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**The *Ba'al Bitachon* Sees Himself  
as a Custodian Over His Money**

*“I Don't Know if They Made Things Better”*

In the previous *shiur*, we learned the words of the *Chovos HaLevavos* which tell us that one of the greatest barriers between a person and his Creator is one's reliance on his money. We cited the teaching from earlier tzaddikim who teach us that ***bitachon on money is mamish like avodah zarah***—for when relying on his money, a person is in essence investing his hopes in a force other than the Ribbono shel Olam... essentially a form of *avodah zarah, chas v'shalom*.

As noted, there were tzaddikim who taught that **the *yetzer hara* of *avodah zarah* wasn't actually killed entirely... he was exchanged for another form of idol worship—the worship of and the lust for money.**

When the Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch heard this, he said, **“I don't know if the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah* made things easier by exchanging the lust for *avodah zarah* for that of a desire and pull for money....** By this he meant to convey how severe this *ta'avah* is, and how grave is the reliance on money.

**For the *Ba'al Bitachon*,  
Money Is Not an Impediment to *Avodas Hashem***

The *Chovos HaLevavos* enumerates a number of spiritual benefits a

person derives from having *bitachon*, and then he turns to the material benefits that come to the *ba'al bitachon*. Now he tells us the final spiritual benefit from *bitachon*:

**“One of them is that having lots of money will not impede him from having *bitachon* in Hashem.”** The *ba'al bitachon* has the spiritual benefit that even if he does have money, it will not get in the way of his *bitachon*. A person who doesn't have *bitachon* lives with an incredible lack in his *avodas Hashem*, for if he has money, it hinders him from having proper reliance on Hashem. But the *ba'al bitachon* continues to serve Hashem with completeness, and his money won't make any problems in this regard.

And why is this?

Because: מפני שאינו סומך על הממון, *he does not rely upon his money*. And the moment that a person doesn't rely upon his money, it ceases to be a barrier between him and the Ribbono shel Olam. He continues to serve his Creator just like the person who doesn't have money.

### A Custodian for an Unspecified Amount of Time

The *Chovos HaLevavos* continues, explaining that the *ba'al bitachon* sees his money as being entrusted to him for an unspecified amount of time, and he is only a custodian to guard it in the right way—**“utilizing it in very specific ways, for specific purposes, for a set amount of time.”**

If the Ribbono shel Olam were to command him to give his money to another person, he will know that this is his calling, his mission. He is a simple guardian, after all. And when the Ribbono shel Olam—Who has entrusted him with this mission—asks that he transfer his money to someone else, he, the custodian, stands at the ready to carry out the orders.

The *Chovos HaLevavos* uses the words **“for a set amount of time.”** Because one of the elements of being a custodian is that—in addition to knowing that the money isn't his—he knows that deposit can be taken back at any time, and he is prepared for this.

The same applies to the *ba'al bitachon*. Aside from viewing his money as not being his own, he keeps in mind at all times that the depositor can come and take it back at any time: It will not remain here forever! And if that happens, all he will say is, "***B'seder. I hope I did a good job guarding your deposit.***"

### ***The Gabbai Tzedakah Doesn't Expect Gratitude***

Continues the *Chovos HaLevavos*, יואם יתמיד אצלו לא יבעט בעבורו, *even if the money remains with him for a very long time, he won't rebel over this.*" That is, he won't change his attitude simply because he has had the money for a long time. He retains his humility and his identity as a simple custodian of the money, and he remains a dedicated *eved Hashem*.

Another element of recognizing that we're only custodians is demonstrated by the fact that **"He will not expect gratitude from the person to whom he was commanded to give money."** The *ba'al bitachon*, who recognizes that he's only a guardian over the money, will never expect gratitude or anything else in return from someone whom he helped with his money—because he knows that the money is not his own.

An example of this is when a wealthy person hires a *gabbai tzedakah* to deal with the petitioners who come to his doors, since he doesn't have the time or patience to deal with them directly—and the *gabbai* writes out all the checks. Now, suppose that his boss calls him up one day and says, "Know that so-and-so will come to you today, and you should give him such and such an amount." Will the *gabbai* feel that *he* has given *tzedakah* here? Why would he? It is clear that he's only a messenger... it's not his money.

