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## ***Bitachon Gives Us Menuchas Hanefesh in All Circumstances***

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**Through Ironclad *Eemunah*, We Receive the Gift of  
*Menuchas Hanefesh***

### **The Way to the Heart is Through the Mind**

We have been speaking about acquiring the incredible serenity and *menuchas hanefesh* that *bitachon* provides—but **how do we acquire *bitachon* in the first place?** The answer is: By strengthening ourselves with thoughts of *emunah*, as the Ramban writes (*sefer Eemunah uBitachon, Perek Aleph*) “*Eemunah is the tree, and bitachon is the fruit.*”

This means that the feeling of *bitachon* is an outgrowth of *emunah*, and the more a person internalizes the *emunah*, the belief, that the Ribbono shel Olam runs the entire world, that He is good and He *does* good, and the more he will work with these thoughts every day, **the more he will merit the wholeness of the soul that comes with *bitachon*.**

Every *Yid* can elevate his mind over his heart, מן שליט על הלב. **His heart must become serene, his *nefesh* complete, and the way to accomplish this is through the mind.** When we inculcate our minds with thoughts and knowledge of *emunah* and *bitachon*, they will make their way to our hearts. The conduit for reaching our hearts is through our minds, which influence our hearts to live with a proper *bitachon* in Hashem.

### **Ruling the Heart**

It is well known that during the war between the Emperor Napoleon

and Russia, there was a debate among the tzaddikim of the generation regarding whom they wanted to win. The Ba'al HaTanya famously wanted Russia to win, and he sent his devoted *chassid* Reb Moshe Meislish to work as a spy in Napoleon's army. In this capacity, he met Napoleon on a number of occasions, and once, the French ruler suspected him of being a spy.

To test Reb Moshe, Napoleon shouted, "You're a spy!" and then he immediately placed his hand on Reb Moshe's heart to see if it began to beat more heavily. But Reb Moshe kept his cool, and his heart didn't race even a beat faster. When he was later asked by chassidim how he was able to remain so calm, he answered simply; **"Didn't the Rebbe teach us that our minds must rule our hearts?"**

### Every *Yid* Can Have This Gift

The concept of *מה שליט על הלב*, *the mind rules the heart*, can work for every person—even in a situation where they find themselves in great fear. *Bitachon* can bring the *nefesh* tremendous wholeness, so that he doesn't worry at all.

The more a *Yid* thinks about the *yesodos* of *emunah*, the more his heart becomes complete. By reviewing and remembering the *yesodos* of *emunah* in his mind, his heart will not become scattered, even in the most difficult circumstances that would ordinarily overtake him and confuse him.

### Gather the Facets of the Soul Through the Magnet of *Bitachon*

Generally, the *nefesh* of a person is scattered in numerous places. It's like a person who has lent money to multiple people, and when he needs a large sum of money, he must gather the funds from numerous places, and it takes him months to collect the money from all the places where it has been scattered. The same applies to the *nefesh* of the person; it is scattered. From the outside he may seem calm, but there are parts of his soul that are scattered in many places.

Now, when he wants to gather his soul, the Torah says to him: You

don't have to wear yourself out trying to gather your *nefesh* from all the places where it has been scattered. Don't go anywhere! Take a magnet... **begin working with the proper thoughts of *bitachon*, and in this way you will draw together all the facts of your *nefesh*.** Through the *emunah* in your mind, you will gather all the facets of your soul, and your *nefesh* will become whole, you will attain שלימות הנפש, serenity and calm.

## Wholeness of the Soul When Learning Torah

There's an incredible teaching from the *Tiferes Yisrael* (a commentary on *Mishnayos*), on the Mishnah in *Pirkei Avos* that teaches us עשה תורתך קבע, *make your Torah learning a fixed practice*. He enumerates several ways a person can make his Torah learning constant.

While the simple understanding is to make our learning a fixed practice—not missing even one day of *limud haTorah*—the *Tiferes Yisrael* explains that קבע also denotes being fully present when learning Torah...as if to say that the person is here to stay. He is fully here in his learning. For learning with a scatteredness is extremely damaging to the acquisition of Torah and to the memorization of Torah. This is especially true if a person is scattered due to worries; he cannot learn properly, because he lacks שלימות הנפש.

