imrei Noam* said, "*Shalom Aleichem*". The Razvadover responded, "If me, then certainly all of you". In other words, he was saying, "How did you deliver such a *derashah*? It seems so arrogant!" The *Imrei Noam* responded, "I am shocked that you would think it possible that before *Yom Kippur* I did not feel total humility. Why did I say what I said? Because I am the Dzikover Rav, and I have learned and achieved a lot in Torah learning".

What is the meaning of this story? If the *Imrei Noam* truly felt that he was of the lowest, how then could he say, "If I fear sin, certainly you should?" If he felt he was of the lowest, why would he declare that he is the Rav of Dzikov who has achieved greatness in his learning? We can ask further, along the same lines, "If you truly feel that you are so lowly, why do you set your children up in marriage to the children of holy giants? Make a match, *shidduch*, with the town water carrier!"

Service of *Hashem* demands of a person great wisdom as well as intricate balancing. There is a multi-faceted aspect to this service; a person has both his

41. Rav Yehudah Horowitz of Stitchin, 1892-1981/5652-5742, was the teacher of our Rebbe, Rav Mordechai Menashe Silver *shlit"a*. He continued the traditions of Ropshitzer *chassidus*. He was a great *tzadik* and giant in Torah and *chesed*. Some of his words of Torah were collected in the works *Minchas Yehudah*.

42. Rav Meir Horowitz of Dzikov, 1819-1877/ 5579-5637, was the grandson of the great Rav Naftali of Ropshitz. His work *Imrei Noam* is a classic of chassidic depth and breadth.

43. Rav Moshe Horowitz. He passed away in 1894/5654. He was the grandfather of the Stitchiner Rebbe, Rav Yehudah Horowitz.

external *hanhagah*, way of acting, and his inner *hanhagah*, which may be quite different from each other. Our material and superficial world cannot tolerate the inner *hanhagah*, and so it often remains concealed. In Heaven, however, *elyonim lematah*, the high are lowered, and *tachtanim lema'alah*, the lowly are elevated. This is because though in this world the true level of a person is hidden, in Heaven it becomes apparent.

The Talmud (Pesachim 50a) relates a story that illustrates this theme: Rav Yosef the son of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi took ill and fainted. When he returned, his father asked him, "What did you see?" He answered, "I saw an upside down world. Those who are low [on earth] were high [in heaven] and those who are high [on earth] were low [in heaven]". He said to him, "You saw the correct world!"

In the world of truth, a water carrier might be higher than a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar. In the world of truth, people are judged based on the sincerity of their actions, as well as whether they were performed *lesheim Shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven. But ours is not the world of truth, and our world requires a *hanhagah chitzonis*, an external way of acting. We can only make decisions based on what is before our eyes, even as we recognize that we cannot penetrate the truth of a person's inner level.

For example, imagine two people who toil equally diligently in Torah. One is gifted with a natural intellect, and so becomes a *talmid chacham*, but the other is of average intellect, and does not become a *talmid chacham*. Even though in the eyes of Heaven they might very well be equal, because their effort is equal—and perhaps the mediocre scholar would even surpass the *talmid chacham*, because his challenges are greater—we would still choose the *talmid chacham* as our synagogue rabbi! In our external world, the greater scholar will accomplish more for the Jewish nation and for *Hashem*! The less gifted scholar will pose his questions to the one who is gifted. That is the reality of how they compare on this earth, even if in Heaven they are regarded as equally special because of their equivalent efforts. Here, they are not equal. In our world, the *hanhagah chitzonis* matters. This is a big challenge for us; *Hashem* challenges us with interacting with the world through our perspective of people's *hanhagos chitzoniyos*, even as we maintain our understanding that this is not the world of truth.

With this in mind, we return to our story about the *Imrei Noam*. In truth, in the inner realm the Dzikover Rav knew that his service of God required him to feel humble, and his real feelings were those of a broken and humble man. "This water carrier serves God more than I do", he thought to himself. "He is going to give God greater pleasure in the world to come by means of his service". Nevertheless, the Dzikover Rav also knew that in this world one must behave in accordance with external reality! And the external reality was that the Dzikover Rav was a *talmid chacham* and a *tzadik*, whereas the water carrier was an *ignoramus*.

There are *halachos*, laws, of *kavod*, respect, for Torah scholars, and these laws must be followed without consideration of hidden inner calculations. A respectable person has an obligation to conduct himself as an *adam chashuv*, prominent person, and yet at the same time within himself he must feel truly broken, and that he is no better than anyone else. This is a challenging balancing act-to act externally like the great scholar that he actually is, and yet to internally feel the complete humility that dictates that the water carrier might be more beloved to *Hashem* than himself. While a scholar has to acknowledge the external reality and act accordingly, for it is the behavior that the Torah mandates, this must be accompanied by a belief that in the inner realm the simple individual might be on a more exalted plane than the Torah scholar. The world's functioning requires that these dual planes, the *hanhagah chitzonis* and *hanhagah penimis*, exist, but maintaining proper actions and beliefs in them simultaneously is difficult.

We are challenged to fight *chitzoniyus*, externalities, as we work on ourselves to become more internal people. We need to avoid being *mispa'el*, emotionally moved, by *chitzoniyus*, but at the same time we cannot pretend that they do not exist! The fact is that there is an external world. When we see that *tzadikim* did things that appeared to be displays of pride and arrogance, we should understand that these actions were what was appropriate in accordance with the reality of the external world. Acting in this way is important, as the external world does exist, and acting according to its rules can lead many others to learn from the *tzadik*. Yet along with this acting, the *tzadik* needs to maintain in his heart the feeling of the inner truth and reality!

The key is to remember that even though there is a *hanhagah chitzonis*, it is an external *levush*, garment, and on the *penimiyus*, internal, level, Heaven makes entirely different calculations.

This concept relates to the idea of compromise. We must accept the *hanhagah* of the world, because the world cannot tolerate acting only according to the inner truth! Balancing the two realms is an art that a *tzadik* practices that requires adjustment and compromise.

From the Potential to the Actual

As we have seen, the wicked are full of regrets, but these regrets do not move them to actually change. This phenomenon relates to the concepts of *bekoach*, in potential, and *befo'al*, in actuality.

The verse states after the splitting of the Red Sea, "*Vaya'aminu baHashem uveMoshe avdo*", "They believed in *Hashem* and in Moshe His servant" (*Shemos* 14:31). Why is this stated as a great *chidush*, novel achievement? The splitting of the sea was a tremendous miracle! Who *wouldn't* believe in *Hashem* after seeing such a thing? Only because *Hashem* hardened Pharaoh's heart did Pharaoh have trouble believing. But *Hashem* never hardened the Jewish hearts, so what was so wondrous about the achievement of belief at the Red Sea?

There is a faith that is *bekoach*, in potential, and faith that is *befo'al*, actually manifest.

There is a faith that is fully actualized, that has become sensory!

For instance, everyone believes in *Mashiach*, but there are few individuals about whom we can say they believe in *Mashiach befo'al*-they feel their belief in a tangible way. What does actual belief in *Mashiach* entail? It entails the belief that a person named *Mashiach ben David* is about to appear and return everyone to full observance. He will build the *Beis HaMikdash* and bring the dead back to life. We all believe this. If so, we should already be planning for what we are going to do when *Mashiach* comes. How many of us live like this in a tangible, real way?

If someone believes in *Mashiach* in an actual way, then *Mashiach* is part of his life. When he wakes up, he opens the window and says, "Maybe *Mashiach* is here already". *Tzadikim* feel that *Mashiach* is coming soon.

Rav Dov Katz records that Rav Yisrael Meir Hakohen, the Chafetz Chayim, displayed this tangible belief.

"Rav Yisrael Meir Hakohen, the Chafetz Chayim, believed with a full faith that his days were ikvasa deMeshicha, the time when the footsteps of Mashiach could be heard, and all must prepare for the imminent redemption."

This primarily began in 5650-5651, 1890-1891, when a movement arose to ascend to the Holy Land and people began to buy land in Israel, to plant vineyards, and establish agricultural settlements. He then wrote a letter to his son, in which he estimated that these actions were the beginning of the ingathering of the exiles which is to precede the coming of Mashiach, and that it was correct to buy a portion in the land and to settle there. However, since he did not have the ability to actualize this aspiration, he felt it incumbent upon himself to begin other practical preparations for the redemption. Behold, once Zion's glory will return, the Temple would be rebuilt and kohanim would be tasked with the service of offering sacrifices. Therefore, he felt a need to become an expert in the laws of sacrifices, so as not to, God forbid, be like the kohanim during the days of Ezra, who were tested by the prophet Chagai on the laws of purity and impurity, and did not know how to answer correctly. Since he was a kohen, he began to study the order of Kodashim, sacred law, in great depth to arrive at the practical halachah."⁴⁴ He even established a separate house of study, with 15 Torah experts, next to his yeshiva in 5665, 1905, to train them to become experts in Kodashim. He appointed Rav Moshe Lundinsky to deliver lessons to them, and this group studied these matters exclusively until the World War broke out in 5674, 1914.

Are we preparing ourselves for a world of prophecy, *penimiyus haTorah*, and the return of the *Beis HaMikdash*? During the first Temple there were over a million prophets. When *Mashiach* comes there will be even more prophecy. Why are we not preparing practically for *Mashiach*? If we really felt that prophecy is about to reappear and the world is about to be filled with knowledge of *Hashem*, would we waste our time with *lashon hara*, negative slander, and *bittul Torah*, wasteful matters? We need to be ready for an awesome time that is coming! So why aren't we actively preparing?

The answer is that our faith in *Mashiach* is not yet in the actual realm. We are like the wicked who are filled with regrets; they know they should be better, but they are not moving from the potential to the actual. This is the deeper meaning of the concept of "birth pangs of *Mashiach*". The challenging task of moving something from the virtual to the real, or from the potential to the actual, is referred to as birth pangs.

44. *Tenu'as HaMusar*, volume 4, pages 42-43.

When people see someone who truly feels the possibility of an imminent coming of *Mashiach*, they call him crazy. The whole world opposes and makes fun of the concept of *Mashaich* because it is a light that is very high, and it is a tremendous revelation of an innate potential becoming reality. To bring a great and transformative light into this world is hard. The task of *Mashiach* is to upend the entire order of the natural world, and it follows that the challenges facing the implementation of this task will be very great.

These challenges are epitomized by the great war of *Gog* and *Magog*,⁴⁵ which is when all the forces of evil will gather and try to stop the *Mashiach*. They will fight against the attempt of *Mashiach* to contradict the natural order to which they are accustomed and that they delight in. To prevent this upheaval, they will fight *Mashiach*. A *Yid* who has actualized the concept of *Mashiach* in his beliefs will be spared from the war of *Gog* and *Magog*. This is because if the belief was tangible, then this person has already given birth to the concept of *Mashiach* and already defeated those who oppose the appearance of the concept in the actual realm.

Birth Pangs

Let us understand more deeply the matter of birth pangs, *chevlei leidah*, particularly as they relate to the arrival of *Mashiach*.

When a soul enters the world it is a time of great holiness. When great holiness is about to appear in the realm of the actual, it faces great opposition. This opposition is the source of *chevlei leidah*. The *Zohar* teaches that when a woman is about to give birth, in her pain she calls out seventy cries, for seventy pains. There are seventy cries to parallel the seventy nations, the nations who oppose bringing *Mashiach* into this world.⁴⁶ This is why in Psalm 20,

45. See *Yechezkel* chapters 38 and 39.

46. See *Emunas Etecha, Shabbos Bereishis* 5758: "The verse states '*yatzev gevulos amim lemispas Bnei Yisrael*', 'He will establish the borders of nations according to the number of the sons of Israel' (*Devarim* 32:8). Rashi explains that God divided the nations into seventy peoples to correspond to the seventy members of Yaakov's family who went down into Egypt. The number seventy was completed as Israel entered Egypt, for it is a number of exile. Throughout the exile, we struggle with the seventy nations. The holiday of *Sukkos* has seventy bulls offered as *korbanos musaf* to correspond to the nations. On *Shemini Atzeres* we have a taste of the redemption. Only one bull is offered! The seventy nations will then return to their root and all will become part of the great One. This level of oneness is hinted to in the word *Bereishis*, the beginning of the Torah representing the realm

"*Lamenatzeiach ya'anacha Hashem beyom tzarah*", "To the composer *Hashem* will answer you in the day of travail", there are seventy words, and this chapter is a *segulah*, miraculously meaningful act, for a *yoledes*, birthing mother, to recite in order to stop the pain of childbirth.

This chapter contains the verses, "*Atah yada'ti ki hoshi'a Hashem Meshicho, ya'aniehu mishmei kadsho*", "Now I know that *Hashem* has saved His *Mashiach*, He has answered him from His holy heavens", as well as "*Eileh varechev ve'eileh vasusim, va'anachnu besheim Hashem Elokeinu nazkir*", "These are with chariots and these are with horses, but we will mention the name of *Hashem* our Lord" (verses 7-8). *Eileh*, אלה, is *alef lamed hei*. Two times *eileh* refers to the two trees of 35 nations: those led by Yishmael and those led by Eisav.⁴⁷ Each tree has a *sar*, an angelic minister, and that is represented by the *alef* at the beginning of the words. "The nations place their trust in horses and chariots, *va'anachnu besheim Hashem Elokeinu nazkir*, and we mention the name of *Hashem* our King". The chapter ends with the phrase in verse 10, "The King will answer us on the day that we call, *HaMelech ya'aneinu beyom kor'einu*, יעננו ביום קוראינו". This stands for *Yabok*, יבק. *Ya'akov*

before the shattering. This is why on *Shemini Atzeres*, we read the Torah portion of *Bereishis*. This is why Rashbi taught seventy *tikunim*, fixings, on the word *Bereishis*, to represent the ultimate redemption when we will have overcome the opposition of the seventy and the seventy will become part of the One!" (page 15).

47. The *Gra*, in his commentary to *Shir Hashirim*, pointed out that we often find a seventy with two that serve as the heads, and who encompass the following seventy. Thus, there are seventy nations from Noach's offspring, and Eisav and Yishmael, who are descendants of Avraham, are the two who encompass all that follow. To represent the eventual overcoming of Eisav and Yishmael, we have a Torah that has seventy faces of meaning, and we heard from *Hashem* Himself the two commands, "I am *Hashem* Your God etc". (*Shemos* 20:2), and "You shall not have any other powers before Me" (*Shemos* 20:3). These two principles, one the foundation of all positive commands and the other the foundation of all prohibitions, encompass all of the Torah. This, too, is the reason why there are seventy words in the *kidush* prayer that is recited Friday night. The two leading, general words, to parallel Eisav and Yishmael, are "*yom hashishi*" (1:2 and footnote 13).

My friend and teacher, Mr. Raphael Benaroya, directed me to an essay of Rav Pinchas Friedman *shlit"a* in *Likutei Ma'amarim Shevilei Pinchas, Parashas Yisro* 5770, on this theme. He says in the name of the *Megaleh Amukos* that one set of thirty-five nations is a perversion of the right of Israel, the kindness of Israel. The other set is a perversion of the left, the attribute of justice. This is why the Muslims made their holy day on Friday, which is to the right of *Shabbos*, and the Christians made their holy day on Sunday, which is to the left of the holy *Shabbos*. At *kidush*, with the thirty-five words of *vayechulu* and the thirty-five words within the blessing of the *kidush*, we annul all these nations. This is the meaning of Avraham's vision of the broken pieces, when the verse

had to cross *Ma'avar Yabok*, and this refers to birth, just as crossing the Red Sea was a form of birth of the Jewish nation. When we passed through the Red Sea, we actually became a nation in this world, and it was this national birth that the seventy nations opposed.⁴⁸

In order for the sea to split, it was necessary to have a revelation of the heavenly in the natural. For the Jews to merit this revelation, they needed an actualized faith, not merely a potential faith. When the Jews were at the sea, they did not even see the waters; they saw right through the barrier! They did not even see an ocean! Their faith was so strong that the barrier disappeared before them. They felt that it would be no big deal for the ocean to split. Since *Hashem* said, "Go into the sea", they responded, "Let's go right in!" This was *emunah befo'al*! The extraordinary strength of their faith is what caused the ocean to split. And that is why the verse informs us, "*vaya'aminu baHashem*"; in fact it was a great *chidush*, novel achievement. The level they had achieved was *emunah befo'al*.

When the Sfas Emes,⁴⁹ Rav Yehuda Leib Alter (1847-1905/5607-5665), was a child, his grandfather⁵⁰ would bring him to Kotzk to the holy tzadik, Rav

declared, "*Vayikach lo es kol eileh vayivateir osam batavech*", "And he took for himself all of these, and divided them in half" (*Bereishis* 15:10). The words *kol eileh*, all of these, mean he took both sets of *eileh*, the thirty-five of the Islamic world and the thirty-five of the Christian world, and he split them in half; he brought the oneness of Israel to annul them!

48. In *Otzar Gilyonei Divrei Torah* 5771, our Rebbe elaborated on the theme of birth pangs. In an essay about *Purim Katan*, the fourteenth day of the first *Adar* month during a leap year when there are two months of *Adar* and most of the *Purim* commemorations are to take place in the second *Adar*, he explained that *Purim* was a time of birth. Birth is opposed by seventy pains, and bringing the holiness of the Jewish way of life to this world is opposed by the seventy nations of the world. During the *Purim* story all the nations of the world wanted to exterminate the Jews. We were opposed by all seventy. It was a time of a difficult childbirth. The Talmud (*Shekalim* 5:1) teaches that the hero of the *Purim* story, Mordechai, was also known by the name Pesachya, which means the one who effects Godly openings. Pesachya was the person in the Temple in charge of the sacrifices of women who had recently given birth. *Purim* was a time of overcoming opposition to birth and bringing holiness into the actual realm. *Purim Katan* is the source for the main *Purim* which occurs in the second month of *Adar*. Since *Purim* represents holy birth and banishing the barriers that try and prevent holiness from entering the world, we all should celebrate *Purim Katan* with the feeling that we are progressing directly to the full manifestation of *Purim* (pages 196-199).

49. The second Gerrer Rebbe, a man of exceptional integrity and holiness.

50. The first Gerrer Rebbe.

Menachem Mendel Morgenstern (1789-1859/5549-5619).⁵¹ These experiences left a monumental impression on him. On one of his visits he heard the wife of the Kotzker tell the attendant about many items that were missing from the home and that had apparently been stolen. The attendant responded, "Is it surprising that there are thieves here? Everything is open. Nothing is locked away! Everything is hefker, ownerless! No one is watching, so thieves prey!" Rav Morgenstern overheard this conversation from his room and he screamed, "Feivel, what did you say? Everything is hefker? But the Almighty said, 'Do not steal!'"

These words would echo in the ears of the Sfas Emes! He felt that there was an iron wall around the property of others; how could anyone steal? From the passion of the Kotzker he internalized a feeling of emunah befo'al.⁵²

The book Kisrah Shel Torah, about the leader of the Mir Yeshiva in the U.S., Rav Shmuel Berenbaum (1921-2008/5681-5768) o.b.m, relates Rav Berenbaum's recollection of an event he heard from Rav Ya'akov Neiman, who witnessed it. This interaction impressed on Rav Berenbaum the great sensory feelings of faith that Rav Elchonon Wasserman (1874-1941/5634-5701), his teacher and head of the yeshiva in Baranovitch, possessed. Rav Elchonon had a study partner, chavrusa, with whom he would study each day at three in the afternoon for four hours. One day the partner arrived late, at 3:05 PM. Rav Elchonon asked him if he owned a watch. The study partner answered that he did and he took it out of his pocket. Rav Elchonon examined the watch, then he said, 'I see that the watch is accurate. So why did you come late today?' The study partner answered, "I had a naturally occurring need that prevented me from coming". Rav Elchonon responded, "That is interesting. Each day the soldiers in the king's army are on time for the morning roll call. They all arrive on time. No one is missing from the daily lineup. Anyone who comes late to the lineup is punished. Why aren't there soldiers who arrive late because they had a naturally occurring need preventing them from coming? It must be", Rav Elchonon continued, "that the body can regulate itself so that at certain times one does not have naturally occurring needs obligating behavior. The time with a chavrusa should be as important as the time for lineup in the king's army!

51. Rav Morgenstern was a great *tzadik* in Poland. He brought about a revolution of great levels of integrity, genuineness and Torah scholarship to the Polish Jewish community.

52. *MiGedolei HaChassidus, Ba'al HaSfas Emes*, page 19.

Yes, you are human, but so are the soldiers. Be like them. You are after all a soldier in Hashem's army; therefore, your excuse is not valid".

Rav Shmuel Berenbaum was very impressed with this story and it had a great impact on him. He almost never left his learning session to use the restroom, and he also almost never took ill during the learning semester. Only during the vacation break would he get sick. He habituated his body to the schedule of the yeshiva like the soldiers of whom Rav Elchonon spoke.⁵³

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz, shlit"a, the current head of Yeshiva Sha'ar Hashamayim, related a story from Rav Ya'akov Galinsky, shilt"a, about the great levels of sensory faith earlier generations exemplified:

"In my hometown there was an elderly Jew in his nineties. This man was exceptionally devoted to learning Torah. He would spend the entire week in the house of study! He never left. I asked him, how did he reach such a level of devotion to study? He told me that as a youth he had studied in the Volozhin yeshiva⁵⁴ and initially had no urge to study. He was wont to wander the halls aimlessly for hours. Once he met Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik (1820-1892/5580-5652), the Beis Haleivi, who was a teacher in the yeshiva. The Beis Haleivi told him, 'Realize that Hashem teaches Torah to the Jewish nation, as we say in our prayers, hamelamed Torah le'amo Yisrael, who teaches Torah to His nation Israel. When you open the book of Talmud, Hashem stands before you and opens a book of Talmud in order to teach it to you. When you close your book of Talmud, Hashem closes His book. How dare you do that? How dare man close Hashem's book?' The Jew related that the words touched him to his core, and from then on he started to study with great devotion. He reached a level where it was impossible for him to close the book of Talmud. He felt with his senses that Hashem was opposite him and studying with him, and that it was impossible to close Hashem's book!"⁵⁵

God probably does not expect such faith from all of us, but from the Jews who had seen the miracles in Egypt, He did. They had just witnessed the ten

53. Pages 27-28.

54. In 1803, Rav Chaim of Volozhin (1749-1821/5509-5581), started the first advanced *yeshiva* in modern times. The famed Volozhin *yeshiva* is the prototype for the thousands of *yeshivos* that have followed it.

55. *Sichos His'orerus Mei'eis HaGaon HaTzadik Rabbi Gamliel HaCohen Rabinowitz, Yamim Nora'im*, pages 15-16.

plagues, culminating in *makas bechoros*, death of the firstborn, and so they could rightly be expected to achieve this level of *emunah*.

In conclusion, we have drawn contrasts in this lesson between *tzadikim* and *resha'im*. *Resha'im* are filled with regrets. They do not bring their *his'orerus*, inspiration, to action. They feel that the *his'orerus* is not *mechayev*; it does not obligate them. However, this is a false belief. While it is true that we have to work within our natural levels, we still should push ourselves for more. Let us remember that *Mashiach* can come at any moment, and then the worthiness of the service to God of this generation will be revealed.

Simply wanting to *daven* and learn in this generation has great value. *Hashem* does not expect us to reach the levels of earlier generations! There is a flood of impurity around us. If in spite of such darkness a person lives as an *ehrlicher Yid*, sincere Jew, he is very holy. Reb Nachman of Breslov⁵⁶ used to say, "In our generation, if someone stays *frum* he is more than just a *kadosh*, a holy being!" It is indeed hard in our generation, yet we must try to the best of our abilities to grow religiously, and in turn *Hashem* will help us arrive at the days of *Mashiach*!

56. Rav Nachman of Breslov, 1772-1810/5522-5560, was the great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov. He was one of the nineteenth century's greatest teachers and innovators in serving *Hashem* with passion. He emphasized seeing the good and always striving to increase devotion to *Hashem*.

Prayer and Torah study can transform us. Lesson Twenty-Five reveals why prayer impacts us so deeply. When we pray, especially communally with a minyan, we rise to the level of our patriarchs. In this lesson we also discover why Torah study is so essential. Torah study, especially the internalization of the depths of the inner Torah, redefines life and greatly weakens the urge for evil.

LESSON

25 Prayer, Inner Torah, and Chochmah

Chapter Twelve of the *Tanya* teaches:

The beinoni is one in whom the evil never rises with such virulence

to conquer the small city, to cloak the body and make it sin.

In other words, the three garments of the animal spirit--thought, speech, and action of kelipah--do not overcome the Godly soul and clothe the body, mind, and mouth

Or any other of the 248 limbs, to make them sin and to make them impure, Heaven forbid.

והבינוני הוא שלעולם אין הרע גובר כל
כך

לכבוש את העיר קטנה להתלבש בגוף
להחטיאו

דהיינו ששלוש לבושי נפש הבהמית
שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה שמצד
הקליפה אין גוברים בו על נפש
האלהית להתלבש בגוף במוח ובפה

ובשאר רמ"ח אברים להחטיאם
ולטמאם ח"ו

The *beinoni*, intermediate person, has within him two personalities: the righteous and the devilish. The two personalities are constantly at war to determine which will conquer the *Nefesh*, the *Ruach*, and the *Neshamah*. These three entities are each distinct parts of the soul, and each has an expression in human behavior. The *Nefesh* is clothed in action, the *Ruach* in speech, and the *Neshamah* in thought. Within each individual, the Heavenly and the animalistic personalities are struggling to determine which will be the victor who will clothe the garments of action, speech, and thought.

The *beinoni* is not a *rasha*, for he does not actually perform misdeeds. If evil does overcome a person and he sins, then he is a *rasha*, not a *beinoni*. This

begs a question about the same scenario in reverse: if an evil act brings someone into the category of *rasha*, why does the performance of a good act not render the person a *tzadik*? After all, at that moment he is only good! What the *Tanya* is teaching is that because a person who does a good act still has virulent evil latent within him, he cannot be called a *tzadik*, only a *beinoni*. This is hard to understand, because if we say that someone who does bad is a *rasha*, even though his essential good is untouched, it seems that the converse should be true for one who does good. This is a question that we can ask on the *Tanya*.

Perhaps we can suggest that the premise of the question is incorrect. When the *Tanya* says that someone who performs evil is a *rasha*, he is not using the term in a way that corresponds to the real and essential *tzadik*. The language is somewhat deceiving; its intent here is to teach that when a person does a sin, in a sense he is a *rasha*, and when he does a *mitzvah* in a sense he is a *tzadik*, but the terms are not intended to describe the complete *tzadik* or *rasha*. In spite of this suggestion, however, the resolution is still not entirely satisfactory, since the way the *Tanya* is written is much more suggestive of a parallelism between the *rasha* and *tzadik*. In Lesson Twenty-Seven, we will suggest an answer to this question.

In summary, a *beinoni* is someone who does good, but internally struggles between his inner good and his inner evil.

Only the three garments of the Godly soul clothe his body. He thinks, speaks, and performs only the six hundred and thirteen mitzvos of the Torah. He never violated a sin. He never will violate a sin. He never had the title rasha affixed to him, not even for a moment or an hour. However, the essence of his Godly soul in its ten aspects is not the only internal ruler and master over the small city. Only during special times, such as when reading the Shema or praying, which is a time of mochin degadlus, expanded intellects, above, and also below it is a time of possibility for people, for then one attaches his thoughts to Hashem and delves deeply into the grandeur of the Ein Sof, and arouses

רק שלשה לבושי נפש האלהית הם לבדם מתלבשים בגוף שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה של תרי"ג מצות התורה ולא עבר עבירה מימיו ולא יעבור לעולם ולא נקרא עליו שם רשע אפי' שעה אחת ורגע אחד כל ימיו אך מהות ועצמות נפש האלהית שהן עשר בחינותיה לא להן לבדן המלוכה והממשלה בעיר קטנה כי אם בעתים מזומנים כמו בשעת קריאת שמע ותפלה שהיא שעת מוחין דגדלות למעלה וגם למטה היא שעת הכושר לכל אדם שאז מקשר חב"ד שלו לה' להעמיק דעתו בגדולת א"ס ב"ה ולעורר את האהבה כרשפי אש בחלל הימני שבלבו לדבקה בו בקיום התורה

the love like the flames of fire in the right ventricle of the heart, to be attached to Him, and fulfill His Torah and mitzvos out of love, for this is the purpose of the Biblical obligation to recite Shema. The Rabbinic obligation to recite blessings before the Shema and afterwards are a preparation for this achievement, as has been explained elsewhere.

ומצותיה מאהבה שזהו ענין המבואר בקריאת שמע דאורייתא וברכותיה שלפניה ולאחריה שהן מדרבנן הן הכנה לקיום הק"ש כמ"ש במ"א

The *Tanya* teaches that a *beinoni* has not reached the level of constant internal holiness. However, at times of holy prayer he can reach this type of experience.

The Possibilities of Prayer

Hashem has infused prayer with *siyata dishmaya*, Divine assistance. Prayer is capable of lifting a person to a very high level. Some *mitzvos* are in the category of *kelaliyos*--general principles that encompass many other *mitzvos*. This means that if one is truly and sincerely attached to these *mitzvos* they will draw him along to the performance of many other *mitzvos*. They are general principles! These *mitzvos* have an attractive quality, and they can and will draw the person who is truly connected to them to many, perhaps almost all, of the other *mitzvos*. Once one observes these special commandments, it becomes almost easy to observe other *mitzvos*.⁵⁷

Prayer is such a commandment; it is the pillar of *avodah*, service of God. The whole world rests on this pillar.⁵⁸ Our forefathers, who encompassed all the Jewish souls that would descend from them, instituted prayer. A father is

57. Perhaps a similar thought to that of our Rebbe is reflected in the thesis of Rav Shlomo Wolbe's book, *Hamitzvos Hashekulos*. Rav Wolbe points that in our literature, there are seven commandments that are identified as being equal to all the other commandments of the Torah. These are: denial of idolatry, *tzitzis* (ritual strings) on four-cornered garments, keeping *Shabbos*, learning Torah, circumcision, charity, and settling the land of Israel. In the *Ba'al Haturim*, the *mitzvah* of *teshuvah*, repentance, is also equated with all the *mitzvos*. Perhaps these special behaviors are equal to all the other *mitzvos* because they define the aspiration of a life of *mitzvos*, and so one who is attached to generosity, memory, evaluation of matters correctly, and holiness of person, place, mind, and time, will find himself fulfilling all the *mitzvos*!

58. See *Pirkei Avos* 1:2.

a root, which is the source from which all branches emanate. Our forefathers, our roots, instituted general, all-encompassing institutions that define our *mitzvah* observance and service of God.

We say in our prayers, "*Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak, veElokei Ya'akov*", "The God of Avraham, the God of Yitzchak, and the God of Ya'akov." The simple meaning of this phrase is that we are mentioning the forefathers in order to arouse their merit. In truth, there is a deeper meaning. When we say these words, we are arousing the piece of Avraham that resides within us. Avraham was an *av*, a father. Each father is the root of all of his progeny; we all stem from the root of Avraham.⁵⁹ Just as God rested His presence upon Avraham and made an inviolable pact with him, I too have a pact with the Almighty that cannot be broken, because within me there is a bit of Avraham. This part of my soul is the channel through which all blessings and good can flow.

In fact, I have three such parts--thus the text of the prayer reads, "*Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak, veElokei Ya'akov*". We are able to access *Hashem* through the pieces of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov that are in each of us; these are the channels that draw down the overflow of blessing. One channel corresponds to *Shacharis*, the morning service; one to *Minchah*; the afternoon service; and one to *Ma'ariv*, the night service.

One of the first rules taught by Kabbalah is that no detail stands alone; each detail contains within it a microcosm of everything else. This is true for the concept of Holiness; everything encompasses everything. This great rule is now being revealed in nature as well, as scientists discover how details are in fact microcosms of the entire whole. This new knowledge is reflected in recent discoveries about the nature of stem cells, as well as in other areas of scientific inquiry. This rule exists because of the unity of God, which dictates the tremendous unity and generalization of the world.

59. Rav Pinchas of Polochek, a student of the Gaon of Vilna, used this concept to explain the term *Tzur chayeinu*, Rock of our lives, which is a term that we use in prayers of thanksgiving. *Tzurim*, rocks, refer to the three fathers, for the children were hewed out of them. Hence the verse in *Yeshayahu* "*Habitu el tzur chutzavtem*", "Look to the rock from which you were cut out" (51:1). This refers to our father Avraham, from whom all Jewish bodies were hewed. But *Hashem* is *Tzur chayeinu*, Rock of our life, for our life, our *Neshamah*, was cut off from *Hashem*. He is the quarry out of which our life emerged, as reflected in the verse, "*Vayipach be'apav nishmas chayim*", "And He blew into his nostrils the living soul" (*Bereishis* 2:7). (*Siddur Sha'ar Harachamim*, page 286.)

Thus, Avraham contained within him all three patriarchs: Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. The *Midrash* says this explicitly: *Avraham nikra Yitzchak*, Avraham was called Yitzchak, and *Yitzchak nikra Avraham*, Yitzchak was called Avraham. Each patriarch had within him the other patriarchs, and so too each prayer contains within it all the prayers. This is the three-fold rope that attaches us to the Almighty. In *Koheles*, King Solomon declared, "*Vehachut hameshulash lo bimheirah yinaseik*", "And the three-fold cord will not quickly be detached" (4:12). The "three-fold cord" refers to attachment to God through Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. We attach ourselves to God through the three channels of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov; we attach ourselves to God through *Shacharis*, *Minchah*, and *Ma'ariv*.

During *Shacharis*, *Minchah*, and *Ma'ariv*, the Heavenly worlds open, and these are times of *ratzon*, favor, and *gadlus hamochin*, expanded intellects. There is such great holiness present at these times that if one prays appropriately, he might merit receiving some of the strength of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. At these special times the *nekudah*, spiritual point, of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov awakens in each of us.

Prayer Lifts Us To a Level Above Our Own

Prayer is referred to as *chayei sha'ah*, life of the moment. In contrast, the Talmud refers to learning Torah as *chayei olam*, eternal life (*Shabbos* 10a). The *Tanya* teaches that this is because prayer is a service wherein man rises above his present level. A person is not normally on the level of Avraham *Avinu*. But during prayer, if he expends great effort, he might merit that his Avraham-part will be aroused, and he will be able to connect to a level higher than his current spiritual level. The arousal of the Avraham within him will allow him to use his expanded intellects to attach himself to God throughout the entire day.

This is a key point to remember about prayer: prayer with a community creates a moment of grace that allows a person to achieve a level higher than his own natural level. When we *daven* with ten other men, we are no longer ten individuals; we have created a group, there is a *chalos tzibur*. We have formed the *klal*, collective community, that prays together. Each *klal* is connected to the *Avos*, since the *Avos* were *kollel Klal Yisrael*, encompassed the entire Jewish nation.

The Talmud says that the verses recited on *Rosh Hashanah* as part of the prayer of *Zichronos*, memories, are not about an individual who is remembered, but are about God's remembrance of the Jewish nation. In that case, how do we understand the inclusion of the verse "*VeHashem pakad es Sarah*", "And God remembered Sarah" (*Bereishis* 21:1)? Isn't Sarah an individual? The Talmud responds that since all the Jewish people stem from Sarah, the remembrance of Sarah is in fact a remembrance of the entire nation!

Hashem made a *bris*, covenant, with the whole nation, the *klal*. He has a *bris* with me because I am part of *Klal Yisrael*! This is why *mitzvos* should be fulfilled *besheim kol Yisrael*, in the name of all of Israel-because in fact, *Am Yisrael* is doing the *mitzvah*! This idea is the essential reason why it is so important to *daven* with a quorum of ten men, a *minyan*. In a *minyan* the entire Jewish nation is praying. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov were the *klaliyim* who endowed each Jew with the ability to become part of the *klal*.

Torah Becomes the Level of the Learner

Torah is called *chayei olam*, eternal life (*Shabbos* 10a). It enters a person and transforms him into someone else. The Torah is called *chayei olam* because it actually becomes part of the individual; it becomes his true *madreigah*, spiritual level. One can actually see this transformation with his own eyes, though it is difficult. Just as we cannot actually watch grass grow, we may not see this change right away, but the change is happening nevertheless, so too Torah study is causing the person to grow into a new person. The Torah that a person studies alters his *midos*, character traits, and transforms him. It makes him into a *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, and a new person. The changes wrought by Torah last, because they become the person's real *madreigah*.

The following Talmudic statement sheds some light on the different qualitative advantages of prayer and Torah study. The Talmud relates a complaint that was once registered against people: "*Manichin chayei olam ve'oskin bechayei sha'ah*", "They leave eternal life and busy themselves with life of the moment" (*Shabbos* 10a). How is it that these people neglect eternal life, Torah learning, for life of the moment, prayer? The complaint is that these people are leaving Torah study, which becomes truly their own, for the sake of prayer, which does not have the same effect. Through prayer one will not

reach his own true *madreigah*; prayer effects a momentary high that does not become the true level of the one who prays.

Prayer of course incurs many advantages. Rav Eliyahu Lopian⁶⁰ once pointed out that just as many technological advances were developed in order to enable the invention of the telephone, so too the *Avos* opened the gates of prayer--they fashioned the telephone so that we can use the medium of prayer to connect to *Hashem*. This is also the deeper understanding behind the concept of the patriarchs digging wells. What they were accomplishing through their actions was revealing the hidden *Nefesh Elokis*, that all souls come from a deeper and holier root. They opened a gate through which one can escape from the mixture of *tov* and *ra*; *tefilah* is that gate.

In fact, this is what the *Tanya* is teaching: a *beinoni* is a mixture of good and evil, but at the moment of prayer, which is an *eis ratzon*, time of favor, he can rise above his present level and become, for a time, a *tzadik gamur*. But in spite of this great advantage, prayer is still only *chayei sha'ah*; its effects will not last and the person will eventually recede back to his struggle as a *beinoni*. That is why Torah study is superior; the changes effected by involvement in it change the person permanently.

However, after the prayer, when the expanded intellects about the greatness of the Infinite leave, then the evil returns and is awakened in the left ventricle of the heart, and it desires the desires and pleasures of this world.

However, since it is not the only judge and ruler in the city, it cannot carry out its urges to actually clothe the limbs of the body with action, speech, or thought, to delve with the mind into the pleasures of this world and to plot how to fulfill the desires of the heart.

For the mind rules over the heart by its very nature!

This is the way man was created.

אבל אחר התפלה בהסתלקות המוחין
דגדלות א"ס ב"ה הרי הרע חוזר וניער
בחלל השמאלי ומתאווה תאוה לתאוה
עוה"ז ותענוגיו

רק מפני שלא לו לבדו משפט המלוכה
והממשלה בעיר אינו יכול להוציא
תאותו מכח אל הפועל להתלבש
באברי הגוף במעשה דבור ומחשבה
ממש להעמיק מחשבתו בתענוגיו עוה"ז
איך למלאות תאוות לבו

כי המוח שליט על הלב וכמ"ש בר"מ
פ' פינחס בתולדתו וטבע יצירתו

שכך נוצר האדם בתולדתו

60. Rav Eliyahu Lopian, 1872-1970/5632-5730, was one of the great *musar* personalities of the last century. He served as the *mashiach* of *Yeshiva Knesses Chizkiyahu* in the land of Israel. His students collected his thoughts and published them in the works titled *Lev Eliyahu*.

Each person can with the will in his mind hold himself back and rule over his desiring spirit, and not indulge the requests of his heart in action, speech, or thought.

He can completely distract himself from the desires of his heart

And think of the exact opposite

This is especially true of holiness

As it is written, "And I have seen that there is an advantage to wisdom over folly like the advantage of light over darkness".

The meaning of this is that just as light naturally rules over darkness, and with a little bit of light much darkness is banished on its own, so too the great folly of the Other Side that is found in the left ventricle of the heart is speedily banished by the wisdom that is in the Godly soul in the mind, which seeks to exclusively rule the city and clothe with her three garments the entire body, as has been explained, to fill action, speech, and thought with expressions of the six hundred thirteen mitzvos of the Torah.

שכל אדם יכול ברצונו שבמוחו להתאפק ולמשול ברוח תאוותו שבלבו שלא למלאת משאלות לבו במעשה דבור ומחשבה

ולהסית דעתו לגמרי מתאוות לבו

אל ההפך לגמרי

ובפרט אל צד הקדושה

כדכתיב וראיתי שיש יתרון לחכמה מן הסכלות כיתרון האור מן החושך

פי' כמו שהאור יש לו יתרון ושליטה וממשלה על החושך שמעט אור גשמי דוחה הרבה מן החושך שנדחה ממנו מאליו וממילא כך נדחה ממילא סכלות הרבה של הקליפה וס"א שבחלל השמאלי וכמאמר רז"ל אלא אם כן נכנס בו רוח שטות וכו' מפני החכמה שבנפש האלהית שבמוח אשר רצונה למשול לבדה בעיר ולהתלבש בשלשה לבושיה הנ"ל בכל הגוף כולו כנ"ל שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה תרי"ג מצות התורה כנ"ל

Naturally the Mind Is Stronger Than Emotions!

The natural way of things, taught the *Tanya*, is that the mind rules over the heart, since the mind is stronger than the heart.

We know there are three main limbs in the body: the mind, the heart and the liver. Also, there are three primary expressions of the psyche: thought, speech and action. And there are three parts of the soul: *Nefesh*, *Ruach* and *Neshamah*. The mind corresponds to thought and to the *Neshamah*, the heart corresponds to speech and to the *Ruach*, and the liver with its *dam*, blood, corresponds to action and the *Nefesh*.

The roots for good and evil are distinct from each other. In *Koheles* we read, "*Mi yodei'a ruach bnei ha'adam ha'olah hi lema'alah, veruach habeheimah hayoredes hi limata la'aretz*", "Who pays attention to the fact that the spirit of man rises above, while the animal spirit sinks down to the earth?" (3:22). There is a *Ruach bnei ha'adam*, a spirit of man, which is the *Nefesh*

Elokis, and there is also a *Ruach beheimah*, animal spirit, that is the *Nefesh habehemis*.

The root of the *Nefesh habehemis* is the earth. *Hashem* created man from dust, just as He made animals from earth. In contrast to this, though, the *Nefesh Elokis* has as its source the breath of the Infinite; it emanates from the highest levels. This is reflected in the posture of living creatures: animals walk stooped over, with their heads close to the ground, while people walk upright. The *Nefesh Elokis* draws man up towards it while animals are drawn to their root, which is below. The very limbs of man also teach this truth about the source of his *Nefesh Elokis*; the mind is the most spiritual part of the body, and it is also the physical height of the person. (This is true about the Godly mind, though it should be noted that there is a physical *moach*, mind, as well). A person's mind draws him to follow the Godly messages that are sent to it. This is natural man! If you let yourself simply follow your pure mind, you will be drawn to *Elokis*!

If being drawn towards elevation is so natural, why do we find that some people use their minds to pursue animal desires? The answer is that these people's minds are not operating independently. Their hearts are ruling over their minds! They have allowed the *Nefesh habehemis* to conquer their minds. In contrast to this, a pure mind is ruled by *Chochmah*. We are told that "*kulam beChochmah asisa*", "You made all with *Chochmah*" (*Tehillim* 104:24). The *Zohar* adds, *kulom beChochmah isbarira*, all become clarified with *Chochmah*. This is the nature of *Chochmah*: it clarifies. If a person would truly utilize *Chochmah*, he would be able to separate good from evil. The *Ramchal*⁶¹ writes that one who is truly a *chacham* will not perform any misdeed. Only a fool sins! A person is only led to sin when his *Chochmah* has been bribed by his *Nefesh habehemis*. True *Chochmah*, however, overcomes sins.⁶²

61. Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato, 1707-1746/5477-5506, was a great *tzadik* and master of Kabbalah. He lived in Italy and produced works that united the traditions of philosophy and Kabbalah. He eventually moved to the Holy Land where he returned his soul to its maker.

62. Rav Elchanan Wasserman, in his work *Kovetz Ma'amarim*, deals with the theme of wisdom and bias extensively. *Halachah* exempts an action performed *be'ones*, against one's will, from punishment. Why, then, he asks, is a heretic liable? A nonbeliever simply does not believe; he does not have the belief others have, so why should he be punished? Isn't he someone whose sins are all *be'ones*? He answers that the existence of wisdom in the creation naturally compels belief. All matters that display great sophistication, order, and wisdom must stem from an intelligent source. When one

Why Some Avoid Wisdom

Some people run away, as if fleeing *Gehinom*, when they hear a deep idea from *chassidus*. They say, "That person is a *Chabadsker*⁶³ or a *mekubal*--this is not for me!" The *Zohar* talks about this phenomenon at length, and explains that this is a *kelipah* of "*Lo yachpotz kesil bitevunah*", "A fool does not desire any understanding" (*Mishlei* 18:2). A fool lives with a darkness that runs away from light. The Rambam in *Hilchos Dei'os* writes similarly that it is an illness of the soul to desire only the night and darkness, and to avoid light. Such people enjoy sitting in a dark room, and when they enter a room filled with light, they get upset. This is an illness of the soul!

This mindset may stem from depression, and sometimes it emerges from a mistaken ideology. Reb Pinchas of Koretz⁶⁴ said that there are three signs that indicate who is happy and who is truly depressed. First, a happy person desires to go to the Land of Israel; someone with no overwhelming urge to go to the Land of Israel is depressed. Second, the person who is happy can cry, while one who is depressed cannot. Third, a joyous person yearns to learn the innermost Torah, but a depressed person has no desire for the light of the inner Torah. Torah is an amazing light whose measure we do not fully comprehend. Torah is the *sha'ashu'im*, the delights, of *Hashem*! It is a hidden light. But if one merits tasting the light of Torah, all questions are answered.

Our world is rife with challenges; there are people who suffer like Iyov. There is so much pain in this world. *Hashem* knew that man would have great pain, so why did He create this world? Even though we know that the world

sees a book one knows there was an intelligent author, and it did not result from an inkwell spilling and miraculously spelling out an entire book. An honest assessment of the world would therefore certainly lead man to faith, since our world displays great sophistication, order, and wisdom. The human body is a more impressive machine than any modern technology. So, simple logic mandates belief in an intelligent Creator. Yet many do not believe. This is a result of a moral lapse on their part. The Torah reveals that bribery will blind the wise and pervert the righteous. Many people are bribed, by the allure of their desires, to deny *Hashem*. The Creator of the world has also made demands on His world, and many would like to live without any obligations; they would prefer to do whatever their hearts desire. This "pay-off" leads them to deny the existence of *Hashem* or the truth of His Torah. In essence, it is their heart ruling their mind that prevents them from recognizing *Hashem*.

63. A follower of the traditions of Lubavitch *chassidim*.

64. Rabbi Pinchas Shapiro, 1726-1790/5486-5550, was known as Rav Pinchas Koretz for the town Koretz wherein he lived. He was a disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov and one of the earliest *chassidic* masters.

was created to provide us with benefit, it is hard to understand why there is so much pain! However, we should know that when we merit even a tiny bit of the light of Torah, questions of this nature are answered. One who appreciates the light of Torah realizes that the suffering of the world is nothing. The Torah's hidden light causes all the difficulties of life to melt away. The Torah and God's will are One. Torah is *atzmiyus Elokis!* Hashem gave Himself over to His creation through the holy Torah, and this is primarily revealed through experiencing the hidden Torah.

The *Zohar* explains the differences between the two manifestations of Torah. It teaches that the revealed Torah is primarily designed to improve creation, and to separate good from evil. It is dressed in a physical form because its task is to fix the physical world.⁶⁵ However, the inner Torah is a more essential form of Torah. It is actually the *penimiyus haTorah*, the soul of Torah. It is the Torah of God's delight-the *sha'ashu'im* of Hashem.

Following the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, man must work to purify evil. Just as in a physical sense man became compelled to work to produce bread, so too man must work to understand the Torah. *Chazal* speak of a person who is characterized as *Toraso omanuso*, his Torah is his trade. Torah is a craft, for it requires toil, and the toil separates the good from the bad.

If man had eaten from the Tree of Life, he would never have committed any sins. Unfortunately, however, evil was able to convince man to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, for man did not have enough *Chochmah* to resist. The *Eitz HaChayim* is the Tree of Life, the tree of eternal life. How does one attain eternal life? Through *deveikus*, attachment, to the Eternal, to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu!* In the future each *tzadik* will be called *kadosh*,⁶⁶ for each one will be *davuk* in *Elokis*. When the body and the soul become one, there is *deveikus*, and death is impossible.

What is death? Death is the separation between body, the vessel, and soul, the light contained within the vessel. If the vessel and light become one, when the body merges into the soul, then there can be no death, for something that is one integrated whole cannot be separated. In the world of *Atzilus*, *iyhu*

65. The Gra explains in his commentary to *Mishlei* that the *peshat*, simple meaning, is a *malbush*, cloak, for the hidden *penimiyus*, inner essence, of Torah.

66. Talmud, *Bava Basra* page 75.

vegarmohi chad hu, He and His garment are one--the body and soul are one. That is the level of *deveikus* and the meaning of the Tree of Life, and in that sphere there can be no death. Had Adam eaten from the Tree of Life; had he attached himself to the inner Torah to truly understand what this world is all about and how one is to live in this world, he would never have sinned by eating from the Tree of Knowledge! Had Adam eaten from the Tree of Life he would have been on the level of *Atzilus*, for he would have possessed the real *Chochmah* that would have allowed him the ability to penetrate the deepest knowledge of the world.

After the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, *Hashem* gave us a microcosm of the Garden of Eden when he gave us the *Beis Hamikdash*, the Temple in Jerusalem. The ark and its two cherubs represent the Tree of Life, and they are at the center of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Just as one is not always allowed access to the Tree of Life, we are not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies at all times. The one time that the *Kohen Gadol*, High Priest, would enter was on *Yom Kippur*. On *Yom Kippur* we taste the world of true life. *Hashem* forgives all sins on that day--even the sin of the Tree of Knowledge--and at that point we can connect to the Tree of Life. The life we are granted on *Rosh Hashanah* is given to us more completely on *Yom Kippur* through our experience of the *Eitz HaChayim*.

The *Ari* explains that the world can be divided into parallels to the four universes. The *Beis Hamikdash* is *bechinas Olam Ha'Atzilus*, relative to the Universe of Emanation; *Yerushalayim*, Jerusalem, is the *Olam HaBeri'ah*, Universe of Creation; the land of Israel is *Olam HaYetzirah*, the Universe of Formation; and the rest of the globe is *Olam Ha'Asiyah*, the Universe of Action. When I would speak with Rav Fishel Eisenbach⁶⁷ in *Yerushalayim*, he used to say, "You just came from *Asiyah* to *Yetzirah*", for even his *sichas chulin*, small talk, was in terms of Kabbalah. Israel is *Olam HaYetzirah*, while the *Beis Hamikdash* is *Olam Ha'Atzilus*, for they are *Gan Eden* and the *Eitz HaChayim*. *Gan Eden* was the level of oneness with the vessels, eternal life. The Tree of Life was concentrated *Gan Eden*. Had Adam eaten from the Tree of Life he would never have sinned, for there is no *ra* there!

67. The *rosh yeshiva*, *yeshiva* head, of *Yeshiva Sha'ar Hashamayim*, the center for study of Kabbalah in Israel.

This is the meaning of the lesson of the Ramchal, who taught that one who is wise will not sin, for had Adam eaten from the Tree of Life he would never have sinned. We have to be wise and realize there is no choice. There is no option of sin; sin is not life!

To eat from the Tree of Life means to be on the level of *Atzilus*. When one feels that the body and soul have merged into one, and has reached the understanding of the innermost wisdom of Torah (which is *Atzilus*-like), he cannot sin, for in the world of *Atzilus*, there is no *ra*, bad, there is no *pirud*, separation, and there is no *misah*, death. One who comprehends and experiences that world cannot and will not sin. If one has enough intelligence one will realize that evil speaks silliness to us. We need to maintain our awareness that evil is a joke. This is challenging because the Other Side is very cunning. We can fight it by remembering that God has given us a great blessing--the light of the inner Torah--that enables us to see the world in a true light. Our evil urge tries to get us to run from the light and truth, but we must resist it, and remember that if we could access this world of truth, we would be true *chochomim*.

There is such depth in the inner Torah!

Deep Depths

As an example that powerfully illustrates the depths hidden in the inner Torah, let us consider the following question: what is the deeper significance of the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah*, the Machpeilah Cave? Why did Avraham *Avinu* insist on possessing it to the extent that he paid four hundred silver coins for it? The *Zohar* promises that those who love Torah will discover that the Torah reveals to them its secrets. It is the inner Torah, which holds the keys to secrets, which can explain to us the importance of the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah*.

The Deeper Meaning of the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah*

The cave is a manifestation of the *midah* of *Malchus*, kingship. According to our tradition, deeper meanings to a word can be discovered when a word is fully expressed. Each letter in a word can be spelled out, and when the numerical sum of the names of the letters in the word is revealed, another level of meaning is discovered. This is called the *miluy*, filled-out form, of the word. There are four *miluyim*, ways to fill out, the *sheim Havayah*. One is to spell

with *hei*'s, and the letter *hei* is two *hei*'s, הַה. Another is to spell with *yud*'s, *hei* is then *hei yud*, הַי. A third way is to spell with *alef*'s, and *hei* is then *hei aleph*, אַה. The letter *vav* can be spelled in multiple forms, *vav alef vav*, *vav vav*, or *vav yud vav*. These different spellings enable the four filled-out forms of the holy name. The first is called *ab* as it equals seventy two, עַבּ, יו"ד+ה"י+ו"י+ו"ה+י-עב, the second is *sag* and equals sixty three, סג, יו"ד+ה"י+ו"א+ו"י+ו"ה+י-סג, the third is called *mah* and equals forty five, מַה, יו"ד+ה"י+ו"א+ו"י+ו"ה+א-מַה, the final form is called *ben* and equals fifty two, בּן, יו"ד+ה"י+ו"י+ו"ה+ה"ה-בּן. *Ben* is filled with doubles. יוּד, *yud vav daled* (which equals twenty, double the ten of an individual *yud*); הַי הַי, *hei hei*; וּו, *vav vav*; and הַה הַה, *hei hei*; this is a doubled name of God, since we have doubled all letters of the Name—two times *Havayah*. The *gematria* of this form of the name of *Hashem* is fifty two. The *Me'aras Hamachpeilah* is a cave of doubles, as it corresponds to this double name of *Hashem*. Each of its two caves—the upper cave and the lower cave—correspond to one of the *Havayah* names. Just as the Name has four letters, and each letter is doubled, there are four pairs of people buried in the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah*: Adam and Chava; Avraham and Sarah; Yitzchak and Rivkah; and Ya'akov and Leah.

Me'aras Hamachpeilah symbolizes the rectification of the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*, Tree of Knowledge. The cave, as a burial place, represents the idea of "*afar atah ve'el afar tashuv*", "you are dust and to dust you shall return" (*Bereishis* 3:19). It belonged originally to עֶפְרוֹן, Efron, whose name shares the root of the Hebrew word for dust, עֶפֶר. When the sin of the Tree of Knowledge is repaired, *David Hamelech*, King David, will rise to the highest level. Adam *Harishon* and David share a *Neshamah*, soul, and so Adam, David, and the *Mashiach* are all one soul. Therefore, the arrival of *Mashiach* will return us to the level of Adam before the sin. At that point, Adam will once again be the highest. Adam and Chava represent the *hei tata'ah*, the last *hei* of the Name, a letter currently low but which will rise to the highest level. The other doubles are Avraham and Sarah, who represent the *yud*; Yitzchak and Rivkah, who represent the *hei iyala'ah*, the top *hei*; and Ya'akov and Leah, who represent the *vav*. Thus we see how the cave and those buried in it represent the letters of the *sheim Havayah*.

As we mentioned, there are three other ways of filling out the Name of Being, *milu'ei Havayah*: they are עַבּ, *ab*, which is seventy two; סג, *sag*, which is sixty three; and מַה, *mah*, which is forty five. When all these are combined, the *gematria* is the same as that of הַמַּכְפִּילָה. The field in which the doubled cave

was located is a symbol of *Malchus*, kingship, the holiness that receives. The *miluy ben*, *Malchus*, receives from the three other letters of *Havayah*, from the three other *miluyim*! There is a great length to talk about this.

Torah Depth

Let us now look at another illustration of the tremendous depths contained within the Torah. The *Zohar* find great depths in *pasuk* 10:19 in *Devarim*: "*Ve'ahavtem es hageir ki geirim heyisem be'erezt Mitzrayim*", "And You should love the convert, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt". At first glance, the ending of the verse is hard to understand. Shouldn't we love the convert simply because *Hashem* told us to? Or perhaps out of appreciation for the fact that the convert joined us in spite of the great difficulties such a move entailed? What does Egypt have to do with anything?

In fact, it seems like the Torah is addressing itself with this statement to a person who is struggling to overcome his evil urge. This person does not feel like loving the *geir*. So the Torah encourages this person to do the right thing by reminding him that he himself was once a stranger, and he knows how important it is to show love to someone in a similar situation. However, this is puzzling, because in other areas, the Torah does not give us guidance about how to overcome the evil urge. For example, the Torah simply tells us not to steal. It doesn't explain that this is because stealing will lead to a societal breakdown. So why here does the Torah give us this type of remonstrance? Why tell us "*ve'atem yeda'tem es nefesh hageir*", "for you knew the soul of the stranger" (*Shemos* 23:9)?

The *Zohar* teaches that great depth is present here. When *tzadikim* in Gan Eden are *meyached yichudim*, meditating on unifications, they are forming the *nefesh hageir*, the soul of the convert, and when they are forming the *nefesh hageir*, they are *mislabeish*, clothed, in the *nefesh hageir*. This is the meaning of the words "*ve'atem yeda'tem es nefesh hageir*", you know this soul--for you were *meyached* and actually created this *nefesh hageir*. Since you created the *nefesh hageir*, you must love him. The addition of "*ki geirim heyisem be'erezt Mitzrayim*", "for you were strangers in the land of Egypt", is actually included as a "throw away thought" for those who do not grasp the inner meaning of the verse, and so will relate to the simple meaning of the verse, which enjoins you to love converts since you yourself identify with their pain. This is a

fascinating *Zohar* which tells us that Torah is permeated with hints and difficulties that enable us to comprehend all sorts of secrets. We see a similar phenomenon in the Talmud often, when we read passages that we would never think to say on our own, because they are rooted in *sod*, secret. We need to seek this deeper awareness of Torah!

As we have demonstrated, the inner Torah provides us with an entirely new perspective on the Machpeilah Cave, as well as other topics. *Bochurim*, teenage Torah students, should primarily focus on mastering the revealed Torah. Yet there will come times when it is appropriate to learn things like the *Bnei Yissaschar*,⁶⁸ the *Tanya*, and *Likutei Torah*,⁶⁹ in order to develop an entirely new perspective on life and Judaism. We have to desire to see and taste at least a little bit of the depth of Torah. Even if one does not reach the highest level, as long as he aspires to penetrate the depth of Torah and find some of its light, he will recognize the silliness and futility of the physical world and its drives toward honor and wealth.

There was a time when this type of study was not as needed as it is today. Different generations are characterized by different *avodos*, labors. For example, some generations were charged with the task of toiling with *sigufim*, physical afflictions, and they devoted themselves to extensive purifying of the body. Today, however, we are accustomed to great physical comfort. Our bodies are not capable of such *sigufim*! *Tzadikim* have revealed that we should not do those types of things to our bodies, as our generation is not on that level. Certainly we should not seek out the satisfaction of our *ta'avos*, urges, but neither should we lacerate our bodies.

In our generation, it is plain to see that there has been an explosive revelation of vast numbers of books. This phenomenon points to the particular focus that is appropriate for our generation. Today, our success lies in extensive Torah study!

The evil urge is quick to challenge us in this vital area. And so he says to us, "Something deep? This is *Chabad*! You should follow the old tradition!"

68. A classic work of chassidic thought about the holidays and months authored by Rav Tzvi Elimelech of Dinov, 1783-1841, 5543-5601, one of the great *tzadikim* who lived in Poland and whose descendants created the Munkatch dynasty.

69. A work by the author of *Tanya* on the sections of the Torah.

But let's be consistent over here. If we are really so devoted to the old *mesorah*, tradition, how about we get rid of the air conditioner? We aren't rushing to do that! We are a weak generation, and a weak generation has tremendous need for the inner Torah!

Even when sticking only to study of the revealed Torah, thank God, today each person has the opportunity to become a great *talmid chacham*. It is in fact a much more attainable goal than it was in the past. There is a great opportunity for growth through learning *chassidus*. We should embrace *chassidus*, for we must avail ourselves of the knowledge that can open for us the *Eitz HaChayim*! We must set aside time to study and ponder the inner light of Torah, and as our mind grows older, this knowledge will steadily become clearer.

Man must understand that the *Chochmah Elyonah* is the best possible approach toward fighting the evil urge, especially all the foolishness of the evil urge, who our sages teach is a *melech zakein ukesil*, an old, foolish king. The *Chofetz Chayim* said, "To be religious, *frum*, you need to be smart". The best weapon against the evil urge is the *Chochmah Elyonah*!

This is what is meant when we refer to the concept of the mind ruling over the heart: the wisdom of Torah can enable one to overcome the desires of heart. The mind is much stronger than all the inclinations of the heart! We need to reveal this wisdom, this *Chochmah*! The heart is the seat of emotion, and it is poised in the middle between the two ventricles. The *chalal hayemini*, the right ventricle, is good, and the *chalal sem'ali*, the left ventricle, is not. The liver is mostly blood, and it is the source of those physical urges that are the opposite of the wisdom of Torah. We need to conquer the lower forces, and not allow the liver to conquer the mind, which would cause the mind to think terrible things. *Chochmah* could then become a slave to the *Nefesh habehemis*, and the *Nefesh habehemis* could then use *Chochmah* to permit matters that are *asur*, forbidden. Use *Chochmah* to overcome the *Nefesh habehemis*!⁷⁰

70. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch interpreted many *mitzvos* as a call to man to ensure that he not allow the instinctual *Nefesh habehemis* to rule over his mind, and that he assert the mastery of the mind over the instinct!

In this way Rav Hirsch interpreted the mitzvah of *pei'os*, the prohibition which enjoins the Jew from destroying the hairs that distinguish between the front and back of his head. The front of the head contains the cerebrum, the part of the brain responsible for human elements. The back of the head

When we learn a *parashah* we should be aware that there are truly great and deep lights embedded in its topics. Read the *Agra DeKallah*⁷¹ on *Parashas Chayei Sarah*, as it is a work that reveals some of these secrets. Thirst for these matters, work to comprehend them, and strive to be *mechadesh*, produce novel thoughts. If you do this, *Hashem* will help you grasp a great deal!

contains the cerebellum, the part of the brain that regulates the animal behavior of humans. The call of all *chukim* is to conquer our *Nefesh habehemis*. We must remember that we *can* rule over our instincts. "The hair at the temples is...A natural veiling which hides the view of the back of the head in the human countenance...the sanctifying of our lives lays on keeping vividly in our minds the existence of these two specifically different elements in man's nature...The hair down the temples is an admonition to a man to be a man" (*Horeb*, page 580).

He also interpreted the prohibition of destroying the corners of the beard with a razor in this light. "Like the relation of the back of the head to the front of the head, so is the relation of the lower jaw (with cheeks and chin) to the upper jaw (and the whole upper part of the human face). The upper jaw is devoted primarily to the intellectual activity of the senses, and in the act of eating--which stems from the animal element--it functions more passively. By contrast, the lower jaw--with the teeth, tongue, and masticatory muscles--is an active factor in eating and tasting...The beard covers those parts of the face whose primary activity is sensual. Thus, one who beholds the countenance of a man sees only the spiritual parts of his face...He is to show his worth and strength only in spiritual values...he is to subordinate all the sensual elements of his nature...". The law to keep the razor from the corners of the beard is a call to man "Not to forfeit his human dignity and mission by emphasizing the sensual aspects of his being. But, rather, to actualize his manly dignity through modesty and spiritual power" (Commentary to *Vayikra*, page 657).

He also interpreted the law of *sha'atnez*, the commandment not to wear threads of mixed wool and linen, in this light. Linen is from flax, a plant, while wool is from the sheep, an animal. Plants merely procreate and ingest food, while animals have the ability to think and plan. In animals, the animal element (perception and motion) serves the plant element! A human, however, must subordinate his plant-like element to his free will. Man is to rule over the lower life! "Man is like a pyramid pointing upward toward God, whereas the animal is like a closed circuit. In the animal, the animal and vegetative forces are closely intertwined". In man, his instinctual plant-like urges may not be intertwined with his animal-like ability to think. The law of *sha'atnez* is a reminder that unbridled plant-like passions can corrupt the thinking mind. A sharp separation must be maintained between the plant and the animal to remind man to control his plant-like elements, his lower instincts (*Commentary to Vayikra* 19:19).

Using these principles, Rav Hirsch also interpreted the law prohibiting the cooking and ingestion of milk and meat. Meat represents the animal element. Milk, which is the food of a child, represents the plant element. The prohibition against mixing these two items is a reminder to not allow the intermingling of lower life drives with higher ones; the lower must be ruled by the higher.

This principle is what underlies all forms of *tum'ah*. *Tum'ah* is when the animal part rules over the human. The rituals of *taharah* are reminders that the unbridled animal can be conquered; the human mind should rule the person! (See *Commentary to Bemidbar*, pages 424-442.)

71. A work from the author of the *Bnei Yissaschar*.

Holiness leaves an impression. In a place where sacrifice of self was displayed, Hashem's presence then appeared. His presence leaves an eternal mark. Lesson Twenty-Six delves deeply into the topic of roshem, impressions of holiness.

LESSON | 26 Holiness Leaves a Mark!⁷²

We have learned, that the *Tanya* defines a *beinoni* as one who never performs sins and never lets evil clothe one of the garments of the soul/personality. In the middle of Chapter Twelve he continues his discussion of the *beinoni*.

Nevertheless, such a person is not deemed a tzadik at all, because the superiority which the light of the divine soul possesses over the darkness and foolishness of the kelipah, exists only in the three garments, but does not extend to its very essence,

To essentially change the inner kelipah

For in the beinoni the essence and being of the animal soul from the kelipah in the left part remains entirely undislodged after prayer. For then the burning love of God is not in a revealed state in his heart, in the right part, but is only sensed in the realm of hidden love, that is the natural adoration in the Divine soul, as will be explained later. Therefore it is possible for the folly of the wicked fool to rise openly in the left part of his heart, creating a lust for all material things of this world, whether permitted or, God forbid, prohibited, as if he had not prayed at all.

ואעפ"כ אינו נקרא צדיק כלל מפני שיתרון הזה אשר לאור נפש האלהית על החושך וסכלות של הקליפה הנדחה ממילא אינו אלא בשלשה לבושי הנ"ל ולא במהותה ועצמותה

על מהותה ועצמותה של הקליפה כי מהותה ועצמותה של נפש הבהמית שמהקליפה שבחלל השמאלי לא נדחה כלל ממקומו בבינוני אחר התפלה שאין רשפי אש אהבת ה' בהתגלות לבו בחלל הימני כי אם תוכו רצוף אהבה מסותרת שהיא אהבה הטבעית שבנפש האלהית כמ"ש לקמן ואזי יכול להיות סכלות הכסיל הרע בהתגלו' לבו בחלל השמאלי להתאות תאוה לכל ענייני גשמיות עוה"ז בין בהיתר בין באיסור ח"ו כאלו לא התפלל כלל

72. The Rebbe returned to the theme of holy impressions in Lessons Fifty-Five and Sixty-Seven. There he discussed why the graves of the pious are optimal places for prayer.

<p>Nevertheless, in regard to a forbidden matter, it does not occur to him to actually violate the prohibition, God forbid, and it remains in the realm of sinful thoughts, "Which are yet more heinous than sin itself" (Yoma 29a), and which can be forceful enough to rise to his mind, to distract him from the Torah and Divine service,</p>	<p>אלא שבדבר איסור אינו עולה בדעתו לעשות האיסור בפועל ממש ח"ו אלא הרהורי עבירה הקשים מעבירה יכולים לפעול לעלות למוחו ולבלבלו מתורה ועבודה</p>
<p>as our Sages said, "There are three sins against which a man is daily not safeguarded: sinful thoughts, distraction in prayer", and so forth (Bava Basra 164b).</p>	<p>וכמארז"ל ג' עבירות אין אדם ניצול מהן בכל יום הרהור עבירה ועיון תפלה כו'</p>
<p>However, the impression [of prayer] on the intellect and the hidden [i.e., innate] fear and love of God in the right part [of the heart], enable one to prevail and triumph over this evil of passionate craving</p>	<p>רק שלזה מועיל הרשימו במוחין ויראת ה' ואהבתו המסותרת בחלל הימני להתגבר ולשלוט על הרע הזה המתאווה תאוה</p>

While the *beinoni's* inner-most core is not entirely pure, the impression from his prayer gives him the strength to ensure that the forces of evil do not take control in the cloaks of action, speech, or thought.

Holiness Leaves a Mark!

There is a principle that every *davar shebikedushah*, holy matter, leaves a mark.

Tenu'as Hamusar relates that the tzadik Rav Yosef Yozel Horowitz of Novorhdok taught that even though the depth of feeling one might experience while learning musar will inevitably dissipate, it is still valuable. Learning musar is a holy experience, and it leaves a mark. It is like a bolt of lightning that flashes in front of a traveler walking through a forest on a dark night. The lightening quickly disappears. However, it did light up the night briefly, and the traveler now knows the way to his destination!⁷³

When there is a *hashra'as haShechinah*, an appearance of the Divine presence, something of the experience always remains. This is the deeper

73. Volume 4, page 301.

meaning of the concept referred to in Torah as *yeti'as tzadik min ha'ir oseh roshem*, the exit of a *tzadik* from a city makes an impression. Not only is his absence felt, but even after he is gone, his impression remains, so in a sense he is always in the city. He was a *tzadik*, and so he leaves a lasting mark on the city! A matter of holiness always creates an eternal force.

It is told that a group of tzadikim once performed an experiment to determine if the pleasure they felt from Shabbos stemmed from serving God, or was merely a product of their imaginations. In the middle of the week they showered, immersed in the mikvah, ritual bath, dressed in Shabbos finery, recited Psalms, and then sat down for a "Shabbos" meal. Indeed, they felt the holiness of Shabbos. They were crushed! Clearly their elevated feelings were the product of their setting and imaginations and not true Divine service, for there is no mitzvah to celebrate Shabbos during the week!

They went to the Chozeh of Lublin and asked, "Has all our service been in vain? Are we in fact not approaching the Almighty, and not truly enjoying the mitzvah of Shabbos?" The Chozeh asked them if they wore the same clothes that they had worn on previous Shabbos days. They answered in the affirmative. Explained the Chozeh, "In your experiment, the clothing you wore created the incorrect feelings of Shabbos. Since in the past the Shabbos clothes had been used for the sake of Heaven, an impression of holiness was left on them. That impression aroused you to feel the sensation of an actual Shabbos".

There is a wide array of matters that are subject to the concept of permanent positive marks. In our chapter, the *Tanya* focuses specifically on prayer. One of the goals of prayer is that man should acquire a positive mark from the experience that will remain with him for the entire day. While prayer is called *chayei sha'ah*, momentary life, as we explained in Lesson Twenty-Five, one of the goals of prayer is to leave an impression that lasts for the whole day. This impression gives the person the strength to overcome the evil urge all day long.

Perhaps the holy marks left by heartfelt prayers explain the instructions of Rav Dov Ber of Mezeritch,⁷⁴ the successor of the Ba'al Shem Tov, in his ethical will to his son:

74. Rav Dov Ber passed away in 1772/5573. He was the leader of all *chassidim* after his teacher, the Ba'al

"You should only wear my holiday tallis which was a gift from my holy master and teacher the Besht, may his merit protect us, on Yom Kippur".

A few days after he wrote about the tallis he added a few more lines to his will.

"A cap for the head should be made from the piece of material that has been in my tallis and tefilin bag since the passing of our teacher and master, the Besht, o.b.m. This material is from his holy clothing. A hint to this is the verse, 'Bad kodesh yilbash', 'he should wear a holy material' (Vayikra 16:4)".⁷⁵

The clothing of the Besht, and especially his tallis, had marks of holiness from his prayers. That is why the tallis was only to be used on Yom Kippur, the holiest day, and from his clothing material a cap was to be made for the tzadik.

Ideally, man should reach a level of holiness through prayer that will leave a mark upon him throughout the remainder of the day, so that he will not drown in the ocean of evil desires that fill this world. The whole world is physical! It is so difficult to avoid falling prey to an entirely physical perspective. Even the air is filled with *chitzonim*, physicality and externalism. The Talmud in Tractate *Berachos* (6a) teaches, "It was taught in a *Baraisa*,⁷⁶ Abba Binyamin taught, 'Had the eye been granted permission to see (what fills the air) no creature would be able to stand (due to panic) from the plethora of destructive forces (it would see).'" Even science recognizes that the air is filled with tiny creatures-whether it calls them germs, radiation, pollution, or carcinogens. And today, devices transmit radio waves through the air, which deliver the profane seductions of radio, internet and television. These things cause great urges for evil and confusion. The air is literally packed with physicality and *yetzer hara* forces.

We live in a world filled with many individuals who suffer from mental unease. Anxiety, depression, and mental illness have become widespread. The

Shem Tov. He had many great men among his students. The author of the *Tanya* was one of his students. His Torah works include *Maggid Devarav LeYa'akov* and *Or Torah*.

75. *Tzavayas Tzadik*, pages 69-71.

76. *Baraisa* is the name of lessons from the Sages called *Tanna'im* (c. 200 B.C.E.-200 C.E.) that were not included in the six orders of *Mishnah*.

evil that permeates the air is causing these societal problems. The world is filled with impurity and it is impacting all of us negatively.

We were granted prayer as an institution that can counter these assaults. Through prayer with a community, great and holy air descends around us so that the prayer is not waylaid or blocked, and it can ascend to Heaven. This is one aspect of the concept of *tefilos Avos tiknum*, the patriarchs instituted the prayers--our ancestors drew down holy air that appears, whenever these prayers are recited, to enable man to pray correctly.

A vivid display of how heartfelt prayer can create protection and clear space from evil is found in the following testimony of Lithuanian Holocaust survivor, David Zaleznik:⁷⁷

"On Shabbos, July 29, 1944, the beadle of the community in Kovno, Kuvalsky, arrived in the forest together with his wife and three children. He came together with the two well-known Kovno geniuses, Rav Mordechai Pogremanski⁷⁸ and Rav Mordechai Zuckerman. Rav Mordechai Pogremanski first insisted that we not cook for him on the Shabbos the non-kosher meat we had. Secondly, he demanded that the women be separated into a separate bunker from the men. In this merit he promised that we would be quickly redeemed.

We were sitting together on the grass and hearing the miraculous story how Rav Mordechai and the group had evaded detection by the Nazis and escaped the ghetto. It was a story that the human mind could hardly grasp...

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77. David Zaleznik was a Holocaust survivor. He gave testimony of his experiences to Mr. Yisrael Kaplan, in Kovno, on December 27, 1946/ 4th of *Shevat* 5706. The testimony was first published in the book *Rabbi Mordechai Pogremanski* (pages 183-189). It seems that he was not an observant man. Despite his personal lapses, he recognized the great spiritual power and holiness of Rabbi Mordechai Pogremanski.
78. Rav Mordechai Pogremanski, 1904-1950/5664-5710, was one of the greatest Torah personalities among the righteous Lithuanian Jews in the early twentieth century. He grew up without much learning of Torah. After World War I, Rav Eliyahu Lopian discovered him in his hometown of Taurage, Lithuania and convinced him to leave his business activities and come to *yeshiva* in Kelm. He became an exceptional Torah giant, master of *musar* and personal holiness. He displayed enormous heights of faith during the horrors of the war. After the war he was a leader of the rescue efforts for the displaced persons. He also established Torah institutions after the war. When he passed away at the young age of forty-six, the Chazon Ish, in an unusual mark of respect, escorted him during the entire funeral procession. At the funeral, the Chazon Ish said, "We have seen people who always had words of Torah on their lips. However, only Rav Mordechai was the person whose mind never stopped thinking deeply about Torah. There wasn't a second in which he was not immersed in Torah".

Suddenly we heard the sounds of armed Germans approaching. Our commanding officer ordered us all down to the bunker to hide. At such a stressful and harried time it was impossible for the men and women to separate. We all headed down into one hiding area. Rav Mordechai understood and asked that a barrier, mechitzah, be set up between the men and women.

I had a complaint to Rav Mordechai. I felt deceived. He had promised that if we did not eat the non-kosher food the redemption would arrive, and meanwhile the opposite had occurred.

He answered me, 'Reb David, have no worry. If God wants, He will turn armored Germans into our friends.' This is what happened. Shortly after the rush down into the bunker, our commander came down and reported that these German soldiers were fleeing the battles at the front, they were looking to hide in the forest with other deserters and by chance had ended up meeting our group.

We immediately took their weapons...

Until this point our arsenal was all of several thick sticks and three shovels. When the German soldiers came we received several rifles and hundreds of bullets. This encouraged us, for now we felt that even if we would be exposed, we would be able to put up a fight and survive for a bit.

The most powerful weapon we had was the Tehillim that Rav Mordechai was constantly reciting. Those words of Psalms put us completely at ease. His Tehillim protected us".

The Importance of Praying in the Same Spot

It is so important to have a *makom kavu'a*, set place, for prayer. Because prayers are holy and leave an impression, when a person prays in the place where he has prayed previously, all the good *rishumim*, forces, from the earlier prayers affect the current prayer and enable it to ascend to the highest of levels. An *avir kadosh*, a holy air, has been created from the *roshem*, impression, that has accumulated from all the *tefilos* recited in that place. Since evil thoughts are not matters of holiness, they don't leave as strong a mark, but prayers leave lasting marks, to the extent that a place that has been saturated with prayer is imbued with a different type of air, and that air enables prayers to break through all barriers.

The Talmud in Tractate *Berachos* (6b) encourages everyone to establish a set place for prayer. "Rav Chelbo⁷⁹ taught in the name of Rav Huna,⁸⁰ anyone who establishes a set place for prayer, the God of Avraham will be a help for him. And when he passes from this world they tell him, 'Where is the *anav*, humble one? Where is the *chassid*, pious one? He was one of the disciples of the patriarch Avraham!'" Why only when a person passes away is he deserving of this compliment? Why don't the angels compliment him during his lifetime?