The next time he encounters the recipient, he won't expect a "thank you," because he knows that it wasn't his money, and it all has nothing to do with him. And this is what the *Chovos HaLevavos* refers to with the next words: ולא יבקש עליו גמול הודאה ושבח, ***he will not expect reciprocation, thanks, or praise.*** Just like the *gabbai tzedakah* in our *marshal*, the *ba'al bitachon* will view his money as not being his own; thus, he does not expect praise and thanks from the recipients of his largesse.

## The *Ba'al Bitachon* Is Grateful, and He Doesn't Blame Anyone

What *does* the *ba'al bitachon* do? **“He gives thanks to his Creator for making him a conduit for his kindness.”** The *ba'al bitachon* gives thanks to the Ribbono shel Olam for having had the merit to be the messenger to help another person. One would think that he wouldn't need to give thanks, since, after all, he was burdened with the responsibility of caring for Hashem's money. Says the *Chovos HaLevavos*, **you must thank Hashem for this privilege—because He has made you the conduit through which to send blessings to others.** So, thank Hashem because you can be a part of it, because you're a link in this chain of bringing salvation to others.

Continues the *Chovos HaLevavos*: **“And if he does lose his money, he will not worry, and he will not mourn the loss of his money—he will only give thanks to his Creator when He takes the money from him, just as he gave thanks when He gave the money to him. He will rejoice in his lot, he will not wish ill on anyone else, and he won't be envious of others.”**

Sometimes, when people suffer a loss, they seek to blame others for it. But the *ba'al bitachon* knows that it's only from Hashem. Likewise, suffering a loss may bring a person to becoming jealous of others who have held onto their money—but the *ba'al bitachon* knows that this is a direct contradiction to *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem. The *tzaddikim* explain that the last of the *Aseres haDibros*—the commandment not to be jealous of others—is directly linked to the first commandment: *Anochi Hashem Elokecha*, believing in Hashem. One stems from the other: If you believe in Hashem, you won't be jealous of others.

The *Chovos HaLevavos* now brings the words of Shlomo HaMelech, צדיק אוכל לשובע נפשו, *a tzaddik eats to satiate his soul* (*Mishlei* 13:25). The *tzaddik* understands that everything he was given is for the welfare of his soul, not his body; therefore it makes no difference to him that he lost his money. Previously Hashem wanted him to serve Him *with* money, and now Hashem wants him to serve Him *without* money.



## Losing Money Isn't Necessarily Due to Sin

Parenthetically, when the *Chovos HaLevavos* talks about a person who “lost his money,” he isn’t referring to someone who lost every penny and became destitute—in which case a major reckoning is in order. He is referring to a case in which a person was rich and went on to lose his excessive wealth. In this case, it seems from the *Chovos HaLevavos* that one does not need to “examine his deeds.”

This person was simply a custodian for this money for a set time, and now he ceased to be that guardian. He may think that perhaps he didn’t do a good enough job as a custodian... but this is not necessarily the cause. As noted above, according to the *Chovos HaLevavos*, the reason the wealth was taken away is because the Ribbono shel Olam previously wanted his *avodah* to be *with* money, and now He wants the *avodah* to be *without* money—for reasons known to Him alone.

## Every Stage of Life Has Its Mission

This is just like in the life of every person. There are different eras in which different *avodah's* are called for. When he’s raising young children, he especially needs to work on his patience and on his anger, etc. When the *Aibishter* helps and his children grow older, life is different, and there are different *nisyonos*... his *avodas Hashem* is of a different nature, according to his current circumstances. **He doesn’t think that there is something wrong simply because his *avodas Hashem* has changed.**

**He understands that in the previous stage of his life he had one calling and mission, and in his current stage of life, the expectations are of another nature.** The Ribbono shel Olam wants to purify a person’s heart, and thus gives him all sorts of situations throughout his life.

## There Once Was the *Nisayon* of Wealth; Today They Want Something Else

The same applies to a person who once had ample money, and later it was taken from him. Why was he initially given money? The Ribbono shel Olam gives everyone what they need. **Why was this person given millions of dollars that he doesn’t need in order to live?** It wasn’t given

to him for it to sit in his bank account; it's clear that there is a mission for him with this money... a *nisayon* of wealth. And this *nisayon* is his current mission in life—to do the right thing with his money.

Later, when a new stage of life arrives, and he loses his wealth, he receives another mission. Now there is a *new nisayon* from Above. This didn't necessarily happen because he did something wrong. The *Chovos HaLevavos* explains that he simply has a *different avodas Hashem* at this stage of his life.