“Making our learning קבע, *permanent*,” says the *Tiferes Yisrael*, means having our entire *nefesh* and being calm regarding any worries, so as to properly concentrate on learning. Because שלימות הנפש doesn't simply mean being serene—although serenity is a part of it—it means being fully present when learning.

## Being Fully Present

The *Tiferes Yisrael* further states that even when a person is overly joyful, he can't learn properly—because his excitement takes away his concentration... his *nefesh* is not fully present. It is occupied with other thoughts and feelings.

And this is the point we're discussing here: **The true definition of *menuchas hanefesh* is when a person has all parts of his *nefesh* in any**

**given situation that he finds himself.** Because excessive worry, and even excessive excitement, causes a scattering of the *nefesh* that interferes with Torah and *avodas Hashem*. **A true *ba'al bitachon* can always have the proper *menuchas hanefesh* and be fully present,** no matter the circumstances. This is the definition of *menuchas hanefesh*.

### With *Bitachon* We Can Always Access Our Entire *Nefesh*

When we understand this, we can also answer the following question: **How can we say that a person should always have *menuchas hanefesh*?** Aren't there times when a person *must* become excited? To feel fear in the proper time... to feel warmth in the proper time...? How can we say that a person should *always* be serene?!

This question is valid only if we think that *menuchas hanefesh* means that we're apathetic, and we don't move from place—to be an unfeeling person. But if we know the truth, **that *menuchas hanefesh* means to always have our *nefesh* in its completeness** then there is no question at all, for the *nefesh* can be present in all its parts, no matter the situation, despite what we feel.

There are several ways to awaken the *nefesh*. Sometimes, the *nefesh* and the heart must be aroused to *love* Hashem, and sometimes they must be awakened to *fear* Hashem; it's not always the same situation. **But a *Yid* who had *menuchas hanefesh* always finds himself with a complete *nefesh*; he has complete *ahavah*, complete *yirah*, etc.**

### The *Entire Nefesh* Pines for the Beis HaMikdash

For example, sometimes a person *must be* in a state of yearning and pining for the Final Redemption and the building of the Beis HaMikdash. He sings with tremendous yearning for Hashem to return to His sanctuary on This World. He is in a state of completeness of his soul as tears of yearning run down his cheeks—because his entire *nefesh* is present in that state.

In general, it is known that song is the pen of the soul. A song can



express the innermost feelings of the soul, whether when he is joyful or when he wants to *daven* for something or yearn for something. His singing gathers all the parts of his *nefesh* and unites them into one expression of his feeling.

This is the *definition* of *menuchas hanefesh*. For, beyond his *nefesh* not being scattered, *menuchas hanefesh* also means that a person is aware and cognizant of which way he is meant to be awakened at any given time—always being prepared and able to place *all* the parts of his *nefesh* and essence into that feeling or endeavor.

### Only Through *Bitachon*

And to attain that level of completeness and *menuchas hanefesh*, one must possess much *emunah* and *bitachon*, which enable all the parts of his soul to remain together and untouched. *Bitachon* that everything will be provided to him gives a person the calmness—not being rattled by anything from the outside—to hold together all the parts of his *nefesh*, ensuring that they all present completely in whatever a person must be doing at any given time.

It is *only* through *emunah* and *bitachon* that a person can attain completeness of the soul.

***Yishuv HaDa'as: The Ability of a Yid to Be Present, with Completeness of the Soul, in All Situations***

### A Time to Laugh and a Time to Cry

In truth, we already taught this concept by Shlomo HaMelech, who said: *עַתַּ לְבַכּוֹת וְעַתַּ לְשַׂחֹק, עַתַּ סְפוּד וְעַתַּ רִקּוּד, a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to wail and a time to dance (Koheles 3:4)*. That is, a person who endeavors to fulfill the Torah with the proper completeness of the *nefesh* must be aware of all the facets of his soul, and he must always be able to take out the aspect of the *nefesh* that is called for at any given time, and then be able to put it back in its place, and take out *another* aspect of his *nefesh* as it is needed.