The answer is that physical air creates a barrier between this world and the next. This makes it difficult for the soul to ascend from this world to the next. When the time comes for someone to leave this world, an angel comes to lead the soul to its place in Heaven. The climb is difficult, as there are many *chitzonim*, external forces, blocking the ascent of the soul. There are 390 heavens that separate the earthly from the Heavenly, and each one acts as a barrier. This is reflected in the fact that the numeric value of the word שמים, *shamayim*, is 390. Similarly, that is the reason that a prayer leader is called a *shaliach tzibur*, a term whose first letters are *shin tzadi*, ש"צ (390)--for the prayer leader must guide the prayers of his flock past the 390 barriers. By encompassing the entire community, he can break through all the physical barriers that prevent souls from ascending.

An individual who has an established place for prayer is praiseworthy because he has created his own channel. He has created purified space, and this channel becomes the path for his soul to ascend heavenward, just as it

79. Rav Chelbo was from the third generation of *Amora'im*. It appears that while he was initially in Babylon as a close disciple of Rav Huna, later in life he moved to the land of Israel. It seems that his main student was Rav Berachya, who frequently transmitted lessons in his name. It also appears that he was very poor. One of his famous lessons in *aggadah* is in Tractate *Bava Metzi'a*, where he states, "One should always take care to display honor to one's wife, for blessings are found in a home only for the sake of one's wife".

80. Rav Huna was the greatest sage during the second generation of *Amora'im*. He was a student of Rav. He was also a student of Shmuel, and he was the teacher of Rabba and Rav Yosef. After the passing of his teachers Rav and Shmuel, Rav Huna served as the *yeshiva* head in a suburb of Sura. When he would teach, thirteen *Amora'im* surrounded him to explain his words to the rest of the students. On a regular day, not a special gathering, eight hundred students would come to learn from Rav Huna. He passed away suddenly in the year 297 when he was over eighty years old. Rav Abba eulogized him by stating that Rav Huna was deserving of having the Divine presence rest on him and becoming a prophet, and only the fact that he lived in Babylon prevented that from happening.

served as the holy air that carried his prayers high. He has cleared a *derech Hashem*, a Godly path, that is inhabited by angels and not *chitzonim*, external forces. When such a person passes away, the angels say, "*Hei anav, hei chassid, mitalmidav shel Avraham Avinu*", "Where is the pious one? Where is the humble one? He was one of the disciples of the patriarch Avraham". This person is a student of Avraham who also cleared air for holiness to ascend. עניו, *anav* (136) + חסיד , *chassid* (82)= אויר *avir* (217) with the *kollel* (another one).⁸¹ By establishing a set place for prayers, he is purifying the area to enable prayers and souls to ascend without being stopped by the external angels and forces.

The book Mareh Hadeshe is a biography of Rav Shmuel Borenstein, the author of Shem Mishmuel, that was written by his son. Perhaps the following practices of the Shem Mishmuel were based on this concept of holy impressions:

*"Even though there were many rooms in his residence, he spent most of his life in one room. Here he would meet those who appealed to him. In this room he would learn and write. He slept there and ate there, alone. His meals would consist of one average, tasteless, food item, every day with no change. He would eat in silence, slowly. Even the seder on Passover night would be in that room alone. (The rebbetzin, his wife, his daughters, and the other women would have a separate seder in a room nearby with an open door between them)."*⁸²

Perhaps the reason for this practice is related to the concept of having a set place for prayer. In this room he prayed, helped fellow Jews, and learned. These actions created an impression of holiness. To gain strength from the impression, he performed the rest of his service in this place.

*At the end of his life, the Shem Mishmuel moved to Otvotzk, where he passed away. However, he was returned to Sochatshov, and the funeral was conducted while his body was set down on the floor of the room where he had regularly prayed, created clear space, and served Hashem so mightily.*⁸³

Every *davar shebikedushah*, holy matter, leaves a mark!

81. In *gematria* one can always add one to the total, for *Hashem* completes the sum.

82. Page 211, note 19.

83. Page 265.

In the work Aleinu Leshabeiach a story is told about Rav Itzele of Volozhin.⁸⁴ He was once walking in the forest when he heard cries. Investigating, he found a Jewish soldier, who had been forcibly conscripted at a young age into the Czar's army, praying and sobbing. Rav Itzele said, "The place where those tears fell will yet house a yeshiva and house of study". After all, Rav Itzele recognized that a heartfelt prayer creates an impression of holiness. That impression has a force--it attracts a yeshiva to the spot!⁸⁵

Daily Holy Marks

Ideally, *tefilin* should be worn all day, as they are the manifestation of the lasting impression created by *tefilas Shacharis*, the morning prayer. Wearing *tefilin* on the head the entire day symbolizes leaving the *moach*, level of intellect, that one received through prayer on the head all day. At night there is *histalkus hamochin*, intellects leave, and there is hardly any *roshem* left, which is why it is not the appropriate time to wear *tefilin*.

In fact, a tiny bit of the impression of holiness does remain even at night. Delicate souls appreciate this. This is why the *Ari* teaches that there is almost no time to sleep: the three hours after *Ma'ariv* retain the *roshem* of *Ma'ariv*, so it is not a time for sleep. Shortly thereafter a person needs to recite the *tikun chatzos*, midnight prayers. (During the day sleep is also not appropriate, because the daylight hours retain a lasting impression from the morning prayers, and if one sleeps the *chitzonim* can grab the *Neshamah*). Still, even though there is minimal *roshem* at night, *tefilin* are not worn then. The main *roshem* of prayers is during the day, and this is represented by the *tefilin*. If one cannot wear *tefilin* all day long, he should nevertheless remember that the impression and impact of *Shacharis* is supposed to stay with him for the duration of the day.

In the *hakdamah*, introduction, to the work *Eglei Tal*, the author, Rav Avraham Borenstein,⁸⁶ quotes his father, who explained the first *mishnah* of

84. The son of Rav Chaim of Volozhin. Rav Chaim was the founder of the first modern *yeshiva*. After his passing, his son, Rav Itzele, became the head of the *yeshiva*.

85. *Parashas Vayishlach*, page 518.

86. Rav Avraham Borenstein, 1839-1910, 5599-5670, was one of the greatest talmudists, halachic experts, and chassidic leaders of his time. His father, Rav Zev Nachum Borenstein, was a prominent

Shas using the principle of lasting impressions. The *mishnah* in question teaches that we read the *Shema* at night, at the time when the *kohanim*, priests, have become pure and can eat *terumah*. The *Eglei Tal's* father explained that we do not read *Shema* in the afternoon, since the *roshem* from the morning service is still strong; however, at night the *roshem* from the morning is gone, which is why it then becomes time to read the *Shema* again. This is also why only at night can the *kohen tamei*, impure priest, eat *terumah*. Even though the *kohen* went to the *mikvah* during the day, which purified him, since he was *tamei* earlier in the day, a *roshem* of that *tum'ah* remains. Only at night, when the *roshem* of the *tumah* is finally gone, is he allowed to eat *terumah*. The *mishnah* linked these two laws for they both deal with the concept of *roshem*.

The holiness of the land of Israel, and that of the *Kosel Hama'aravi*, the Western Wall, persist even though the Temple has been destroyed: it is the holiness of a *roshem*.⁸⁷ The *Shechinah* has left the land of Israel, but holiness

rabbi and Talmudist who authored the work *Agudas Eizov*. Rav Avraham was the son-in-law of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern, the Kotzker Rebbe, who was his Rebbe and the Rebbe of his father. Rav Avraham started the Sochatshov *chassidus*. He authored the work *Eglei Tal*, which is a classic work on the laws of *Shabbos*. He also authored *Avnei Neizeir*, a collection of his responses to Halachic queries that he received from all over the world.

87. The Rebbe once suggested that the origins of the Temple sanctity stemmed from a *roshem*. The Temple's location was the spot where Avraham *Avinu* performed the *akeidah*, binding of Yitzchak. For Avraham to bind his beloved son to the altar and lift the knife to slaughter him before *Hashem*, he had to swear with every fiber of his being to do *Hashem's* will. That commitment left an eternal mark. All later sacrifices and holiness that took place there are based on the impression of that initial devotion of Avraham, and help bring that *roshem* to full expression and life. When our father Ya'akov slept on the Temple Mount, he dreamed of the holiness of the place, and then swore to be loyal to *Hashem*. He realized that the holiness there was due to the impression of Avraham's heartfelt oath and commitment, and so he was moved also to swear and commit himself fully to Divine service. רושם, *roshem*, contains the same Hebrew letters as the word שומר, *shomeir*, protector. Our shield and protection is the impression of the devotion of the patriarchs!

See also *Pachad Yitzchak, Rosh Hashanah, Ma'amar* 20. There Rav Hutner teaches that the binding of Yitzchak was a lesson in *roshem* dynamics. Avraham wanted to offer Yitzchak, but ultimately *Hashem* told him not to. However, his willingness to do so remains as a *roshem* of holiness. The offering of the ram instead of Yitzchak brought the *roshem* of Avraham's holy will back to full life. That is why our Sages teach that Yitzchak's ash, not the ash of the ram, is before the throne of glory! The very essence of the *shofar*, which comes from a ram to remind us of the *akeidah*, is that it has the power to bring impressions of holiness back to vibrant life. This is why the *shofar* sound at Sinai was an ever-increasing blast. The role of the *shofar* is to take a low sound, an impression of holiness,

can never leave entirely; the nature of the holiness of the Western Wall, and in fact the entire land of Israel, is that of *roshem*.

On a deeper level, every holy item of this world has within it the ten *Sefiros*, the *roshem* that remains is from the *bechinas Malchus*.⁸⁸ One might even say the impression is from the *Malchus deMalchus* part of a holy matter; nevertheless it is a *Malchus* part that leaves a lasting residue.⁸⁹

and amplify it, bring it to full life. Similarly, the first set of tablets was shattered, becoming merely a *roshem*. Our Sages who forget their learning are compared to broken tablets, for they too only have a *roshem* from their holy Torah knowledge. Each generation forgets the learning of the earlier generation. Each generation has a mere *roshem* of the level of its parents. As we progress through history there are so many broken tablets, the mere impressions left from the earlier generations. *Mashiach* will arrive with a great *shofar*, for he will bring all those impressions to full life. He will restore all the forgotten Torah. He will make from all the broken tablets complete stones!

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, o.b.m., in his work *Sichos Musar*, first of *Lech Lecha* 5732, also expounded on the concept of impressions. The Talmud (*Yoma* 38a) teaches that a man named Nikanor sought to bring doors from Egypt to Jerusalem for the Temple. The doors were large, made out of copper, and very heavy. The sea was whipped into a storm and the boat was in danger of sinking, so the other passengers took one of the doors and threw it into the sea. The boat was still not secure. They wanted to throw the second door overboard. Nikanor stood and hugged the door and demanded, "If you throw it overboard, throw me with it". The sea immediately became peaceful. But Nikanor was pained over the loss of one of the doors. When they arrived in Acre a miracle occurred, and the door washed up from the sea. This is why even though eventually the entire Temple was plated in gold, the doors of Nikanor were left crafted of copper to commemorate the miracles that had occurred. The doors had an impression of holiness. Nikanor fully sacrificed any sense of self or existence for the sake of the doors, and this filled the doors with sanctity; as a result, they attained miraculous qualities. The *Yalkut Shmuel*, *Remez* 139, teaches that the prophet Samuel had a robe his mother had knitted for him. She gave it to him as a baby. As he grew it miraculously grew with him. How can mere wool miraculously grow? Samuel's mother was Chanah. She prayed for Samuel from the depths of her soul. She displayed enormous sacrifice of self for the sake of her child. She was *moser nefesh*. All of that sacrifice was then invested into the robe. A *roshem* of holiness was in the robe. Due to the holy impression, the robe miraculously expanded as Samuel aged. In light of this theme, Rav Shmuelevitz explained why it was so hard for Noach to build more than one ark. The ark Noach built had to have a mighty holy impression. He had to invest one hundred and twenty years of *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice, in order to imbue it with the sanctity that would enable it to miraculously save the world, and as a result he could not make more than one ark.

88. See Lesson Seven for a greater description of *Malchus*.

89. We have learnt that *Malchus* is synonymous with *bittul*, negation, and humility. The *Shem Mishmuel* in his comments to *Parashas Chukas* explains the sin of *Mei Merivah*, where Moshe hit the rock instead of speaking to it, in this vein. The rock Moshe was to talk to had in the past produced water. That water ceased flowing with the passing of Miriam. This time, Moshe only had to speak to the rock, because there was a *roshem* left from the earlier time it had been turned into a fountain. The reason why there was a *roshem* was because Moshe had earlier performed the act of getting water

The Original Moon Is the Source for Impressions of Holiness

There are deep meanings attached to the moon. The moon represents the attribute of *Malchus*, kingship. Thus we find that during the blessing of the new moon at the beginning of the month, we mention King David, the epitome of *Malchus*.

The moon is also the source for the concept of holy impressions that last. Initially the Almighty created two equally great lights—the sun and the moon. Later, *Hashem* instructed the moon to limit itself, and the full measure of the light of the moon departed, leaving behind a smaller moon. However, a *roshem* of the earlier level remained. From this instance of a lasting impression the concept of holy impressions entered the world.

Let us understand this idea in a deeper way. How is it possible that the moon was ever equal to the sun? "Equal" means the same. But the nature of the moon is that of a receiver of light, and the sun is a light source. These are two different entities, so how could they ever have been equal?

The moon symbolizes the world as a whole. The moon represents all created beings, for a created being is a recipient of life from God; he does not generate his own life. Only God is the ultimate cause. God is called *ilas kol ha'ilos*, the Cause of all causes. His life does not stem from any other source. An *or*, light, is the *hashpa'ah*, emanation from God, and this *or* is transmitted to the *keli*, vessel, which is the *nivra*, created being, that receives this bounty.

from the rock in a state of complete *bittul*. He had negated himself to the point where he felt acutely that it was all *Hashem's* doing; when it is *Hashem's* doing an impression remains, and the rock attained the halachic status of a *tashmish kedushah*, a holy utensil. A holy utensil retains a lasting mark. However, Moshe did not believe in himself. He was sure that when he had last impacted the rock, it had not been with complete negation of self—he was sure he had some ego feelings. As a result, he felt that the rock was a *tashmish mitzvah*, a *mitzvah* utensil, where once the *mitzvah* is done there is no lasting *roshem*, and therefore he made the mistake of thinking he had to hit the rock, and that mere words would not suffice to produce water.

In his commentary to *Parashas Va'eira*, *Shem Mishmuel* taught, "Even the body is a *tashmish kedushah*, it is the vessel of the soul. It is a vessel to the piece of the Divine within. Utensils of holiness must be buried, for even after their active use an impression of holiness still resides within them. A human body is therefore to be buried for it is a *tashmish kedushah*, even after the soul leaves, the impression of holiness remains. This is fully true only for a man who is *battel*, annuls himself, to holiness. Then an impression is left. If a person refuses to bow during the thanksgiving prayer, that indicates he refuses to subdue himself and acknowledge God. Then he is not a utensil for holiness!" (page 94).

Thus a light is the opposite of a vessel, just as the sun is opposite to the moon. So we remain with the same question--how could the original vessels, represented by the moon, have been the same as lights, represented by the sun?

The answer is that a correct and perfect vessel knows intrinsically that on its own it is absolutely nothing--it is totally nullified to the light. The ideal created creature is totally *battel*, annulled, before *Hashem*. Therefore, it is actually the same as the source, for since it annuls itself, it is as if it is gone, and it simply displays the light of the source.

Let us use the example of a wise man to illustrate this concept. A wise man who is a perfect vessel for the light of God's wisdom knows that he has nothing on his own, and that God is giving him wisdom. Since he does not view his wisdom as his own, the wisdom does not change him at all! His ego is unaltered by the acquisition of wisdom, since he so clearly sees it as a thing apart from himself. Just as before it entered him, it was clear that it was God's wisdom, so too now he remains certain that it is all the wisdom of God! He views himself like a clear window pane that does not in any way alter the light that passes through it. This is an ideal vessel--someone who is totally negated--and who therefore channels the source as if there were no vessel.

This ideal level was the level that the creation was at before the minimization of the moon. This was why the moon and the sun produced the same light; the moon so nullified itself that the sun's light completely shone through it!

The ideal world was one where its created beings had no ego; they were fully submissive vessels, and therefore the light was not negatively impacted at all. The moon was identical to the sun when the moon was fully *battel* to the sun, so that the light of the sun could shine right through it!

Moshe *Rabbeinu* resembled the moon before it was reduced. He was entirely *battel*, and that is why he saw prophetic messages through a clear window with no barrier whatsoever! The *roshei teivos*, first letters, of the phrase *shenei me'oros hagedolim*, שני מאורות הגדולים, two great lights, spell Moshe, משה. *Chazal* tell us that Moshe's level was *or halevanah ke'or hachamah*, the light of the moon equal to the light of the sun, which is initially hard to understand--created beings are not normally on such a high level. However, we can understand this through the idea of the *roshem* of past holiness. The reason God created two *me'oros hagedolim* even though that

state would not last was so that a *roshem* of this concept would exist. The *roshem*, the residual holy atmosphere, of these two great lights remains even after the moon was diminished, and this *roshem* provides hope and opens the possibility for man to re-arouse the world and atmosphere of *shenei hame'oros hagedolim*. That is what Moshe *Rabbeinu* was able to do.

Sometimes *Hashem* will allow a person to attain a high level of spiritual feeling for a period of time. Later, he might fall from his spiritual perch. He might feel despondent that he is no longer spiritually inspired. If this happens to you, do not feel terrible! Any level a person has reached leaves a *roshem*, and a person must work to reach that level again. He must remember that it is possible to reach that level again! We see this with Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who succeeded in breathing new life into the *roshem* of *shenei me'oros hagedolim*.⁹⁰

The Nature of Rabbi Akiva

Like the moon, the sage Rabbi Akiva is an illustration of the concept of *roshem*. When his skin was cruelly flayed from his frame, the soul of Moshe *Rabbeinu* protested with the question, "*Zu Torah vezu secharah?*" "Is this Torah and its reward?" *Hashem's* response was, "*kach alah bemachshavah*", "So it arose in My thought" (*Menachos* 29b). The commentators explain that the *machshavah* here refers to God's original intention of creating the world with *omek midas hadin*, the depth of Divine judgment, that punishes severely for the slightest infraction.

The Gaon of Vilna and other commentators point out that in the very beginning of his commentary to the Bible, Rashi states, "*Shebetchilah alah bemachshavah livroso bemidas hadin. Ra'ah she'ein ha'olam miskayeim, hikdim midas rachamim veshitfah lemidas hadin*". This means, "Initially it arose in His

90. When the Rebbe gave an introductory talk for the month of *Elul*, 5763, he seemed to link the concept of *roshem* to our ancestor Yosef. Yosef passed away and was initially interred in the Nile. Yet he asked that his bones be brought up and buried in Israel. The bones contain the *kista dichiyusa*, the minimal life that remains even after the soul has left. This is the *roshem* of the soul. Out of this minimal spark of life, there can be a full restoration of life, when this spark is inspired back to full form. The Red Sea saw the remains of Yosef and split. It saw the impression of holiness that always remains, and that impression forced it to split! The Jewish nation then sang a song which mentioned the revival of the dead. One of the Biblical sources for *techiyas hameisim* is the Song of the Sea. For when one appreciates that a remnant of holiness stays, has power, and can someday return to its full form, one sings a great song, the song of the revival of the dead!

thought to create the world with the attribute of justice. When He saw that it would not survive, He first added to it the attribute of mercy". It was this original thought to create a world of strict justice that God was invoking when he silenced the protests of the angels. *Hashem* reminded the angels of the depths of judgment. According to the depths of justice even a slight infraction deserves the terrible punishment of iron combs tearing the skin off of one's body. Because *alah bimachshavah livroso bemidas hadin*-initially God's intent was a world of strict justice-there remains a *roshem* of a world of absolute strict judgment, even after the Almighty added the attribute of mercy. Throughout his entire life, Rabbi Akiva sought to reach a level of living in that world of *omek hadin*! The blessings that come to the world through the *mitzvos* performed in a world of very strict standards, *omek hadin*, are most impressive. They create an entirely different world. If the *hashpa'ah*, Divine flow of blessing, that comes to the world is totally deserved and is appropriate according to the deep standards of *omek hadin*, then it is the best type of *hashpa'ah* that can come to the world. Rabbi Akiva strove his whole life to reach this exacting ideal, and it was under this exacting ideal that he left this world. The reason this ideal exists is because its *roshem*, stemming from God's original intention, always exists!

Rabbi Akiva was the leading sage of the Oral Torah. His soul was the root of *Torah shebe'al peh*, the Oral Torah. All the *stimsa'ah*, unattributed Tannaitic lessons, follow the opinion of Rabbi Akiva. The *gematria* of *משנה*, *mishnah*, (395), is equal to that of *רבי עקיבא* Rabbi Akiva (395). An unattributed law in a *mishnah* can only be called the law of a *mishnah*. *Mishnah* equals Rabbi Akiva to teach that each such law is really the opinion of Rabbi Akiva.

A Talmudic passage about King David sheds light on this aspect of Rabbi Akiva. In *Sefer Shmuel*, King David asks, "*Mi yashkeini mayim mibor Beis Lechem*", "Who will give me waters from the well in Bethlehem?" (*Shmuel* II 23:15). The Talmud (*Bava Kama* 60b-61a) suggests a number of different possibilities as to what David was asking, and then mentions that David had a tradition that if one risks his life for words of Torah, the Torah is not quoted in his name. Finally the Talmud closes its discussion by explaining the words, "*vayasech osam laHashem*", "He poured them out to God", as "*de'amrinhu mishmei digemara*", "he quoted these laws without attributing them to a particular sage". Rather than attributing them to anyone, he presented them as the tradition.

The meaning of this discussion is that if someone is *moser nefesh*, and gives his life for *Hashem*, then the Torah is not his Torah; rather, it is the Torah of *Hashem*, and so we refer to that Torah as *Torah stimsa'ah*, unattributed Torah. Rabbi Akiva *stimsa'ah*--his name is not mentioned, for he gave his name up for the Torah and God. After the defeat of Bar Kochba, the Romans decreed that anyone who taught Torah publicly would be executed. Rabbi Akiva gave away his life and continued to disseminate Torah to the masses. Rabbi Akiva was truly *moser nefesh*, and because he did not think of himself at all, his Torah was designated *stimsa'ah*--it is the Torah of the *Ribono Shel Olam!* Rabbi Akiva was a perfect vessel who negated himself fully, and that is why his name was left out. His Torah was the unaltered Torah of *Hashem*. Rabbi Akiva merited to connect to the impression left from the two great lights. In the world with two great lights, all created beings were fully annulled to their Creator. He too was fully annulled to *Hashem*.

Sacrifice of Self and Elevating the Physical

Moshe *Rabbeinu* is the paradigm of this concept. He was *moser nefesh* entirely in his appeal for mercy after the sin of the golden calf, telling *Hashem*, "If You do not forgive the sin of the golden calf", then, "*mecheini na misifrecha asher kasavta*", "erase me please from the book You have written" (*Shemos* 32:32).

During the sin of the golden calf, the Almighty told Moshe that He intended to wipe out the Jews, and instead of the Jews being descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov; "*Ve'e'eseh osecha legoy gadol*", "And I shall make you into a great nation" (*Shemos* 32:10). The *Ari* explains that Avraham and the other patriarchs are our biological fathers. We have a physical bond with them. They brought the Divine into the physical world. Moshe is our Torah teacher. We have a spiritual bond with him. He led us in the desert, a place that normal physical beings cannot settle. He was a man of the spiritual. It is hard to successfully bring the Divine into the physical world. It is easier to stay pure in a completely spiritual setting. When the Jewish nation sinned with the golden calf the Almighty told Moshe that he would make a nation out of Moshe, for He intended to make a people who would be other-worldly like Moshe. It would be a nation comfortable with spiritual food like manna and with life in a desert. The greatest ideal is not to avoid the physical. The aspiration we are to have is to transform the physical. The Almighty desires a residence in the lowest of realms.

Moshe was *moser nefesh* for the *Ribono Shel Olam*. He gave himself away to preserve a physical nation that would transform the physical. He told the Almighty, "*Ve'atah im tisa chatasam ve'im ayin mecheini na misifrecha asher kasavta*", "And now if you will forgive their sin [all will be well], and if you will not [forgive them], erase me please from the book that You have written" (*Shemos* 32:32).

Like Moshe *Rabbeinu*, Rabbi Akiva was a soul of total *mesirus nefesh*. His soul stemmed from the soul of Eisav. Eisav was the *bechor be'Asiyah*, firstborn in the realm of action. He had advantages in the area of accomplishments. Rabbi Akiva had the ability to remove sparks from Eisav. To be able to do that, he needed *mesirus nefesh*. He needed to give himself over entirely so that his Torah should in fact be the Torah of the *Ribono Shel Olam*.

At the time of blessing Ya'akov instead of Eisav, Yitzchak smelled *reiach begadav*, the smell of the garments, of the *bigdei Ya'akov*, the clothing that Ya'akov wore in order to impersonate Eisav. He admired the smell, because he was able to smell the *mesirus nefesh* that was taken from the forces of Eisav. This *mesirus nefesh* is the positive aspect of Eisav--this is Rabbi Akiva, a soul from Eisav. In *gematria* the words for smell of the Garden of Eden, *reiach Gan Eden*, ריח גן עדן, is the same as the words Rabbi Akiva, רבי עקיבא (395). This is also the *gematria* of the words for Eisav's garments--*bigdei Eisav* בגדי עשו. Ya'akov wore the garments of Eisav as a display of sacrifice to acquire the soul of Rabbi Akiva, and the sacrifice had the sweet smell of Eden.

It is these souls that Yitzchak had truly desired to bless. When Ya'akov said, "I am Eisav your firstborn", he intended to make this point--that he was bringing with him souls that stemmed from the root of Eisav! Ya'akov came with tremendous *mesirus nefesh*. Our Sages explain that Ya'akov did not lie. When he spoke to his father he was saying, *anochi*--I am I, and Eisav *bechorecha*, Eisav is your firstborn. He was now I and not Ya'akov, for he was sacrificing himself. When he sacrificed his physical life he lost his name. He became like Moshe whose name is not mentioned in *Parashas Tetzaveh* and like Rabbi Akiva *stimsa'ah*. "I am I", not Ya'akov, because great sacrifice is being displayed, due to the fact that Eisav *bechorecha*, Eisav is your firstborn, the idea is the doer and the sparks of physical holy accomplishment are hidden in Eisav and they must be saved. Ya'akov risked a great deal when he acted as Eisav to get blessings. He was endangering his life in this world and the next in order to listen to the prophecy of his mother Rivkah, who told him to

impersonate Eisav in order to be blessed by Yitzchak. Yitzchak smelled this *mesirus nefesh*. Rashi notes that goats don't smell good, and that is the smell of Eisav. Yet when Ya'akov came in, he took the good from Eisav through his *mesirus nefesh*. The *mesirus nefesh* smelled like *Gan Eden*. *Gan Eden* is a place that is entirely *mesirus nefesh*. The essential pleasure of *Gan Eden* is that of total *mesirus nefesh*.

The following account, from Rav Yona Emanuel,⁹¹ about how righteous Jews displayed great sacrifice and studied Torah while under the brutal yoke of Nazi slave labor, might help illustrate the principle that sacrifice of self creates man's portion in Gan Eden:

"I learned very little Torah during the years of hiding and internment, but on occasion I was able to savor the sweet taste of Torah study, despite the horrific conditions under which we lived. In Westerbork and in Bergen-Belsen I hardly managed to learn at all. We worked from sunrise to sunset on Shabbos and holidays, so it was impossible to learn at these times. During our first few months in Bergen-Belsen we did not work on Sunday afternoons because the S.S. guards were off duty then. I utilized some of those rest hours to learn, even though it was very difficult to concentrate. In light of the terrible conditions in which we subsisted, I regarded every iota of Torah study as a major accomplishment.

There were some unique and extraordinary individuals who did manage to somehow learn Torah continuously in the camps. My uncle Naftali Abrahams, may Hashem avenge his blood, was one of them. He would learn alone, with his sons and with my brother Shmuel. I too merited to learn with him on some Sunday afternoons. My brother Elchanan, may Hashem avenge his blood, was another such individual-he devoted every spare minute he had to Torah study...

91. Rav Yona Emanuel was a German Orthodox Jew. He was exceptionally devoted to observing every detail of Jewish law. Born in Hamburg, Germany, the family fled to the Netherlands to escape the Nazis. Unfortunately, the Germans ended up conquering the Netherlands and deporting the Emanuel family to the Netherlands transit camp Westerbork and then to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. Rav Emanuel lost many members of his family in Bergen-Belsen. After the war he moved to the Holy Land and studied Torah from Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, o.b.m. He wrote a book about his family's wartime experiences and the exceptional devotion to Hashem that was displayed by the German Orthodox Jews in those terrible years, titled *Dignity to Survive*.

Father learned Chumash with Rashi's commentary during the short half-hour breaks. He sometimes dozed off as he held the book in his hands, but only for a brief moment.

It is difficult to convey the value of Torah study in such appalling conditions.

In reference to the passage from the Musaf service of Rosh Hashanah, "To revive with the year's dew those whose decree (to die) is sealed", Rav Yechiel of Paris (as quoted in Ma'aseh Oreg) said, 'When a person who is in the midst of learning Torah falls asleep over his book, the Holy One stores away the spittle that drips from his mouth and transforms it into the dew that will revive him in the end of days.'

If Rabbi Yechiel said this in reference to any Jew who falls asleep in the midst of his learning, then surely it can be applied to one who fell asleep while learning Torah in Bergen-Belsen".⁹²

A Jew once told me the following story: He had been in Soviet Russia. The Russian communists prohibited teaching Torah. There was a Jew there who had been secretly teaching Torah at night. This endeavor required great self-sacrifice and entailed much risk. Those whom the KGB arrested for teaching Torah would frequently be banished to slave labor in Siberia, and sometimes even executed. This man used to position children at the window who would warn him if the KGB was approaching. On one occasion, he was warned by the children, and the group fled in great haste. When he came to *shul* next, he was all sweaty from his flight. One might think the smell of sweat is unpleasant, yet the Rav said he smelled the smell of *Gan Eden!* *Mesirus nefesh* is the smell of *Gan Eden*.

Perhaps the objects of tzadikim have holiness due to the ideas of our lesson. Tzadikim sacrifice themselves fully for Hashem. As a result, there is a holy impression left in the objects that they use for mitzvot. The following story related by Rav Tzvi Hirsch Meisels, o.b.m., brings to life the themes of devotion for a mitzvah and the holy impression that is always found in an object of mitzvah of a tzadik.

92. *Dignity to Survive*, pages 194-195.

"I want to tell our generation about the miracle that I experienced during the last week before the end of the war.

My tallis was decorated around the top edge with an ornament, an atarah, from the holy giant of Sighet, author of Yitav Lev,⁹³ and which I received as a gift from my father-in-law⁹⁴. Of course it was very, very dear to me. When the murderers dragged me and my family members from our home to transport us to Auschwitz, I took the tallis with me. I felt certain that it would protect me; that so long as I wore it, it would guard me from all sorts of worldly dangers. Thus I yearned with all my heart to don this tallis during the days of destruction to escape the sword of the despicable murderers, may their names be forever blotted out.

At first I was forced to relinquish my tallis with its atarah in Auschwitz, as all our possessions and clothes were taken from us there. This distressed me tremendously. But when I arrived at the work camp I found out where the clothes and other possessions were stored. I managed to be assigned the job of sorting through the belongings and clothes that were sent to Nazi Germany, and during my work I found my tallis. With great difficulty I was able to smuggle it back to my barrack.

Due to the conditions in the camp under the evil kapos,⁹⁵ I had no way of wearing this big tallis even under my clothes. (In the camps the Nazis would give each prisoner a pair of striped pajamas as clothing. They did not allow the inmates to wear anything else. If they found an inmate wearing a coat, or another layer of clothing under their pajama shirt or pants, kapos or Nazis would torture the person terribly, frequently killing the unfortunate soul on the spot). Therefore I cut it down into what is known as tzitzis, or tallis katan, and I wore that under my clothes until a few days before our final liberation by the Americans. [Rabbi Meisels had been deported in the spring of 5704/1944 and was liberated on the 21st of Iyar 5705, May 4, 1945, in Braunshweig, Germany.

93. Rabbi Yekusiel Yehudah Teitelbaum, 1808-1883/5568-5646, was a great *tzadik* and chassidic Rebbe in Sighet, Romania. He authored the work *Yitav Lev*. He was a grandson of the author of the book *Yismach Moshe*, and the grandfather of the Satmar Rebbe, Rav Yoel Teitelbaum, o.b.m.

94. Rabbi Chaim Yaakov Teitelbaum.

95. Kapo was the name for a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp who was assigned by the S.S. guards to supervise forced labor or otherwise afflict a group of fellow prisoners. Many of the kapos were criminals whom the Nazis sent to the camps and then appointed to afflict the inmates under their control.

Thus, he risked his life,⁹⁶ daily, to wear tzitzis from the tzadik's tallis for almost an entire year].

It was very dangerous to wear even a small extra piece of clothing because we all wore the same prison uniform, and the extra layer visibly added bulk to my physical appearance. If I had been caught, I risked being beaten to death, God forbid.

Thus it happened once when I left the public bathroom. A guard stood there to make sure that no one took more than one garment. He had been a German communist and was punished for his 'sins' with life imprisonment, and now he was appointed to guard us. He noticed my thickened appearance due to my tzitzis, and commanded me to approach him so that he could inspect me. He touched my clothes and felt my tzitzis; he became very angry because he had never seen such a garment. When he asked me about it, I didn't want him to think that I stole it so I said that it was a 'Godly garment' that I had brought with me from home. He immediately started to rain murderous blows on my head and body, and commanded me to follow him to his room where he would 'teach me about God.'

As soon as I heard this ominous command, my hairs stood on end because everyone knew what this meant; certain death by brutal beating under his coarse hands. I had no choice but to follow the guard to his room, and there he started to beat me again, blows reflecting his anger and lethal intent, while he screamed at me. 'You pig, how dare you speak of a "Godly garment" when you see with your own eyes how your fellow Jews and family members are being killed with all sorts of cruel and brutal deaths. How can you still mention the Name of holy God and believe in Him and His leadership of the world?! How can you mention or imagine that there is a Master of the Universe? If He

96. As a footnote to Rav Meisels's account his son added the following: "To illustrate how wearing tzitzis entailed actual sacrifice of self and grave personal risk, I will relate what I heard from Rav Yitzchak Dana'eh about what happened to someone whom the Nazis found had tzitzis in the camp. This was his testimony:

'In the camp there was a Jew from Satmar whose name was Avraham Wolf Greenwald, may Hashem avenge his death, and he had a small pair of tzitzis... He once washed the pair and hung it outside the bunk to dry. Usually, that was not a dangerous thing to do, for the Germans usually did not enter the camp, they would only enter the camp when they needed to do something in the camp. But at this moment, an unfortunate occurrence happened. An S.S. man walked by. When he saw a Jew involved with tzitzis, he immediately shot him on the spot without even asking for an explanation or answer. May Hashem avenge his blood in front of our eyes!'"

exists, why doesn't He prevent the Nazis from wiping your people off the face of this earth with all sorts of tortures and sufferings that human beings have never endured before! But there is no ground for faith; it is the law of the jungle that prevails!

Meanwhile I lay on the ground, mute from despair and from the suffering I endured as a result of the beating--blood flowed from almost every part of my body. Then he told me to stand up by myself and give him an explanation. If it did not satisfy him, I would not leave his room alive.

I was in a terrible position; I knew that the brutal guard would kill me unless I was able to provide some kind of shrewd answer to quiet his murderous spirit. So I said to him, 'I will answer you with an allegory. Our situation can be compared to the patient of a famous professor, known all over the world for his skill in performing complex surgical procedures on dangerously ill patients. One day the professor is summoned to perform surgery on a great minister. He begins his surgery with a deep incision in the patient's body, cutting out various parts, as he sees fit.

And now suppose a shoemaker stands on the side, watching the professor at work. Since he doesn't understand a thing about the patient's disease and how to cure it, he is astonished at the professor's actions. All he sees is that the professor is tormenting the unfortunate invalid for no apparent reason. Not only does the man suffer from his illness, he is also forced to have his handsome body cut into pieces at the professor's hands. "I wouldn't do such a thing", thinks the simple shoemaker. "When I fix shoes, I don't cut up the leather in the finest and best areas!"

But of course, it is inconceivable that the professor should take the shoemaker's opinions into account; instead he must do what is necessary to assist the patient, no matter what. The shoemaker does not understand.

This allegory pertains to us, the patient, regarding the leadership of the Creator, may His Name be blessed, the great professor in the allegory. The truth is that we mortals cannot understand His leadership, and why He performs this painful incision on the best part of the Jewish nation. But we must be aware that although we are primitive beings of flesh and blood and cannot grasp or comprehend His actions, that does not diminish Him in any way, God forbid.'

After I explained the allegory at length, I added a small story that I heard from my father. 'My father used to quote the holy Rabbi of Yaroslav who never

had questions or doubts regarding God's conduct of the world and accepting everything that happens to him with love. The Rabbi said he was afraid that God would say to him, "If you do not understand My actions, why not come up to the Heavens, where I can show you how everything is truly for the good?" Since he was not yet ready to ascend to the Heavens, he decided not to question God's actions.' I turned to the guard and said to him, 'My advice to you is also not to ask too many questions of God, because perhaps then He will also call you to join Him in the next world.'

Thank God, my words found favor with the depraved kapo. With a smile on his face, he said, 'You are a clever Jew and are free to leave here in peace. From now on, you may come to my block for better food, in addition to the food you receive in the camp as an inmate.'

Thus I was saved, God be praised, from certain and cruel death. And I give thanks to Hashem, for He is good, and His mercy endures forever.⁹⁷

Rav Meisels had been in grave danger. Miraculously, he thought of a clever answer to respond to the sadistic guard who challenged his faith, and emerged from the encounter in a better situation, with a guard helping him. He felt that the miracle of quick thinking, finding favor in the eyes of the guard, and getting more food than before was a result of the special tzitzis, the garment of a tzadik. The tzadik's sacrifice had imbued the garment with a lasting holiness, and the sacrifice of Rav Meisels had aroused that impression and brought it to the fore. The holiness of the garment had saved his life. At the end of the war, Rav Meisels experienced what he felt was an open display of the powers of the garment of a tzadik and the holiness it contained.

"At the end of the war, there were about fifteen hundred Jews remaining in the camp where I was imprisoned. A few weeks before we were liberated by the Americans, the Nazis started to move us around from place to place, mainly in order to distance us from the approaching Americans so that they would not liberate us. On the last Shabbos before our release we heard the sounds of gunfire and the cannons of the Americans. We were overjoyed that they were near the camp and our day of redemption was at hand. But suddenly an order came to transfer us to an unknown location far from the camp. We were afraid that they wanted to take us to a place that had gas chambers in

97. Introduction to *Mekadshei Hashem*, pages 17-19. The introduction was translated in *The Forgotten Memoirs* by E. Farbstein, pages 281-285.

order to carry out the final wish of the Evil One, may his name be obliterated, that no Jew should be left alive.

When Jews would be sent out of a camp, it was the practice of the wicked kapos to first search the inmates and steal from them any item of value they might possess. Thus they would take an inmate's shoes or clothing, anything that was still in decent condition. Willy, the kapo of my bunk, did the same. When he came to me and searched me he found my tzitzis. Immediately, he became furious, perhaps because he had not found anything useful on me to steal, and he ferociously tore up my tallis katan, throwing it into a furnace until it burned in front of my eyes.

No pen or paper can begin to express my grief and sorrow over the loss of that tallis that had given me protection and refuge during times of trial and tribulation. I simply could not accept the fact that my valuable tallis no longer existed, and felt myself bereft of the protection and security I had enjoyed previously when I felt it on my body. The act of that evil man caused me to sob hysterically, as I knew that the final days before our redemption were dangerous ones. We would need great Divine mercy and safekeeping to survive these last days.

My dear son Zalman Leib, who stood next to me, tried to console me over my loss. He pointed out that all the fifteen hundred Jews with us had not had a tallis in almost a year, for ever since they had arrived at Auschwitz they had been denied the chance to wear tzitzis. 'Why should you be distressed?' he asked. Instead, we should only gaze to Hashem. Hashem had come to our aid until now, and hopefully He would continue to do so, and we would merit to be saved.

Then they took us to freight trains, and crammed us into cattle cars under unbearable conditions. We were squeezed against each other and we sat there in the suffocating heat, without food or water; this was the way the Germans used to transport their Jewish victims. We waited for the Americans to come and liberate us quickly.

We tried to sleep a bit during the night, which was very difficult due to the conditions in which we were confined. The only possible way we could try to sleep was to rest our heads on the shoulders of our neighbors in the cattle car. Willy, the kapo who guarded our car, stretched himself out on a long bench that he placed in the middle of the car, while we had to squeeze into the corners of the car under dreadfully crowded conditions. I rested my head on the shoulder of my dear son Zalman Leib, who sat next to me. Finally, after many

attempts, I was able to nod off only to be awakened by my son a short time later. He complained that his shoulder, on which my head had rested, hurt him terribly. In fact he said, 'Father, it hurts so much I can't bear it any longer.' And he asked that I rest my head instead on the shoulder of the fellow who sat on the other side of me, as he could not take the pain that my head was causing his shoulder. Initially, I was upset by his request. It was frustrating to be awakened as it was extremely difficult to sleep under the conditions. Of course, I acceded to his request and moved my head to the shoulder of the person next to me, and he put his head on the shoulder of the person next to him. At almost that exact moment we were roused by the sounds of tremendous explosions caused by American warplanes flying above our train; they evidently thought we were German soldiers and so they were giving our train a terrible pounding from the air. Aerial bombs swirled all around us in ear-splitting clamor. Suddenly, a missile flew right in between us--that is, between my head and my son's head. Just a minute earlier our two heads had rested on exactly that spot! The missile made a direct hit on Willy the kapo, who was lying down on the bench. Both his hands were severed. He burst out in wild roars and bellows from the pain, and begged us to save him from dying in agony. The cheering prisoners made jokes at his expense and fun of him, saying, 'Now can you tear and burn a tallis with those hands of yours?' He begged us to save him, apologizing for burning my tallis and asking me to pray for him that he should survive.

*After this wonder occurred, and my son and I were saved from certain death as the missile passed through the spot where our heads had been and instead struck the wicked Willy, **I realized again the special miraculous qualities of the holy tallis of my grandfather. Even after the anti-Semite burned it, its merit achieved two feats at once, it saved me and my son, and it caused the wicked Willy to suffer immediate punishment.** At that time, I thanked Hashem for His many acts of kindness and goodness".⁹⁸*

The Source of Holy Impressions

The *roshem* that remains from an experience of holiness is the *bechinas Malchus* that is in each item. On *Rosh Chodesh*, the first day of the new month, we experience a *roshem* of the light of the *shenei hame'oros hagedolim*. We say

98. Introduction to *Mekadshei Hashem*, pages 19-22; *The Forgotten Memoirs*, pages 285-288.

Hallel, the thanksgiving prayer, to commemorate the miracle of *Rosh Chodesh*, which is the miracle that God is shining to the moon a light from the world of *shenei hame'oros hagedolim*. Who is it that makes the month holy? This is accomplished by the Jewish court, a *beis din* of *semuchim*, ordained teachers, that goes back to Moshe. The first *beis din* to sanctify the month was composed of Moshe and Aharon. Moshe and Aharon themselves display the *shenei hame'oros hagedolim* dynamic. They are considered equally great lights, because since Aharon recognized that Moshe is the *mashpi'a*, the giver, he is a perfect *mekabel*, recipient, and so he is the light of Moshe.

Perhaps the principle that actions performed with complete self-negation leave holy impressions, and recreate the original impression left from the holiness of two great lights, is what informed the behavior of Rav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal, o.b.m., when he had to flee the Nazis who had liquidated the Jewish community of his city, Pistian, in Slovakia.

He recorded the following story in his diary:

"On Thursday of last week there was a last hunt for souls. They began hunting Jews in the beginning of the summer, right after Pesach. They started trapping our brethren from Pistian and sending them away, Heaven have mercy! Last week they took everyone, even those who had converted to their faith. I and the members of my household and another family that lives in this courtyard escaped from the trap by miraculous means. There isn't another Jewish soul left here.

I took and hid all the holy books I had in my home in the attic above the house of study. When I completed putting away the last package of holy books in the attic, I was left with a ring of keys to the closets where I had kept my books and handwritten notes of Torah. I did not want the keys. I did not need them anymore. I took them and threw them on top of all the books. They were objects used for a mitzvah. Objects used for a mitzvah should not be thrown out. As I threw the keys I remembered the lesson of the Talmud at the end of Tractate Ta'anis (29a). The Talmud relates that as the Beis Hamikdash was being destroyed, the young kohanim took the keys of the Beis Hamikdash and threw them to heaven and said, 'Master of the World! We did not sufficiently protect your sanctuary, that is why it is now being destroyed, so You take the keys and protect the sanctuary!' An arm emerged from the sky and took the keys.

I therefore did the same. For twenty years I was in Pistian trying to guard the holy watch. I was here till now when the community was fully destroyed. I am the last Jew left in Pistian and I am now about to leave. I am going to exile. I did not guard the mini sanctuary of our town sufficiently. This is why our beautiful synagogues were destroyed due to our sins. Master of the World! Take the keys from my hand! You do Your will to raise the glory of the Jewish nation. I know I made many inadvertent errors while I was here, I did not watch the sanctuary the right way. May it be Your will that my exile should atone for me and for the entire nation of Israel".⁹⁹

In the footnotes to this diary entry, Rav Teichtal's son is shocked that his father refused to throw away the keys. After all, one is permitted by law to discard items that helped with the performance of a mitzvah, tashmishei mitzvah-it is only holy items, tashmishei kedushah, such as a pair of tefilin, that one may not discard. Perhaps our Rebbe's lesson explains his behavior. At the moment of leaving Pistian, Rav Teichtal felt that all his learning was fully for Hashem, and therefore an impression of holiness was left in the keys to his bookcases. Therefore, he could not throw them out, as they were like the keys to the Temple.

Rosh Chodesh and Roshem

Every *Rosh Chodesh* is permeated with the *roshem* of the *shenei hame'oros hagedolim*. During the *kidush haChodesh*, dedication of the new month, Moshe and Aharon reached a *bechinah* of this level, and they were equals when Hashem taught them the *mitzvah* together. As Rashi points out in *Shemos* 12:1, most *mitzvos* were taught to Moshe, and then Moshe taught them to Aharon. However, the first *mitzvah*, the command to sanctify *Rosh Chodesh*, was conveyed to Moshe and Aharon together, for they received it equally.

Roshei teivos are an institution that is related to *Rosh Chodesh*. *Roshei teivos*, the initial letters of words, teach that the whole word is alluded to in the first letter of the word, just as on *Rosh Chodesh* the entire month is included in the beginning of the month. The *roshei teivos* of all ten *Sefiros*, כח"ב חג"ת נהי"ם, *kchb, chagat, nehim*, equals in *gematria* רושם, *roshem*. For when

99. *Emunah Tzerufah Bekur Hasho'ah*, volume one, pages 115-119.

the light of an ideal world shines again, we are in possession of the full light of the source, which is all ten *Sefiros*. The reduced moon of today does not contain the full ten *Sefiros* as it possessed them when the *or halevanah* was *ke'or hachamah*-when the light of the moon was equal to the light of the sun-but in the realm of *roshem*, we do find all ten *Sefiros*.

In *Shir Hashirim* (1:3) it is written, "*Lereiach shemanecha tovim, shemen turak shemecha, al kein alamos aheivucha*", "The smell of Your oils is good, your name is like oil poured out, that is why the young maidens will love You". Rashi explains that this *pasuk* is describing how *geirim*, converts, would join the Jewish people. The deep understanding of this verse is that the Torah and Jewish souls go together-whatever the state of the Torah will also be the state of the Jewish souls.¹⁰⁰

Let us explore this concept further. The name *Yisrael*, Israel, is an acronym for "*Yesh shishim ribo osiyos laTorah*", "There are six hundred thousand letters to the Torah", corresponding to the six hundred thousand Jewish souls. Just as Jewish souls had to be purified through the process of going to Egypt, so too the Torah needed purification. Ya'akov fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* with sticks in front of a watering hole, not with boxes and straps. Since Jewish souls were once *me'urav tov bera*, mixed good with evil, and the Torah was once part of the natural world and thus also *me'urav tov bera*, that has left a *roshem*.

The Torah was present in the world at large during the time of the *Avos*, and so every act had the potential to be a *mitzvah*, which is why to this day every physical act can be somewhat holy through the *mitzvah* of "*Bechol derachecha da'eihu*", "Know Him in all your ways" (*Mishlei* 3:6). This force exists as a result of the *roshem* of what once existed. Getting back to our *pasuk*,

100. Rav Moshe Wolfson, *shlit" a*, once explained that *chassidim* believe that Maimonides had the soul of the *Mashiach*. He explained that this belief rested on the principle that Torah and the nation of Israel are one. Rambam contributed *Mishneh Torah* to our literature. In this fourteen-volume work he collected each law that had been scattered in the literature of the earlier Sages, organized the laws topically, and provided clarity and conclusions to questions of doubt. The nation of Israel was exiled after we lost our Temple. When we were exiled we scattered. The job of the redeemer is to gather in, unite, and settle the Jewish nation back in the land of Israel. Since the nation was scattered after we lost the Temple, our books of law, such as the Babylonian Talmud, contained laws that were scattered. For instance, laws of blessings might be in the book that deals primarily with laws of celebrating *Pesach*. Since Maimonides collected the laws and organized them, he must have had the soul of *Mashiach*, who will collect the nation and return each of us to his rightful place.

we can note that oil is a substance that always leaves a *roshem*. That is why *shemen bemilu'o*, the word "oil" in its filled-out form (שֵׁן מִם נוֹן), $360+80+106=546$) has the same *gematria* as רוֹשֵׁם (546). This is the meaning of the verse: since the *shemen*, the Torah, has left a *roshem* everywhere, all the *alamos*, young women (a reference to the gentiles), can come close to *Hashem*. Just as when you pour oil from one vessel to another, each vessel will retain a mark from the oil, so too God's name left a mark everywhere. The Jewish souls who were once mixed into the rest of the souls also left an impression. From this impression of holy souls, souls within non-Jewish families and settings exit their families of origin and join the Jewish nation. The word the verse used to refer to the converts, *alamos*, also equals in *gematria* the same sum as for the word *roshem* (546), for it is this residual holiness that enables all men to approach God.

King Shlomo is a bit of *Mashiach*.¹⁰¹ We are taught that when the *Mashiach* arrives, then "*Torah mei'iti seitzei*", "Torah will emerge from Me" (*Yeshayahu* 51:4). Now there is only a *roshem* of the *sodos haTorah* that are everywhere. The secrets of Torah are currently in the state the Torah was in before it was revealed at Sinai. In the future these secrets will be fully revealed. Now it is *bevchinas lo nitnah*, these secrets have not yet been revealed, and so they are unable to light up the entire world. King Shlomo worked to reveal these secrets, and that is why he begged God in the name of the Jewish people (*Shir Hashirim* 1:2), "*Yishakeini mineshikos pihu*", "May He kiss me with the kisses of His mouth". Rashi explains that kisses of the mouth are displays of very great affection. We merited such displays of affection when *Hashem* conveyed to us the Torah at Sinai:

"*Ve'osam dodim areivim aleihem mekol sha'ashu'a*", "And those displays of love are sweeter to them than any delight".

"*Umuvtachim mei'ito lehofi'a od aleihem*", "And they are guaranteed from Him that He will yet again appear upon them".

"*Leva'er lahem sod ta'ameha umistar tzefunoseha*", "To reveal to them the secret of Torah's reasons and the hidden treasures of Torah".

101. The Rambam taught that *Mashiach* will be a king who is wiser than King Shlomo. Just as Shlomo inspired all through his wisdom, *Mashiach* will inspire people to follow him through his wisdom.

"*Umechalim panav lekayem devaro*", "And they eagerly seek out His company so that He will be able to fulfill His word".

Clearly the secrets are now hidden in the natural world, just as the rest of the Torah was initially hidden in the natural world. Shlomo was begging to reveal the secrets, and he then continued, You revealed the Torah and that has led to an impression of holiness to remain and continue to inspire converts, so too reveal the secrets and an impression from them will remain as well. The entire world will be illuminated once the Almighty reveals those affections.

Winter and Hidden Light

The month of *Kisleiv* in particular is primed for revelation of the secrets of the Torah, those secrets that have the potential to light up the entire universe. *Kisleiv* is a winter month, a time of rain. Rain prepares for the summer. Due to winter rains we have summer blossoms. Summer is hidden in the winter. A great light is hidden in *Kisleiv*. Use winter time to work hard at understanding Torah secrets. Hopefully, we will soon merit that these secrets be fully revealed in the time of the great fixing.

The Thoughts of the *Beinoni*

The *Tanya* teaches that since the *beinoni* has an inner nature that contains an urge for evil, he does not succeed in avoiding thoughts of sins. However, in this he does succeed:

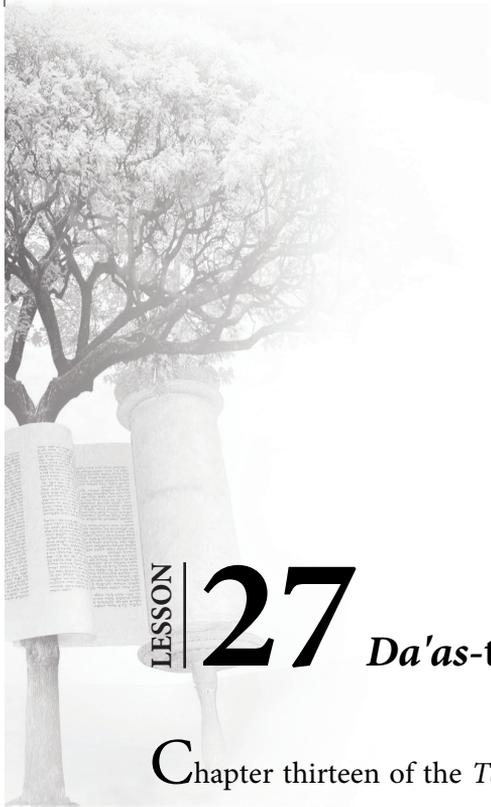
<i>that there be no rulership over the small city</i>	שלא להיות לו שליטה וממשלה בעיר
<i>to bring his lusts from potential to actual to</i>	להוציא תאוותו מכח אל הפועל
<i>clothe the limbs of the body</i>	להתלבש באברי הגוף
<i>and even his mind alone</i>	ואפי' במוח לבדו
<i>evil has no power to compel the mind's</i>	להרהר ברע אין לו שליטה וממשלה
<i>volition to entertain willingly, God forbid,</i>	להרהר ח"ו ברצונו שבמוחו שיקבל
<i>any wicked thought rising of its own accord</i>	ברצון ח"ו הרהור זה הרע העולה מאליו
<i>from the heart to the brain, as discussed</i>	מהלב למוח כנ"ל
<i>above.</i>	
<i>But no sooner does it reach there than he</i>	אלא מיד בעלייתו לשם דוחהו בשתי
<i>thrusts it out with both hands and averts his</i>	ידיים ומסיח דעתו מיד שנזכר שהוא
<i>mind from it the instant he reminds himself</i>	הרהור רע ואינו מקבלו ברצון אפי'

that it is an evil thought, refusing to accept it willingly, even to let his thoughts play on it willingly; how much more so to entertain any idea of putting it into effect, God forbid, or even to put it into words. For he who willfully indulges in such thoughts is deemed wicked at such time, whereas the "beinoni" person is never wicked for a single moment.

So, too, in matters affecting a person's relations with his neighbor, as soon as there rises from his heart to his mind some animosity or hatred, God forbid, or jealousy or anger, or a grudge and suchlike, he gives them no entrance into his mind and will. On the contrary, his mind exercises its authority and power over the spirit in his heart, to do the very opposite and to conduct himself toward his neighbor with the quality of kindness and a display of abundant love, to the extent of suffering from him to the extreme limits without becoming provoked into anger, God forbid, or to revenge in kind, God forbid; but rather to repay the offenders with favors, as taught in the Zohar, that one should learn from the example of Joseph toward his brothers.

להרהר בו ברצון וכ"ש להעלותו על הדעת לעשותו ח"ו או אפי' לדבר בו כי המהרהר ברצון נק' רשע באותה שעה והבינוני אינו רשע אפי' שעה אחת לעולם.

וכן בדברים שבין אדם לחבירו מיד שעולה לו מהלב למוח איזו טינא ושנאה ח"ו או איזו קנאה או כעס או קפידא ודומיהן אינו מקבלן כלל במוחו וברצונו ואדרבה המוח שליט ומושל ברוח שבלבו לעשות ההפך ממש להתנהג עם חבירו במדת חסד וחיבה יתרה מודעת לו לסבול ממנו עד קצה האחרון ולא לבעוס ח"ו וגם שלא לשלם לו כפעלו ח"ו אלא אדרבה לגמול לחייבים טובות כמ"ש בזהר ללמוד מיוסף עם אחיו



LESSON

27

Da'as-the Essence of Man!

*Da'as enables choice.
The essence of man is that
he is a being with choice.
Lesson Twenty- Seven reveals
how the dynamics of will, wisdom,
and understanding culminate in
Da'as and choice.*

Chapter thirteen of the *Tanya* states:

Now it can be understood what the Sages said, "The beinonim, this one and this one judge them", meaning the urge for holiness and the urge for evil, as it is written, "He will stand at the right of the impoverished to save him from the judges of his soul" (Tehillim 109:31).

Note that they did not say "ruled" by both, God forbid.

Because where the evil nature gains any control and dominion over the "small city", even though but temporarily, one is at such times deemed "wicked". The evil nature [in the beinoni], however, is no more than, for example, a judge who gives his opinion on a point of law, yet it is not necessarily a final decision to be implemented in deed, for there is another judge who is contesting this opinion. It is, therefore, necessary to arbitrate between the two, and the final verdict rests with the arbitrator.

Similarly, the evil nature states its opinion in the left part of the heart, which thence ascends to the brain for contemplation.

ובזה יובן לשון מאמרז"ל בינונים זה וזה שופטן [פי' יצר טוב ויצר הרע] דכתב כי יעמוד לימין אביון להושיע משופטי נפשו

ולא אמרו זה וזה מושלים ח"ו

כי כשיש איזון שליטה וממשלה ליצר הרע בעיר קטנה אפי' לפי שעה קלה נקרא רשע באותה שעה אלא היצה"ר אינו רק עד"מ כמו שופט ודיין האומר דעתו במשפט ואעפ"כ יכול להיות שלא יהיה פסק הלכה כך למעשה מפני שיש עוד שופט ודיין החולק עליו וצריך להכריע ביניהם והלכה כדברי המכריע כך היצה"ר אומר דעתו בחלל השמאלי שבלב ומהלב עולה למוח להרהר בו ומיד חולק עליו השופט השני שהוא הנפש האלהית שבמוח המתפשט בחלל הימני שבלב מקום משכן היצר טוב והלכה כדברי המכריע הוא הקב"ה העוזרו להיצר טוב כמאמר

Immediately it is challenged by the second judge, the divine soul in the brain extending into the right part of the heart, the abode of the good nature. The final verdict comes from the arbitrator-the Holy One, blessed be He, who comes to the aid of the good nature, as our Sages said, "If the Almighty did not help him, he could not overcome his evil inclination". The help comes by means of the glow radiated by the Divine light, which illuminates the divine soul that it may gain the upper hand and mastery over the folly of the fool and evil nature, in the manner of the excellence of light over darkness, as stated above.

רז"ל אלמלא הקב"ה עוזרו אין יכול לו
והעזר היא ההארה שמאיר אור ה' על
נפש האלהית להיות לה יתרון ושליטה
על סבלות הכסיל ויצה"ר כיתרון האור
מן החושך כנ"ל

The *Tanya* notes that our Sages tell us that *beinonim* have two judges, but not two rulers. The evil urge merely presents its opinion like a judge, but it cannot issue an order, and the other judge presents its opinion after. The Almighty casts the deciding vote. Because *Hashem* casts the deciding vote, the *beinoni's Da'as* chooses holiness. An exploration of the inner workings of *Da'as* will explain why holiness is the winner.

Man Is a Being Who Chooses

The essence of man is his *Da'as*; the ability to intelligently weigh matters and choose wisely is what makes us human. If a person lost his eyes, mouth, or limbs, he would remain human; those items can be taken away and one would still retain his personhood. What is essential to his humanity, though, is his ability to choose! *Bechirah*, choice, is the very definition of humanity. One who does not have the ability to choose is not a man even if he has all his limbs, and one who has *bechirah* is a human regardless of what he looks like.

Even a child has *bechirah*, since a child is a human being. A child's *bechirah* is weaker than the *bechirah* that an adult possesses, and so he is not punished under Jewish law for his poor choices. However, he does have choice. Without freedom to choose, he would not be human! If a child had no choice, then the world would be a grossly unfair place. Consider a man who has a hard time studying, since he never studied in his youth, and so the habit

of neglect became deeply ingrained within him. If in fact he had no real ability to choose as a child, then the fact that he didn't learn when he was younger was due to his nature. Now, as an adult, he is simply continuing to conduct himself according to the habits of his youth. Would it be fair to punish him? Of course not! It must be that in fact a child does have the ability to choose, and furthermore, his choices as a child impact what he does as an adult.

A person can always choose. Even a baby can choose to be angry or to be in a good mood. This principle helps us understand a tradition. It is known that the great *tzadik*, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk,¹⁰² repented for the pain he caused his mother as a nursing baby. Holy people hold themselves to very exacting standards. Because his actions as a child were in fact choices, Reb Elimelech did *teshuvah* for them later in his life!

The Root of Choice

Da'as is the part of the person that is the key to enabling *bechirah*.

The attributes of man are clothed in different physical proclivities and urges. The physical urges pull man in multiple directions. The force of a man's *Da'as* is what determines which *koach hanefesh*, force of his soul, will be employed, and in what measure and circumstance. *Da'as* is that point in the psyche of man that is not influenced by the other forces operating on him! If *Da'as* would be under the control of the different parts of the personality, there would be no choice. The strongest natural attraction would always win. However, this is not what happens. Although a person is drawn in many different directions, his *Da'as* makes the decision about what to embrace and what to reject. *Da'as* is free from the *kochos hanefesh*, and therefore it can serve as the arbitrator, deciding which voice within the psyche it should follow. It is for this reason that *Da'as* is the true essence of man: it is the *ba'al habayis*, the master, of all the forces within man!

Within the concept of choice, many levels exist. Some people have strong *Da'as*. They are truly free from the *kochos hanefesh* and physical urges. Their

102. Reb Elimelech Weisblum of Lizhensk, 1717-1787/5477-5547, was one of the greatest *tzadikim* of the chassidic movement. He was a student of the Maggid of Mezeritch. His work, *Noam Elimelech*, is one of the classics of chassidic thought. He also authored a short letter with practical advice for living a holy life and a prayer to be recited before one begins to pray.

kochos hanefesh do not awe and overpower them. They can feel anger rising in them, and yet remain unmoved by it. Such people have a strong force for choosing, a powerful *Da'as*. Others have a weaker *Da'as*. They struggle more to overcome the urges of the body, and they feel obligated to heed the body's forces. *Hashem* made the decision of how strong a *Da'as* to impart to each person and what level of choice to give to him. It is part of the package of unique attributes with which every person is endowed.

Will Extends Essence

We have learned that *Da'as* and *Keser* are linked.¹⁰³ Let us delve more deeply to understand how will interacts with internalization to enable correct choices.

A person has many parts to his personality. He has *mochin*, which comprise his intellectual powers and are categorized as *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Keser*. He also has emotional attributes, *midos*. Let us look closely at these attributes.

Keser is a force that is higher than *Chochmah*. It is an inner will; it is a hidden will. It is desire that does not have a reason. Any analysis of human actions and motivations will eventually arrive at the point of will that transcends logic; that is the point of *Keser*.

For example, consider someone who wants to accumulate wealth. Presumably, there is a reason for this desire: he wants to live, and he needs money to buy food in order to live. But we can dig deeper still—the desire to have money in order to live is not a primary will; rather, it is the expression of an even more basic desire. True, he wants funds in order to live, but why does he want to live? If you ask him this he will probably say, "Why do I want to live? Because I want to live!" There is no reason more basic than this!

However, some people can identify an underlying reason for their will to live, and they might respond, "I want to live in order to fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*". Here too one can challenge them and say, "Why do you want to fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*?" When you keep following the path of their logic, eventually one arrives at a point of will that cannot be explained, a *ratzon*, desire, with no *ta'am*, reason. Each identifiable desire, upon probing, leads

103. See Lesson Seven.

eventually to a will that cannot be explained further, for the root of will is a concept above *Chochmah!* It is a concept that has no *ta'am*. The real *ratzon* is pure *ratzon* without any reason. The *ratzon* expresses the *etzem*, essence, of the person. This is who he is; this is the way he was created!

This is the truth about all desires of a person: when questioned about the reason for his desires, he can provide a reason. When questioned further about the reason for that reason, and the reason for the one he provides, eventually you arrive at a point of will that defies explanation. This final, unexpressed reason represents the essence of the person. This is who he is! This is his life! To live, or to fulfill *mitzvos*, is *Keser: ratzon* which is above reason.

Since the sin of Adam, a human being is bifurcated. He has a body with its desires, and a soul with its own will. Each entity, body and soul, has its own definition of what living really is. Each one, body and soul, has its own unique *ratzon*.

Sparks of Soul

The connection that the soul has with the body is through glows of light that are called *nitzotzin kedoshim*, holy sparks. What does this mean? There is both light and its vessel. Light is connected with the infinite Godliness, while the vessel is limited, and related to the created recipient. The vessel receives the light. In order to combine light and vessel there is a need for an intermediary that has a bit of light and a bit of vessel, and can thus fuse the light and the vessel together.¹⁰⁴ The holy sparks we mentioned serve as this necessary *memutza*, intermediary, for they are the parts of light that are always together with the vessel.

You may recall the concept of *sheviras hakeilim*, breaking of the vessels, that we learned about in Lessons Eighteen through Twenty. This refers to the separation of the light and the vessel. The light ascended and the vessels fell

104. Intermediaries, *emtza'im*, always contain a bit of each of the sides they are bridging. *Shem Mishmuel* explained in this manner the role of the eve of the Day of Atonement, *erev Yom Kippur*. On this day Jewish law obligates us to eat. Our tradition also declares that one who eats on *erev Yom Kippur* is considered to have fasted on both *Yom Kippur* and *erev Yom Kippur*. As a day of eating, the eve of the Day of Atonement is connected to all eating. Since the eating is considered fasting, it is also connected to the fast of *Yom Kippur*. This makes it a bridge that elevates all the eating done throughout the year and endows those acts with the transcendent holiness of a bit of *Yom Kippur*.

down, in order to enable the creation of lower realms. The sparks descended along with the vessels, because the sparks are pieces of light that always remain together with the *keli*. The sparks went with the vessels because they are particles and thus similar to and connected to the limited vessels.

What are these sparks? They are the *kochos haguf*, abilities of the body, the character parts, that are constantly drawing inspiration from the light of the soul. We have explained that the soul and the body are like two different personalities living in a small house together. A vessel without any light is dead. The body on its own has no life; it is a dead creature. However, the sparks enter the vessel to animate it, and they merge with vessel to the point that it almost seems as if they have become one with the vessel.

Consider the concept of wisdom. The mind can elevate or degrade the Godly spark that is within it. The Godly soul has *Chochmah*, which is a Heavenly wisdom that is Divine and soulful. A person does not appreciate this Divine wisdom because of a physically sharp mind. Although mastering deep science is dependent on a good mind, when we speak of *Chochmah Elokis*, we refer to wisdom of the soul, which is a Heavenly comprehension. For instance, a *tzadik* who sees the name of God, ה-ו-ה-י , *Havayah*, sees a tremendous light and has an amazing comprehension of Godliness from this light. These *hasagos*, spiritual attainments, are experiences that he cannot convey to others! They are soulful feelings and comprehension, which he sees and feels but cannot convey. (I am not talking of angels; I am talking of human beings in our times! We can achieve these levels of Godly comprehension and wisdom. We need to simply work a little in order to achieve these levels). This experience is not a physical comprehension; it is a *deveikus*, cleaving, that is Godly and that cannot be fully explained to others. It is called *Chochmas haneshamah*, the wisdom of the soul. This wisdom of the soul has sparks, and these sparks have entered the body.

Adam's sin caused the shattering of the vessels, the division between light and vessel, and a subsequent descent of the sparks into a lower realm. Sparks of the Godly wisdom have entered, been absorbed into, and now animate the earthly and physical wisdom. Since sparks of Godly wisdom have fallen into the earthly realm, the Godly wisdom has acquired qualities of the physical realm. As a result of this, now there are physical ways of acquiring parts of *Hashem's* wisdom. Just as natural intellect helps one fully understand science, natural intellect can acquire Godly wisdom. When man uses his natural

intellect to understand a lesson of Talmud or Jewish law, physical intellect is grasping a piece of Divine wisdom.

When someone understands a piece of Talmud with his physical and logical mind, he has understood a physical aspect of the Torah. He has grasped the part of the Torah that accompanies the physical realm.

Transcendent, *deveikus*-type wisdom releases a spark that animates natural intellectual abilities. When the natural mind is used to grasp the natural part of Torah, the revealed Torah, the spark is elevated closer to *deveikus*, transcendence, from whence it emerged. If one uses the intellectual mind to understand external wisdom, though, he has taken the spark of *Chochmah* that is in the vessel of intellect and has brought it closer to the physical. Use of intellect for external thought makes the Godly spark coarser and more material. However, use of this spark in order to understand even the physical part of Torah elevated the spark. Therefore, even the employment of logic as opposed to the pure Godly wisdom will elevate the spark of understanding to a place closer to its source, and renders the experience a spiritual grasping of wisdom. Talmud is closer to light, while science is closer to vessel. When one employs the human mental capacity for understanding Torah, he causes the spark of Godly wisdom that is within human understanding to shine more brightly and to purify the human vessel of understanding. Eventually, if it shines brightly enough, man can return to the state of Adam before the sin, when the soul shone right through the body! Then the light broke through the barrier of the flesh, the body was entirely subservient to the soul, and the body obeyed the soul completely!

To summarize, when the spark of *Chochmah* that resides in a good human intellect becomes attached to the light of *Chochmah*, it is elevated. Therefore, when one comprehends a concept relating to the greatness of God using his physical understanding, and then has the Heavenly experience of a Godly comprehension, and feels a light shining on him that cannot be explained or defined, he should realize that the spark of *Chochmah* has become stronger within him.

Why the Young Have Passion

As a person ages, he loses his passion. Why does this happen? The soul is connected to the body through the sparks, which are soulful extensions. They

have the effect of rendering the body fresh and youthful. As one gets older, he loses many sparks, because he has already used them, either by raising or lowering them. While a person is still young, he has not yet used many of his sparks, and this leaves him with a lot of energy for human activity, because the unused sparks generate freshness and vigor. He has life! He can now choose to use the excess energy for good or for bad. In contrast, an older person no longer has so many sparks, and as a result he is weaker, and physically exhausted.

Youth and Old Age Each Have Advantages

When a young person overcomes the external forces that are attached to him, he turns them into spiritual forces. For example, a person can take the desire to eat and transform it into a Heavenly desire. Similarly, younger people have more excitement in their *davening* because they are transforming the vibrant forces of the body. The young are busy with the work of elevating the *nitzotzos*. Older people no longer have as many sparks to uplift. This causes their prayer to be lacking in passion. However, old age has its own advantages. Older people have a more internal grasp on spirituality than the young.

Our Sages say that as Torah scholars age, their *Da'as* increases (*Kinim* 3:6), and the quality of their wisdom grows in superiority. While it is true that in a physical sense an older person is weaker in both mind and body, nevertheless he is a more *penimi*, internal, person, and he serves *Hashem* in a more spiritual way. The older person is connected to the *or*, light, already—he is no longer a person of sparks, which are merely scraps of light. Since the younger person praises God in the external realm, he reaches God through excitement and passion. But while the older person may sway less in prayer, he has more soul in his prayer! His soul is more connected to his body.

A verse in Psalms states, "*Zekeinim im ne'arim yehalelu es sheim Hashem ki nisgav shemo levado*" (*Tehillim* 148:12-13), which means, "The aged and the young will praise the name of *Hashem*, for His name is exalted alone". Why in the future will the old praise together with the young? Wouldn't it be more intuitive to have the elderly pray with one another and the young pray with one another? No—the two groups complement each other and belong together. The elderly grasp things in a more inner way. The young grasp matters in a more external, sharper, and passionate way. The aged praise *Hashem* in a more spiritual way, with a comprehension that is above explanation, while the

young ones praise *Hashem* in a way that is explainable and filled with passion. The future realm will be characterized with people who have both advantages.

In *Parashas Vayishlach*, the Torah relates that our father Ya'akov was left alone when bringing his family across the Yabok river, and a mysterious assailant wrestled with him all night until morning. The Torah describes Ya'akov with the phrase, "*Vayivaser Ya'akov levado*", "And Ya'akov remained alone" (*Bereishis* 32:25). The Midrash connects this phrase to the verse about the ultimate future when "*Venigav Hashem levado*", "And God will be exalted alone" (*Yeshayahu* 2:11). The verse we saw in the previous paragraph, which unites the elderly with the young and makes them one, uses similar language: *ki nigav shemo levado*. It is reflecting the time when *venigav Hashem levado*, He will be exalted alone! At that time, the inner and outer realms become one; body and soul are one. The external realm benefits from the strength of the inner realm, while the inner soulful realm retains the passion of the externally excited young person!

Man has two personalities, external and internal, and his challenge is to unite them. The choices that he makes will determine the type of person he will become. One man might choose to live in a spiritual world, while his contemporary of the same age chooses the material path. As time passes, they have become different people. While one might be naturally drawn to spirituality while another is tugged towards the material, nevertheless each has choices to make.

Will and Evaluations

The essence of a person is his *ratzon*, his *Keser*. One type of person is naturally drawn to the spiritual. He feels that, "And He blew into him a soul of life" is his root. Another chooses to identify with his bodily *ratzon* and define his essence as pursuit of what the body wants.

Da'as serves as the arbitrator. It is an extension of the inner will. The *ratzon* sends a spark, and it becomes *Da'as*. This illumination from the *ratzon* is not pure will; it stems from the *ratzon* and then enters *Chochmah* and *Binah*, which clothe it. The *ratzon* lit up the *Chochmah* and *Binah*, but now they charge the *ratzon* with their character, and the final result of these inputs is *Da'as*.

Da'as is the ability to make decisions. It will dictate whether man does this

or the other thing. The process of making a decision is mind-directed; the mind directs the person's thoughts and eventually he reaches a decision. The core of the correct decision is the feeling of will and essence that is noticeable in the appropriate option.

***Da'as* Teaches You to Measure Each Matter Correctly**

Correct *Da'as* is needed in order to avoid the many common errors of evaluation. For instance, let us consider propaganda. The propagandist takes some true words. He presents them without context. He creates a great misimpression. Healthy *Da'as* recognizes the fallacy of the propaganda and rejects it. Even in the Jewish nation there are propagandists who push agendas. A particular application of propaganda is propagated by some Zionists, both secular and religious, who claim that virtually the only obligation in our religion is to live in the land of Israel. For some religious Zionists, living in Israel relates to redemption, and this idea is based on the underlying assumption that man himself can bring about the redemption. The truth of the matter is that redemption is such a great light that man cannot understand it-when it arrives, that is when we will first understand what it is. How then can limited human hands bring the redemption, and how can finite human minds take it upon themselves to define redemption as Jews living in a land?

In Israel we also find secular, wicked, ideologues that attack every holy concept. Propagandists might say, "Even though these people sin, they live in the Holy Land, and so they are all right". To prove their claim, they will locate a relevant statement from the Talmud and present it in isolation. For example, our Sages said, "*Kol hadar beEretz Yisrael domeh kemi sheyeish lo Elokah*", "Anyone who lives in Israel resembles one who has God", "*vekol hadar be'chutza la'aretz domeh kemi she'ein lo Elokah*", "and anyone who does not live in Israel it is as if he has no God" (*Kesuvos* 110b.) So these propagandists will conclude that this means that anyone who lives in the Holy Land is a believer in *Hashem*, while anyone who does not live in Israel is a heretic. Then they might proceed to quote the lesson of the Ramban about *mishpat Elokei ha'aretz*, the law of the King of the Land, which states that *mitzvos* are primarily intended to be fulfilled in the land of Israel. From this collection of sources, they will conclude that the anti-religious builders of Zion are the greatest *tzadikim*, while righteous Jews who live in America are the equivalent of heretics.

This is propaganda. The people who make this claim are misrepresenting and misinterpreting true sources. They are taking one or two sources of *Chazal* while ignoring tens of other sources, long-standing Jewish customs, and traditional perspectives! A *mechalel Shabbos*, desecrator of the *Shabbos*, is *chayav sekilah*, deserves stoning. This is true regardless of whether or not he lives in Israel. On the other hand, a pious Jew who lives outside of Israel is not eligible for any sort of punishment in a Jewish court of law! And yet these people push their lone declaration about "Anyone who lives in Israel..".

There are many other examples of the misuse of *Da'as*. Consider a person who has a *yahrtzeit*,¹⁰⁵ and would like to lead the services as a merit for the soul that is deceased. He arrives in *shul* and discovers that someone else was chosen to lead the services. He gets angry, creates a dispute, and speaks gossip, all because of his *yahrtzeit*. Such a person lacks *Da'as*. What a horrible judgment he has made! Leading services on the anniversary of the day of someone's death is not nearly as important as encouraging peace and avoiding anger and gossip.

How much weight to give to a particular concept, and the understanding of what is primary and what is secondary, are considerations that are extremely important. The ability to exercise free choice in evaluating matters is the primary gift of man. Healthy *Da'as* can correctly measure how much a stringency is worth, and how much value to give an *ikar*, a principle. *Da'as* depends on *Chochmah* and *Binah*, but how much consideration to give an idea presented by *Chochmah* or *Binah* is determined by *Da'as*. *Da'as* is a glow of *ratzon*. Correct evaluation emerges from an inner feeling of knowing what is important and what is less so. The *ratzon* of man is the true essence of man. The Torah works on this *ratzon*, by purifying it and teaching it what is appropriate to want. Torah teaches how much value to attach to something and guides man in the correct direction. Once purified, the *ratzon* then sends a light to the *Chochmah* and *Binah*, which instructs the *Chochmah* and *Binah* how much weight to attach to something. Finally, this light is sent on to the *Da'as*, which makes the ultimate decision.

The *Da'as* determines whether one will be a physical person or a soulful person. Both the body and soul have their own *Da'as*, and a man must decide

105. The day a family member left this world. It is a source of merit for the departed soul when his offspring cause *mitzvos* to be fulfilled on his day.

which type of *Da'as* he will listen to. The *Da'as* in the middle is the essence and key part of the person.

