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The Proper Approach to Our Pesach Preparations

As we approach the heilige Yom Tov of Pesach and the myriad preparations that come along with this time of year, many of us justifiably feel overwhelmed—feeling that we can't possibly finish it all and still keep our wits about us to accept the aura and the kedushah of the heilige Yom Tov. But we must remember that, throughout it all, it is the Ribbono shel Olam Who commanded us... He sent us... and He will strengthen us every step of the way, as we will learn in the following ma'amar.

Putting Aside All *Cheshbonos*—Performing Mitzvos with Serenity

One Cannot Be a Tzaddik Without Being a *Ba'al Bitachon*

Rabbeinu Bachya (*Parashas Pinchas*) teaches us a tremendous *yesod* that is extremely important to learn and remember, especially now as we go about our Pesach preparations:

The reason Pinchas merited such a great reward, he says, is because **he made no calculations**. He didn't hesitate to think that he might be killed, or that other things might happen. He performed his courageous act confident in the belief that the Ribbono shel Olam would surely help him.

Rabbeinu Bachya cites the *pasuk* in *Mishlei* (28:1) צדיקים ככפיר יבטח, *the righteous are confident like a young lion*. He explains these words to mean that **one cannot be a tzaddik unless he places his trust in Hashem**. Why

is this? Because performing mitzvos often entails stretching ourselves to the limits of what we think we can do. Therefore, **if one isn't a *ba'al bitachon*, he won't be able to properly function as he performs the mitzvos.**

Without *Bitachon*, We Neglect Mitzvos

A person who doesn't have *bitachon* will regularly neglect mitzvos. "What can I do? I have no *koach*! I should wake up at *alos* on Erev Yom Kippur for *kapparos*?! It's simply too difficult. I have a long fast day ahead of me."

When Pesach comes, this person rushes the *Seder*, because he needs to wake up the next morning for davening (such people tend to show up late for davening even so...)—because everything must always be "just so" and not deviate from the regular schedule.... When he needs to perform a *chessed* for another person, he's afraid that it will disturb his davening schedule.

Thus, this person will never properly fulfill mitzvos because of his lack of *emunah* (serenity and calm).

The *Ba'al Bitachon* Can Do It All

However, says Rabbeinu Bachya, the tzaddik trusts like a young lion [in its mother]. The tzaddik is confident that the Ribbono shel Olam will help him. He is thus unafraid to take on the many mitzvos that come his way—knowing that he'll be assisted in completing the job.

The Torah *Yid* can calmly and serenely perform the *mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro*, interpersonal mitzvos, as well as *bein adam l'Makom*, and manage to complete them all, because he's armed with the trust that the Ribbono shel Olam will help him get them done. People wonder: *How does this Yid have time for kibbud av v'eim on a busy Erev Pesach? How does he have the time to schlep for his parents? This Yid needs to learn and daven, and he must also prepare his own home for Pesach!* The answer is, וקוי ה' יחליפו כח, but those whose hope is in Hashem will have renewed strength (Yeshaya 40:31).

Of course, not every person is made to be able to accomplish everything. But the main thing is to remember and reflect. Don't become stressed out because you think you must accomplish everything, but you think you can't get it done. **Let go! The Ribbono shel Olam will give you the strength to be able to accomplish everything that you need to do!** A person must only begin—and in the end it will be וְקוּי ה' יְחַלִּיפוּ כַח, *he will receive renewed strength from Hashem.*

The *Chassid* Who Got Drunk on Erev Yom Kippur

On one Erev Yom Kippur, a *chassid* of the Ba'al HaTanya undertook to raise the astronomical sum of three hundred rubles for *pidyon shevuyim* to free a *Yid* from prison. The odds were stacked against him, as this was a seemingly impossible sum to raise in such a short time. Making the rounds in the town, he chanced upon a tavern where he found three wealthy *Yidden* sitting and drinking. They made the following proposal: For every cup of whiskey he downed, they would give him money until he reached the needed sum.

This *Yid* hadn't even eaten anything that day, having run around collecting money. But he didn't think twice and immediately accepted their offer. And so, he downed cup and after cup of *mashkeh*, until he raised the necessary sum. He managed to free the *Yid* from prison, and soon he fell down, completely drunk. Pitying passersby brought him to shul and laid him down on a bench in a deep sleep.