Shlomo HaMelech teaches us: You *can* be the master of your feelings. You *can* work to have a *מח שליט על הלב*, emphasizing the aspect of the *nefesh* that is called for at any given time.

### *Menuchas Hanefesh* in Times of Joy and, *R"l*, in Times of Sadness

*Menuchas hanefesh* means that a person has the ability—the *מח שליט על הלב*—to go from a wedding to a *shivah* house and have his *nefesh* at his disposal in both places equally. When he is at the *chasunah*, with his entire essence he shares the feelings of joy of the *ba'alei simchah*, and when he is at the *shivah*, he empathizes with his entire *nefesh* with the sorrow of the mourners.

### Scatteredness of the Soul Takes Away Joy

But if a person doesn't have *menuchas hanefesh*, then he isn't present—neither for the wedding nor for the *nichum aveilim*. Being at the wedding, he didn't "take out" the aspect of his *nefesh* of "a time to dance." He went because he *had to go*... his neighbor made a wedding, and he didn't want to deal with the discomfort of meeting him afterward not having attended....

But during the time he spends at the wedding, he still doesn't have *menuchas hanefesh*. He's busy thinking about whether the *ba'al simchah* noticed him, and whether he was happy to see him. "If he knew how long I sat in traffic just to wish him *mazel tov* for one minute, he would have appreciated my coming. I drove all that way to wish him *mazel tov*, and he was busy talking to his brother-in-law," he thinks.

This is called *פיזור הנפש*, scattering of the soul! Of course, he can't properly serve Hashem with the "time-to-dance" aspect of his *nefesh*, because his *nefesh* is not serene.

### Everything Has Its Time—With *All* Aspects of the *Nefesh*

Had this person had proper completeness of the *nefesh*, all these calculations and thoughts wouldn't bother him: Right now, he has

the mitzvah of fulfilling the will of Hashem to bring joy to another *Yid* during his time of rejoicing—and his *nefesh* is present 100 percent, whether or not he was recognized or appreciated. “It doesn’t matter one way or another; I am doing what I need to do with one hundred percent of my *nefesh*.”

Afterward, he comes out of the wedding hall and changes into his regular clothing—able to “take out” the “time-to-wail” aspect of his *nefesh* as he makes a *shivah* call. He makes the effort to give it all that he’s got, to express true sorrow together with the *aveilim*.

When he was at the wedding, he didn’t feel that there’s a *shivah*, and when he’s with the mourners, he didn’t feel that there was a wedding. *This* means completeness of the soul!

### Tzaddikim Possess This Incredible Ability

When we observe tzaddikim, we can marvel at their ability to switch in and out of different modes, with their entire feeling and their entire essence.

We must analyze the stories that we hear about tzaddikim—how they’re able to sit with *Yidden* in pain and cry along with them! How they hold their hands, and truly immerse themselves in their situations and feel their pain.

Afterward, when they’re done empathizing with his pain, comes the *avodah* of being *mechazek* the *Yid*. In each *avodah*, they’re completely there with their entire *nefesh*.

### A Tzaddik Has *Bitachon* That Hashem Will Give Him the Right Words

When an average person hears about the pain of others, he is generally preoccupied with the thought “What on earth will I tell this person? What do I do?” **He can’t properly feel the pain of the other person because he is worried about what he will tell him in response.**

This is called scatteredness of the soul! Because you didn’t believe that

Hashem would give you the right words, you're already preoccupied with thinking what will happen soon. When someone is unburdening himself to you, you can't be completely with him because you're thinking, "I don't have anything helpful to tell him...."

Tzaddikim, who have the proper *sheleimus hanefesh*, thanks to their *emunah*, can be completely with another *Yid*, because they're assured that when it will come to being *mechazek* the person, Hashem will send them the right words. Tzaddikim can do this because they have complete *bitachon*, and this gives them all aspects of their *nefesh*.