Different Types of *Da'as*

Now we are able to understand the depth of the *Tanya's* lesson that teaches that *Hashem* casts the deciding vote for the *beinoni*. The *Da'as* of the *Nefesh Elohis* comes from *or*, light, while the *Da'as* of the *Nefesh habehemis* comes from a *keli*, vessel. A *keli* is a *tzimtzum*, contraction, of the *or*, while the *or* has no *tzimtzum*. Since the *Nefesh Elohis* and its *Da'as* are drawing from *or*, the life they draw down is stronger life! It is life without *tzimtzum*! This is why the verse states, "*Ki ya'amod liymin evyon lihoshi'a mishoftei nafsho*", "For He will stand at the right of the impoverished to save him from the judges of his soul" (*Tehillim* 109:31). Holiness has a great advantage. The *Da'as* of *or* stems from the time period before the *shevirah*, the shattering of the vessels, while the *Da'as* from the *Nefesh habehemis* comes from after the *shevirah*! We must internalize these lessons, and understand that there is a great advantage to the *Da'as* of the *Nefesh haElohis*. It is a *chiyus*, life, without any *tzimtzumim*, and that makes it most important. The life of Torah is a much more powerful life than the life of satisfying lusts.

We have learned that *Da'as* is the essence of man. Holy *Da'as* channels infinite light. Therefore, holy *Da'as* innately leads a man to *mesirus nefesh*, sacrifice of self. Holy *Da'as* teaches man to overcome his own interests, while secular thought and non-holy *Da'as* do not create the same level of ability to transcend the limitations of self interest.

In the book Trails of Triumph, Rav Yonah Bromberg relates a story that occurred immediately after the Holocaust, in which he proved to other Jews the great worth of studying Torah, and how other studies cannot change the person the way Torah study can.

"The American Joint (Distribution Committee) distributed relief packages to Jewish refugee students in the displaced persons camp, but the organization's European representatives refused to include yeshiva bochorim, students, in the distribution, arguing that they were benk kvetchers ("bench pressers", not genuine students).

The heads of several yeshivos for refugees appointed me as their representative to the Joint committee...to defend our right to receive our share

of the food packages...I told them a story that happened to Rav Shmuel Snieg, who served as chief rabbi of the Lithuanian army and after the war was appointed rabbi of Kovno.

The Nazis, yimach shemam, may their names be obliterated, built a labor camp at the foot of a certain mountain, over which a railway track passed. Every train carrying Jews stopped on top of the mountain, and the Jews were thrown out to roll down the hill no matter how, right into the camp.

After the war a train carrying food packages for the survivors remaining in the camp reached the mountaintop, and the old problem of transportation from the train to the camp down below arose. An announcement was made to the refugees that whoever climbed the mountain to the train would be given four packages.

One of the survivors, the aforementioned Rav Snieg, was very weak and unable to manage the climb. He asked a young man to lend him one of his packages. After he'd eaten something and regained some strength, said Rav Snieg, he'd make his way up to claim his packages and repay the loan. However, the young man refused.

I heard this story from the young man himself! 'Do you think I gave it to him?' he said to me. 'Of course not!' Then he observed, 'That's how we turned into wild animals instead of human beings...'

Then I told the committee members, 'Now I'll tell you another story that happened in a Nazi labor camp. One day a Jewish prisoner named Gershon Leibman saw another Jew, whose name was Yoel Zoiler, being dragged by the feet into the camp morgue.' (I was talking about Rabbi Gershon Leibman, one of the foremost disciples of the Novorhdok movement).

'Reb Gershon went inside to see what was going on and discovered that Zoiler was still alive. At that moment he heard the prisoners' soup ration being distributed. There was no longer a portion for Yoel Zoiler, whom they viewed as dead, but Gershon received a portion like all the others.

Gershon took his only plate of soup, which he so desperately needed himself, and hurried into the morgue, where he sat down to feed it slowly to Yoel Zoiler, one spoonful at a time, until the latter revived and regained some strength. He then supported Zoiler and helped him leave the morgue, alive.'

After telling these contrasting stories I added, 'The young man in the first story was a college student, while the hero of the second story was a yeshiva student!'

My message was obvious, and it hit home. While they were deliberating over who is and isn't a student, the real issue is who behaves like a human being, and who doesn't!

On the spot they passed a resolution entitling yeshiva students to receive packages. What pushed them into it? The presiding chairman was none other than the student who refused to lend Rav Snieg his food package..". (pages 301-304).

The diary of Rav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal, zt"l, Emunah Tzerufah Bekur Hasho'ah, Faith Purified in the Cauldron of the Holocaust, records a similar observation. Rav Teichtal was in hiding during one of the barbaric Nazi roundups. While looking through the crack of his hidden attic his heart burst forth with a question. "What happened to cultured Germany? How did the land of poets, philosophers and universities educate its children to treat elderly and weak Jews as subhuman? Where did all the talk of rights of man and universal justice go?"

His resolution was based on the comment of the Bartenura to the first mishnah of Avos. Pirkei Avos is filled with universally recognized moral guidance; why does it begin with a listing of the order of Torah tradition? Rav Ovadiah answered that the order of tradition reminds us that our book of ethics differs from the ethics books of other nations. Other nations have ethics that emerge from a human Da'as. All of our ethics come from Hashem's Torah. Limited human mind produces limited ethics. The ethics of the nations are limited to self interest. The ethics of Avos, however, emerge from the Torah text and tradition. These ethics are superior; they have infinite strength. In moments of supreme duress and strain, ethics whose base is the limited human understanding collapse and disappear. Hence the wartime immorality of the educated of Europe. Only ethics founded on Torah, that manifest infinite strength and holy Da'as, can withstand even the strains of a world war! (pages 94-105).

The Evil Urge of the Beinoni is Virulent

The *Tanya* now resolves one of its original questions. Why must man swear to view himself "like" a *rasha*? Why not view himself as an actual *rasha*?

Yet, inasmuch as the evil in the [heart's] left part of the beinoni is in its innate strength, craving after all the pleasures of this world, not having been annulled in its minuteness in relation to the good, nor having been dislodged from its position to any degree-except in so far as it has no authority and power to diffuse itself throughout the limbs of the body, because the Holy One, blessed be He, "Stands at the right of the impoverished", helping him and illuminating his divine soul-such a person is said to be like a "rasha".

In the words of our Sages, "Even if the whole world tells you that you are righteous, in your own eyes regard yourself as if you were wicked"- not as actually wicked. But one should consider oneself to be a "beinoni" person and not accept the world's opinion which would have him believe that the evil in him has been dissolved by the good, which is the category of a tzadik. Rather he should consider himself as if the very essence of the evil is in its full strength and might, in the left part, as from birth, and that nothing of it has ceased or departed; on the contrary, with the passing of time it has gained strength, because the man has indulged it considerably, in eating and drinking and other mundane pursuits.

Even one whose whole aspiration is in God's Torah, which he studies day and night for its own sake, this is still no proof whatever that the evil has been dislodged from its place, but it may still be that its essence and substance are in their full strength and might in its abode in the left part, except that its garments-the thought, speech and act of the animal soul-are not invested in the brain, mouth and hands and the other parts of the body, because God has given the mind supremacy and dominion over the heart. Therefore the Divine soul in the intellect

אך מאחר שהרע שבחלל השמאלי בבינוני הוא בתקפו כתולדתו להתאות תאוה לכל תענוגי עוה"ז ולא נתבטל במיעוט לגבי הטוב ולא נדחה ממקומו כלל רק שאין לו שליטה וממשלה להתפשט באברי הגוף מפני הקב"ה העומד לימין אביון ועוזר ומאיר לנפש האלהית לכן נקרא כרשע

כמארז"ל אפילו כל העולם כולו אומרים לך צדיק אתה היה בעיניך כרשע ולא רשע ממש אלא שיחזיק עצמו לבינוני ולא להאמין להעולם שאומרים שהרע שבו נתבטל לגבי הטוב שזו מדרגת צדיק אלא יהיה בעיניו כאלו מהותו ועצמותו של הרע הוא בתקפו ובגבורתו בחלל השמאלי כתולדתו ולא חלף והלך ממנו מאומה ואדרבה נתחזק יותר בהמשך הזמן שנשתמש בו הרבה באכילה ושתייה ושאר ענייני עוה"ז

ואף מי שבתורת ה' חפצו ויהגה בה יומם ולילה לשמה אין זו הוכחה כלל שנדחה הרע ממקומו אלא יכול להיות שמהותו ועצמותו הוא בתקפו ובגבורתו במקומו בחלל השמאלי רק שלבושיו שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה של נפש הבהמית אינם מתלבשים במוח והפה והידיים ושאר אברי הגוף מפני ה' שנתן שליטה וממשלה למוח על הלב ולכן נפש האלהית שבמוח מושלת בעיר קטנה אברי הגוף כולם שיהיו לבוש ומרכבה לשלש' לבושיה שיתלבשו בהם שהם מחשבה דבור

rules over the [entire] "small city", i.e., all the parts of the body, making them a garment and vehicle for her three garments, wherein to be clothed, to wit, the thought, speech and act of the six hundred thirteen commandments of the Torah.

However, in its essence and substance, the Divine soul in the *beinoni* has no preponderance over the animal soul, except at the time when his love for God manifests itself in his heart on propitious occasions, such as during prayer and the like.

ומעשה של תר"ג מצות התורה אבל מהותה ועצמותה של נפש האלהית אין לה שליטה וממשלה על מהותה ועצמותה של נפש הבהמית בביוני כי אם בשעה שאהבת ה' הוא בהתגלות לבו בעתים מזומנים כמו בשעת התפלה וכיוצא בה

Holiness Is Innately Stronger!

In an earlier lesson, we asked why it is that if one commits a sin he is called a *rasha*. We observed that one who performs *mitzvos* is not called a *tzadik* when he does good, since his evil urge is still there, and he is only called a *beinoni*. So we would expect the converse to be true-shouldn't a sinner also be called a *beinoni*, since the inner advocate for good has not been silenced entirely, and it is still as strong as it was *bemahuso ve'atzmuso harishon*, in its essential original state? We are now able to answer the question.

The term *tzadik* means that the good is stronger than the evil, while the term *rasha* indicates someone whose evil is stronger. If someone performs good deeds, it does not mean that he is primarily good, for it could be that the two forces within him are of equal strength, and only because of the concept of *ya'amod liymin evyon*, Hashem is standing to the right of the poor person and assisting him, did he end up doing good. However, when one chooses to do evil, it is not the result of internal forces that were equal. The evil urge must possess greater strength, for if the two were equal the concept of *yisron ha'or min hachoshech*, advantages to light over darkness, would have compelled him to perform *mitzvos*. This is why an act of sin renders a man a *rasha*-the evil within him is in fact stronger.

How to Sweeten the Evil Urge

Even then it is limited to preponderance and dominion alone, as is written, "And one

ואף גם זאת הפעם אינה רק שליטה וממשלה לבד כדרכיב ולאום מלאום

nation shall prevail over the other", that is, when one rises the other falls, and vice versa. Thus, when the Divine soul gains strength and ascendancy over the animal soul, in the source of gevuros which is Binah, through pondering on the greatness of God, the blessed Ein Sof, thereby generating intense and flaming love of God in the right part of his heart-then the sitra achra in the left part is subdued. But it is not entirely abolished, in the case of the beinoni; it is so only in a tzadik, concerning whom it is said, "My heart is void within me". The latter despises and hates evil with a consummate hatred and contempt, or without quite such complete hatred, as is explained above.

יאמץ כשזה קם זה נופל וכשזה קם
 כו' שנפש האלהית מתאמצת
 ומתגברת על נפש הבהמית
 במקור הגבורות שהיא בינה
 להתבונן בגדולת ה' א"ס ב"ה
 ולהוליד אהבה עזה לה' כרשפי
 אש בחלל הימני שבלבו ואז
 אתכפיא ס"א שבחלל השמאלי
 אבל לא נתבטל לגמרי בבינוני
 אלא בעדיק שנאמר בו ולבי חלל
 בקרבי והוא מואס ברע ושונאו
 בתכלית השנאה והמיאוס או
 שלא בתכלית השנאה כנ"ל

The *Tanya* here is talking about *gadlus hamochin*, expanded intellects. He is saying that through intense intellectual delving and visualizing of *Hashem's* greatness, which involve thinking about *Ein Sof Baruch Hu*, the One with no end, there is tremendous holy strength, *Gevurah*. These holy *gevuros* are flames that will conquer evil. There is great depth here in this passage, and we will only merit beginning the explanation.

There is a principle that *dinim*, judgments, are only sweetened by their own root. *Ein hadin nimtak ela bishorsho*, judgments are only sweetened with their root. That means that only a judgment, *din*, can sweeten a *din*. Unrefined judgments, which are unsweetened, can be caught by the forces of evil. The *yetzer hara* is on the left, which is the side of *din*. *Din* is *tzimtzum*, limitation, and therefore there is limited life wherever judgments are displayed. Evil always has limited life, and as a result evil is always seeking life. Evil runs after a person, because it seeks to run after man and attach to him so that it will have life.

We must understand the creation. How does the evil realm function? Because the evil realm has little life, it craves vitality and energy, so it seeks to draw from the good in order to acquire for itself living spirit. This is the idea behind gaining forgiveness on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, by sending a goat to the wilderness, *sa'ir le'azazel*. We give the Other Side a bit of life so it stops bothering us; if we would not send it some life, it would continue to pursue the good and draw its nourishment from the good.

Therefore, in order to overcome evil, it is necessary to use a *tzimtzum*. It is necessary to employ a holy form of limited life. One must withdraw oneself, and this is a *tzimtzum* that sweetens the constricted and limited forces of evil. For instance, *sifrei yir'ah*, books of discipline, are a holy form of limiting life. By nature, man is attracted to joyous service of God, and this joy and love leads us to feel awe in the presence of God. Because man was created for the goal of experiencing the pleasure of God, this is how he is drawn to serve Him. Ideally, all religious talk would arouse feelings of pleasure and delight.¹⁰⁶ Even fear of God should emerge from feelings of love for God.

Yet the *yetzer hara* is very powerful. To talk with the *yetzer hara* in his language, we need to talk with the language of limited lights, which is closer to his language. That is why we require books of awe and fear, and the writings of *musar*. *Musar* is intended to be "*yazkir lo yom hamisah*", to remind a person of the day of death. Through the study of *musar* one reminds the evil urge of the day of death. This is depressing, but it is a limitation that we must employ in order to conquer the evil urge. If we would speak only in the language of delights, the evil urge would not understand! Speaking about death is close to the language of the evil urge.

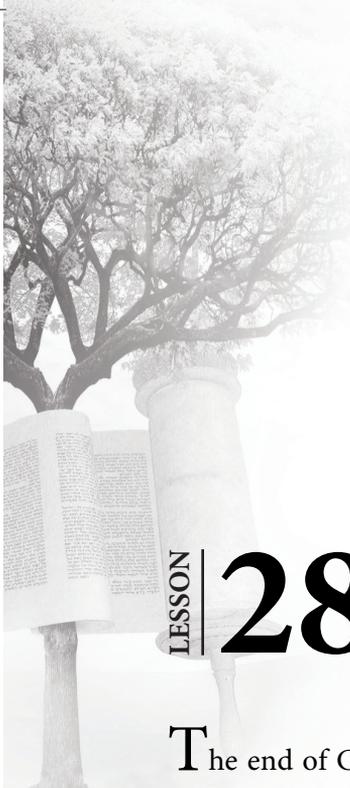
Lowly people think mainly about themselves. If one reminds a lowly person of death and *gehinom*, his selfishness will urge him to be observant for selfish reasons-so he can avoid this suffering. Through the *tzimtzum* of *musar*, there is a *hamtakah*, sweetening, of the *din* of the *yetzer hara*. All *Binah*, detailed understanding, is a form of *tzimtzum*. *Binah* is on the left, while *Chochmah* is on the right. *Chochmah* is *chasadim*, displays of generosity, and *Binah* is *gevuros*. Through a *hisbonenus* of *tzimtzum*, one can reach the *yetzer hara* with his own terminology and thereby sweeten it.

106. Rav Shlomo Wolbe in his book, *Olam Hayedidus*, points out that in the Talmud in Tractate *Menachos* (53a), the term *yedid*, which means dear friend, is used to describe many aspects of our religion. "*Yavo yedid ben yedid, veyivneh yedid leYedid, veyiskapru bo yedidim*", "Let the dear friend, son of the dear friend, build the dear friend, for the dear friend, and may the dear friends gain atonement there". The meaning of this passage is that Solomon, Abraham, the Jewish nation, the Temple in Jerusalem, and God are called *yedid*. The reason that *yedid* is the appropriate term is that Judaism is all about dear friendship. Judaism is not the religion of harsh demands. It creates a life where man finds himself surrounded with enormous pleasure and companionship. Judaism is filled with pleasure, because at the core of man there is a desire for pleasure (*Olam Hayedidus*, pages 15-22).

When a person is *bekatnus hamochin*, in a state of limited consciousness, he is incapable of overcoming evil, even with *Binah*. Only during *gadlus hamochin*, a time of expanded intellects, can one overcome the forces of evil through *hisbonenus*, which will give birth to holy *gevuros* that can overcome evil.

When Ya'akov Needed Limits

This relates to *Parashas Vayitzei*. Ya'akov went to the home of Lavan. *Lavan* is the Hebrew word for white. White is a color of *chessed*; it represents great love. And yet there is an evil side to white. Consider a world view that claims one can only employ love. This world view claims that there should be no laws, restrictions, or criticism, for they would conflict with the spirit of love. This was the evil that the Biblical Lavan embodied. When Ya'akov went to the house of Lavan, he knew he would have to adopt and acquire holy *gevuros*, to counteract the worldview that was empty of all *Gevurah*. Ya'akov acquired these *gevuros kedoshos* in order to subdue Eisav, to sweeten his brother who was the embodiment of the urge for evil. Let us all embrace *musar*, for when we internalize holy limitations we sweeten the urges for evil.



The Tanya began with questions about how Rabbah could have thought that he was a beinoni. In Lesson Twenty-Eight, the depths of Rabbah's spiritual achievements are revealed. Rabbah was unique. Those who fully overcome the material and transient realm become singular and eternal. Rabbah was such a tzadik!

LESSON | **28** The Unique Rabbah

The end of Chapter Thirteen of the *Tanya* states:

The beinoni is like a sleeping person. Even when he does not feel that he has a yetzer hara, the evil urge is like one who is napping and will wake up. During kerī'as Shema and tefilah, when his heart is burning with love of Hashem (it is a time of gadlus hamochin), and as a result he does not feel the evil urge, the urge is still there, and it can reawaken.

For this reason Rabbah considered himself as though he were a beinoni, though his mouth never ceased from study, and his desire was in God's Torah, day and night, with the passionate craving and longing of a soul yearning for God with overwhelming love, such as experienced during the reciting of the Shema and Amidah. He thought he was a "beinoni" who prays all day, as, indeed, our Sages have said, "Would that a man prayed the whole day long!"

אבל בבינוני הוא ד"מ כאדם שישן שיכול לחזור וליעור משנתו כך הרע בבינוני הוא כישן בחלל השמאלי בשעת ק"ש ותפלה שלבו בוער באהבת ה' ואח"כ יכול להיות חוזר וניעור

ולכן היה רבה מחזיק עצמו כבינוני אף דלא פסיק פומיה מגירסא ובתורת ה' חפצו יומם ולילה בחפיצה וחשיקה ותשוקה ונפש שוקקה לה' באהבה רבה כבשעת ק"ש ותפלה ונדמה בעיניו כבינוני המתפלל כל היום וכמאמר רז"ל הלואי שיתפלל אדם כל היום כולו

The *Tanya* has now answered his original question about Rabbah, which was why Rabbah considered himself to be a *beinoni*. He explains that Rabbah was always learning, and when he learned he felt a great love for *Hashem*, as strong as the love one experiences when properly reciting the *kerī'as Shema*

and *tefilah*. Rabbah was concerned that this powerful feeling of attraction was masking a dormant urge for evil.

Rabbah Was Unique

We must better understand the character of this Jewish spiritual giant, Rabbah bar Nachmeini.¹⁰⁷ The first avenue of exploration involves consideration of the Talmud's account of how he left this world. The Talmud (*Bava Metzi'a* 86a) relates that in Heaven, a question arose about the laws of *nega'im*, impure plagues. The Torah clearly states that if the *baheres*, sickly skin, appears first, and is then followed by *sei'ar lavan*, white hairs, the person is impure. However, if the white hairs appear before the sickly skin, the person is pure. The Heavenly *yeshiva* was immersed in a discussion about a case of *safek*, doubt, in which it isn't known which symptom appeared first. Should we assume that the sickly skin appeared first, and the person is impure, or do we assume the opposite? The consensus in the Heavenly *yeshiva* was that such a situation rendered the person *tamei*, impure. However, the Almighty Himself ruled that the person was pure.

Who could arbitrate such a standoff? The decision was made to approach Rabbah, who was accustomed to saying about himself, "*Ani yachid benega'im, ani yachid be'ohalos*", "I am a singular one in the laws of plagues and I am a singular one in the laws of transferring the death impurity through a common roof". A messenger was dispatched to summon him. However, the Angel of Death could not get near Rabbah, for he was constantly uttering words of Torah. A wind began to blow, and it caused the sound of crashing reeds. Rabbah was distracted from his learning, believing that the noise signified a troop of soldiers trying to get him. During this moment of distraction, the Angel of Death had access to Rabbah, and he took him. As Rabbah left the world, he said, "*Tahor, tahor*", "Pure, pure". At that moment a proclamation came from Heaven and declared, "*Ashrecha Rabbah bar Nachmeini shegufcha tahor veyatzas nishmacha betahor*", "Fortunate you are Rabbah son of

107. Rabbah bar Nachmeini is one of the most famous Sages of the Talmud. He was the head of the *yeshiva* in Pumpedisa for twenty-two years. He was the main student of Rav Huna and Rav Yehudah, and a close friend and colleague to Rav Yosef. He is characterized as the *oker harim*, the one who would uproot mountains with his depth of thought.

Nachmeini, that your body is pure and your soul exited with the word pure". This story is illustrative of the tremendous level of Rabbah, whom even the Angel of Death could not reach, and whose thoughts about the laws of purity were aligned with those of *Hashem* Himself; both *Hashem* and Rabbah felt that in a case of doubt, the person should be considered pure.

Interestingly, we find that the Rambam¹⁰⁸ rules that in the case of *safek baheres kodmah lesei'ar lavan*, the case of doubt we have been discussing, the person is *tamei*, impure. How could this be? Did not Rabbah rule that it is pure, in concordance with the ruling of *Hashem* Himself? What could be clearer than that? The *Kesef Mishnah*¹⁰⁹ explains that we have a guiding principle in Jewish law referred to as *lo bashamayim hi*, Torah is not in Heaven. Because the Torah was given to man, and is no longer in Heaven, even if *Hashem* Himself adopts a position in a halachic dispute, we will not follow that opinion. You might then ask, what about the great Rabbah, who ruled on the same question while still on earth? How could Maimonides rule against him? To that the *Kesef Mishnah* replies that even though Rabbah was indeed on earth when he ruled on this matter, since it was immediately prior to his death when he said the word "pure", he was already on a Heavenly level, and so the *halachah* does not follow his view. This analysis further emphasizes the great heights reached by Rabbah, by illustrating that even while still in this world he was akin to angels, and his opinions were exalted like the opinions of the Almighty, to the extent that the rule that Torah is not in Heaven was applied to him as well.

We have seen that Rabbah characterized himself as *yachid benega'im*, singular in the laws of plagues, and *yachid be'ohalos*, singular in the laws of tents. Rabbah truly merited the title *yachid*, singular one. His hard work throughout his life earned him this name. *Hashem* is termed the *Yechido shel*

108. "Rambam" is the acronym for the full name of Maimonides, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. Maimonides, 1135-1204, was one of the greatest men in Jewish history. He was a great master of *halachah*. He served as the head of the Jewish community of Egypt, as well as personal physician to Salah-a-Din. He wrote a commentary to the *Mishnah*, a compendium of all of Jewish law, many medical books, letters to many Jewish communities addressing their questions of Jewish law and belief, and the *Moreh Nevuchim*, *The Guide to the Perplexed*, a work of Jewish philosophy that was intended to address those of his generation who were swerving off the path of observance.

109. *Kesef Mishnah* is the name of the commentary that Rav Yosef Karo wrote on the writings of the Rambam.

Olam, the singular One of the world. Rabbah, who worked so hard to resemble the Holy One, is also called a *yachid*.

Singular Men

The Talmud also characterizes Shimshon as a *yachid*, singular one.¹¹⁰ Well before the birth of Shimshon, Ya'akov had said about Shimshon's tribe, Dan, "*Dan yadin amo ke'achad shivtei Yisrael*", "Dan will judge his nation like the one of the tribes of Israel" (*Bereishis* 49:16). The Talmud explains that this means he will judge like the One-the Unique One. Like Rabbah, Shimshon resembled *Hashem*. Since he had earned the title of *Yechidi*, he usually waged war without an army.

Rabbah reached the level of accessing the very ideas of *Hashem*. He taught us that *safek baheres kodmah* and *safek sei'ar lavan kodmah* is *tahor*-a person in the doubtful case is considered pure. This is because every man has a *chezkas taharah*, a presumption of purity. We assume people are pure unless proven otherwise. Even though in the case of doubt there actually is a *rei'asa*, a flaw, in this *chazakah*, assumption, since there actually are marks of *baheres* and *sei'ar lavan*, nevertheless the *chezkas taharah* is so strong that we still rule that the person is *tahor*.

Man was created from the dust, which is a place of impurity. The verse in *Iyov* 14:4 tells us, "*Mi yitein tahor mitamei lo echad*", "Who can render the pure from the impure if not one!" The Midrash explains that this verse is teaching that only the One, meaning *Hashem*, can turn the impure into pure. The *echad*, the *yachid*, is the One who makes man *tahor*. Rabbah was singular and connected to this *yachid*, which is why he was the one who revealed the presumption of purity of man!

Rabbah's lesson is a great *chidush*, novel insight. Consider: man was created from the blood of *nidah*, menstruation, which is a place of *tum'ah*. A superficial view would therefore assume that man is impure, or liable to become impure easily. Rabbah reveals a deeper truth, however; he teaches that not only is man *tahor*, but he has a *chezkas taharah*, a presumption of

110. Shimshon was the last judge in the book of judges, *Sefer Shoftim*. He was from the tribe of Dan. *Hashem* sent an angel to tell his parents of his birth before he was born. He was endowed with special holiness all his life. He fought the Philistines and protected Jewish lives.

purity--his default status is purity. In case of doubt we assume that he is still pure! If it were the opposite, and man was assumed to be impure, the *chezkas taharah* would be a *chazakah ha'asuyah lehishtanos*, an assumed state that will inevitably change, and it would not be a *chazakah* at all! Rabbah revealed to us, however, that even though man is filled with *zohamas hanachash*, serpent's filth,¹¹¹ and there are many *tum'os* man might fall into, such as *zav*¹¹² or *tum'as meis*,¹¹³ nevertheless he has a *chezkas taharah*! This is the amazing *chidush* of man: that even though he dwells in a lowly body that tends toward impurity, he maintains his *chezkas taharah*. Rabbah, who reveals the true deep nature of the spiritual soul of man, is the one who teaches this to us.

The Tzadik Shows You Your Greatness

Only a true *tzadik* like Rabbah could reveal so awesome a thought as the *chezkas kashrus vetaharah* of man. A *tzadik* develops his entire personality in order to reveal all of his hidden abilities. Not only does he reveal his own hidden *kochos*, strengths, but he also reveals the hidden *kochos* within other people. This is part of the service of a *tzadik*. When you go to consult with a *tzadik*, he will reveal the great treasure that is you! We are usually unaware of the great fortune that is our soul. The verse says "*Lehodi'a livnei ha'adam gevurosav*", "To let man know of His strengths" (*Tehillim* 145:12). The simple meaning of the verse is that *Hashem* informs man of *Hashem's* strengths; however, it can also mean that *Hashem* informs a person of the *person's* own strengths, which is what the *tzadik* does for us as well. In general, we are unaware of how much potential we have, and therefore we neglect to actualize the great abilities that reside within us.

The Stitchiner Rav, *zt"l*, used to say, "*Halevai*, I wish, the younger generation would know how great they can become". You have a treasure in

111. The Talmud in Tractate *Shabbos* teaches that when the serpent in Eden seduced Eve to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, he also entered her and placed within her and all humans a filthy element, *zohamas hanachash*.

112. *Zav* is the term for a man who is ritually impure due to a recurrent discharge of a fluid called *zivah*.

113. According to the Torah, the most severe form of impurity is the product of intimate contact with a dead body. The impurity resulting from walking over a grave or a dead body, touching the corpse, or being under the same roof or cover as the corpse is called *tum'as meis*.

your hand! You have to know what you can become. When you approach a *tzadik*, observe his level, and allow him to arouse your soul--he will let you know what your soul is. He will awaken the *kochos hanefesh*, soulful abilities, that are in you, and you will see that in fact you too have great *kochos*, and you can reach real and true greatness.

Reb Nachman of Breslov points out that a visit with a *tzadik* is actually an attempt to reclaim a lost fortune. Before each soul comes into this world, it is shown its ultimate portion of paradise, so it has a glimpse of what it is capable of achieving. However, when we are born, we forget what we have seen. This vision becomes an *aveidah*, lost object. Monetary law requires that one know what it is he owns. According to the Rosh¹¹⁴ in *Bava Metzi'a*, if there is something that is in your courtyard but it is unknown to you, it is not considered yours. It is lost! If we are unaware of our *Gan Eden*, our paradise is lost to us. A *tzadik* returns the lost object and shows you your *Gan Eden*. However, beware: dishonest people are not believed when they come to reclaim lost objects. Similarly, a person has to approach the *tzadik* honestly, and not as a trickster. One who comes to a *tzadik* with earnestness, and not because he is really interested in external matters, or trying to trick someone--only because he is seeking to serve *Hashem*, and to rediscover his lost *Gan Eden*--will be shown his true *kochos hanefesh*. The *tzadik* will bring them out, and the person will be able to see his *Gan Eden*.

It is rule built into the creation that a *tzadik* can reveal the hidden *tahor* that is in man. A *tzadik* like Rabbah, who said "*tahor*", is especially suited to reveal a person's hidden purity. When Rabbah said "*tahor*", he was referring to each and every person. Rabbah revealed the presumption of purity! Even when not in the presence of the *tzadik*, our inner purity creates a presumption of purity. Rabbah left this world with the word "pure" on his lips to teach the lesson that a *tzadik* restores man to his Garden of Eden, and reveals his innate purity.

114. Rabbeinu Asher ben Yechiel, 1250-1328/5010-5088, is known as the Rosh. He was born in Germany. Due to the attempts of the Germans to kidnap him and hold him for ransom, he fled to Spain where he served as the Chief Rabbi of Toledo. He was one of the greatest expositors of Jewish law in our history.

Be Unique

Rabbah ascended on high with the declaration that he was *yachid benega'im*, *yachid be'ohalos*, unique in the laws of plague impurity, and unique in the laws of transferring the death impurity through a common roof. We have already analyzed the significance of his declaration of "*tahor*", pure. Now let us discover the meaning of the adjective "*yachid*", singular. A singular person has a relationship with the Almighty so deep that he feels he is Hashem's only child.

Parashas Vayishlach describes Ya'akov as singular as well, when it says, "*Vayivaser Ya'akov levado*", "and Ya'akov remained alone" (*Bereishis* 32:25). He was alone in the unique level that he reached. Let us examine this story in greater detail.

Following his struggle with the angel, the angel told Ya'akov, "*Lo Ya'akov ye'amer od shimcha ki im Yisrael*", "you will no longer be called Ya'akov, rather you will be called Yisrael" (*Bereishis* 32:29). Later in the *parashah*, Hashem also renames him Yisrael. The angel who bestowed this new name upon Ya'akov and then blessed him was the *sar*, master angel, of *Eisav*. He is also known as the *samech mem*, the Angel of Death.

Ya'akov's Change and Blessing

Hilchos Berachos, the laws of blessings, includes the concept of *nishtaneh lema'alyusa*, change for the better. When an item improves in quality, it now merits a more specific blessing. For example, we recite the general blessing of *borei peri ha'eitz*, thanks to the One who created the fruit of the tree, over grapes. This blessing is also recited on most other fruits, such as apples, pears and mangos. However, when grapes are made into wine, we recite a more singular blessing: *borei peri hagefen*, thanks to He who creates the fruit of the vine. The more elevated product-wine-now merits a more specific blessing. We can apply the same concept to Ya'akov's receipt of a new name and blessing-he was experiencing *nishtaneh lema'alyusa*, a change for the better, and now merited a more individualized blessing.

Chazal ask and answer the following question: "Why was man created alone? So that each person will say, *bishvili nivra ha'olam*, the world was created for me" (*Sanhedrin* 37a). This is not a mandate for a person to simply imagine that the world was only created for him; he actually has to *feel* this

way. The first created man, Adam *Harishon*, knew that he was unique, and that the world was created for him, as there were no other humans. In fact, every human being is called an Adam, and the truth is that each of us has to feel as the original Adam did--that the whole universe was created only for me. One might ask, how can I feel that I am the only created being when there are so many other people out there? In the spiritual realm, this is not a question--there can be many "only ones".

Consider this example: if a person has many children, and one gets sick, he would never say, "What is so terrible about this? I have another ten kids who are healthy". That would be insanity! Each child is uniquely meaningful, each is a *yachid*! What this child means to me, no other child ever will! The love between a father and a child is a spiritual connection that relates to the *shoresh hanefesh*, root of the soul. That is why *tzadikim* never worked to break this connection. They would break *ta'avav achilah*, the appetite for food, and *ta'avav hakavod*, the desire for honor, but they would never break the connection between father and son, because the connection between father and son is spiritual. In the spiritual realm you can have many only ones, so there actually can be ten only children in a family! There can be thousands of *yechidim*. This is related to the matter of unification below, *yechidah tata'ah*; in *alma diproda*, the realm of separation, there can also be uniqueness and oneness.

Another example of the possibility of many "onlies" can be appreciated when we observe how a *tzadik* fulfills a *mitzvah*. He does it with such passion that it seems as if this is the only *mitzvah* that exists. He sits in the *sukkah* as if there is no other *mitzvah* at all. There is no decrease in the attachment he has to this *mitzvah* because of the fact that there are another 612 *mitzvos*. Each of the 613 *mitzvos* is deeply appreciated as if it were the only *mitzvah* in the world.

This is the meaning of the statement of the Sages that states, "*Toldoseihen shel tzadikim*, the offspring of the pious, are *ma'asim tovim*, good deeds" (*Bereishis Rabbah* 30:6, see also Rashi *Bereishis* 6:9). Their actions are like children. Just like in a family there is no less love for one child because there are other children, so it is with the good deeds of *tzadikim*. Each good deed is performed with the same level of love lavished on an only. The *tzadik* puts all of his life and emotion into each *mitzvah*!¹¹⁵

115. *Sfas Emes* on *Parashas Noach* teaches, "The primary offspring of the *tzadikim* are *mitzvos* and good

Every Jew is an only child to *Hashem*. The particular joy you give to the *Shechinah* can be provided by you, and no one else. The service, *avodah*, of a person cannot be replaced even by the *avodah* of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. This is the meaning of the statement of the Rambam, who declares that each person can reach the level of Moshe *Rabbeinu*. You can be as important to *Hashem* as was Moshe, because you alone provide Him with a unique satisfaction that even Moshe could not provide! When we overcome the *nisyonos*, challenges, that we have, we are fulfilling our unique mission, and this creates a special *nachas ruach* for *Hashem*. Moshe *Rabbeinu* never had to walk down our modern streets and avert his eyes. We have unique tests and unique ways to give *Hashem* pleasure. Each of us is a unique and only creation.¹¹⁶

When man works on himself, and changes himself for the better, he merits a special *hashgachah*, supervision, from above. When man becomes a *tzadik* he merits to see revealed the *hashgachah peratis*, personal supervision, that rests upon him. King David taught, "*Yodei'a Hashem yemei temimim*", "*Hashem* intimately knows the days of the perfect" (*Tehillim* 37:18). This verse teaches that just as there was a clear *hashgachah peratis* for Adam *Harishon*, so it is with a *tzadik*. In truth, everyone is guided with *hashgachah peratis*. Unfortunately, however, we do not generally merit seeing this guidance. We may see the hand of Providence in the big picture, or in the general supervision and direction of *Klal Yisrael*. However, we often do not perceive the guidance of *Hashem* on a personal level. A *tzadik*, however, will see the *hashgachah* that guides him with the same clarity that he sees *Hashem's* guidance of the Jewish people as a whole. He senses how *Hashem* cares for him in an individualized and personalized way. Such a man, who has worked on himself to reach the level of *yechidi*, is like the grapes that merit a more

deeds...only a *tzadik* who attaches all his life to the *mitzvah* has a good deed that is a child. From our flesh we are to learn about the Almighty! (*Iyov* 19:26). Just as in a physical sense creating, forming, and raising children require all of a person's energy, creating *mitzvos* that are children is achieved when the *tzadik* performs the *mitzvah* with all of his life!"

116. Rashi in *Parashas Va'eira* (*Shemos* 6:26) teaches that sometimes Moshe's name appears before Aharon's and sometimes Aharon's name appears before Moshe's, to teach that they are equal. Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, asked, how is it possible that they are equal? After all, no one can reach the level of Moshe; one of the pillars of Jewish belief is that no one will achieve the level of prophecy of Moshe. Among other answers, he suggests that each Jew gives *Hashem* pleasure in a unique way. Moshe could not do what Aharon did, just as Aharon could not do what Moshe did. In this sense they were equal. Each of us has a unique way to give *Hashem* pleasure!

individualized blessing once they improve and become wine. This person will merit seeing *Hashem's* hand guiding him on his personal journey through life.

In the memoir Dignity to Survive, Rav Yona Emanuel related a story that demonstrated the special divine supervision that a tzadik and those who follow him merit to see in their lives.

"The Gestapo transported us to Amsterdam. We were taken to S.S. headquarters, and then on to the 'Jewish theater'--a central depot where all the Jews caught throughout the country were held. A few days later we were summoned to appear before an S.S. committee that would decide our fate. As we stood tensely in line waiting to enter the committee room, an old acquaintance by the name of Reb Chaim Ehrenreich, a Belzer chassid, suddenly approached Father. He hurriedly informed my father that he was expecting the imminent arrival of a Honduran passport, but that all he possessed in the meantime was a written statement from the embassy confirming that the passport had been ordered. He was in a quandary as to what to say to the S.S. committee. How could he possibly convince the Germans not to send him to the camps in Poland?

Father thought for a moment. He then instructed Reb Chaim to tell the Germans that, due to his anxiety and confusion during his arrest, he had taken the wrong documents with him, and that he would need to write home to receive the Honduran passport. My father assured Reb Chaim that by the time the deferral expired, the passport would arrive, and that he and his entire family would be out of danger.

Reb Chaim Ehrenreich was clearly disappointed by my father's suggestion. He was convinced that the ploy would not work--he felt it was just too obvious a lie. Yet Father adamantly insisted that Reb Chaim tell the Germans exactly what he had told him.

The line moved forward, and as Reb Chaim's turn approached, he lost his nerve and returned to my father's side once again, telling him that he was afraid of stating such an obvious lie before the S.S. committee. Father did not mince words with him--he literally commanded Reb Chaim to say exactly what he had instructed him to and not to change a single word.

The truth is that my father's suggestion did seem rather feeble. However, to our surprise it worked--Reb Chaim was granted a deferral of a week, by which time the Honduran passport arrived. As a consequence, he and his wife

and daughter were spared from being sent to the death camps. Instead, they were sent to Bergen-Belsen with us. Reb Chaim continued to seek my father's advice throughout our incarceration in Bergen-Belsen. I remember frequently seeing my father listening to Reb Chaim with utmost patience, and then giving detailed instructions regarding various problems which they encountered in the camp. Once I saw Father even admonish Reb Chaim for not exercising sufficient caution.

I met Reb Chaim again in The Hague approximately two years after the war ended. I had come to the city to participate in the monthly study convention of Po'alei Agudas Yisrael. When Reb Chaim saw me, he requested that I accompany him to his home, for he said he had something of great importance to tell me.

After we had entered his simple quarters, he took out a photo of the Belzer Rebbe from his pocket and said to me with emotion, 'Do you remember the instructions your father gave me in the waiting room before I faced the S.S. committee? At first it seemed like such a strange piece of advice! I was really at a loss over what to do! Your father did not speak to me in his usual calm way. Rather, he literally ordered me to follow his instructions, as though he were relaying someone else's message.

I want you to know that I held on to this picture of the Belzer Rebbe, Rav Aharon of Belz. The Rebbe could not be everywhere in order to protect his chassidim, so he sent faithful envoys to carry out this task. I have no doubt that the Rebbe appointed your father, zt"l, as his personal envoy to save me and my family from death. From the moment I received the seven-day deferral, I realized that this was the case. I continued seeking your father's advice throughout my stay in the camps, and I faithfully followed his word, for I was absolutely positive that your father was the Belzer Rebbe's personal envoy".¹¹⁷

Vayivaser Ya'akov levado. Ya'akov remained alone. Ya'akov reached the level of a *yechidi*. The Midrash links *Vayivaser Ya'akov levado* to the words, "*Venishgav Hashem levado*", "And God will be exalted alone" (*Yeshayahu* 2:11). Ya'akov was *domeh la'Elyon*, resembled the One above. Because he was a *yachid*, he was *nishtaneh lema'alyusa*, changed for the better, and became Yisrael instead of Ya'akov. This change occurred when he conquered the Angel

117. *Dignity to Survive*, pages 131-133.

of Death, his challenge. As a result of his victory, he experienced a change for the better, and he now resembled the Only One as a *yechidi*.

Each person at some point can change and acquire a new name. Adam was created as a Divine creature, and he was made a *yechidi*. Had he never sinned, all of his children would have attained the same level. Had he never sinned, each human would feel, "I am special to *Hashem*; the whole universe exists for me!" But he did sin, and that cost him the title of *yechidi*. Because of the sin, the decree was issued: "Dust you are and to dust you shall return" (*Bereishis* 3:19). He had to die and shed the fallen non-*yechidi* existence. Eventually, however, man will once again rise from the dead and rectify the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Each resurrected man will feel that he is a *yechidi*. When he will arise, he will return to the level of *levado*.

Eisav and Ya'akov

Ya'akov lived a spiritual life attached to *Olam Haba*, the World to Come, while Eisav lived in this world. The name "Eisav" comes from the word *asui*, completely made; Eisav was a person who felt himself to be fully formed, and he identified entirely with life in this world.¹¹⁸ For Eisav, the future world of infinite delights, *Olam Haba*, is the satisfaction of the material pleasures of this world, *Olam Haze*. He has no aspirations for the future spiritual realm, because the delights of the physical world are all he needs. In contrast, Ya'akov is focused entirely on the World to Come. This is reflected in his name, *י עקב*, a *yud* followed by the word *eikev*. The *yud* represents the World to Come,¹¹⁹ and *eikev* means the heel, which is the very end of the body. Ya'akov is always focused on the ultimate end, which is the purpose of life--achieving the World

118. *Shem Mishmuel* on *Parashas Toldos* points out that our Sages say that Eisav used to fool his father by asking him how to tithe salt and straw. Why did Eisav ask about things like salt and straw? According to Jewish law, they are not products that must be tithed! Why didn't Eisav ask questions that were actually relevant? Eisav is this world and Ya'akov is the next. This world should be treated like salt and straw. Salt is secondary to meat! One cannot eat a plate of salt! Only a small measure is added to make food tasty. Man must be primarily Ya'akov-like, with a bit of indulgence in this world. This world should be secondary to the eternal realm, the next world. Eisav asked about salt, for his soul attracted him to salt, and his error lay in exaggerating the importance of salt (pages 260-261).

119. See Rashi (*Bereishis* 2:4), who teaches that this world was created with the letter *hei* and the world to come with the letter *yud*.

to Come. He always looks to the eternal world and seeks to bring it even to the lowest realm of this world. His primary residence is not this world. In this world he is a *nirdaf*, one who is pursued, for it is not his true place. Ya'akov truly lives in *Olam Haba*.

A vivid example of the difference between descendants of Ya'akov and heirs of Eisav occurred during the Holocaust. Reb Chatzkel Levenstein¹²⁰ spent the war years in Shanghai. To escape the oppressive heat, there were gentiles who stretched out and fell asleep in the streets. Reb Chatzkel was walking home with a student of his one night and the young man asked, "Why is it that our community members are not outside sleeping in the street?" Reb Chatzkel answered, "The gentiles feel that this world is their place and home. A Jew knows, however, that *Olam Haze* is not his world. He can never relax and spread himself out in it. Those who channel the legacy from Eisav feel that this realm is their place and home; since a Jew lacks that feeling, his experience in this world is always limited".

Blessings and Eternity

The verse states, "*Vayehi acharei mos Avraham vayivarech Hashem es Yitzchak beno*", "After Avraham died, *Hashem* blessed Yitzchak his son" (*Bereishis* 25:11). Rashi offers two interpretations of this verse. One is *bircho birchas aveilim*, God blessed him with the blessing given to the mourners. The second is that Avraham had declined to give Yitzchak a blessing, for he did not want that blessing to benefit Yitzchak's child Eisav, so after he died, *Hashem* Himself gave Yitzchak the blessing. This second interpretation is difficult to understand. If *Hashem* was willing to bless Yitzchak, why would Avraham not do so?

The answer lies in the fact that the two explanations of Rashi actually complement one another. Rashi first mentions that *Hashem* consoled

120. Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, 1885-1974/5645-5734, was one of the great *musar* giants of the twentieth century, and was known as Rav Chatzkel. Born in Warsaw, at age five he was orphaned of his mother, and at age thirteen he went out to work. After his wages were stolen from him, he decided to dedicate his life to the study of Torah and *musar*. He served as the *mashgiach ruchani*, spiritual guidance officer, of the Mirrer *yeshiva* throughout its tumultuous years in Shanghai during World War II. After the war, he served as the *mashgiach ruchani* of the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, Israel. His lectures were collected and published in the work *Or Yechezkel*.

Yitzchak. What is consolation? *Hashem* gave Yitzchak a glow and light from *techiyas hameisim*, the future world where the dead will come back to life. After all, the only real comfort possible in the face of the sadness of death is the feeling that the dead will once again live. One Jew can give *nechama* to another, because there is a *mitzvah* to comfort and to reveal the light of *techiyas hameisim*. When one fulfills this *mitzvah*, it is a *segulah* to bring the light of belief in *techiyas hameisim* to the mourner, and that provides comfort.

Interestingly, we find that even people who are very far from religious observance are stringent in the area of *hilchos aveilus*, laws of respect to the dead, such as reciting the *Kaddish*. They recite *Kaddish* diligently, and they approach the rabbi with questions about mourning. This is because every mourner feels that his relative still lives. It goes against the nature of creation to accept that a person is gone forever. Even against a person's own better judgment, he can sense eternal life. He feels intrinsically that there is another realm, and that the soul is living on, and therefore he is moved to fulfill the laws of *aveilus*. This is a great *tikun* that *Hashem* has given to souls--even those who do not keep His laws have a basic belief in some element of *techiyas hameisim*, and this connects them to *Olam Haba*, the world of *techiyas hameisim*. Through this, they can merit a portion of *techiyas hameisim*, for they are connected to it. This feeling is the source of all consolation; there is nothing else that can provide comfort in the dark shadow of death.

When *Hashem* comforted Yitzchak, Yitzchak felt this light, the secret of the eternal life of the soul, *techiyas hameisim*. On that very day Eisav denied *techiyas hameisim*, when he said, "*Anochi holeich lamus*", "I am going to death" (*Bereishis* 25:32). Then he said, "*Lamah zeh li bechorah?* What do I need to be the firstborn for? Why do *avodah*, Divine service?" *Avodah* is related to the *olam hanitzchi*, the eternal world, but since Eisav did not believe in the *olam hanitzchi*, *anochi holeich lamus!* The Midrash says explicitly that on this day, Eisav claimed that if Avraham could die, there is no law and no judge, and he denied *techiyas hameisim*. He then sold the status of being firstborn, the *bechorah*.

At this time, Yitzchak was meriting a light of *techiyas hameisim*, and Eisav should have attached himself to the powerful light of eternity that was entering the world, just as our own brothers and sisters who are otherwise non-believers do in a time of death, when they choose to embrace the rituals of mourning. But Eisav rejected this attachment and connection, and he chose

instead to disconnect from service and eternity. He sold the *bechorah* and the holiness that it stood for. As a result, now *Hashem* could bless Yitzchak. Avraham had declined to bless Yitzchak because he did not want the blessing to reach Eisav, but once *Hashem* consoled Yitzchak, which resulted in Eisav disconnecting from Yitzchak and from eternity, now *Hashem* could bless Yitzchak, for Eisav would no longer benefit from these blessings. Thus the two answers of Rashi complement one another.

Through *techiyas hameisim*, man merits to reach the level of *yachid be'olamo*, unique in his own world. At *techiyas hameisim* each Jew will feel that he is the only one, as he will relate to the level of uniqueness that was experienced by Adam before the sin. *Techiyas hameisim* is a return to the level of *yachid* enjoyed by Adam *Harishon* prior to his fall.

Vayivaser Ya'akov levado--when Ya'akov conquered the Angel of Death, he achieved the level of Yisrael, which is the level of *yachid*. He conquered death, and so he became attached to eternal life. The *chiyus nitzchi*, eternal life, does not die. Ya'akov annulled the Angel of Death, who only exists before we enter the world of *chiyus nitzchi*. Ya'akov is *yud eikev*--he is focused on the future. In contrast, *ישראל*, Yisrael, is composed of the letters *לי ראש*, *li rosh*, to me is the head--because he has already reached the goal of *olam hanitzchi*.

A Jew does not die--he lives forever due to *bittul Mal'ach Hamaves*, nullification of the Angel of Death. Because Ya'akov entered the world of *chiyus nitzchi*, he merited to a change, a *shinui lema'alyusa*. And this change merited him the *berachah peratis*, because just as grapes--turned-into-wine merit a more singular blessing, so did the more elevated Yisrael require a special *berachah*.

Now we can understand why, after the story of Ya'akov's encounter with the angel, the Torah teaches that *Hashem* changed his name to Yisrael, and as happened in the case of Yitzchak, *vayivarech oso sham*, He blessed Ya'akov there. Rashi says that *Hashem* blessed Ya'akov with *tanchumei aveilim*, consolation for mourners, for *tanchumei aveilim* is the sensation of eternal life, and now that Ya'akov grasped the level of *yechidi*, which is the level of Yisrael and of eternity, he could receive the blessing of *nichum aveilim*. Now he had become an Adam and a *yechidi*.

The Two Names of Eisav

Like Ya'akov, Eisav had two names. His birth name was Eisav, but when he denied the value of eternal service and sold the privilege of being Yitzchak's firstborn for the *adom*, red lentil soup, he received the name Edom. Just as Ya'akov received his second name when he believed in *techiyas hameisim*, an event represented by his defeat of the Angel of Death in a nighttime struggle, Eisav got his second name when he denied the transcendent realm. "Edom" is a term related to death; its root is similar to *dumah*, which means silence. The dead are characterized as *yordei dumah*, those who descend to eternal silence. That is the death that is without *techiyas hameisim*.

While Adam is on the level of *nivra adam yechidi*, Edom represents the level of the being who has no place in the world of *nivra adam yechidi*. Edom resides in the world of the many, not the world of *yechidim*. In the world of many, Eisav has a spot. The Torah states, "*vayikra'u shemo Eisav*", which is in the plural form: "and they called his name Eisav" (*Bereishis* 25:25). He has no place in the spiritual world of one, in the realm of individuals. But about Ya'akov it says, "*vayikra shemo Ya'akov*", "And He called him Ya'akov" (*Bereishis* 25:26). *Hashem* called him Ya'akov, for Ya'akov is connected to the *yachid*. Eisav will never be *domeh* to the *Yechido shel Olam*. By denying the world of *techiyas hameisim*, he changed for the worse, and got the name Edom. Edom is the opposite of Yisrael. Yisrael is the name of a nation. A nation appears to be many, but our national identity is singular, and we are a collection of *yechidim*. Eisav as a nation is known as Edom, because he is silent in the realm of unique ones.

The two root impurities that include all other forms of impurity are *nega'im* and *ohalos*. All plagues are forms of death; as the Sages point out, *metzora chashuv kemeis--a metzora*, a person with the skin plague, is considered a dead man. *Ohalos* discusses the transferring of impurity from the dead through sharing a common roof. To be a *yachid* in *nega'im* and *ohalos* is to be on the level of being *mevatel*, annulling, all the forms of *tum'ah* and death. Such a person is a being of *yachid*, and so the *Mal'ach Hamaves* cannot reach him.

What Rabbah actually did was kill the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination. Remember that Rabbah considered himself to be a *beinoni*. The *Tanya* explained that this was because of the fact that he was always learning, which led him to think that in fact he had a *yetzer hara*, which was simply masked

by his holy feelings. Abaye said, you are attached to the *chiyus nitzchi*, and you are a *yechidi*. You are a person who is one. You do not have the *zeh vezeh shoftan*, this one and this one judge them--there are no two people in you, you are one! Your body has been transformed! You are *chiyus nitzchi*! Rabbah was connected to the future realm, when it will be revealed that man is a *yechidi*. This is why he established that man has a *chezkas taharah*, in spite of his physical body. Man can be *domeh leYechido shel Olam* and be a pure and holy being. As a *yachid*, Rabbah resembled the One and only Hashem!

This quality of love of which we speak in the case of the beinoni people which is attained at the time of prayer by virtue of the preponderance of the Divine soul, etc., is, in comparison with the degree attained by the tzadikim who serve God in perfect truth, not called "true service" at all, since it passes and disappears after prayer, and it is written, "The lip of truth shall be established forever, but a lying tongue is but for a moment".

והנה מדת אהבה זו האמורה בבינונים בשעת התפלה ע"י התגברות הנפש האלהית כו' הנה לגבי מדרגת הצדיקים עובדי ה' באמת לאמיתו אין בחי' אהבה זו נקראת בשם עבודת אמת כלל מאחר שחולפת ועוברת אחר התפלה וכתוב שפת אמת תכון לעד ועד ארגיעה לשון שקר

Truth is a lasting level, falsehood a passing inspiration.

Nevertheless, in relation to the rank of the beinoni people, it is regarded as a truly perfect service in terms of their [level of] truth, in each man relative to his standing in the ranks of the beinonim. For in their case, too, their love, during their prayers, may be termed "the lip of truth shall be established forever", since their Divine soul has the power to reawaken this kind of love constantly, during its preponderance in time of prayer day after day, by means of an appropriate [mental] preparation, each soul according to its intrinsic quality and rank.

ואעפ"כ לגבי מדרגת הבינונים נקראת עבודה תמה באמת לאמיתו שלהם איש איש כפי מדרגתו במדרגת הבינונים והריני קורא באהבתם שבתפלתם ג"כ שפת אמת תכון לעד הואיל ובכח נפשם האלהית לחזור ולעורר בחי' אהבה זו לעולם בהתגברותה בשעת התפלה מדי יום ביום ע"י הכנה הראויה לכל נפש כפי ערכה

Prayer and Preparation

Another concept that we see from the *Tanya* is the importance of preparation for *davening*. One does not just jump in and *daven*. *Davening*

requires *kevi'us*, an established base. It is intended to leave an impression on the entire day that follows, and it should be the focal point of the day, especially *Shacharis*, the morning service. We have to raise ourselves to reach a true *gadlus hamochin* through prayer, and then remain attached to *Hashem* the entire day.

It is worthwhile to invest in and work at achieving a strong *davening*. From the Talmud we see that a good *davening* of *Shacharis* can enable us to merit a good *davening* of *Minchah* and of *Ma'ariv*. Regarding *Minchah*, the Talmud (*Yoma* 28b) says, "*Tzlosa deAvraham michi mishachari koselei*", "When the walls of the temple darkened (shortly after midday) it was the time to *daven Minchah*, the prayer of Avraham". Why does the Talmud call *Minchah* the prayer of Avraham? It was Yitzchak, after all, who established *Minchah*. We can understand this with help from the Ari, who says that the *ha'aros*, illuminations, of *Shacharis* return during *Minchah*. In other words, you cannot have a good *Minchah* without the help of *Shacharis*.

This insight can also help us understand another puzzling aspect of the Talmudic statement about *Minchah*--why did it say that the time for *Minchah* is when the walls darken, which is shortly after midday? The afternoon prayer is to parallel the *korban tamid shel bein ha'arbayim*, daily afternoon sacrifice. The daily afternoon sacrifice was at the earliest offered a half hour after midday, and usually it was offered later in the afternoon. How can immediately after midday be an ideal time for *Minchah*? The answer is that we need the help of *Shacharis* for our *Minchah*! Thus, the closer we can proximate *Minchah* to *Shacharis* the better. *Tzlosa deAvraham michi mishachar kosel*, for if at this time you *daven* a *Minchah*, it will be linked to the *Shacharis* that preceded it.

Tzadikim put tremendous effort into preparing for *Shacharis*. The *Imrei Yosef*¹²¹ would say, "I cannot *daven Shacharis* before one", meaning, "only when I reach the level of one, of *yichud*, and *yachid*, can I *daven Shacharis*". The *Mishnah* says, "*Chassidim harishonim hayu shohin sha'ah ahas umispallelin*", "The earlier pious ones would prepare for a single hour and then pray"

121. Rav Yosef Meir Weiss, 1838-1909/5598-5669, was a great chassidic Rebbe and master of Kabbalah. He was the founder of the Spinka chassidic community. He was very devoted to Rav Shalom Rokeach of Belz. He authored the work *Imrei Yosef*.

(*Berachos* 5:1). This meant that only when they felt the *achas*, the *yechidah leyachdach*, uniqueness to make You unique, would they commence their *Shacharis*.

I heard from the Amshinover Rebbe that his *Zaide* would daven each *tefilah* at the last possible moment. He was once preparing to say *Ma'ariv* at the same time that his son was arising to say *Shacharis*, and he said, "As long as it is night, there is hope that we can have a good *Ma'ariv*". In other words, he spent the entire night trying to prepare himself for *Ma'ariv*. The whole night long, he thought, "I am not yet ready for *Ma'ariv*", and he waited until the last possible minute, when waiting was no longer an option.

This was the way of *tzadikim*. They put all of their energy into the *mitzvah* that they were doing, to the extent that it entered their very bones. They would focus on the meaning of a statement like "*baruch atah Hashem*", "blessed are You, *Hashem*". The main *gadlus hamochin*, expanded consciousness, and the main feeling of the *Nefesh Elohis* was felt by them during their *davening*. And in this way they would arrive at a real *panim befanim*, face to face, with *Hashem*. This is why we have been created--to reach *Hashem* and to attach to Him. At a level of *gadlus hamochin*, there is no challenge or fight with the *yetzer hara*!

The demonic opponent of our father Ya'akov said, "*Shalcheini ki alah hashachar*", "Send me for the morning star has risen" (*Bereishis* 32:27). The *Zohar* explains that once the day dawns and there is light, there is no longer room for the *yetzer hara*. When there is a *madreigah* in Torah and *tefilah*, and when a person reaches the *gadlus hamochin*, a revelation of Godliness, the *yetzer hara* flees! We need to learn Torah in depth, and to toil to understand and pray with devotion! The *Tanya* is referencing the tremendous *segulah* of *tefilah*, which is that through a really good *davening* one can open up great spiritual levels.

For truth is the attribute of Jacob, who is called the "Middle bolt which secures [everything] from end to end", from the highest gradations and degrees to the end of all grades. And in each gradation and plane it fixes its bolt through the most central point, which is the point and quality of its attribute of truth. The attribute of truth is an

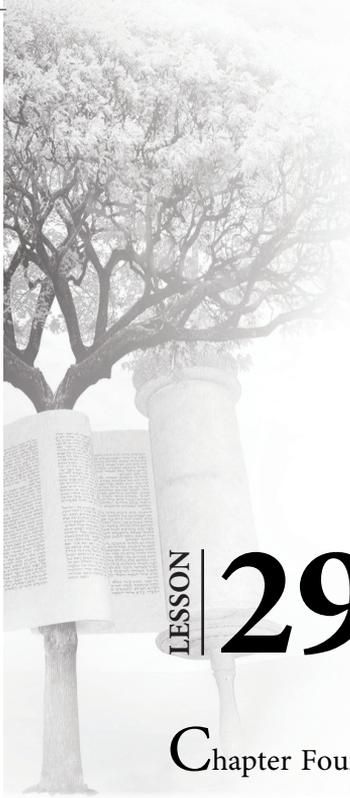
כי הנה מדת אמת היא מדתו של יעקב הנקרא בריח התיכון המבריא מן הקצה אל הקצה מרום המעלות ומדרגות עד סוף כל דרגין ובכל מעלה ומדרגה מבריא תוך נקודה האמצעית שהיא נקודת ובחי' מדת אמת שלה ומדת אמת היא נחלה בלי מצרים ואין לה שיעור למעלה עד רום המעלות וכל

unbounded inheritance which has no limit upwards to the highest degrees, while all lower gradations and degrees are as nothing compared with those that are superior to them. (As is known to those who are familiar with the Esoteric Discipline, that the quality which is, as it were, the "head" and "intellect" of lower grades, is inferior to the so-called "soles" and "feet" of the grades above them. Compare the statement of our Sages, "The feet of the chayos measure up to all").

מעלות ומדרגות שלמטה הם כאין
 לגבי מעלות ומדרגות שלמעלה מהן
 וכידוע ל"ח שבחי' ראש ומוחין של
 מדרגות תחתונות הן למטה מבחי'
 עקביים ורגלי מדרגות עליונות מהן
 וכמאמר רז"ל רגלי החיות כנגד כולן:

The attribute of *emes*, truth, moves from the top to the bottom, as is reflected in the ladder that Ya'akov saw in his dream. The *Tanya* teaches that there is a *midah* of *emes* corresponding to each level. This is amazing! Whatever level you are, serve *Hashem* with your particular level of truth, and you will merit *hashra'as haShechinah*, the Divine Presence resting upon you. *Hashem* does not expect of you the *bilti laHashem levado*, only to God alone, of Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. But you can sincerely avoid honor and give glory to those who are pious instead of to those who are famous--reach *Hashem* in truth in accordance with your level. Wherever you are, you can truly connect to *Hashem*.

In any world, in the middle there is a *Beis Hamikdash*. In each world there is a place of *hashra'as haShechinah*. Be *davuk* at your appropriate and true level, and you will reach the *emes* of your *madreigah* and the *hashra'as haShechinah* of your level.



Each generation has a unique challenge. We who live now must contend with a world of no certainties or commitments. Lesson Twenty-Nine reveals that we have much to be certain about. As Jews our religion has historical fact on its side. We also have an innate attraction for Hashem. We are blessed with a unique, strong, and certain innate attraction for Hashem.

LESSON

29 Jewish Love for Hashem

Chapter Fourteen in the *Tanya* states:

<i>Behold the level of beinoni is attainable to each person</i>	והנה מדת הבינוני היא מדת כל אדם
<i>Everyone should pursue the level of beinoni, for it is within reach of each person at every time</i>	ואחריה כל אדם ימשוך שכל אדם יכול להיות בינוני בכל עת ובכל שעה

Every person can be a *beinoni*, and this level is accessible at any time. Not everyone can turn the bad within them into good, and thereby reach the level of a *tzadik*. In fact, even someone who can become a *tzadik* may not be able to reach that level at all times. But the level of *beinoni* is accessible to every person at any time.

<i>Because the beinoni does not revile evil- for that is a feeling entrusted to the heart, and not all times are alike. [His task is] only to "turn away from evil and do good", in actual practice-in deed, speech, or thought, wherein the choice, ability and freedom are given to every man that he may act, speak and think even what is contrary to the desire of his heart and diametrically opposed to it.</i>	כי הבינוני אינו מואס ברע שזהו דבר המסור ללב ולא כל העתים שוות אלא סור מרע ועשה טוב דהיינו בפועל ממש במעשה דבור ומחשבה שבהם הבחירה והיכולת והרשות נתונה לכל אדם לעשות ולדבר ולחשוב גם מה שהוא נגד תאות לבו והפכה ממש
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Even when a person has a desire for a matter that is prohibited, or even for a matter that is heter, but is kelipas nogah (which if done shelo lesheim Shamayim is an aveirah), one can overcome it and completely distract his mind from it; he can tell his heart I do not want to be a rasha who is detached from Hashem even for a single moment. As it is written, "Your sins separated you from Your God".

גם מה שהוא נגד תאות לבו והפכה ממש כי גם בשעה שהלב חומד ומתאוה איזו תאוה גשמיית בהיתר או באיסור ח"ו יכול להתגבר ולהסיח דעתו ממנה לגמרי באמרו ללבו אינני רוצה להיות רשע אפי' שעה אחת כי אינני רוצה להיות מובדל ונפרד ח"ו מה' אחד בשום אופן כדכתיב עונותיכם מבדילים וגו'

The truth is that if a person pushed away sin with all of his strength, in Heaven they know that he put forth his maximum effort. Even if he still harbors desire for the sin, he is no longer considered in violation of the commandment, "*Velo sasuru acharei levavchem ve'acharei eineichem*", "And do not stray after your hearts and eyes" (*Bamidbar* 15:39). On the contrary; each moment spent fighting the *yetzer hara* raises sparks and accomplishes a great *tikun*. Later, the *Tanya* further discusses the fact that man should know that his battle with the *yetzer hara* gives great pleasure to *Hashem*. Here, what the *Tanya* is teaching us is that *hirhur beratzon*, willful fantasizing, is within a person's control. A person always has the ability to hold himself back from delving into and willfully desiring prohibited matters. When it comes to the realm of *befo'al*, actually violating prohibitions and fulfilling *mitzvos*, one always has freedom of choice. The *beinoni* is a person who is always making the right choice. A person always has the ability to choose, and so can always be a *beinoni*. There is never a good excuse not to be a *beinoni*.

Rather I wish to cleave to Him, with my Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah, in their garments of action, speech, and thoughts about Hashem, His Torah, and His mitzvos, from the hidden love in my heart for Hashem, which is there just as it is in every Jewish heart, for Jews are called Ohavei Shemecha, Lovers of Your Name.

רק אני רוצה לדבקה בו נפשי רוחי ונשמתו בהתלבשן בשלשה לבושו ית' שהם מעשה דבור ומחשבה בה' ותורתו ומצותיו מאהבה מסותרת שבלבי לה' כמו בלב כללוי ישראל שנקראו אוהבי שמך

The Jewish nation as a whole are *Ohavei Shemecha*, and what is true about the *klal*, the community, is also true about the *perat*, the individual. Deep down every Jew has a great love for *Hashem*.

Even the kal shebekalim, the lightest of the light, is an ohev Hashem and willing to give his life for Hashem. Why does he do the aveirah? The ruach shtus, spirit of lunacy, enters him and it causes him to forget. It makes him think that he can perform the sin and not disconnect from Hashem! He thinks he is not detaching from Hashem with his sin, this is why he performs the sin, but I should tell myself I do not want to be a fool, who denies reality!

ואפי' קל שבקלים יכול למסור נפשו על קדושת ה' ולא נופל אנכי ממנו בודאי אלא שנכנס בו רוח שטות ונדמה לו שבעבירי זו עודנו ביהדותו ואין נשמתו מובדלת מאלהי ישראל וגם שוכח אהבתו לה' המסותרת בלבו אבל אני אינני רוצה להיות שוטה כמוהו לכפור האמת

I do not want to disconnect from *Hashem*! I want to fulfill the Torah and the *mitzvos*. Would any of us say, "We want to disconnect from *Hashem* for eternity?" Of course not! We all want to stay attached to *Hashem*; we would give our lives to maintain this bond!

Each and every sin is a violation and rupture of the eternal covenant *Hashem* made with the Jewish people. We have a *bris*, covenant, with *Hashem* regarding all of Torah and *mitzvos*. How then can we speak *lashon hara*, slanderous speech? How can we not *daven*? If we do these things, we are damaging the *bris* that *Hashem* has made with *Klal Yisrael*. Our sins build walls between ourselves and *Hashem*. However, this is not something we are always conscious of. Ask a Jew, "Do you want to completely disconnect from *Hashem*? Never be able to approach Him? Surrender the relationship you could have with Him?" He would certainly answer, "No way! I want to maintain my bond with *Hashem*". We sin because we don't realize that sin affects our relationship with *Hashem*. But if we would understand this, if we would internalize the fact that a sin affects our *bris*, we would overcome the *yetzer hara*, and not commit the sin.

However, the level of mo'es bera, finding evil revolting, this is a level in the heart. To feel a real hatred for evil is not attainable to all. Only in the context of when one is filled with real love of Hashem, when one reaches ahavah beta'anugim, love of delights, or when one feels a bit of olamcha tir'eh bechayecha, you will see your world in your

משא"כ בדבר המסור ללב דהיינו שיהא הרע מאוס ממש בלב ושנאוי בתכלית שנאה או אפי' שלא בתכלית שנאה הנה זה אי אפשר שיהיה באמת לאמיתו אלא ע"י גודל ותוקף האהבה לה' בבחי' אהבה בתענוגים להתענג על ה' מעין עוה"ב. ועל זה אמרו רז"ל עולמך תראה בחייך כו' ואין כל אדם

lifetime, then a person might reach the level.	זוכה לזה כי זהו כעין קבול שכר
This is like receiving reward. This is called	וכדכתיב עבודת מתנה אתן את
avodas matanah eten es kehunaschem: A	כהונתכם וגו' כמ"ש במ"א
gift of service I will give to your priesthood.	

The *Tanya* goes on to explain that since this level of being *mo'es bera* is not within everyone's reach, we need *Hashem's* help in order to achieve it. Therefore, *Iyov* said of this level, "*bara'sa tzadikim bara'sa reshaim*", "You created the righteous, You created the wicked".

Therefore did Job say, "Thou didst create tzadikim...". It is also found in Tikunei Zohar, that in the souls of [the people of] Israel there are many kinds of gradations and distinctions- pious men, strong men who gain mastery over their nature, scholars of the Torah, prophets. tzadikim, and so forth. Note there.	ולכן אמר איוב בראת צדיקים וכו' וכדאיתא בתיקונים שיש בנשמות ישראל כמה מיני מדרגות ובהי'. חסידים גבורים המתגברים על יצרם מארי תורה נביאים כו' צדיקים כו' ע"ש
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Kehunah is a level of *ahavah*, love. It is the level of *ahavah beta'anugim*, love of delights, which is a level of love that is attached to fear. *Ahavah beta'anugim* is one of the greatest levels of love, and it is a gift from *Hashem*. After someone attains the highest levels of awe and fear, he is given this spiritual level as a gift. This is the level of *tzadikim*, who have truly broken *ra*, and who hate it and find it revolting.

Certitude of Holiness

Realize that as a Jew you have entered into a covenant with *Hashem*. *Kerisas bris*, the entering into a covenant, means that no matter what, the covenant will take place. Consider the *Bris bein Habesarim*, the Covenant of the Parts, that took place between *Hashem* and Avraham. The *korsei bris*, parties of the covenant, walked between the two halves of the split animals. This action reflects the concept that there will be no barrier in the world that will hold us back. There is no turning back! We will maintain this covenant to the point of *mesirus nefesh*. We will walk through walls to maintain our commitment!

Kerisas bris stems from a level that is higher than normal *Da'as*. The

typical *Da'as* that a person has does not have such *tekifus*, forcefulness. Sometimes we think this way and sometimes that way. We find this phenomenon often in *avodas Hashem*, service of God. Sometimes we are working on a particular *midah*, or we are learning a specific tractate in Talmud, and we start the project with passion. "*Ein tokef kechassidus bischilaso*", "there is no strength like the beginning of piety". Yet, as time goes on, we wane in our commitment and we drop the effort or study. This is a flaw that indicates the weakness of our *Da'as*. In order to achieve in the realm of holiness, we need a strong *Da'as*.

It is of course true that we can go to the opposite extreme, and be excessively stubborn. Suppose a person decides that he will learn the entire *Choshen Mishpat*, corpus of Jewish monetary law, on his own, with all the commentaries, and he will do this in two months. After a month, he can see that the task is overwhelming, and he is not accomplishing. If he insists on proceeding with his plan, it is mistaken stubbornness! Sometimes, the human body is incapable of tolerating a commitment that we make. Someone who decides that he will learn with no break all day might find himself having a nervous breakdown after just two days of the program.

When it comes to mistaken commitments, we have the tool of *hataras nedarim*, annulment of oaths. We realize that we made a mistake, so we can find a *pesach*, an opening, for the dissolution of the vow, and thus remove the *neder*. But it is important to distinguish between making mistakes and losing fervor. We need *tekifus*, forcefulness! If you commit to learning a tractate in one semester, stick with it. As long as the commitment you accepted upon yourself is reasonable and good, use your strength to see it through. Do not tolerate inconsistency! *Tekifus haDa'as*, forceful *Da'as*, is something that our minds need. To get things done, we must stick with them.

For example, if you find a book, *sefer*, of *chassidus* that touches you, do not learn it for a few weeks and then move on to something else. A *sefer* must be acquired; you have to spend years on a *sefer*! Make it part of your blood; make sure it goes into your very bones. Have an established and set study time in a *sefer musar* or in a *Noam Elimelech*; then you will acquire it and it will become a part of you. This is true about all matters of Divine service, *avodah*: to acquire any level you need *tekifus haDa'as*. There is no room to be flippant and inconsistent; we need to immerse ourselves with strength in a study until it becomes part of our blood and bones, until we internalize it!

In every generation there is a relative *yitzra de'avodah zarah*, urge for idolatry. Even though the Men of the Great Assembly¹²² annulled the urge for *avodah zarah*, a form of it still exists. Once, the *yetzer* of *avodah zarah* was a *ta'avah*, lust, for idol worship. This lust was as strong as our present-day urge for *arayos*, indiscretions between men and women. However, even though that lust was annulled by the Great Assembly, every generation is subject to ideas and thoughts that represent the particular *yetzer avodah zarah* of that generation. The *Haskalah*,¹²³ the cult of Sabbateanism,¹²⁴ the Karaites,¹²⁵ the Early Christians, the ideas of Aristotle—all these are false ideologies that are forms of the *yetzer* of *avodah zarah*. In our days this challenge has been sweetened a great deal. The *ta'avah* for such things is not as strong as it was during previous times. Nevertheless, it still challenges us.

What is the *yetzer* of *avodah zarah* of our generation? I think that it is lack of certitude. America is the land of democracy and freedom, and each person can do what he wants. On a basic level, it is certainly a great kindness of this country that it allows Jews to serve *Hashem*—because in America everyone can do whatever he wants. However, on a deeper level, we can see that there is a great *kelipah* in this ideology. How can everyone be allowed to do what he wants? Then there are no certainties and absolutes! I know *Hashem* made the world, and He made the world for a purpose: that we should serve *Hashem* through the practice of the 613 *mitzvos*, and the non-Jews should serve Him through seven *mitzvos*. So how can it be all right to just let everyone do what he wants?

122. Men of the Great Assembly, *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*, refers to the Torah giants who led the Jewish people at the beginning of the Second Temple era. The First Temple was destroyed due to Jews worshipping idols. The Men of the Great Assembly appealed to God to annul the urge for idol worship. *Hashem* sent a fire in the shape of a lion to exit the Holy of Holies to signify that their plea was granted (*Sanhedrin* 63b).

123. The movement of Eastern European Jews at the end of the nineteenth century to leave Torah study and *mitzvah* observance, and to adopt a secular worldview of "enlightenment".

124. Shabbetai Zvi, 1626-1676/5386-5436, was a Jew who falsely claimed that he was *Mashiach*. He performed outrageous sins and justified them with distortions of Kabbalistic concepts. He caused tens of thousands of Jews to join his cult. Eventually he converted to Islam.

125. The Karaites were a heretical movement of Jews who came together in Baghdad during the Geonic period. They rejected the Oral Tradition and attempted to interpret the Bible without accepting the *Mishnah* or Talmud.

The fact that a Christian president does not demand that his subjects become Christian is a kindness to us, but it also shows that he is not truly committed to his religion and beliefs. Today people are not sure of the truth-even the president is not sure of his faith-and as a result, everything and anything is acceptable. The American ideology is one of doubt; nothing is certain, and therefore all is okay. This *yetzer hara* of uncertainty has infected our society as well. In the realm of holiness, the concept of *tekifus*, certitude, has been devastated.

The Role of Faith

Emunah, faith, is the source of *tekifus*. When we feel certain about the truth of the thirteen principles of faith, we have conviction in all areas of holiness! However, because in our country the non-Jews are uncertain about their beliefs, this affects us by causing us to be weak in our beliefs, resulting in inconsistent service.

Hashem revealed Himself at Sinai to 600,000 military-aged men, and we lived in the desert for forty years on the gifts of *man* and miraculous water. Everyone saw the splitting of the sea, and they witnessed how the earth swallowed Korach for opposing Moshe *Rabbeinu*. The whole world knew of these things! The great religions of the world confirmed these events; the previous generations had certitude!¹²⁶ We all felt *be'azneinu shamanu be'eineinu*

126. In his book *Permission to Receive*, Rabbi Kelemen stresses these points.

"As few as five generations ago, nearly all Jews agreed that God revealed the Torah to Moses at Mount Sinai in the presence of the entire Jewish people. Nearly every Jewish family can trace its roots to ancestors who believed this with all their hearts" (page 17).

"There are thirteen families of extant religions worldwide, representing hundreds of religious philosophies espoused by tens of thousands of individual sects and cults...Among all the thirteen families, the only groups that attribute their religion's origin to an omnipotent, good God are Sikhs, Bahais, and certain groups from within Islam, Christianity, and Judaism...Notably, the theologies of Bahai Faith, Sikhism, Islam, and Christianity do intersect: They all affirm Judaism's claim that God, through Moses, gave Israel the Torah. For all these religions, the Torah is a Divine document. The point of discord is whether Moses' revelation was superseded by later prophecies, and if it was, how many times...Does the text of the one prophecy that all monotheists acknowledge - the Torah - indicate how many times, if at all, God would update mankind's assignment? On the contrary, twenty-three times the Torah states, 'This is an eternal law for all generations' (Exodus 12:14, 12:17, 12:43, 27:21, 28:43; Leviticus 3:17, 7:36, 10:9, 16:29, 16:31, 16:34, 17:7, 23:14, 23:21, 23:31, 23:41, 24:3; Numbers 10:8, 15:15, 19:10, 19:21, 18:23, 35:29), and towards its conclusion Moses writes that Torah

ra'inu, with our ears we heard and with our eyes we saw. No nation on earth has claims even slightly resembling these.¹²⁷ At one time, these were universally accepted facts. Jews used to be certain about all the miracles of the *Mikdash* and the miracles in Bavel that took place with the prophet Daniel. Their belief in these events inspired *emunah*. But now, in recent generations, nations have begun to question these facts of history, and to make the claim that the revelation at Sinai did not occur.

