

# A Spiritual Ritual

The *pasuk* says, “*V'chol chacham lev bachem yavo'u*” (Shemos 35:10), all those of wise heart shall come. The Be'er Mayim Chaim explains that any smart person will bring his heart to act with passion and enthusiasm. This is unlike “*Libo richak mimeni*”, distanced its heart from Me (Yeshaya 29:13). Similarly, it says “*Tofsai haTorah lo yidauni*” (Yirmiya 2:8), there are those who grasp the Torah and yet still don't know Me (Hashem).

After Noach got drunk, Shem and Yefes took a garment and covered their father's nakedness. Rashi (Bereishis 9:23) tells us that Shem *nisametz*, exerted effort in honouring his father more than Yefes. Therefore, his children merited the mitzva of *tzitzis* and Yefes earned burial for his children. What is the meaning of *nisametz*, exerted effort, as all Shem did was cover his father with a garment? *Nisametz* can be interpreted as *hislahavus*, as this is how Shem performed his act. As a result, his children merited *tzitzis*, the first mitzva one educates his child with. Yefes, on the other hand, who performed the act in a dead type of way, merited burial which is for the dead. Additionally, it is the last mitzva (symbolising the opposite of *hislahavus*, which is done immediately and with alacrity).

We can't just do things by rote as in *mitzvas anashim melumada* – davening another tefilla and the like, without doing it with enthusiasm. As someone once put it, “When it comes to that which is **spiritual**, it is all about putting spirit into your ritual!”

In this way the Kotzker Rebbe interprets “*Lo saasun kein l'Hashem Elokeichem*” (Devarim 12:4): Don't perform acts *kein*, by doing it out of habit and getting caught in a rut, or to just fulfill your obligation. There is a quote that reads, “The really dangerous thing about existence is that it is not a question of sink or swim but that it is possible to float.”

This idea is further understood by explaining the words of the Gemara (Brachos 57a) which says that even the empty ones among you are as full of mitzvos like a pomegranate. R' Dovid Povarsky was asked, if they are empty, how can you say they are full of mitzvos? He answered that it refers to people who perform mitzvos habitually, without feeling. This leaves them with a feeling of emptiness.

Rashi (Bereishis 25:21) tells us that the tefilla of a tzaddik the child of a rasha isn't comparable to a tefilla of a tzadik the child of a tzadik. One explanation why the tefilla of a tzadik the child of a tzadik is greater is because he can more easily do it by rote since he grew up that way.

R' Shlomke Zvhiller, was extremely happy each morning when he put on tefillin. He once remarked that the joy of a great rasha when he commits a sin can't compare to the joy he receives when he puts on tefillin.

The Gemara tells us of the praiseworthy deeds of R' Adda Bar Ahava who never slept in the house of study; “*Lo yashanti b'beis hamidrash*” (Taanis 20b). This can also be understood as his Torah (Beis Hamidrash) was learned with enthusiasm, not in a sleepy way (*lo yashanti*).

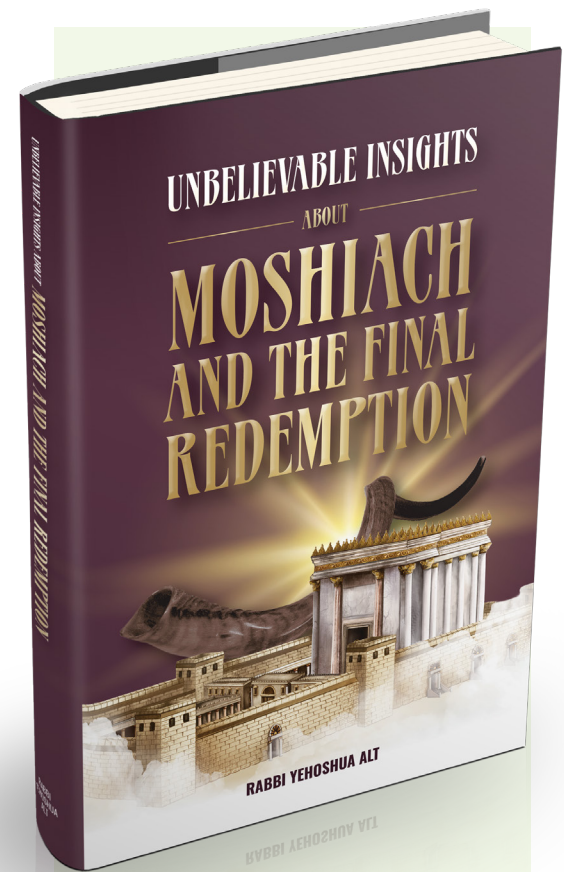
This idea is brought forth from Rashi (Shemos 30:13) who tells us that Hashem showed Moshe a *matbea shel aish*, coin of fire. This symbolizes the need to give tzedaka with fire and enthusiasm, *hislahavus*.

After relating the disagreement where R' Yishmael says that one should work and learn whereas R' Shimon Bar Yochai says to only learn, the gemara states, “*Harbei asu k'Rebbe Shimon Ben Yochai v'lo alsa b'yadan*”, many did like R' Shimon Bar Yochai and were not successful (Brachos 35b). It is said in the name of the Baal Shem Tov that it didn't work because *harbei asu k'Rebbe Shimon* – they merely copied R' Shimon Bar Yochai and didn't do it from their own original initiative and passion. A wise man remarked, “Man must guard himself and his uniqueness, and not imitate his fellow...for initially man was created in his own image, and only afterwards in the image of G-d.” And in the words of the famous quote, “Your time on this world is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.”

R' Yitzchak Isaac Sher, (1875–1952) once observed his student, R' Shlomo Hoffman, (1922–2013), imitating a certain pious practice of his and asked why he was doing it. R' Hoffman replied that he saw the Rosh Yeshiva doing it, so he decided to do it as well. R' Sher responded, “Your Rosh Yeshiva is not a Shulchan Aruch. You don't have to do everything you see him do.” R' Sher then made him promise never to imitate his practices unless he knew why he did them and had carefully considered whether they were appropriate for him as well.

When the Beis Midrash of the Sefas Emes burned down, he inquired what the source of the fire was. When he was told it was ignited by a cigarette in the attic, he commented that if such a small fire can lead to much damage, imagine the constructive power of a small fire of Torah and mitzvos.

By doing avodas Hashem with passion and fire we can rebuild the Beis Hamikdash. This is alluded to in the Gemara (Baba Kamma 60b) which says the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed with fire and will be rebuilt with fire. This can mean that it will be rebuilt with the fire, passion, and fervour we put into our avodas Hashem.



## RABBI YEHOSHUA ALT

The newly released book “*Unbelievable Insights about Moshiah and the Final Redemption*” is now available (as a paperback, hardcover and digitized version) for purchase and delivery on Amazon at <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0D14Z6283> or by sending an email to [yalt3285@gmail.com](mailto:yalt3285@gmail.com)

Some of the questions discussed in this book are the following.  
 What is the correlation between the rapid advancement of technology and Moshiah coming?  
 What concrete actions can we take to express our anticipation of Moshiah?  
 In what ways can we accelerate Moshiah's arrival?  
 What will the future redemption look like?

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 Thank you.