Later, when the community arrived in shul for *Kol Nidrei*, the *chassid* awoke from his stupor. Still under the influence, he began calling out *Atah Hareisah...* mistaking the event for the *Simchas Torah* davening.

When the Ba'al HaTanya heard of this, he said: Our entire *avodah* over the days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, and Shemini Atzeres, is all to attain the level of 'אתה הראת לדעת כי ה' הוא האלקים אין עוד מלבדו', *you have been shown in order to know that Hashem, He is the G-d, there is none beside Him!* But **this *chassid* skipped all this... he attained all these levels through his selflessness and *mesirus nefesh*: he is indeed already holding by** אתה הראת לדעת.

Making No Calculations

Let us think about this for a moment: What was the *cheshbon* of this *Yid*? Didn't he know that Yom Kippur was imminent, and that he probably wouldn't be able to daven as usual if he drank so much?! **His *cheshbon* was: I don't make any *cheshbonos*!** There's a *Yid* sitting in prison. **What will happen to my Yom Kippur? I don't know! The Ribbono shel Olam will take care of it!**

This *chassid* was ready for *mesirus nefesh*—and **thanks to this, he attained the lofty levels that he did.** *Precisely because* he didn't make any *cheshbonos*...he was *mevatel* himself completely to the Ribbono shel Olam, which is the highest level a *Yid* can attain.

People refrain from doing *chessed*, they neglect all sorts of mitzvos, because: "I can't... it will interfere with my life here, it will disturb me there...." Remember that! וקוי ה' יחליפו כח! This is what we must always remember.

The Most Elevated *Seder* Night

The legendary Stoliner *chassid*, Reb Nissen Pilchick, always served Hashem with great fervor and feeling. It is related that a Jewish cleaning lady worked in the house, but, unfortunately, she was distant from *Yiddishkeit*.

As Pesach approached, Reb Nissen wondered, "Who knows if this woman has a place to be for the *Seder*; perhaps I should invite her to our home." On the other hand, he thought, "How will I be able to conduct my *Seder* in the usual manner [his *Seder* was known for the tears of emotion... lasting till the wee hours of the morning] with this woman at my table, dressed the way she is... perhaps it will disturb my *avodah*...."

But he concluded: **What does the Ribbono shel Olam want? Does He want a *Yiddishe* daughter not to have a seat at a *Seder*?! Of course not!** He indeed invited the woman for the *Seder*, and he later related that **he never had such an inspiring *Seder* in his life!** It was the most elevated *Seder* of his life—all because he took in a fellow *Yid*, and **didn't make the Ribbono shel Olam's calculations.**

The Outcome Is Out of Our Hands

This is a great *nisayon* for every person. We all want results—and this may often seem daunting. We must remember that we only need to start, to do the beginning. **We don't control whether we will have a *geshmake davening*. Everything can be prepared on our end, but the outcome is dependent on the Ribbono shel Olam alone!**

Sometimes, we sit at the *Seder*, and nothing negative happened... nothing turned over... no one misbehaved... no one became upset... and yet, *it didn't go... he didn't feel it...*

This person must know that we cannot control the outcome: That is in the domain of the Ribbono shel Olam. We must only make a beginning. All other *cheshbonos* are totally not in our domain. The Lechovitzer Rebbe would say, ... בשביל ראשית נברא העולם *the world was created for the beginning*—the first step that a *Yid* takes. **Don't worry about the outcome!** You must only make one *cheshbon*: Have I done my part? If yes, the Ribbono shel Olam will surely help us perform all our mitzvos with serenity.