The above ideas relate to the *peshat*, literal meaning, of *emunah*. It should be noted that another aspect of *emunah* is that every Jew has a natural attraction to *Hashem* and to holiness; this is the *sod*, secret, of *emunah*. But the *peshat*, literal understanding, of *emunah* is the belief that *Hashem* revealed Himself to us and took care of us throughout Jewish history.

law applies 'to us and to our children forever' (Deuteronomy 29:28). The one universally accepted prophet, Moses, unequivocally proclaims throughout his Five Books, twenty four times, that God would never nullify the plan handed over to Israel" (pages 26-31).

127. See *Devarim* 4:32-40. Rav Hirsch writes, "This inquiry will show that you are the only people to whom God has come out of His invisibility through the certainty of sensory perception and revealed Himself through His direct rule. You are the only people that is aware of God and His rule through knowledge, not just faith. You are the sole custodian of God's revelation, of His rule, and of His Will, toward mankind. Therein lies the eternity of your mission and the historical immortality of your wanderings in the midst of the nations" (The Hirsch Chumash, *Sefer Devarim*, page 84).

"Your awareness of God is based not on belief, but on knowledge; and this knowledge is not based on a report, nor is it a conclusion drawn by the mind, which infers one thing from another. Your knowledge of God is based on *the certainty of personal, direct experience, an experience presented to the entire nation at one time.*

ה' הוא: What you *saw* with your own eyes was sufficient for you *to know that* האלוקים: that ה', Who was revealed to you under this Name, is *the only true God*, Whom the rest of mankind seek and believe in so many forms of foolishness and delusion" (pages 85-86).

See also Rav Hirsch's comments to *Shemos* 19:4:

"The basis of your knowledge of God does not rest on belief, which can, after all, allow an element of doubt. It rests solidly on the empirical evidence of your own senses, on what you have seen with your own eyes, have yourselves experienced. In exactly the same words, Chapter 20:19 speaks of the fact of the revelation of the Torah *אתם ראיתם כי מן השמים דברתי עמכם*, 'Ye yourselves have seen that from the heaven have I spoken with you.' The two fundamental truths on which the whole of Judaism rests, *יציאת מצרים ומתן תורה*, the Exodus from Egypt and the Lawgiving on Sinai, stand firmly on the actual evidence of your senses; and, as they were seen, heard, felt, and experienced simultaneously by so many hundreds of thousands of people, every possibility of deception is ruled out. Both these fundamental truths accordingly are completely out of the realm of mere believing or thinking and are irrefutable facts which must serve as the starting point of all our other knowledge with the same certainty as our own existence and the existence of the material world we see about us" (Quoted in Dayan I. Grunfeld's *Introduction to Horeb*, page xliii).

In addition to our knowledge of the awesome events of history, another source of faith is the Torah. Consider the depth and perfection of Torah, which testify to its Godliness. For example, the Torah fights *arayos*, immorality between men and women. No other religion has such an intense focus on the matter, because *arayos* can literally destroy society. Wherever you look in the world, in history,¹²⁸ and in Torah, you will find *emunah*. In fact, because *emunah* is so widespread, when we speak of it, there is a danger that perhaps we are limiting it, and that is the downside of speaking of *emunah*. *Emunah* is everywhere; it is clear and strong. When we experience our *emunah* in *Hashem*, we are being *koreis bris* with *Hashem*, and we are filling ourselves with a strong attachment, a *tekifus*, that enables us to walk through all barriers for the sake of *Hashem* and His covenant. Unfortunately, however, in our day and age this is increasingly difficult. Our society casts doubt on our beliefs and reduces all certainty. This reduction of certainty causes a weakening of our passion to do what *Hashem* wants.

A World of No Commitments

While the starting point for the problems we discussed above may stem from a weakness in *emunah*, ultimately people experience a weakness in all types of commitments. Why are there so many divorces today? It used to be that a person felt that a marriage is connection decreed by God, and therefore it is a lifelong bond. In fact, this attitude is reflected by the ruling of Beis Shamai,¹²⁹ who held that divorce is rarely permitted. If someone had a difficult spouse, he reasoned that this was suffering sent by *Hashem*. A wedding is *kerisas bris*. It is a strong decision of conviction; this is now going to be my life and I cannot abandon it. This is the ideal sentiment of people entering into marriage. However, nowadays, a wedding is seen as a choice, and because it is not a decision of conviction, we are faced with an epidemic of divorces.

128. Consider the miraculous survival of the Jewish nation. Despite having more enemies than any other nation, despite being persecuted more than any other nation, we have survived longer than all the others because *Hashem* has promised our ancestors that we would be an eternal nation.

129. Beis Shamai, the House of Shamai, refers to a school of thought during the times of the *Mishnah* and Second Temple. The students of Shamai created the House of Shamai, and they frequently advocated a strict interpretation of Jewish law.

We are infected with the ideology of our surroundings. In our society many do not tell children what to do, for they do not know themselves what is right, and they have no *vada'us*, certainty. We also are therefore hesitant and unsure of facts. If we had certainty to our *emunah*, we would be able to make and maintain strong decisions in other matters as well.

The *tokef haDa'as* needs *birur*, purification; certainty can be abused if it is not purified. However, in our culture, our main challenge is not too much decisiveness, it is too little certainty. The doubts about everything reflect the *yitzra de'avodah zarah* of our generation. In the modern world, unfortunately, nothing is certain.

Chanukah: Our Neshamah Feels Hashem's Strong Love for Us

Chanukah is the time when we celebrate our defeat of the Greeks. What was the goal of the Greeks? They wanted to annul the *kerisas bris* between *Hashem* and *Klal Yisrael*. The *kerisas bris* emerged from the many *nisim*, miracles, in Egypt and in the desert. These great acts filled us with certainty and conviction, which we then translated into a *bris* with *Hashem* to eternally fulfill His *mitzvos*. The Greeks opposed miracles, only accepting nature and logic, so they opposed the great *tokef* of Jewish commitment. They made decrees against *Chodesh*, the new moon, *Shabbos*, the Sabbath, and *milah*, circumcision. They wanted to cause the Jews to abandon their willingness to sacrifice physical life, *mesirus nefesh*. If our understanding of *Shabbos* would be that it is something *sichli*, intellectual, then we would not be *moser nefesh* for its observance. While important, it wouldn't be worth giving up a human life for. And so the Greeks sought to undermine our deep commitment. They fought the *kerisas bris*, and we defeated them by demonstrating that in fact we retained tremendous *mesirus nefesh* for the *mitzvos*. At the point when we showed our belief in *Torah min hashamayim*, the Torah is from the Heavens, and that knowledge of Torah is not like the *seichel* present in other matters, we were able to overcome the Greeks!

Regarding the nature of our *bris* with *Hashem*, the Torah teaches us, "*Hinei anochi koreis bris neged kol amcha e'eseh nifla'os asher lo nivra'u bechol hagoyim*", "Behold I am entering into a covenant, before your entire nation I will perform wonders that have not appeared in any of the other nations" (*Shemos* 34:10). The miracles that *Hashem* performs for the Jewish people are

not the norm; other nations do not merit such things! They are a product of the *kerisas bris*. No nation can point to miracles like our miracles to confirm their beliefs; we have a unique covenant with *Hashem* due to our miracles.

The Greeks made thirteen breaches in the wall of the *Mikdash*. This corresponds to the *bris*, for we know that *gedolah milah shenichrasu aleha yud gimel brisos*, great is circumcision that had thirteen covenants entered into for its sake (Nedarim 31b)—we see from here that the number thirteen is associated with *kerisas bris*. There is *bris kerusah* for the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, which establishes that these *midos* will never return empty-handed. The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy are lights from the *kerisas bris*. “*Ki lo yitosh Hashem es amo ba'avur shemo hagadol*,” “For God will not desert His nation for the sake of His great name” (*Shmuel I* 12:22). Just as Jews make *Hashem chativah achas ba'olam*, a unique slice in the world, so too no *aveirah* can disrupt the connection *Hashem* has with *Yisrael*. He is *koreis bris* with *Klal Yisrael* and He makes us *chativah achas ba'olam*. This *kerisas bris* enables us to overcome all barriers. A *beinoni* uses this *bris*, this hidden love that a Jew has for *Hashem*.

The rule in love is that, “*Kamayim hapanim lapanim kein lev ha'adam la'adam*”, “like a reflection of a face in water so is the heart of man to his fellow” (*Mishlei* 27:19). Just as a Jew has hidden love for *Hashem*, *Hashem* has hidden love for the Jewish people. The *or haganuz*, hidden light, of *Chanukah* is the hidden love that *Hashem* has for the Jews, which is revealed on *Chanukah*. We know that the Ari taught us to be *mechavein*, concentrate, on the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, while lighting the *menorah* in order to correspond with the thirteen breaches that the Greeks opened in the wall of the Temple. On each night of *Chanukah* we are *mechavein* to one *midah*, and on the eighth night of *Chanukah* we are *michavein* on the remaining *midos* beginning from the eighth, *notzeir*, to the last, *venakeih*. Because on *Chanukah* the *kohanim* were *moser nefesh* and revealed the hidden inner love we have for *Hashem*, *Hashem* responds during these days by revealing His hidden love for *Klal Yisrael*. He breaks all the *mechitzos* and shows His love for the Jewish people.

***Chanukah* is the Experience for Lowly Generations**

Chanukah reaches beneath ten *tefachim*, handbreadths, as we place the candles within ten *tefachim* of the floor. This is the “*Ner leragli devarecha*”,

"Your lamp was a light at my feet" (*Tehillim* 119:105). This is the light that reaches all the way to the feet. According to the Ari, you should light the candles at a height of three *tefachim*, for this is the light for *ikvasa deMeshicha*, the heels of the messianic era. There are ten *tefachim*, and they correspond to the ten *Sefiros*, *k'chabad*, *chagat*, and *nehi*. The last three are *nehi*, and this is the light of *Chanukah*. We find that this light is more revealed in later generations. In *Torah shebichtav*, the written Bible, there is no mention of *Chanukah* at all. It is mentioned a little in the *Mishnah*, and given a few pages of discussion in the Talmud. The *Shulchan Aruch* has more information about *Chanukah*, but in the books of the students of the Besht there are many lengthy discussions of the topic. Because *Chanukah* is the 620th *mitzvah*, it completes the word *Keser*, כתר, which is 620 in *gematria*.¹³¹ The idea of will is related to the light of *Mashiach*, and we who are close to the time of *Mashiach* merit in a miraculous way to illuminate the darkness with the light of *Chanukah*. The light of *Chanukah* is intended to remind us that nothing should come in the way of our love of *Hashem*.

As we know, the *Notzrim*, Christians, observe their holiday during this season. The entire faith of the *Notzrim* is a joke. And what little strength they do have stems entirely from the few points that they absorbed from the Torah. They were originally idol worshippers, and through the small amount of Torah that they learned, they began to develop the feeling that they were leaving a deep darkness for a place of much greater light.

The basis of their faith cannot be compared to the basis for our faith. They do not claim to have had 600,000 people witness great miracles. What about the fact they claim of their founder performing wonders and miracles, albeit

130. *Sefiros* refers to *Hashem's* attributes, His limited, unlimited lights. In Lessons Seven and Eight we attempted to explain and study each of the *Sefiros*.

131. In Lesson Seven we learned that will is represented by a crown. Just as a crown is higher than the skull which holds the mind and brain, will is higher than wisdom and understanding. *Hashem's* will is to reside on earth. He resides on earth when human beings fulfill *mitzvos*. This is why He gave us 613 *mitzvos* at Sinai and our Sages later added another seven *mitzvos*. Six hundred thirteen plus seven equals six hundred twenty. There are six hundred twenty actions that bring Him to this world. The word for crown, *keser*, כתר, equals in *gematria* six hundred twenty. Lighting the *Chanukah* candles was the last of the *mitzvos* our Sages set for us. Thus the *Chanukah* candle completes the word, and brings *Hashem* all the way down to the earthly realm.

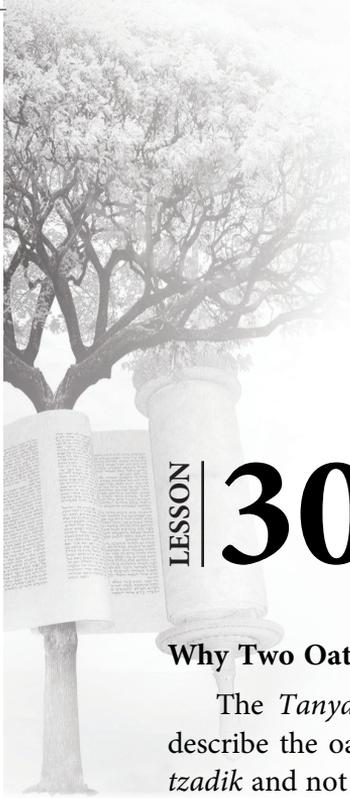
not as public as ours? As the Torah explains, we have no need to be impressed by these claims. Magic can indeed produce wonders! The Torah acknowledges this possibility, and warns us explicitly not to accept an *os*, sign, or a *mofes*, wonder, that is produced in order to encourage us to go against the directives of the Torah. We do not believe in these miracles; rather, we believe in *Ma'amad Har Sinai*, the revelation at Sinai. How can there be people who accept the Torah, and then reject it for the words of that *Notzri*?! It is a joke!

We must be so happy and grateful that *Hashem* allowed us to be born Jews. Thank God we have *emunos*, principles of faith, which are so wonderful and true. Thinking about our *emunah* can in fact be a great source of strength to us. We are so fortunate! As we say in our prayers, "*Ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu*", "we are fortunate and blessed with a wonderful portion", "*shelo sam chelkeinu kahem vegoraleinu kechol hamonam, sheheim mishtachavim lehevel varik*", "that He has not made our portion like theirs and our fate like that of their many masses, for they pray to emptiness and nonsense. "*Varik*", וריק, is equal to the name of that *Notzri*, נ"ז, in *gematria*. His very name is associated with emptiness! The prayer further states, "*umishtachavim el eil lo yoshi'a*", "and they bow to a power that will not save". This refers to the *Yishma'eilim*, the Muslims. Both the *Notzrim* and the *Yishma'eilim* wanted to break the *bris*, as if, *chas veshalom*, *Hashem* has exchanged the Jews with another nation. It is for this reason that they make their holiday on *Chanukah*. *Chanukah* disproves their claims. *Chanukah* declares that we retain the *bris*, and that the *Notzrim* are wrong. *Hashem* has been *koreis* a *bris* with *Klal Yisrael*, and that *bris* is eternal.

Hashem's Love for Us

In our weak generation, *Hashem* reveals yet again that He continues to choose *Klal Yisrael*. Even though our level of *avodah* is not as great as it could be, he is *me'orer mile'eila*, arousing from Above--He is actively choosing *Klal Yisrael*. *Klal Yisrael* has an *or haganuz* which is *kol kulo ahavah*. When we read *Shema*, we see how *Hashem* demands that we love Him "*bechol levavecha uvechol nafshecha uvechol me'odecha*", "with all your heart, all your soul, and all your wealth". We must realize that He would never expect such a love from us without first feeling such a love for us Himself!

As we have mentioned, there is a principle of *kamayim hapanim lapanim*, we reflect the feelings of *Hashem* toward us. The truth is that *yachrish be'ahavaso*, His love for us is unlimited. There is no limit to the love He feels for us! Yes, there are vessels of *me'odecha*, wealth, *nafshecha*, soul, and *levavecha*, heart, but in truth there are no words that can capture His love. When you light your *Chanukah* candles, recognize that you are lighting up love for *Hashem*. *Hashem* is shining towards you with a love that has no words or definition! You should feel such an awesome love for *Hashem*, and this love will be one about which the verse will declare, "*Mayim rabim lo yuchlu lechabos es ha'ahavah*", "Mighty waters will not be able to extinguish the love" (*Shir Hashirim* 8:7).



Lesson Thirty discusses the pre-birth oath to be a tzadik. We each are to connect to a tzadik. We can also reach a bit of tzadik behaviors and actions. The deep truth is that what is physically beautiful and good reflects a spiritual good.

LESSON | 30 Physical Beauty Is Good!

Why Two Oaths?

The *Tanya* has asked previously about the double terminology used to describe the oath of a baby. A baby swears, before he begins his life, to be a *tzadik* and not to be a *rasha*. This double oath is difficult to understand. Once he swears to be a *tzadik*, obviously this includes a promise not to be a *rasha*. Why is it necessary to swear both oaths? In the middle of Chapter 14 the *Tanya* answers the question.

Now we can understand the redundancy of the oath, "Be righteous (tzadik) and be not wicked", which is unintelligible at first glance: Since he is warned, "Be righteous!" where is the need to put him on oath again that he shall not be wicked? The answer is, that inasmuch as not everyone is privileged to become a tzadik, nor has a person the full advantage of choice in this matter to experience true delight in God and to actually and truly abhor evil, he is consequently adjured a second time: "Thou shalt", at any rate, "not be wicked!" Here the right of choice and freedom is extended to every person, to check the drive of his heart's desire and to conquer his nature, so that he shall not be wicked even for a moment throughout his life, whether in the realm of "turn away from evil" or in that of "do good", there being no "good" other than Torah, that is the "study of the Torah which equals them all".

ובזה יובן כפל לשון השבועה תהי צדיק ואל תהי רשע דלכאורה תמוה כי מאחר שמשביעים אותו תהי צדיק למה צריכים להשביעו עוד שלא יהיה רשע. אלא משום שאין כל אדם זוכה להיות צדיק ואין לאדם משפט הבחירה בזה כל כך להתענג על ה' באמת ושיהיה הרע מאוס ממש באמת ולכן משביעים שנית אל תהי רשע עכ"פ שבזה משפט הבחירה והרשות נתונה לכל אדם למשול ברוח תאוותו שבלבו ולכבוש יצרו שלא יהיה רשע אפי' שעה אחת כל ימיו בין בבחי' סור מרע בין בבחי' ועשה טוב ואין טוב אלא תורה דהיינו תלמוד תורה שכנגד כולן.

The *Tanya* explains that not everyone merits reaching the level of *tzadik*. Many people do not have enough strength to reach the level of actually finding the material world revolting. This is why each baby has to take two oaths. The first one is, "*tehi tzadik*", "be a *tzadik*," and this might mean, if you have the potential to be a *tzadik*, you must swear to actually become one. (We will see later that the *Tanya* will modify this a bit). The second oath, "*velo tihyeh rasha*", "do not be a *rasha*", reflects a level that is attainable for everyone—the level of never performing sins.

When we consider this, it is still hard to understand. Shouldn't each soul simply say what is appropriate for it? Why should a soul of a *beinoni* swear to be a *tzadik*, if he does not have the potential to reach the level of *tzadik*?

Each of Us Is a *Tzadik*

The answer is that in truth, "*ve'ameich kulam tzadikim*", "and Your nation are all *tzadikim*" (*Yeshayahu* 60:21). Ultimately every Jew will be a *tzadik*. It is only in this *gilgul*, the present sojourn through life, that a particular person may not have the ability to reach the level of *tzadik*, and the most he can do is become a *beinoni*. But if he succeeds in this life, during his next appearance on earth he might indeed merit reaching the level of *tzadik*. The Ari points out that some people only reach the level of *Nefesh* in one *gilgul*, and they will require another *gilgul* to reach the level of *Ruach*, and still another to reach *Neshamah*. A person who only has a *Nefesh* cannot annul the evil within him, for all he has is the lowest element of the *midos*, but ultimately he will merit achieving higher degrees of soul. Each one of us will eventually internalize and display *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah*, and *Yechidah*. And once a person reaches all of these levels, he will certainly be a *tzadik*. Therefore, a person who rectifies himself in this *gilgul* as much as possible is in fact fulfilling the oath of *tehi tzadik*, for he is preparing himself for the next reincarnation, when he actually will reach the level of *tzadik*.

There is yet a deeper answer to this question. We must understand that all Jews together are one *komah sheleimah*. We are one complete structure. Each generation has a *tzadik hador*, the righteous person of the generation. He is the *Yechidah* of the era; he is the *Keser* who is attached to the *ratzon ha'elyon*. Every generation requires a *tzadik hador*. The Ropshitzer Rav¹³² points out that

in fact every generation is blessed with a *tzadik*.¹³³ The verse says, "*Davar tzivah le'elef dor*", "He commanded His word to the thousandth generation" (*Tehillim* 105:8). *Hashem* had intended to give the Torah after 1,000 generations had elapsed. The Talmud explains, however, that when He saw all the difficulties of the world and the work of the *tzadikim*, he gave the Torah after only 26 generations. The other 974 generations have been mixed in among all the generations, and they are the *azei panim*, the brazen faces of each era, who live among the rest of the citizens of the world.

The Ropshitzer explained that among those souls there were also *tzadikim*! For every generation needs a *tzadik*. But those generations would not have benefited from their *tzadikim* because their members were *azei panim*, filled with brazen *chutzpah*, and as a result they could not accept inspiration from *tzadikim*. Brazen individuals do not subdue themselves to *tzadikim*, and they do not draw guidance from them.

However, there is a positive side to the trait of *azus* as well. The

132. Rav Naftali Tzvi Horowitz, 1760-1827/5420-5487, was the first Rebbe of Ropshitz. He was a student of Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, and of Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov.

133. In the work *Yam HaChochmah* 5769, pages 473-474, Rav Morgenstern elaborates on the theme that each generation has a *tzadik*:

"The light of *Hashem* comes to the Jewish souls through the *tzadikim* who are like the world of *Atzilus*. They are the heads of the Jewish people. From there the Divine light extends to Torah scholars who are like *Beri'ah*, then to the *Yetzirah* people, and finally to the *Asiyah* people, until the light reaches even the lowest level, the *amei ha'aretz*. In each generation, there is a Moshe-type soul, the aspect of *Mashiach* of the generation, the personal *Adam Kadmon* of the generation. This person displays the secret of *Keser* of *Atzilus*, the *Malchus* of *Adam Kadmon*, this is the Moshe of the generation. After him there are souls of the lower worlds, and they all receive their life from him.

The holy Rebbe of Sanz wrote in a letter that in each generation they think that only in earlier generations were there great leaders of the Jewish nation and now they are no more. He then writes that any leader whom the Jewish nation highly regards has the status of a great leader of the Jewish nation...One must believe that they exist in each generation and that we must connect with them, for Godly light always passes through the *tzadikim*. It is very important for Divine service to connect with the Moshe of the generation.

Reb Nachman, the Rebbe Reb Bunim, and others teach that we must connect to the *tzadikim* of this generation and to the *tzadikim* who have already passed on. Each one must regularly study the writings of the holy *tzadikim* that provide him with a great feeling of life while serving *Hashem*! This is one of the wonders of the Almighty, that one person is aroused by one work and another from a different work. The reason for this is that each person is attached in the root of his soul to the root of the soul of a particular *tzadik*. Therefore he should study their works and in this way he will draw on himself the Godly light through the souls of the *tzadikim* who are the leaders of the Jewish nation".

Gemara (Beitzah 25b) notes that *Hashem* chose the Jews as His nation because Jews are the *azim sheba'umos*, the brazen ones among the nations. The Talmud *Yerushalmi*, the Jerusalem Talmud, explains that this is a reference to *azus of kedushah*, which indicates that Jews are not swayed by opposition-rather, they are *moser nefesh* to serve *Hashem*, and this type of *azus* is in fact a very good *midah*.

The Code of Jewish Law begins with, "*Yehudah ben Teima omeir: hevei az kanamer*", "*Yehudah ben Teima taught: be as brazen as the panther*". This is the introduction to Jewish law. Do not to be swayed by the *mal'igim*, the cynics and scoffers. Be brazenly holy! The earlier generations should have corrected their *chutzpah* by channeling it towards *kedushah*, and then they would have been chosen as the recipients of the Torah, for we noted from the choosing of the Jews that holy brazenness is valued. But those generations never refined their brazenness. Therefore, their imperfect *azus* rendered them people who would not accept instruction from *tzadikim*, and so *Hashem* caused them to be pushed aside. The Torah was given earlier than it should have been, the *azei panim* were scattered among the future generations, and they remain the *azei panim* who appear in each era. However, the *tzadikim* from their times together with the *tzadikim* of the later generations have enough combined strength to overcome the *chutzpah* and to bring down wonderful influences, in spite of the challenges of the *azei panim*.

So we see that each generation has a *tzadik hador*, and each generation is *yoneik*, draws life, from the *tzadik hador*. Without a *tzadik* for the generation, there could not be a generation. The *tzadik* of the generation is relatively on the level of *tzadik vetov lo*; it is as if he has no evil urge.

Now we are able to understand why each Jew swears to be a *tzadik* even if in fact we do not all have the capacity to achieve this level. The entire generation is linked, and therefore the *tzadik hador* sends light into me, so when I make the oath "*tehi tzadik*", I am referring to the light I receive from the *tzadik*. *Tehi tzadik* refers to the level one gets from the *tzadik hador*, while *ve'al tehi rasha* is built on the perspective of one's own individual level. Even the *beinoni* has part of the light of the *tzadik*, and he is promising to do his part to receive that light and to live according to that light.¹³⁴

134. Rav Morgenstern in *Yam HaChochmah* 5769, page 475, adds, "The level of *Atzilus* is awareness of Godliness in a state of absolute negation of self. *Beri'ah* is great devotions and thoughts. *Yetzirah* is

One merits great *siyata dishmaya*, Divine help, if he has the merit to be attached to a *tzadik emes*, true *tzadik*, to a *tzadik hador*. There is a great amount of *shefa*, abundance, that flows through the *tzadik hador* to the rest of the generation. Great *chiyus*, life, comes through a *tzadik emes*. One must pray a great deal to merit learning from and being attached to a *tzadik emes*.

Ways To Reject Evil

Nevertheless, a person must set aside specific periods in which to commune with his soul in order to cultivate the abhorrence of evil, as, for example, reminding himself of the admonition of our Sages that "Woman is a vessel full of filth", and in like manner. So, too, all dainties and delicacies turn into a "vessel full of filth". Likewise in regard to all pleasures of this world, the wise man foresees what becomes of them, for in the end they rot and become worms and dung. Conversely, [let him] delight and rejoice in God by reflection on the greatness of the blessed Ein Sof, to the best of his capacity. He may well realize that he cannot attain to this degree with a full measure of truth except in illusion; nevertheless he should do his part in an effort to uphold the oath administered to him, "Be righteous", and God will do as He sees fit

אך אעפ"כ צריך לקבוע לו עתים גם כן לשית עצות בנפשו להיות מואס ברע כגון בעצת חכמינו ז"ל אשה חמת מלאה צואה כו'. וכהאי גוונא. וכן כל מיני מטעמים ומעדנים נעשים כך חמת מלא כו'. וכן כל תענוגי עוה"ז החכם רואה הנולד מהן שסופן לרקוב ולהיות רמה ואשפה וההפך להתענג ולשמוח בה' ע"י התבוננות בגדולת א"ס ב"ה כפי יכולתו אף שידע בנפשו שלא יגיע למדרגה זו באמת לאמיתו כי אם בדמיונות אעפ"כ הוא יעשה את שלו לקיים את השבועה שמשביעים תהי צדיק וה' יעשה הטוב בעיניו.

to feel holy emotions, and *Asiyah* is to accept the Divine yoke. Each Jewish soul has the ability to attach to the highest realm above and ascend to a personal level of *Atzilus*. To be attached at all times with complete *bittul*, negation of self, to Divinity.

This is how the *Tanya* explains the verse, '*venasati eisev* [עשב] *besadecha livhemtecha*', 'And I will place grass in your fields for your beasts' [*Devarim* 11:15]. The letter shin, ש, with its three branches, from the word *eisev*, represents Jewish souls who embody the three channels, the right (kindness), the left (justice), and the middle (truth). The other two letters in the word represent the seventy-two letter name, עב, the name of *Atzilus*. (There are four ways to fill out the letters in the name *Havayah*. They are the sources for the four universes. One way, the highest, totals in *gematria* seventy-two and is the source for the universe of *Atzilus*.) The verse is stating that even if you are on the level of being like a field and beast, like the souls in the realm of *Asiyah*, still, *venasati eisev*, ונתתי עשב, you can rise in Divine service until you shine with the light of *Atzilus*. For in the innermost part of each soul, we are rooted in *Atzilus*".

The *Tanya* is teaching that a person who is a *beinoni* must devote time to work on reaching the level of *mi'us bera*, abhorring and hating evil. He should consider how empty pleasures are, and how the ultimate end of all food consumption is *tzo'ah*, excrement. By focusing on this thought, one can overcome the *ta'avah*, desire, for eating. The *Mesillas Yesharim* makes the same suggestion, stating that a person can conquer his *yetzer hara* by focusing on the ignoble end of all material matters.

What is the rationale that underlies this piece of advice? Why should I care what will be in the end? Right now, I desire this thing and want to enjoy its pleasure. But there is depth to this idea. This idea is teaching us that desire, *ta'avah*, is not logical. *Ta'avah* does not make sense. To conquer something illogical we need to use our senses. Senses and feelings can successfully conquer *ta'avah* and its associated sensations. The *yetzer hara* lacks *seichel*, and therefore by imagining and picturing the end of *ta'avah*, we become able to conquer it.

However, as we will see, there is also a deep logic here.

All Good Is Holy

Everything that *Hashem* created has a *chiyus dikedushah*, life force of holiness. Adam assigned names to all of creation, and he even named *Hashem: Adon*, Master. The Maharal¹³⁵ explains that the true reality of each item is what it means to mankind. For example, a *ma'or* is something which gives light. Why do we not call it electricity? Why *ma'or*? After all, light does contain electricity. However, the essential point is how the item relates to man; what man takes out from an item constitutes that item's existence. Man gets light, so the name for a light is *ma'or*, because that is what matters to humankind. The essence of it is *ma'or*.

"*Vayikra ha'Adam sheimos*", "And the man assigned names" (*Bereishis* 2:20). The words that tell us that Adam named everything teach us the nature of what an item really is, because the way that man utilizes an item is its essence, and man is the main inhabitant of the world. Even regarding *hisgalus*

135. Rabbi Yehudah ben Bezalel Loew, 1520-1609/5380-5469, served as Chief Rabbi of Prague and is known as the Maharal. He was a great mystic and genius, respected by Jew and gentile alike. He was dedicated to the explication of the profundity of the *aggadah*.

Elokis, revelation of the Divine, in the world, *vayikra ha'Adam sheimos*--man determined that the primary way he relates to *Hashem* is as a servant to a master, so *Hashem* is *Adon*. Man accepts on himself the yoke of Heaven, and this constitutes the main revelation of *Hashem* in the world.

What man's senses tell him about an item is very significant, since they reveal how the item relates to man. This principle tells us that if *tzo'ah*, excrement, has a bad smell, it must be that the very essence of *tzo'ah* is abhorrent. It is not just that it is revolting to man: it is essentially revolting. Something revolting contains little life.

This is why the *Beis Hamikdash* had vessels and ornaments of gold and silver. Everything was wonderful and beautiful. We learn the importance of this from the Song of the Sea, when we declared, "*Zeh Keili ve'anveihu*", "This is My God and I will adorn Him" (*Shemos* 15:2). Our Sages teach that this verse obligates us to *hisna'eh lefanav bemitzvos*, be adorned before Him with *mitzvos*, and because of this injunction, everything in the Temple had to be magnificent. Why was this necessary? Why should the *Beis Hamikdash*, a place of spirituality and holiness, need to be physically beautiful? Why would *Hashem* care how it looked?

The answer is that physical beauty emerges from spiritual beauty. Sometimes beauty can fall to the *kelipah*. The *sitra achra* might hold it in exile. But essentially, the physical and spiritual should be aligned. There are no two worlds, only one. If you see beauty in the *sitra achra*, know that it was taken from *kedushah*. If you hear a nice *nigun* in the *sitra achra*, know that it came from holiness and it is in exile in the hands of the Other Side. For there is no good thing that does not have its source in holiness, and this includes things that are physically good. An item that is good in *gashmiyus*, physicality, is a *mashal*, parable, to good in *ruchniyus*, spirituality, which is where it came from.

The fact that the Torah informs us that Yosef was *yefeh to'ar*, good of form, and *yefeh mar'eh*, good-looking, is intended to be understood as physical truth as well as a spiritual truth. Yosef was in fact physically good looking. As we have explained, all good is connected to holiness, and it all stems from and reveals *Hashem*. In the case of Yosef, his external beauty matched his spiritual beauty. This is in contrast to a misbehaving beautiful *rasha*, whose beauty is in exile, for although he is physically beautiful, he is spiritually bad and ugly. This is the deeper meaning of *lo sichanem*, the commandment not to favor

gentiles, which in this context is teaching us the prohibition against giving a pagan a compliment. It is not appropriate to do this, because the wicked good feature he possesses comes from holiness, and is merely in exile with him, so to commend him for his good looks would be to say that the good looks belong to him, which is not actually the truth.

True goodness rests only in the spiritual. A physically good item comes from a spark of holiness, which is of course spiritual. The physical good that we observe is merely a *hislabshus*, cloaking, of the spiritual reality. The good in *gashmiyus* comes from the *nitzotz chiyus*, which is a spiritual matter. The service of *tzadikim* is to raise sparks, which involves finding the spiritual source and root of each physical item.

When a *tzadik* perceives that a food has a good taste, he senses that at its core, this taste is something spiritual, and the spiritual taste is the food's root. This is difficult to explain, but the *tzadik* can feel that the good taste is a *hislabshus* of a *davar ruchani*, which is clothing itself in the *ta'am gashmi*. The *tzadik* is tied to the root of the physical taste, to the spiritual *nitzotz*. This is the raising of sparks--lifting the good in a physical matter to its spiritual root. A *tzadik* enjoys the taste when he eats food, and yet it is different from the way others eat food. His eating food is a spiritual endeavor.

Physical and Spiritual Beauty

When the Jews crossed the Red Sea, they declared, "*Zeh Keili ve'anveihu*", usually translated as, "This is my God and I will adorn Him". There is a simple explanation for this verse, which is: "This is My God and I will construct an abode for Him". The Almighty wished to reside on earth, and it was necessary to build a spectacular building for this purpose. The *Beis Hamikdash* was an exceptional building in every way. It was physically beautiful, and because its beauty was its own, and not beauty in exile, its beauty reflected spiritual beauty. In the *Beis Hamikdash* you could see the spiritual essence shining through the physical matter.

The *derash*, homiletical interpretation, of *Zeh Keili ve'anveihu* is "*hisna'eh lefanav bemitzvos*", "become beautiful before Him with *mitzvos*". The place where *hisna'eh lefanav bemitzvos* really comes true is in the *Beis Hamikdash*. When a *mitzvah* is beautiful, it aligns the spiritual with the physical. The *Beis Hamikdash* was the ultimate place of this alignment, as it was the home of

Hashem where *mitzvos* were beautiful. It was the place of *hashra'as haShechinah*, where God had chosen to reside here below. Because of this, the *Beis Hamikdash* was the place of the real alignment and union between the spiritual and the physical.

Now that we understand the idea of the alignment of the physical and the spiritual, we can again consider the advice of the *Tanya* regarding avoiding *ta'avah* related to food. The concept of sparks explains to us why the waste of food is manure. When you eat a food there are sparks of holiness. When you are *mevarer* the *nitzotz*, when the spark ascends, what is left is very lowly. It still retains a small amount of *nitzotz*, but these *nitzotzos* are limited, and in fact so lowly that they can only be used as manure. Use your eating to realize that the good taste in the food comes from the *nitzotz hakadosh* which gives life to the item. When the *nitzotz* has departed, what is left is quite lowly. It is a waste and it smells bad. In other words, when something physical is left on its own after most of the great sparks have been removed from it, it becomes lowly and smelly-*tzo'ah*. In light of this, when I eat, does it make sense to think of the physical pleasure of the food? Why should I be attached to the materialism of the activity? The physicality should be *ma'us* and *nim'as*, abominations in my eyes, since that is what the physical really is—something with very little life remaining to it. If I become attached to the physical garment of the item, I am moving the *nitzotz kadosh* into a place of exile and loss.

Now we understand the counsel of the *Tanya* when it advised us to think about excrement in order to help us overcome our physical urges. On one level, I need to use my senses so I am revolted by physicality, for feeling can conquer feeling. On a deeper level, I need to think about and realize what the *etzem chiyus*, real life, of the matter really is—and that is its spiritual core; the rest is abominable, *ma'us* and *nim'as*. To raise sparks we must constantly attach ourselves to the real life, to the spiritual spark.

Fantasy of Holiness

People must be able to distinguish between fantasy and truth. Nevertheless, fantasy has an important place in service of *Hashem*. *Dimyonos*, images, of holiness can help a great deal in Divine service, *avodas Hashem*. They have the power to affect your day. When you wake up in the morning,

think about the fact that a day contains enormous potential, and that today it is possible to reach the *tov haganuz*, the hidden good. We spend so much of our time imagining things-we should use the power of our imagination for great things.

We can use it, for example, to imagine the era of ultimate redemption, *yemos haMashiach*. We do not know what that time period will actually be like, but we can think about it and imagine the time when *lecha tichra kol berech*, to You each knee will kneel. *Mashiach* will deliver a *derashah* of Torah, and his *Toros* will be awesome! We have no *hasagah*, concept, of them; our Torah is dry bones compared to the awesome light that *Mashiach* will reveal. The whole world--every human being--will thirstily drink in *Mashiach's* words! Imagine all the news stopping and everyone listening to the holy words of *Mashiach*. The prophet predicted, "*Beruach sefasav yamis rasha*", "With the breath of his mouth he will put the wicked to death" (*Yeshayahu* 11:4). The words of the *Mashiach* give holy life, while the wicked die from his words. The *tzadikim* will get awesome life from his words; each word will give the righteous a life like a resuscitation from death, *techiyas hameisim*!

Imagine hearing the announcement, "Tomorrow *Mashiach* will give a *derashah* about the *taf* in the word "*tadshe*", from the verse, "*tadshe ha'aretz deshe*" (*Bereishis* 1:11). You realize he is going to explain the word "*deshe*"-why grass grows, along with every aspect of wisdom regarding grass. He is going to reveal how all of this emerged from the letter *taf*. From this *derashah*, secrets of *Adam Kadmon* and *Atzilus* will emerge. Everyone will understand the discourse on his own level, and people will become filled with life from this *derashah*! The stadiums of the world will be filled with people listening to the *derashah*. All the world's televisions and radios will turn off their regular programming so they can broadcast each word uttered by *Mashiach*. These are some of the thoughts you can imagine when contemplating the era of *Mashiach*.

Another possible vision: think about how *Mashiach* will look. He will be a *tzadik emes*. His face will shine with a great light, and everyone will be inspired by his visage. His spiritual will penetrate into the physical.

All of these thoughts are fantasy. I am not sure how *Mashiach* will actually look. However, these thoughts and fantasies are examples of ways in which we can use imagination in a positive way. When you spend time on such fantasies, these words of prayer will be more meaningful to you: "*Es tzemach David*

avdecha meheirah satzmiach vekarno tarum biyshu'asecha", "The plant of David Your servant may You quickly make grow and raise his horn with Your salvation". You will also find that you can use such ways of thinking to avoid wasting time. When you walk in the street, if focusing on learning is difficult, you can think imaginatively about *Mashiach*. Those thoughts will help you prepare yourself for having true *kavanah*, intention, when reciting the prayer of *es tzemach David avdecha meheirah satzmiach*.

Another area in which engaging in fantasy can be extremely beneficial is that of the Heavenly judgment. You can reflect upon the scene of the soul arriving in Heaven to be judged by the *Beis Din shel Ma'alah*, the Heavenly court. A caveat that should be noted before delving too deeply into this picture is that ours is a weak generation that may have a hard time handling these types of strong *dimyonos*, because of their frightening nature. If thinking about this makes you too nervous, then don't do it.

In earlier generations, *tzadikim* used to imagine the moment when their soul would arrive to be judged. The Torah says, "*Nefesh ki techeta*", "a soul when it will sin" (*Vayikra* 4:2). The deeper understanding of Torah explains this verse as containing a declaration from the *Shechinah*. The Divine Presence wails, "Man is a soul, a *Nefesh*, how then can he sin?" Would a piece of the Infinite, willingly, sully itself with sin? Do we even know what a sin is? *Hashem* sent us so many hints and warnings to do *teshuvah* and flee from sin, including events that arouse us to do *teshuvah* or teachers that inspire us to do *teshuvah*. These types of things are *remazim*, hints, to get a person to do *teshuvah* and return from his *aveirah*. The soul is a great and awesome light—imagine the pain of this awesome light standing in Heaven clothed in excrement, for that is what sin is! The *Shechinah*, the mother of the *Neshamah*, tells us, "Before you were born, I showed you *Gan Eden* and *Gehinom*, and I taught you Torah, so how could you sin? *Nefesh*, soul, after all this, *ki techeta*, how did you sin?" The soul then passes into an *eimek habachah*, a vale of tears, where there is overwhelming regret. It is so terribly painful. If we would imagine such things in this world, maybe we would say the words, "*selach lanu Avinu ki chatanu*", "forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned", with real pain and hurt. Such an experience can cleanse us. In the next world, we will feel all the pain and sorrow, but it will be too late. Here, though, I can cry and fix myself. The inspiration to do so comes from the power of *dimyon*.

Hashem has given man the ability to be *metzayer*. You have to draw pictures. This power is a tool that we can harness to do the important work on ourselves. You can learn *musar seforim*, but the main *musar sefer* is yourself. You have to take ideas to heart and inject them into your very being. The ability to do this comes through the power of imagining and *dimyon*. *Tehi tzadik*, even if you can only reach this level through *dimyonos*. That is still very important and worthwhile!

Furthermore, habit reigns supreme in any sphere and becomes second nature. Therefore, if he accustoms himself to despise evil, it will to some extent become despicable in truth; similarly, when he accustoms himself to gladden his heart in God, through reflection on His greatness-for self-impulsion induces heavenly inspiration. With all that, perhaps a spirit from above will descend upon him, and he will merit something of the spirit (Ruach) that is rooted in some tzadik that will attach itself to him, so that he may serve God with true joy, as is written, "Rejoice, O ye tzadikim, in God". Then will in truth be fulfilled in him the avowed oath: "Be righteous".

ועוד שההרגל על כל דבר שלטון ונעשה טבע שני. וכשירגיל למאס את הרע יהיה נמאס קצת באמת וכשירגיל לשמח נפשו בה' ע"י התבוננות בגדולת ה' הרי באתערותא דלתתא אתערותא דלעילא וכולי האי ואולי יערה עליו רוח ממרום ויזכה לבחי' רוח משרש איזה צדיק שתתעבר בו לעבוד ה' בשמחה אמיתית כדכתיב שמחו צדיקים בה' ותתקיים בו באמת השבועה שמשביעים תהי צדיק:

Returning Lost Objects and Lost Sparks

The *Tanya* provides another suggestion for becoming a *tzadik*. If one works on himself to achieve a higher level than his actual level, he might merit receiving an *ibur Neshamah*. This means that *Hashem* will send into him a soul that is higher than his. People will find that there are occasionally times when they learn better than usual, or *daven* with unaccustomed intensity, and this is because an *ibur Neshamah* has entered them. If the person succeeds and truly holds on to this level, he might merit to maintain it for an extended period of time and to receive yet another high soul. This can be a great favor both for the person and for the soul that entered him. If a soul entered him, it must mean that it is necessary for him to repair this soul. When he does fix the soul, he is performing the *mitzvah* of *hashavas aveidah*, returning a lost object, in a spiritual sense. The *mitzvah* of *hashavas aveidah*, when considered

spiritually, includes a *segulah* that *Hashem* will return to the finder his own *aveidah*. Man has lost many sparks, but if a person returns someone else's *aveidah*, *Hashem* will return to him his *aveidos* in turn.

The tribe of Dan is the tribe of *hashavas aveidah*. They were the last tribe to travel, and were referred to as the *me'aseif lechol hamachanos*, the gatherer behind all the camps. They are also primed for *ibur Neshamah*, a task inherent in their job as returners of lost objects. "*Dan yadin amo ke'achad shivtei Yisrael*", "Dan will judge his nation like the one of the tribes of Israel" (*Bereishis* 49:16). Dan is the last of the *Shevatim*, and yet he judges like Yehudah. Shimshon was from the tribe of Dan. This verse teaches that Shimshon is like Yehudah, for Shimshon merited many *iburei neshamos*. It is possible that when the *Navi* teaches that Shimshon was suddenly filled with a *Ruach Hashem*, spirit of *Hashem*, and he would then have supernatural strength, this experience stemmed from an *ibur Neshamah*. An *ibur Neshamah* would enter him, he would fix it, and then it would leave, to be followed by another *ibur Neshamah* that required fixing. This was the source of Shimshon's great feats.

The Task During the Winter Months

The month of *Teiveis* corresponds to the tribe of Dan, according to the order of the flags. It is a dark month filled with long nights. Darkness is the *sitra achra*. On *Rosh Hashanah*, *Hashem ori*, God is my light, and there is great light present. *Rosh Hashanah* is a *yoma arichta*, long day, and it is a great light. The great illumination of *Rosh Hashanah* makes two days into one great light.

However, the day that *sitra achra* celebrates as New Year is a time of great darkness. The *tekufas Teiveis*, winter solstice, and the eight days following it have always been a holiday for *avodah zarah*. The *Gemara* relates that when Adam *Harishon* saw light beginning to last for a longer period each day, he made a holiday to celebrate light's increase. The times referred to by this statement in the *Gemara* are the days following the *tekufah*, winter solstice. Eventually, the non-Jews turned these days into a celebration for *avodah zarah*. Chratsmach and New Year's Day were originally holidays of *avodah zarah*. Just as *Hashem ori beRosh Hashanah*, *Hashem* is our light on *Rosh Hashanah*, *Teiveis* and its long period of darkness is the new year for the nations of the world.

December is the *Kisleiv* of the *yemos hachamah*, solar months. On *chaf hei Kisleiv*, the 25th of *Kisleiv*, we celebrate *Chanukah*. The light of *Rosh Hashanah* shines all the way to the night of *tekufah*, the time that parallels the solstice, which is the twenty-fifth of *Kisleiv*. *Chanukah* reminds us that the light of *Rosh Hashanah* extends all the way to the *Kisleiv* of the *yemos hachamah*; our light reaches even as far as December 25th, the time of great darkness. *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis*, the beginning of the month of *Teiveis*, actually falls out on *Chanukah*. *Chanukah* thus reaches as far as the beginning of the next month. Chratsmach and New Year's Day parallel *Chanukah*. These non-Jewish holidays display an overlap of the 25th and the first. The *Kisleiv* of the solar calendar extends to *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis* of *yemos hachamah*, the first of January. *Chanukah* teaches us that the light of *Chanukah*, which is the light of *Rosh Hashanah*, penetrates even to January 1st, the head of the non-Jewish year.

This dynamic is the secret behind an episode in the Torah. According to the Midrash, Chushim ben Dan, Chushim the son of Dan, was deaf. When the Jews brought the remains of the patriarch Ya'akov for burial in *Me'aras Hamachpeilah* in Israel, Eisav came and protested. He claimed that since Leah, one of Ya'akov's wives, was already buried in the Cave, he was entitled to the other burial spot. The Jews countered that Eisav had sold all his rights when he had sold the privilege of being a firstborn to his brother Ya'akov. Eisav demanded to see the bill of sale, but the Jews did not have it on them. Naftali was dispatched to Egypt to retrieve it. Chushim, the son of Dan, was deaf and so could not follow this conversation. He did not understand why his grandfather was being disgraced by not being brought to immediate burial. Unable to tolerate the delay, he killed Eisav, and the burial proceeded. Chushim decapitated Eisav, and Eisav's head came to rest in the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah*.

This story took place on *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis*, for the very essence of *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis* is the idea that holiness will overcome even the head, or beginning, of Eisav's time. The *Bnei Yissaschar* explains that Ya'akov *Avinu* passed away on the first day of *Sukkos*. When we add to that the forty days of *chanitah*, embalming, then the thirty days of crying, and then the seven days of mourning, we arrive at *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis*. It emerges from this that on *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis*, Ya'akov was buried. On that very day Chushim knocked the head of Eisav into the *Me'aras Hamachpeilah*. The same pattern repeats

throughout the generations. On *Chanukah*, the light penetrates into *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis*, thereby knocking *Rosh Chodesh Teiveis* out of the realm of Eisav and into the realm of holiness!

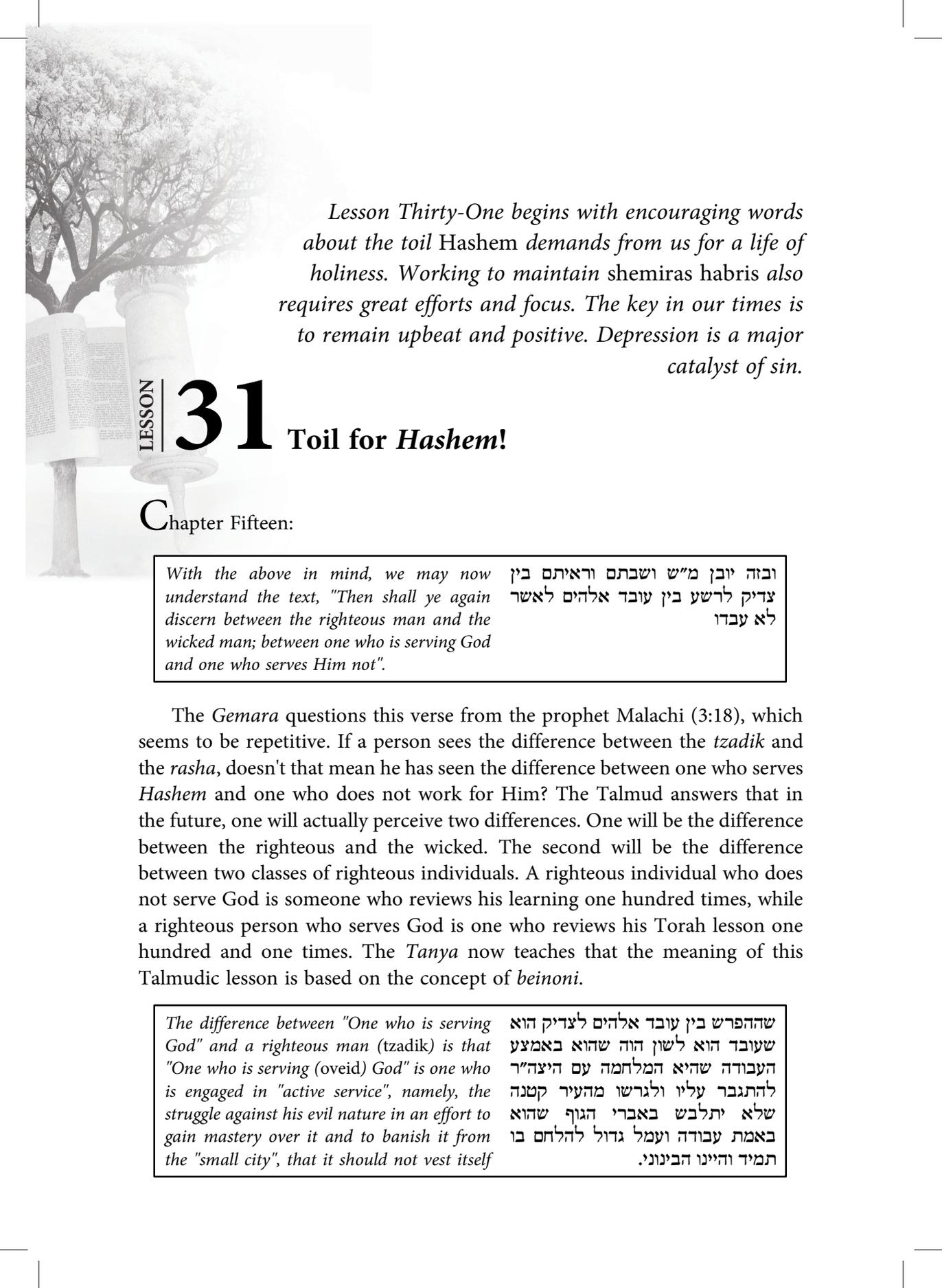
Hints To the Chushim Story

In *Parashas Vayechi*, Dan is described with these words: "*hanosheich ikvei sus*", "the one who bites the heels of the horse". *הנשך*, *hanosheich*, equals *עשו*, Eisav, minus one, because the head of Eisav was chopped off by a descendant of Dan and was buried with Ya'akov. *יעקב* is composed of the letters of *עקבי*, Ya'akov, because the head was given to Ya'akov. *סוס*, *sus*, equals *ביסלו*, *Kisleiv*, so we see that *ikvei sus*, the heels of *סוס*, is a hint for the end, the heel, of *Kisleiv*. *ויפול רוכבו אחור*, *vayipol rochvo achor*, is *roshei teivos* *אור*, *or*, for the *or* of *Rosh Hashanah* that penetrates into the darkness of *Teiveis*.

This is the power of the tribe of Dan; they are able to take the head of Eisav. In general, we find that Dan was the lowest of the tribes. In Egypt there was just one immodest Jewish woman, and she came from Dan. "*Achas haysah ufirsama hakasuv*", "there was only one disloyal woman in Egypt and the Torah publicized it". Her name was Shlomis bas Divri, and she mixed with the Egyptians. From this impure mix came the *megadeif*, the blasphemer, who the Ari teaches housed the soul of *Oso Ish*, the founder of the Christian faith. Just as *Oso Ish* left Jewish practice when Reb Yehoshua ben Perachya pushed him away, so too the *megadeif* cursed when he was pushed away from the holy camp.

Whenever there is a true redeemer, he is preceded by great darkness. This darkness is the opposite of the *Mashiach*, who is entirely light. *Oso Ish* is the *kelipah* of darkness. When Moshe *Rabbeinu* was born, he brought light into the world, since he was the ultimate holiness. Our Sages teach that when Moshe entered the world, the entire room was filled with light. He was *or*. *Tachlis hakedushah*, the ultimate holiness, is the light of *kedushas habris*, the holiness of the covenant. Moshe was the *go'el*, the redeemer. The light of *ge'ulah*, redemption, comes from *kedushas habris*. When Moshe was thirteen he killed the Egyptian taskmaster who was about to murder a Jew. According to tradition, that taskmaster was the father of the *megadeif*. Moshe became a redeemer when he fought against the violator of the Jewish covenant.

The period of *Chanukah* is a time to prepare for *Shovavim*. The time period of *Shovavim* is the time in which we fix flaws of *kedushas habris* and attempt to attain personal redemption. During these weeks we read *Sefer Shemos*, which according to the Ramban is the Book of Redemption. We merit the *or haganuz* through the light of *kedushas habris*; the opposite of *kedushas habris* is the darkness that precedes *Mashiach*. *Oso Ish* was a *mamzer*, a bastard, which is the opposite of *kedushas habris*! He represents the *kelipah* of the false redeemer. An Egyptian damaged the *kedushas habris* of *Klal Yisrael* in the tribe of Dan. Moshe saw this damager and he killed this Egyptian, who was the father of the *megadeif*. He killed him with the *Sheim Hameforash*, the special name of *Hashem*, for the Egyptian was the *kelipah* of *megadeif Sheim Hameforash*, blaspheming the Holy Name. The light of *Chanukah* is the opposite of *Oso Ish*, which is why the darkness that opposes *Chanukah* is the darkness of *Oso Ish*. The light of *Chanukah* extends to these dark areas and clarifies them. Anything that hides the light of *Mashiach* is part of the *kelipah*. The key entity is *kedushas habris*, which opens up the inner light of the Torah and is the light of *Melech haMashiach*. Each of us has a great mission. We are to become people of holiness, beings of light!



Lesson Thirty-One begins with encouraging words about the toil Hashem demands from us for a life of holiness. Working to maintain shemiras habris also requires great efforts and focus. The key in our times is to remain upbeat and positive. Depression is a major catalyst of sin.

LESSON | 31 Toil for Hashem!

Chapter Fifteen:

With the above in mind, we may now understand the text, "Then shall ye again discern between the righteous man and the wicked man; between one who is serving God and one who serves Him not".

ובזה יובן מ"ש ושבתם וראיתם בין צדיק לרשע בין עובד אלהים לאשר לא עבדו

The *Gemara* questions this verse from the prophet Malachi (3:18), which seems to be repetitive. If a person sees the difference between the *tzadik* and the *rasha*, doesn't that mean he has seen the difference between one who serves Hashem and one who does not work for Him? The Talmud answers that in the future, one will actually perceive two differences. One will be the difference between the righteous and the wicked. The second will be the difference between two classes of righteous individuals. A righteous individual who does not serve God is someone who reviews his learning one hundred times, while a righteous person who serves God is one who reviews his Torah lesson one hundred and one times. The *Tanya* now teaches that the meaning of this Talmudic lesson is based on the concept of *beinoni*.

The difference between "One who is serving God" and a righteous man (tzadik) is that "One who is serving (oveid) God" is one who is engaged in "active service", namely, the struggle against his evil nature in an effort to gain mastery over it and to banish it from the "small city", that it should not vest itself

שההפרש בין עובד אלהים לצדיק הוא שעובד הוא לשון הוה שהוא באמצע העבודה שהיא המלחמה עם היצה"ר להתגבר עליו ולגרשו מהעיר קטנה שלא יתלבש באברי הגוף שהוא באמת עבודה ועמל גדול להלחם בו תמיד והיינו הבינוני.

in the organs of the body. Verily it entails much effort and toil to wage constant war with it. This is the beinoni.

The tzadik, however, is designated "Servant (eved) of God", which is a title already earned, as the title "sage" or "king" is bestowed on one who has already become a sage or king. So is this person who has already effected and completely accomplished his task of waging war against the evil in him, with the result that he has expelled it and it has disappeared, and his heart has become "void within him".

In the category of beinoni there are also to be found two gradations, to wit, "One who is serving God" and "One who serves Him not".

Yet the latter is not wicked, for never in his life did he commit even a minor transgression, and, moreover, he fulfilled all the commandments which were possible for him to fulfill, including the study of the Torah, which balances everything else, his mouth never ceasing from study.

אבל הצדיק נקרא עבד ה' בשם התואר כמו שם חכם או מלך שכבר נעשה חכם או מלך כך זה כבר עבד וגמר לגמרי עבודת המלחמה עם הרע עד כי ויגרשהו וילך לו ולבו חלל בקרבנו.

ובבינוני יש ג' כ"ב שתי מדרגות עובד אלהים ואשר לא עבדו

ואעפ"כ אינו רשע כי לא עבר מימיו שום עבירה קלה וגם קיים כל המצוות שאפשר לו לקיימן ותלמוד תורה כנגד כולם ולא פסיק פומיה מגירסא

There is a great novelty contained within the *Tanya's* lesson: the idea that there is a level of *lo avado*, one who serves Him not, for a person who never sins. He applies this category to a person who has reached the level of *beinoni*. According to the *Tanya* even he who has never actually sinned in his life might be "one who serves Him not" if his behaviors of holiness are part of his habits and do not require effort or struggle to occur.

The reason he is referred to as "one who serves Him not" is that he does not wage any battle against his [evil] disposition in order to vanquish it by means of the Divine light that irradiates the Divine soul, whose abode is in the brain which predominates over the heart, as explained above; for his disposition does not confront him at all in an attempt to distract him from study and prayer, and he

אלא שאינו עושה שום מלחמה עם היצר לנצחו ע"י אור ה' המאיר על נפש האלהית שבמוח השליט על הלב כנ"ל מפני שאין יצרו עומד לנגדו כלל לבטלו מתורתו ועבודתו ואין צריך ללחום עמו כלל כגון שהוא מתמיד בלמודו בטבעו מתולדתו על ידי תגבורת המרה שחורה וכן אין לו מלחמה מתאות נשים מפני שהוא

is consequently never obliged to wage war against it. Thus, for example, is the case of one who is by nature an assiduous student because he is organically so disposed, and is likewise free from conflict with regard to physical desire by reason of his frigid nature, and similarly with the other mundane pleasures wherein he naturally lacks any feeling of enjoyment. Hence he does not need to concentrate so much on the greatness of God to consciously create a spirit of knowledge and fear of God in his mind, in order to guard himself against violation of the prohibitive commandments; or to arouse the love of God in his heart to induce his attachment to Him through the fulfillment of the [positive] commandments and the study of the Torah which balances everything else. For him suffices the hidden love that is in the heart of all Jews, who are called "The lovers of His name". Therefore he is not called "One who is serving", inasmuch as this latent love is not of his making or accomplishment by any means, but it is our inheritance that has come down from the patriarchs to the whole community.

מצונן בטבעו וכן בשאר תענוגי עוה"ז
הוא מחוסר הרגש הנאה בטבעו ולכן
אין צריך להתבונן כל כך בגדולת ה'
להוליד מבינתו רוח דעת ויראת ה'
במוחו להשמר שלא לעבור על מצות
ל"ת ואהבת ה' בלבו לדבקה בו בקיום
המצות ות"ת כנגד כולן אלא די לו
באהבה מסותרת אשר בלב כללות
ישראל שנקראו אוהבי שמו ולכן אינו
נקרא עובד כלל כי אהבה זו המסותרת
אינה פעולתו ועבודתו כלל אלא היא
ירושתנו מאבותינו לכלל ישראל
וכמ"ש לקמן.

Holy Labors

The *Tanya* explains that *oveid Hashem* and *lo avado* are two distinct people within the category of *beinoni*. While neither has sinned, the first is engaged in struggle and is actively working to serve *Hashem*, while the second does not struggle with his urges. Every Jew has a hidden love for *Hashem*. The person who is *lo avado* serves *Hashem* without toil, for he serves with his hidden love. Most of us sin because we don't believe that when we sin, we are harming our relationship with *Hashem*. The *beinoni* who is *lo avado* does not have the *ruach shtus*, spirit of folly, which moves most people to sin. For instance, the *Tanya* explains that he might naturally be a *masmid*, diligent student, who applies himself to his learning, because he has a strong *marah shechorah*, black bile, in his heart. Or perhaps he has simply become

habituated to serving *Hashem*, so it is no longer a struggle for him. He is righteous, but he is not considered someone who is serving *Hashem*.

This point of the *Tanya* is hard to accept. The evil urge never lets up his work, so how can it be that a person who has an evil urge, like this *beinoni*, is not actively struggling? The *Tanya* must mean this answer *lefi erech*, in a relative sense. Relative to the *oveid Hashem*, the *beinoni* of *lo avodo* is not working much. But certainly the fact that he does not commit sins requires effort, and can't be attributed simply to his good nature.

Contemplating Eternity and Other Strategies for Becoming an *Oveid Hashem*

The ideal is to be an *oveid Elokim* and not one who is *lo avodo*. An *oveid Elokim* is a person who has a hard job. *Hashem* expects all of us to work: "*adam le'amal yulad*", "man was born to toil" (*Iyov* 5:7). We are on earth for a short time, and while we are here we must constantly strive and struggle to acquire eternal benefit.

One important tool that can encourage a person to become an *oveid Hashem* is contemplation of eternity. Thinking about eternity, or even about millions of years, is overwhelming. When we realize that our seventy, eighty, or ninety years on this earth are all we have in which to earn eternity, we can recognize that to accomplish something worthy of eternity, a great deal of effort must be necessary. This is an idea that can take time to sink in. Think about how much happens in a hundred years, and then ponder how much takes place in a thousand years, in ten thousand years, and in a hundred thousand years. A thousand years ago, Maimonides lived. How much has happened since then? The Spanish Expulsion, the discovery of America, the Ari, the authorship of the *Code of Jewish Law*, the appearance of the Besht, the *Musar* movement, and much, much more. So much has happened in the last thousand years. A thousand years is merely a thousandth of a million years. Think about how much can happen in a million years! And all this has not even touched the realm of infinity, which is what we must acquire in the few years that we have here on earth!

The *Gemara* teaches that "*yeish koneh olamo besh'a'ah achas*", "one can acquire his eternity in one moment". The *ba'alei musar* point out that similarly, in one moment I can lose eternity. Someone who is *malbin penei*

chaveiro berabim, publicly humiliates a friend, can forfeit his eternity. This can get us to consider the implications of what happens in our world. In these few years we must do a great deal. How dare we waste time? Each moment is so precious and has the potential to bring us eternity and *nitzchiyus*! There is no such thing as an easy life. There is a world to accomplish!

Another thought that should inspire us to become toilers for *Hashem* is to consider how broad each matter of Divine service is, especially becoming a Torah scholar. The term "*talmid chacham*" describes a very high level. The *Gemara* says regarding the reward due a *talmid chacham*, "*ayin lo ra'asah Elokim zulasecha*", "no eye has seen it, God, other than You!" (*Sanhedrin* 99a). Apparently the level of a true Torah giant is one that is beyond comprehension, and certainly beyond articulation! A *talmid chacham* learns *Torah lishmah*, for the sake of *Hashem*. He wants to get close to *Hashem*! He learns so that the Torah will become a part of his being! He learns to the extent that *sho'alin oso bechol makom ve'omeir*, one could ask him in any place and he would answer. Moreover, each of his actions demonstrates his *yir'as Shamayim*, awe of Heaven. When a person is saturated with Torah,¹³⁶ all the universes respect him. The Talmud teaches this explicitly-while in Heaven, one sees an overturned world, for those who are low in this world are exalted in Heaven. However, we are taught that Torah scholars are respected in this world as well as in the Heavenly realm. For all universes respect a true Torah scholar!

To be a true Torah scholar reflects a very high level of Divine service. A *talmid chacham* reaches perfection when he is not deficient in any area of Divine service. Sometimes there are people who excel in *tzedakah*, charity, but lack *sheleimus*, perfection, in other areas. Someone else might be an exceptionally hospitable person, but when he eats, he stuffs himself, and fails

136. *Shem Mishmuel* explained in his father's name why it is a holy custom to eat fish during the meal of *erev Yom Kippur*, eve of the Day of Atonement. "The creatures of sea differ from those of the dry land. The water creatures cannot survive detached from their source (the Torah teaches that the fish were created out of the water). Land animals, though, can detach from their source. This is why the Sages of the *Mishnah* are called in the *Zohar*, *nunei yama*, whales of the sea, for they are one with the Torah! They are inseparable from Torah! Like a fish in water. On *Yom Kippur* Jews attach to their source and say aloud, *baruch Sheim kevod Malchuso*, Blessed is the name of the honor of His glory; they are all like the whales of the sea. The food most fitting for them is fish! The meal on the eve of *Yom Kippur* celebrates *Yom Kippur*, hence the fitting custom to eat fish!" (*Mo'adim* page 103).

to display self-control and service of *Hashem*. In contrast, a true Torah scholar is a person who is not deficient in any realm of Divine service.

A true Torah scholar is a person who eats only what he should, eats with elevation, holiness, and *perishus*, and is in all areas a *shaleim*, an ideal person. I have had the privilege of meeting such people. You cannot catch them being inconsistent at all! When you meet such a person, you will say, "Wow, this is an ideal human being. Great in all realms".

The reason that a true Torah scholar displays such complete perfection is that he learns Torah in a way that makes it a part of his essence. He does not learn superficially; he desires for what he learns to enter his being and become a part of him. If we are to reach such an exalted level we must toil a great deal.

In addition to reflecting upon the great level of a *talmid chacham*, another thought that can inspire devotion to laboring in Torah is the realization that Torah itself is very, very broad. Each point of Torah is a universe, and there is so much that we must master. Many *yeshivos* leave their alumni with a sense that mastery of Talmud and Codes of Law is all that it would take to become a Torah giant. The alumni usually feel that this is a very difficult objective for them to reach. However, this is false! Torah is not merely *Shas* and *poskim*-it is also *penimiyus haTorah*, inner Torah, *chassidus*, *musar*, and many other elements, each of which has tremendous depth. We need to master all of these complex, profound, and extensive disciplines!

Even in the *peshat*, literal meaning, of *niglah*, revealed Torah, there are awesome secrets of the *penimiyus haTorah*. Consider the fact that the Ari wrote pages to explain the *Mishnah* in Tractate Shabbos of "*kate'a yotzei bekav shelo*", "the lame may exit with his prosthetic leg". This seemingly simple statement of *peshat* contains hidden secrets. There are flowing springs within each part of the Torah, which spread further and further throughout all the areas of Torah. Even the simple study of *Mishnayos* is very broad, for it should entail understanding all the kabalistic secrets that are clothed in the simple understandings of *Mishnah*.

Still another vast discipline is the study of character improvement. Consider *midos*, human ethical traits. The Torah contains so much information about how to conquer *kin'ah*, jealousy, *ta'avah*, lusts, and *ga'avah*, arrogance. Another major subject in the Torah is how to conquer material urges and to fix a person, which are all subjects that man must acquire. In light

of the limited time we have to accomplish big tasks, the breadth of perfection the aspiration to become a Torah giant entails, and the complexity of each subject of Torah, we can only conclude: *adam le'amal yulad*, man was born to toil! There is a lot of work that man must invest to acquire complete *sheleimus hanefesh*, perfection of spirit, and truly master the Torah and deserve the title *ben Torah*, son of the Torah. There is no question that each man must work hard to be an *oveid Hashem*.

Do Not Settle!

Keep in mind that the *Tanya* has explained there are two types of people: one who is *oveid Hashem*, and one who is fully observant, but on the level of *lo avado*. Young people must know that each one of them is fully capable of becoming an *oveid Hashem*, someone who labors and toils. However, what generally happens is that when a person gets older, he will usually find himself in the category of *lo avado*. Once people are middle-aged, and involved with their work in the secular world, they usually tend to develop a comfort zone, and no longer respond positively to calls to extend their service beyond the norm.

I was a young boy when I spent time with the Satmar Rav during the *Shovavim*, and it was amazing! I could not appreciate it fully then, but yet he achieved miracles. He had a gift from above to arouse people to literally cry about their sins and commit to working on *shemiras einayim*, watching their eyes! To achieve such an arousal here in exile is a miracle. Yet many of the people who heard his exhortation failed to become entirely new people in the wake of the tears the Rav inspired. He succeeded in retaining them as *chassidim*, which is also a remarkable achievement in our generation, but the powers of his miraculous words should have caused people to walk out of that room and become *tzadikim*. Why did his words not lead to complete and lasting revolutions in the behavior of his listeners? Because these people were *beinonim* who had settled themselves comfortably at the level of *lo avado*. They told themselves, "My level is that I go to the Satmar Rebbe and cry during his *shalosh se'udos*, third Shabbos meal, but when I get home I go back to work in the street". These people were limited in the *his'orerus*, awakening, that they were capable of achieving. And this is the norm for all of us as we get older. We make limits for ourselves.

Bochurim, young men, know first of all that you should have great goals in *avodas Hashem*. Furthermore, realize that even though you will have many

failures-"*ein adam omeid al divrei Torah ela im kein nichshal bah*", "no one merits to attain words of Torah until he first fails with them"-nevertheless, remain *davuk* to *Hashem* and do not let yourself be swayed from your commitment to carry out your goals! Make a *bris*, and with an awesome commitment, push yourself to get close to *Hashem*! Then you might merit to reach great levels in *avodas Hashem*.

You have to try for *ledavkah bo*, a level which means that you are always attached to *Hashem*. *Hashem* expects this level from each of us. If you accept this upon yourself during your younger years, and you push yourself harder and harder, you can merit to reach great levels in *avodas Hashem* and to be attached to *Hashem*, as *Hashem* wants us to be. *Adam le'amal yulad*, man was born to toil-an *oveid Hashem* is always working and trying to reach *Hashem*.

Seize Special Moments

The days of *Shovavim* are primed for achieving as an *oveid Hashem*. The wintry days are perfect for this type of work. At the beginning of winter, we have the light of *Rosh Hashanah*, which is the light of the creation of the world. When *Hashem* made the world, He placed a hidden light in the world. This light emerges *mikoach el hapo'al*, from the potential to the actual. There are different levels of how these lights will move from the potential to the actual.

When the *sheviras hakeilim* occurred, followed by the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, a great mixing of good and bad took place. The *nachash hakadmoni*, serpent in Eden, was created by the *sheviras hakeilim*, and when man ate from the tree, the *nachash* entered man, causing an even greater mixing of *tov* and *ra*. Jewish souls now have a *zuhamas nachash* in them, and there is need for great *birur* to separate the good from the bad. This *birur* requires optimism and joy, not depression and despair.

Consider the source for the known sin that the time period of *Shovavim* is intended to fix. After eating from the tree, Adam wished to atone and was very pious. In fact, he was too pious. He separated from his wife for one hundred and thirty years. He immersed regularly in the waters of the *Gichon* spring. However, the main sins of *cheit hayadu'a*, the well-known sin,¹³⁷

137. Violations of the covenant of Abraham.

occurred during those one hundred and thirty years. How could this be? Wasn't that the exact time period during which he was engaged in *teshuvah*? The answer is that his actions during that period were built on despair. The appropriate *tikun* of the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as* would have been to bring new Jewish souls in the world, and these souls would have been *mivarer* the *tov* from the *ra*. To cry without fixing is not *tikun*! It is depression! Adam *Harishon* was not engaged in a correct *teshuvah*! Because his approach to rectification was wrong, he failed in the realm of the *cheit hayadu'a* during those years.

All the *kochos hara*, evil forces, that come from the well-known sin of violating the covenant stem from that time period.

The Importance of Joy

We see from this that the main *tikun*, fixing, of the *cheit hayadu'a* involves optimism, joy, and fixing. The nature of violating the covenant is that it causes depression. Therefore, the primary correction is to move on, forget what was, be happy, and be involved only in *tikun*. This is the main thing: to focus on *tikun*. The area in which the sin occurred is where the *tikun* must take place.

There is a story about a sinner who violated everything and then decided to do *teshuvah*. He came to the Alter of Novorhdok¹³⁸ and asked, "What *teshuvah* do I do for all the sins that I did? I ate non-kosher, and I violated the *Shabbos*". The Alter answered, "*Teshuvah* must penetrate to the source of the sin. The real sin was not your consumption of non-kosher; rather, you ate non-kosher as the result of a deeper root. The root of the sin was that you thought you knew better than your parents and teachers. You thought you were smarter than *Klal Yisrael* and *Gedolei Yisrael*, and that belief led to everything else. That is what you need to do *teshuvah* about".

So it is with the *cheit hayadu'a*. The *teshuvah* has to address the *ikar nekudah*, main point, that led to the sin. The sin comes from not being

138. Rav Yosef Yozel Horowitz, 1847-1919/5607-5679, the Alter of Novorhdok, was one of the great *musar* personalities. He was a man who displayed enormous trust in *Hashem*, great religious devotion, and deep knowledge of *musar*. He started a network of *yeshivos* and *kollelim*. His ideas are collected in the work *Madreigas Ha'adam*. His primary yeshiva was in Novorhdok, which is why he is known as the Novorhdoker.

immersed in spiritual matters. If a person is immersed in Torah, learns Torah the right way, and learns with deep analysis, all the *hirhurim ra'im*, bad thoughts, would be banished. A mind that is involved with delving into the depths of Talmud would not commit this sin. A lack of such immersion is the real source of the sin, and that is what one must do *teshuvah* for.

Sometimes, people fall into the *cheit hayadu'a* because of nerves. Having a nervous temperament is not a sin at all. If one sins deliberately, and did not put any work into cleaning his thoughts, he is to blame. But if someone put effort into cleaning his thoughts, but as a result of nerves fell in this area, it is not a sin. *Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu ba betrunya im beriyosav*, Hashem does not approach us with unreasonable demands! If a person was sincere and tried his best, and nevertheless things happened, he should not think about it! Thinking about it more will make it worse. He should forget about it, and go learn Torah with joy. He should go deeply into spiritual matters. Go deeply into the study of Torah. That is the primary way to fix this sin.

We Need Positive Thinking

Let us add another point. In our time, the *yetzer hara* focuses on *atzvus*, sadness, and depression. This is not only regarding the *cheit hayadu'a*, but is true in many other areas as well. He gets people to sin when they are depressed and upset. Now we need a new *musar sefer* that reflects this reality. We need new *hadrachah*, guidance. In the letters of the Steipler Gaon,¹³⁹ he speaks about this topic frequently. He explains that *bizman hazeh*, in our time, we should talk about the serious danger of depression and despair. Those are the areas that the *yetzer hara* is targeting nowadays.

We think we have fallen very low, but we must remember that *Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu ba betrunya im beriyosav!* You are not the *posek*, legal expert, on what constitutes a great failure. It could be that what you thought lowered you actually did not, and in actuality it is a test to see if you will avoid depression. Here is a rule that is helpful in evaluating this question: any matter which diminishes Divine service, *avodas Hashem*, comes from the *sitra achra*.

139. Rav Ya'akov Yisrael Kanievsky, 1899-1985/5659-5745, was known as the Steipler Gaon. He was a student of Rav Yosef Yozel of Novorhdok. He authored numerous works of Torah, including the many books titled *Kehillos Ya'akov*.

Feelings that serve to inhibit your service of *Hashem*, or cause you to learn less and accomplish less for *Hashem*, have their source in the *sitra achra* and should be avoided. If joy leads you to learn more, clearly joy is the right path to adopt.

Mikvah and Tikvah

The sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge caused a great mixing of *tov*, good, and *ra*, evil. Opportunities arose to purify the *tov* from the *ra*, but the *tov* and *ra* kept getting mixed together. A broad look at the early history of the world reveals this pattern. Let us consider first the *dor hamabul*, generation of the flood. Regarding this time period, the Torah states (*Bereishis* 6:6), "*vayis'atzeiv el libo*", "He was saddened to His heart". *Hashem* felt *atzvus*, depression, from the loss of hope that man would be a *tzadik*. Noach was a lone *tzadik* in a world immersed in sin, but the rest of humanity had been overpowered by evil that was too strong to resist. "*Yetzer machshavos libo rak ra kol hayom*", "the inclination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil, every day, all day" (*Bereishis* 6:5). People thought only of evil, and it was impossible for people to overcome these urges and become *tzadikim*.

What was needed to purify this evil was a *mikvah*, ritual bath. *Mikvah* is related to the word *tikvah*, hope. When we reach the point of *vayis'atzev el libo*, which is a loss of hope, there is a need for a very strong *mikvah*, a powerful infusion of hope. The *mabul*, flood, served as a *mikvah*. In fact, it rained for forty days to correspond to the forty *se'ah*¹⁴⁰ of water that are the minimum amount of water needed to create an actual *mikvah*. The entire world was immersed, and then it returned to the level it was at before creation. Once again the world was entirely water, and it was cleansed.