### The *Ba'al Bitachon's* Clarity That He Was Never in Charge

#### How Is a Feeling of Custodianship Connected to *Bitachon*?

The *Chovos HaLevavos* establishes a rule for us that the *ba'al bitachon* always feels that the money that he has is merely deposited with him for safekeeping. But this is a concept that we must better understand. For one may ask, **what does this feeling of guardianship have to do with *bitachon*?** A person can simply—without necessarily learning *Chovos HaLevavos*—reach the conclusion that he is merely a custodian over the money.

We can give a *shiur* on the topic of money without mentioning a word about *bitachon*. We can explain in very simple terms that **if the Ribbono shel Olam gave a person lots of money, it is clear that he must do good things with that money.** Why does the *Chovos HaLevavos* connect this feeling with the concept of *bitachon*—implying that only when a person has proper *bitachon* will he feel that he is a mere custodian over the money?

Generally, we understand *bitachon* to mean that a person believes that Hashem will never abandon him and will always provide for him. **What does this have to do with the belief and the understanding that the money is not his, and he is only guarding it?!**

## The First Expression of Ownership:

### *“I Have Acquired It”*

To understand this, we must make an introduction: **There are two ways that one declares that something belongs to him** and is under his ownership.

The **first way** one declares that he has taken ownership of something is when he paid money for it... he has acquired it. According to the Torah, when a person acquires something... whether he worked for it or found it in the street and picked it up, etc., it is now his for all intents and purposes. **It is his, because he has acquired it.**

## The Second Expression of Ownership:

### *“I Decide What to Do with It”*

The **second *mehalech*** of a person expressing his ownership over something is **when he has the power to decide what to do with it**. He can decide to give it to another person, or he may decide not to allow anyone else to use it.

When a person buys a *sefer*, he inscribes his name in it, and beneath that he may choose to write, “No one may use this *sefer* without my permission,” or he may decide to write, “One may use it on the condition that he returns it to its place.” Who is this person to be writing this?! The answer lies right above it: Look at the name. He is the owner of the *sefer*! And since he is the owner, he has the right to decide what happens to it. **This definition of ownership is, “I am the one who decides what happens to this item.”**

This feeling of ownership of the things around us are so ingrained in us... even from childhood. We see that **even toddlers and small children begin grabbing objects from others as they call out: “It’s mine!”**

## *Bitachon* Clarifies the Truth: We Haven’t Acquired It

But it is specifically the *ba’al bitachon* who understands that **both of these expressions of ownership do not apply to us and our possessions in This World:**

**First**, the *ba'al bitachon* understands that the money and possessions are *still not* his own—even if he has worked to acquire them. While the Torah gives us the concept of *kinyan*, acquisition, the Torah also says לה' הארץ ומלואה, *the world and everything in it belongs to Hashem*.

The *ba'al bitachon* understands very well that it belongs to him only because the Ribbono shel Olam gave it to him—but **it really belongs to Him!**

A child, who has a childish worldview, will snatch an object and say, “It’s mine.” But the older and more mature he becomes, he will look at things with a more G-dly perspective. He won’t be so alarmed when people ask him for *tzedakah* from his money. **“Yes, it’s my money... but other people can use it, because nothing on this world is truly mine, even my own shirt!** It’s all a deposit, and I am the guardian. It was given to me by Hashem; I did not acquire it for myself.”

### *Bitachon Clarifies the Truth:* **“I Don’t Decide What Happens”**

**Second**, the *ba'al bitachon* knows that even when he has already taken possession of something, **the Ribbono shel Olam can take it away at any moment**—as we see all the time that people lose everything they own from one moment to the next, *R”l*, because Hashem has decided to take it away.

The *ba'al bitachon* knows that **even if he has acquired it, and even if he has worked hard for it, it was only with the *siyatta diShmaya* from the Ribbono shel Olam, and it all remains in His hands**. I am only a simple custodian for this deposit.

### **A Clear Perspective with No Illusions**

Sometimes when we ask some people for *tzedakah*, they feel that they’ve worked for decades for this money...and now you’re coming to me with a story about making a wedding. “If you’d sweat for the money for 20-30 years, you would *also* have money! You think it happened on its own?! I worked hard, day and night, for this money....

With my ten fingers I established a business. If you'll work, you will also have."