### A *Yid* Can Move Seamlessly from One Situation to the Next

The *Gemara* (*Berachos* 10a) tells us that regarding to the *Ribbono shel Olam*, it says, "There is no artist like our Master, because **He creates a form within a form, and infuses life and soul into it.**"

The *Sfas Emes* says regarding this *Gemara* that Hashem has given all of us the ability to go from one form to the next form in a seamless manner. This is what is meant by "creating a form within a form." A *Yid* has the ability to change his essence from one moment to the next.

A *Yid* sits at the *סעודה המפסקת* filled with joy, eating and drinking and repeating the holy words of the *sefarim hakedoshim* regarding the great gift of forgiveness that Hashem is about to bequeath us.

But a few moments later, he comes to shul for *כל נדרי*, and he is a different person entirely—not to be recognized; the awe and the fear of the holy day are all over his face: When he is experiencing this awe, we cannot see the joy that he felt earlier.

**This is the ability of a *Yid* to transition seamlessly between situations, because he possesses completeness of the *nefesh*.** He knows that every moment has a different *avodah*, and he must invest all of himself into the call of the moment. He doesn't make any *cheshbonos* about later. This is *sheleimus hanefesh*, completeness of the soul: the ability to be at peace within oneself in all situations, being completely present.

## When the *Nefesh* Is Scattered, We Cannot Learn or Daven Properly

When we observe the tzaddikim, we must learn this *avodah* from them, and we must become accustomed to have this type of *sheleimus hanefesh* so that we can learn and daven and serve Hashem properly.

As long as a person doesn't have *menuchas hanefesh*, he is unable to learn and daven with proper *yishuv hada'as*. **In middle of learning Gemara, he takes out a Tehillim... and in middle of chazaras hashatz, he takes out a sefer to learn!** This stems from a scatteredness of the soul; he is unable to be completely present when doing what he must do.

When a person who has merited *menuchas hanefesh* learns Torah, he is 100 percent present regarding the Torah he is learning. When he davens, he is 100 percent present. And when he is at a *simchah*, he is 100 percent joyful and present. **Wherever he finds himself, he is there 100 percent, with all the aspects and parts of his nefesh.**

### The Pleasure of Being Completely Present

This is why וירא מנוחה כי טוב ויש שכמו לסבול *he saw tranquility that it was good... he bent his shoulder to bear*. When a person sees how pleasurable it is to have *menuchah*, **he is prepared to do the hard work to attain the emunah that will lead to this sheleimus hanefesh.**

We can get a taste of this pleasure when we watch a *badchan* at a wedding who amuses the audience with humor and wit, and everyone laughs... and moments later he evokes tremendous emotion from everyone, and they have tears running down their faces.

People enjoy such a *badchan*, one who has a range of emotions—because he can take over the people and all their senses and bring them fully to joy and laughter or to the heights of emotion. **The nefesh has great pleasure when it can immerse itself completely into a state;** this is the opposite of פיצור הנפש, and this immersion brings a person *menuchah* and tranquility.

The Ribbono shel Olam tells us that **we can work on our menuchas**

*hanefesh* so that we live with a state of Shabbos the entire week—to let go of everything around us and live with the current mission we have before us right now. Tzaddikim lived this way, and this is why they were able to transition between various situations with serenity and presence of mind.

### The Creation Changes Seamlessly

Rebbe Mendele of Vitebsk (*Pri HaAretz Parashas Veyeishev*) teaches us how a person can indeed attain this level of going from one emotion to the next with serenity and peace of mind.

It is when we believe that the *chiyus* of the entire universe is renewed by Hashem at every moment; every second, there is a completely new creation. **This second and the second after it have no connection, and they have no bearing on one another—because each is a new creation.**

This is the truth. The *avodah* of a person now and the *avodah* of a person yesterday have no connection—so much so that when a person neglects to perform a mitzvah, there is no way for him to rectify it. Because the *avodah* of later is different from the *avodah* of earlier. What you accomplish now is a new *avodah* for *this* moment.

### Seizing the Moment

This means that it's not only the person; the entire creation was created in this way, transitioning constantly, without letup. Every moment, it receives new *chiyus* from Hashem.

When we appreciate this fact, we understand we must seize every moment when it is front of us. It's a shame to think about anything else, because if I think about something else, I have not lived *this* moment!