In the *teivah*, the ark, the word *tamei*, impure, was not mentioned. Had Noach heard the word "*tamei*" he would have fallen, for the world at his time was so filled with impurity that even the mention of *tum'ah* would cause a complete fall. In relation to the *cheit hayadu'a*, similarly, the word *tamei* is not mentioned for the same reason. The terminology used is, "*Ki yihyeh becha ish*

140. *Se'ah* is a Biblical and Talmudic measure of liquid. The oral tradition of Torah has revealed that a *mikvah* is a pit in the ground that holds forty *se'ah* of liquid that has not been touched by metal or transported in a vessel. In our measurements, a *mikvah* contains about 150 gallons of pure water.

asher lo yihyeh tahor", "When there will be in you a man who will not be pure, *tahor*" (*Devarim* 23:11).

The experience of entering a *mikvah* is one of forgetting evil and sin and instead thinking of something else. Every sin creates a picture of evil, but the *mikvah* cleanses so that man now has a clean mind. The *mabul* of Noach gave the world hope again.

However, we find that the pattern of history repeated itself following the generation of the flood. After the flood came the *dor haflagah*, the generation of dispersion (*Bereishis* 11:1-10). *Hashem* had given mankind another chance to separate good from evil, but once again, mankind failed. People used their abilities to unite against *Hashem* and holiness. At that point, *Hashem* changed the plan for the world. He removed the ability to spiritually influence the cosmos from the nations as a whole, and instead focused more narrowly on the *Avos*, patriarchs. Because the nations were not fulfilling *Hashem's* plan of *gilui nitzchiyus*, revealing eternity, *Hashem* now turned to an individual, *Avraham Avinu*. Avraham acquired *ahavah*, love, for *Hashem*, and he revealed this love to the world and endowed his children with it. Yitzchak reached greatness in Godly *Gevurah*, heroic restraint, and Ya'akov excelled in harmonious balance, *Tiferes*. Together, the *Avos* form the "*Vehachut hameshulash lo bimheirah yinaseik*", "And the three-fold cord will not quickly be detached" (*Koheles* 4:12). Now the world had three pillars on which to stand.

This is why *Sefer Bereishis* is also called, as the Ramban explains, *Sefer Yetzirah*, the Book of Creation. We might wonder why this is an appropriate name, since only the first *parashah* discusses creation, and the rest of the *parshiyos* talk about the *Avos*. Why then should the title of the book be a reference to creation? The answer is that the *Avos* are intricately connected to the story of creation, for without the *Avos* and their contributions, there could be no creation. The *Avos* are the *merkavah*, God's chariot. The world was created to bring *Hashem* into this world. If there is no revelation of the Divine, *gilui Shechinah*, in the world, there is no world. The *Avos* enabled the creation through the fact that they brought *gilui Shechinah* to the world.

Formation and Redemption: *Bereishis* and *Shemos*

After *Sefer Yetzirah* comes the book of *Shemos*. Just as *Bereishis* has an additional name, *Shemos* is called *Sefer Hageulah*, the Book of Redemption. Or

zarua latzadik, a seeded light awaits the *tzadik*. The seed took root and grew, and it was ready to sprout. The *Avos* were individuals. They were seeds. But in order to accomplish *Hashem's* ultimate goal for the world, a complete nation was necessary. The Jewish nation is 600,000 *peratim*, details, stemming from the holiness of the *Avos*. The number six hundred thousand represents the *sheleimus*, perfection, of all the *peratim*. In fact, there is a special blessing recited when one sees 600,000 Jews. It is the blessing of *Baruch chacham harazim*, blessed is the Wise One of secrets. When the entire nation gathers, there is a display of all the *dei'os*, ideologies, of *kedushah*. This blessing can occur only in *Eretz Yisrael*, because the nature of the Holy Land is to bring into the physical world the good *dei'os* of the world. In *Eretz Yisrael*, we build a residence in the *tachtonim*, lowly realms, for *Hashem*, and that is where we succeed in fulfilling the purpose of creation, which is to make an abode on earth for *Hashem*.

The essence of *geulah* is that the *banim*, children, reach the level of their parents.¹⁴¹ At the end of *Sefer Shemos*, when the cloud of *Hashem* rested on the *Mishkan*, the Jewish nation as a whole had at last reached the level of the *Avos*, the level of *sod Hashem al ahaleihem*, the secret of God on their tents. At that point the children were considered to be fully redeemed. They had brought the level of the *Avos* from potential to actual.

Sefer Shemos, the book of exile and redemption, begins with, "*ve'eilaeh shemos bnei Yisrael haba'im Mitzraymah*", "and these are the names of the children of Israel who descended to Egypt". The primary exile is with the children. Our father Ya'akov is one level above exile. He is at the level of *Yetzirah*, and *Yetzirah* provides a light that enables *geulah*, redemption. Just as throughout the flow of history we see that formation is linked with redemption,

141. See the Ramban's introduction to his commentary on the book of Exodus: "*Hagalu einenu nishlam ad yom shuvam el mekomam ve'el ma'alas avosam yashuvu*", "for the exile is not complete until they return to their place and they return to the level of their fathers". Rav Yitzchak Hutner, in *Pachad Yitzchak, Purim, Ma'amar Eighteen*, quotes the Ra'avad to *Eiduyos*, who says that when time is viewed as units that are years, we end up in exile. Only when time is viewed as the passage of generations do we merit redemption. Amalek, therefore, is to be opposed *midor dor*, from generation to generation. Amalek, who brings exile, seeks to divide one generation from the next. This is why in the war with Amalek, Moshe treated his student Yehoshua as an equal. Students are like children. When the teacher and the student are treated as equals, the children are on the level of the parents, and then we have a merger of generations, which brings us to redemption.

we also see that through the passage of time, each year, formation connects with redemption.

The completion of creation brings us until *Chanukah*. *Hashem ori*, God is my light, begins on *Rosh Hashanah*, and that light shines all the way down to the realm beneath ten *tefachim* on *Chanukah*.¹⁴² *Chanukah* is therefore the culmination of the *Yetzirah*, creation; in fact, the *chassidim* say that *Chanukah* is the *gemar hachasimah*, the final sealing of the judgment for the year. We find that until *Chanukah* we read each *Shabbos* from *Sefer Bereishis*, *Sefer Yetzirah*, the *parshiyos* which discuss the *Avos*. After *Chanukah* we read *Parashas Vayigash*, the story of two sons, Yosef and Yehudah. Yosef is the *memutza mitzad ha'Avos*, the bridge from the patriarchs, and Yehudah is the *memutza mitzad habanim*, bridge from their children. *Vayigash eilav Yehudah*, and Yehudah stepped to Yosef, represents *geulah* coming towards *Yetzirah*. Just as in this time of year we still retain the light of *Rosh Hashanah*, the light of *Yetzirah*, the Yosef bridge, we also draw an *or chozer*, a light which moves back in time, of *geulah*, a light from *Pesach*, the Yehudah bridge. The light of creation carries us until *Chanukah*, and after that, in the winter months, we read about *geulah*. We immerse ourselves in *Sefer Shemos* because winter is the time of bringing together *Yetzirah* and *geulah*.

Shovavim is the time of redemption. Redemption means that children reach the heights of their fathers. The child displays all that had been in the father. This means that the light *Hashem* planted in *Rosh Hashanah*, which is the acceptance of His yoke, must now emerge to actuality in all of the limbs. The body's limbs, such as the eyes and the mouth, have to display Godly holiness! The light must be fully realized. *Kedushas habris* is represented by Yosef. He is the one who connects the fathers with sons. The forces of evil most fight the holiness of Jewish birthing; they fight the *kedushas habris*. For when there are failures in this area, a spiritual *orlah* forms. *Orlah* is the Hebrew term for foreskin, and its literal meaning is a barrier or blockage. The

142. The Talmud (*Sukkah* 5a) teaches that the Divine presence never descends to within ten handbreadths, *tefachim*, of the earth. The reason for this is that in the realm very close to the earth, evil forces are felt. *Chanukah* candles are ideally to be placed within ten handbreadths of the floor. This law demonstrates the uniqueness of *Chanukah*. The light that the candles radiate is so special that it can penetrate even into realms that usually do not display Divinity. The light in the *Chanukah* candles is an extension of the light of creation that entered the world on *Rosh Hashanah*.

failure in the realm of the covenant blocks the light that originated on *Rosh Hashanah* from finding expression. The result of these failures is that the link between formation and redemption is blocked!

Let us look at some *remazim*, hints, for these ideas. The time period of *Shovavim* ends with the reading of *Parashas Shekalim*, a description of the yearly donation of half shekels to the sanctuary. This already leads us towards the theme of *Purim*, because redemption is achieved through a good experience of *Shovavim*! *שובבים*, *Shovavim*, is *יצירה גאולה*, *Yetzira geulah*, in *gematria*. *Shovavim* takes the lights from *Yetzira* and brings them towards *geulah*. *Yetzira* in *gematria* equals seven times *אדם*, *adam*, for the seven days of creation. *גאולה*, *geulah*, equals *אדם*, *adam*, for this is the eighth *adam*. Eight is a number of redemption: our world was created in seven days, and the world of redemption, which is above our world, was created in eight. Eight times *adam* equals *Shovavim*.

Another hint relates to the fact that we read in *Parashas Vayigash* that Yocheved, the mother of Moshe, Aharon and Miriam, who would grow up to become the redeemers of Israel, was born *bein hachomos*, between the walls of Egypt as Ya'akov and his family entered. *חמה*, *chomah*, is *ח*, *ches*, eight, which is a number of *geulah* with *מה*, *mah*, forty-five, the *gematria* of *אדם*, *adam*, for in *Vayigash* the light of *Yetzira* moved toward the light of *geulah*.

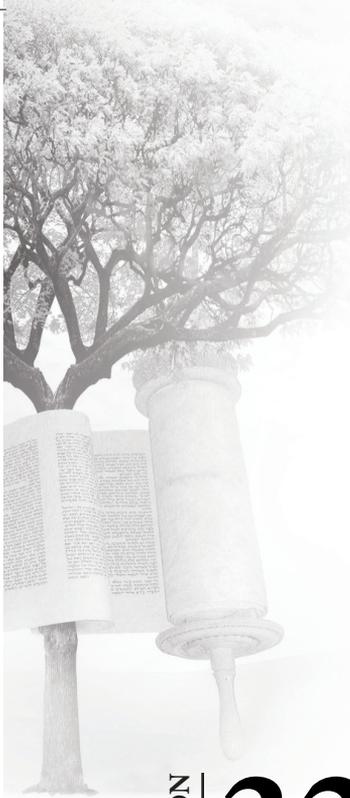
The Stitchiner Rav used to say that all the *ba'alei aliyah*, masters of ascent, that he knew reached greatness through hard work in their youth. Now, when you are young, is the time to work in matters of holiness. Immerse yourself in Torah and holiness, and then you might merit a great light. You might just taste *nitzchius* and realize why you came into this world. Especially during the days of *Shovavim*, one must work hard and involve himself in *tikun*. Work to understand difficult subjects in *Shas*. Work to appreciate a *Shabbos*. Establish for yourself a rule to learn from a great holy book on a regular basis, so you will come to truly appreciate *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. Study *Noam Elimelech*, the *Bnei Yissaschar*, *Be'er Mayim Chayim*,¹⁴³ or the *Me'or Einayim*.¹⁴⁴

143. *Be'er Mayim Chayim* is the name of the classic work of chassidic Torah that was authored by Rav Chaim ben Rav Shlomo Thirer of Chernovitz. Rav Chaim, 1740-1817/5500-5577, was a student of Rav Yechiel Michel of Zolotshov. He served as a *rav* in many communities. He eventually moved to the Holy Land and is buried in Tzefas.

144. *Me'or Einayim* is a work from one of the early chassidic masters. It was authored by Rav Menachem

These works have great holiness and in a seemingly miraculous manner, *bederech segulah*, they can embed holiness in a person, so learn them well, and you might merit to reach a level of *olamcha tir'eh bechayecha*, you will see your world in your lifetime! We (who descend from Galicia) have the tradition of studying *Noam Elimelech*. *Chassidim* of Russian origin generally study *Me'or Einayim*. Either way is good. Immerse yourself in one of these works and you will find great success.

Nachum of Chernobyl, 1730-1798/5490-5558. Rav Menachem Nachum had studied with the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of *chassidus*, and was a devoted student of the Maggid of Mezeritch, the primary student and successor of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Square, Rachmistrivka, Chernobyl, and many other large chassidic groups are headed by direct descendants of the *Me'or Einayim*.



Learning a matter one hundred and one times is a great spiritual achievement. What is unique about one hundred and one? Why do we believe that reviewing a matter one hundred and one times is the key to memorization and overcoming the propensity to forget? Lesson Thirty-Two reveals that learning a matter one hundred and one times draws a very deep level of soul to the forefront. When the depth of soul, depth of pleasure, and depth of will are linked to Torah knowledge, one is like a ba'al teshuvah, filled with added strength, and that knowledge will not be forgotten!

LESSON

32 Added Passion for Holiness

Chapter Fifteen of the *Tanya* continues:

So, too, is one who, although by nature not an assiduous student, has yet accustomed himself to study with great diligence, so that the habit has become second nature with him; for him, too, suffices the innate love, unless he wishes to study more than his wont.

*This will explain the statement in the Gemara that "one who is serving God" refers to he who reviews his lesson one hundred and one times, while "one who serves Him not" refers to he who repeats his lesson no more than one hundred times. This is because in those days it was customary to review each lesson one hundred times, as, indeed, illustrated in the Gemara, *ibid.*, by the example taken from the market, where donkey-drivers used to hire themselves out at a rate of ten parasangs for a zuz, but for*

וכן אף מי שאינו מתמיד בלמודו בטבעו רק שהרגיל עצמו ללמוד בהתמדה גדולה ונעשה ההרגל לו טבע שני די לו באהבה מסותרת זו אא"כ רוצה ללמוד יותר מרגילותו

ובזה יובן מ"ש בגמרא דעובד אלהים היינו מי ששונה פרקו מאה פעמים ואחד ולא עבדו היינו מי ששונה פרקו מאה פעמים לבד והיינו משום שבימיהם היה הרגילות לשנות כל פרק מאה פעמים כדאיתא התם בגמרא משל משוק של חמרים שנשכרים לעשר פרסי בזוזא ולאחד עשר פרסי בתרי זוזי מפני שהוא יותר מרגילותם. ולכן זאת הפעם המאה ואחת היתרה על הרגילות שהורגל מנעוריו שקולה כנגד כולן ועולה על גביהן ביתר שאת

eleven parasangs charged two zuzim, because that exceeded their customary practice. For the same reason, the one-hundred-and-first review, which is beyond the normal practice to which the student had been accustomed since childhood, is considered equivalent to all the previous one hundred times put together, and even surpassing them in endurance and effort, hence entitling him to be called "one who is serving God". For in order to change his habitual nature, he must arouse the love of God by means of meditation in his mind on the greatness of God, in order to gain mastery over the nature that is in the left part [of the heart] which is full of blood of the animal soul originating in the kelipah, whence comes his nature. This is a perfect service for a beinoni.

Or, he must awaken the hidden love in his heart to control, through it, the nature that is in the left part, for this, too, is called service- the waging of war against his nature and inclination, by means of exciting the love that is hidden in his heart. However, if he wages no war at all, the said love in itself can in no way be credited to his service.

ויתר עז להיות נקרא עובד אלהים מפני
שכדי לשנות טבע הרגילות צריך
לעורר את האהבה לה' ע"י שמתבונן
בגדולת ה' במוחו לשלוט על הטבע
שבחלל השמאלי המלא דם הנפש
הבהמית שמהקליפה שממנה הוא
הטבע וזו היא עבודה תמה לבינוני

או לעורר את האהבה המסותרת
שבלבו למשול על ידה על הטבע
שבחלל השמאלי שזו נקרא ג"כ עבודה
להלחם עם הטבע והיצר ע"י שמעורר
האהבה המסותרת בלבו משא"כ
כשאין לו מלחמה כלל אין אהבה זו
מצד עצמה נקראת עבודתו כלל

The *Tanya* explains that a person who is always learning is a person who can satisfy himself with the still dormant *ahavah mesuteret*, hidden love. However, if he decides to learn more than his normal amount of learning, then he needs to work, and at that point he becomes an *oveid Elokim*. This is the meaning of the Talmud's statement that one who learns one hundred and one times is an *oveid Elokim*. The norm was to review a lesson one hundred times. The person who studies one hundred and one times pushes himself to do more than the accepted norm. In order to compel himself to learn beyond the typical quota, the person had to use his mind to meditate on *Hashem's* greatness and thereby arouse great love, and thereby conquer habit. Alternatively, he aroused the *ahavah mesuteret* in his heart and brought it out into the revealed realm to do more than what was standard. These two efforts,

either arousing the love in the mind, or arousing the love hidden in the heart, have the effect of transforming a *beinoni* into an *oveid Elokim*, while the *beinoni* who did not struggle and merely learned the amount he was used to is called the *yerei Elokim asher lo avado*.

Why Effort Is Needed

Among the important gifts we inherited from our forefathers is an *ahavah mesuteres*, hidden love. People who use this inherited love as the basis for their service of *Hashem* can be in the category of *lo avado*, because their service is based upon drawing from that which they received from their ancestors. In contrast to relying on an inherited gift, performing your own unique service and reaching your personal level of greatness requires significant work.

The Talmud teaches that anything for which a person is *moser nefesh*, gives his life for, is *nikreis al shemo*, called by his name. For example, the Torah teaches us regarding the construction of the Ark that, "*vaya'as Betzalel es ha'Aron*", "and Betzalel made the Ark" (*Shemos* 37:1). The Midrash (*Mechilta Shemos*, 15) states, "*keivan shenasan nafsho aleha nikreis al shemo*", "since he gave his life for it, it was ascribed to his name". When someone extends, sacrifices, and gives up of himself, he is demonstrating *mesirus nefesh*, and that quality is what allows him to acquire something and truly possess it, so that the level he is now on becomes uniquely his, and not merely a continuation of his predecessors. That is why we can say that one who learns one hundred times has not acquired his own level. He has merely expressed the hidden love he received from the patriarchs. However, one who pushes himself even harder displays *mesirus nefesh*, and when he reviews one hundred and one times, he is acquiring his own level. To do that is difficult, which is what makes it so meaningful.

The Significance of One Hundred and One

The number one hundred and one is not merely a drop more than the standard; rather, it represents a unique spiritual experience. When one reviews something one hundred and one times, he is associated with a particular religious level. In Psalms, King David declared, "*mei'ayin yavo ezri*", "from where will my help come?" (*Tehillim* 121:1). We generally understand this plea to be a question, but in fact it can also be translated as a statement: "My help

will come from *ayin*". The Hebrew word מַאֲיִן, *mei'ayin*, equals one hundred and one in *gematria*. This teaches us that from the spiritual level of one hundred and one, מַאֲיִן, help emerges. In order to understand this unique level of learning one hundred and one times, we must first define the difference between the three forefathers and Moshe *Rabbeinu*.

The Avos Brought Holiness into the Physical

In *Parashas Va'eira*, *Hashem* contrasts Moshe with the forefathers: "*Va'eira el Avraham el Yitzchak ve'el Ya'akov beKeil Sha-d-a-i, ushmi Hashem lo noda'ti lahem*", "and I appeared to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov with the Name *Keil Sha-d-a-i*, but I did not make Myself known to them with My Name *Hashem*, ק-ו-ק-י" (*Shemos* 6:3). *Hashem* is teaching here that although His revelation to the *Avos* is characterized by the Name *Sha-d-a-i*, for the revelation to Moshe that would culminate in our departure from Egypt, we needed a new and greater revelation, *ushmi Hashem*, the name of *Havayah*.

Commentators explain that the Name *Sha-d-a-i* refers to limits: it includes within it the word, יָד, enough, which connotes limits. It is a name that describes *Hashem* as clothing Himself in the limits of nature. In contrast to this, the *Havayah* name refers to the unlimited and miraculous.

Let us explore the nature of the revelation to the *Avos*, as well as their contributions to the spiritual character of the Jewish people. Then we will more readily understand the appropriateness of the Name *Sha-d-a-i* that is used in connection with the *Avos*. That which our ancestors achieved spiritually and internalized, we inherited, for we are their flesh and blood. Avraham made *ahavas Hashem*, love of God, a part of the physical world, firmly implanted in the DNA of his descendants. Yitzchak brought to this world fear of Heaven, and Ya'akov brought down *Tiferes*, also known as *emes*, truth, which is a combination of *ahavah* and *yir'ah*.

Where is the love of *Hashem* that Avraham possessed contained? Is it in his soul, his mind, his heart, or his body? The answer is that the *Avos* brought their contributions down to the lowest physical level. Avraham's love of *Hashem* reached his guts, blood, and bones. We are the children of the *Avos* in a physical sense, so the *ahavah*, *yir'ah*, and *emes* that they had, we receive and manifest in a physical way. Because Avraham's physical body was perfectly aligned with his love for *Hashem*, he was able to endow this quality to his sons

just like a father endows his children with his various physical characteristics. It is not just that our souls are primed to inherit the spirituality of our forefathers; our bodies are prepared to absorb these levels as well.

Because of this physical readiness, it is not necessary for us to wage war with our bodies in order to achieve the holiness of the fathers. It is true that the *guf hagashmi*, physical body, is attached to the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*, and it has a *yetzer hara* that fights the soul. However, the service of Avraham has influenced things so that a Jewish body is easily broken in a way that allows the hidden *ahavah* to emerge. So we were bequeathed two things from the *Avos*: the hidden love, and the fact that the body is easily broken and rendered ready to reveal the soul's love.

At first glance, it seems that converts should be exceptions to this principle. They are not the biological children of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov. Are their bodies therefore harder to defeat? No. Consider this: we are taught that the name Avraham is an acronym of the phrase *av hamon goyim*, father of masses of nations, and this alludes to the fact that converts can accurately describe the patriarchs as *Avoseinu*, "our fathers". Why is it important for a convert to stress the connection he has with Avraham? The answer is that the *ger* would not be able to break his physical body without being linked to Avraham. Avraham broke his physical body and filled it with so much soul that he brought a unique light into the world. This light allows for a physical body to be overcome and to shine with the light of the hidden love. A convert has a Jewish soul, so he certainly has the *ahavah mesuteres* in his soul; the fact that Avraham is *av hamon goyim* points to the physical connection Avraham has with the convert. The *ger's* link with Avraham gives him the power to easily break the barrier of his body.

Hashem gave the land of Israel to the *Avos*: "*asher nishba Hashem le'avoseinu laseis lanu*", "that *Hashem* promised to our ancestors (Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov), to give to us" (*Devarim* 26:3). *Eretz Yisrael* is the land where Torah and *mitzvos* penetrate into the realm of the *gashmiyus*, the physical. This holiness is ingrained in the physical attributes of the Holy Land. Building a home in the United States is not a *mitzvah*; it is a physical and secular endeavor. In *Eretz Yisrael*, however, building a home is the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *yishuv ha'aretz*, settling the Land. For in *Eretz Yisrael* the holy realm reaches and conquers even the physical! The physical sand and dirt of *Eretz Yisrael* is holy, and even though today the Land does not possess its

full sanctity, since the majority of Jews do not yet live there, a remnant and *roshem* of the holiness that was once there remains there still. The primary holiness of *Eretz Yisrael* stems from the *Avos*. Because the *Avos* made their holy *midos*, character traits, of *Chessed*, *yir'ah*, and *emes* part of their DNA, the place on earth where holiness enters the physical was promised to them.

Moshe Rabbeinu Is Da'as

Moshe *Rabbeinu* is intrinsically different from the *Avos*. His essential identity is that of our teacher, not our father. Unlike the *Avos*, Moshe's essence has not become part of the physical realm. It remains in a more soulful state, for it is based upon intellect, and it is a matter of holy *Da'as*. Moshe embodied perfected Torah learning, and therefore he is the *Da'as* of *Klal Yisrael*.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* personifies *Da'as*; however, it is important to understand that each individual Jew also possesses *Da'as*. As we have explained, *Da'as* is the foundation of *deveikus*, attachment. Through *Da'as*, a soul can attach itself to *Hashem*. True *Da'as*, which means the ability to grasp holiness and to know and understand His will, is the key to attachment to *Hashem*. We have learned that *Da'as*, internalization, is linked with *Keser*, innate will. To understand a spiritual matter, you must have a deep connection to it. You must feel a bit of the inner life of the matter.

When you learn Torah, you need to feel the sweet inner life contained in the ideas of Torah. Consider: *Hashem* is one with His Torah and with His people. In each matter of Torah there is Godly life, and when the soul attaches to Torah thought, it can feel this inner life. To experience this bond one needs correct *Da'as*. Etymologically, the word *Da'as* is related to the concept of attachment, as we see that Adam's attachment to Chava is described in the Torah as Adam having *Da'as* of Chava: "*Veha'Adam yada es Chava ishto*", "and Adam knew Chava his wife" (*Bereishis* 4:1). For a man to *understand* a spiritual matter, he must be *attached* to the matter. And to truly become attached to a matter of soul demands that one not be attached to the pleasures of this world.

Gashmiyus, physicality, hides *Elokus*, Godliness. Therefore, in order to be able to feel pleasure in holiness, a person cannot feel a great pleasure in *gashmiyus*. If I am in a place where Godliness is hidden, but I do feel deep pleasure therein, then I will be unable to truly attach to *Hashem*. Conversely,

when I experience the *ta'anug*, pleasure, of *deveikus* in *Hashem*, I will be unable to feel any other pleasure, because *ein od milvado*, there is nothing other than Him. Just as an older man cannot take pleasure in the things that a child enjoys, a person who is attached to *Hashem* cannot take pleasure in physical things.

The nature of the Torah is delight. It is the delight of the Creator! The essence of Torah is *ratzon Hashem*, the will of God. *Hashem* wants us to do this *mitzvah* or that *mizvah*. Why? Because *Hashem* experiences deep pleasure, *ta'anug*, from the actions we do, *kavayachol*, as it were. *Ta'anug* is always the reason for *ratzon*. Besides these acts, does *Hashem* want anything else from us? Absolutely not. All that He wants He has revealed in the Torah! There are other things that He requires, but these things are all for the sake of Torah and *mitzvos*. The entire plane of physical existence is the *achorayim*, rear aspect, of the will, *ratzon*, for Torah and *mitzvos*; it does not represent the real will, but is secondary. The only true *sha'ashu'im*, delights, of *Hashem* are Torah and *mitzvos*.

All life and pleasure are found in the Torah and *mitzvos*. There is no vitality in physicality! In our liturgy, we describe Torah learning and *mitzvah* observance with the phrase, *ki heim chayeinu*, for they are our life. We need to work on ourselves to reach a level of revealing that *ki heim chayeinu*! We need to feel the pleasure of the life that is contained in Torah. Only then will we truly understand the Torah! All other understandings are inaccurate.

A *lomeid Torah lishmah*, one who learns Torah for the sake of its name, can feel the light of the Torah. "*Lishmah*" can mean that a person learns for *Hashem's* intended purpose in giving the Torah, or it can mean that he learns for the names of *Hashem*, as the Torah is *shemosav shel Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, names of *Hashem*. The *tachlis*, purpose, of why *Hashem* gave the Torah is so that the names of *Hashem* should be revealed. Someone who learns *Torah lishmah* gets special insight into the Torah.

Each generation has a different degree of *lishmah*. This is why an *Amora*¹⁴⁵

145. The Sages from 200-500 C.E. were called *Amora'im*, and an individual sage was called an *Amora*. The *Amora'im* analyzed the lessons of the *Mishnah*. Their conversations became the Babylonian and Jerusalem editions of the Talmud, also known as the *Gemara*.

cannot argue with a *Tanna*,¹⁴⁶ and a *Gaon*¹⁴⁷ will not argue with an *Amora*. Earlier generations had deeper feelings of *lishmah* in their learning, and as a result of this their grasp of Torah was higher and purer. Later generations cannot argue with them, as our levels of *lishmah*, and subsequently our grasp of Torah, are lower. The highest level of *lishmah*, of truly learning for the sake of the resultant attachment to *Hashem*, was achieved by *Moshe Rabbeinu*. Each later generation merely extends a bit of his experience.

Moshe Rabbeinu was a *Neshamah koleles*. He encompassed all Jewish souls. Every Jew contains within him a piece of *Moshe*. Each Jew has a point through which he attaches to Torah, enjoys Torah, and tastes the life in Torah—this point is the *nekudah* of *Moshe* that is in each of us. This is why *Chazal*, our Sages, will refer to a *talmid chacham* with the name *Moshe*, as we see in the phrase *Moshe shapeir ke'amarta*, *Moshe*, you said well. It is the *ispashtusa deMoshe*, extension of *Moshe*, that attaches to Torah.

Sinai and the Tree of Knowledge

At the moment that the Jews accepted the Torah at Sinai, their souls leaped out of their bodies, and *Hashem* sent down a special dew to restore them to life. *Yatza nishmasan*, their souls left them, because at that moment, they experienced the feeling that life was for Torah, and they were *moser nefesh hagashmis*, filled with a sense of sacrificing the physical self, as they became *davuk* to Torah life. Each Jew experiencing this felt that his body would disrupt this awareness, and therefore their souls left their bodies. Through the *tal shel techiyah*, reviving dew, they came back to life. The dew can thus be understood as possessing the ability to enable the physical body to understand Torah.

All of the 600,000 souls present at *Matan Torah*, the giving of the Torah, were roots for all subsequent Jewish souls. Therefore, all of us were present at

146. The *Tanna'im* were the Sages of the *Mishnah*. The era of the *Tanna'im* began with Hillel and Shamai, roughly the year 10 C.E., and ended with Rabbi Judah the Prince, 220 C.E., who codified the *Mishnah*.

147. After the completion of the Talmud, the heads of the two great academies in Babylon became the pre-eminent deciders in all matters of Jewish law. These Babylonian Rabbinic Sages are known as the Geonim. The period of the Geonim is often dated as 589-1038/4349-4798. Jews from all over the world sent questions on Jewish law to the Geonim in Babylon. We still study many of their responses.

and impacted by the revelation at Sinai. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was the teacher of the 600,000 souls at Sinai. Since these root souls all experienced a bit of Moshe's *Da'as* when *Hashem* gave the Torah, and all of our souls stem from these souls, all of us have experienced the *Da'as* of Moshe that was revealed at *Matan Torah*. This is why the Torah stresses that the commitment of *Matan Torah* applies both to *asher yeshno poh*, those that are here, and *asher ainenu poh*, those that are not here (*Devarim* 29:14). All Jewish souls, of all generations, are bound by the commitment expressed at Sinai, because all of them were there.

Those who were actually alive and received the Torah are referred to as the *Dor Dei'ah*, the generation of *Da'as*, since they understood the *etzem haTorah*, essence of Torah. Moshe understood it in an even more *atzmityusdike*, essential, way. As we have mentioned, each generation understands Torah in a different way, and the level of each generation is lower than the one before it, which is why an *Amora*, for example, will not argue with the *Tanna* of the previous generation. As we move further away from Moshe, our attachment to him becomes more tenuous, and our grasp of Torah becomes inferior. All true understanding of Torah comes from the *kedushah* of Moshe and is based on the Moshe-piece within the person. Moshe *Rabbeinu* bequeathed to us the inner *Da'as* of connecting with *Hashem*. With this *Da'as penimi*, Jews of every generation are attached to the level of unity between *Yisrael*, Torah, and *Hashem: Kudsha Berich Hu, Yisrael, ve'Oraisa chad ninhu*.

Had the Jews not sinned with the golden calf, the concept of *Da'as* represented by *Moshe* would have become manifest in a physical way. This statement does not mean that he would have been akin to the *Avos*, who became our physical fathers, because Moshe was not a father for *Klal Yisrael*-he was our teacher. Nevertheless, on some level his conception of *Da'as* would have penetrated into the lowliest realms. His *Da'as* would have reached the material and physical reality of *Klal Yisrael*. Perhaps this would have taken place through his children intermingling with other Jews, thus rendering all of the Jews *bnei Moshe*, descendants of Moshe. The *Zohar* discusses the high level of the *bnei Moshe*. There were 600,000 of them, and they were personifications of *Da'as*.

Today, we are the *bnei Avraham, Yitzchak veYa'akov*--the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. This *kedushas ha'Avos* which extends even to the physical realm and brings Jews to *Eretz Yisrael*, is a *kedushah* of *midos*,

ahavas Hashem, yir'as Hashem, and midas ha'emes, or Tiferes. These emotions are the roots of all the seven *midos*, so we see that the legacy of our fathers is the holiness of the seven *midos*. From these *midos* we develop a *kesher*, connection, to *Hashem*, and our bodies are primed to express this *kedushah*, which can emerge even in *gashmiyus*.

However, in contrast to the *kedushas hamidos*, the holiness of *Da'as* is a more inner holiness. *Da'as* is *mochin*, intellects. Inner *Da'as* is the *kedushah* of Moshe. While the *bnei Moshe* were embodiments of *Da'as*, the *bnei Avraham, Yitzchak veYa'akov* embody *kedushas hamidos*. When these two are linked and integrated fully, we have a complete structure, *komah sheleimah*, of *Klal Yisrael*. *Klal Yisrael* is whole when the *bnei Moshe* are the teachers of *Klal Yisrael* and they teach *Da'as* to *Klal Yisrael*.

The early history of mankind teaches us about the initial damage to *Da'as*, and the path we took towards the reparation of this *Da'as*. The sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*, Tree of Knowledge, was a sin of causing damage to *Da'as*. As we have learned, *Da'as* is an inner attachment, which allows us not only to understand but also to feel a bit of life in our comprehension. When *Da'as* was damaged, mankind attached itself to physical matters and began to enjoy them. We ate from the wrong tree. Man should have sampled from the Tree of Life, which would have caused us to feel the pleasure of life only in holiness.

After we left Egypt, we traveled forty-nine days in the desert to reach Sinai, and these forty-nine days are the days of *Sefirah*. The days of *Sefirah* were intended as a preparation to repair the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as* and therefore to arrive at *Matan Torah* with a purified *Da'as*. At Sinai, this pure *Da'as* enabled us to understand Torah the way we should. We realized that Torah is life, and that there is nothing higher than the pleasure of Torah. We truly felt that Torah was the *Eitz HaChayim besoch hagan*, the Tree of Life in the midst of the garden.

Physical pleasure inevitably results in a void. Think of *kavod*, honor, wealth, or any other physical *ta'anugim*, pleasures. When we reach the apex of this pleasure, we ask, "What next?" Physicality is empty, and when one reaches its ultimate end, he can feel that emptiness. This is true for all matters of *gashmiyus*. *Ruchniyus*, spirituality, is different. It lasts forever. It could be that someone has an experience similar to the disappointment with physical pleasures that we just described. For example, someone might have a strong *davening*, and then feel later that the experience has dissipated. If that

happened, he should understand that he never had a real experience, because the real experience of *ruchniyus* is to feel that this experience is the *etzem hachiyus*, essential and eternal life. A person who feels that there is nothing higher than the state of the *Neshamah* being attached to the *or Ein Sof* will understand the lasting nature of spiritual experiences.

At that point there is a true *reishis*, initial point, and therefore there is no room for a nagging sense of, "What will come after this?" When man is truly attached to his Creator, there is no question of what comes next, because he is living the *etzem metzi'us*, the ultimate experience of existence. He is living the *Eitz HaChayim*. When *tzadikim* used to bless each other with the words (*Berachos* 17a) "*olamcha tir'eh bechayecha*", "may you see your eternity during your lifetime", they were wishing this experience upon one another.

The *Zohar* reveals that the *Eitz HaChayim* and the *Eitz HaDa'as* were two trees that emerged from the same shared root. This root, where the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge merge, is the point of purifying the Tree of Knowledge. When man arrives at this root, he unites the two trees with each other. The Tree of Knowledge is the tree of explanation and understanding. When a person reaches *deveikus*, you cannot explain the experience with words, it is simply an experience of *deveikus*. When a person understands a matter of Torah that he can explain, and in the explanation he feels a deep *ta'anug* that he cannot explain, then the vessel, *keli*, and the light, *or*, are uniting, and he has reached the point of uniting his *Da'as* with the *etzem Neshamah*. He is merging knowledge with the *chiyus hapenimi*, the inner life, and this is the *paskah zuhamasan* of *Matan Torah*, the purification of the *Eitz HaDa'as*, that we achieved at *Ma'amad Har Sinai*.

***Bikurim* as the Ideal**

The *Beis Hamikdash* was the site for the union we have just described. Each year, every farmer in Israel had the *mitzvah* of *bikurim*, which required him to bring the first ripe fruits from his field to the Temple and give them to the *kohen*, priest. The *bikurim* come from the seven species with which Israel was blessed.¹⁴⁸ These seven types of trees represent the seven *midos* that we

148. Wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.

received from the *Avos*. They are the *ilanos*, trees, of *Eretz Yisrael*, and we take the *reishis*, first offering, of these trees.

The concept of first fruit corresponds to *Da'as*, which is the *reishis* of the seven *midos*. We bring this *reishis* to the *Beis Hamikdash*, a place that resembles Gan Eden. Through bringing the seven fruits, we connect our *midos* to the *Da'as* of Torah which fills the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Bikurim are first brought on *Shavu'os*, which is the time of *Matan Toraseinu*, the giving of the Torah. Why do we need to bring the physical fruit? We want the *Da'as* of Torah to reach the *gashmiyus* so it can reach all seven *midos*. The *bikurim* ritual represents the true inheritance of *Eretz Yisrael*, which is why when we perform the ritual, we say, "*ba'si el ha'aretz*", "I have come to the land" (*Devarim* 26:3). *Moshe Rabbeinu* brought this *Da'as* to *Klal Yisrael*. Had the *Dor Dei'ah* merited entering the land of Israel, *Moshe's* level would have reached the children of Israel in a *gashmiyus* way as well, and then we would have achieved the correct inheritance of the land, rendering it a conquest that would not have come along with an exile afterwards. It would have revealed the taste of Torah, the joy of Torah, and the *Da'as* of *Moshe*.

We find that *kedushas Eretz Yisrael*, the holiness of the Land of Israel, is a function of 600,000. According to Jewish law, the land of Israel only has full sanctity when *kol yoshvehah aleha*, all her residents are on her—namely, that 600,000 Jews are in Israel. The 600,000 residents would channel the souls of the 600,000 Jewish soldiers who left Egypt. It would be a correspondence to the perfection of the *Dor Dei'ah*. Had the real 600,000 of the *Dor Dei'ah* entered the land, there would have been a real and permanent conquest of the Holy Land!

Unfortunately, since the Jews were only on the level of *midos*, they ruined the *Da'as*. They failed by sinning with the golden calf, which was a recreation of the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*. The sin restored the *zahamas hanachash*. It was a nation that was on a lowly level that failed so greatly, and with their worship of the golden calf, the Jews once again experienced the pleasure of connection with the material realm. When *Hashem* told *Moshe*, "I wish to destroy the Jews, for they have worshipped the golden calf, and make a people out of you", He said, "*Ve'e'eseh osecha legoy gadol*", "And I shall make you into a great nation" (*Shemos* 32:10). *Hashem* did not mean only that numerically there would be many offspring from *Moshe*; rather, His intention was to convey that the nation would be truly great. It would be exalted, and would not remain

only on the level of *midos*-it would be an entire nation existing on the level of *Da'as*. This would have meant that the *kedushah* would not enter *midos*, but would exist only in *Da'as*. If that would have come to pass, *Da'as* alone would then reveal Godliness. This would have caused a great change in the world. God wanted to have a residence down below, but since *midos* are lower than *Da'as*, had there been no *bnei Avos*, the *kedushah* would only have been found on a higher level.

***Teshuvah* Requires Reaching the Level Higher Than Sin**

When *Hashem* proposed this change to the way the world was running, Moshe responded with great *mesirus nefesh*. He pleaded with *Hashem* not to carry out this plan, eventually saying, "*ve'atah im tisa chata'sam ve'im ayin mecheini na misifrecha asher kasavta*", "and now if You forgive their sin, fine; however, if not, erase me from Your book that You have written" (*Shemos* 32:32). Through this declaration, Moshe reached the level of *ayin*, nothingness. He was annulling his existence. The *kedushah* he attained through this act was higher than the *kedushah* he had from his experiences at *Matan Torah*.

Hashem had proposed to leave holiness only in the realm of *Da'as*. Moshe rejected this, and said we need a *Klal Yisrael*--we need the realm of *midos*! The *midos* need to be, and will be, attached to *Da'as*. Yes, it was true that Jews who sinned with the golden calf, who were on the level of *midos*, had damaged their bond with *Da'as*, but Moshe *Rabbeinu* was determined to help them fix themselves. In order to do this, he himself had to rise to a higher level. Anytime there is a sin with resultant damage, the *teshuvah* experience demands that one must reach a level higher than that of the sin, a level where no damage is found, and then draw from that level.

The Jews damaged *Da'as* in *midos*. The inner point of *Da'as* is *ratzon*. Within attachment to a matter there is a bit of feeling of life and will. The level above *Da'as* is pure *ratzon*, which is will itself, not merely an inkling of will. Will is called both *ratzon* and *ayin*. To help the Jews return, Moshe rose to the level of *ayin*, and along with him the nation rose to the level of *ayin* and drew strength from it.

The Zohar teaches that a *ba'al teshuvah*, penitent, has *cheila yatir*, greater strength. *Hashem* created this world with the letter ן, *hei*. This letter has an

opening on the bottom to represent the fact that man easily sins and falls from the correct mode of living. It also has an opening on the top, which indicates that a sinner can return to the Almighty as a *ba'al teshuvah* through the top. Why is there a need for two openings? Why not just have one, and let the sinner return via the same opening through which he fell out? The answer is that since he sinned, he cannot return to the level from where he fell. After all, he failed when he was at that level! To return, he must display added strength. He must go higher. He must avail himself of the more elevated parts of his personality that were never damaged by sin. This is why he must enter from a higher opening. And since he now lives on a higher plane, he is best characterized as one who displays greater strength, the strength of the higher level.

Moshe had to personally experience the *ba'al teshuvah* dynamic in order to repair the nation that sinned with the golden calf. The sinners damaged *Da'as*, so Moshe had to rise to the level of *ratzon*, which is a higher level than *Da'as*. *Ratzon* parallels the top of the *hei*. When Moshe said, "*mecheini na misifrecha*", "erase Me from Your book that You have written", (*Shemos* 32:32) he reached the level of *Keser*, which is the level of *ayin*. *Ayin* is pure *ruchniyus*. The *luchos sheniyyos*, second set of tablets, emerged from this level of *ayin*. Therefore, in this place the Jews were never *poge'im*, for it is a place where Jews cannot cause damage. *Klal Yisrael* cannot damage the level of essential will, and therefore the second set of tablets can never be broken. At the time when Moshe reached this level, *Hashem* revealed the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy. The Thirteen Attributes speak of an awesome love. Even if we sin, when *Hashem* reveals the Thirteen Attributes, we will continue on, for these attributes display the will and commitment called *ayin*. Now we have understood a bit of the level of *ayin*. It is the level of *mecheini na misifrecha asher kasavta*, erase me from Your book that You have written.

One Hundred and One Reviews Displays the *Ayin* in Man

At the time of *Matan Torah*, there was no such thing as forgetting Torah. Because our *Da'as* was in a state of perfection at the initial acceptance of the Torah, we fully attached ourselves to the Torah, and felt in it a bit of the pleasure of life. Only after we sinned with the golden calf, thereby recreating the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, did we begin to forget our learning. Forgetting is only possible regarding a matter that one does not fully enjoy

and attach to. Forgetting Torah knowledge stems from the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*, which entails having a *Da'as* bond with matters that are material as opposed to Torah.

Reviewing a lesson one hundred times was the normal amount of times that was necessary to enable a student to remember his lesson. If he reviewed one hundred and one times, he was guaranteed that he would remember his lesson. To review Torah one hundred times is to attempt to fix the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*; however, the possibility of forgetting still exists. What can one do to ascertain that he will definitely not forget? He reviews Torah one hundred and one times! This single extra review is special in that it channels the added strength of rising to the roots of *Da'as*, of feeling will itself in Torah! We need to access Torah as *ba'alei teshuvah* do! Just as a *ba'al teshuvah* is characterized as someone who displays *cheila yatir*, added strength beyond the normal, the acquisition of Torah requires *cheila yatir*, which is represented by learning a matter one hundred and one times. When we learn something a hundred and one times, we acquire Torah on the level of Moshe, who taught us the level of *ayin*: "*ve'im ayin mecheini na misifrecha*".

We need to learn Torah as *ba'alei teshuvah* do, by putting in more than the normal effort!

Moshe's name is not mentioned in the Torah portion of *Tetzaveh*. Commentators explain that this is because this Torah portion is *Hashem's* fulfillment of the request, "Erase me from Your book that You have written". There are one hundred and one verses in *Parashas Tetzaveh*! To truly reach Torah we must negate ourselves as Moshe did. We must rise to levels higher than *Da'as*. We must become *ba'alei teshuvah*!

We find that the Oral Torah is also connected to the concept of living like a *ba'al teshuvah*. All the basic texts of the Oral Law, such as *Mishnah*, are reflections of the ideas of Rabbi Akiva. In the Talmud we are taught that all the *setamos*, Tannaitic texts that are not attributed to a particular sage, follow Rabbi Akiva (*Megillah 2a*). This is why he is called *Reb Akiva stimsa'ah*, Rabbi Akiva the nameless one. Rabbi Akiva himself was a *ba'al teshuvah*. In his earlier life, he was a sinner who hated Torah scholars. He later returned to *Hashem* and learned with *cheila yatir*, great passion and strength. He displayed the level of *ve'im ayin mecheini na misifrecha asher kasavta*. And this *ba'al teshuvah* is the source for our Torah!

Rabbi Akiva concludes the tractate of *Yoma*, which is the tractate about *Yom Kippur*, the day the second Tablets and the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy were revealed, with this lesson: "*Ashreichim Yisrael lifnei mi atem metaharim*", "You are fortunate Israel! Before whom do you become pure?" He was speaking of the greatness of *ba'alei teshuvah*, and how the *ba'al teshuvah* merits *taharah*, purity. The place where *ba'alei teshuvah* stand is a place that *ein tzadikim gemurim yecholim la'amod*, even the perfectly righteous cannot stand. What Rabbi Akiva meant was that through *metaharim*, through *teshuvah*, one reaches a higher level than by simply having lived as a *tzadik gamur*!

Now we can understand that the level of Moshe is best represented by the words, "*mei'ayin yavo ezri*", "my help will come from *ayin*". "מאי, *mei'ayin*", equals one hundred and one in *gematria*. Furthermore, we know that each Hebrew word can be more fully spelled out, since each letter can actually be its own word. Thus, the spelled-out form of the word "Moshe" would be מ, מ, א, ה, י, ש. If we take the inner parts of these names—all of the letters except for the initial letters—the numeric value is, once again, one hundred and one. The *gematria* of the *milui*, מ, י, א, is one hundred and one, because the *milui* is the inner part, and the inner part of Moshe is מיאי, *mei'ayin*!

In the Song of Songs, King Solomon wrote, "*Tze'enah ur'enah bnos Tzion bamelech Shlomo, beyom chasunaso uveyom simchas libo*", "Go out and see, daughters of Zion, King Shlomo... on the day of his wedding and on the day of his heart's happiness" (*Shir Hashirim* 3:11). Our Sages teach that King Shlomo in the verse is a reference to the Almighty. *Yom chasunaso*, the day of his wedding, refers to *Matan Torah*. Jewish practice is that every *kidushin*, marriage, is declared to be based on the *Da'as* of Moshe. The groom says to the bride, "*Harei at mekudeshes li betaba'as zo kedas Moshe veYisrael*", "Behold you are betrothed to me with this ring as the way of Moshe and Israel". The *Da'as* of Moshe established the connection between Moshe and *Klal Yisrael*. Through learning Torah, we have knowledge of *Hashem* and a connection to *Hashem*. Moshe received the Torah in the right way and then conveyed it to us.

The Midrash teaches us that after the sin of the golden calf, Moshe defended the Jews with the claim, "You said, '*anochi Hashem Elokecha*', 'I am God your Lord' (*Shemos* 20:2). You spoke to me and not to them!" How is this a meaningful defense? Moshe was obligated to, and did, convey the Torah to the Jewish nation. It was all for them!

The depth of Moshe's defense is that the Torah was given to the part of Moshe in each Jew. Since Moshe never sinned with the golden calf, the part of Moshe that resides within each Jew really did not sin with the golden calf. *Hashem* should look at that aspect of the Jewish souls, and see that the nation deserved to be spared annihilation! The part of Moshe in each Jew was damaged, but the core of the Moshe element had not been damaged, just as Moshe himself had not been part of the sin of the golden calf! The root of the *Da'as* was not damaged. We still retain the root of *Matan Torah* today.

When Moshe broke the *luchos*, it was a form of *afke'inhu rabbanan lekidushin mineih*, the rabbis annul the marriage from them! He broke one set of *luchos* in order for us to reach a higher level—that of *cheila yatir*. We would have a new *kidushin*, a marriage of *luchos sheniyos*! The *luchos sheniyos* are the *Da'as* of *mei'ayin*, which was a higher *Da'as*.

We have mentioned that Moshe's level did not descend to the *gashmiyus*. It was the *Avos* who gave us the land of Israel and lived in the land. Moshe himself did not actually enter Israel, for the *ayin* cannot enter into *gashmiyus*! It is a level too high for the physical realm.

When we learn Torah we must remember what we learn. Sometimes we forget, but the way to combat this is by learning with *cheila yatir*. When we learn with added strength we reach the level of *luchos sheniyos*, and we reach an inner bond, *keshar penimi*, with Torah. We feel the feeling of *ki heim chayeinu*, we feel a different life in the Torah, and then the lessons will be unforgettable.



Amalek is the great enemy of the Jewish people. When Amalek first attacked us, Moshe led us to victory through the raising of his hands. Lesson Thirty-Three reveals the deeper meaning of the two hands, the two eyes, and the idea of raising the hands. Da'as can extend to five attributes of Chessed or five of Gevurah. When the hands, with five fingers on each, are lifted it means that the attributes are being elevated to Da'as, and Da'as is rising to will. When Keser appears, we prevail!

LESSON

33

The Secret of Lifting Hands

In Chapter Sixteen of the *Tanya* we read:

This is a great principle in the Divine service of the beinonim, the main matter is for the mind to rule and master the nature that is in the left ventricle of the heart through the light of Hashem that illuminates his Godly Nefesh in his mind for it to rule over the heart.

וזה כלל גדול בעבודת ה' לבינונים
העיקר הוא למשול ולשלוט על הטבע
שבחלל השמאלי ע"י אור ה' המאיר
לנפש האלהית שבמוחו לשלוט על
הלב

Two Ways to Defeat the Animal Nature

The *Tanya* says that a vital principle for *beinonim* is to have the Godly light, or *Hashem*, in the Godly soul, *Nefesh Elohis*, rule over the heart. The *Tanya* actually uses a double terminology, *limshol velishlot*, to rule and to master, to describe how a person should control the animal nature which is in the left ventricle of the heart. The reason for this is that there are actually two distinct ways of ruling over the *Nefesh habehemis*.

The first method, *shelitah*, is built upon the principle that it is natural for the mind to rule over the heart. The *Chochmah* of man provides life for all of the limbs of the body; in fact, anything physical derives its life from

Chochmah. King Solomon revealed that, "*HaChochmah techayeh ve'aleha*", "wisdom gives life to her possessors" (*Koheles* 7:12). חכמה, *Chochmah*, is composed of the letters כח מה, *koach mah*: it is the *koach*, the life-force, of each *mah*, meaning *mahus*, essence. Since *Chochmah* is the source of life, we must arouse *Chochmah* to rule over the *midos* in the heart.

When *Chochmah* does this, it rules through *hislabshus*, clothing. The wisdom is clothed in the emotions of the heart. For example, *Chochmah* is *metzayer*: it draws pictures for emotions. Consider love. One can love anything. Love can be clothed in items rooted either in the *Nefesh habehemis* or the *Nefesh Elokis*. Love can fill in a picture by taking from the animal soul or from the Godly soul. When the *Nefesh Elokis* is aroused, the *midah* becomes imbued with *Chochmah*, and this causes the *midos* of the *Nefesh habehemis* to be drawn towards and transformed into the *midos* of the *Nefesh Elokis*.

There is an ongoing war between the love of the *Nefesh Elokis* and the love of the *Nefesh habehemis*. In order to win this war it is necessary to go to a higher level. The level of thought is a higher level than the level of emotions, because thought stems from a universe that is mostly good! Let us explain. There are three lower universes. The universe of *Beri'ah* gives us thought, the universe of *Yetzirah* gives us emotion, and the universe of *Asiyah* gives us action. In the universe of *Yetzirah*, everything is equal between the realm of *tov* and the realm of *ra*, which means that when it comes to emotions, war takes place between two equal forces. In the *Asiyah* universe, which is expressed in blood and liver, we find that *rubo ra*, a majority of it is bad.

Only in the universe of *Beri'ah* do we find a situation of *rubo tov*, mostly good. The good part, *chelek hatov*, of the heart absorbs from the mind, which is mostly good, *rubo tov*, and the evil part, *chelek hara*, draws from the liver, *kaved*, which is mostly bad, *rubo ra*. Therefore, we see that the main war takes place in the realm of *midos*, which includes the realms of *dibur*, speech, and emotion. In order to win this war, we need to draw from a higher level, and we accomplish this by drawing from the mind / *Beri'ah*-part, which is mostly good.

If we take an even deeper look, we can see that in the mind there is *melubash*, clothed, a bit of *Chayah*. *Chayah* comes from the world of *Atzilus*, which is *kulo tov*, completely good. Through these *hamshachos*, drawings down, there exists the possibility of *shelitah*, mastery, of *tov* over *ra*. This type of transformation of evil is what the *Tanya* is referring to when he uses the phrase "*lishlot*."

Besides for *shelitah*, there is also *memshalah*, rule. *Memshalah* implies absolute dominance, not merely the state of being clothed and of directing an emotion. It comes from a level higher than thought and even higher than the level of *Chayah*: it comes from the *ratzon shebenefesh*, the innermost will of the soul. *Memshalah* draws from the *Keser* within the *Nefesh*, which is what the apex of the *yud* in the Tetragrammaton represents. When you arouse the *ratzon* of the *Nefesh*, you do not need to use the natural force of loving. In contrast to *Chochmah*, which acts as a teacher to show a person how to employ and direct the natural emotion of love, *ratzon* is a *bechinah* of *memshalah*, which implies ruling against one's will. The quality of *ahavah* under the influence of *ratzon* will only be directed to love those matters that the *ratzon ha'elyon* says to love, for the power of love is *battel*, annulled, before the *ratzon ha'elyon*. While *Chochmah* can direct the heart to feel love for certain things, much like a *rebbe* educates a student and teaches him what to love, *ratzon* is a *memshalah* in that it will force the *ahavah* to accept the dictates of the *Chochmah* of holiness. The *ratzon* rules as an *or makif*, encompassing light. This is the *memshalah* that the *Tanya* refers to.

We have seen the two ways of ruling over the *Nefesh habehemis*. One is the rule of *Chochmah*, which involves redirection of the *midos*, and the other is the rule of *ratzon*, which acts as a *memshalah*.

That is to say, to rule the heart by means of meditation in the mind on the greatness of the blessed Ein Sof, whereby his understanding will beget a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord in his mind, to make him turn away from the evil condemned by the Torah, or by the Rabbis, even from a minor Rabbinic prohibition, Heaven forbid; and [at the same time arousing] the love of God in his heart, in the right part, with a fervor and desire to cleave to Him through the fulfillment of the precepts of the Torah and of the Rabbis, and through the study of the Torah which is equivalent to them all.

כשמתבונן במוחו בגדולת א"ס ב"ה להוליד מבינתו רוח דעת ויראת ה' במוחו להיות סוד מרע דאורייתא ודרבנן ואפילו איסור קל של דבריהם ח"ו ואהבת ה' בלבו בחלל הימני בחשיקה וחפיצה לדבקה בו בקיום המצות דאורייתא ודרבנן ות"ת שכנגד כולן.

Love and Awe from *Da'as*

The *Tanya* teaches that by thinking about *gedulas Ein Sof*, the greatness of the Infinite, one can arouse in his heart the capacity to avoid evil, as well as a great love for *Hashem*. In essence, the *Tanya* is describing the synthesis of two vital concepts. One is the injunction *sur meira*, abandon evil, a directive which encompasses all the *mitzvos lo sa'aseh*, prohibitions. The other is the love that comes with fulfilling *aseih tov*, doing good, which refers to fulfilling the positive commandments, which are the vehicle through which we express *ahavas Hashem*, love of *Hashem*. The ability to accomplish in both of these pathways stems from the mind, a point which relates to the fact that *Da'as* can be divided into two parts--the *chassadim* of *Da'as* and the *gevuros* of *Da'as*. What is the meaning of these two categories?

We know that there are *mochin* and there are *midos*. The *mochin* are *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Da'as*. *Chochmah* is general knowledge of a matter, while *Binah* is understanding the details, and being able to distinguish one matter from another. *Chochmah* is called *av*, father. Biologically, it is the father who plants the drop of seed, the potential. The *ima*, mother, draws forth the entire person from the single drop deposited by the father. The power of drawing from the general to the detailed is a display of *Binah*. *Binah* is the root of all *gevuros* and limits. *Binah* is also the root of *dinim*, because *Binah* divides a general rule into its details, and dividing a whole into details is a form of *tzimtzum*, limitation.

The Talmud teaches that in the creation of a child, the red items, such as blood, come from the mother, while white items such as bones come from the father. Red is the color of *din*, judgments and restrictions. In the womb the fetus is nourished from the blood of the mother. However, the drop that the father contributed to the child is white, and is entirely *Chessed*. The mother, and her blood, divide the general life of the seed of the father into all of its parts and details, and this is a manifestation of *Binah*.

So what then is *Da'as*? *Da'as* is the connecting force that enables the *midos*, emotions and behaviors, to follow one's *mochin*. *Midos* are supposed to follow the dictates of the mind. Sometimes people understand a concept, but it does not become a part of their identity. This is an indication that the matter never reached their essential core, for *Da'as* is the link that renders knowledge a part of one's being. *Da'as* is not an independent attribute; in most lists of the

attributes of the Almighty, it is not counted. Rather, it is the soul of the *midos*. As we have learned, one feels a sense of life in matters that are in *Da'as*. *Da'as* enlivens the *midos* and gives life of *mochin* to *midos*.

Da'as has *itra dechassadim*, a crown of *chassadim*, and *itra degevuros*, a crown of *gevuros*. What does this mean? *Da'as* causes all *midos* to understand the greatness of God. This understanding will foster both *ahavah* / *Chessed* and *yir'ah* / *Gevurah*. Why are there five *chassadim* of *Da'as* and five *gevuros* of *Da'as*? The answer is that there are five primary emotions. These emotions might feel a life of awe, which would be the *gevuros* of *Da'as*, or they might feel a life of love, the *chassadim* of *Da'as*. While there seem to be seven *midos*, as represented by the acronym *chagat* (*Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*; kindness, restraint, and beauty) *nehim* (*Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, *Malchus*; dominance, empathy, foundation, and kingship), there are actually five primary *midos*. *Yesod* (foundation) and *Malchus* (kingship) are generalizations of all the *midos* and thus not part of the five.

The seven-week period from *Pesach* to *Shavu'os* is the time designated to fix the seven *midos*. The job is actually complete on the thirty-third day of the *Omer*, *Lag Be'omer*. That is the day of *Hod* of *Hod*, and it is the point at which we have basically finished the *tikun* of the *midos*. After *Lag Be'omer*, we already experience the light of *Shavu'os*. Even though two weeks and two days still remain before *Shavu'os*, along with the task of fixing *Yesod* and *Malchus*, at this point we are not focusing our service on the repair of our character. This is because these two final *midos* are simply summaries and generalizations of the other *midos*. The *Zohar* offers a proof to this idea with the statement, "*ima ila'ah ad Hod ispushetes*", "the Supernal Mother extends to *Hod*". *Ima*, which is a reference to *Binah*, reaches until *Hod*. Why does it reach only until *Hod* and not as far as *Malchus*? This enforces our previous point, which is that once one has repaired his *midos* until the point of *Hod*, he has achieved the primary *tikun hamidos*, fixing of character traits.

We see from all this that the attribute of *Da'as* divides only into five parts, and not seven. There is a *ha'arah*, an illumination, a feeling of living, of *chassadim* of *Da'as* from *Chessed* until *Hod*. This light from *Da'as* animates *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, and *Hod*, and then all of these traits become generalized in *Yesod* and in *Malchus*. Just as there is a feeling of life from *chassadim* of *Da'as*, there is an animating feeling of life of awe from *gevuros* of *Da'as*. This light from *Da'as* also fills all the *midos* from *Chessed*

through *Hod*. Thus we can understand that there are five *chassadim* of *Da'as*, and five *gevuros* of *Da'as*.

This concept is actually hinted at in the nature of a human being in several ways, as we will see.

The Meaning of the Right and Left Hands

One hint to this concept lies in the hands of man. The two hands of man symbolize love and fear; the right hand is love and the left hand is fear. This idea is found in the section of *Zohar* that was revealed by Elijah the prophet, which is called *Pasach Eliyahu*. There Elijah explained that the right hand is *Chessed* and the left hand is *Gevurah*. The five fingers of the right hand are the five *chassadim* of *Da'as*, and the five fingers of the left hand are the five *gevuros* of *Da'as*.

It is the task of every person to lift up his hands. Naturally, hands descend, and the task of man is to elevate them. The *mitzvah* of washing our hands is called *netilas yadayim*, which literally means "the raising of the hands". The lifting of the hands reflects the necessity of lifting attributes to their root, to *Da'as*.

This verse from *Koheles* alludes to the opposite idea, that of descending hands: "*Ba'atzaltayim yimach hamekareh uveshiflus yadayim yidlof habayis*", "With laziness the roofer will be exhausted and the house will be leaky if the hands are let down" (*Koheles* 10:18). We see from here that hands are connected to the concept of home. What home specifically is impacted by hands? The ultimate home, the *Beis Hamikdash*, which is the home of *Hashem's Shechinah*. We have learned previously that "*kol mi sheyeish bo dei'ah ke'ilu nivneh Beis Hamikdash beyamav*", "Anyone who possesses *Da'as* it is as if the House of *Hashem* was built in his days" (*Sanhedrin* 92a). Consider the builder of the ultimate house: King Solomon. Shlomo *Hamelech*, the builder of the *Beis Hamikdash*, is the also the one who instituted *netilas yadayim*. This is no coincidence, as we have just seen the connection between these concepts. The builder of the house instituted lifting the hands through *netilas yadayim*. We can see this connection once again in the Song of the Sea, when the Jews said, "*Mikdash Hashem konenu yadecha*", "Your hands built the *mikdash* of *Hashem*" (*Shemos* 15:17). Once again, hands are associated with building the house of *Da'as*!

Shlomo *Hamelech* actually has another name, *Yedidyah*. ידידיה is composed of the word *yad* twice-- יד יד, *yad yad*, which is hand hand. Shlomo calculated *yad*, which in *gematria* is 14, 14 times for good and 14 times for bad in *Koheles* (see Chapter Three of *Ecclesiastes*). The right hand, *yad yemin*, represents good times, and the left hand, *yad semo'l*, represents bad times. Shlomo united the two together.¹⁴⁹ That is why the last time he mentions is *eis shalom*, a time of peace, for he brought the two sets of times, the good and the bad, together and made peace between the two hands. His name is Shlomo, which contains the word *shalom*, peace, for he made peace between the two hands.

Da'as affects the totality of the actions of the individual. In Proverbs 24:4, the verse teaches, "*UveDa'as chadarim yimal'u kol hon yakar vena'im*", "With *Da'as* rooms will be filled, with all treasures and precious items". *Da'as* teaches that the *midos* should follow the *mochin*, and this will affect all the details of the person. A person who is a *ba'al Da'as* will find that his *Da'as* affects every aspect of his life. There should be nothing that he does without thinking; all details of his life should be directed by *Da'as*. In the future, we know that, "*Ki mal'ah ha'arets dei'ah es Hashem kamayim layam mechasim*", "For the whole world will be filled with *Da'as* of *Hashem*, like the waters cover the ocean" (*Yeshayahu* 11:9). In the same vein, all of the actions of a person should be careful and deliberate, and in accordance with the dictates of *Da'as*.¹⁵⁰

The *Beis Hamikdash* contained both great and small vessels, all of which were holy to *Hashem*. The Torah itself contains numerous details related to many areas, and all of them are parts of Torah that demand our careful attention. So it is with man: every aspect of man must be filled with *Da'as*! If

149. On the verse in Psalms that states "*neharos yimcha'u chaf*", "the rivers will clap" (*Tehillim* 98:8), the Gra explained that just as there is a right hand and a left hand, the Psalmist allegorizes that there is a right river and a left river. The right is the symbol of *Chessed*, times when we feel *Hashem's* love. The left refers to times when we feel *Hashem's* mighty punishing hand. In the future, the two hands / rivers will clap, for we will see these two as one, and we will realize that all the judgments were really gifts of *Chessed*, and that both hands should be clasped together! See the commentary of *Maggid Tzedek* to the prayers of *Kabalas Shabbos*.

150. Rav Shlomo Wolbe, in *Pirkei Kinyan Da'as* (pages 13-16), points out that the Rambam characterizes *Da'as* as an ocean. One who wishes to become pure must immerse himself in the ocean of *Da'as*. Rav Wolbe explained that just as the ocean completely covers the ocean floor, a pious Jew should be fully immersed in *Da'as*. *Da'as* must guide his every action. Every waking moment must be filled with attempts to apply *Da'as* and derive *Da'as* from life, and not to allow our minds to wallow in fantasy and imagination!

a man has even a small hole in his stomach he cannot eat. We don't say that since he is mostly all right, he is completely all right. Similarly, if there is a small malfunction in one area of the brain, the entire mind has trouble functioning. Our limbs teach us how meaningful every detail is. Man was built with *Da'as* and each detail was placed within him with *Da'as*. *Da'as* fills the human being.

However, the natural state of hands contrasts to the principle of mindfulness that *Da'as* demands from a person. There is a principle that states that *yadayim askaniyos hein*, hands move about with no control. Hands are therefore connected to the concept of *hesech haDa'as*, distraction from *Da'as*!

As we have learned, *Da'as* is the feeling of life within a matter. When one feels this life, he internalizes those ideas. *Da'as* is life, purity and holiness. When *Da'as* is present, there is no place for *chitzonim*, external forces. In the Temple, *kodashim*, sacred foods, were disqualified if there was *hesech haDa'as*, distraction from *Da'as*, because in the *Beis Hamikdash* there had to be *Da'as* every second. Similarly in Torah, we find that "*hasa'if einecha bo ve'einenu*", "if you leave your eyes from it, it will be gone" (*Mishlei* 23:5). If you abandon Torah for a second, you can lose it all!

Without a feeling of life, there is death, and death results in *tum'ah*, impurity. The hands can get to a place where there is almost no *Da'as*. *Shiflus yadayim*, lowering the hands, causes the house of *Da'as* to leak. This presents a monumental challenge: do not let the hands fall down!

The Talmud teaches that Rabbi Judah the Prince was called *Rabbeinu Hakadosh*, our holy teacher, for he never let his hands descend beneath his stomach. Lift your hands up! Bring them to the level of mind and thought. It is their nature to fall, and they will be raised up only if you think! The idea behind *hagbahas yadayim*, raising the hands to the head after washing them, is that man must not allow himself to experience *hesech haDa'as*; he must see to it that he always has *Da'as*. He must raise both the right hand and the left hand; he must not let them fall. He must give *Da'as* to the hands; he must not be *meisiach Da'as*.

The Source of Amalek

Amalek is the *Da'as* of *kelipah*. In fact, Amalek draws from the *gevuros* within *Da'as*, which are represented by the left hand. The *sitra achra* is *yoneik*,

draws nourishment, from holiness. This is because the *sitra achra*, like everything ever created, was also created for holiness. The *sitra achra* serves the cause of holiness in two ways. First, it is *mefateh*, which means it seduces man to sin. When it takes on this form of temptress, it is called the *yetzer hara*. When the *yetzer hara* encourages man to sin, man has the ability to resist this advice, and earn reward so he will not be forced to eat the *nahama dikisufa*, bread of shame, which refers to the disgrace of accepting undeserved reward. The second way the *sitra achra* serves a Divine purpose is by acting as the *Mal'ach Hamaves*, Angel of Death. It punishes sinners, thus providing man with a *tikun*. This is its second holy purpose.

Man could reach his *tikun* in a straightforward way, by doing *mitzvos* and becoming a great *tzadik*. When a *tzadik* arrives in Heaven, the gates of the Garden of Eden open before him. He enables *Hashem*, who is all good, to provide for him blessings in a way that is good. However, if man chooses a crooked path, he will need to receive his *tikun* through suffering at the hands of the Angel of Death. The prophet Yechezkel conveyed this message to the Jewish nation when he told us, "*veha'olah al ruchachem hayo lo tihyeh... Chai ani ne'um Hashem. .. im lo beyad chazakah uvizro'a netuyah uveheimah shefuchah emloch aleichem*", "What is rising in your thoughts will not be...As I live, swears the Almighty... rather with a strong hand, outstretched arm, and an overflowing fury I will rule over you!" (20:32-33). This is true if you want to be like all the other nations. But you do have the option of reaching Heaven with a straight track, by fulfilling the *mitzvos*. If you choose that route, you will be a son of a king and you will rule over the angels. When you arrive in Heaven, they will call before you "*kadosh*".

The *yahrtzeit*, date of passing, of such a person could become like that of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. When Rabbi Shimon left this world on *Lag Be'omer*, there was a *yom tov* when he arrived in Heaven. If we choose not to do *mitzvos*, however, we will not reach these levels. Ultimately we will get a *tikun* at the end, but it will be accomplished through His ruling over us with an overflowing rage. The left hand will give a *yenikah* to the *sitra achra*. The *gevuros kedushos* will devolve into the forces of *sitra achra*.¹⁵¹

151. The Gra on *Mishlei* explained the verse, "*Kol po'al Hashem lema'aneihu vegam rasha leyom ra'ah*", "All that God created was for His sake and even the sinner for the day of misfortune", to mean that each item was created to increase the glory of *Hashem*. The righteous accomplish that mission

Gevuros kedushos, holy restraints, that have not fallen, create pleasure. What are *gevuros kedushos*? There is a certain pleasure inherent in hearing a good rebuke, such as words of *musar*. What can possibly be enjoyable, you might wonder, about hearing a speech of *musar*? The speaker, the *ba'al musar*, is revealing my flaws and pointing out what I do wrong! Isn't recognition of flaws and failures a source of pain and discomfort? There is a depth here: the soul enjoys the truth. It is a *michayeh*, a pleasure of tasting life, for the soul to experience a revelation of the Godly seal, truth. A *musar* speech is an experience of holy restraints. *Gevuros kedushos* are a complete pleasure, for the *sitra achra* has not gotten those *kochos* at all. However, when holy restraints fall, the *sitra achra* has life, and then he punishes.

The prophet Yirmiyahu declared in *Eichah* 3:38, "*Mipi elyon lo seitzei hara'os vehatov*", "From the One on High, evil and good do not emerge". When everything is from *Hashem*, we only feel pleasure, since *Hashem* does not punish. Punishments come from *sitra achra*. In other words, through his actions, the sinner gave life to the *sitra achra*, and it is therefore now above him and able to punish. Similarly, it says in *Divrei Hayamim* I 16:27, the prophet declared about *Hashem*, "*oz vechedvah bimkomo*", "strength and joy in His place". Where *Hashem* is, there it is all good. But when *Hashem*, as it were, removes His *hashgachah*, supervision, then it seems that the forces of the evil are the masters, and then there are punishments. They take the left hand of holiness, the *gevuros kedushos*, and they use it punitively.

The generation that left Egypt is called the *Dor Dei'ah*, the Generation of *Da'as*. The people of this generation had the potential to reach great heights of *Da'as*. When they doubted *Hashem* and asked, "*Hayeish Hashem bekirbeinu im ayin*", "Is *Hashem* in our midst or is He not" (*Shemos* 17:7), they damaged their *Da'as*. With this sin they gave Amalek a whip with which to hit them. That is why the very next verses in the Torah describe Amalek coming and attacking the Jews. For Moshe it was a great war to remove the holiness from the *sitra achra*, and this was accomplished by raising his hands. When Moshe raised his hands, he was lifting the *Da'as* back to its root.

through their Godly actions. The behaviors of the wicked do not increase the glory of *Hashem*, so they need to experience misfortunes. Through witnessing their punishments, others learn that God's law must be kept, and His glory is ultimately increased (16:4).

Perhaps the themes of this lesson inform the practice of the holy Rav Eliezer Zev Klein, Hy"d, when the Nazis yemach shemam, deported him to Auschwitz-Birkenau in the spring of 1944. His behavior was recorded by his son, Harav Menashe Klein, o.b.m., in his book, Pirsumei Nisa:

"After we were interred in the Ungvar ghetto for four weeks, the wicked Nazis began to remove Jews from the ghetto through transports to Auschwitz. The wicked ones decided and agreed that it was time to get rid of all the Jews. We had no idea where people were being sent. We were merely told that people were being sent to work. We tried to get more information. We even spent money to find out but did not succeed in finding out anything more....

The transports were in the wagons of cattle trains. Each week another transport with masses of families headed out. On the train would be stuffed thousands of people, fathers with their sons, babies and their mothers tending to them, the elderly and their offspring together with possessions. The conditions on the train were horrific, there was virtually no room to sit due to the overcrowding....

On the Friday the day before the eve of Shavu'ot, the turn for us and our relatives arrived. The authorities in charge of the transport were the emissaries of damage, the men of the Gestapo y"sh. They were much worse than the wicked ones we had known until now. They only allowed each person to take one satchel that the person could easily carry. If they found a person dragging a package that was hard for him to lift, they would empty all the contents and only allow the person himself to get onto the train.

They gave each person a kilo of bread and a small piece of jam....

At the accursed hour they locked the doors to the wagon with a lock. On the morning of the holy Shabbos, the eve of Shavu'os, the train began to travel.

The wagons were stuffed terribly. I succeeded in getting my younger siblings some place on the floor to lay down on, however, as a result of the congestion in the wagon, there was only room for one foot of mine on the floor. For forty-eight hours I stood on one foot and held the other foot up with my hands.

It is impossible to describe the train ride from the ghetto to Auschwitz. The heat was horrific. It was summertime and the sun was warming all in its most potent way. The sun was very hot for the world, it was especially hot on the Jewish nation.

In addition, since they stuffed us with our satchels into the train, the wagon was therefore overflowing. There were so many on the train, men,

women, children, pregnant women, young babies and their mothers, elderly sages and older women--all had been stuffed into the wagon, the windows and doors were locked, there was no air. We could lift our hands and feel the stuffiness of the air due to the terrible congestion.

And there was no water to drink there. The heat was terrible. People almost died of thirst....Children screamed for water, their tongues were glued to their cheeks due to thirst, the mothers had no means to help them. The adults and elderly also suffered terribly and were about to expire.

We felt then that Hashem had removed the cover of the sun, it was unusually hot and together with the congestion and primarily the lack of water, our lives were in grave danger....

Sunday was the holiday of Shavu'os. We prayed even though our spirits were broken. We fulfilled the law, "One must bless Hashem for misfortune just as one blesses for good fortune". We could not do anything. All we could do was accept the decree from Above. "For He said and it was, He decreed and it was established".

The children were constantly screaming, "Save us! Water! We need to drink!" It was now the third day without water. Hashem had compassion on us, in the city Cracow they allowed us to take from the water that was for the machines, it was not enough for our needs, and the train then continued on its accursed path.

A lesson in Sanctifying Hashem's name and Sacrifice for Mitzvos

In one of the places we passed, the train paused at the station. They then brought a few pails of water. They gave out small amounts to each person. Anyone who was fortunate enough to receive some water to his hands quickly swapped it in a single gulp to try and save his life. At that moment when all grabbed water and drank, I joyously brought some of the life-saving liquid to my holy master, teacher and father, and I waited for him to drink the water and alleviate a bit of the horrible pain of thirst.

My eyes then saw a wondrous sight. If I had not seen this I would never have believed that such a deed could occur. My holy father took this limited water and he washed his hands to fulfill the mitzvah of netilas yadayim. First he washed his right hand, then his left, and again the right and then the left.

The people who stood all around also saw and were shocked. Some even cried out, "How can he spill water at such a time? If he is not thirsty, others are thirsty!" "Give us the water you are spilling".

I stood in awe and trembling before the holiness of this tzadik. And I learned from his living example the entire subject of sacrifice of physical life for Hashem and His Torah. I learned from this holy and pure man to prepare for one's final mitzvah, the mitzvah of giving one's life, kidush sheim Shamayim.

I did not question him, I did not tell him anything. My holy father also did not say anything. There was no need. I looked at his holy face, it was fully aflame with holy passion. His expression conveyed deep concern and also great happiness and joy, that he had merited to wash his hands and sanctify them in his last moments".¹⁵²

This account perhaps displays the ideas of our lesson. Rav Klein was martyred by the Germans, the Amalek of the twentieth century. In his final moments, he purified his hands, for the purification of hands is how, spiritually, Amalek is to be defeated.

This is also the idea behind the service of the *kohanim*. *Kohanim* raise their hands to their foreheads when they bless the nation. This action is combining the right side and the left. The forehead is the location of *Da'as*, and so at the root, the left and right unite and become one!

The Root of *Da'as* is *Keser*

As we have learned, the deepest root of *Da'as* is *Keser*, will. *Da'as* is what I take to heart, the thing that moves me to really change. When I hear a message that resonates with my inner essence and my unique core, I am motivated to change. I connect with that message and allow it to channel my inner essential will, my *Keser*. We see this reflected in Moshe's role during the battle of Amalek. When he lifted his hands, he reached the level of *ratzon* itself.

Lifting the Hands to Their Root

The message of *tefilin* is one of lifting the hands. The *tefilin* worn on the head is described in the Torah as "*vehayu letotafos bein einecha*", "and they should be a sign between your eyes" (*Devarim* 6:8). Our two eyes, like our hands, are a *ha'arah*, illumination, of *Da'as*. The right eye and the left eye parallel the right hand and the left hand.

152. *Pirumei Nisa*, pages 44-48.