But the *ba'al bitachon* has no such thoughts. He doesn't think thoughts of כחי ועוצם ידי, *my power and the might of my hands*, because **he knows clearly that he couldn't do anything on his own**. How *did* the money come to me?! Clearly, the *Aibishter* sent it to me. The *ba'al bitachon* has a totally different perspective on his money. **He always feels that the Ribbono shel Olam gave it to him, and He can always take it back**. I have no ownership of it, and even when I decide to do something, the Ribbono shel Olam can decide otherwise.

### We're Not in Control

The *ba'al bitachon* clearly understands that he doesn't own any of it. It's just like a person who is the administrator of a *mossad* and thinks that he is managing it all—only later to find out that everyone is running rings around him...they have meetings where they decide what to do behind his back, while the entire time he thought that he was running it all. So too, any illusion that we are running our lives and our money is just that: an illusion.

When a person internalizes this truth, he lives with the truth, not with falsehood. He understands that his money is only a deposit, given to him for stewardship—because he has done nothing for his money. His excessive *hishtadlus* has done nothing. If he'd have done less *hishtadlus*, he would have just as much money.

Every penny that he owns is only because the Ribbono shel Olam has entrusted it to him, and at any moment He can take it back—because, after all, it is only a deposit.



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## The *Seudos Shabbos* Are Times for Drawing Families Close

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### A Time for Reconciliation

The Midrash (*Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim* Ch. 888) teaches us, “The *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (139:16) says, ימים יוצרו ולו אחד בהם, *though they will be fashioned through many days, to Him they are all one*; this “one” special day refers to the holy day of Shabbos, as it says זכור את יום השבת לקדשו. How is this? A person does his work during the six weekdays, and he rests on the Seventh Day. **He reconciles with his children and with the members of his household.**”

From here we learn that—in addition to being a day of holiness and elevation between man and his Creator—an essential aspect of Shabbos Kodesh is to reconcile with one’s family, so that there will be closeness and love between them. This must be the *avodah* of Shabbos Kodesh.

### A Joyful Countenance

Among *ehrlliche Yidden, yirei Shamayim*, we have always seen an ability to have their innate elevation, seriousness, and *yiras Shamayim* go hand-in-hand with a joyful façade, greeting each person with a smile. They were never sour as a result of their seriousness in *avodas Hashem*—as the *Chovos HaLevavos* says, “**The *chassid* hides his worry in his heart, and his joy is etched on his face.**”

Just as the *chassid* doesn’t allow his worry and mourning over the *Churban Beis HaMikdash* to color his interactions with others—he maintains a joyful countenance—so too, when it comes to serious matters of *avodas Hashem*, of deep thought and meditation (such as the holiness and

the closeness to Hashem that are unique to Shabbos), the *chassid* fulfills the exhortation of וגילו ברעדה *rejoice when there is trembling* (Tehillim 2:11).

This is especially important for us as we seek to imbue the *kedushah* of Shabbos into our children. There is no better vehicle for this than the exalted *seudos* of Shabbos, and the more one is close and loving to his children, the more he will succeed in the task of conveying and transmitting to them the holiness and the aura of Shabbos Kodesh. Thus, together with any *madreigos* a person may experience on Shabbos, joy and love are essential as well.

### Holiness Isn't Acquired by Force

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* (*Parashas Emor*) explains that *kedushah* **isn't something that can be acquired by force**. And we learn from here that **when we seek to instill *kedushah* or appreciation for matters of holiness into our children, it is not accomplished by force or pressure**. It works differently: When a person is in an elevated state, he is able to accept *kedushah*, and it remains with him for the long term.

Furthermore, **Rebbe Pinchas of Koretz** said that when a person lashes out at his children, when he expresses anger as he corrects their behaviors, when he threatens to punish them for not behaving properly, **a spirit of *tumah* rests upon him, and when he is *mechanech* his children from a place of anger and *tumah*, he transmits the *tumah* to his children**—accomplishing the complete *opposite* of what he intended!

One who wishes to imbue *kedushah* into his children at the *seudos Shabbos* must do so from a place of joy and an elevated spirit.

### “Playing With the Children”

To understand this a bit deeper, we bring the words of the Gemara (*Nedarim* 37a), which teach us that one may not learn new material with one's children over Shabbos; rather they should review what they learned during the week. The reason is “so **that the fathers should have time to play with the children.**”

The **Ran** explains: If they review only what they have already learned, it will be easier for them, and this will free the fathers to play with their children.

### The Difficulty in New Learning Causes Pressure

Let us try to analyze and understand this Gemara.