If I sit in front of the *Gemara* and I think about things that I must take care of, I have lost the moment of *now*! Hashem has just renewed the creation from anew. Therefore, we must seize and utilize every minute. It is a shame to think about things that will happen later at the expense of seizing the *chiyus* of now.

## It's a Shame to Think of Things That Don't Belong Now

Just as **when a person approaches you on Shabbos and begins talking to you about a business deal, you immediately silence him and say, "Nu, it's Shabbos today. We can't think about it now."** "But..." he persists.... "There are no 'buts.'" On Shabbos we live with the feeling "as though all your work is done." This doesn't mean that this person is forgoing the deal... it is simply out of place to think about it at this moment.

The same applies during the week: If he is busy doing something that he must do, according to the *ratzon Hashem*, then there is no time to think about anything else. It only causes **פיזור הנפש**.

This person says to himself, "How does this come in now? Even if it is a *good* thing... a *ruchaniyus* thing... now is not the time for it. Now I am doing something else that I must do, and I don't have the time or capacity to think about anything outside of that."

### To Feel the Pain of Another Is Part of *Menuchas Hanefesh*

#### Not Being Indifferent to Another's Pain

Thus, it is clear that **attaining complete *menuchas hanefesh* is hard work**—because *menuchah* doesn't mean apathy, simply being unconcerned about anything. It means that a person can be fully present—with all facets of his *nefesh*—in any given situation.

And when a *Yid* is *zocheh* to attain *menuchah*, it is such a pleasure. He can rejoice in the joy of others, he can empathize completely with others, because in every situation, he is fully there.

And here is the place to address a common mistake that people make: When another *Yid* has a *tzarah*, *R"l*, many suddenly gain a newfound calm, and they tell themselves that this is *menuchas hanefesh*...but accord-

ing to the Torah, there are times when we are expressly not meant to be unconcerned; rather, we're meant to feel the anguish of another person. *This* is the completeness of the *nefesh*.

When a *Yid* unburdens to us about his *tzarah*, we aren't meant to be calm and say, "It will be okay... Hashem surely has a *cheshbon*, etc." Of course, there is a *cheshbon*, but it is demanded of *us* that we have compassion and empathy and feel his pain.

### **The Punishment for "Accepting" *Someone Else's* Pain**

When it comes to the pain of another person, we are meant to be right there with them. The concept of קבלת יסורים באהבה is meant for our own challenges, as the following story illustrates:

The Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch had two *chassidim* in the city of Vitebsk, Reb Leib and Reb Shmuel. Both did well in business, each had ample *parnassah*.

But it happened that Reb Shmuel fell in with bad actors who swindled him out of a great deal of money. So, his friend Reb Leib journeyed to the Rebbe and related that his friend had suffered a great monetary loss. "Surely everything is from Above, and it is surely for the good. But still, it is a *rachmanus* on him," he said.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe didn't respond. But soon after Reb Leib returned home, a blaze broke out in one of his factories, causing him an astounding loss of 50,000 rubles. He went running to the Rebbe, this time beside himself, "Rebbe! It's terrible!" he exclaimed.

To this the Rebbe responded, "When your friend lost money, I didn't hear the same emotion from you.... When it came to someone else, you said that it's all *bashert*, and it's all for the good. But now, when it comes to your own loss, you're suddenly beside yourself. It should really be the opposite: When you're speaking about your own loss, you should have *bitachon*, and when you're addressing your friend's loss, you should be upset."



The Rebbe added, “You should know that the entire reason for the fire in your factory was because of those words that you said—because there’s a tradition from the Ba’al Shem Tov that when a person ordains something for his friend, that fate will come back to him, and since you said that it was meant to be for your friend, you suffered a similar loss. It was a punishment for ‘accepting’ your friend’s *yissurim*.”

### The Demand from *Shamayim* to Feel Another’s Pain

A similar story is related about Rebbe Mechele of Zlochev:

Rebbe Mechele of Zlochev felt that, on a certain occasion, his *tefillos* weren’t reaching their intended destination, they weren’t being accepted On High. He was very perturbed about this, until his father came to him in a dream and revealed the reason. “Know that a while back, a *Yid* came to you and unburdened himself about his *tzaros*, and rather than empathize with him and share his pain, you told him that it was due to his *aveiros*... that suffering doesn’t happen for no reason. He surely must have done something to deserve it. This is causing your *tefillos* not to be accepted as usual.”