(As we know, man has both a body and a head, and each of these entities is almost a complete being. The verse says, "*va'eshbor motos ulechem va'oleich eschem komemiyus*", "and I will break the beams of your yoke and I will lead you upright" [Vayikra 26:13]. The word for upright, *komemiyus*, contains within it the word *komah*, full structure, twice. There are two *komos*, structures, that comprise man: the head and the body. There is a *komas harosh*, the structure of the head, and *komas haguf*, structure of the body, almost as if there are two men contained within each person. When the head wants to come to the body, there is a need for *tzimtzum*, limitation, for there is too much life in the head. The neck is the *tzimtzum*, which is a sign of the *dinim* to limit the head and enable it to descend to the body. This is known as *meitzar hagaron*, constriction of the throat. Whenever there is a limit, there is a *yenikah* to the *chitzonim*. This is why the verse begins with the promise that *Hashem* will break the *motos ulechem*, the beams of your yoke-it means that He will break the *yenikas chitzonim*, and then *va'oleich eschem komemiyus*, I will lead you upright. Because then there will then be a correct connection between the *komas harosh* and the *komas haguf*.)

אֵי, *ayin*, the word for eye, is in *gematria* five times the Tetragrammaton, the *sheim Havayah* (130). One eye represents the five *chassadim* of *Da'as*, which are displays of love, and the other eye represents the five *gevuros* of *Da'as*, holy restrictions. Above this display of the extensions of *Da'as*, we find the root of *Da'as*, which is the forehead, and this is where the *tefilin* are placed: *bein einecha*.

When we look at something we should look with a root perspective. Look for the root of the matter. The *tefilin* give us the power to look with the roots of *Da'as* and perceive the inner and deeper reality. And just as *yadayim askaniyos hein*, hands are constantly busy, eyes also naturally look all over, unless a person has a great *shemiras einayim*, guarding of the eyes. That is the reason for the command, "*velo sasuru acharei levavchem ve'acharei eineichem*", "Do not stray after your urges and eyes" (*Bamidbar* 15:39).

How to Defeat Amalek

During the fight with Amalek, Moshe's hands were supported by his brother Aharon and his nephew Chur, who was from the tribe of Yehudah. Moshe's task at this time was to elevate the hand of *chassadim* and the hand of *gevuros*. Aharon, the great master of *Chessed* and kindness, supported the

hand that was working on the hand of *chassadim*. Chur was descended from Yehudah, who stands for *Malchus*. *Malchus* contains *gevuros* and is even sometimes referred to as *din*, judgment. Therefore, Chur supported the hand that was working with the hand of *gevuros*.

We can observe the difference between Aharon and Chur when we consider their behavior at the time of the sin of the golden calf. Chur openly fought the proposal to construct a golden calf, for he was a person of holy *Gevurah*, while Aharon related to the nation with great softness, as his approach was one of *Chessed*. When Moshe raised his hands, he purified the *Da'as* until he achieved unity between the two of them.

Let us consider this in greater depth. King Shlomo calculates all the *itim*, times, in the book of *Koheles*, in the famous verses in which he describes how for everything there is a time and season. He mentions fourteen distinct times for each side, the right and left, but there is another time that is called the *eis ratzon*, a time of favorable will, that Shlomo does not discuss. The existence of such a time is referred to in the verse, "*Va'ani sefilasi lecha Hashem eis ratzon*", "as for me, my prayer to You *Hashem*, may it be at a time of will" (*Tehillim* 69:14). Shlomo refrained from mentioning this time because he himself failed to reach it. The *eis ratzon* is the twenty-ninth time, which is higher than the extensions of *Da'as* that are manifest by the two hands. King Shlomo is the man of *shalom*, peace. *Bikeish Shlomo lehiyos keMoshe*, Shlomo sought to be like Moshe, but he did not reach that level. However, Moshe reached it when he defeated Amalek. This defeat is symbolized by Moshe lifting his hands during the battle. He was lifting the *Da'as*-inspired *midos* to the root, to the will that is represented by the forehead. Aharon and Chur supported his hands, a fact which also alludes to Moshe's accomplishment: we have *משה*, Moshe, with one added for the *kollel*, resulting in 346, which is the *gematria* of *רצון* *ratzon*. Aharon *אהרן* and Chur *חור*, when calculated together, equal 470, which is the *gematria* of *eis* *עת*.

During our songs of *se'udah shelishis*, the third and holiest *Shabbos* meal, we talk about the forehead of will. We describe the time of *shalosh se'udos as ra'ava dera'ava bemetzcha adei yehon chalfin*, will of wills at the forehead when all the evil dissipates. This is a time when we lift everything to the roots of *Da'as*, and at the roots of *Da'as* we connect to *ratzon*. When Moshe was fighting Amalek, he created a *se'udah shelishis* atmosphere! At that time the *ratzon* of the Godly soul was revealed, which broke Amalek.

Before we can build the *Beis Hamikdash*, we must always first break Amalek. The *Beis Hamikdash* was filled with *Da'as*, which is why *kol mi sheyeish bo dei'ah ke'ilu nivneh Beis Hamikdash beyamav*, "anyone who has *Da'as* it is as if the *Beis Hamikdash* was built in his days (*Sanhedrin* 92a). Before we can experience the *tikun* of *Da'as*, we need to defeat Amalek and reveal the *ratzon*. That is why we find that "*shalosh mitzvos nitztavu Yisrael beknisasan la'aretz, limnos lahen melech, lehachris zar'o shel Amalek, velivnos lahen Beis Habechirah*", "The Jews were commanded to perform three obligations when they entered Israel: to appoint a king, to destroy the seed of Amalek, and to build the chosen house" (*Sanhedrin* 20b). Defeating Amalek is a prerequisite to building the *Beis Hamikdash*. Amalek seeks to drag our hands down and to ruin *Da'as*. We must counter this by elevating the hands to the highest point of *Da'as*, which is the will, and only then can we build the house of corrected *Da'as*, the holy sanctuary in Jerusalem.

Rosh Chodesh as a Time for Ratzon

Each complete month represents raising *midos* and *Da'as* to the level of *ratzon*, will. The four weeks in a month correspond to the four letters in the *sheim Havayah*, the Tetragrammaton, *yud hei* and *vav hei*. Each month has its unique arrangement for these four letters. This is why a month has twenty-eight days: those twenty-eight days comprise four weeks, one week devoted to each of the four letters. Then comes the twenty-ninth day of the month, which is related to the *kutzo shel yud*, the apex of the *yud*, which is higher than the four letters of *Havayah*. It stands for the *ratzon*. The *ratzon* is revealed on *Rosh Chodesh*, the first of the month.

You might wonder why, then, is *Rosh Chodesh* the thirtieth day. According to what we have just seen, shouldn't it be on the twenty-ninth day? The answer is that the thirtieth day also represents an aspect of *Keser*. The moon circles the earth in twenty-eight days. However, it takes twenty-nine and a half days for the new moon to be revealed, and that is because the sun also moves. While the moon is circling the sun, the sun is moving as well, and this adds to the time it takes for the moon to reappear. Twenty-eight days emerged from the four weeks and four letters of the name of *Havayah*. Days twenty-nine and thirty correspond to *Keser*. *Keser* has both a lower and a higher part—*Atik* and

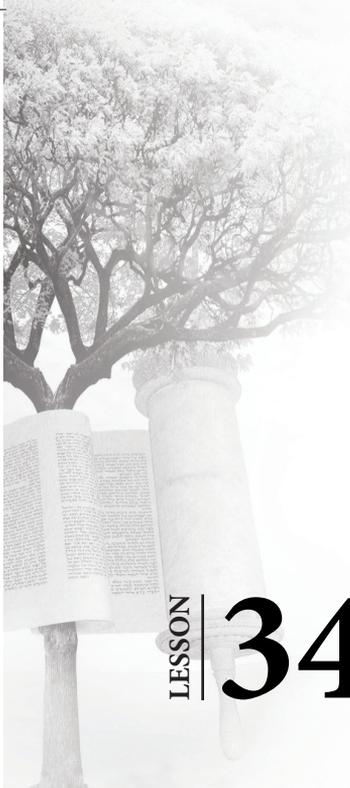
Arich-and that is why a month will sometimes be thirty days and sometimes twenty-nine. But either way, the extra days are part of *Keser*.

As we have seen, Shlomo listed twenty-eight *itim*, and the twenty-ninth, that he did not discuss, is the *eis ratzon*. The twenty-ninth time corresponds to the twenty-ninth day of the month, which means that day is *eis ratzon*, the time of will, higher even than peace between the hand of love and hand of justice. Shlomo did not reach this level of the twenty-ninth time, but Moshe did. This is represented by the fact that the war with Amalek lasted for thirty days.

Each year we spiritually reenact a war with Amalek. The spiritual war with Amalek begins on *Purim* and ends on *Erev Pesach* with *bi'ur chametz*, the burning of the leavened products. It is a battle that takes thirty days, for thirty days represents reaching *eis ratzon*, the time that breaks Amalek! *Purim* itself contains a light of *ratzon*. The *mazal*, astrological sign, of *Adar* is *dagim*, fish, and a fish has eyes that are always open. This symbolizes a being with just one eye, for one eye is a symbol of the unification of the two eyes. It is the *eis ratzon* which unites the two eyes and makes them one. Bil'am tried to be *yoneik* from this one eye, which is why he is described as the *shesum ha'ayin*, one-eyed man. He wanted to be a *merkavah*, chariot, for the idea of one eye.

The fifteenth of *Shevat* begins a period of thirty days to prepare for *Purim*, which is why during this time we read the Torah portion about fighting Amalek, a lesson most appropriate for *Purim*. This is the *inyan*, concept, of *sho'alin vedorshin lamed yom kodem lachag*, we are to study the matters of a holiday thirty days before the festival. Historically, the *Purim* salvation led to the construction of the Second Temple. When we destroyed Amalek on *Purim*, we began to build *Bayis Sheini*. Amalek was *yoneik* from *Gevurah* of *Da'as*, so we took away this *yenikah* through *teshuvah me'ahavah*, a repentance out of love, and we reached an *eis ratzon*. We learned what the *dinim* were intended to teach us, but through ways of pleasantness. We did not need any punishments once we revealed a heartfelt *teshuvah*, and we were able to receive our good as revealed blessings. At that point, Amalek no longer had anything from which to draw, and he collapsed.

As we have seen, *Da'as* affects both the *sur meira* and the *aseih tov*. Go even higher than *Da'as*; go to the level of will. *Va'ani sefilasi lecha Hashem eis ratzon*, we need to arouse the real levels of *Da'as* and in this way reach an *eis ratzon*, which is the *eis ratzon* of *Purim* that allows us to defeat Amalek. Let us strive to always reach the time that is *eis ratzon*!



Ideally, mitzvos should be performed with passionate feelings of love for Hashem. However, there is even a great value to a simple mitzvah act, a mere physical performance, without accompanying religious fervor. The reason a simple physical act is significant is that to serve Hashem in the physical realm, through physical acts, is the ideal that was brought to the world through the Sinai revelation.

LESSON

34 The Ideal Is the Combination of Heaven and Earth

Middle of Chapter Sixteen:

More than this one must know an important principle of the service of the beinoni: even if the mind is not yet arousing the heart to be burning with a revealed love for Hashem, to be attached with Hashem, still there is a hidden love in the recesses of the heart; the heart understands the grandeur of God.

Even if the mind does not understand, in the inner heart one feels that all before Him is as if it is nothing. The ta'alumos libo, recesses of the heart, understand it. In other words, this is an inner feeling of the gedulas Ein Sof, greatness of the Infinite, that kulei kameih kelo chashiv, all before Him is like nothing, and since Hashem is the real root of all that exists, all have to be attached to Hashem and included in His light.

ויתר על כן צריך לידע כלל גדול בעבודה לבינונים שגם אם אין יד שכלו ורוח ביתנו משגת להוליד אהבת ה' בהתגלו' לבו שיהיה לבו בוער כרשפי אש וחפץ בחפיצה וחשיקה ותשוקה מורגשת בלב לדבקה בו רק האהבה מסותרת במוחו ותעלומות לבו:

דהיינו שהלב מבין ברוח חכמה וביני' שבמוחו גדולת א"ס ב"ה דכולא קמיה כלא חשיב ממש אשר על כן יאתה לו יתברך שתכלה אליו נפש כל חי לידבק ולהכלל באורו

Love of Self and Love of God

There are a few avenues of thought that we can utilize to help us achieve the ideal love of God to which we aspire. First, consider the fact that all people

love to live. We love ourselves, and we have well-developed egos. Each one of us has a picture of who we are. This picture represents the "I", the *yeishus*, independent existence, of man. Man loves this "I" with a tremendous love! However, man must realize that "The real 'I' is not what I think the 'I' is. The real 'I' is *Hashem!*" *Hashem* is the true existence of man.

We usually think, "I do things for *Hashem*". I exist, and then there is *Hashem*, a separate Being. This is a false fantasy. What we think of as "I" is simply the false picture we have made of our *yeishus*. The only real existence is *Hashem!* He is the true reality of everything. When it becomes clear to us that the real "I" is Godliness, we can transform our *ahavah atzmis*, love of self, into *ahavas Hashem*, love of God.¹⁵³

Reflecting that *Hashem* is the only true existence is one meditation that can set us on the road to achieving *ahavas Hashem*. Another useful meditation is to contemplate *gadlus haBorei*, the greatness of His infinity.¹⁵⁴ This can also help us achieve *ahavas Hashem*. The essence of *ahavas Hashem*, however, is the experience of pure *deveikus* in *Hashem*. It is when the *timtum halev*, sealing of the heart, is removed, and the heart is naturally drawn to *Hashem*.

153. See Rav Hirsch's *Horeb*, where he defines the *mitzvah* to love *Hashem* with these words, "'To love' means to feel one's being only through and in the being of another. 'To love God', therefore, means to feel that one's own existence and activity are rendered possible and obtain value and significance only through and in God. You exist and are something only through God; and therefore in all that you are and do, you have only to strive to reach God--that is, to perform His will" (page 25).

154. See *Horeb* where Rav Hirsch teaches about which thoughts might engender fear of God; they are similar to the meditations that the *Tanya* teaches engender love of *Hashem*. "If you have a vivid conception of but one aspect of God's greatness and carry it with you always and everywhere, then you cannot sin.

God's omnipotence: Heaven and earth return to nothing at His nod, and you, in your human littleness, with your grain of power, with your brief spell of time, with your transient existence, will you, man, in your impotence set yourself up against the Omnipotent, rebelliously disdain Him, and not fear lest if you sin the next moment may bring you annihilation?

God's greatness: God reaches out to where man's thought grows dizzy. All being, all existence, all becoming serves the plan of His wisdom, and He reaches His goal by ways which no human thought can dream of. And you will not fear His dominion, because over the short span which you can survey you see no danger?

Omnipresence: Whither will you escape from His spirit? Whither flee from His presence? Were you to ascend to heaven, you would stand before Him, were you to lay yourself in the grave, He is there too; if you go east or west, north or south, His eye is everywhere, His hand is everywhere, above you, below you, around you, in you--can you escape from yourself? And still you want to sin!" (pages 22-23).

It is a *kelos hanefesh*, a natural attraction to lose oneself in *Hashem*. This feeling has no rational explanation or source, for it is absolute attachment. When this attachment is aroused in a person, he feels it as a love of the heart and a desire to be close and attached to *Hashem*. *Deveikus* is pining for attachment to and inclusion in His light!

The *Tanya* is explaining that sometimes one does not feel any of these feelings, but he knows he should feel this way. Even the possession of such knowledge is significant. A person who knows this actually does feel love, but it is hidden in his heart.

Likewise is it fitting for the Nefesh and Ruach within him to languish for Him, with a fervent desire to emerge from their sheath, which is the body, in order to cleave to Him; except that they dwell against their will in the body and are bound up in it, like deserted wives; and no thought of theirs can grasp Him at all, except when it grasps, and is vested in, the Torah and its commandments, as in the example of embracing the king, mentioned above;

וגם נפשו ורוחו אשר בקרבו כך יאתה להן להיות כלות אליו בחשיקה וחפיצה לצאת מנרתקן הוא הגוף לדבקה בו רק שבע"כ חיות הנה בתוך הגוף וצרות בו כאלמנות חיות ולית מחשבה דילהון תפיסא ביה כלל כי אם כאשר תפיסא ומתלבשת בתורה ובמצותי' כמשל המחבק את המלך הנ"ל

So a person should be involved in Torah and *mitzvos*, for performing *mitzvos* it is like hugging a king who is clothed.

Therefore, it is proper for them to embrace Him with their whole heart, soul and might, which means the fulfillment of the six hundred and thirteen commandments in act, speech and thought, the last being the comprehension and knowledge of the Torah, as explained above.

Consequently, when [the beinoni] ponders this subject in the recesses of his heart's and mind's understanding, with a unanimity of mouth and heart, in that he upholds by word of mouth that which has been resolved in the understanding of his heart and mind, namely to direct his desire towards the

ואי לזאת יאתה להן לחבקו בכל לב ונפש ומאד דהיינו קיום התרי"ג מצות במעשה ובדבור ובמחשבה שהיא השגת וידעת התורה כנ"ל

הנה כשמעמיק בענין זה בתעלומות תבונות לבו ומוחו ופיו ולבו שוין שמקיים כן בפיו אשר נגמר בתבונת לבו ומוחו דהיינו להיות בתורת ה' חפצו ויהגה בה יומם ולילה בפיו וכן הידים ושאר אברים מקיימים המצות כפי מה שנגמר בתבונת לבו

Divine Torah, meditating on it day and night in oral study, while his hands and other bodily organs carry out the commandments, in accordance with the resolution of his heart's and mind's understanding, then this understanding is clothed in the act, speech and thought of the Torah and its commandments, providing for them, as it were, intelligence, vitality and "wings" wherewith to soar on high. It is the same as if he practiced them with real fear and love as revealed in his heart (with a desire, fervor and passion that are felt in the heart and soul thirsting for God, by reason of the glowing embers of love in his heart, as mentioned above), inasmuch as it is this understanding in his brain and heart's recesses that is instrumental in leading him to engage in them, and had he not so delved in it, he would not have occupied himself with them at all, but with his physical needs alone.

ומוחו הרי תבונה זו מתלבשת במעשה דבור ומחשבת התורה ומצותיה להיות להם בחי' מוחין וחיות וגדפין לפרחא לעילא כאלו עסק בהם בדחילו ורחימו ממש אשר בהתגלות לבו ובחפיצה וחשיקה ותשוקה מורגשת בלבו ונפשו הצמאה לה' מפני רשפי אש אהבתו שבלבו כנ"ל הואיל ותבונה זו שבמוחו ותעלומות לבו היא המביאתו לעסוק בהם ולולי שהיה מתבונן בתבונה זו לא היה עוסק בהם כלל אלא בצרכי גופו לבד

In order for Torah learning and mitzvah observance to rise above, they need life. Just as wings lift up a bird, passionate love and fear in the fulfillment of mitzvos cause them to rise. The Tanya is teaching that since in the innermost part of the man's heart he does in fact have religious feeling, and he is acting like someone who has revealed passion, his actions are therefore also considered to be endowed with the wings that make the mitzvos rise to their heights.

It emerges from here that there is the *etzem inyan*, essential matter, of Torah study and *mitzvos*, and secondly religious feelings, love and awe, that enable Torah and *mitzvos* to ascend to the heights. Certainly a person fulfills his obligation of Torah and *mitzvos* even without love and fear. The *tikun*, fixing, that is accomplished through the act of a *mitzvah* and the learning of Torah is not dependent on *ahavah* and *yir'ah*. Nevertheless, there is a level of *porchos le'eila*, flying above, that is accomplished through the addition of *ahavah* and *yir'ah*. However, a person should remember that even though this is true, there is the principle of *ein Hakadosh Baruch Hu ba betrunya im beriyosav*, the Almighty does not make excessive demands of His creations

(*Avodah Zarah* 3a). All that is mandated is that a person attain what is possible for him at this point in time. If he is unable to access the full passion right now, it is sufficient for him to act as if he had that passion.

The Significance of Physical Acts of *Mitzvah*

Let us delve more deeply into understanding the value of keeping the Torah and *mitzvos* even without the appropriate level of love and fear for *Hashem*. By studying the climactic events recorded in *Parashas Yisro*, we will gain insight into this level. *Parashas Yisro* records the foundation of our faith: the revelation at Sinai, when *Hashem* spoke to the entire Jewish nation. At that time we were *all* prophets, and it is this aspect of the revelation that distinguishes our faith from other faiths.¹⁵⁵ We are taught, "*Hayom hazeh ra'inu ki yedaber Elokim es ha'adam vachai!*" "On this day we saw the Almighty speak with man and yet man lived!" (*Devarim* 5:20). (Of course, we know that the love the Jewish people felt then for *Hashem* was so intense that *yatza nishmasan*, their souls jumped out of their bodies. Had they heard another word from *Hashem*, they would never have returned to their bodies).

The revelation at Sinai was the greatest revelation that ever occurred on earth. As the verse states, "*Ki she'al na leyamim rishonim asher hayu*

155. In *Permission To Receive*, Rabbi Keleman points out that all the monotheistic faiths, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Bahai, and Judaism, agree to that fact that *Hashem* only spoke publicly to the Jews. They do not make up such claims about themselves. If it would be possible to fool masses of people into believing that a public revelation occurred even if it did not, why did no other faith make such a claim? Only the Jewish faith is based on a public revelation, as opposed to the words of a lone individual reporting a private revelation to himself, for only we in fact had a public revelation! In the *Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*, volume 2, pages 138-146, Rav Hirsch brilliantly clarifies how Judaism differs at its core from other faiths.

"Judaism very definitely does not want to give birth to a 'religion' from *within* the soul of man, or *for* the soul of man. Rather, it seeks to *implant* religion into man's emotions through clear cognitive and intellectual perceptions based on the recognition and acceptance of Divine truths that have been objectively documented.

In fact God does not appeal to our feelings and intuitions. He has not built *our* religion on the mysterious, trackless, sand of a shore gently washed by waves of dreams and fancies. "אתה ה' ראית", לדעת, I have caused you to *know* מלבדו אין עוד האלקים כי ה' הוא האלקים אין עוד מלבדו, that The Lord alone is God and none else beside Him". Your covenant with God does not refer you to mere 'belief', but to that which you yourself have seen and experienced. God has placed the foundations of His covenant with you upon a world of concrete realities...To the reality of creation of heaven and earth He has added the reality of His revelation, confirmed by the experience of your own natural history" (pages 141-142).

lefanecha", "For you should ask about earlier days that were before you existed", "*lemin hayom asher bara Elokim adam al ha'aretz*", "from the day the Lord created man to exist on earth", "*ulemiktzei hashamayim ve'ad ketzei hashamayim*", "and from one end of the heavens to the other" (*Devarim* 4:32). In all of world history, though there have been so many religions and faiths, has there even been one that has had an experience equal to even half of what we experienced at Sinai? "*Hanihyah kadavar hagadol hazeh o hanishma kamohu. Hashama am kol Elokim medaber mitoch ha'eish ka'asher shamata atah vayechi!*" "Was there a matter as great as this or even heard like this, did any other nation ever hear God talking to them out of the fire as you heard and lived!" (*Devarim* 4:32-33).¹⁵⁶ We were all there, and we all heard *Hashem* speak to the Jews and say, "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*", "I am God your Lord!"

The *mekubalim*, Kabalists, explain that in terms of *aliyos olamos*, ascent of the worlds, *Shavu'os*, the holiday commemorating the Sinai revelation, is the greatest *Yom Tov*. There is nothing to compare to *Shavu'os* in terms of comprehending *Hashem* and rising high! *Shavu'os* represents the level of Adam before the sin. This is the level of *paskah zuhamasan*, when the filth of the serpent left. It requires seven weeks of preparation in order to reach the holiness of *Shavu'os*. Each year the spiritual essence of *Shavu'os* repeats itself. After seven weeks of *Sefiras Ha'omer*, our souls hear *Hashem* speak to us. The truth is, the greatness of the level of *Shavu'os* is actually something that should inform our learning all year long. Whenever we learn Torah, it should be *kenesinasah miSinai*, as it was given at Sinai. We should feel that *Hashem* is talking to us, *hashama am kol Elokim!* Has any other nation heard the voice of God! When we learn Torah we are hearing *Hashem's* voice; each individual's study session is an extension of *Matan Torah* and a form of prophecy. On *Chag HaShavu'os* we acquire this, and *Parashas Yisro* as well can allow us to merit to reach a bit of *Chag HaShavu'os*. The period before *Purim* is also a time to consider these thoughts. *Purim* is the time when we completed *Matan Torah* through the *hadar kiblahu*, the renewed acceptance, so before *Purim* is a time to consider how special the Sinai revelation was.

When *Hashem* came down to Har Sinai, there was a great revelation. We say in the *Pesach Hagadah*, "*Ilu kirvanu lifnei Har Sinai dayeinu*", "Had He

156. Rabbi L. Keleman, in his book *Permission to Receive*, points out that no other religion even claims that their faith started with a public revelation of God to masses of people!

brought us near to Sinai it would have been enough reason to praise Him". Apparently, simply approaching close to Sinai has its own level, distinct from that of *Matan Torah* itself. *Kirvanu lifnei Har Sinai* is the point at which *Hashem* spoke to us face to face from within the fire. In addition to this, at Sinai all of creation changed. The Midrash teaches that at *Matan Torah*, there was an annulment of the decree that "*Hashamayim shamayim laHashem vecha'aretz nasan livnei adam*", "The heavens belong to God and He has given the earth to people" (*Tehillim* 115:16). It was *yom chasunaso*, the day of His wedding (*Shir Hashirim* 3:11), and on that day a merger between the high and low took place. Combining the transcendent with the earthly was a process that began with *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim*, leaving Egypt, and it was amplified by *Matan Torah*. Ultimately, building the *Beis Hamikdash* would be another level of the union of heaven and earth, and the final fulfillment of this process will be reached in the messianic era, when "*Veyimalei kevod Hashem es kol ha'aretz*", "The honor of *Hashem* will fill the entire earth" (*Bamidbar* 14:21).

When a man does a *mitzvah*, he is attaching to *Hashem*. The physical act of a *mitzvah* has a special quality: *Hu uretzono echad*, He is one with His will, and therefore His will is expressed in Torah and *mitzvos*! The act of a *mitzvah* brings the holiness of Torah into this world. For example, when a person takes the physical *tefilin*, he is holding the Godly light of *tefilin*. This is a reality that came to be at the time of the giving of the Torah and is now built into the very nature of *mitzvah* observance. The *Zohar* teaches that when our father Ya'akov labored as a shepherd for Lavan's flocks, he fulfilled the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* with his sticks that he placed at the watering hole. The meaning of this lesson is that he was attached to the light, with the *inyan*, concept, of *tefilin* so he did not need the boxes. However, once the Torah was given, even a person who has all the *deveikus* and *kavanos*, meditations, of Ya'akov will not fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tefilin* by using sticks. Only a person who puts on the actual boxes of *tefilin* will fulfill the *mitzvah*. For after the giving of the Torah, the only way to attach to *Hashem* is through the physical acts of *mitzvos* as per the specifications of Jewish law.

Even attachment to *Hashem* through contemplation of the greatness of *Hashem* is only meaningful because it is itself a fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of "*Veyada'ta hayom vahashevosa el levavecha ki Hashem hu HaElokim bashamayim mima'al ve'al ha'aretz mitachas ein od*", "Know today and take it to heart that *Hashem* is the Lord in the heavens above and on the earth below

there is no other" (*Devarim* 4:39). Every aspect of our service must be done as a *mitzvah* in order to access *deveikus* with *Hashem*. *Deveikus* can only be achieved from within the framework of *kiyum mitzvos*, fulfilling *mitzvos*!

Hashem desires this world to be central. *Ikar Shechinah betachtonim*, the primary presence of *Hashem* is down below! He wants that the physical world itself, the wood and the stones of this world, reveal His honor.¹⁵⁷ He desires that material matter reveal His word, which gives it life. With *Matan Torah* He brought holiness to the physical realm, and from that point on, the only way to reach *deveikus* is through physical acts of *mitzvos*.

Kayin and Hevel; Yisro and Moshe; Nadav and Avihu

Reflecting on some pairs of people in the Torah will yield insight into the points we have been discussing about approaches towards service of *Hashem*. Let us consider the example of Kayin and Hevel, the early set of brothers in *Sefer Bereishis* who brought offerings to *Hashem*. Ultimately, as a result of *Hashem's* reaction to his offering, Kayin killed Hevel. What went wrong?

Creation actually reflects two distinct realms, the heavenly and the earthly. The *Zohar* explains that the word *בראשית*, *bereishis*, means *ב ראשית*, *beis reishis*, two beginnings. There is a *reishis* of heaven and a *reishis* of earth. What are these two beginnings? The ten *Sefiros* are the ten statements of creation. The first statement is *bereishis*, and in *Sefiros* it is *Keser*. *Keser* is *ratzon ha'elyon*, elevated will. Two *reishis* means two *kesarim*, two crowns, two *retzonos*. One *ratzon* is *es hashamayim*, the heavenly realm; the other *ratzon* is *es ha'aretz*, the earth, the physical realm. Yet *ikar Shechinah betachtonim*, the main intent, the place where *Hashem* desired primarily to place His focus, is the lower earthly realm!

157. The *Shem Mishmuel* points out that the *Mikdash*, Temple in Jerusalem, was holier than the *Mishkan*, the Tabernacle of the desert, in spite of the fact that the *Mikdash* was made of more lowly materials. There are four types of materials: inanimate, growing, living and human. The essence of the *Mishkan* was that its roof was made of skins and tapestries. These are materials from items that are growing. However, the *Mikdash* was made mostly of stone and gold, materials that are inanimate. Why was the holier building built of lowlier matter? The answer is that *ikar Shechinah betachtonim*, the main Divine presence is in the realm below, and the greatest spiritual achievement is when the lower matter is made sacred. *Hashem* sent our souls from Heaven to make our lowly bodies sacred, and in His place of great holiness, the lower matters, inanimate materials, are made sacred! (See *Shem Mishmuel Vayakhel* page 268, *Beha'aloscha* page 186, and *Re'eh* page 85.)

Kayin brought an offering from the *peri ha'adamah*, fruit of the earth; Hevel's offering was sheep. Kayin, the *bechor*, firstborn, brought a sacrifice *min ha'adamah*, from the earth. He was a physical man, and he was involved in physical matters, with the intention of bringing the physicality to God. Hevel was more spiritual. His name stems from the word *hevel*, which means air and breath. Appropriately, his sacrifice was more spiritual. He brought animals, which have a *Nefesh*, a bit of soul.

In spite of his spiritual leanings, however, Hevel sinned in a way that caused him to be deserving of death, which is why he was able to be killed. The Ari explains that his sin was attempting to go too high. The ideal scenario is to cause a unification between Hevel and Kayin. When we bring the *Shechinah* down below, then there is only one realm, not two opposite worlds. There is unity. Unity is the purpose of life-the demonstration that there is really only one.¹⁵⁸ By looking at a world he should not have looked at, instead of bringing what he could from that world down to his world, Hevel forfeited his life. It was an instance of *lo yir'ani ha'adam vachai*, for man cannot see Me and live (*Shemos* 33:20). Another way to look at it is that he was attached to such a high level of life that the physical world could not tolerate it.

Hevel's sin was that he was not connected to Kayin at all, and he therefore rose too high. Had he been attached to Kayin he would have achieved an experience of "*umibesari echezeh Elokah*", "and from my flesh I will see God" (*Iyov* 19:26). He would have seen *Hashem* from within his body, and not felt that the only way to see *Hashem* is to detach from the body entirely.¹⁵⁹

158. In *Horeb*, pages 5-6, Rav Hirsch points out that belief in one God is intended to inculcate within us a sense of unity and to see His oneness in all matters.

159. The themes of this lesson were utilized by our Rebbe in his work *Mishbetzos Zahav* 5750, in explaining the lesson of the sage Abaye that we are to eat symbolic foods on *Rosh Hashanah* as a prayer for a year of blessings.

"There is the concept of Kayin and the concept of Hevel. Kayin is the attraction man has to *artziyus*, earthly matters. This is why Kayin brought as a sacrifice fruits of the earth, items that indicate earthly concerns. Hevel represents the spiritual concept; *hevel hapeh*, the breath of the mouth, is used for the spiritual. Hevel is the attraction to spiritual concepts. Our holy works (see *Zera Kodesh Parashas Va'eschanan*) teach that Kayin the son of Adam was born with this quality of attraction to the earthly due to the fact that Adam sinned and did not wait for *Shabbos* to draw down a holy soul. Hevel had a deficiency as well; he was too drawn to the spiritual and he forgot entirely about this world and its purpose. Because the real perfect service is to purify this world as well, one must elevate the desires and transform them, and not leave the earthly realm. This was the sin of Hevel; this flaw

A parable that illustrates the nature of this dialectic is the difference between a *navi*, prophet, and a *chacham*, wise person. A *navi* seemingly detaches from physicality, while a *chacham* is rooted in this world, and while immersed in this world he sees *Elokus*. This is not truly analogous because Hevel was a sinner and a *navi* is not a sinner, but we can say that Hevel's

caused him to deserve to be killed by Kayin. In each man there are two primary pipes in the neck, the windpipe, *kaneh*, and the food pipe, *veshet*. The *kaneh*, which is the key for releasing breath and speaking, is the Hevel part in each of us; the *veshet* the Kayin part.

Kayin was the *bechor*, the firstborn. The verse states, "*Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim ve'es ha'aretz*", "In the beginning the Almighty created the heavens and the earth" (*Bereishis* 1:1). The *Zohar* teaches **ב ראשית** there are two beginnings, *es hashamayim*, the beginning of the Heavens, the spiritual, *ve'es ha'artez*, the beginning of the earth, the material. Clearly there is a *reishis*, a concept of great spirituality, the holiness of *Chochmah* (Godly wisdom is called *reishis*) attached to the material realm. In truth, the holiness in perfected physicality is greater than the holiness of the spiritual realm! This is the great labor; man must elevate his physicality so that it will be higher than his spirituality. It is well known that *tzadikim* serve *Hashem* with physical activities that are greater than their spiritual acts. The Rebbe, Rav Zvi Hirsch of Ziditchov, may his memory protect us, said, 'In the past I would pray that my eating should achieve what my praying accomplishes; now, thankfully, I pray for the opposite.' This concept is also expressed in the work *Noam Elimelech Parashas Korach*. Rav Elimelech explained the verse, '*Vekoyei Hashem yachalifu koach*', "Those who hope for God will have exchanged strength" (*Yeshayahu* 40:31), to mean that *tzadikim* exchange their service; theirs is opposite the service of the rest of mankind. Others find the spiritual a great service; the *tzadikim* find physical acts to be greater displays of Divine service than spiritual acts. This is why Kayin was the firstborn. *Hashem* told him that if he would be good he would be uplifted, *im teitiv se'eis* (*Bereishis* 4:7). This meant that his service, the food pipe, could be higher than the service from the *kaneh*, windpipe. However, Kayin did not fix himself as he should. To fix the physical, first one must be pure from evil urges and desires through separation and asceticism, then one can make physical acts sacred. Purity leads to sanctity. Kayin never purified himself; that is why he failed".

The Rebbe then added that prayer is Hevel-like. Through holy words prayer accomplishes miracles. *Nichush*, sorcery, is a way to accomplish what prayer would accomplish in a defiled manner. Prayer requires holiness. Sorcery indulges lusts and urges. Eliezer, to find a wife for Yitzchak, prayed in a *nichush*-like manner. Rivkah was in the hands of a Kayin-like family. Her brother Lavan was the master of sorcery, the *menachesh*, of the world. Through using a sorcery-like prayer he was able to overcome the power of sorcery. When Eliezer refused to eat Lavan's food until he first said words, he was asserting the mastery of *Hevel / kaneh* over *Kayin / veshet*. On *Rosh Hashanah*, the windpipe will be employed to blow *shofar*. Before that happens, Abaye, who was from the Kayin-spirituality, taught that one should engage in holy physicality, for the holy physical is greater than the spiritual--Kayin was the *bechor*. The holy physicality entails an eating which is praying, eating foods and praying through them. The *Zohar* teaches that one who eats before he prays is guilty of *nichush* for he has strengthened his physicality. However, on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*, Rav Chaim Vital would eat before daybreak and morning prayers. Rav Chaim's soul came from Kayin; through engaging in a Kayin-like activity he would fix Kayin. His eating on the eve of *Rosh Hashanah* was a holy eating like the eating of *tzadikim*. On *Rosh Hashanah* we engage in these activities to challenge ourselves to endeavor throughout the year to eat in the holy way of *tzadikim* (pages 8-11).

mistake was in taking the concept of a *navi* too far—he was detaching too much from the physical realm, and assuming that only through absolute spirituality could one connect with *Hashem*.

Both Kayin and Hevel sinned, but Hevel's mistake was tolerated by *Hashem*. If a man is honestly searching for *Hashem* and goes too high, *Hashem* tolerates this, as it says, "*Vayisha Hashem el Hevel ve'el minchaso*", "God turned to Hevel and his offering" (*Bereishis* 4:4).

Kayin's core concept of serving *Hashem* through physicality was actually correct, for *nis'avah Hakadosh Baruch Hu lehiyos lo dira betachtonim*, *Hashem* desired for an abode in the lowly realms, and *ikar Shechinah betachtonim*. Where then did he sin?

He mixed many physical and materialistic motives into his *korban*. It seems that he wished to bring materialistic *shefa*, flows of blessings, into the world. He was not purified. His hidden will was to bring God into the material realm, but what he was consciously doing was giving greater prominence to physical things. Kayin is like a student who studies chassidic *sefarim* and sees the idea of *ikar Shechinah betachtonim*, but when he sits down to eat, he experiences the full range of *ta'avos achilah*, lusts for eating, of any other man. When this student sees someone who is fasting *lesheim Shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven, he will criticize him, because "*ikar Shechinah betachtonim*" and one should not try to reach the spiritual through asceticism. Such a *chassid* is missing the point. *Hashem* does wish to be present in this realm, but He abhors indulgence of desires and unredeemed appetites. Kayin is correct in his belief that the ideal is a *korban gashmi*, but to get to the level of truly living that ideal, you have to first go through the process of a Hevel. You have to first try your best to really live spiritually, and as a youth, go too far in renouncing the physical for the sake of *Hashem*.

The *Chozeh* of Lublin explains that in order to achieve greatness in Divine service, *avodas Hashem*, all young people need to go to an extreme in their dedication to *Hashem* and abandonment of materialism. "*Zacharti lach Chessed ne'urayich ahavas kelulosayich lechteich acharai bamidbar be'erezt lo zeru'ah*", "I remembered for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your marriage, how you followed behind me to the desert, to a land that cannot be planted" (*Yirmiyahu* 2:2). Is the desert the ideal place for man? No! The ultimate purpose of the journey from Egypt was to come to work the land of *Eretz Yisrael*! But one can only reach the mature ideal of man after first living

with the passionate zeal of youth. "*Zacharti lach Chessed ne'urayich lechteich acharai bamidbar be'erezt lo zeru'ah.*" During the time of youth, your goal is to achieve the level of leaving the *gashmi* realm entirely. Kayin did not accept this; he fooled himself into thinking he was serving *Hashem* in the physical when in reality he was only indulging his desires. He never attempted a desert-type of existence. He said to himself, "My goal is *avodah begashmiyus*, service through the physical, therefore I should not renounce any physicality at all". *Hashem* told him, "You are basically right, *im teitev*, you can be right, but if *lo seitiv*, if you do not improve, *lapesach chatas roveitz*, at your door sin crouches, for your way is merely the *yetzer hara*" (*Bereishis* 4:7).

Yisro was the reincarnated soul of Kayin, while Moshe was Hevel. The word משה, Moshe, is the *roshei teivos*, acronym, of משה שת הבל, *Moshe, Sheis, Hevel*. Moshe was attracted to holiness, which is illustrated by his separation from his wife. The Ropshitzer Rav notes that the Torah rarely tells us that Moshe ate. Moshe was too holy; he was all soul.

There was a need of a combination of Kayin and Hevel. *Matan Torah* was the wedding day of heaven and earth. It was exactly the right time for Yisro to come, because Yisro must link with Moshe to enable the giving of the Torah! The *parashah* is even called by Yisro's name to underscore the importance of Yisro, because the main thing is *artziyus* and *asiyah*, earthiness and doing.

The Midrash states that the praise of Yisro is that he was sitting *bichvodo shel olam*, in the midst of the honor of the world, and he left to join Moshe in the wilderness. He was a member of this world, but he went to join Moshe in the desert. He knew he had to leave materialism, so he went out to the desert to Moshe. At the same time, Moshe went out to him: "*Vayeitzei Moshe likras chosno*", "and Moshe went out to greet his father-in-law" (*Shemos* 18:7). Moshe linked with Yisro, and he gave him great *kavod*, honor, to link the level of soulful attachment with the physical and the material. In fact, the Torah tells us that Moshe ate when Yisro came! Yisro ate bread with Moshe as preparation for *Matan Torah*, in order to combine the level above with the levels below.

Yisro complained about Moshe's system of judging the Jews entirely by himself. This complaint stemmed from the same Kayin / Hevel dialectic. How? To answer this question, we must first understand that in the generation of the desert, there were many souls *mishoresch Kayin*, from the Kayin root. For

example, Nadav and Avihu were from the root of Kayin. They were attached to the concept of the *Shechinah* on earth, and their sin, even though it was a very slight one, was that they brought an *esh zarah*, a foreign fire, which is similar to Kayin sinning by bringing a *korban* that was mixed with *ra*. He had not purified himself fully from the *olam hagashmi*, and as a result there was a mixture of *ra* in his *korban*, which is why *Hashem* did not accept it. According to some, the sin of Nadav and Avihu was entering the sanctuary while intoxicated. Wine elevates the material in man. They were too materialistic. Nadav and Avihu did not annul themselves sufficiently before Moshe. They were *moreh halachah bifnei raban*, issued a ruling in front of their teacher. People with the nature of Kayin must be linked to people with the nature of Hevel, and that is what they failed to recognize. Another illustration of this dynamic can be found with the *Shiv'im Zekeinim*, the Seventy Elders, who are also *mishoresh Kayin*, from the root of Kayin, and one of their functions was to bring meat to the people.

Therefore, a deeper understanding reveals that when Yisro complained about the system of judging, he was in essence telling Moshe, "There are many members of your people who are from the root of Kayin, *mishoresh Kayin*, so how can you have all these people stand over you and wait for you? You are not giving them any honor, *kavod!* You need to give them a place, and appoint some of them to be judges and leaders. You should honor the root of Kayin too!" The verse that concludes Yisro's speech says, "*Vegam kol ha'am hazeh al mekomo yavo veshalom*", "and also this whole nation will come to its place in peace" (*Shemos* 18:23). Rashi comments on this verse, "*lerabos Nadav Avihu ve'ayin zekeinim*", "to include Nadav and Avihu and the Seventy Elders". Why does Rashi mention only these individuals as the intention behind Yisro's term "this whole nation"? The point is that these individuals were *mishoresh Kayin*; they were connected to *gashmiyus* matters, to meat and to drunkenness. They were really roots of Kayin, and by involving them and including them there would be real *shalom*, for real peace is the peace between the spiritual and the material realms.

Ikar Shechinah Betachtonim

The great change wrought by *Matan Torah* was the enabling of the *Shechinah* to descend to the lower realm. From that point onward, the

Shechinah can be found in the physical realm, through physical acts and objects. How does this work?

Since the *Shechinah* has come down to the *tachtonim*, the only way to now elevate it is through fulfilling a *tzivui Hashem*, command of *Hashem*. Avraham Avinu, who lived before this change, was not commanded in service of *Hashem*. He comprehended intuitively the Heavenly lights in the high realms. For example, he comprehended a light and attached himself to it, and felt that it was the light of *tefilin*. He similarly attached himself to many other great lights. But none of these things came to him as commands.

As we have learned, there are two "firsts", the first in the spiritual realm and the first in the material realm. Within each of these realms, there are many different *madreigos*, levels. A person can progress from one level to another within a particular realm. For example, if we consider the spiritual realm, we know that from *ratzon* we descend to the level of *Chochmah*, from *Chochmah* to an emotion, a *midah*, and from a *midah* to action. This is the *seder hishtalshelus*, the way of progression. But what if we have to move from the realm of *ruchniyus* to the realm of *gashmiyus*? There is no link that attaches the spiritual to the physical. How does a table emerge from love of *Hashem*?! How can spiritual levels eventually become physical? It makes no sense. The spiritual is qualitatively *different* than the physical! Because there is no logical connection between the two, we must understand that just as there was a *yeish me'ayin*, something from nothing, to create the *ruchni*, there was a *yeish me'ayin* to create the physical. *Yeish me'ayin* comes from *ratzon ha'elyon*. It therefore emerges that the only way to bring a light of *ruchniyus* to the physical world is through *ratzon Hashem*, fulfilling the will of God through an act that He commanded and that He wants. The command of *Hashem* is what purifies the physical level.¹⁶⁰

160. In his commentary to the *Hagadah of Pesach*, the *Shem Mishmuel* utilizes a similar principle in explaining the question and answer of the wise son. "The question of the wise son is that since you were on such a high level, why was there a need for a command to eat the *Pesach* sacrifice? Why not just inform us of its benefit and let us choose on our own to fulfill the *mitzvah*?" He answers, based on the *Zohar*, that one who fulfills a *mitzvah* without a sense of obligation is like an ox without a yoke. The meaning of this is that the only way a mere human can change Heavenly realities through his actions is when he represents *Hashem* as His *shaliach*, emissary. If one acts to fulfill a command, he is a *shaliach*, and we can apply the rule of *sheluchos kemoso*, the emissary has the strengths of the one who sent him. Just as *Hashem* impacts the Heavenly realm, so can man.

Now we can understand more deeply the sin of Nadav and Avihu, which the Torah describes as bringing a fire "*asher lo tzivah osam*", "that He had not commanded them" (*Vayikra* 10:1). Nadav and Avihu believed that they had reached the level of attachment between the spiritual and the physical, and so they thought that, like Avraham, they did not need a Divine command. *Asher lo tzivah osam*, that which had not been commanded to them, was their mistake! After *Matan Torah*, the only possible way to bring holiness into *gashmiyus* is through following *Hashem's* commands! Fulfilling the *ratzon Hashem* is an absolute necessity post *Matan Torah*. This is what they did not realize.

This concept is the "*alef*" of "*Anochi Hashem Elokecha*", "I am *Hashem* your God", that is revealed during the reading of *Parashas Yisro*. The world began with a *beis*, a letter that equals two in *gematria*. Initially there were two *reishis*,

However, if man is acting solely out of his own will, then he is not an emissary, and he cannot impact realms beyond his own. In a private conversation with the Rebbe, he agreed that the idea of the *Shem Mishmuel* is the same as the principle he was expressing.

See also *Shem Mishmuel* to *Vayikra* 5672 who explained the Midrash in the beginning of *Vayikra* with this principle. The Midrash asked what is the connection between *Parashas Pekudei* and *Vayikra*? It answered with a parable to a king who ordered his servant to build him a palace. On each part of the building the servant engraved the name of the king. When the king entered the palace, he looked at the walls and saw his name. He looked at the ceiling and saw his name. He looked at the windows and saw his name. The king then declared, "My servant created so much honor for me, let him enter and enjoy this palace!" The king is *Hashem*, Moshe is His servant, and the *Mishkan* the palace. Throughout *Parashas Pekudei* as Moshe supervised the building of the *Mishkan* and its objects, he wrote the name of *Hashem* on each object as the phrase, "*ka'asher tzivah Hashem es Moshe*", "As *Hashem* commanded Moshe", is repeatedly invoked. This phrase put *Hashem's* name on each item. Thus when *Hashem* entered the palace, He saw His name everywhere, and He therefore invited the servant Moshe to enter, hence *Vayikra el Moshe*.

Shem Mishmuel asked, why did the Torah stress in *Parashas Pekudei* that Moshe built as *Hashem* commanded him? Would we have imagined that Moshe would deviate from what *Hashem* commanded? Why did the Midrash link the phrase, "As *Hashem* commanded Moshe" to the presence of *Hashem's* name in the *Mishkan*?

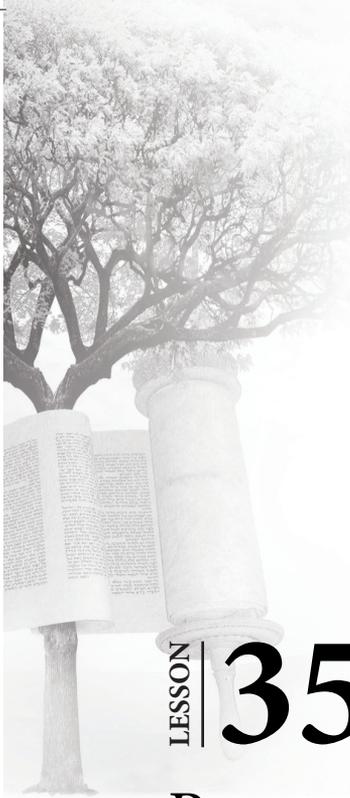
He answers that successful construction of the *Mishkan* should be an impossibility. How can limited human hands create a building and objects on which the Infinite will reside and be manifest? However, since Moshe was building as he was commanded by *Hashem*, he was the emissary, *shaliach*, of *Hashem*. *Shelicho shel adam kemoso*, the emissary of a person is like the one sending him. Since Moshe acted as *Hashem's* representative, with the intent only to fulfill Divine commands, it was as if *Hashem* Himself were building the *Mishkan*. Only because it was as if *Hashem* was supervising the construction was Moshe able to bring the Divine presence into the physical world and engrave the name of *Hashem* throughout the *Mishkan* (pages 16-17).

but at *Matan Torah* there was only an *alef*, for it was the time when the level of the *Shechinah* below was like the level of the *Shechinah* above. It all became one.

When a person learns *Torah lishmah*, for its own sake, he merits to reach this level. He merits to hear the *kol Hashem* and live! He merits a completely unique type of life. He feels the special *chiyus dikedushah*, life of holiness. This feeling of life is felt especially by those who merit to grasp the secrets of Torah.

The main *deveikus* in *Elokus* is through the *penimiyus haTorah*, innermost Torah. Today we do not truly have an inkling of a real understanding of the innermost Torah. All that we do now is a mere preparation for *Mashiach*. When *Mashiach* will come, we will truly obtain all the secrets of the Torah. There will be a new revelation of Torah, the revelation of its secrets! King Solomon describes this time with the words, "*Yishakeini mineshikos pihu*", "May He kiss me with the kisses of His mouth" (*Shir Hashirim* 1:2). We will merit *deveikus*. All the longing expressed in *Shir Hashirim* is the longing for the feelings of *Matan Torah*. Then we tasted the taste of life; now we are not alive, we are not feeling life. The *ta'am hachayim*, taste of life, that we had at *Matan Torah* was the *hayom hazeh ra'inu*, this day we saw, *ki yedaber Elokim es ha'adam*, that the Almighty would speak with man, *vachai*, and he would live! And it is this feeling that we will have when *Mashiach* will come, when *yishakeini mineshikos pihu*. On this verse, Rashi says that we are assured that *Hashem* will again reveal Himself and reveal the secrets of the reasons of the Torah; that is what is referred to by the kisses of His mouth. The Jewish nation begs for these kisses, for *tovim dodecha miyayin*, these delights are better than any other pleasure!

Arouse these feelings in yourself. Think about what level the Jews reached at that time. Learn the *Or Hachayim Hakadosh* of *Parashas Yisro*! See what he says about *Shemos* Chapter Nineteen. Read and feel a little of the holiness of *Matan Torah* and arouse these feelings in yourself. Feel a longing for the *yishakeini mineshikos pihu*, for the real feelings of life! This is the foundation, and you should work on it for your entire life. True *talmidei chachamim* devote their lives to working towards reaching this level-to taste a little bit of the *yishakeini mineshikos pihu*!



Even holy matters can be perverted. Every matter must be purified. It must be performed in the right way and in the right place. Service of Hashem through the physical is the ultimate ideal. However, there is a need for religious passion to accompany mitzvah observance.

Without the religious inspiration of love and fear, mitzvah observance in the physical might become corrupted. Lesson Thirty-Five details and explicates the need to purify mitzvos and holy concepts.

LESSON

35

The Need to Purify Holiness

Previously, the *Tanya* discussed the love and fear that act as the wings that enable a *mitzvah* to ascend. He described a person whose love and fear are not revealed, and explained that when such a person performs *mitzvos* as if he had the appropriate love and fear, his love and fear will also be able to act as wings to elevate Torah and *mitzvos*. If such a person does *mitzvos* with all possible *hasmadah*, devotion, and *dikduk*, care, and these feelings of devotion and care stem from the fact that he knows he should have true *ahavah* and *yir'ah*, he will certainly succeed in elevating Torah and *mitzvos*. For the *Zohar* teaches that love and fear are necessary to enable *mitzvos* to ascend, but that a hidden *ahavah* and *yir'ah* will also cause *mitzvos* to rise.

It is now understood the precision of our Sages when they taught that machshavah tovah, a good thought, Hakadosh Boruch Hu mitzrafah lema'aseh, God combines it with an action. They should have said God considers it as if the deed was done, why say that God combines it with an action? The answer is that the love and fear that are hidden in the heart are combined to the action. When the love and fear are revealed in the heart, then they clothe themselves in the act of the mitzvah to give them life to rise above, for the heart gives life to the Torah and mitzvos.

וזה רמזו רז"ל באמרם מחשבה טובה הקב"ה מצרפה למעשה והוה ליה למימר מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו עשאה אלא הענין כי דחילו ורחימו שבהתגלות לבו הם המתלבשים במעשה המצות להחיותם לפרחא לעילא כי הלב הוא ג"כ חומרי כשאר אברים שהם כלי המעשה אלא שהוא פנימי וחיות להם ולכן יכול להתלבש בהם להיות להם גרפין להעלותם.

Let us understand: what is the meaning of "rising high"? Why are wings necessary?

To answer these questions, it will be helpful to first review what we have already learned about the significance of the simple physical act of a *mitzvah*, and then we will be able to delve even more deeply than we did in the last lesson on this subject.

All Torah and *mitzvos* are physical acts. The soul is clothed in the body, which is involved in doing physical acts. When we do the will of God in the physical world, what we are actually doing is drawing Godliness down into the physical world.

There is a principle that says regarding *Hashem* that *Hu uretzono echad*; He is one with His will. However, this is in contrast to what we find is the case with man. A person is not identified with his will. A person has things that he wants. If we removed these desires from the person, he would remain a person. His will is simply a description of something additional about him. It does not reflect his essence, or his core. It is important to always distinguish between *atzmiyus*, that which is essential, and that which is merely a description. Non-essential aspects of a man include anything about the person that were it to disappear, he would still be a person.

To illustrate, suppose we describe a person by saying, "He is wise". There are really two things being said here: one is that he is a person, and the other is that he is wise. Wisdom is not his essence, however. He would still be a man even if he had no wisdom whatsoever. We can take this idea further by talking of *metzi'us atzmis*. We can say that the real essence of man is that he exists. The fact that he is a man is an additional descriptive adjective, and if we would add that he is a wise man, we are adding yet another descriptive adjective to the type of man that he is. None of these adjectives and descriptions are the essence of the person. However, the *Zohar* teaches that in contrast to man, *Oraisa veKudsha Berich Hu chad hu*, Torah and *Hashem* are in fact one. Torah, *Hashem's* wisdom, is not an adjective that describes *Hashem*. Torah is existential. It is one with His essence. One cannot divide *Hashem* and the Torah, just as one cannot split the most essential, existential point of man. If a person says, "I believe in God but not in the Torah", he is connecting to something other than God. He is denying the God of Israel, *Elokei Yisrael*. It is impossible to separate the Creator from His Torah; He is one with His Torah. Therefore, when a person is involved in Torah, he is grasping the will

of *Hashem*. By fulfilling *mitzvos* we can connect with *Hashem*, and we can grasp the *atzmiyus Elokis*-the very essence of the Creator of the world.

The physical world cannot affect the Almighty. He fills the physical just as He fills the spiritual; His glory fills all. We cannot actually perceive *Hashem* in the physical realm, and only have the ability to see Him when we reach the spiritual realm. The truth is, however, that *Hashem* fills the physical realm as well, and when we will arrive at the real *tikun* of the times of *Mashiach*, we will merit to see *Hashem* in the physical realm as well. Because of our present limited perspective, the verse declared, "*Hashamayim shamayim laHashem*", "the Heavens belong to *Hashem*", (*Tehillim* 115:16) which reflects our ability to only see *Hashem* when we focus on spiritual matters. It is key, however, to remember the continuation of the verse: "*veha'aretz nasan livnei adam*", "and He has given the earth to people". We have the responsibility to transform the *aretz* into a place where man can see Godliness. We need to build holiness in this world so that man will be able to see the Godliness that is down here in the physical realm, and so that man can see the Divine commands that give life to wood and to trees.

Hu uretsono echad, and "*Kol asher chafeitz Hashem asah bashamayim uva'aretz*", "All that *Hashem* wanted He has made in the Heavens and on earth" (*Tehillim* 135:6). All has been made by God due to His will. We should see His will everywhere. However, the filth of the physical hides this truth. Performing the actions of *mitzvos* that His will has commanded enable us to see Him in the physical realm itself. Torah and *mitzvos* are capable of creating a revolution! They transform the physical realm so that it becomes a place where people can see the *devar Hashem* everywhere. When we perform Torah and *mitzvos*, we are transforming the physical world. We are rearranging the combination of letters of the physical world so that it reveals *Hashem's* word in ways that enable people to see this Godliness. When we arrive at the *tikun hashaleim*, we will see Godliness as a physical fact in this world.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* did not have to leave his body to talk to *Hashem*; he was able to talk to *Hashem* as man speaks to man! In this way he was different from all the other prophets. So it will be for us all in the time of the *tikun hashaleim*, complete fixing. We will not need to leave our physical bodies to perceive *Hashem* in the physical world. Our actual physical sight will perceive *Hashem*, and the route to accomplishing this will be the physical performance of Torah and *mitzvos*.

Mitzvos are the will of *Hashem*. When it comes to the will of *Hashem*, there is no difference between the physical and the spiritual. *Hashem* is one with His Will. Through the performance of *mitzvos*, physical acts that reflect the will of *Hashem*, the physical realm is cleansed and transformed into holiness.

Hashem, Goodness, and His Will

We need to further explain the concept of "He and His Will are one". Why is this so? Isn't *Hashem* distinct from that which He desires, making these two separate entities? As we explained, a person who desires something remains a person even if he doesn't have that thing; he and his desires are not one. Why is it different with *Hashem*? If *Hashem* decided He wanted us to do something other than don *tefilin*, presumably He would still be the *Ribono Shel Olam*. *Hashem* is *mechuyav hametzi'us*, must exist, so what does it mean that He and His Will are one? The answer is that He is one with His *mitzvos*, for the *mitzvos* are all the good possible in the world.

Let us understand this more clearly. *Hashem* is *Ein Sof*, with no end, which means He is beyond our understanding and definition. All we can do should we wish to describe Him is use the language of *shelilah*, negation. This means we can say He is *more* than a particular object, or *greater* than a particular concept. We can say He is the *opposite* of lack of wisdom and the *opposite* of lack of kindness. This type of talk is known as talking *bederech shelilah*. Should we wish to utilize language that is *chiyuvi*, positive, we could say that He is *Ein Sof*, but there are no other positive descriptions that can be ascribed to Him. We cannot say He is this or that.

However, when we say that *Hashem* is higher than all matters, that is not truly correct, for He is also *in* all matters. Can you only say that *Hashem* is more than wisdom? *Hashem* is also *in* wisdom. He makes wisdom, He gives wisdom its life. The whole world is filled with His attributes. The significance of this point is that in fact, any adjectives that *Hashem* wants us to use when we describe Him, such as compassionate or merciful, are in fact pieces of His being in this world! Being compassionate is something good, and *Hashem* wants us to use that attribute in His description. Wisdom is also good, and He wants us to describe Him with the title the Wise One. All the good traits in our realm of limits, such as kindness, wisdom, and compassion, are all traits that *Hashem* wants us to reference in our descriptions of Him.

All this means that in the realm of limits, *Hashem* has left certain garments that are filled with His honor. A person of limits would not be able to comprehend Godliness if not for the fact that *Hashem* has limited Himself and allowed man to describe Him with these *hasagos*, concepts. Had He not revealed that He is a *chacham*, by creating the world with wisdom and filling it with wisdom, we would not be able to reach Him through *Chochmah*. "*Melo kol ha'aretz kevodo*", "the world is entirely filled with His honor", means that in the realm of limits, *Hashem* has left us concepts that allow us to describe Him. Thus, when we say that the world of limits is filled with Godliness, can we say this is different from the essence of *Hashem*? Can we say *Hashem* in His essence is higher than all limits, and that what has been revealed in the realm of limits is just a light from *Hashem*, but not *Hashem* himself? One who says this is called by our Sages a *mikatzeitz baneti'os*, one who divides saplings from their root, which refers to heresy. The same Almighty who is *Ein Sof* is a *rachum*, a *chanun*, a *gibor*, and a *chacham* in this world. The *melo kol ha'aretz kevodo* is literally one with the *Ein Sof*. He is *Ein Sof* just as He is a *rachum* and *chanun*.

What is Torah? Torah is the sum of all of the adjectives that describe *Hashem*. What are *mitzvos*? They are revelations that He is a *rachum*, a *chanun*, a *gibor*, and a *chacham*. What is the world? It is the same thing. The entire world is revelations of *Hashem* through adjectives that we can use to describe Him. The world is revelations of His *midos*! All of His *midos* are found in the Torah. *Hashem* looked in the Torah to make the world; the world is a piece of Torah. According to our tradition, *Oraisa Kudsha Berich Hu veYisrael chad*: Torah, *Hashem*, and the nation of Israel are one. When man is the way he should be, he too is a piece of Torah. Man is a revelation of Torah. All the parts of man are parts of Torah and *mitzvos*. The two hundred forty-eight limbs of man are embodiments of the two hundred forty-eight positive *mitzvos*; the three hundred sixty-five sinews of man are embodiments of the three hundred sixty-five prohibitions in the Torah. This is the secret of revealing *Hashem*.

We have to transform the physical world, and thereby change the realm of limits, so that the physical world reveals that God is the considerate One, *chanun Hashem*, and God is the compassionate One, *rachum Hashem*. When these things will be revealed, the words "*melo kol ha'aretz kevodo*" will be true as well. Those words will reflect the reality of the *atzmiyus* of *Hashem*. He is

One *above* all limits as well as One *in* limits. When man does Torah and *mitzvos* and fulfills the two hundred forty-eight *aseih*'s and the three hundred sixty five *lo ta'aseh*'s, he becomes transformed into a piece of Torah, and all the worlds dependent on this person are similarly transformed. In this way man brings about a revelation of *Hashem*'s glory, and he reveals the concept that *Hu uretzono echad*. This is the *tikun* that man must do. We must reveal the Godliness that is in this world, and we must fully reveal the *midos* of *Hashem* in this world. This is why through physical *mitzvah* observance, we succeed in purifying the physical realm. When we perform *mitzvos*, we are attaching to His infinite essence that is one with all the positive attributes in the limited world.

The Need for Love and Fear

Mitzvos are physical acts which are needed to transform the physical realm. We have learned that the primary goal of Torah and *mitzvos* is to bring Godliness down into the physical realm, in order to show that particularly here, in this lower world, *Hashem* can be found. However, as long as the world is not yet fixed, and Torah and *mitzvos* remain clothed in physical matters, it is necessary that there be ascent of deeds. The ascent of *mitzvos* is accomplished through the use of wings, those of love and fear, which enable them to go on high and achieve their intended goals. It is important to remember, when considering the ascent of deeds, that all holy matters must be done right to avoid their perversion. If a man wants to elevate something of this world and make it Godly, he must be careful to do it in the right way. Love and fear are the essential components that ensure that an action is performed correctly and that it is appropriately refined.

Every good path also contains crookedness, and therefore every matter needs *birur*, clarification. When a person starts out on a path, even if that path is a holy one, he may encounter confusion, and end up in the wrong place. A *tzadik* will know how to correctly stay on the proper path, but a person who is not a *tzadik* might stray and end up far from where he intended to go. There are no guarantees. Not every Ropshitzer *chassid* succeeded, nor did every Lubavitcher *chassid* succeed. Even within the context of an approach to life that is based on holiness, actions still need to be performed in the perfected way. A person can never say, "I am on the Ropshitzer path, so I know I will succeed at serving *Hashem* properly and that I will excel in that service". No,

constant vigilance is necessary, and each and every path must be purified and then fulfilled in the right way. Otherwise one might find himself no longer on the path of Divine service.

Purify Faith in the Righteous and Rebuke

Let us more closely examine two concepts to explore how they can be lived properly or improperly. First let us consider *emunas tzadikim*. *Emunas tzadikim*, faith in the righteous, can serve as an example of a Torah concept that must be lived properly. The Ba'al Shem Tov, known as the Besht, stressed the importance of this principle, and he brought to the world a great light of believing in *tzadikim*. Some schools of *chassidus* focused extensively on *emunas tzadikim*, and their adherents had complete trust in their *rebbe*. They had faith in him! However, those *chassidim* must know this: if you do not follow the boundaries of the Torah, then *emunas tzadikim* could be a violation of Torah! If people base their course of action based solely on considering what their *rebbe* said, they might forget the existence of *ma'amarei Chazal*, statements of our Sages from the second century, and the *Shulchan Aruch*, Code of Jewish Law!

Such a culture allows for the possibility that based on a belief that the Rebbe said he was *Mashiach*, people will willfully ignore the *Shulchan Aruch* as well as twenty or thirty statements on the topic that were made by *Chazal*. *Chazal* taught that until we get to the point of "*yakiru veyeide'u kol yoshvei teiveil ki lecha tichra kol berech*", "all the residents of the world will recognize and know to kneel each knee to *Hashem*", *Mashiach* has not yet come! Until the world is filled with acceptance of *Hashem*, *Mashiach* has not yet arrived. What happened in some groups is that a few people so distorted the concept of *emunah* in *tzadikim* that they turned it into an *avodah zarah*, determining that if the Rebbe implied he is *Mashiach*, they would accept that at face value and ignore the many compelling contraindications.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory, was a great *tzadik*. He never said that he was *Mashiach*. In fact, he said the opposite many times. To claim that an inference of something he said indicated that he thought he was *Mashiach* is a terrible mistake. Yes, we must believe in *tzadikim*; however, this belief must be cultivated in a correct manner. Our first guide is always our *mesorah*, Jewish tradition. We look first in the Talmud and then turn to the Codes of Jewish Law. Since all these sources indicate that *Mashiach* has yet to

arrive, we must acknowledge that he has not yet come. Once we know that he has not yet come, we can take on the task of figuring out how to interpret those words of the Rebbe that seem to imply that he was the *Mashiach*. As long as our foundation is correct, we can then find a way to deal with the language of the *tzadik* that appears to have implied that he was the *Mashiach*. This is just one example of the vital importance of following a path correctly, and making sure that even our cherished values are appropriately filtered and purified.

Another area in which we find the possibility of having good intentions, yet walking down the wrong path, is that of *musar*, rebuke. There have always been people who spoke sharply and gave very tough rebuke. They did this out of love. However, if a person neglects to purify this form of service, he will come to neglect all the laws of *ona'as devarim*, causing pain through words, and *malbin penei chaveiro*, humiliating his friend, because speaking in a tough manner is *pesoles*, inferior. It is never the way of an *ehrliche Yid*, a sincere and earnest Jew, to hurt others with words! An earnest Jew who is sincere about his service of *Hashem* is soft-spoken. He avoids the trap of speaking harshly. We must strive to be *ehrliche Yidden*. We must make sure to purify the path of rebuke so that we don't fall into the trap of speaking roughly. Like all other matters of holiness, rebuke must be delivered correctly.

The Meaning of Wings

Now we can understand why love and fear must accompany *mitzvah* observance. Ultimately, the goal of physical life is to create a residence for *Hashem* here on earth, as we work to fulfill Torah and *mitzvos* physically in this world. But as long as the world is *megusham*, material, we require the level of wings. The meaning of wings is that we cannot fully immerse ourselves in the physical act; we need to add a spiritual element. We are not presently at the point where we can create that perfect residence for *Hashem* down in our world. At the point of the *tikun*, the physical world will actually be a spiritual world. But since we are not yet at the level of *tikun*, it is necessary to utilize the wings of love and fear in order to ensure that the *mitzvos* do not become defiled and diminished into mere physical acts.

A person who lacks these wings might think extensively about the *Shulchan Aruch* and be careful with all the *halachos* of *tefilin*, but neglect to think about the *Ribono Shel Olam*. It is possible to correctly perform all of the

mitzvos without actually thinking about *Hashem*! A *rosh yeshiva* once came to our Rav¹⁶¹ and said, "I had a dream about *Hashem* last night". The Rav responded, "Maybe you thought about *Hashem* during the day. The Talmud teaches that one dreams during the night about the matters that one thought of during the day". The *rosh yeshiva* responded, "No! I never think about *Hashem* during the day". This was a *rosh yeshiva*, busy with learning and teaching Torah all day, who was able to say with a straight face that he forgot about *Hashem*! The physicality around us is overwhelming! Thus the needs for wings of religious sentiment are very great. The wings of loving and fearing *Hashem* while doing a *mitzvah* elevate the Torah and *mitzvos*, so that the Torah and *mitzvos* will truly accomplish their role. And to the extent that a person grows in spirituality, he can rise higher above the physical, and do even more *mitzvos*, that will be thus enabled to accomplish their ultimate goal.

However, the above-mentioned fear and love that are in the intelligence of the brain and the recesses of the heart are of an infinitely higher order than that of "action" and they cannot clothe themselves in the performance of the commandments to become their intelligence and vitality, as it were, to uplift them to soar upwards, were it not for the fact that the Holy One, blessed be He, fuses and unites them together with the action; hence they are called "good thought", for they are not actual awe and love in a revealed state in the heart, but only in the intelligence of the brain and in the recesses of the heart, as mentioned above.

But the Almighty produces this coalescence in order to elevate the performance of the commandments and study of the Torah-which are carried out under the influence of the said good thought-into the world of Beri'ah, the abode to which ascend the Torah and commandments that are performed through intelligent awe and love which are truly revealed in the heart.

אך הדחילו ורחימו שבתבונות מוחו ותעלומות לבו הנ"ל גבהו דרכיהם למעלה מעלה מבחי' המעשה ואי אפשר להם להתלבש בבחי' מעשה המצות להיות להם בחי' מוחין וחיות להעלותן לפרחא לעילא אם לא שהקב"ה מצרפן ומחברן לבחי' המעשה והן נקראות בשם מחשבה טובה כי אינן דחילו ורחימו ממש בהתגלות לבו כי אם בתבונת מוחו ותעלומות לבו כנ"ל

אך צירוף זה מצרף הקב"ה כדי להעלות מעשה המצות ועסק התורה הנעשים על ידי מחשבה טובה הנ"ל עד עולם הבריאה מקום עליית התורה והמצות הנעשים ע"י דחילו ורחימו שכליים אשר בהתגלו' לבו ממש

161. A reference to the former Stitchiner Rebbe, Rav Yehuda Horowitz o.b.m.

The world of *Beri'ah* is the realm of love and fear that come from the mind. The world of *Yetzirah* is the realm of the angels that are animated by the love and fear in the heart, but *Beri'ah* is the realm of thought.

<p><i>But even without this they still rise to the world of Yetzirah, by means of the natural fear and love which are latent in the heart of all Jews from birth, as will be later explained at length.</i></p>	<p>אבל בלא"ה נמי עולים לעולם היציר' ע"י דחילו ורחימו טבעיים המסותרים בלב כל ישראל בתולדותם כמ"ש לקמן באריכות:</p>
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What this means is that *Hashem* takes the love and fear that are not yet revealed, and He combines them with the action, so the action will have the wings that enable it to ascend to a higher world.

Shabbos Shekalim: A Time of Will

The *Zohar*, in one explanation for the *sheim Havayah*, teaches about the name יה-ו-ה-י *yud hei vav hei* that "*yud hei*" represents fear and love, while "*vav hei*" stands for Torah and *mitzvos*. The four *parshiyos* read in synagogues around the month of *Adar* correspond to the four letters of the *sheim Havayah*. *Shabbos Shekalim* is when we read *Parashas Shekalim*, which discusses the donation of half-shekels for the *Mishkan*. This reading corresponds to the initial "*yud*". *Yud* has a *gematria* value of ten, which is why the half-shekel had the weight of ten *geirah*, barley seeds.

Let us take a deep look at the concepts underlying the four *parshiyos*. These four unique readings express the idea that holiness, once extant only in potential, is beginning to be revealed in the actual. Holiness was first infused into the world on *Rosh Hashanah*, when *Hashem* renewed the world and was *mashpi'a* a *hashpa'ah* to the world. This *hashpa'ah*, flow of blessing, was in a latent state. It would take time for the *hashpa'ah* to be revealed in the world. This is similar to gestation; even though the child exists in its mother's womb, it is not born until the passage of time. Eventually, the *hashpa'ah* is actualized, and in its actualized form, it is quite different than it was in its latent form.

Rashi teaches us something very important about the creation of the world. "*Alah bemachshavah livroso bemidas hadin ra'ah she'eino miskayem amad veshiteif imo midas harachamim.*" This means that, "It initially rose in

His thought to create the world with the attribute of justice; however, when He saw that the world would not then be able to survive, He added the attribute of mercy to the world" (*Bereishis* 1:1). *Tishrei*, the month of initial creation, is characterized by days of judgment, which reflects the attribute of *din*. It is the time of *machshavah*, thought. It is the *alah bemachshavah livroso bemidas hadin*. This contrasts with the month of *Nisan*, a time during which the world was created in *ma'aseh*, action. *Nisan* is the actual birth, the *amad veshiteif imo midas harachamim*-the time when He added the attribute of mercy to the world. (Rabbeinu Tam illustrates this understanding when he taught that there is no real dispute between the view that *Tishrei* was the time of creation and the view that the world was created in *Nisan*, for it was created in thought in *Tishrei* and in actuality in *Nisan*).

In the prayers of *Rosh Hashanah* we state, "*Hayom haras olam*", "today is the conception of the world". It is the conception, the initiation. The Ari teaches that the primary completion of this stage is *Shemini Atzeres*, the last holiday in the month of *Tishrei*. This is followed by seven months of gestation and preparation for the birth. The time of birth, roughly seven months after *Shemini Atzeres*, is *Shevi'i shel Pesach*, the seventh day of Passover. On the seventh day of Passover, *Hashem* split the Red Sea. The sea splitting was a birth. *Keri'as Yam Suf* was the actual birth of the world. The Jewish people were born during *Keri'as Yam Suf*, and our *mitzvos* are the life force for the whole world. Every year on the seventh day of *Pesach*, our souls walk through the *Yam Suf* and the world is born in an actual way.

These ideas are illustrative of the fact that a person cannot encounter a great light suddenly; there is a process that he must go through before he can arrive at the great light. The birth of the Jewish people couldn't happen instantaneously, and rather had to flow from a necessary period of gestation. The *Zohar* says this principle is true as well regarding the arrival of the *Mashiach*, a time which will be characterized by various levels of revelation of light. Thus the verse states, "*Mi zo's hanishkafa kemo shachar*, Who is this who is seen like a rising sun, then, *yafah kalevanah*, beautiful like the moon, then, *barah kachamah*, clear like the midday sun, and finally, *ayumah kanidgalos*, awesome like a bannered legion" (*Shir Hashirim* 6:10). There are stages in the revelations of the light of redemption. The four *parshiyos* reflect this dynamic, of slowly and steadily revealing the light of the birth of the Jewish people and the birth of the world.

We have learned that the four *parshiyos* correspond to the four letters of *Havayah*. This is the revelation of the name *Havayah*; *Havayah* is the name that denotes *rachamim*, mercy. In *Tishrei* everything reflected *Elokim*, the *midas hadin*. However, *sof ma'aseh*, the concluding action, is with *rachamim*.

Shabbos Shekalim is the *yud* of the *sheim Havayah*, and it is also the *kutzo shel yud*, the crown of the *yud*, for it is all one letter, the *yud* and its crown. The crown is the will of *Hashem*, and the will of *Hashem* is clothed in wisdom. This is why the Torah talks of *machatzis hashekel*, half of a shekel: for the crown of the *yud* is the hidden will, while what is actually expressed is not the entire will. A Jew places the hidden will in the shekel, and the will is clothed through giving the coin to *Hashem*.

This will is hidden, just as in the name of *Havayah* the will is represented by the crown, not by a complete letter. The will is submerged in the *yud* of *Chochmah*. There is a hidden will in the *Chochmah*. The Torah said that *esrim geirah hashekel*, the complete shekel weighs twenty barley seeds. This means that there is a *yud* of *Chochmah* and a hidden *yud* of *ratzon* / *Keser* (for the *kutz* of the *yud* is also a *yud*). עשרים, *esrim* (620), equals כתר, *keser* (620) in *gematria*, for there is a hidden will in this *mitzvah*. This *kutzo shel yud* is called *keren Yisrael*, horn of Israel. *Keren* refers to the horns that extend from the skull of a creature. The skull is higher than the *mochin*, intellects. The Ari calls the skull the place of *keser*, the *kutzo shel yud* is this *ha'arah* from the *keser*, the *ha'arah* from the skull. *Hu uretzono echad*, He and His will are one; the essence of the soul is the *ratzon*. This *ratzon* is the root of the *yud* and is called *keren Yisrael*.

There is a deeper meaning to the *shekalim* that we read about on *Shabbos Shekalim*. These *shekalim* were donated by the Jews in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and they would be used to purchase the animals needed for the *korbanos*, sacrifices. The *korbanos* are the actualization of Jewish service; they are the revelation of the *ratzon*. When referencing the *shekalim*, the Torah refers to them as *beka lagulgoles*, a *beka* per head. The word "*beka*" בקע is related to the verb *boke'a*, which means to break through. The donation of a half-shekel is a breakthrough of the will of the *gulgoles*, the skull. Each Jew wants to serve *Hashem*, but the desire has to be actualized. On *Shabbos Shekalim*, the will bursts forth.

One of the messages of the *shekalim* is that a Jew should display *nedivas hanefesh*, generosity of the soul. He has to donate and give of himself to the

Ribono Shel Olam. When he does so, he opens a new path, a path down which he will be the first person to walk. *Hashem* loves pioneers; He loves the ones that are first. In fact, we see that *Hashem* always chooses the first. The first grain is hallowed and is given to the *kohen* as *terumah*. The first fruits are given to the *kohen* in the *Beis Hamikdash* as *bikurim*.

What is the uniqueness of being first, the uniqueness that makes these firsts merit to be given to *Hashem*? Consider the example of Christopher Columbus, the first European who reached the shores of what would later become the United States of America. Columbus occupies a special place in American history. Until his successful journey, people believed they could not cross the ocean, but once Columbus crossed, people realized that they too could get through this barrier. Columbus created a breakthrough. He was the first one, and the first creates a breakthrough!