In general, when a person learns something new, his brain must work harder, because it now needs to grasp new concepts. It is only *after* he has internalized these new ideas and reviews what he has learned that everything flows much more easily. But when learning something for the first time, it is very unfamiliar, and it is difficult to grasp. We know the rule that *כל ההתחלות קשות*, *all beginnings are difficult*. And this is because of the unfamiliarity therein.

And difficulty leads to tension and pressure.

We can all visualize how it looks in a home in which the parents want the children to sit perfectly still at the table, “as is befitting a *seudas Shabbos*.” No one should grab and no one should fight and no one should complain....

Or... a person heard that the time of *Kiddush* is a time of great holiness, a time when we attest and bear witness to the creation of Heaven and earth. He wants this belief in Hashem’s Sovereignty to seep into the hearts of his children... and he also heard that it’s very nice when the children look into the *siddur* and follow along. And thus, he becomes very upset when the children don’t go along with this practice.

### New or Old?

Let us ask ourselves: This person who yells at his children to sit properly... **is he teaching them “new material or old ...”**? Is he conveying something easy or pressured? On Shabbos, events must flow nicely – as we have learned above.

A father may ask, “When, if not now, should I teach him? On Tuesday?! On Shabbos we make *Kiddush*, and I must be *mechanech* him.” This



is a good point, and we must find the right time and place. Perhaps speaking with the child during the week is actually a *good* idea. After all, *he* hasn't heard the *shiur* about the greatness of Shabbos that *you* have heard. **This is "new material," and we don't teach new material on Shabbos.**

The same applies when children become somewhat impatient at the Shabbos table when the father is telling a long story. Any rebbi or teacher will tell you that you can't go on speaking for too long... but this father doesn't have that experience, and so he goes on and on...expecting them to sit patiently. **You're teaching "new material" ... which we do not do on Shabbos.**

### A Time for Everything

There's a time for everything. Chazal (*Sanhedrin* 107b) have told us an ironclad rule in *chinuch*: ימין מקרבת ושמאל דוחה, [*Regarding*] *the yetzer hara, a child, and a woman, the right hand must draw them close while the left hand pushes away*. The *Mefarshim* (see *Yad Ramah*, *ibid.*) explain that the right hand must draw them close *more so* than the left hand pushes them away.

There's a time when the right hand must draw close, and there's a time when the left hand pushes away; a time for closeness and a time for distance. And the Midrash is teaching us that Shabbos Kodesh is a time for closeness and love—**a time for "the right hand to draw close."**

Similarly, when the **Ran** taught that Shabbos is a time for playing with the children, it means to play with them on *their* level—not on your own. Otherwise, it's not playing... it's abuse....

In our times, there is much debate about how much to utilize the ימין מקרבת, *drawing close with the right hand*. What to do when a child does something very wrong... and so forth. But it is clear from the Gemara and the *Mefarshim* that Shabbos Kodesh is a time for closeness, love, and joy with our children.

## A Father Who Is Absolved from *Chinuch*

Once, a father came to the great **Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach, zt"l**, and complained that his son wasn't behaving properly. Rav Shlomo Zalman was able to hear from the father's tone that he constantly badgers his son without letup, and he told him, "Imagine that your son is your guest. Would you speak to him this way?" To this, the father replied. "But he *isn't* my guest. He is my son, and I'm obligated to be *mechanech* him."

When Rav Shlomo Zalman heard this, he firmly said, "I am prepared to give you a document, with my signature, attesting that you're absolved from being *mechanech* your son" –and he went on to write precisely such a document. The stunned father took the paper and began to exit the room, when the *Gadol* called him back edited the document: He erased the word "absolved" from *chinuch*, and in its place wrote *אסור לחנך*, *you are prohibited from chinuch!*

This is an amazing story! Rav Shlomo Zalman, the great gaon – with his incredible love and heart – understood that this father was incapable of *chinuch*. **He wasn't engaged in *chinuch*... he was ceaselessly badgering and correcting his child.**

Similarly, we must know that Shabbos is not a time for any of this. It is at time for singing with children, a time for joy and love with our children.

## The Power of Drawing Children Close

A *yungerman* related the following incredible story:

When I was a *bachur*, I had a friend who was slipping badly in his *Yiddishkeit*, spiraling steadily downward. A long time went by in which I hadn't seen him, and one day I encountered him – and he was unrecognizable... he was dressed like a regular *chassidisher yungerman*, indistinguishable from everyone else in the community.