Surely the tzaddik had to guide this *Yid* on a path of repentance for his ways. But, according to his lofty level, it was required that he should first empathize with the *Yid* with his entire essence, with *sheleimus hanefesh*, and only later give him *mussar*.

### The *Ba’al Bitachon* Must Take Extra Care

This is an area that takes *avodah*—especially for a *Yid* who works on his *emunah* and *bitachon*. This is a *Yid* who learns *Chovos HaLevavos Sha’ar HaBitachon*, and toils on his *emunah* and *bitachon*, and when he comes home, his wife complains about certain aggravating things that happened to her during the day. Sometimes, he may be inclined to laugh those things off. “Why are you being silly?” he may want to say. “Do all these things really matter in life?! There is a Ribbono shel Olam on This World. He runs everything. Everything is *bashert!*”

This is not the right approach, and it causes problems later – because this person is not exhibiting empathy and understanding to someone else’s pain. He is having “*bitachon*” at someone else’s expense. And it is all because this person has not employed the completeness of his *nefesh* such that when a person unburdens himself to him, he should feel his pain. As mentioned above, one must be able to transition seamlessly between modes.

### ***Bittul* to Hashem According to the Situation**

Rebbe Pinchas of Koretz would say that when we plant a kernel in the ground, it becomes completely rotten before it sprouts forth a beautiful sapling. Because this is the way the world works: It is ever changing – but it must first have *bittul* to Hashem, it has no hubris. It has nothing. Only then can a new creation sprout.

The same applies to every *Yid*. If he has proper *bittul* to Hashem, then he can bring his entire essence to any given situation, placing himself wholly into the state where the Ribbono shel Olam wants him to be at that moment.

### **The שלימות הנפש of Tzaddikim**

Rebbe Henich of Aleksander said regarding his Rebbe, the Rebbe Rav Bunim of Peshischa: **“In my Rebbe, I saw at the same time love, fear, joy, humility, goodness, and displeasure.”**

Rebbe Henich was able to see that his Rebbe possessed all aspects of his *nefesh* with a wholeness. All these various modes and *middos* did not emanate from a scatteredness, but the opposite: He had *sheleimus hanefesh* on such a lofty level that he was able to transition to and from contrasting emotions seamlessly.

The Torah that a person acquires guides him in always knowing precisely what Hashem wants from him at any given moment, and thus he can move deftly from one state to the next. There’s a *nefesh* that we need for Torah, and there’s a *nefesh* that we need for *tefillah*. There’s a *nefesh* that we need when conversing with a friend, and there’s a *nefesh* that we

need when we're at home with the family, and so forth. **Every time, we "take out" a different *nefesh*, and each time we are fully there.**

If a *Yid* lives with the proper *bitachon*, and he has *bittul* to Hashem, he will find the וירא מנוחה כי טוב. He has incredible serenity and tranquility in every *matzav*, and this brings him tremendous pleasure and *siyatta diShmaya*.



י"א חשוון

הילולא דרחל אמנו

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## Giving to Others in the Ways of Rachel Imeinu

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### Learning from the *Avos* and *Imahos*

According to *Yalkut Shimoni*, 11 Cheshvan marks the *yahrzeit* of Rachel Imeinu – indeed, the *parashiyos* we are currently learning are filled with the stories of the heroism and the splendor of our forefathers and foremothers. Klal Yisrael is built upon their shoulders by learning from their example; as we are taught, מעשה אבות סימן לבנים, *the actions of our fathers are instructive to their children.*

**This is the reason the Torah teaches us these stories – solely so that we should learn from them and walk in their footsteps.** The Torah didn't tell us *all* their stories, only the ones that are instructive to us.

Regarding Rachel Imeinu, the Torah brings the entire incident where-in she gave the signs to her sister Leah – knowing that with this she was forfeiting her marriage to Yaakov Avinu and becoming the mother of the Shevatim of Klal Yisrael.