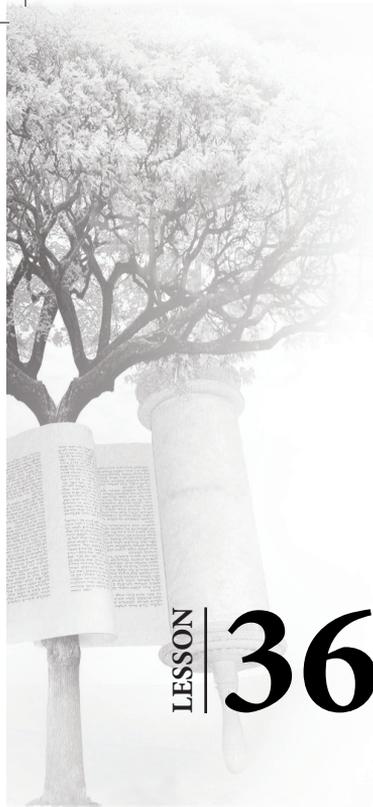
To apply this idea to matters of holiness, we can reflect on the *Beis Hamikdash*, the ultimate place of holiness in our world. Initially, people thought they could not build a *Beis Hamikdash*. How could we possibly build a home for *Hashem* in this world? David *Hamelech* was the one who penetrated this barrier. He demonstrated that man could in fact build a *Beis Hamikdash*. Because David *Hamelech* was first, and he generously donated his heart to *Hashem*, *menadev libo laHashem*, he merited to retain his kingship for all generations. The first in matters of holiness is loved.

The opposite is true as well: the first in matters of evil is abhorred. In the Torah, Amalek is referred to as "*reishis goyim*", "first of the nations" (*Bamidbar* 24:20). The world had accepted as a firm principle that no one could start up with the Jewish people. However, as a result of the sins of the Jewish people, Amalek's chutzpah was permitted to enable them to challenge this assumption and demonstrate that Jews can in fact be attacked. They were the first ones to challenge this firmly-held assumption. And just as *Hashem* loves the *reishis* in holiness, like the David who is a first, and who shows that a barrier can be broken, so too does *Hashem* hate Amalek, the *reishis* of profanity.

During the days of *Adar*, it is a time to break through the walls. It is a time to be a *reishis*, to be a *menadev*. We can break the walls separating ourselves from *Hashem*; we must defeat Amalek! You can build a house for *Hashem*. Do not think we cannot reach the levels of holiness of a Reb Elimelech or of other *tzadikim*: *ledavkah bo*, to cling to Him, is a mandate for each generation! We can be *menadev* our hearts, and if we donate ourselves and break the walls that

separate us from *Hashem* now, in the time of the *ikvasa deMeshicha*, the era when we hear the footsteps of *Mashiach*, we can merit great blessings.

Shabbos Shekalim is a great time. The Torah characterizes donating *shekalim* as, "*Ki sisa es rosh bnei Yisrael*", "When you will lift up the heads of the children of Israel" (*Shemos* 30:12). The Midrash teaches that Moshe is lifting Jewish heads and instructing them to give *shekalim*. Whenever we read the verses of *Shekalim* Moshe is lifting us. On *Shabbos Shekalim Hashem* calls us to donate ourselves to *Hashem*, and this will be the *beka lagulgoles*. May *Hashem* allow us to merit the destruction of Amalek, and to revel in the revelation of the *reishis* of holiness.



Sometimes we do not feel inspired. Are we to perform religious acts when they seem lifeless and uninspired?

Lesson Thirty-Six addresses the mandate of the Talmud, "Today do them! Tomorrow you will receive reward!" It explores the theme of true loyalty and constant service. Our world is the place for continual service. Even if we are uninspired, this is the realm to keep doing good!

LESSON

36 The Tasks of this World and the Next World

In Chapter Seventeen we read:

Now we can understand the phrase, "The matter is very close to you in your heart and mouth to fulfill it".
ובזה יובן מ"ש כי קרוב אליך הדבר
מאד בפיך ובלבבך לעשותו

The *Tanya* explains, in light of what we have learned, that *Hashem* combines the love and fear that are in the hidden recesses of the heart to the action that a person performs. We understand the meaning of the verse that says, "ki karov eilecha hadavar me'od beficha uvilvavcha la'asoso".

How can we say that these matters are very close and are very near to fulfillment? Aren't love and fear of Heaven very difficult for people like ourselves? The answer is that the verse says la'asoso, to do it. The love that brings to actual doing is the hidden love in the recesses of the heart, and this is karov me'od, very close. Any Jew who has a mind can think deep thoughts about whatever he would like to think, and when he uses the mind to think about the greatness of Hashem, he can have at least in his mind a
דלכאורה הוא בלבבך נגד החוש שלנו
(והתורה היא נצחית) שאין קרוב מאד
הדבר להפך לבו מתאוות עוה"ז
לאהבת ה' באמת וכמ"ש בגמרא אטו
יראה מילתא זוטרתא היא וכל שכן
אהבה. וגם אמרו רז"ל דצדיקים דוקא
לבם ברשותם. אלא דלעשותו ר"ל
האהבה המביאה לידי עשיית המצות
בלבד שהיא רעותא דלבא
שבתעלומות לב גם כי אינה בהתגלות
לבו כרשפי אש ודבר זה קרוב מאד
ונקל לכל אדם אשר יש לו מוח

love and a fear and he will realize that his mission in life is to fulfill the mitzvos, hayom la'asosam. Today to fulfill them, and tomorrow to receive reward for them.

בקדקדו כי מוחו ברשותו ויכול להתבונן בו ככל אשר יחפוץ וכשיתבונן בו בגדולת א"ס ב"ה ממילא יוליד במוחו על כל פנים האהבה לה' לדבקה בו בקיום מצותיו ותורתו וזה כל האדם כי היום לעשותם כתיב שהיום הוא עולם המעשה דוקא ולמחר כו' כמ"ש במ"א.

The *mitzvah* is to do for *Hashem*. All the levels one merits to reach, and the ascent from one level to the next, are not the actual *mitzvah*: the *mitzvah* is to do.

Doing Is the Task

When a person does a *mitzvah*, his act arouses a light from above, and this light imbues him with love and fear of *Hashem*. This special success is a gift that he is granted, akin to finding a lost object. Our Sages teach, "*Yaga'ta umatza'sa ta'amin*", "If you labored and found [Torah knowledge], believe it!" *Yaga'ta* means hard work, but the hard work is followed by finding. Finding is not the same as earning-what you get will be a *metzi'ah*, a find. There is a commandment of *vehiskadishtem*, make yourself holy. If we follow this commandment by doing the actions that make us holy, we will be given the gift of "*vihiysem kedoshim*", "and you will be holy" (*Vayikra* 20:7). Through the *mitzvah* that you do below, you arouse a flow of blessing from above; the resultant spiritual attainment will be given to you as a gift.

If a person *davens* but does not feel a light, it is a sign that he has not fulfilled the *mitzvah* the right way. According to the principle we have just discussed, when we do the right thing we merit a response of blessing and success. However, the light that we hope to receive must not be our main focus; we must remember that the main thing is to do. Perform *mitzvos*, even when you do not see success. In fact, when you do not see success, you can take that as a sign that you need to do more. Do more and more for the sake of *Hashem*. *Hashem* will respond by sending spiritual achievements to those He wishes to endow with inspiration.

The ultimate purpose of performing *mitzvos* is not to reach a level of holiness; rather, the purpose is to bring joy to *Hashem*. In light of this, it is important to realize that we cannot evaluate the worth of our service of

Hashem by the feeling we get from that service. Sometimes we work hard and fail to feel anything, but we should not allow this to discourage us. It could be we have not worked hard enough; another possibility is that this is a test, to see if we will keep up our service even without being rewarded by the feeling of success. Moshe *Rabbeinu* was destined to ultimately speak to *Hashem* face-to-face; he was created to be the redeemer of Israel from Egypt. But until he was eighty years old, he certainly felt that he was unsuccessful, and that he had not reached the level he had the potential to reach. Although we find that he served *Hashem* all his life in the most perfect way, with absolute *mesirus nefesh*, sacrifice of self, nevertheless for the first eighty years of his life he felt that he was a failure. The Torah testifies about Moshe, "*bechol beisi ne'eman hu*", "In My entire house he was the loyal one" (*Bamidbar* 12:7). The nature of a loyal emissary is to persevere with the task he was given, even if it is hard, and even if he doesn't feel the success that he yearns for. This was how Moshe *Rabbeinu* lived his life.

Let us consider a more common example of loyalty in the face of challenges. Imagine a *yeshiva* student who promises *Hashem* to learn a particular tractate to the point of mastery. Initially, he begins his project with great passion, for "*Ein chozek kechassidus bischilaso*", "There is no strength like the beginning of piety". As time wears on, however, he loses his passion and drive. What happens at this point? If he drops his commitment now, because of his flagging enthusiasm, he cannot be considered a *ne'eman*. An *ish ne'eman* is someone you can rely on.

Moshe was a person who was *ne'eman* in his service of *Hashem*. He personified the *midah* of *Netzach*, dominance. His *midah* was to bring the *Shechinah* into the world, and he persevered in that struggle come what may. He never let up. Moshe's task was to teach the whole world that *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, I am *Hashem* your God. In carrying out this directive, Moshe moved from one level to the next. When *Hashem* first told Moshe to save the Jews, He said, "This will be the sign that I have sent you, when the nation will serve the Lord on this mountain" (*Shemos* 3:12). Only when Moshe finally arrived at Sinai did he feel that he had succeeded in fulfilling the *shelichus*, mission, that *Hashem* assigned him in this world. When the nation served *Hashem* on Mount Sinai, Moshe felt successful. But for his entire life before and after this, Moshe continuously toiled on behalf of *Hashem*. This is why he is considered a *ne'eman*, loyal one.

Like Moshe *Rabbeinu*, we all have to be loyal *sheluchim*. When we take something on, we need to approach it with *ne'emanus*. We should carry out our task with *sheleimus*, perfection and completion. *Sheleimus* connotes permanence; we must fulfill our charge with *kevi'us*, established permanence. When something is imbued with *kevi'us*, it never stops. *Kevi'us* demands regularity-it cannot be sometimes yes and sometimes no. When you take something on, let it have permanence! Take on a *mesechta* or a matter of *musar*, and do it in a complete and perfect way! Become a person who is *ne'eman*. Do it the way *Hashem* wants it done. Whether or not you achieve your hoped-for *madreigah* or not, carry out your service in a permanent way.

These words from *Sefer Tehillim* characterize the nature of serving *Hashem*: "*Shemesh umagen Hashem Elokim*", "Sun and shield is *Hashem* our Lord" (*Tehillim* 84:12). A *shemesh* is a sun that gives light; this reflects the reality that sometimes *Hashem* shines light on us, and we experience a time of inspiration, a time of *Havayah*. However, there are also times of shadows, a time of *magen*, when we need a shield. This is a time of *Elokim*. The verse continues with, "*lo yimna tov laholchim besamim*", "if a person walks in the way of complete service of *Hashem*, He will not hold back the good" (*Tehillim* 84:12). If you persist in your service, you are guaranteed to receive good! When it comes to physical plenty, we receive no guarantees of success. It is possible to work very hard but not become wealthy. However, regarding matters of holiness, there is a promise, "*vehiskadishtem vihyisem kedoshim*", "And you make yourself holy, and you will become holy" (*Vayikra* 20:7). Spiritual areas come with a guarantee for success! The *Chozeh* of Lublin said that a person must know that *Hashem* wants only to bring us close. With this knowledge, we can persevere and labor in spiritual areas, knowing that eventually *Hashem* will give us Godly successes, and we will merit *olamcha tir'eh bechayecha*, you will see your world in your lifetime. You will see a success that you never imagined you could reach.

Everything has its own time and place. If you work hard, there will be a time when *Hashem* will open a gate for you, and you will merit great successes. You will achieve love of *Hashem*, fear of *Hashem*, and new levels of Torah. You will see *Hashem*. You might experience a taste of *Shabbos* so intense that when it comes, you will feel that as a young person you never imagined *Shabbos* was such a light. For there is a time for everything. As a young person, you might have to deal with many challenges. But eventually you will merit

closeness to *Hashem*. This closeness creates a new beginning, and you will be faced with a new level to work towards: "*Yeilchu meichayil el chayil*", "They will walk from strength to strength" (*Tehillim* 84:8). A person has to always walk and progress and go ever higher.

"*Hayom la'asosam umachar lekabel secharam*", "Today to do them and tomorrow to receive their reward" (*Eruvin* 22a). Today we need to act. The truth is that the *lemachar lekabel secharam* is not mentioned in the Torah at all. The reason for this is that since the future reward is on the level of *ayin lo ra'asah*, no eye has seen it, it is hidden in the Torah as well, and not mentioned there explicitly.

Reward and Punishment

Olam Haba, the future world, is the place where people receive reward for what they have accomplished in *Olam Haze*, our present world. Literally, the term *Olam Haba* means "the world that is coming". It is the world that is higher than the one I am presently in. When I am in the lower world, I cannot comprehend what the higher world is like; thus, the world to come can be understood as the world that I have not yet grasped.

As long as the lower world remains in an unfixed state, it remains the realm of doing, while the next realm is the place of *kibul sechar*, receiving reward. However, when we look at this from the perspective of holiness, we can understand that actually, each level contains within it all other levels, so there is in fact a level of *Olam Haba* in this world. A person experiences this when he completes a *hayom la'asosam*, a level of service, and he advances to a higher world. He will feel a bit of *Olam Haba* while still remaining in this world. Then he is ready to begin a new level of *hayom la'asosam*.

In *Parashas Va'eschanan*, the verse says that "*hayom la'asosam*", "today is the time to do them" (*Devarim* 7:11). Immediately before this verse, *Hashem* taught that the Almighty does not want His enemies to serve Him. Apparently, the greatest success a human being can achieve is that of providing pleasure, *nachas ruach*, to *Hashem*, which is accomplished by performing an act that gives pleasure to the Almighty. Man's success is not reflected in the fact that he merits to enjoy *Hashem's* light, or receive *madreigos*, levels, of holiness! It is reflected in the fact that he has brought pleasure to *Hashem*.

The Ropshitzer Rebbe applies this principle to answer the question of why it was that the *Dor Dei'ah*, the Generation of Knowledge, asked Moshe to speak to *Hashem*, and then relay the message to them. Why were they unwilling to hear *Hashem* speak to them directly? The Rebbe explains that they were being tested. Would they immerse themselves in the pleasure of attachment to *Hashem*, or would they focus on giving *Hashem* the *nachas ruach* that He desired? When they initially heard *Hashem's* voice directly, they enjoyed experiencing the glory of the *Shechinah*, as it was the greatest possible pleasure. Yet they knew that *Hashem* does not want us to run from this world to the pleasures of the next. Rather, what gives Him pleasure is our hard work to turn *this world* into His abode. The request that Moshe take over speaking to them was reflective of the fact that they passed this test and overcame this temptation: they were asking that only Moshe transcend the world through direct communication with Him. The greatest success of man is when he succeeds in giving *nachas ruach* to *Hashem*. We must remember in our own lives that just as the Jews did at Sinai, any situation holds the possibility of engaging in the hard work that will bring *nachas ruach* to *Hashem*.

Thus, we see that success is equated with acting for *Hashem*. This is the very reason for the existence of each created person: to do and then to do more for *Hashem*. And the realm of doing is our present world. Because the essential task of this world is doing, *Hashem* gets no *nachas ruach* from our receiving reward in this world. However, the *avodah* of the next world is to get reward, and so there, *Hashem* does take pleasure when we receive reward. In other words, in the future world, the service and the reward are one and the same, whereas in our world they are not. Although the focus of the two worlds is different, the underlying *nekudah*, point, is actually the same: in every situation, we can give *nachas ruach* to *Hashem*. While the form that the *nachas ruach* takes will vary between the two worlds, the essential thing is that we are involved with providing that *nachas ruach* to *Hashem*. A *tzadik gamur* gives *Hashem* great *nachas* in this world, by doing and accomplishing, and as a result of that, he merits giving *Hashem* great *nachas* in the next world as well. Because the way to give *Hashem* pleasure in the next world is through the receipt of *sechar*, reward, he receives great reward in the world to come.

The Talmud teaches, "*Tzadikim ein lahem menuchah lo ba'olam hazeh velo ba'olam haba*", "*Tzadikim* have no rest not in this world nor the next" (*Berachos* 64a). This is referring to the fact that they are always proceeding

from one level to the next. This is true regarding both worlds-this one and the next. A man's eternal progression is determined by the nature of his progress in this world. If he progresses with great consistency through this world, in the next world, which is eternal, he will continue his trajectory of rising from level to level. As the verse in *Tehillim* says, "*hu yenahegeinu al mus*", "He will lead us over death" (*Tehillim* 48:15). A man will forever follow along the path that he has set for himself in this world.

In contrast to this, a wicked person becomes disconnected from *Hashem*. *Hashem* does not want to hear from him and talk to him. The Heavenly Court judges him, and wants nothing to do with his evil ways. Because in the next world, *Hashem* takes joy in our receiving blessing, the wicked person does not get reward in the next world. *Hashem* does not desire a relationship with him, and does not want the connection engendered by rewarding him in the world to come. Therefore, *Hashem* gives such a person reward in this world. Because this world is not the place designed for receiving reward, when the evil person gets reward in this world it does not give *Hashem* pleasure. The verse in *Devarim* describes this approach when it says, "*meshaleim lesan'av el panav leha'avido*", "He pays to His enemies on His face to destroy them" (*Devarim* 7:10). *Hashem* rewards the wicked now, when He receives no pleasure from it. However, as we have described, for the righteous, *hayom la'asosam*, today is the realm of doing. *Lemachar*, tomorrow, there is a different type of doing, the doing of receiving reward.

We must always remember that the essential task is to do. Even when we finish a task, we cannot sit back and relax, because we are now on a new level, and this level as well demands that we act. And so it continues.

The Sin of the Spies

While the Jews were in the desert, Moshe sent twelve spies to scope out the land of Israel. Unfortunately, these spies did not prove to be loyal emissaries. A deeper analysis of their task demonstrates that it was a difficult one. Their charge was to ease the transition of the Jewish people from one plane of existence to another. Theirs was the generation that lived on *man* and was surrounded by clouds of glory; *Hashem* was clearly at their side. It was a level that was higher than this world. So too, their service was uniquely suited to the nature of their lives in the desert. The task of the *Dor Dei'ah*, Generation of Knowledge, was to live with *Binah*, deep understanding.

However, once residing in the land of Israel, they were expected to transition to the level of *Malchus*, royalty and humility. These two levels, *Binah* and *Malchus*, are very different from each other and do not mesh well. The spies faced a difficult challenge when they reached *Eretz Yisrael*, because the mode of service demanded there was different from that to which they were accustomed. The very goal of sending spies was to combine these two levels of service. What is a spy? A spy is a person who enters someone else's land. So too, the twelve spies were sent to dwell on a level that was not theirs. They were sent to face tests that were qualitatively different from the challenges of their generation.

How did the tests of these two different levels differ from each other? The very nature of the *Dor Dei'ah* was immersion in Godly thoughts and apprehensions. Appropriately, their challenges were things like the sin of the golden calf. The sin of the calf was a result of mistakes they made regarding their understanding of the *yichud haBorei*, the unity of the Creator. The test that led to this sin was questioning whether they would "cut the saplings", by detaching the products of *Hashem* from Him, like the renegade sage Acher,¹⁶² or whether they would remain firmly attached to *Hashem* alone. However, the challenges of the land of Israel were different. In *Eretz Yisrael*, the spies saw giants. The challenge inherent in this was for people who were weak to not be frightened by the brawn of their opponents. As they transitioned from a miraculous subsistence to a natural way of living, they needed to learn to rely on their *emunah peshutah*, simple faith; all of the *hasagos*, apprehensions, that they had developed during their time in the desert could not help them deal with their fear of the enemies.

Simple Challenges Are Sometimes the Most Difficult

Emunah peshutah, simple faith, sometimes proves not to be that simple at all. Passing challenges in the area of faith can prove to be very difficult. An example of such a challenge is the test faced by a young man who leaves

162. *Acher* literally means "the other one". Acher's given name was Elisha ben Avuya. He was a great sage who lived in the second century, and he ultimately abandoned religious belief and observance. As a result of his defection, he was called "the other one". Our Sages teach that Acher ascended to Heaven, and while there he saw the angel Matat. He "cut the saplings" when he thought that Matat could act independently of the will of *Hashem*, the source of all.

yeshiva to open a business. Perhaps this young man will realize that if he behaves crookedly, he will seemingly earn a lot more money than if he is totally honest. This may pose a great test in the area of *emunah peshutah*. Does he believe that there is a Creator of the world who is the source of *parnasah*, livelihood? If he truly believes it, he will not lie. If he does not truly believe it, he will fail the test. It is possible that this test is harder for him than all of the other tests he faced while learning in *yeshiva*.

So it was with the spies. Until now, they were not involved in the natural world, as they lived the miraculous desert existence. Now they were entering *Eretz Yisrael*, the earthly realm, and they were challenged with a new type of test. Would they have the strength, in this setting that was new to them, to believe with simple faith that *Hashem* could and would do miracles for them? Their test was to live with the simple belief that nothing in nature can stand in the way of the will of *Hashem*.

The spies did not succeed in overcoming this test. They were not prepared for it. However, *Hashem* had given them a way to succeed. He had told Moshe, "*Shelach lecha*", "You send" (*Bamidbar* 13:2), and our Sages teach that this word means "*leDa'ascha*", according to your thought. Had the spies been *mevattel*, nullified, themselves to the *Da'as* of Moshe, they would never have failed their test.

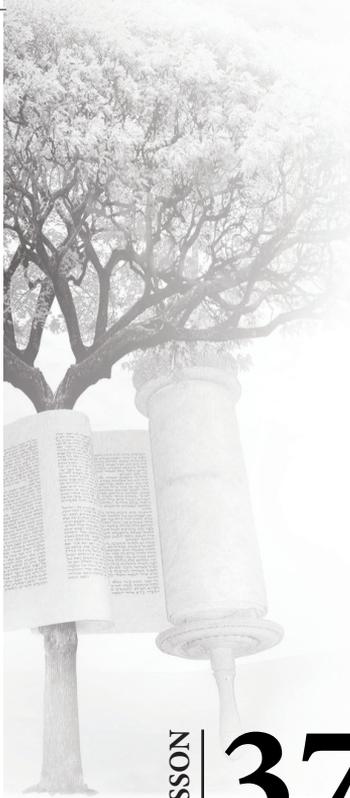
Ten spies sinned. The number ten is significant. Ten is the *gematria* of the letter *yud*. *Yud* is the letter that represents *Chochmah*. There is an order of Divine flows of life, which proceeds from one level to the next, known as "the *seder* of the *hishtalshelus*", and it begins with *Chochmah*. From *Chochmah* all the way on to *Malchus*, there are a total of ten *Sefiros*. A person should start his day with *Chochmah*, wisdom, and utilize his wisdom to do what is correct. In the merit of his acting with *Chochmah* he will then draw from Heaven an extension of the order of *hishtalshelus*. He will be at the level of *ratzon*. *Ratzon*, will, is higher than *Chochmah*; *ratzon* is above the *seder hishtlashlus*.

We can see this progression playing out in life when we observe people who do things that are above wisdom-their actions are higher than all orders. This is the level people reach when they feel "my life depends on this". When people are inspired with *ratzon*, they act with *mesirus nefesh*! Nothing stands in the way of *ratzon*. Even if someone is not prepared for a particular test, when he has such great *mesirus nefesh*, he will succeed in passing the test. Moshe was a *merkavah*, seat, to the level of *Keser*. As we have learned, Moshe

is *Da'as*, and *Da'as* can be an extension of *Keser*. When *mekubalim* refer to *Da'as* as one of the *Sefiros*, they leave *Keser* off the list, for *Da'as* is one with *Keser*, and *Da'as* is a revelation of *ratzon*. *Shelach lecha leDa'ascha*-the advice here was for the *meraglim* to connect to the *Da'as* of Moshe. They should have been *battel*, annulled, to Moshe, and then they would have had the *ratzon* and *mesirus nefesh* which would have enabled them to succeed in a trial which was higher than they were.¹⁶³ "*Ein lecha davar she'omeid bifnei haratzon*", "nothing stands in the way of *ratzon*". If a person has *ratzon*, he can overcome all challenges.

We can further understand that the generation that entered the land of Israel was on the level of *hayom la'asosam*, a generation whose task was to do. In contrast, the *Dor Dei'ah* corresponded to the level of *lemachar lekabel secharam*, which was a higher level. The Jews needed to move from a higher level to a lower one. The challenge was that those entering the land needed to descend from the higher level of receiving reward to the lower level of service and doing. This was their challenge, and it was this challenge that the *meraglim* did not pass. May we all merit to work and toil for heaven and to succeed in all our tests.

163. See also *Shem Mishmuel* on *Parashas Shelach*.



What is the meaning of the term Shechinah? How can Hashem's presence be in exile? How was life different when the Beis Hamikdash stood and Hashem's Shechinah resided among the Jewish nation? Lesson Thirty-Seven answers these questions. It also reveals that the urge for idolatry was a misplaced form of the urge to connect with the Infinite Himself. Nowadays, we are not tempted by idols; however, we who live at the end of time do contend with materialism, and we are challenged by heresy. Sanctifying the material would enable us to defeat the challenges of our era.

LESSON

37

The Meaning of *Galus HaShechinah*

In Chapter Seventeen of the *Tanya* he is clarifying the meaning of the verse, "*Ki karov eilecha hadavar me'od*", "Rather the matter [of observance] is very close to you" (*Devarim* 30:14). He asked, how can the verse declare that the level of true love for *Hashem* is close to all of us? Only *tzadikim* are on a high enough level to have perfect mastery over the feelings of their hearts; for the rest of us, this level is much harder to reach. So what is the verse telling us? The *Tanya* explains that as long as a person possesses the hidden love in his heart, and he acts in the manner of one who knows that he ideally should have love for *Hashem*, this is enough. It is very attainable to act this way, hence this does fit properly under the description of *karov me'od*. Such a person is considered to be one who fully serves *Hashem*.

The mind, in turn, by virtue of its inherent nature, is master over the left part of the heart, and over the mouth and all the limbs which are the instruments of action except in him who is completely wicked, as the Rabbis said, that the wicked are under the control of their heart, but their heart is in no way controlled by them. This is a punishment for

והמוח שליט בטבעו ותולדתו על חלל
השמאלי שבלב ועל פיו ועל כל
האברים שהם כלי המעשה אם לא מי
שהוא רשע באמת כמארז"ל
שהרשעים הם ברשות לבם ואין לבם
ברשותם כלל וזה עונש על גודל ועוצם
עונם ולא דברה תורה במתים אלו
שבחייהם קרוים מתים

the enormity and potency of their sin. But the Torah does not speak of these "dead" who in their life are called "dead".

The *Tanya* is teaching that the mind naturally rules over the heart and the rest of the body, except in the case of truly wicked people. These people lose *libam birshusam*, their heart is within their own control, as a punishment for their bad deeds. Rather, they are personified as *heim birshus libam*, they are under the control of their hearts. The Rambam taught that sometimes a person loses his *bechirah chafshis*, his ability to choose freely, as a punishment. The inability of one's mind to control his heart can be thus understood as a penalty. However, while it is a punishment, it is also a kindness. Because the choice is not clearly his, his punishment for the sins he commits as a result of his removed ability to choose is not so severe. Furthermore, if he succeeds in overcoming this barrier and does *teshuvah*, he will receive an awesomely great merit. Although his choice is diminished, such a person still retains his existential will, his *ratzon*, which he can utilize to overcome the barriers and serve God. His mind might not rule his heart, but his *ratzon* is still clear, and through this *ratzon* he can come back to God. If he does this he reveals great Godliness in the world, demonstrating that even a person whose mind does not rule his heart can do *teshuvah*. This is an awesome lesson, and it is a great merit.

In Tractate *Avodah Zarah*, on page 17a, the Talmud relates the story of Elazar ben Durdaya, who had visited every *zonah*, immodest woman, in the entire world.

He once heard about a *zonah* in a distant island who would charge a pouch of dinars as her wages. He took a pouch of dinars and crossed seven rivers to reach her. During the act, some gas was emitted; she said, "Just as this gas will not return to its place, so Elazar ben Durdaya will never return to *Hashem* and find his *teshuvah* accepted." He left her and sat between two mountains. He turned to the mountains and begged, "Mountains and hills, ask for mercy for me!" They said to him, "Before we ask for you we need to ask for ourselves..". He then said, "Heaven and earth, ask for mercy for me!" They said, "Before we ask for you we need to ask for ourselves..". He said, "The matter is only dependent on me". He placed his head between his knees and sobbed tears until his soul left him. A voice came out of Heaven and declared, "Rabbi Elazar

ben Durdaya is invited to the world to come". Rabbi Judah the Prince cried [when he heard the story] and said, "*yeish koneh olamo besh'a'ah achas*", "one can acquire his eternity in one moment", and Rebbi added, "It is not enough that the penitents are accepted back, but they are called [by Heaven] Rabbi!"

By utilizing his *ratzon*, Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya reached a great level. The *bas kol*, Heavenly voice, gave him *semichah*, Rabbinic ordination, which granted him a place in the chain of generations that links sages all the way back to Moshe *Rabbeinu*. He had reached a point that was even beyond despair, but in the end he gave the world a tremendous revelation. All punishments are really displays of great kindness, because they repair the sinner. The punishment of the wicked losing control over their hearts so that their hearts control them is also an act of mercy. Because their hearts control them, they are not punished so severely for their sins, and they also have the opportunity for monumental achievement when they succeed in breaking the shackles of their urges and repenting, like Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaya.

Indeed, it is impossible for the wicked to begin to serve God without their first repenting for their past-in order to shatter the kelipos, which form a sundering curtain and an iron partition that interpose between them and their Father in Heaven-by means of contriteness of heart and bitterness of soul over their sins, as is explained in the Zohar on the verse, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart..". For through breaking one's heart the spirit of uncleanness of the sitra achra is broken (see ibid., on Parashas Pinchas, p. 240, and on Parashas Vayikra, p. 8 and p. 5, and the commentary of the Ramaz thereon).

This is the category of "lower repentance", whereby the lower [letter] "hei" is raised up from its fall into the forces of evil, which is the mystery of the Shechinah in exile, as our Rabbis, of blessed memory state, "When they [the Israelites] were exiled into Edom, the Shechinah went with them". That is to say, when a person performs the acts of "Edom" he degrades and brings down to there the

כי באמת אי אפשר לרשעים להתחיל לעבוד ה' בלי שיעשו תשובה על העבר תחלה לשבר הקליפוי שהם מסך מבדיל ומחיצה של ברזל המפסקת בינם לאביהם שבשמים ע"י שבירת לבו ומרירת נפשו על חטאיו כמ"ש בזהר על פסוק זבחי אלהים רוח נשברה לב נשבר וגו' שע"י לב נשבר נשברה רוח הטומאה דס"א (ע"ש פ' פינחס ד' ר"מ ופ' ויקרא ד' ח' וד' ה' ע"א ובפ' הרמ"ז שם) והיא בחי' תשובה תתאה להעלות ה' תתאה להקימה מנפילתה שנפלה אל החיצוני שהוא סוד גלות השכינה כמארו"ל גלו לאדם שכינה עמהם דהיינו כשהאדם עושה מעשה אדם מוריד וממשיך לשם בחי' וניצוץ אלהות המחיה את נר"נ שלו המלוכשים בו בנפש הבהמית מהקליפה שבלבו שבחלל השמאלי המולכת בו בעודו רשע ומושלת בעיר קטנה שלו ונר"נ כבושי' בגולה אצלה וכשנשבר לבו בקרבו ונשברה רוח הטומאה וס"א ויתפרדו כו' היא קמה מנפילתה וגם נצבה כמ"ש במ"א

Divine spark which vitalizes his Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshamah that are clothed within him in the animal soul of the kelipah, which is in the left part of his heart, which reigns over him as long as he remains wicked, dominating his "small city", while the Nefesh, Ruach and Neshamah are forced into exile under it. But when his heart breaks within him, and the spirit of uncleanness and of the sitra achra is broken, and [the forces of evil are] dispersed, then [the Shechinah] rises from its fall and remains upright, as is explained elsewhere.

The *Tanya* teaches here that a broken heart is needed, for by means of a submissive heart, one shatters the spirit of the *sitra achra*, and then the *Shechinah* can exit the state of exile. He also taught that this dynamic is the meaning of the terms "lower repentance", *teshuvah tata'ah*.

Exile of the *Shechinah* in the World and in Man

The *Tanya* is discussing the idea of *galus haShechinah*, the exile of the Divine presence. In order to understand this concept, we must first focus on what the *Shechinah* actually is. We also should understand what is the human parallel to the *Shechinah*. Finally, we will look more closely at the meaning of the exile of the *Shechinah*.

Shechinah is a name for the Divine attribute of kingship, *midas haMalchus*. The word *Shechinah* is related to the verb *lishkon*, which means to reside. The holiness we describe with the term *Shechinah* is *Hashem* residing. When we speak of *Hashem* residing, we mean *Hashem* revealing Himself. *Hashem* resided in the Jerusalem Temple, the *Beis Hamikdash*. The Temple in Jerusalem was based on the very first Temple, the Tabernacle in the desert, which was called *Mishkan*, מִשְׁכָּן. This name shares the same Hebrew root as the word *Shechinah*, שְׁכִינָה. These places of Divine residence were spots of Divine revelation. The primary place for revelation of the Divine presence was in our sanctuary on the Temple Mount, the *Beis Hamikdash*.

Each of the holy Divine *Sefiros* is only fully revealed when it is clothed in *Malchus*. For instance, only if Divine wisdom would be clothed in *Malchus*

would it be fully revealed so that even a physical and materialistic mind would succeed in grasping Divine wisdom. If the physical mind discovers Godliness to the greatest extent possible, this means that there exists a state of *Chochmah* taking on the clothing of *Malchus*, which causes a revelation even in the furthest of realms, that of the physical intellect.

What is the human parallel to the place wherein *Hashem* reveals Himself?

Every Jewish person is a *tzelem Elokim*, a being in the image of *Hashem*, and has within him all ten *Sefiros*. We are each a *chelek Elokah mima'al*, piece of the Divine from Above. *Hashem's* attribute of *Malchus* is experienced when He reveals Himself, and man's *Malchus* is experienced when the human reveals all of the holiness a man can display. Of a man who displays all the holiness a human can reveal, we will say, *Hashem* resides in this man. He is a seat for the *Shechinah*.

In the time of the *Mikdash*, in the sanctuary the individual *midas haMalchus* of each Jew was aroused to its perfect state. Man's holiness would be expressed and revealed.

To define matters further, the perfect expression of holiness is a display of *yichud Kudsha Berich Hu uShechinteih*, unification of the transcendent Almighty and His inhering presence. When there is no apparent distinction between the holiness that is beyond all words and comprehension and the holiness that is within each item in this world, holiness is being revealed to the furthest levels. The first nine *Sefiros* in man represent levels of holiness that are beyond this world. *Malchus* is a holiness within this world. When it fully reveals the nine *Sefiros* above it, it is revealing that really even within the world, there is holiness that is beyond the world. A correct *Malchus* within man receives fully from the nine *midos* that are above it and fully reveals them.

True Kings Versus External Rulers

Why is royalty related to revelation?

When something greater than us reveals how great it is, we naturally accept it and are submissive to it. Thus the true king is one who can reveal his greatness and thereby inspire those who see his greatness to submit to him and follow his guidance.

Malchus means royalty, and a single royal ruler is called a *melech*. The

gentile world does not have anyone who deserves the title *melech*. Among the nations of the world, a king is a *moshel*, a ruler by power, who is followed because people fear the strength of his army and police force. He may be king in an external sense, but in the inner realm, people do not accept him. They obey his laws out of fear, while internally they may not respect him. He is not a ruler when it comes to the realm of private thought. It is even possible that a subject expresses disrespect for the king in the privacy of his own home. The king is a *moshel*, who rules by force, but not a *melech*.

A Jewish king earns the title of *melech*. He resembles the Almighty, about whom we declare, "*uMalchuso beratzon kiblu aleihem*", "and they willfully accepted His rule". In the ideal Torah society each subject willingly accepts the Jewish king. This acceptance exists because each person recognizes the king's refinement and elevation, and so they desire to follow his character and his counsel. This is the meaning of the teaching that rabbis are called *melachim*, kings (*Gittin* 62a:) the students of a rabbi appreciate his spiritual greatness and as a result are drawn after him to follow his guidance and willingly accept his authority.

There are two components that coalesce to cause people to follow a particular *rebbe*. First, the *rebbe* is a person who has great *ma'alos*, spiritual advantages. Second, he has the ability to reveal these wonderful traits. It is possible to have a person with great spiritual strengths who is not able to reveal them. Such a person will not have a following. A scholar who knows a lot of Torah but is unable to express it to others cannot be a king. No one recognizes what he truly is. To have *Malchus*, a person must have the ability to express the greatness that lies within him.

When we speak of willful acceptance of *Hashem's* kingship, we are expressing the idea that when people recognize the *midos* and *Chochmah* of *Hashem*, they desire to follow Him. *Hashem* reveals His Heavenly *midos* of *Chochmah*, *Chessed* and *Gevurah*, along with all other Godly attributes. As each creation appreciates these *midos* to the best of its capabilities, it understands the greatness of *Hashem*, and wants to serve Him. "*Veyimalei kevod Hashem es kol ha'aretz*", "And the honor of *Hashem* will fill the entire earth" (*Bamidbar* 14:21). Even a gentile will fill his vessels with the maximum awareness of *Hashem* he can achieve and then *Hashem* will rule as the King.

On a lower level than humans, we find that even animals will be aware of *Hashem*, to the extent that they are able. Even though an animal cannot

achieve the level of awareness that a human being can, it too can feel *Hashem* on its own level. Going still further down the chain we find that even inanimate objects can feel *Hashem*. Any item that has some amount of life within it can sense *Hashem*, and can be a vessel that receives life from *Hashem*.

When something senses *Hashem*, it reveals that the life that is in it comes from *Hashem*. This is why it is possible to have miracles stem from items, a phenomenon that the Torah refers to in a variety of places. It occurred when the mountain of Sinai was trembling, and will occur in the future, as the prophet declared with the words, "*Heharim vehageva'os yiftzechu lifneichem rinah*", "The mountains and hills will open their mouths before you with song" (*Yeshayahu* 55:12). These inanimate objects will engender a full revelation of *Hashem*, as they become His vessels, and therefore tremble and perform miracles. So we can say that the revelation of the Godly life in each matter is how *Malchus Shamayim* is revealed to the world. Complete *hisgalus Malchus Shamayim* will only occur in the messianic era, when the entire world will be able to see Godliness everywhere.

We have learned that the *Mikdash* was the place of perfected *Malchus*, and we have explained that perfected *Malchus* means revealing Godly life to the furthest possible extent. This is why King Shlomo, when inaugurating the *Beis Hamikdash*, asked that the gentiles should also appreciate the holiness of the *Mikdash*. He prayed, "*Vegam el hanochri asher lo mei'amcha Yisrael hu uva vehispalel el habayis hazeh, atah tishma haShamayim ve'asisa kechol asher yikra eilecha hanochri, lema'an yeid'un kol amei ha'aretz es shemecha*", "And also to the gentile who is not from Your nation Israel and he will come and pray from this place, You will listen from the Heavens and You shall do like all that the gentile will call out to You so that all the nations of the world will know Your name" (*Melachim* I 8:41-43). Because the *Beis Hamikdash* was the ultimate place of *gilui Elokis*, revelation of *Hashem*, Shlomo wanted that every corner that could be filled with *Hashem* should be filled with *Hashem*. The *Beis Hamikdash* was where the entire Jewish people drew strength, so that in their personal vessels there could be a revelation of Godliness.

The Spiritual and Physical Influence of the *Beis Hamikdash*

The *Beis Hamikdash* impacted the world on two levels; it transformed both the spiritual and the physical realms. As long as it existed, the *Shechinah*

resided in the lower world, and therefore, the realm of the spirit was dominant within the physical. A person who learned *Hashem's* words would literally become a different person, since he could feel the spiritual holiness of Torah. In addition, there was a spiritual impact. Since *Hashem* was revealed in this world, this high level of spirituality also enabled the scholar to access tremendous new ideas in the Torah. The presence of the *Shechinah* below engendered an overflow of Torah from between the arms of the Ark, which led to both a high level of Torah learning as well as an inability to forget one's learning.

The Talmud (*Chagigah* 5b) states that the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* was the greatest *bittul Torah*, neglect of Torah, imaginable, because it eliminated the possibility of accessing this higher spirituality when engaged in learning. Similarly, while intense feelings of love for *Hashem* could be felt while the *Beis Hamikdash* still stood, these were mitigated with its destruction. The awesome feeling of attachment to *Hashem* that people who lived in the time of the *Mikdash* experienced was no longer accessible in its destruction. All spiritual successes were possible on high levels as long as the *Beis Hamikdash* stood; after that time, much less so.

As we have mentioned, the *Beis Hamikdash's* influence on the world was not found only in the spiritual realm, however. It also impacted the physical world. As long as the Temple stood, people perceived clear Divine supervision over worldly matters. They could see the special protection that *Hashem* granted to dwellers of His land. We learn in *Sefer Devarim* that *Eretz Yisrael* is characterized as a land where "*einei Hashem Elokecha bah*", "the eyes of *Hashem* your Lord are upon it" (*Devarim* 11:12). Everyone was able to sense *Hashem's* attention to our affairs. This is illustrated through various incidents recounted in *Tanach*. King Saul, the first king of the Jews, lived during the time of *Mishkan Shilo*, the Shilo Tabernacle, which was a prototype of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Before he became king, when he lost the donkeys he was watching, he turned to a prophet to help him locate the donkeys. This was a natural response during a time when the *Shechinah* resided on earth and prophecy was abundant and easily accessed by many people. Many years later, when King Asa was sick and went to consult a doctor, the prophet was upset with him, for while the *Beis Hamikdash* stood the appropriate response to illness was a visit to the *Beis Hamikdash*, where by engaging in *teshuvah* and *tefilah*, a person could expect to get well. At that time, it was a sin to go to

doctors. People were able to clearly perceive the *hashgachah*, Divine providence, in all of their affairs. If someone sinned, he would immediately see Divine retribution. The tests faced by the people of the Temple era were not tests of basic belief, such as we contend with in our times. Faith was elementary; every child could see that *Hashem* ran the world. People were tested instead with idolatry, which questioned the form their faith would take. But there was no question that everyone believed in God.

No one had believed that it was possible for the *Beis Hamikdash* to be destroyed, and when it finally was, it was an awesome catastrophe that changed the world on so many levels. People did not know how they could possibly continue to be Jews without a *Beis Hamikdash*. The prophet Yirmiyahu told the Jews, "*Hatzivi lach tziyunim*", "Set up for yourselves signposts" (*Yirmiyahu* 31:20), to teach that the Jewish people should continue doing *mitzvos* even in exile. This will allow us to remember how *mitzvah* observance used to be carried out, so that when the redemption comes, we will not be totally unfamiliar with *mitzvos*.¹⁶⁴ So while we do still observe the commandments today, we must realize that these *mitzvos* are nothing compared to what they used to be.

While the *Mikdash* still stood, the spiritual reality of *mitzvos* was something that could be sensed in a concrete way. When people would shake *lulav*,¹⁶⁵ they could feel the *shefa*, Divine flow of blessing, coming down. They would feel the "*yemino tichabekeini*", "His right will embrace me" (*Shir Hashirim* 2:6). They would feel how the action of shaking the *lulav* would set up barriers that could stop the forces of evil. They could see how the *lulav* stopped *ruchos ra'os*, bad winds, and *telalim ra'im*, bad dews. Today all this is lost to us; there is no comparison between the act of shaking the *lulav* then and now.

In the ideal situation, the *mitzvos* penetrate into the physical realm. But when the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, "*shavas mesos libeinu*", "the joy of our hearts suddenly ceased" (*Eichah* 5:15). We suddenly lost the spiritual life

164. See Ramban to *Vayikra* 18:25.

165. A *lulav* is the palm branch that is lifted and waved during the *Sukkos* holiday. According to mystical sources, through the waving of the *lulav* great flows of blessing are drawn down. The Talmud teaches that waving the *lulav* was like stabbing a spear in the eye of the forces of evil, an action which would stop bad winds and dews.

that had been present. In addition, "*naflah ateres rosheinu*", "the crown atop our heads fell" (*Eichah* 5:16). The crown is a reference to the physical realm, which fell as well at the time of the destruction. Revealed holiness was lost with the sacking of the *Beis Hamikdash*. This is the meaning of the term, "exile of the Divine presence", *galus haShechinah*. As the Romans toppled the stones of the *Mikdash* the *Shechinah* fell, and that is the *galus HaShechinah*.

The truth is that even in exile there is *hashgachah*, Divine providence. The miracle of *Purim* is an outstanding example that showed us that *Hashem* was still running the world. But it is a different type of *hashgachah* than that of the times of the *Mikdash*. It is the *hashgachah* of *hester panim*, a hidden face. The Talmud says that the name "Esther" is related to the verse "*Ve'anochi hasteir astir panai*", "And I will surely hide My face" (*Devarim* 31:18). In a time of *hester panim*, *Hashem* continues to run the world, but His influence is hidden behind the mask of the seventy *sarim*, guardian angels of the nations,¹⁶⁶ and as a result it is covered by the mask of the natural world. This change in *Hashem's* style of supervision mandates different behavior from us. Today, if a sick person neglects to see a doctor, he is considered a sinner, and he will not get better. *Hashem's* hidden providence demands that we put in normal human efforts.

The exception to this rule is a *tzadik* who is capable of rising above the norms of this world. To reach the level of not needing a doctor, one must be very pious and display great levels of trust and belief in *Hashem*. A great *ma'amin*, believer, does not actually have to go to a doctor when he is sick, for he has sufficient faith that *Hashem* can heal him without him seeing a doctor. This level of faith is hard to achieve, and if one does reach it, it is a great merit. Most of us cannot be sure that we have this level of pure faith in *Hashem*; most of us need to see doctors.

A person can test himself to ascertain whether or not he has the level of faith of a person who does not need to see a doctor. He can do this by simply asking himself what will happen if *Hashem* does not in fact help him. If upon

166. At the end of *Parashas Noach*, the Torah teaches that there were seventy descendants of Noach who became the seventy nations of the world. Each of those gentile nations has a *sar*, guardian angel, in Heaven. Now the Almighty has masked Himself behind them. It appears that life comes to the angel of a nation and the nation is then running affairs in a natural way.

contemplation, he realizes that *Hashem* not coming through for him on this issue will cause him to have even the slightest decrease in his *emunah*, it is a sign that he needs to go to a doctor. Only someone whose faith would be completely unaffected by a major setback can ignore the doctor and simply rely on prayer. Such a person will merit miracles. Think of the sage Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa.¹⁶⁷ His daughter once mistakenly put vinegar instead of oil into the lamp on Friday night. His response, upon hearing of the error, was, "The one who told the oil to burn can tell the vinegar to burn". A miracle occurred, and the vinegar-based flames burned for the entire *Shabbos*. Rabbi Chaninah had awesome faith. The miracle did not alter his faith in any way, because even before it took place he had exceptionally strong faith that everything that happens is a miracle from *Hashem*. Had the vinegar not burned, his faith would certainly not have wavered at all; that is why *Hashem* performed for him the miracle of the vinegar burning.

There were tzadikim who did not feel a need to go to doctors when they were sick. Through the power of their trust and faith in Hashem, they were able to heal the sick. Rav Yekusiel Yehudah Halberstam (1927-1994) talked about such tzadikim in his classes.

"It used to be the practice of the early chassidim, that if Hashem would bring on a person an illness or difficult suffering, the friends would wish each other lechayim, to life, and they would have complete trust and faith in Hashem that He heals all flesh and performs wonders. With the power of this faith the ill would merit a complete recovery..". (Shefa Chayim, Parashas Tetzaveh, Derashos Chumash and Rashi, 5742).

At the same time, it is important to note that Rav Halberstam also founded a hospital, Laniado Hospital of Netanya, Israel. Perhaps it was due to the exile of the Shechinah, and the fact that in this state of existence, we must avail ourselves of doctors, for we no longer have the power to reach the faith and certainty that would heal illness.

Here in exile, God does not expect such *emunah* from us. In exile, we do

167. Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa was a *Tanna* in the first generation of *Tanna'im*. He was a contemporary of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai and was a man of exceptional piety and faith. While he personally had very few physical possessions, the Talmud reveals that all the physical bounty in the world came because of his merits. He had a great power of prayer and experienced many miracles.

not see *Hashem* so clearly, and He guides us in a hidden way. As we have learned, since *Hashem's* guidance is hidden, we say that the *Shechinah* is in *galus*. *Shechinah* is the attribute of the revelation of Godliness. Now that there is no *Beis Hamikdash*, the *Shechinah* is in pain, because *Malchus* is not revealed. There is a great pain stemming from the lack of revelation of the Godliness.

The Cosmic Impact of Human Actions

The *Shechinah's* exile emerges from the personal exile. We each have a soul as well as a body. We are to reveal our holy soul. We are to take the love of God and fear of Heaven latent within the soul and draw them out so that they transform all our actions. Our deeds should display Divine love and awe. If all my natural attributes are not filled with the honor of God, and my love and fear of God are hidden, then my behavior does not openly reveal love of God and fear of God. If my soul is not being expressed, it is in exile within me. My actions have a cosmic impact. They cause the hiding of the *Shechinah* in the world.

Idolatry and Prophecy

We have seen that while the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, God's revelation and providence were obvious and prophecy was widespread. The desire to achieve prophecy was like a *ta'avah*, lust, but a lust for holiness. The nature of prophecy is expressed in the verse, "*Leshimcha ulezichrecha ta'avas Nafesh*", "For Your name and mention the soul desires" (*Yeshayahu* 26:8). A person had an awesome desire to attach to the higher realms. He would desperately crave to be *davuk* in *Elokus*. It was a spiritual *ta'avah*, a desire to attach to Godliness. However, the world contained a parallel desire for evil. People were challenged with a terribly strong urge to worship idols. Because the men of the Great Assembly prayed for the urge for *avodah zarah* to be annulled, and it is therefore not something we experience today, we have no concept what that *yetzter hara* was like. It manifested as a *ta'avah*, a desire and lust for idol worship and its attendant corrupt ideologies. So we see that while prophecy is a *ta'avah* for holiness, it was opposed by the *ta'avah* towards *avodah zarah*.

The primary practitioners of *avodah zarah* were the *Bnei Kedem*, the people of the East. Rashi, in *Bereishis* 25:6, states that our father Avraham gave a *shem tum'ah*, name of impurity, to his sons that he sent to *Kedem*. We find

that Bil'am, the great Biblical sorcerer, was from the East. The deeper meaning of this is that *kedem* or *mizrach*, the words that mean "east", are connected to *reishis*, beginnings, while *ma'ariv* or *achor*, the words that mean "west", are connected to *acharis*, end points. The world exists in three dimensions. What is true about time is true about a place and a person. There is a place, time, and a part of person that are *mizrach*. *Mizrach* is an attraction to holiness, a feeling of being drawn to the real beginning. What is the *reishis*? *Reishis* is *ruchniyus*, spirituality! As the order of *hishtalshelus*, devolution, teaches, everything starts from the spiritual and then comes to the physical.

People often wonder how we can find *Hashem*. We can find Him by rising above physical matters. This allows us to comprehend spiritual matters and attach to *Hashem*. This is the awareness of *Hashem* through the attribute of *reishis*. It is a spiritual connection that comes from the soul, for the soul is *reishis* and the body is *acharis*, and the natural trait of the soul is to connect to what is above it. The people of the East felt this pull towards that which is above. They were attracted to spirituality. But when their attraction to *reishis* was not elevated and refined, it turned into *yitzra de'avodah zarah*, the attraction towards idolatry.

Nowadays we are living in the world of the West. West is also our temporal location; we dwell in the *acharis* of time, for we know that we are close to the times of *Mashiach*. The *acharis*-realm is characterized by a great deal of lowliness and physicality. Because today the *yetzer hara* is for *gashmiyus*, materialism, we think that if we detach ourselves from the physical and attach to holiness we are fully serving *Hashem*. However, this step is only half of the equation, and when not accompanied by the discipline of *mitzvah* observance, it can lead a person terribly astray. A closer look at the *Dor Enosh*, the first generation to worship idols, can demonstrate how this takes place.

The Source of Idolatry

The *Dor Enosh* that first created *avodah zarah* were spiritual seekers. The verse states, "*az huchal likro besheim Hashem*", "then they started to use the name of *Hashem*" (*Bereishis* 4:26), which indicates that they were interested in pursuing spiritual life. And yet, they contained within them the root of idolatry! They did not realize that true service of *Hashem* entails a combination of both the physical and the spiritual through the discipline of fulfilling His

will. *Hashem* is found both in the physical and in the spiritual; He is to be found both in the realm below and in the realm above. The Torah, which personifies the will of *Hashem*, teaches us to do *mitzvos*, which are physical acts. These physical *mitzvah* acts are fulfillments of *Hashem's* will, because *Hashem* and His will are one. So by performing a physical act, a person actually attaches to *Hashem*. This synthesis is the correct approach to *Hashem*.

The error of the generation of Enosh, like that of the *Bnei Kedem*, was that they did not want any part of physicality. They were seeking pure spirituality that was entirely devoid of any physical component. Since they knew that *Hashem* was *Ein Sof*, with no limits or definitions, they wondered how it was possible for limited man to be attached to *Hashem*. They knew that *leis machshavah tefisa beih*, no thought can grasp Him. They did not accept the truth, which is that the way for man to attach to the Infinity of *Hashem* is through the practice of Torah and *mitzvos*, for they express what He wants. They were looking for *Hashem* in His *atzmiyus*, essence, rather than being concerned with carrying out the will of *Hashem*. They rejected performance of the *sheva mitzvos*, seven Noachide laws, because they were seeking essence. However, one cannot attach to essence, because it is beyond a person's grasp! Eventually, they gave up on attaching to essence, since *leis machshavah tefisa beih klal*, and they decided instead to attach themselves to Godly forces that are in fact comprehensible. They began the search for foreign gods, and they connected to different angels. In this way they directed their spiritual desire to attach to the Heavenly realm in the way they felt able to, and they fell into the practice of *avodah zarah*. Their ultimate goal had not been to fulfill the will of *Hashem*; they were attempting to follow the call of their own *ta'avos*, and that call led them to seek a false *deveikus*, instead of channeling their nature into an appropriate service of *Hashem*.

Idolatry is the result of laziness. To be a true prophet is very difficult. A person who violates a single custom of the tradition will lose his prophecy. False prophets and the *yetzer hara* for *avodah zarah* are both the results of a desire for *deveikus* that is unaccompanied by a willingness to do the hard work of bending one's nature to listen to *Hashem's* will. The false attachment to other sources of spirituality was the source of the false prophets and false gods. These mistakes derive from the natural urge to connect with that which is elevated. When this urge is not properly harnessed, these tremendous errors are the result.

The West and Materialism

The land of Israel is the center of the world; the midpoint of the six thousand years of the world took place in the days of David *Hamelech* and Shlomo *Hamelech*. After that time, the world moved in a western direction, which was a movement towards greater physicality. This is the time in which we are now ensconced. The United States, the westernmost edge of the world, reflects the ideology of physicality, and so it makes sense that it dominates the world scene. The psychology and religion upon which its culture revolves is entirely material. Psychologists do not even attempt to address man's religious needs; they view everything through the prism of materialism and physicality. This is what rules the universe today.

The Midrash teaches that in the days of Enosh, the ocean drowned a third of the world. It is possible that this means that the Atlantic Ocean drowned a third of the world, and this caused America to be lost for so long. America was a lost continent, as for thousands of years the Atlantic kept it separate from Europe and the rest of the world. During the earlier phase of the world, when excess spirituality ruled, it made sense that the greater world was disconnected from America, the area of excess physicality, whose time had not yet come. The ideal situation is union between *acharis* and *reishis*. However, in the days of Enosh, because they damaged the concept of *reishis*, the link that connected the world to *acharis* was severed. The Great Flood of Enosh separated the *acharis* of America from the *reishis* of the rest of the world.

In the end of days, the *acharis* of time, America and the West, the *acharis* of place, will become ascendant. The days of *acharis* began during the time of the Ari *Hakadosh* (1534-1572). He revealed that it was in his lifetime that the *ikvasa deMeshicha*, the heels of *Mashiach*, began. It was no coincidence that also in his time, following the expulsion from Spain in 1492, heresy began to spread throughout the world. This was eventually followed by the great unfolding of scientific wisdom and the discovery of the American continent. All of these developments reflect the strengthening of *acharis* without *reishis*, matter disconnected from soul. The Jewish people continue their existence throughout the entire exile, from *reishis* to *acharis*, and our task is to demonstrate the Oneness of *Hashem* from the *reishis* all the way through the *acharis*. This is the idea of *guf*, body, and *Neshamah*, soul, combining to form one. *Neshamah* is *reishis*, and *guf* is *acharis*.

Bil'am said about Amalek, "*Reishis goyim Amalek ve'achariso adei oveid*",

"First of the nations is Amalek, and at his end eternal destruction" (*Bamidbar* 24:20). At the time of *reishis*, Amalek has the ability to cause confusion, but at the time of *acharis*, we can finally destroy Amalek! A closer look at the nature of life in the *acharis* world will reveal to us why this is so. During the *acharis* time, the world is obsessed with physicality and materialism. Eventually, man will come to a point where he will realize that he needs real life. *Gashmiyus* leads to disappointment and frustration; the satisfaction of each lust leads to sadness and depression, which is why so many people across the world turn to drug use today. At a certain point, the people of the world will have no choice but to admit that there is no purpose in an exclusively physical life. Ultimately, man has a natural urge for spiritual matters, and it cannot be suppressed forever.

Because the Jewish people in particular are drawn naturally to *atzmiyus Elokis*, to the Divine essence, *gashmiyus* is ultimately meaningless and can never fill the urge. Back when the world was in its *reishis* state, where spirituality was the dominant drive, we experienced the confusion born of the urge for idolatry. Amalek was able to tap into this drive and confuse people, and even provide a little *sipuk hanefesh*, spiritual satisfaction, through its corrupt thoughts of idolatry. However, in the time of *acharis* we are able to more clearly see that Amalek is *adei oveid*, eternally lost, empty and meaningless. It has no purpose. The existence of the world in all its detail proves that everything has a purpose. Each organ has a purpose and every creature fulfills a task. The purpose appears at the end. In Hebrew the word for purpose, *tachlis*, also means the end and completion. The only purpose to life is the purpose of Torah and *mitzvos*. This awareness, once brought to the fore by people's realization that directionless physicality is meaningless, will break Amalek permanently at the end of time. *Mashiach* will reveal how at the end, Amalek falls forever.

Adam contained within him three souls: Adam *Harishon*, the first man, David *Hamelech*, King David, and *Mashiach*, the Messiah. He was Adam in the time of *reishis* and *Mashiach* in the time of *acharis*. David *Hamelech* and Shlomo *Hamelech*, as we mentioned previously, existed in the middle of the two extremes. *Mashiach* will defeat the materialism of the end-times with the purposefulness and meaning of actually performing *Hashem's* will in this world. He will bring *Elokus* down below to the realm of *acharis*. *Mashiach* will be victorious during the time of *acharis*.

The month of *Adar* is the last month of the year, so it is a month of *acharis*. It was the time when the *yetzer hara* of *avodah zarah* was broken by the men of the Great Assembly, and the service of *acharis* began. *Purim* is the most materialistic of our holidays, because it is the time to demonstrate that the purpose of creation is to do the will of *Hashem*, especially here on earth, through physical acts. Performing of the physical *mitzvos* is the only way to bring the *Shechinah* to a state of revelation here in the lower realms; it is the only way to properly unite the two realms; and it is the only way to channel the drive towards spirituality that we possess.



The realm of holiness displays great unity. Lesson Thirty-Eight reveals why each matter in holiness seems to have component parts from many other holy matters. Lesson Thirty-Eight also reveals why each Jew has a hidden love for Hashem. The patriarchs were exalted men who reached the universe of Atzilus. Atzilus entails a sense of oneness with Hashem. As children of the patriarchs, we each have a piece of Atzilus and a desire for unending attachment with the Infinite.

LESSON

38 Infinity in the Finite

Chapter Eighteen of the *Tanya* says:

To explain more adequately and more precisely the word "very" in the verse, "Rather the matter is very close to you" ולתוספת ביאור באר היטב מלת מאד שבפסוק כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד וגו'

This chapter addresses the theme of the entire work. How could Hashem say that Divine service is very close to us? Successfully serving the Almighty seems to be very difficult. Therefore, wouldn't it be more apt to describe it as distant from us?

It should be recognized with certainty that even the person whose understanding in the knowledge of God is limited, and who has no heart to comprehend the greatness of the blessed Ein Sof, to produce therefrom awe and love [of God] even in his mind and understanding alone-however it is a "very near thing" for him to observe all the commandments of the Torah and the "study of the Torah which counter-balances them צריך לידע נאמנה כי אף מי שדעתו קצרה בידיעת ה' ואין לו לב להבין בגדולת א"ס ב"ה להוליד ממנה דחילו ורחימו אפי' במוחו ותבונתו לבד אעפ"כ קרוב אליו הדבר מאד לשמור ולעשות כל מצות התורה ות"ת כנגד כולן בפיו ובלבבו ממש מעומקא דלבא באמת לאמיתו בדחילו ורחימו שהיא אהבה מסותרת שבלב כללות ישראל שהיא ירושה לנו מאבותינו רק

all", in his very mouth and heart, from the depths of his heart, in true sincerity, with fear and love; namely, the hidden love in the heart of all Jews which is an inheritance to us from our patriarchs. However, we must, first of all, preface a clear and precise explanation of the origin and essence of this love, how it became our inheritance, and how awe is also incorporated in it.

The matter here is that the patriarchs are the chariot!

שצריך להקדי' ולבאר תחלה באר
היטב שרש אהבה זו ועניינה ואיך היא
ירושה לנו ואיך נכלל בה גם דחילו

והענין כי האבות הן הן המרכבה

Our Fathers Were Godly Beings

The *Tanya* says that in order to properly understand how with our hidden love we can reach a state of constantly serving *Hashem*, he must first explain the source of our *ahavah mesuteres*, hidden love. He explains that we received this love as a genetic endowment from our forefathers, who were a chariot for the Divine presence. A chariot is fully controlled by its intelligent driver. It has no will of its own, and it perfectly follows the driver's directions. Thus, a chariot represents *bittul*, negation of self.

The patriarchs served as the *merkavah* of *Hashem* because they had no personal identity; they were completely *battel*, self-negated, before *Hashem*. They only felt life when serving *Hashem*. Like a chariot horse that does whatever the rider wants, our fathers fully submitted themselves to the will of *Hashem*. There was no "I" factored into the calculations made by the *Avos*. Wherever *Hashem* led them, they followed.

We find that the *Avos* fulfilled the *mitzvos* prior to the revelation at Sinai. How were they able to comprehend the Torah before it was given? How did they know what *Shabbos* was, or which features render an animal kosher? The answer is that this understanding emerged from the fact that they were a *merkavah*. Since they were fully annulled to the will of *Hashem*, and had no personal will, they grasped the will of *Hashem*. And thus they comprehended the *mitzvos*, which are the will of *Hashem*.

and therefore they merited [the blessing of] transmitting to their descendants, coming after them forever, a Nefesh, Ruach and

ועל כן זכו להמשיך נר"נ לבניהם
אחריהם עד עולם מעשר ספירות
דקדושה שבארבע עולמות אבי"ע

Neshamah from the ten holy Sefiros of the four worlds of Atzilus, Beri'ah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, to each according to his station and according to his works. Even the most worthless of worthless men and the sinners of Israel are thus endowed, at the time of marital union, with, at any rate, a Nefesh deNefesh of Malchus de'Asiyah (Royalty in the world of Action), which is the lowest grade of holiness [in the world] of Asiyah. Nevertheless, since the latter is of the ten holy Sefiros it is compounded of them all, including Chochmah de'Asiyah (Wisdom of the world of Action), wherein is clothed Chochmah deMalchus de'Atzilus (Wisdom of Royalty in the world of Emanation), incorporating Chochmah de'Atzilus (Wisdom of the world of Emanation) which is illuminated by the light of the blessed Ein Sof itself, as is written, "The Lord has founded the earth in wisdom", and "In wisdom hast Thou made them all". Thus it comes to pass that the blessed Ein Sof is garbed, as it were, in the wisdom of the human soul, of whatever sort of a Jew he may be. [In turn,] the soul's faculty of wisdom, together with the light of the blessed Ein Sof that is vested in it, spreads throughout the entire soul, animating it "from head to foot", so to speak, as is written, "Wisdom gives life to those who possess it".

לכל אחד ואחד כפי מדרגתו וכפי מעשיו ועל כל פנים אפי' לקל שבקלים ופושעי ישראל נמשך בזיווגם נפש דנפש דמלכות דעשיה שהיא מדרגה התחתונה שבקדושת העשיה ואעפ"כ מאחר שהיא מעשר ספירות קדושות היא כלולה מכולן גם מחכמה דעשי' שבתוכה מלובשת חכמה דמלכות דאצילות שבתוכה חכמה דאצילות שבה מאיר אור א"ס ב"ה ממש כדכתיב ה' בחכמה יסד ארץ וכולם בחכמה עשית ונמצא כי אין סוף ב"ה מלובש בבחי' חכמה שבנפש האדם יהיה מי שיהיה מישראל ובחי' החכמה שבה עם אור א"ס ב"ה המלובש בה מתפשטת בכל בחי' הנפש כולה להחיותה מבחי' ראשה עד בחי' רגלה כדכתיב החכמה תחיה בעליה

The *Tanya* speaks here of people who are like *Nefesh of Nefesh of Malchus of Asiyah*, and yet have within them an aspect that is like *Chochmah*, and as a result, they have the hidden love that would lead to complete devotion and ultimate sacrifice for the will of *Hashem*. There is a lengthy basis for these words of the *Tanya*, which we will proceed to explore.

Universes, Sefiros, and Hashem's Name of Being

What is the meaning of "souls that are *Nefesh of Nefesh of Malchus of*

Asiyah"? To answer this question, we require a working understanding of the four universes, the ten *Sefiros*, and the interplay between these entities.

We have learned that there are four spiritual universes: *Olam Ha'Atzilus*, the universe of Emanation and Nobility; *Olam HaBeri'ah*, the universe of Creation; *Olam HaYetzirah*, the universe of Formation; and *Olam Ha'Asiyah*, The universe of Action. These four universes correspond to the four Hebrew letters in *Hashem's* Name of Being, the Tetragrammaton, ק-ו-ק-י. The *yud* is for *Atzilus*, the first *hei* is for *Beri'ah*, the *vav* is for *Yetzirah*, and the lower *hei* is for *Asiyah*.

There are also ten *Sefiros* in each of the four universes.

The source of the concept of four universes is found in the verse in the book of *Yeshayahu*, which states, "*Kol hanikra vishmi, velichvodi, bera'siv yetzartiv af asisiv*", "All is called in My name, and for My honor I have created it, formed it and made it" (43:7). The four verbs in this verse each correspond to the creation of one of the four worlds. *Shemi*, My name, and *kevodi*, My honor, characterize the universe of *Atzilus*. *Hashem's* light first became the universe of *Atzilus*. Then the light descended, became more material, and emerged as the universe of *Beri'ah*--as the prophet declared, *bera'siv*, I created it. Then, as reflected in the word *yetzartiv*, it became the universe of formation, *Yetzirah*. Finally, the word *asisiv* reflects how it became the universe of *Asiyah*.

Each universe contains ten *Sefiros*; *Sefiros* are not synonymous with *olamos*, universes. There are ten *Sefiros* in *Atzilus*, ten in *Beri'ah*, ten in *Yetzirah* and ten in *Asiyah*. The ten *Sefiros* can be understood in a simple sense as ten *tzimtzumim*, ten vessels, which are contractions of the Infinite light that enable creations to grasp Godliness. *Hashem*, so to speak, clothes Himself in these ten vessels so that people will be able to comprehend Him. The ten *Sefiros* also divide along the letters of *Havayah*, and they correspond as well to the four universes. *Keser* and *Chochmah* are in the *yud*: *Keser* is represented by the crown of the *yud*, and *Chochmah* by the rest of the *yud*. The first *hei* is for *Binah*. The *vav* is for the lower six *Sefiros*: *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod*. And the final *hei* is for *Malchus*.

Atzilus and Beri'ah

A close comparison of the worlds of *Beri'ah* and *Atzilus* reveals to us aspects of the nature of the *Sefiros*. The universe of creation, *Beri'ah*, is the

realm of something emerging from nothing. *Atzilus* is above this world, and it is complete Godliness. *Atzilus* is like the shine of a person's face; you cannot distinguish between the person and his light! Were the Almighty to have a face that shone, the world of *Atzilus* would be the shine of His face. At this stage, existence is a light still attached to the root. *Beri'ah*, however, is *yeish mei'ayin*, something from nothing, a new thing just created. *Beri'ah* represents a realm where there is two, not only unity, and once there is two, there is disconnection from the realm of all being part of the One. That is why the world of *Beri'ah* is also the place where evil begins. The difference between the worlds of *Beri'ah* and *Atzilus* is a good analog for the differences between the *Sefiros* as they divide.

Keser and *Chochmah*, relative to the remaining *Sefiros*, have similar differences to those that exist between *Atzilus* and the other universes. *Binah*, relative to the other *Sefiros*, is like *Beri'ah* in relation to the other universes. *Vav*, which is the six *midos*, emotions, corresponds to the world of *Yetzirah*, which has *midos*. And *Malchus* parallels *Asiyah*, the realm of doing.

Soul Parts

The same differences that exist between worlds and between *Sefiros* also exist within a person. The soul has five parts--*Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshamah*, *Chayah*, and *Yechidah*. *Chayah* and *Yechidah* are like *Chochmah* and *Keser* and *Atzilus*; *Neshamah* is like *Beri'ah* and *Binah*; *Ruach* is like *Yetzirah* and the six *Sefiros* from *Chessed* through *Yesod*; and *Nefesh* is like *Malchus* and *Asiyah*.

Unity at the Micro Level

The truth is that each level has within it all the other levels. There is *Atzilus*, *Beri'ah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* of *Atzilus*. There is *Atzilus*, *Beri'ah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* of *Beri'ah*. There is *Atzilus*, *Beri'ah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* of *Yetzirah*. And finally, there is *Atzilus*, *Beri'ah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah* of *Asiyah*. You can find this pattern again and again, millions of times, in each universe.

In our chapter, the *Tanya* is describing a lowly soul, one that is lacking spirituality. He is discussing a soul that is very physical and materialistic. He

calls this a soul of *Nefesh of Nefesh of Malchus of Asiyah*, a name that intends to convey that this soul is the most physical soul-part of the most physical soul-part of the lowest *Sefirah* of the lowest universe: in other words, an extremely lowly soul and physical soul. But the *Tanya* teaches that even though the soul is lowly, it has a piece within it that is *Chochmah*-like, which is the highest of levels.

There is a principle in holiness that in the holy realm there is no *pirud*, separation, alienation, or detachment. Everything is attached to and combined with everything else. Therefore, everything includes within it traces of everything else. Holiness is a revelation of the Oneness of the Almighty. Therefore, holiness must display Oneness. Holy matters must be united! To be holy, a matter must have unity on every level. This unity is expressed by the fact that each detail has within it all the other details.

This point is hard to grasp, and the following illustration will attempt to clarify it. We focus on this in the time period following *Pesach*, when we prepare for the next holiday, *Shavu'os*, by counting days, the *mitzvah* of *Sefiras Ha'omer*. According to mystical teachings, not only must we count the days, but we must also improve our characters each day, and thus make the days count. For the first week, we are to work on the attribute of *Chessed*. How can a single attribute occupy an entire week of self-improvement? The answer is that there are many parts to loving. Each day we work on a different aspect, or component piece, of *Chessed*. *Chessed* itself gets divided into seven parts, and so each day is devoted to efforts to improve one particular aspect of *Chessed*. On the first day, we are to fix *Chessed of Chessed*. The second day is for *Gevurah of Chessed*, followed by *Tiferes of Chessed*, and so on, until the seventh day when we work on *Malchus of Chessed*. Why seven parts? For the seven weeks of counting are to fix seven attributes, and each attribute really contains within itself aspects of all the other attributes. *Chessed* is united with the other attributes; that is why there are seven aspects to kindness and we need seven days to work on the attribute of kindness.

If there are so many levels within *Chessed*, then what is pure, unadulterated, *Chessed*? One might suggest that *Chessed of Chessed* is the real *Chessed*, but if you go deeper you will find that *Chessed of Chessed* incorporates all the seven *midos* as well, for just as the general *Chessed* has seven parts, each detail of *Chessed* also has seven parts. There is *Chessed of Chessed of Chessed*, and *Gevurah of Chessed of Chessed*, and *Tiferes of Chessed*

of *Chessed*. *Chessed* of *Chessed* is therefore not pure *Chessed*. As we go deeper, we will continually uncover this phenomenon. This is because when *Hashem* is revealed in His distinct attributes, they were united with all the other attributes, since the attributes are matters of holiness. Each holy attribute comes from the One of *Hashem*. *Hashem* is above *Chessed* and *Gevurah*, so there has to be a place where the *Chessed* and *Gevurah* are all one. There is a level of comprehension in which one experiences all the attributes as fully united and being absolute, simple unity.

Created beings are incapable of grasping true Oneness. In order to understand it, we require division and contraction. We are limited, and so we cannot grasp the unlimited One. However, even though we cannot grasp it, it remains true that the Oneness of *Hashem* includes within it absolute Oneness. The only way that limited beings can grasp even an inkling of Oneness, and thus attach themselves to the Oneness of the Almighty, is through the realization that each holy detail has within itself each of the aspects of everything else that is holy. Hence the lesson that within the attribute of loving there are loving, restraint, beauty, dominance, empathy, foundation, and kingship aspects. We need to discuss the details within each attribute in order to be able to approach the concept of unity that pervades all.

The following example might help clarify this point. If I would recite a *sevarah*, a theoretical analysis, I would choose a particular set of words. Someone else might give over the identical thought with different words. It is clear to those who understood the idea that the two people presented the same thought. Only someone who did not understand what was being said might come to think that two different ideas were expressed, because what he heard was two different sets of words. A similar example is two people who see the same mountain, but one is north of the mountain while the other is south. Their descriptions might be different, but they are describing the same mountain! While both parties have comprehended the same matter, the mountain, the way it was clothed in each mind was different. So it is with the differences between the *Sefiros*. The revelation of each might differ, but in the *atzmiyus hadavar*, essence of the matter, they are all the same! Thus, when we start analyzing the details of each attribute, we discover the same pattern of all the attributes within each attributes. Essentially there is a unity, and each individual attribute has within it all the other attributes, and thus each attribute is essentially the same as each other attribute.

The differences among the *Sefiros* are the differences in how we appreciate the same *Hashem*. When we think of each *Sefirah* as a distinct concept, we are like people who do not understand the analyses and only see the words that are different. We are caught up in externals. However, if we would go deeper and understand the root, we would see that it is really all one! *Chessed* and *Gevurah*, relative to the infinite essence of *Hashem*, are the same, except for the fact that they are described with different words. The closer a created being gets to the root of things, the better he is able to perceive unity. The process of Oneness is infinite. In the realm of *gevul*, limitations, there is a process of *Ein Sof*, no limits. In the limits there is an echo of the truth that really there are no limits. The constant rediscovery of the same pattern in ever more minute measure is the infinite within the finite!

If someone told you to imagine an infinite line, you would envision a line that extends farther and farther, never ending. In fact, the line is not really without limits. It has many limits. It is limited on each side. However, the picture of the line continually extending creates a "no-limit" aspect to this line. Similarly, *Chessed* is not *Ein Sof*. *Ein Sof* has no words, for it is everything. *Chessed* is limited--it is kindness, not everything. But within the limits of *Chessed*, there is an aspect of no limits! In the world of limits there can be a light that is *Ein Sof*! The "no limits" concept creates the fact that in each *midah*, there is a *hiskalelus hamidos*, compendium of all the other attributes, and this leads to the sense that it is all one.

The *hiskalelus hamidos* teaches the created being that the divide is not *atzmusi*, essential. It is merely a mirage when we deal with the revelation. The root, however, is a place where all is one.

The Importance of Unity

Sitra achra is also called *alma diproda*, the universe of separation. While in matters of holiness, everything displays Oneness, in the *sitra achra*, Oneness is hidden. Where the Oneness of *Hashem* is hidden, the Other Side begins.

Each Jew contains within himself a special *midah*, but nevertheless he should have in himself a little bit of everything, and in this way he will unite with the entire Jewish people. We should be, "*goy echad ba'aretz*", "a single nation on earth" (*Shmuel* II 7:23, *Yechezkel* 37:22, *Divrei Hayamim* I 17:21).

Wherever there is Oneness, you find *hashra'as haShechinah*, a sense and feeling of the Divine revealed.

Any type of unity here on earth emanates from the true Oneness, the Oneness of *Hashem*. All the divisions in the creation are from *tzimtzum*, contraction. The real root reality is the unitary realm *before* the contraction: as we have learned, a seal of this Oneness is revealed in the fact that each holy attribute is a generalization from all the other holy attributes. Each human *tzadik*, with his specialness and uniqueness, must contain all of the other *midos* in him as well.

Because a holy attribute has within it all the other holy attributes, even in *Nefesh* of *Nefesh* of *Malchus* of *Asiyah*, the lowly soul described by the *Tanya*, you will find *Chochmah*. *Chochmah* is a level and aspect of *Atzilus*. Therefore, even in the lowest soul there is a piece of absolute holiness. In the revealed world this soul might be a soul of low levels, but in the inner realm, where all is one, the level of hidden love exists within him.

Essential Life

Let us understand another point. We have spoken of *Chochmah*, which is the *yud* of the name *Havayah*, and corresponds to the universe of *Atzilus*. In *Chochmah*, there is a union with the *Ein Sof*. *HaChochmah techayeh be'aleha*, *Chochmah* gives life to those who possess it. In *Chochmah* of the *Nefesh Elohis* you have the *Ein Sof*, and you have life. The Hebrew word *Chochmah* חכמה is composed of the letters for the words *koach mah*, כח מה, the root, force, and power, of each *mah*. *Mah* refers to *mahus*, essential existence. When we get to the very existence of an item, we will find that in its core existence, *Hashem* is giving it life.

We have explained that the universe of *Atzilus* is pure Godliness, and only in *Beri'ah* can there be something new. We also said that *Chochmah* is like *Atzilus*. So what is *Binah*, which means understanding? *Binah* is when new matters begin. In *Chochmah* there is no new proto-physical reality; it is all *Elohis*. The *Chochmah* that is in the *Nefesh Elohis* is the *etzem chiyus*, essential life, of the *Nefesh Elohis*. It is not accessed through comprehension, for it is higher than *Binah*.