I had to ask for the background, and this is what he told me. “One Shabbos at the *seduah*, I got the urge to smoke a cigarette. I went out to the porch and I smoked a cigarette. Returning to the table, I reeked of cigarette smoke—but my father said not one word about it. Instead, he passed me a plate of soup and said, ‘You must be dried out... have some soup.’

“That gesture of love stunned me so deeply that on the spot I decided that I could never hurt my father ever again—and I immediately turned my life around.”

### All Your (*Chinuch*) Work Is Done

Indeed, there’s a place for ... שמאל דוחה sometimes we *must* correct our children. We can’t allow them to do whatever comes to their minds. But the שמאל דוחה belongs to the rest of the days of the week. On Shabbos, we must only conduct ourselves with ימין מקרבת.

If a person is *mechanech* his children on Shabbos in a manner of שמאל דוחה, with sternness and strictness, **he should yell at himself, Nu! Shabbos! This is not the time for this!** “But it is my responsibility,” he will say. No, **on Shabbos this is not your responsibility.** The Shabbos concept of עשויה כל מלאכתך applies to the area of *chinuch* as well. It’s all taken care of, and Shabbos is not a time for correcting and educating—but a time for peace, love, and closeness.

### The Power of Holy Chatter

Another aspect of Shabbos is what we call *farbrenge*—spending time together, chatting about nothing in particular. As we will see, this is yet another opportunity to imbue holiness into our children.

In the Torah, there are a number of expressions related to speech. There’s דיבור, there is אמירה, and there is שיחה. The expression of שיחה refers to chatter... when people engage in chatter simply so as not to sit in awkward silence. Chazal (*Avodah Zarah* 19b) tell us that even שיחה של תלמידי חכמים, *the idle chatter of talmidei chachamim*, must be learned and analyzed, for even their *chatter* contains words of wisdom and *yiras Shamayim*.

Thus, Rav Avigdor Miller *zt"l*, taught regarding the *pasuk*, שִׁיחַו בְּכֹל וּפְלִאוֹתָיו, *speak of all His wonders* (Tehillim 105:2), that when we speak of Hashem's wonders—the wonderful things that we see, experience, and observe—it doesn't necessitate an entire *derashah*, a formal speech to convey these wonders to others. It should be שִׁיחַו, *regular chatter*! We should find ways to weave in stories of Hashem's wonder into our regular chatter—for sometimes, this is the most effective vehicle to convey the greatness of our Creator.

## Shaping Perceptions

As we said, it need not be an earthshattering story in order for us to relate it—it can short episodes of *Hashgachah Pratis*, and so on. “Do you know what happened to me? I was waiting for a parking spot, and I *davened*, and soon I found a spot!...” “Do you know what happened? I was looking for something, and I said *Amar Rabbi Binyamin*, and I soon found it.”

This type of chatter can sometimes be more effective than formal speeches. Because, when a person sees that another person is preparing to relate something formally, their guard goes up. They can become skeptical... whereas in informal conversation, people can sometimes more readily accept what is being said—it seeps into their heart more easily. Thus, our Shabbos “conversations” can be an incredible opportunity to convey *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem to our children.

The Rambam (*Avos* 1:17) divides speech into a number of categories. There is speech of mitzvah, speech of *aveirah*, and then there is speech called דיבור הנאהב, *speech that brings a person to love Hashem*—such as speech that lauds the good and denigrates evil.

Thus, **the child's perceptions and attitudes—what is fitting and what isn't, what is good and what is not, etc., are largely shaped by our words during the *seudos Shabbos*.** If we engage in conversation that denigrates other people, *chas v'shalom*, our children will get the idea that this is appropriate conduct.

## When the Heart Is Open

The *seudas Shabbos* has all the conditions for an open heart. The family is together, there is serenity, ambiance, delectable food, and so forth. What takes place at the *seudas Shabbos* will enter the hearts of the family as few other experiences will.

On the positive side, when we speak about the greatness of good *middos*, about tzaddikim, about stories and concepts of *emunah* that even children can understand—these ideas will seep deep into their hearts and minds. As said, it is a time for reconciliation with our families, a time for togetherness and love—and everything we do over Shabbos should be in this vein and style.

Every person should use his own wisdom and understanding of how to go about implementing this. The main thing is the idea that **Shabbos Kodesh is a time for** *ימין מקרבת*, **a time for love and togetherness**—as we were taught by the Rishonim, the Midrash, and real-life experience—bringing the beauty of Shabbos, Torah, and *Yiddishkeit* to the hearts of our families.