But the *sefarim hakedoshim* add a point that is also apparent from the *pesukim*: When later Rachel asked Leah to give her the *dudaim* that Reuven had brought, Leah angrily said: המעט קחתך את אישי ולקחת גם את דודאי בני, *was your taking my husband insignificant – and now to take even my son's dudaim!* And Rachel remained silent.

The question arises: Didn't Leah feel any gratitude to Rachel for what she had done for her?! Is this the way to speak to someone who had given her so much?!

## The True Level of Rachel's Sacrifice

From this, the *sefarim hakedoshim* conclude that when Rachel gave the *simanim* to her sister, she didn't tell her everything. Rachel didn't tell Leah that she, Rachel, was really meant to marry Yaakov, and that he had given her the *simanim* for this purpose. She simply related these signs to Leah in a matter-of-fact way, so she would know what to do with them—all so she should feel no shame, embarrassment, or pain. **Thus, Leah never knew the extent of Rachel's sacrifice on her behalf!**

**Can we imagine such a level of generosity?! A person gives up her entire future to save another person from embarrassment—and does not even divulge a word to the recipient of that kindness—and, furthermore, hears complaints and remains silent.**

The Torah tells us this so we will know that Klal Yisrael was and is built through this type of sacrifice and מעביר על מדותיו.

The first insight we must take from this incident is that so **often it seems that we're giving up everything, and we will be left with nothing. But in the end, we will receive far more than we gave up**—as happened in the case of Rachel Imeinu.

## Giving for Giving's Sake

On a practical level, in His Torah, HaKadosh Baruch Hu is teaching us how to give, how a person should give of himself to others. Indeed, in *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Tzedakah (Yoreh Deah 249:7)*, we learn that the most perfect and altruistic tzedakah is one in which the giver doesn't know to whom he gives and the receiver doesn't know from whom he received.

In truth, this is only logical. For when one gives money to another person and helps him establish himself, that person feels indebted to him, feeling that he must give him something in return—thus his giving is not complete; it's somewhat transactional. But when a person gives in a hidden manner, the recipient doesn't feel any need to reciprocate, and such giving is more complete.

## Falsehood Cannot Stand

Often, a person can't divulge what he has done for another person because the recipient will become humiliated due to the nature of what he has done for him, and sometimes it involves *lashon hara* about others. In such a case, a person should never feel cheated by not divulging anything to recipient. He shouldn't think, "If only this person knew what I did for him...." To the contrary! Know that it's so much better for you that he *doesn't* know what you did for him.

We must battle with the falsehood that the *yetzer hara* always seeks to propagate, telling us that *everything* must be publicized, and one must be honored and lauded for everything that he does. Today, people publicize about themselves even things that they *didn't* do....

But even if you were involved in some *askanus* ... is it really necessary to spread the word far and wide?! Sometimes, even if a person only stood in the same street in which the *shadchan* suggested the *shidduch*, he nevertheless takes all the credit for the *shidduch*.... This type of conduct is repugnant to any *yerei Shamayim*.

## The Purpose of Giving

But we want to learn from our *Imahos*, we want to emulate them, and, like them, become vehicles for the *Shechinah HaKedoshah*. **We do chessed and we give tzedakah because we want to emulate the Ribbono shel Olam, and through this merit pray that the Shechinah should rest upon us.** This is the *real reason* we invest in *tzedakah*. Not so we should feel good, not because it will bring us satisfaction, and not because we *must* give him lest he die... and the entire world is resting upon us. A *Yid* invests in *cheded only* because he wants to emulate the Ribbono shel Olam—and just as HaKadosh Baruch Hu gives without the expectation of anything in return, so too, we do our best to do the same.

We give, and we give again... we *daven* for our friends even without their knowledge (We can tell a friend once a while to give him the good feeling that someone cares about him—but our giving isn't at all based on his knowledge thereof).

## The Best Type of Giving

**Even better is when the recipient**—who doesn't know what you've done for him—**comes over to you and accosts you for not doing anything for him...** and you remain quiet... or you say, "*Bli neder*, I will see what I can do...." How wonderful is that? How altruistic and perfect it is? *This* is the *chessed* that the Torah talks about. *This* is the *chessed* of Rachel Imeinu.