Chochmah is translated as wisdom, to be aware of something, while *Binah* means comprehension. In our world, *Chochmah* and *Binah* go together. There

is no possibility of knowing something but not comprehending or understanding any aspect of it. Suppose that someone knows a *halachah*. The more he will study, the better he will understand it. He will increase his *Binah* of the *halachah*. But even before he studied it in depth, can you really say that he did not understand it at all? He understood it-it's just that later, after continued study, he understood it much better. If someone can state that the time for reciting *Shema* is three hours in the morning, it means he understands what an hour is and what three is. Even if he does not yet understand that the reason for this law is the word *bekumecha*, when you arise, and that this is the time when the angels stand in heaven, he still has understanding of the *halachah*. So we see that every bit of knowledge in this world has a measure of understanding as well.

If we delve more deeply, we can explain that we do not have the right vessel for *Chochmah*. Thought, *machshavah*, is really a vessel for *Binah*. We have three vessels: *machshavah*, *dibur* and *ma'aseh*: thought, speech and action. *Chochmah* finds itself in the vessel of *Binah*, which is why in our world knowledge and understanding are linked-the two share a vessel. We are simply unfamiliar with the possibility of grasping a matter through *Chochmah* but lacking the *Binah* to understand it.

In the *Nefesh Elokis*, however, it is possible to have an experience of *Chochmah* without *Binah*. *Chochmah* exists without *Binah*! This is an intellectual experience that is a type of feeling and *deveikus*. Let us explain this phenomenon further. As we have seen, "*HaChochmah techayeh be'aleha*", "*Chochmah* gives life to those who possess it" (*Koheles* 7:12). *Chochmah* is life. Even if someone experiences *Chochmah* without understanding, he has a feeling of life! Sometimes a person grasps a certain sweetness of *Hashem* that he cannot explain. He feels life. He feels *deveikus* in *Hashem* in his davening or in his learning, and he cannot explain this life. He cannot define his feelings because they emerge from a level higher than *Binah*. He is grasping this life with the *Chochmah* of the *Nefesh Elokis*! It is *koach mah*, pure existence of the *Nefesh Elokis*. In this pure existence, the *or Ein Sof*, infinite light, is found. The Infinite is found in *Chochmah*! It is *Atzilus*! It is *kulo Elokus*, fully Godliness. All of *Atzilus* is the light of *Elokus*.

From the *Chochmah* of the *Nefesh Elokis* there are comprehensions that cannot be transmitted to others, for they defy understanding. This essential wisdom can be compared to one of the five senses. Can you explain a sense?

Can you explain sight to a person who has never seen? So it is with this *Chochmah*, which works like a sense. It is real. *Chushim*, senses, are elements that do not need *Binah*.

We see a similar concept regarding certain assumptions and postulates. Can they be logically justified? No, they are assumptions and postulates. Consider the concept of truth. What is truth? Can you define and explain truth? It is impossible; truth is a basic reality. Along the same lines, try explaining why one and one equals two. If someone were to ask you to do this, it is a nonsensical request. One and one is two because this is the reality; this is *Chochmah*. If you will question basic postulates such as one and one being two, you should go even further and ask, what is why? And why is why, why? To all these types of queries the answer is that this is simply the way it is. You cannot even ask a question about the basic postulates, for the question assumes the acceptance of these postulates!

So too the *etzem haChochmah* is an apprehension of reality. There is no why and reason; it is the way it is. It is in this area of *Chochmah*, the pure *Chochmah*, that the hidden love resides. This is the hidden love which is above understanding. You cannot explain this love, for it is higher than *Binah*!

Sacrificing External Life for Essential Life

There are times when *halachah* requires a human being to give up his life in order to avoid violating particular commandments. Why does *Hashem* occasionally demand that we display this level of *mesirus nefesh*, sacrifice of life? Does *Hashem*, Heaven forbid, want to see people die? No! The purpose of the rules of *mesirus nefesh* is to bring man to an awareness of the nature of his true life. His real life, the root of his being, is not his body and its existence in this world. The physical body is merely a garment for his soulful vitality. He is attached to the physical body through the holy sparks that are clothed in the physical body, and his task is to raise these sparks. Sparks connect the soul and the body. As long as he continues to raise sparks, he is attached to the will to live, for *Hashem* wants him to raise these sparks. This is the reason why there is life in this world.

But a person must maintain for himself the essential awareness that his earthly existence is not his real life. There are times when he must detach from

this false life and connect to the *or Ein Sof*, which is real life. One primary example of this requirement is the obligation to die rather than worship idols. When *Hashem* presents a person with the challenge of *avodah zarah*, idol worship, he must display sacrifice of self. Idol worship would entail a loss of true soulful life, for committing *avodah zarah* is tantamount to violating all the *mitzvos* of the Torah. Were one to worship *avodah zarah*, there would no longer be the possibility of raising sparks! The requirement of self-sacrifice in this instance is derived from the verse, "*venikdashti besoch Bnei Yisrael*", "and I am to be sanctified in the midst of the nation of Israel" (*Vayikra* 22:32), which teaches that sometimes, one is required to give up his physical life! The law of sacrifice is derived from the word for sanctity, *kodesh*. Rashi teaches that the word *kodesh* literally means separated and detached, *mufrash umuvdal*, a level that is not connected to physical matters. A person must give up his life in order to maintain this level.

The letter *yud* in *gematria* equals ten. When a *minyan*, quorum of ten Jewish men, is assembled, they are a *merkavah*, chariot, to the *yud* of *Havayah*, and they have the status of a *mikdash me'at*, a mini-sanctuary. The *Shechinah*, Divine presence, is found among the members of the *minyan*. We have also learned that the *yud* of *Hashem's* name corresponds to the universe of *Atzilus* and the *Sefirah* of *Chochmah*. Therefore, the *halachah* of self-sacrifice is that when there are ten people there is a status of *befarhesyah*, in a public display, and one must sacrifice his life for the sake of any *mitzvah*, not only the avoidance of idolatry. The reason behind this law is that in the presence of ten men there is a spirit of *Chochmah* that is felt. This creates an awareness of the *Chochmah* within the *Nefesh*. This acute awareness of spiritual life leads to the mandate to sacrifice physical life in order to avoid slightly damaging the spiritual life through sin.

Perhaps the events that occurred on the tenth of Teiveis 5703, (Friday, December 18, 1942) in Tzuzmir, Poland reflect the theme of our lesson that in the presence of ten, there resides the holy atmosphere of Divine Wisdom, Chochmah, which leads to sacrifice of physical self and feeling that life is spiritual activities:

The writer Aharon Tzeitlin heard the details of what had happened from Yeshayahu Zuberman who saw it all. This is what he recorded:

"The tenth of Teiveis is the yahrtzeit of the Rebbe of Ostrovitze.¹⁶⁸ On that day he was murdered in an act of sanctifying the name of Hashem, kidush Hashem, together with twenty of his chassidim.

After the slaughter that was perpetrated against the residents of the ghetto in Ostrovitze, there remained alive only about 1,500 Jews who worked in a factory outside of the city, in Budzhochov. One of the survivors was the great tzadik, Rav Yechezkele, the Rebbe of Ostrovitze.

One day, the Gestapo suddenly raided the place of work. They were searching for the Rebbe, whom they called the wonder-rabbi. They did not find him. It was decided then that the Rebbe should be smuggled to Tzuzmir, which was nearby. The Germans had put up signs and proclaimed that all the Jews who were in hiding could return to Tzuzmir and if they signed up for work there no harm would befall them. As a result, some of the simple Jews, feeling that they could not survive any longer in hiding with no provisions, made their way to Tzuzmir.

In the Tzuzmir ghetto then the wicked Nazi Lasher was misbehaving. He would force all the Jews to stand at attention twice a day for him to look us over. Any sickly or pregnant women that he would find, he would shoot on the spot. Despite everything, we wanted to fool ourselves to believe that somehow we would survive the horrors. In these conditions the Rebbe was brought to Tzuzmir. His entire body was wrapped in bandages so that the Germans not see his beard. It cost a lot of money to smuggle the Rebbe in to Tzuzmir. We got him in at the end of the month of Kisleiv. About two weeks after he had arrived in Tzuzmir, the head of the Gestapo, Braun, arrived in Tzuzmir. He summoned the heads of the Jewish council, that had to administer the ghetto, and demanded that within a few hours they bring the wonder-rabbi from Ostrovitze to him. When the leaders of the Jewish council claimed that the Rebbe was not in Tzuzmir, the murderer said, 'If the Rebbe is not brought to me within an hour I will take two hundred Jews, lock them in the synagogue, light the building on fire, and burn them all alive.' When the leaders heard this they informed the Rebbe of the predicament that they were now in. When the Rebbe heard, he immediately commanded that he be brought immediately to

168. Rav Yechezkel Halevi Holstock of Ostrovitze was one of the great *tzadikim* of Poland. He was the head of a network of *yeshivos*, Beis Meir, that he founded. He had foreseen the Holocaust before it arrived. It is known that during the war he would pray passionately for the Jews of America and the land of Israel that they merit to be spared from the fires of the war.

the head of the Gestapo. The murderer asked him many questions; the Rebbe did not respond to any of them... Braun photographed the Rebbe and then informed the leaders of the community, to take the Rebbe and make sure to watch him that he not escape, for he had plans for him for the next day. He ended his meeting with them with a terrible threat, 'If the Rebbe escapes and is not here tomorrow, I will take the two hundred Jews and do to them what I had threatened to do.'

The holy Rebbe knew that his moment to sanctify the name of Hashem had arrived. He went to the mikvah and immersed himself in its waters. The mikvah had not been used in months. Atop it was a layer of ice. The Rebbe broke the ice and immersed his body in the frigid waters. He then began to pray for his holy community. The Nazis made a curfew that night. No one was allowed to be out of their rooms. Despite grave danger, many Jews gathered in the offices of the Jewish council where the Rebbe was being held, and they tearfully recited Tehillim and begged the Almighty to save the life of the tzadik. That night, no Jew in Tzuzmir slept. Everyone prayed, and prayed more, begging the Almighty to spare Reb Yechezkele. As the morning appeared on the tenth of Teiveis 5703, the Rebbe put on his white robe, kitel, and prayed the full service with the confessional prayers. The whole community was crying bitter tears together with him. At exactly 9 o'clock, the murderer Braun arrived, accompanied with many murderous Germans. At that moment, twenty Jews stepped out of the crowd. They each offered their life so that the Rebbe would be spared. Braun laughed. He then said, 'Very well, your request will be granted. You will die with your Rebbe.' Braun arrested the twenty volunteers. He stood the Rebbe against the wall and he drew his revolver. The Rebbe shouted with pride and strength, 'Shema Yisrael, Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem echad', 'Hear O Israel, God is our Lord, God is one.' Braun shot the gun and the Rebbe's soul left with the word, echad, one, on his lips. The community later buried the Rebbe in the cemetery as he merited to receive a Jewish burial".¹⁶⁹

Perhaps the gathered group aroused the feelings that life is only to be felt when one is performing a spiritual act. This perhaps inspired the twenty volunteers to heroically offer their lives for the sanctification of Hashem's name.

169. *Devarim Keksavam*, by Yehoshua Eybshutz, pages 251-252.

However, when there is no *minyan*, the requirement to surrender physical life pertains only to the three cardinal sins of idol worship, murder, and marital indiscretions. These three sins all relate to the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*, Tree of Knowledge. Our Sages proposed three possibilities as to the nature of this tree: it was either a wheat stalk, grape vine, or fig tree. Each of these fruits represents one of these primary sins. Wheat represents wisdom and *avodah zarah*. Grapes refer to marital indiscretions, as the Talmud teaches that wine is what leads to romantic sins. Figs represent murder. Man should recoil from committing murder, marital indiscretion, or idolatry. A healthy person would always find these behaviors as abominable as suicide. However, the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as* brought a mixture of evil and good to all areas, even to the roots. We needed our three *Avos*, patriarchs, so that each fixed one of these three flaws.

The *Avos* worked out a part of the *Nefesh*. They clarified the *Chochmah shebo*, the *Chochmah* within it, for the *Avos* were relatively *Atzilus*. As we know, there were four levels of Jewish people—the *Avos*, the *shevatim*, the seventy souls, and the *shishim ribo*, 600,000, who left Egypt. These four stages of population growth of the Jewish nation correspond to the four universes. The *Avos* correspond to *Chochmah* and *Atzilus*, the *shevatim* to *Beri'ah*, the seventy souls to *Yetzirah*, and the 600,000 to *Asiyah*. The *Avos* worked on the *Chochmah* in the *Nefesh Elokis*, so that if one would violate one of these three sins he would be damaging this point of *Chochmah* within the *Nefesh Elokis*, and he would be disconnecting from the real life which is felt at that point.

According to the *Zohar*, there are three parts to the *yud*. We have learned that *yud* corresponds to *Chochmah* and *Atzilus*. We had three fathers, for the *Avos* fixed the *yud*. They clarify to us the *Chochmah* within us so that it should be aware that its life is *deveikus* in *Hashem*. When there is a challenge of *mesirus nefesh*, the *Chochmah* of the *Nefesh Elokis* is revealed, and this level reveals that the person's life is attachment with *Hashem*!

The Red Heifer Represents Wisdom above Understanding

Regarding the law of the *parah adumah*, the red heifer, Shlomo *Hamelech* said, "*Amarti echkamah vehi rechokah mimeni*", "I said I would know it, but it was far from me" (*Koheles* 7:23). The law of the red heifer is a *chok beli ta'am*, a law that transcends reason. Shlomo *Hamelech* wanted to access the pure

Chochmah, wisdom unclothed even in *Binah*, which is what he meant when he said *amarti echkamah*. There is no logical explanation for the *parah adumah*. When something can be explained, it relates to the sin of the *Eitz HaDa'as*. The tree of knowledge was the source of fully understanding matters. The tree of knowledge brought death to man. Understanding and knowledge connote the possibility of death. But in the realm of pure *Chochmah*, you will experience life, as it says in the verse, "*HaChochmah techayeh be'aleha!*" "Wisdom gives life to those who possess it!" (*Koheles* 7:12). *Chochmah* brings about a revelation of life—the *chiyus* of Torah and *mitzvos* stems from this point of *Chochmah*!

The truth is that the deepest *ta'am*, reason, for a *mitzvah* is a part of the *mitzvah* that we cannot explain; it is the essential *mitzvah*. *Hashem* introduces the law of this red cow with the words, "*Zos chukas haTorah*", "This is the law of the Torah:" this *mitzvah* of *parah adumah* is the life of all the *mitzvos*, because when fulfilling this *mitzvah* you take a Divine command without an understandable garment—it is the pure *mitzvah*! (While there are many explanations for understanding the reasons behind *mitzvos*, these explanations are merely *levushim*, garments, for the essential point).

Parah adumah is described as the *ima* that cleans *tzo'as benah*, the mother who cleans up the mess of her son. *Ima* is *Binah*, yet we burn the red mother cow because we are breaking *Binah* and bringing its ashes to the *mayim chayim*, to pure waters. Pure waters are the root of *Binah*, which is the level of *Chochmah*. It is *chiyus*, the state of real life. The place where the *parah adumah* is prepared is *Har Hazeisim*, the Mount of Olives. *Har Hazeisim* is the mountain of olive oil, which represents *Chochmah*. It is a point of life that is higher than *Binah*, from which flow *mayim chayim*, living waters, which is the life of Torah and *mitzvos*. On the *Shabbos* that we read about the *parah adumah*, the life of *Chochmah* is revealed during the entire week.

This is the explanation of what the *Tanya* means when he speaks about the fact that even the *kal shebekalim* has the piece of *Chochmah* which creates an *ahavah mesuteres*.

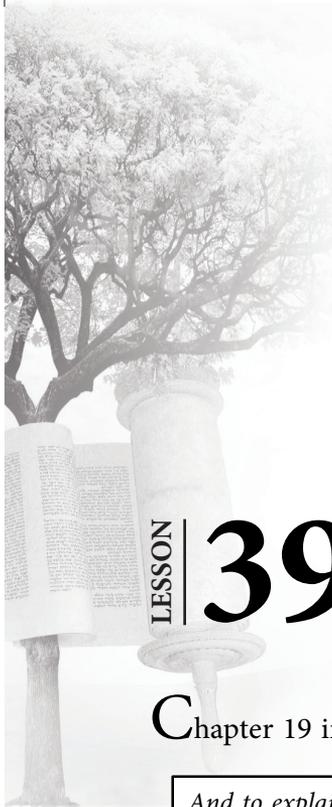
Now, the *Tanya* goes on to explain how this point of *Chochmah* is above understanding:

Now, Chochmah (wisdom) is the source of intelligence and comprehension, and it is above Binah (understanding) which is intellectual understanding and comprehension, whereas Chochmah is above them, and their source. Note the etymological composition of the word כח-מה-חכמה ("the potentiality of what is"), that which is not yet comprehended and understood, or grasped intellectually; consequently there is vested in it the light of the Ein Sof, blessed be He, Who can in no way be comprehended by any thought. Hence all Jews, even the women and the illiterate, believe in God, since faith is beyond understanding and comprehension, for "The simple believe everything, but the prudent man understands" But with regard to the Holy One, blessed be He, Who is beyond intelligence and knowledge, and Who can in no way be comprehended by any thought—all men are like fools in His blessed presence, as is written, "So brutish am I, and ignorant: I am as a beast before Thee; yet I am continually with Thee", meaning that "Because I am brutish and as a beast, I am continually with Thee". Therefore even the most worthless of worthless and the transgressors of the Israelites, in the majority of cases sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of God's Name and suffer harsh torture rather than deny the one God, although they be boors and illiterate and ignorant of God's greatness. [For] whatever little knowledge they do possess, they do not delve therein at all, [and so] they do not give up their lives by reason of any knowledge and contemplation of God. Rather [do they suffer martyrdom] without any knowledge and reflection, but as if it were absolutely impossible to renounce the one God; and without any reason or hesitation whatever. This is because the one

הנה החכמה היא מקור השכל וההבנה והיא למעלה מהבינה שהוא הבנת השכל והשגתו והחכמה היא למעלה מההבנה וההשגה והיא מקור להן וזהו לשון חכמה כ"ח מ"ה שהוא מה שאינו מושג ומובן ואינו נתפס בהשגה עדיין ולכן מתלבש בה אור א"ס ב"ה דלית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל ולכן כל ישראל אפילו הנשים ועמי הארץ הם מאמינים בה' שהאמונה היא למעלה מן הדעת וההשג' כי פתי יאמין לכל דבר וערום יבין וגו' ולגבי הקב"ה שהוא למעלה מן השכל והדעת ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל הכל כפתיים אצלו ית' כדכתיב ואני בער ולא אדע בהמות הייתי עמך ואני תמיד עמך וגו' כלומר שבזה שאני בער ובהמות אני תמיד עמך ולכן אפי' קל שבקלים ופושעי ישראל מוסרים נפשם על קדושת ה' על הרוב וסובלים עינוים קשים שלא לכפור בה' אחד ואף אם הם בורים ועמי הארץ ואין יודעים גדולת ה'. וגם במעט שיודעים אין מתבוננני כלל ואין מוסרי' נפשם מחמת דעת והתבוננות בה' כלל. אלא בלי שום דעת והתבוננות רק כאלו הוא דבר שאי אפשר כלל לכפור בה' אחד בלי שום טעם וטענה ומענה כלל והיינו משום שה' אחד מאיר ומחיה כל הנפש ע"י התלבשותו בבחי' חכמה שבה שהיא למעלה מן הדעת והשכל המושג ומובן

God illuminates and animates the entire Nefesh, through being clothed in its faculty of Chochmah, which is beyond any graspable and understood knowledge or intelligence.

After explaining *Chochmah*, the *Tanya* then points out that *emunah*, faith in *Hashem*, also stems from this level of *Chochmah*, the level that is above *Binah* and understanding. "And this is why", says the *Tanya*, "even people who have little knowledge of Torah and observance are very attached to *Hashem*, and they are willing to give up a great deal so as not to violate the will of *Hashem*, and when they do so they feel that this is a simple matter, that it is not possible for them to violate the will of *Hashem* and worship another god, for their *emunah*, their *Chochmah* which is above *Binah*, is expressing itself, and in this *Chochmah* the *or Ein Sof* can be found".



Freedom is more than a political construct. Freedom is when the soul expresses itself. The soul can express itself through thought, speech, or action. Freedom of the seder night exists because on this night, the innermost essence of the Jew, the soul element that transcends thought, speech, or action, is set free!

LESSON | **39** Essential Freedom

Chapter 19 in the *Tanya* states:

And to explain in greater measure, we must explain the verse, "Man's soul is the lamp of God".

ולתוספת ביאור צריך לבאר היטב
מ"ש נר ה' נשמת אדם

In this chapter, the *Tanya* seeks to explain in greater detail the idea of the hidden love each Jew possesses.

The explanation is that (only members of the nation of) Israel are called adam.

פי' שישראל הקרוים אדם

We will elaborate on the meaning of this idea.

Jews and the Pious of the Nations

Jews are called *adam* because all Jewish souls were contained within *Adam Harishon*, the original man. A Jew is an *adam*, a complete perfect structure, unlike all other creations who are connected with *nitzotzin*, sparks, which are details. Other creatures manifest a detail, but are not complete structures. For example, an angel can only do one mission. *Adam*, on the other hand, encompasses many missions and functions, and was capable of performing them all. Jews are called *adam* because Jews encompass all the spiritual abilities. Each soul has within it all the perfection of the whole world. But while the soul is complete, a spark is only a detail. Each spark must

connect to an *adam hashaleim*, complete adam, and thus be elevated.

Scattered among the cultures of the world are holy sparks which will eventually rise and reattach to *Klal Yisrael*. Because the ultimate destination of these sparks is the Jewish people, these sparks cannot be said to fully belong to the nations. The nations do not serve as a chariot, *merkavah*, to the Divine presence, *Shechinah*; they are not eternal creations. They have within them bits of life, but the essential national core is not Divine. For example, the ancient Romans were filled with strength. They were drawing nourishment from fallen holy fear, from shattered holiness. A certain fear of holiness had fallen, a force of evil clothed it, and the result was a particular nation characteristic of great physical strength. The *nitzotz* of *Gevurah* gave them life, but they were not that life themselves. They were merely the *kelipah*, the darkness that covered the spark. When the *nitzotz* was ultimately lifted up, the evil of Rome did not accompany it. Once their spark returned to its rightful place their culture dissipated and disappeared. Many ancient nations have disappeared from the stage of history, consider the Phoenicians, Moabites, and Emorites. Only the Jewish nation and culture is eternal. For only *atem keruyin adam*.

This description of national cultures is not referring to the *chassidei umos ha'olam*, the pious among the nations. *Chassidei umos ha'olam* are a different entity. The *chassidei umos ha'olam* do truly possess good. Yet, their level is still not identical to that of the nation of Israel. They will eventually rise to the level of Israel. The world is filled with beings that are progressing from one level to the next; nothing can remain static at the same level. Think of a *tzadik*; he works on himself so that he is continually changing and growing higher and higher. He progresses during his life from one level to another. This is true about everything—every creation keeps on ascending, until its ultimate grasp and union with the level of *Ein Sof*. What is at one level today will be at a higher level tomorrow, and still higher the next day. Eventually all Jews will become *tzadikim gemurim*, completely righteous men, as the prophet declares, “*ve'ameich kulam tzadikim*,” “and Your nation are all *tzadikim*” (*Yeshayahu* 60:21). As a result, during the messianic era, all the Jewish people will be elevated to the level of *tzadikim*. At that time, the *chassidei umos ha'olam* will be elevated to the level of *Klal Yisrael*.

Progress is assured. A person who should have reached a high level during his life but did not will eventually reach that level, something that

we are assured of based on the principle of yedi'ah,¹⁷⁰ for that is his real sheleimus, perfection. Hashem has established the sheleimus of Klal Yisrael in such a way that we are all guaranteed to eventually reach it.

Atem keruyim adam, only you, members of the Jewish nation, are called adam. Our Sages say that Adam Harishon reached from one edge of the heavens to the other. The meaning of this is that Adam encompassed the whole creation. The Jewish people are now this *adam*, for we are the purpose of the creation. Other creatures possess a spark of holiness; they do not possess a general holiness that encompasses all, and that is why only Israel deserves the appellation *adam*.

The Jewish souls are, by way of illustration, like the flame of the candle, whose nature it is always to scintillate upwards, for the flame of the fire intrinsically seeks to be parted from the wick in order to unite with its source above, in the universal element of fire which is in the sublunar sphere, as is explained in Eitz Chayim. And although it would thereby be extinguished and emit no light at all below, and even above, in its source, its light would be nullified, nevertheless this is what it seeks in accordance with its nature.

In like manner does the Neshamah of man, including the quality of Ruach and Nefesh, naturally desire and yearn to separate itself and depart from the body in order to unite with its origin and source in God, the fountain-head of all life, blessed be He, though thereby it would become null and void, completely losing its entity therein, with nothing remaining of its former essence and being. Nevertheless, this is its will and desire by its nature.

"Nature" is an applied term for anything that

נשמתם היא למשל כאור הנר שמתנענע תמיד למעלה בטבעו מפני שאור האש חפץ בטבע ליפרד מהפתילה ולידבק בשרשו למעלה ביסוד האש הכללי שתחת גלגל הירח כמ"ש בע"ח ואף שע"י זה יכבה ולא יאיר כלום למטה וגם למעלה בשרשו יתבטל אורו במציאות בשרשו אעפ"כ בכך הוא חפץ בטבעו. כך נשמת האדם וכן בחי' רוח ונפש חפצה וחשקה בטבעה ליפרד ולצאת מן הגוף ולידבק בשרשה ומקורה בה' חיי החיים ב"ה הגם שתהיה אין ואפס ותתבטל שם במציאות לגמרי ולא ישאר ממנה מאומה ממהותה ועצמותה הראשון אעפ"כ זה רצונה וחפצה בטבעה וטבע זה הוא שם המושאל לכל דבר שאינו בבחי' טעם ודעת וגם כאן הכוונה שרצון וחפץ זה בנפש אינו בבחי' טעם ודעת ושכל מושג ומובן אלא למעלה מהדעת ושכל המושג והמובן והיא בחי' חכמה שבנפש שבה אור א"ס ב"ה

170. See Lesson Five for a further explication of the role of Divine Knowledge.

is not in the realm of reason and comprehension. In our case, too, the inference is that this will and desire of the soul are not within the realm of reason, knowledge and intelligence that can be grasped and understood, but beyond graspable and comprehensible knowledge and intelligence; for this nature stems from the faculty of Chochmah found in the soul, wherein abides the light of the blessed Ein Sof.

The *Tanya* now explains that the Jewish soul is compared to the light of a candle, which by nature seeks to rise above to the root of fire.

In the *yesodos*, natural elements, there is a power of attraction. For example, all items on earth are pulled down towards the earth, while items of air are drawn to the *yesod* of air. Fire is drawn to the *yesod ha'eish*, to its root which is above in the sphere of the moon. Because its root is located above, it is naturally drawn upwards. Even when fire is found down on earth, it is not at home. It feels forced to be here by its connection to the part of *eish* in the item that it is burning. Fire burns things because the part of the item being burned is the *yesod ha'eish* of the item, so the fire consumes it and causes it to be burned. But the ultimate desire of fire is to rise above, in order to be included in the *yesod ha'eish hakelali*, general element of fire, which is located under the *galgal hayerach*, the lunar sphere. The truth is that if it would in fact rise, it would become *battel*, annulled. Fire as a *perat*, individual, would be *battel* were it to become a part of the *klal* of the *yesod ha'eish*. Nevertheless, it yearns upwards, because that is the nature of fire.

This is a rule: a lone detail wants to become a part of the general, and lose itself in the collective. The reason for this urge is the desire of each item to have a true *metzi'us*, existence. Its source is where its true reality is contained, and so it yearns to connect to it. Each item wants the deepest feelings of life. In the case of fire, the flame would like to go back to the root of fire. The *yesod ha'eish hakelali* is the truest *metzi'us* of fire, while the fire here below is only a spark from that root of fire. It is clothed; it is not the pure and unadulterated energy. Pure energy is something that is invisible. The *yesod* of *eish* could possibly be things like electricity, sound waves, or radio waves: things that you cannot see. The *yesod ha'eish* is higher than the physical senses. Only when it

comes down to earth does it take on a garment, but the garment is not the real *metzi'us*. Because each item naturally desires to be in a state of real *metzi'us*, the fire seeks to return to the root of fire, where exists the truest reality of fire.

Freedom

In this section, we will discuss the concept of true freedom, which is freedom for the essential soul to express itself. The word *meitzar* indicates a limit. *Mitzrayim*, Egypt, was a place of limits, a place where the powers of the soul were unable to emerge from the potential to the actual. To better understand this idea, we will first see how the soul seeks to express itself. A soul always seeks to express itself and be revealed. However, this can be hard, as the physical body is very stubborn, and it does not allow the soul out. How is the soul revealed? The soul can be revealed in many ways, such as through the gate of the mind, which is thinking. When a soul delves into deep matters of *Hashem*, it emerges, for the soul is a piece of *Hashem*, and it senses itself in Godly matters.

Physical matters are accessible to all people, Jewish or gentile. Knowledge of physical or scientific aspects of the world is knowledge of sparks from the Divine, so a physical body, which is a being made up of sparks, is capable of grasping it. However, in holy areas of thought it is different. While it may appear that the soul understands matters of Godliness in an identical manner to the way that the mind understands physical matters, this is simply the way it seems. The truth is otherwise, because when you understand Torah you are really understanding the *ratzon Hashem*, will of *Hashem*. The soul uses the *levush* of the body in understanding Torah, but the reality is that for the *etzem Elokus*, the soul cannot use the *levush* of the body—rather, it is pure soul attaching to soul. The right way to learn Torah is for our souls to attach to the soulfulness of Torah. When we do this, we will merit to see a great light. When the soul moves from the potential to the actual, the soul is attached to Godliness. Therefore, in a matter of *haskalah* of Torah, or thinking about *etzem Elokis*, we get a sense of the soul. *Haskalah*, the mind, is only a detail of the soul. The soul is higher than the mind; it is *atzmiyus Elokis*. It accesses a gate through the mind, but its revelation is higher than mind.

The soul is not only expressed through thinking. Feeling is another channel through which the soul might express itself. *Avodah shebaleiv*, service

of the heart, is *tefilah*, prayer, which is a powerful expression of the soul. Similarly, holy emotions such as *ahavas Yisrael*, loving other Jews; *ahavas Hashem*, loving *Hashem* (which is obviously different than *ahavah gashmis*, physical love), and *yir'as Hashem*, awe of *Hashem*, also connect us with our souls. So we see that *Hashem* has built many gates through which the soul can emerge *mikoach el hapo'al*, from the potential to the actual.

While the soul remains contained within the body, the soul is in *Mitzrayim*. *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim*, leaving Egypt, was the revelation of the *etzem Neshamah*, the soul itself, without any garments and clothing! It wasn't just that the soul expressed itself through the vessels of mind and thought-its very essence appeared. When the King of Kings was revealed and He redeemed us, the *atzmiyus* of the soul was revealed! When *Hashem* sends an angel to effect a blessing there is an attachment to a *perat*, detail, just as the angel is a *perati* creature. But we were not taken out of Egypt by an angel! *Hashem* Himself revealed Himself, and this revelation rested on uncovering the *atzmiyus* of the soul, which is what left exile! *Hashem* said, "*Ani yotzei besoch Mitzrayim*", "I am going out in the midst of Egypt" (*Shemos* 11:4). The *Ani* that went out in Egypt caused the real *ani*, the real "I" of each Jew, which is the essence of the soul, to express itself.

The essence of the soul is a force that is all-encompassing. It is higher than mind and even higher than will, and it is what emerged from the exile. This element is higher than all the limits. Prior to the redemption, the soul was in a bind, because there is no part of the body that can reveal the *etzem* soul. This essential soul is the *ahavah mesuteres*, hidden love for *Hashem*. (*Ahavah mesuteres* is revealed in *Chochmah*, but it itself is higher than soul parts). The *ahavah mesuteres* is usually hidden, but it was revealed when we left Egypt. The deep meaning of leaving Egypt was that *Hashem* allowed this aspect of the soul to come out and express itself.

Every year we read in the *Hagadah*, "*chayav adam lir'os es atzmo ke'ilu hu yatza MiMitzrayim*", "A person is obligated to see himself as if he himself left Egypt". This is because *every* year, this part of the soul, the essential soul, emerges from the bonds and limits that hold it back. When we leave Egypt, the very essence of the soul leaves Egypt, and there is no difference among the generations at this point. The generation that physically left Egypt was a generation of *dei'ah*, understanding. After that, there was a generation of *tzedakah*, charity. The next generation had a different particular focus, and so

on through the ages. But while the generations can be separated like this on the level of *midos*, at the level of *atzmiyus*, our *etzem* is identical to the *etzem* of the first generation. Since the *atzmiyus* emerged in that original generation that left Egypt, there is no reason at all why every generation should not be able to access this. All generations have the same *atzmiyus*, and so in every generation the very *atzmiyus* is revealed, which is why each generation is capable of seeing itself as leaving Egypt. What an amazing time of year this is! The events that take place on the night of *Pesach* should turn us into entirely new people.

After the emergence of *atzmiyus*, the details are affected. When we think of the fact that *chayav adam lir'os es atzmo ke'ilu hu yatza MiMitzrayim*, we need to know that *atzmo*, my essence, left Egypt, and therefore I am becoming a new person. I should think about this and feel clearly in my heart that my *atzmiyus* is being freed. When this fact is clear to me, I am fulfilling the mitzvah of *sipur yetzi'as Mitzrayim*! *Sipur* literally means to relate a story. Yet the *halachah* teaches that even if one is eating the *seder* alone, he must still relate the story. I have to tell this story even to myself, for the freeing of the inner essence is something one can appreciate even while eating alone! Through relating the story, the inner essence goes free.

While the essence of the soul is beyond the gates of thought or speech, one can still be aware that the essence is emerging, even though my mind and heart are not feeling this emergence. This is because the essential freedom impacts the mind and all the other gates of soul-expression. There is a power to fulfilling this *mitzvah* that causes us to feel its effects in other *mitzvos* later on. We might find that our davening and learning have improved after the *seder* night. The real "I" has left Egypt, and that will impact us on many levels. The *Hagadah* teaches, "*Ba'avur zeh asah Hashem li*", "For the sake of this *Hashem* did for me". *Zeh*, this, means we have an obligation to point to something with our finger. Why are we able to actually point to holiness and see that I now learn better? Because *Hashem* has taken me out of *Mitzrayim*. This is the real freedom. Real freedom is when the soul goes free and can now be the way it is *be'etzem*. Only then is it free.

The Maharal explains that both the idea that *matzah* is *lechem oni*, poor man's bread, and the custom of wearing white garments during the *seder*, convey the message of *atzmiyus*, essence. A wealthy person has many possessions, which he does not really need. What the soul needs are things that

are connected to *atzmiyus*. If there are things that you can live without, then those things are not part of the essence of your very life. They relate to the breadth of wealth, but they are not life itself. A poor person has only the things he absolutely needs, like the basic essential food he needs to keep himself alive. So too, white clothes have no color; white is the essential color. *Matzah* is called *lechem oni*, bread of the poor, to mean that it is an *atzmiyusdike* bread. You need only flour and water to produce *matzah*, for *matzah* is just the essentials. *Chametz*, on the other hand, is the wealth and pleasure of a full bread. *Matzah* is all that we absolutely must have. The hinted message of the *matzah* is that *Hashem* is giving nourishment and strength to the *atzmiyus* of the soul. When the soul is nourished, it grows in strength and can break through all limits. The soul goes free.

Soulful Speech

The idea of soul expression is also behind the law that teaches, "*Kol hamarbeh lesaper biyetzi'as Mitzrayim harei zeh meshubach*", "the more one relates the story of leaving Egypt the more one is praised". This is not the usual instruction regarding speech, because the speech that we have regarding leaving Egypt is not normal speech. Normal speech thrives on limits: "*Lo matza'si laguf tov ela shesikah*", "Nothing is better for the body than silence" (*Avos* 1:17). Our Sages also teach that "*milah be'sela mashtuka betrei*", "if a word costs one *sela* pay two for silence" (*Megillah* 18a). The best thing is usually silence.

Normal speech is when a piece of soul expresses itself, and there is a revelation from the potential to the actual. This has built-in limits. *Dibur* needs limits—a person may not lie, or say hurtful things. However, telling the story of the departure from Egypt is not normal *dibur*! It is the soul's essence revealing itself, and that is why there is a need for many, many words! The rule of the personality is that when it needs to express itself, it will find a way to do so. We know that a blind person usually has unusually strong mental faculties. Because the *kochos haNefesh* that would normally emerge in sight are stunted, they instead express themselves through his mind. All powers a person has stem from the *Neshamah*, so if the gate of sight is closed, the *kochos* instead go to the mind, and instead of seeing, he thinks more. So too when we leave Egypt, the essential soul seeks to express itself, and it has a great *koach*.

Which gate is this power going to find through which it can express itself? The answer is speech. The soul emerges in all its strength on the *seder* night, and it transforms the power of speech.

Seder night speech is filled with *atzmiyus* of the soul. The normal power of speech was not intended for matters that express the very essence of the soul, but *Pesach* at night is not a time for normal speech. Normal speech, which expresses the mind, is governed by laws to the extent that "*kol hamarbeh devarim mosif cheit*", "the more one speaks, the more one sins". However, speech that expresses the essential soul is governed by a different concept: "the more one tells the story the more praised he is", "*kol hamarbeh harei zeh meshubach*". Evil attaches itself to normal excess speech, but this special speech of the *seder* night is immune to evil, because evil cannot access the *atzmiyus* of the soul. On the night of the *seder*, the more you talk, the better.

***Nisan* and Redemption**

The days of *Nisan* are days of *geulah*, redemption. These are days when we were redeemed and when we will be redeemed. For *Nisan* we read *Parashas Hachodesh*,¹⁷¹ for we will be renewed just as the moon renews itself monthly. We will become new creations.

There are many contractions, *tzimtzumim*, that limit a person. Sometimes the reputation he has in *yeshiva* limits him. He might be known as the know-it-all who speaks *lashon hara*, and if suddenly he decides he wants to get serious and learn, his friends might make sarcastic comments that pull him down again. If your friend pulls you down, he is ruling over you. He is the Egyptian spell that prevents you from getting away. Why allow your friend to become your ruler? Why let his smirks and laughter influence you? Are you going to be a fool and continue to sin because of him? *Nisan* is the season of freedom! *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim* means that each person is to go free. On *Pesach* the *atzmiyus* of the soul is freed. Grab the inspiration. Do what *Hashem*

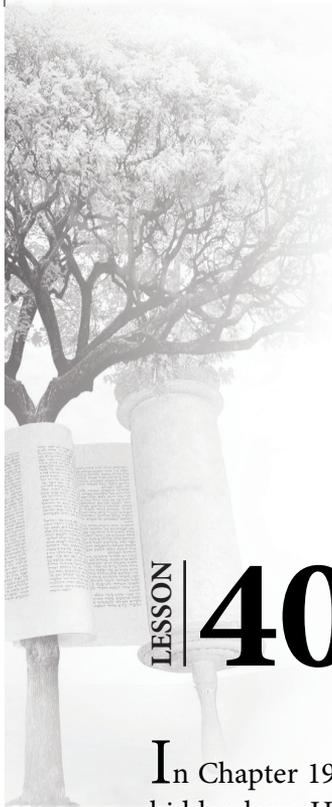
171. *Parashas Hachodesh* is the last of the four special readings associated with *Adar* and *Purim*. It is taken from *Parashas Bo*. It details the laws of the Paschal lamb and the observance of the holiday. It begins with the first *mitzvah* ever given to the Jewish nation and Moshe *Rabbeinu*, *hachodesh hazeh*, the commandment to sanctify the new moon. The renewing moon is the sign to begin a new month.

created you to do, and forget about what people will say. Do what is right. Habit also can become a second nature and jail a person. *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim* also means to get away from your nature and your habits.

Think about this! There is a great light of *yeti'as Mitzrayim*. I have seen *tzadikim* who rethought their direction during this time and started a whole new *derech*, approach. They left all their *chassidim* and set out on a new path. The Kotzker¹⁷² was not *meshu'bad*, obligated, to people. When he felt something was the will of *Hashem* he did not care what people would say! He wanted to serve *Hashem*! And a *yeshiva* boy is afraid of what his friend will say? Think carefully about the power of the days of *Nisan*, which consists of the ability to change, and even leave, your present situation. When you expand past your limits, you cause great repairs to take place in all the worlds. Exile is a situation that stubbornly refuses to change. But when a person changes himself, the exile will change as well. Chapter 46 in *Tehillim* tells us that when *Mashiach* comes, *matu mamlachos*, kingdoms will collapse, the world will change, but we will be in a state of *lo nira*, we will not fear, for we will have learned how to change and serve *Hashem*.

When a person changes himself, he arouses the great change of redemption, and he brings it closer and with greater mercy. It is a monumentally great achievement if in these days of *ikvasa deMeshicha*, a person can free himself from the prison of his past and change himself. This is the *yeti'as Mitzrayim*. He is becoming a new person, which is *meivi liymos haMashiach*, brings closer the days of *Mashiach*.

172. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern was known as the Kotzker. He was one of the greatest *tzadikim* of Poland.



All understandable matters are rooted in an abstract point that transcends understanding. A point that is beyond the limits enters the realm of limits for matter to begin. This point is called Kodesh, holy. Each Jew is holy. Each Jew has a core that is above the limits and above what is natural. Lesson Forty delves into this point of transcendence.

LESSON | **40** A Point of *Bittul*

In Chapter 19 the *Tanya* explains in greater detail the meaning of the inner hidden love. He has taught that each item is attracted to its root, even if it will dissipate and become annulled once it connects with its root. Now he adds,

This is a rule in the entire side of holiness: it completely emerges from Chochmah, which is called Kodesh ha'elyon

whose existence is nullified in the light of the blessed Ein Sof which is clothed in it, so that it is not a thing apart, as is explained above; therefore it is called koach mah, the force of nothingness [power of humility and abnegation]. This stands in direct contrast to the so-called kelipah and sitra achra, wherefrom are derived the souls of the gentiles who work for themselves alone, demanding, "Give, give!" and "Feed me!" They seek to become independent beings and entities, as mentioned above, in direct contrast to the category of Chochmah. Therefore they are called "dead", for "wisdom (Chochmah) gives life", and it is also written, "They die, without wisdom".

וזהו כלל בכל סטרא דקדושה שאינו אלא מה שנמשך מחכמה שנק' קודש העליון

הבטל במציאות באור א"ס ב"ה המלוכבש בו ואינו דבר בפני עצמו כנ"ל ולכן נקרא כ"ח מ"ה והוא הפך ממש מבחי' הקליפה וס"א שממנה נפשות אומות העולם דעבדין לגרמייהו ואמרין הב הב והלעיטני להיות יש ודבר בפני עצמו כנ"ל הפך בחי' החכמה ולכן נקראים מתים כי החכמה תחיה וכתוב ימותו ולא בחכמה.

Holiness and Transcendence

Holiness emerges from the realm of *Kodesh*. In other words, the holy *hishtalshelus*, devolution of matter, starts with Holy Wisdom, and this Holy Wisdom is called *Kodesh*, sacred. The word *Kodesh* means *mufrash umuvdal*, set aside and separated-it is distinct from all physical matters. Let us explore this concept more deeply.

The root of any physical item is a transcendent spiritual point. This point is *Kodesh*, for it is set aside and distinct from the physical. While the entirety of each item occupies space and is limited by boundaries, the item has a beginning point which is a reality that the mind can only picture. This point takes up no space, but it fills something that takes up a bit of space, and out of that thing another point emerges, and then another point, and then another point, until eventually all of these points became a ray. From the ray emerges another ray. Several rays together make up the lines that define the physical item. However, the original point itself does not take up any space. Thus, anything that occupies space necessarily emerges from a level which is above space. The point that is above space is *Kodesh*, for it is *mufrash* and *muvdal* from space. It is something beyond space and limits.

The *Tanya* here is teaching that *kodesh* is another name for *Chochmah*, and that *kodesh* represents that which is separate from limited physical things. *Chochmah* is separated and distinct from understanding. The root of all understood matters is a matter that transcends understanding, just as the root of all space-occupying items is a point that is above space.

Every matter higher than understanding is called *Kodesh*. As we have learned, *Chochmah* refers to basic postulates that cannot be explained, from which all understanding stems. For example, consider the idea of truth. What is truth? Can you define it in a positive sense? Can you explain it? We know what truth is, that's all. We can explain the truth once it is in our minds, but the core concept of truth is a matter of *Kodesh*, and therefore it defies explanation. *Kodesh* is not lack of existence-it is existence itself, and so it is much stronger than all other realities. It is so real that it transcends normal existing matters.

The Source of Space

The Almighty chooses those items that display the concept of *Kodesh*. For

example, the *Aron*, Ark of the Covenant, is placed on the *even shesiyah*, foundation stone. The *even* is a spiritual point that has clothed a physical point—a small stone! At the exact place of the foundation stone, a higher world entered a lower realm. The rules of space did not apply to the foundation stone and what was on it. For the first point is a point of *Kodesh*, a realm that transcends this world, that enters and clothes something in this realm.

We live in a large world. Russia, America, China, and other vast countries fill it up. Yet God chose a tiny place, a stone in the land of Israel, on which He set the world! This place was *Kodesh*, and the source of all the spaces of the world. When our father Ya'akov ran from Eisav, he slept on this stone. The verse, in describing Ya'akov's journey, states, "*vayifga bamakom*", "and he suddenly was in the place" (*Bereishis* 28:11). Our Sages note that the verse does not state that he arrived at *a* place; rather, it stresses that he arrived at *the* place, *bamakom*, and they explain that it is referred to as the place because it is the place of the world, *mekomo shel olam*. It is the root of place, and so it is higher than place!

The land of Israel's relationship to the rest of the world is comparable to the *even shesiyah*'s relationship to the rest of the world. *Eretz Yisrael* is the root of the world just like the *even shesiyah* is. *Eretz Yisrael* is a small point that clothes a spiritual root. It is the root of all the lands in the world. Just as a circle is drawn from a center point, the entire world is drawn from *Eretz Yisrael*. *Eretz Yisrael* is the central *nekudah*, point, of the world.

To Correct One Must Be Clothed Like the Corrected

A point is a *davar sichli*, an intellectual matter. But for this point to be grasped it must assume a garment of filling space. To be a source of space it must adopt a garment of space. This is a major principle: in order to influence someone who is essentially lower than you, you must wear his clothing. *Hamevarer mislabeish bilvush hamisbarer*—to clarify, one must don the garments of the one receiving clarification. The Torah itself is an example of this concept. While the essence of the Torah is beyond words, the Torah itself is physical directives. It commands us to do physical acts like eating *matzah* on *seder* night. It takes on these physical garments because we are physical beings, and in order to be elevated by the Torah, we need it to be clothed in the garments of the physical realm. The essence of the Torah is far greater than

the physical acts that it commands, but it is phrased this way because *Hashem* wants to reside in the lower realm.

Were the Torah to be phrased in language a bit closer to its essence, we would find verses that would describe the *seder* night in a completely different way. Instead of "*Ba'erev to'chlu matzos*", "In the evening eat *matzos*" (*Shemos* 12:18), there would be a more spiritual command. Perhaps it would state, "Have *mochin degadlus*, elevated consciousness, before *mochin dekatnus*, constricted consciousness, on the eve when you exited the straits of the neck". However, the Torah does not speak in such lofty terms, because the Torah took on the lower garment of that which it sought to correct.

A similar principle governs the way we teach about our faith to a member of our nation who is far from observance. Generally, a Jew and a gentile behave differently. A Jew fights his urges and resists lowliness. He does not make a joke with a non-Jewish flavor, because such humor is antithetical to *Yiddishkeit*. Not does he dress or speak like the rest of society. However, when we are trying to reach our brother who is estranged, we do need to wear the clothes of the gentiles and speak their language. Even those who have an elevated holiness must wear the external trappings of the lower person they are seeking to transform and enlighten. When one wears low garments, he must remember that he can only do this if he makes sure these garments don't attract him and influence him to become lowly himself. This lowering of the self to reach others is analogous to the fact that the Torah speaks of physical activities even while its own essence is far above such things.

A vivid example of this principle is the parable of the turkey prince:

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov related the following parable:

Once the king's son went mad and thought he was a turkey. He felt compelled to sit under the table without any clothes on, pulling at bits of bread and bones like a turkey. None of the doctors could do anything to heal him or cure him, and they gave up in despair. The king was very sad.

Then a wise man came and said, "I can cure him".

What did the wise man do? He took off all his clothes, and sat down naked under the table next to the prince and also pecked at crumbs and bones.

The prince asked him, "Who are you and what are you doing here?"

"And what are you doing here?" he replied.

"I am a turkey", said the prince.

"I am also a turkey", said the wise man.

The two of them sat together like this for some time, until they were used to one another.

Then the wise man gave a sign, and the king's men threw them shirts. The wise man-turkey said to the prince, "Do you think a turkey can't wear a shirt? You can wear a shirt and still be a turkey". The two of them put on shirts.

After a while he gave another sign, and guards threw them trousers. Again the wise man said, "Do you think if you wear trousers you can't be a turkey?" They put on trousers.

One by one they put on the rest of their clothes in the same way.

Afterwards, the wise man gave a sign and they put down human food from the table. The wise man said to the prince, "Do you think if you eat good food you can't be a turkey anymore? You can eat this food and still be a turkey". They ate.

Then he said to him, "Do you think a turkey has to sit under the table? You can be a turkey and sit up at the table".

This was how the wise man dealt with the prince, until in the end he cured him completely.

Rav Nachman's parable is about our lesson. As Jews we have a Divine soul and an animal soul. From the perspective of the Divine soul each of us is a prince, a child of the Ultimate King. However, we also possess an animal soul, a turkey. We sometimes go mad. We think we are a turkey. We act like an animal and aspire to all the lowly urges animals seek. For the wise man to heal the prince, he had to act like him. The wise man acted like a physical being. Then he could lift the physical person up to his rightful royal perch.

In theory, *Eretz Yisrael* should not occupy any space, since its essence is above space. But it does in fact occupy space, in order to elevate the rest of space. The lack of space of its spiritual root point is not a deficiency; it is an advantage. It is so real that it transcends the reality of the limited. The land of Israel is the ultimate space.

Divisions of Matter

Israel was divided into twelve sections, one for each of the twelve tribes. The twelve *shevatim*, tribes, correspond to the twelve *gevulei alachson*, boundaries of edges. Every three-dimensional object that takes up space can be divided into twelve lines. There are many ways to divide physical objects, and each of these divisions is rooted in Torah concepts. The first way to divide an item is to assign it three lines—a length line, a height line, and a width line. This way of dividing things is based on the Torah's teachings about the three *Avos*, the patriarchs. Because we have three fathers—Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov—items have these three features of length, width, and height. We also can divide the *Sefiros* into three triads: *chabad* (wisdom, understanding and internalization); *chagat* (giving, restraint and harmony) and *nehi* (dominance, empathy and foundation). (*Malchus* is not included here because it is really of a different nature than all the others.)

Many types of divisions exist beyond the division into three sides. There is also a four-part division of matter, based upon the four letters of the name of *Havayah*, which results in an item having four sides. Yet another way of looking at items would be to divide them into six sides. Based on the seven days of creation, each item has six sides, and its inner point results in seven. We can also divide everything into nine sides: each item has a head, a bottom, and an inside, and each of these levels in turn has three points. So if you consider a box, you will realize that a box has a head, a bottom and a middle of the top section; a head, a bottom and a middle of the middle section; and a head, a bottom and a middle of the very bottom section: all together, you end up with nine sections. You can also divide items into ten: the nine points we just discussed plus an inner point, which results in ten points that correspond to the ten *Sefiros* and the ten statements of creation. Finally, you can divide items into twelve sides, which is known as the *yud beis gevulei alachson*. To visualize this, we can once again consider a box: a box has four lines on the bottom of the box along its edges, four lines at the top and four lines connecting that which is above to that which is below.

It is a complex study to understand the correspondence of all the different areas, such as to understand how to connect the three patriarchs to the three characteristics of length, width and height, and we will not delve further into it here. But the bottom line is that you should understand that everything that exists in *Nefesh* has a parallel in *olam*, space of the world, and *shanah*, years

of time. All items that fill space have twelve edges. Since Israel was the root of space, *Eretz Yisrael* was divided to twelve *shevatim*. The twelve *shevatim* are the *hisphashtus*, spreading out, of our father Ya'akov. Ya'akov was the one about whom we read "*vayifga bamakom*", he reached the foundation stone, and "*vayikach mei'avnei hamakom*", he took [twelve] stones from there. Ya'akov was the point of the source of *makom*, and the *shevatim* were the *hisphashtus* of this *nekudah*, point.

The application of these concepts is that *kodesh* is higher than the mind. The mind cannot grasp it, as it is so *mufrash* and *muvdal*, but it is there. In fact, it is not less real; it is more real, and it is the source for all reality. How, then, do we achieve a connection to this point? By submitting to it!

Let us explain further. Something that I understand is in my grasp. I have ownership of it. It is in my domain, and it becomes a part of me, and a part of my knowledge set. *Binah* is the faculty that lets me understand this thing, and *Binah* is part of *yeishus*, independent existence. The root of *Gevurah*, restraint, stems from *Binah*. *Gevurah* is a *tzimtzum*, constriction. When the *nekudah* of *Chochmah* is clothed into limits it is understood. Something which can be defined and explained is limited. It is not the essential item itself, but because the mind works with definitions and limits, in order to understand something, it must enter the realm of limits and be clothed as a limited matter. However, the point itself, the holy aspect which is higher than limits, is not grasped by the human understanding. Rather, human understanding surrenders to it and accepts it!

As an illustration, let us return to the concept of truth. A limited being does not understand truth and cannot define it, but because he knows it is there, he makes himself *battel* to it—he surrenders to truth. *Emes* is not subservient to man; rather, man's intellect is subservient to *emes*. So it is with the powers of the human personality. The holy point of the soul is transcendent. The point, which is called *Kodesh*, is *atzmiyus Elokis*, and a man cannot bring it into his domain, nor can he control it. A person thinks, "I am my soul". But whatever he thinks is his, and that he understands, is not the *Kodesh* point. The *Kodesh* point of the soul is the part that is not mine and that I am not in charge of—the part that I am *battel* to. When this point emerges, it comes with an awareness that prompts a person to reflect, "This is not mine. This is *Hashem*, and I take up no space in front of this point". This

is "*Ani Hashem shochein besoch Bnei Yisrael*", "I am Hashem who resides within the Jewish nation" (*Bamidbar* 35:34).

An *oveid Hashem* who thinks, "I am wise", or "I am kind", because he has focus and interest in his learning, *davening*, and interpersonal relationships, has never really tasted holiness. Holiness is about *not me*. Where there is ego and "I", there is no *hashra'as haShechinah*, resting of the Divine Presence. The rule of holiness is that only in a place of *bittul* is the *Ribono Shel Olam* revealed. *Hashem* is *shoreh*, dwells, in a place which is *battel* to Him.

We need to seek and struggle in order to see *Hashem* revealed in the world. We need to seek the *no'am Hashem*, pleasantness of *Hashem*, which is not associated with the feeling of "I have achieved a level", but rather with a feeling of pure Godliness. If the feeling one has is pleasure in the level he has reached, then he has not reached a true level of service of *Hashem*.

The Sin of "I"

Nadav and Avihu were the two sons of Aharon who died when the *Mishkan* was first inaugurated. Our Sages struggle to understand what they did wrong, as the verses do not provide much detail as to what their sin entailed. Many suggestions are offered. Perhaps they did not sufficiently respect Moshe and Aharon and issued a ruling in the presence of these teachers, or perhaps they lit a strange fire, or perhaps they entered the Holy of Holies while drunk. In fact, all of these suggestions of possible sins really reflect one sin: ego. They were operating out of a sense of self at a time when there was a need for *hashra'as haShechinah*, which required a great degree of *bittul hayeish*, negation of independent self.

When Moshe commands the nation to begin the service of the *Mishkan*, he says, "*Zeh hadavar asher tzivah Hashem ta'asu veyeira aleichem kevod Hashem*", "This is the matter Hashem has commanded that you should do, and the glory of Hashem will appear to you" (*Vayikra* 9:6). Our Sages teach that at this time, the masses were able to all stand in a limited space: "*zeh echad min hamekomos shehichzik mu'at es hamerubah*", "this was one of the places where the small contained many masses". The *kodesh* in space was revealed, and as a result, there was no *tefisas makom*, taking up of space, which resulted in many people being able to fit into a small space. The rules of space were

suspended in preparation for *hashra'as haShechinah*, which is an attachment to the level of being above space.

The Midrash adds that at this time there was also an opportunity to annul *oso yetzer hara*, that urge for evil. What is that particular urge for evil that is being referenced here? Aren't there many varieties of urges for evil? In this case, it is the sin of the righteous man, the sin of ego, of *yeishus*. Thinking of oneself as an independent existence is the real root of all evil. The *yetzer hara* that makes me think of me is the greatest obstacle to *avodas Hashem*, serving *Hashem*. It will not allow me to be a *lomeid mikol adam*, one who learns from all people. It will cause me to be jealous of others who are *ovdei Hashem* and are more successful at serving Him than I am.

Yeravam ben Nevat is a powerful illustration of the pitfalls of ego. At the time of the First Temple, the Jewish nation split into two kingdoms, Judea and Israel. Judea was composed of the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin, whereas Israel comprised the remaining ten tribes. The leader of Israel was Yeravam ben Nevat. Yeravam was an exceptionally accomplished servant of *Hashem*, about whom the Talmud states that his Torah had no flaws. Ultimately, though, he became a terrible sinner who constructed golden calves, and encouraged the Jews to worship his idols instead of attending the services at the *Beis Hamikdash*.

What pushed Yeravam ben Nevat so far from the path of righteousness? It was his sense of his own self-importance. The Talmud relates that the Almighty told Yeravam that He would walk together with him and David the son of Yishai in the World to Come. Yeravam asked, "*Mi berosh?*" "Who will be at the head?" When *Hashem* informed him that *ben Yishai berosh*, David would be first, Yeravam rejected the path of righteousness and became a terrible sinner who caused the entire nation to sin. He could have been *Mashaich ben Yosef*, while David would have been the redeemer from the house of David. He would have been the second-greatest *tzadik* ever! But because he couldn't accept that ben Yishai would take precedence, he became a person who, according to some, lost his portion in the World to Come. This is a powerful illustration of the fact that Holiness only resides in a place which is *battel*.

Tzadikim have always focused on *bittul hayeish*, nullification of the ego. It can be very hard to focus on a *mitzvah* without considering yourself. Imagine if you went through the entire night of the *seder* without feeling any *mochin*,

inspired intellects. This might make you very upset. But why be upset? You just had the privilege of doing a *mitzvah*! You ate *matzah* and *maror*! Someone else has *mochin*? So *Hashem* gave him *mochin*! Let him serve *Hashem* with *mochin*, and don't begrudge him these thoughts. Maybe it is your role to serve *Hashem* without *mochin*! Appreciate that that is your success, and that you don't need anything more. It is always acceptable to *daven* for *mochin*, but it is never correct to try to push someone else down. To do that is pure ego.

The common thread binding together all of the explanations for the sin of Nadav and Avihu is that in some small measure, they failed in the realm of *bittul hayeish*. Issuing a ruling in front of their teacher is an expression of *yeishus*, and their death was therefore a *kaparah* for the Jewish people. Only when ego is removed can there be *hashra'as haShechinah*.

***Pesach* and Humility**

Pesach is the introduction of all the *mikra'ei kodesh*, sacred times. It is the head of all the *regalim*, festivals. It is the time to work on *bittul chametz*, annulling leavened products, which on a deeper level stands for getting rid of the *yeish*. The first *mitzvah* of *Pesach* is *tashbisu se'or mibateichem*, destroy the leaven from your homes. The head of all the festivals demands that we get rid of that which takes up space. Once we get rid of the taking up of place, we are left with pure Godliness, and we are able to enjoy the power of *hashra'as haShechinah*.

So are the wicked and transgressors of Israel before they face the test to sanctify God's name. For the faculty of Chochmah which is in the Divine soul, with the spark of Godliness from the light of the blessed Ein Sof that is clothed in it, is, as it were, in exile in their body, within the animal soul coming from the kelipah, in the left part of the heart, which reigns and holds sway over their body; in accordance with the esoteric doctrine of the exile of the Shechinah, as mentioned earlier.

וכן הרשעים ופושעי ישראל קודם שבאו לידי נסיון לקדש השם כי בחיי החכמה שבנפש האלהית עם ניצוץ אלהות מאור א"ס ב"ה המלוּבש בה הם בבחי' גלות בגופם בנפש הבהמית מצד הקליפה שבחלל השמאלי שבלב המולכת ומושלת בגופם בסוד גלות השכינה כנ"ל.

For this reason, this love of the Divine soul, whose desire and wish is to unite with God, the blessed fountain-head of all life, is called "hidden love", for it is hidden and veiled, in the case of the transgressors of Israel, in the sackcloth of the kelipah, whence there enters into them a spirit of folly to sin, as the Rabbis have said, "A person does not sin unless the spirit of folly has entered into him".

However, this exile of the faculty of Chochmah refers only to that aspect of it which is diffused throughout the Nefesh and animates it. Yet the root and core of this faculty of the Divine soul remains in the brain and does not clothe itself in the sackcloth of the kelipah in the left part of the heart, in veritable exile, but it is, as it were, dormant in the case of the wicked, not exercising its influence in them so long as their knowledge and understanding are preoccupied with mundane pleasures. Nevertheless, when they are confronted with a test in a matter of faith, which transcends knowledge, touching the very soul and the faculty of Chochmah within it, at such time it is aroused from its sleep and it exerts its influence by virtue of the Divine force that is clothed in it, as is written, "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep". [On such occasion the sinner is inspired] to withstand the test of faith in God, without any reasoning, or knowledge, or intelligence that may be comprehended by him, and to prevail over the kelipah and temptations of this world, whether permitted or prohibited, to which he had been accustomed-even to despise them, and to choose God as his portion and lot, yielding to Him his soul [to suffer martyrdom] in order to sanctify His Name. For, even though the kelipos had prevailed over him all his life and he was impotent against them, as the Rabbis have

ולכן נקראת אהבה זו בנפש האלהית שרצונה וחפצה לרבק בה' חיי החיים ברוך הוא בשם אהבה מסותרת כי היא מסותרת ומכוסה בלבוש שק דקליפה בפושעי ישראל וממנה נכנס בהם רוח שטות לחטוא כמאמר רז"ל אין אדם חוטא כו'

אלא שגלות הזה לבחי' חכמה אינו אלא לבחי' המתפשטת ממנה בנפש כולה להחיותה אבל שרש ועיקר של בחי' חכמה שבנפש האלהית הוא במוחין ואינה מתלבשת בלבוש שק דקליפה שבלב בחלל השמאלי בבחי' גלות ממש. רק שהיא בבחי' שינה ברשעים ואינה פועלת פעולתה בהם כל זמן שעסוקים בדעתם ובינתם בתאות העולם. אך כשבאים לידי נסיון בדבר אמונה שהיא למעלה מהדעת ונגעה עד הנפש לבחי' חכמה שבה אזי היא נייערה משנתה ופועלת פעולתה בכח ה' המלוּבש בה. וכמ"ש ויקץ כישן ה' לעמוד בנסיון באמונת ה' בלי שום טעם ודעת ושכל מושג לו להתגבר על הקליפות ותאוות עוה"ז בהיתר ובאיסור שהורגל בהם ולמאוס בהם ולבחור לו ה' לחלקו ולגודלו למסור לו נפשו על קדושת שמו ואף כי הקליפות גברו עליו כל ימיו ולא יכול להם כמארוז"ל שהרשעים הם ברשות לבם מ"מ כשבא לידי נסיון בדבר אמונה בה' אחד שישודתה בהררי קודש היא בחי' חכמה שבנפש האלהית שבה מלוּבש אור א"ס ב"ה הרי כל הקליפות בטלים ומבוטלים והיו כלא היו ממש לפני ה' כדכתיב כל הגוים כאין נגדו וגו' וכתיב כי הנה אויביך ה' כי הנה אויביך יאבדו יתפרדו וגו' וכתיב כהמס דונג מפני אש יאבדו וגו' וכתיב הרים כדונג נמסו.

said that "the wicked are under the control of their heart", yet when he faces a test challenging his faith in the One God, [a faith] which has its roots in the uppermost heights of holiness, namely, the faculty of Chochmah of the Divine soul, in which is clothed the light of the blessed Ein Sof, then all the kelipos are made null and void, and they vanish, as though they had never been, in the presence of the Lord. So it is written, "All the nations are as nothing before Him", and "For, lo, Thine enemies, O Lord, for lo, Thine enemies shall perish; and the workers of iniquity shall be scattered", and, again, "As wax melts before fire, so shall the wicked perish", and "The hills melted like wax".

The force of the Divine light of the blessed Ein Sof that is clothed in the soul's Chochmah is great and powerful enough to banish and repel the sitra achra and the kelipos so that they could not even touch its garments, namely, the thought, speech and act of faith in the One God. In other words, [it enables one] to withstand a test of self-sacrifice, to the extent of even refusing to do some single act that is contrary to the faith in the One God, such as, for example, to bow to an idol, even without acknowledging it in his heart at all, or to utter any false notion, Heaven forbid, regarding the unity of God, be it merely by way of rendering lip-service only, while his heart remains perfect in the belief in God. This is called "Fear that is contained in love", the natural love of the divine soul that is found in all Jews, the intrinsic desire and will of which is to be attached to its origin and source in the light of the blessed Ein Sof. For by virtue of this love and this desire, it instinctively recoils in fear and dread from touching even the fringe of the impurity of idolatry, Heaven forbid, which denies the

והנה אור ה' א"ס ב"ה המלוּבש בחכמה שבנפש גדול ועצום כל כך לגרש ולדחות הס"א והקליפות שלא יוכלו יגעו אפי" בלבוּשיו שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה של אמונת ה' אחד דהיינו לעמוד בנסיון למסור נפשו אפי" שלא לעשות רק איזה מעשה לבד נגד אמונת ה' אחד כגון להשתחות לעבודה זרה אף שאינו מאמין בה כלל בלבו וכן שלא לדבר תועה ח"ו על אחדות ה' אף שאין פיו ולבו שוין רק לבו שלם באמונת ה' וזה נקרא דחילו הנכלל ברחימו שהיא אהבה הטבעית שבנפש האלהית שבכללות ישראל שחפצה ורצונה בטבעה לידבק בשרשה ומקורה אור א"ס ב"ה שמפני אהבה זו ורצון זה היא יראה ומפחדת בטבעה מנגוע בקצה טומאת ע"ז ח"ו שהיא נגד אמונת ה' אחד אפילו בלבוּשיה החיצונים שהם דבור או מעשה בלי אמונה בלב כלל:

faith in one God, even where such contact involves only its outer garments, namely, speech and action; without any faith whatever in the heart.

Jews are unique. In other cultures, even when one does a good deed, it is *legarmeihu*, for his own sake, which is the opposite of negation of self, *bittul*. When a Jew performs a good deed, he is acting with *bittul*. Acting with self-negation is what brings life to all matter. This is because life comes from God, which means it comes from *Chochmah*, and only when there is *bittul*, *Hashem* is present, and so there is life in the matter!

Every Jew has a will in his *Nefesh Elokis*, which is that his ego should be annulled and Godliness revealed. In the case of a wicked Jew, this will is hidden by the influence of the *ruach shtus*, spirit of folly. This *ruach shtus* makes a sinner think that even when he sins, he remains attached to *Elokis*. There are many Jewish sinners who think they can violate *mitzvos* but remain good Jews, a mistaken thought that is a product of the *ruach shtus*. The exception to this is *avodah zarah*. Because *avodah zarah* tests a person in the area of *emunah*, faith, a quality which is above *Da'as*, he actually feels that if he commits this sin, he is not a Jew. When someone has that realization, he will avoid that sin. It is likely that he will even give his life to avoid this. When someone faces a test in the area of faith in *Hashem*, he knows how to overcome the *ruach shtus*, for he recognizes that committing this sin detaches him from the Jewish people and from *Hashem*! In matters of faith, the *Chochmah* of the *Nefesh*, the core of the soul, is revealed, and then *kol hagoyim ke'ayin negdo*, all nations are like nothing against Him. The Jew finds within himself the strength to be *moser nefesh*! Even if someone wants this Jew to merely utter one word that admits a belief in idolatry, the force of the *Kodesh ha'elyon* is so strong that it does not allow him to let *avodah zarah* into his external garment of speech, even though it is just words.

Of all the times of the year, the *leil hiskadesh chag*, the night of holiday sanctity, a reference to the night of *Pesach*, is a time of great revelation of *atzmiyus haNefesh*. The prophet declared, "*Hashir yihyeh lachem keleil hiskadesh chag*", "The song will be like the song of the night that was made holy, [a reference to *Pesach* at night]" (*Yeshayahu* 30:29). *Leil hiskadesh chag*: this is a night of *Kodesh*! In Hebrew there are two forms for the word "song".

Shir is a masculine song, whereas *shirah* is a feminine song. All previous redemptions were described as *shirah*, female song, because our Sages explained that those great moments were followed with times of pain, just like a woman who gives birth sings her joy at the delivery even though she knows that the pain will return. She knows it will return because *yolades vechozeres letzirei leidah ki hi yolades shuv*, she gives birth yet she will return to the pangs of childbirth, for she will yet give birth again. In the future, however, the redemption will be *shir*, a masculine song, because it will not be followed by pain. It will be an eternal redemption. And this future eternal good is linked to *geulas Mitzrayim*, the redemption from Egypt.

Letters of Redemption

All the final Hebrew letters, ךָךְץץם, *mantzepach*, are connected to *dinim*, judgments. All salvation comes from these letters. Let us explain. We learned in Lesson Twenty-One that these letters are the *par*, 280, *dinim*, which is why they were forgotten, for where there are *dinim*, there is also *shikchah*, forgetting. A judgment entails limited life. Wherever there is limited life, there is forgetting. While a day that is brimming with life is remembered, a day with limited feelings of life is easily forgotten. These letters come at the end of a word, sealing it off. The word cannot go any further. So they are symbols of *tzimtzumim*-the lowest level of light that cannot go further. Each exile has the task of fixing one these *hesteirim*, concealments of the Divine-the reparation of one of the *tzimtzumim* represented by each of these letters.

Reb Shimshon Ostropolye¹⁷³ explained the following verse as relating to the various redemptions we have experienced. The verse states, "*Mikenaf ha'aretz zemiros shama'nu tzvi latzadik*", "From the edges of the earth we have heard songs with a message: the *tzadikim* will be uplifted" (*Yeshayahu* 24:16). We have been redeemed four times: from Egypt, from Babylonia, from Persia and from Greece. However, we are still waiting for the final and complete redemption. Each redemption corresponds to one of the final letters, which is

173. Rav Shimshon of Ostropolye, 1600-1648/5408-5360, was a great master of Kabbalah in the early seventeenth century. He was enormously creative. He revealed secrets and insights that had never been revealed before. He died sanctifying the name of Heaven during the terrible pogroms and massacres of 1648-1649/5408-5409.

hinted to in the word **מִכְנַף**, *mikenaf*, which is composed of four of the letters of **מַנְזַפָּח**, *mantzephach*. From the exiles represented by those four letters we have heard songs, for we have been redeemed from them. However, we are waiting for *tzvi latzadik*, uplifting the *tzadikim*, which refers to the final redemption from Rome. This is the redemption of the final end-letter, the letter *tzadik*.

This is alluded to by the fact that **בְּלֵל הַתְּקֵדֶשׁ חַג**, *keleil hiskadesh chag*, is 900 in *gematria*. When we ascribe numeric values to Hebrew letters, we start with *alef* equaling one, and continue on until *taf*, which equals four hundred. If the five end-letters get values according to the same pattern, then the end-letter, *tzadik*, has a numeric value of 900. The word **לַחֵם**, *lachem*, equals ninety. The eternal redemption, *hashir yihyeh lachem*, will be a song of *tzadik*, *keleil hiskadesh chag--tzvi latzadik*, a redemption with no exile following it.

Redemption and Rushing

One of the goals of the redemption from Egypt was to bring the revealed Torah into the world. This needed to be carried out with great *chipazon*, speed. The simple reason for this haste was that we could not wait any longer, and we had to rush out. However, this can be understood in greater depth.

(It is extremely important to realize that someone who serves *Hashem* must be connected to the deeper truth of a matter. Many people just look for a simple answer, and when they find it, they stop investigating. Do not accept that! You have to know that the greatest *deveikus* can be achieved through the study of the depth of Torah. The Besht forged a path of serving *Hashem* through connection to the deeper Torah. A person with the capabilities of becoming a great *ba'al madreigah*, possessor of spiritual heights, who instead satisfies himself with simple levels will get a great *gehinom*!

The night of leaving Egypt is a time to think of the *matzah* meditations in all their sophistication and not be satisfied with a simple understanding. When it comes to physical matters, did you look for great delights? Were you satisfied with simple pleasures, or did you look for all the pleasures that the body can experience? If you did involve yourself excessively in the material realm, how can you fail to do the same for the spiritual realm? When *Hashem* gives you a spiritual food like *matzah* to consume, how can you fail to make sure to eat it with all the special tastes and pleasures which are dependent on the *kavanos* and meditations about the *matzah*? *Hashem* gives all the *mochin*

to one who has the ability to be a person of depth. As a young man, you need to realize that if you follow the teachings of the Ari, you will see how each *mitzvah* and *pasuk* has a new level of understanding. Avoiding delving into this depth is an attempt of your evil urge to limit your *avodas Hashem*).

So what then is the deeper meaning of the *chipazon* accompanying the departure from Egypt? Generally speaking, to reach an awesome *gadlus hamochin*, expanded consciousness, takes time and effort. However, in Egypt there were great *kelipos*, so *Hashem* made a spiritual miracle, and on the night of *Pesach* there was a sudden and quick revelation of awesome *mochin* so that the external forces would be shocked and overwhelmed, and not be able to take any nourishment from this light. The sudden speed of the revelation of this light blinded the external beings and enabled us to leave Egypt.

When holiness reveals something great, the forces of evil come up with an explanation for the revelation in order to redefine it so it is not so awesome. They do this by putting the revelation into their vessels. Once it is in their vessels, they can provide the lame explanation which takes away the awesome inspiration in the matter. However, if there is a great light which is beyond the reach of their vessels, then they can give no excuses, and the holiness is free to have its intended great impact.

Another way to understand the *chipazon* is to consider the normal progression of *mochin*. We know that there is *gadlus hamochin*, expanded consciousness, as well as *katnus hamochin*, limited consciousness. The rule is that generally *katnus hamochin* is achieved first, and after that we reach the state of *gadlus hamochin*. External beings hold onto *katnus*. However, *Pesach* night is different. On *Pesach* night, there is already *gadlus hamochin* at the time of *kidush*, and *katnus* comes later, during *karpas*, when we dip a vegetable in salt water. The *matzah* is *mochin deChochmah*, and the four cups are *mochin deBinah*. I suggest further that perhaps the *maror* is the *katnus*. Be that as it may, on *Pesach* night the *gadlus* always precedes the *katnus*, and this takes away the *yenikah*, drawing of nourishment, of the *chitzonim*.

You should also know that the *Ma'ariv*, night prayer, of *Pesach* night is as great as the *seder* itself. The *Ma'ariv* we say at night is the *penimiyus*, inner nature, of the *seder*. The *Hallel*, thanksgiving prayer, of the *Ma'ariv* we say on the *seder* night is awesome! All of these elements are part of the *chipazon* of the *seder* night.

The future redemption is different from the redemption from Egypt. About the future redemption, the prophet declared, "*Ki lo bechipazon teitzei'u*", "For you will not go out in a rush" (*Yeshayahu* 52:12). In the future, the *keilim*, vessels, will be so pure that the *chitzonim* will not be able to distort and misrepresent the revelation, and therefore there will be no need to rush-*lo bechipazon teitzei'u*. Like counting the days of the *Omer*, the *Sefirah*, which is not *bechipazon*, the future redemption will come slowly, and its *oros*, lights, will enter into the *keilim* in such a steady way that there will be no need for *chipazon*.

Chipazon never lasts. But the future redemption will last. If there is no rushing, then the redemption and salvation can last, and so the final redemption will be eternal. We have learned that at the time of the first redemption, *Pesach*, there was negation of ego. The correct and most perfect *bittul hayeish* will occur at the time of the final redemption. At that time, even in the *keilim*, even when we have a matter in our vessels and our comprehension, we will still feel the *bittul hayeish*. The root of *bittul hayeish* is the exodus from Egypt. The *geulah* from Egypt *bechipazon* will eventually spread out to the *keilim*, and in the *keilim* we will feel the special *bittul* that we initially only felt in a *chipazon* manner when we left Egypt. The future redemption will be a masculine song, a *shir*. It won't be *shirah*, a feminine song, that has after it pain, for it will entail complete negation of the root of evil. May we merit to see soon the fulfillment of that holy vision of the prophet, *Hashir yihyeh lachem keil **hiskadesh** chag!*

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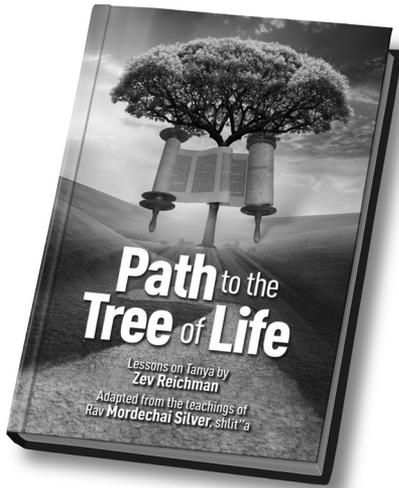
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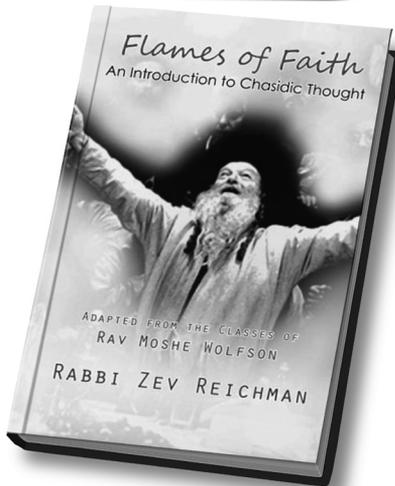
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