This is a *Yiddishe* response, a response that brings a person *shefah*—and everyone can fulfill this type of *chessed* in his own way, because it's not dependent on quantity. One needn't be wealthy in order to do *chessed*—one only needs to be a *Yid*. The vessels to carry this out are found in every *Yid's* heart. You can give a person in need a good word... you can give to him by *davening* for him. **There's an endless list of things you can do for another person without him even knowing about it.**

We can be active for the *shidduchim* of their sons and daughters... making calls, suggesting *shidduchim*... and he doesn't even need to know about it—and *you* will never know whether your efforts ever bore fruits. **All you know is that you did altruistic and unconditional *chessed* for another person.**

**It is a great punishment when a person does something good and others become aware of it**—so says the *Chovos HaLevavos* (Ch. 5)—because it detracts from the greatness of the mitzvah. And although one cannot always function in secrecy, he must know he should make the effort to do his *chessed* away from the limelight. **If one wants to be a true *Yid***—following the pathway of our *Avos* and *Imahos*—**he must invest in this type of giving**, which builds the world.

## The Ability to Change the World

We must be vigilant not to learn from the ways of "the street."

In our times—living as we do in a world that is so foolish and childish—when the urge to publicize everything is so strong, it is easy to think that we're not making a difference in the world by doing good things in a modest and hidden manner. After all, we may think, there

are others who publicize themselves in a far more obvious manner.

But we must know that by doing good things in the ways of our *Avos* and *Imahos*, we are tipping the scales of the world; **we change the entire atmosphere in the world**. And so, if the world is low, it is not enough to be just a little bit better....

A person may say, "I'm not like my friend who publicized himself all over... I told only my friends. My friend made a *siyum haShas* for six hundred people, and then disseminated the pictures—while I made a *siyum only* for my *kehillah*." No. Look to live higher—and in this way you will elevate the entire world.

**A world in which there are people who do altruistic *chessed*, without anyone's knowledge, is a different world entirely—a far purer world.**

### Lighting Up the Darkness

We must internalize the fact that **we influence others not only through direct words and actions**. *Tzaddikim* purify the world through their *avodas Hashem* behind closed doors—and in this way they infuse a spirit of *teshuvah* into the hearts of their fellow *Yidden* in all four corners of the world. And it is not only *tzaddikim*—but it is a spiritual rule of the way our dark world functions. **When we add light, the darkness is dissipated.** מעט מן האור דוחה הרבה מן החושך. It doesn't work according to the rules of the material world, which believes we must publicize the light in order to illuminate. That is not how the world is purified. We illuminate the darkness of the world by doing *chessed*, *ruchniyus* actions with *mesirus nefesh*. A person who lights a candle in the darkness—the amount of good he does for himself and his family cannot be overestimated. But **the main thing is to think about how much G-dliness is brought into the world through this.**

### The Eternal Reward

Rachel Imeinu's reward is one that continues to pay dividends to this day! It is an eternal reward. She received a reward that is worth more than all the money in the world. She merited to be on an exceptional-



ly high level of connection to Yaakov Avinu, and to be the mother of Yosef HaTzaddik. And she remains our mother through our bitter and difficult *galus*, as we learn in the *pesukim* in *Sefer Yirmiyahu*: קול ה' אמר ה' כה ברמה נשמע נהי בכי תמרורים רחל מבכה על בניה מאנה להנחם על בניה כי איננו *Thus said Hashem, "A voice is heard on high, wailing, bitter weeping, Rachel weeps for her children, she refuses to be consoled for her children, for they are gone"* (*Yirmiyahu* 31:14-15).

In the *zechus* of her incredible sacrifice for her sister, Rachel merited the power of *tefillah* that no one else did—and it is she who continues to storm the Heavens for our return to Tzion. And we, for our part, turn to our Mother Rachel, knowing that her tears will bring the גאולה השלימה.

**The more we continue to emulate her ways, the more strength she receives**—for she has with what to approach the Ribbono shel Olam and implore Him to finally redeem us from the bitter *galus* and bring us the Final Redemption.