Do Your Best—Hashem Will Do the Rest

Trust Comes First

The Ramban, in the *sefer HaEmunah v'HaBitachon*, points out that in *Tehillim* we say בטח בה' ועשה טוב, *trust in Hashem and do good*, not the other way around (do good and trust Hashem). Evidently, trust in Hashem is a prerequisite for performing the mitzvos—it must come first. This teaches us, says the Ramban, that **one must pursue mitzvos and make the effort to perform them. One shouldn't neglect the mitzvos for lack of ability... for the Ribbono shel Olam will surely support you and assist you.**

This is the *peshat* in בטח בה' ועשה טוב: it is *necessary* to have *bitachon* as we approach doing mitzvos, doing good. **Trust that the Ribbono shel Olam will get you to the finish line.** Don't make so many calculations—

just do your best to carry out the mitzvah. The Ribbono shel Olam will help you! **The introduction to טוב עשה בה' בטח בה' is the only way we can properly perform the mitzvos.**

Forget the Future

People so often make calculations about whether it “makes practical sense” to do a mitzvah. The *yetzer hara* gives him numerous thoughts about whether he should invest in a mitzvah or not. This person says, איזהו חכם הרואה את הנוולד, *who is wise? One who sees the future*—when actually this wasn’t said regarding mitzvos at all!

The exhortation to see and reckon with the future pertains to worldly matters—we should think about whether this is the will of the Ribbono shel Olam... to think about the future, not just the present. But **when it comes to a mitzvah, there is no question whatsoever that it is the will of the Ribbono shel Olam!** Your neglect of this mitzvah comes only because you feel a lack of ability to carry it out—for whatever reason. **Run! Do the mitzvah!** And the Ribbono shel Olam will be with you—the same Ribbono shel Olam Who gave you the command! He will not abandon you.

The Difference Between the Wise Man and the Fool

The *Midrash* teaches the following on the *pasuk* לא בשמים היא, *the Torah is not distant in the Heavens*: **The fool enters the shul and sees people engaged in Torah learning. He says to them, “How does a person begin to learn Torah?” They answer him, “First one learns the Megillah, then he learns Nevi’im, and later in Kesuvim. When he has finished Mikra, he then learns Talmud. Afterward, he learns halachos, and later Aggados.”** As soon as he hears this, he says to himself, “When will I be able to learn all this?” And he turns on his heels and leaves the *beis medrash*.

The *Midrash* likens this to a loaf of bread that was suspended in the air. **The fool says: “Who can possibly retrieve it?” While the wise person says, “Didn’t someone hang it there? If so, there must be a way to get it down.” Immediately, he brings a ladder or a stick and takes down the bread.**

So too, concludes the *Midrash*, the fool says, “When can I possible learn the entire Torah?” But what does the wise man do? He learns one chapter every day, until he concludes the entire Torah.

The wise man says: I don’t know what the result will be; I am starting to learn. But what will happen? Erev Pesach is approaching and then I will find it more difficult to learn? How can I commit to learning this *shiur* every day? I don’t make such calculations! I start by *doing*!

Begin, and You Will See That It’s Possible

Concludes the *Midrash*: **Says HaKadosh Baruch Hu, it [the Torah] is not hidden from you, and if you find that it is hidden, it is because you haven’t yet begun!**

These are such incredible words! The Ribbono shel Olam says: **If you had begun learning, you would have come to realize that there’s a Heavenly force that brings it closer to you and makes it possible!**

A *Yid* looks at the words *לא בשמים היא*, *it’s not in the Heavens*, and he asks: **What do you mean it’s not distant?** Acquiring the four parts of *Shulchan Aruch* isn’t distant?! Being vigilant and carrying out every one of the 613 mitzvos isn’t distant?! The answer is: *Before* you begin, it’s indeed distant. In fact—this is the entire *nisayon*... it should *seem* distant. But afterward—once you begin—you will see that it’s much closer than you think.

Every time a person feels pressured, it paralyzes him from acting, and it blankets him in melancholy. “How can I ever finish this,” he asks. But we tell him: **Jump in! Just start! Just like Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped into the Yam Suf! Then, the sea will split.** The Ribbono shel Olam created the world just so you should begin.

The *Kirvas Elokim* in the Pre-Pesach Toil

This is the golden rule of pre-Pesach preparation: **Of course we must clean well for Pesach. We shouldn’t despair and we shouldn’t neglect it. We must do what we must do. But don’t make *cheshbonos* about the outcome!**

This is the essence of our *hachanah* for Pesach. Chodesh Nissan is a month of renewal. Thus, we must renew our resolve to jump in and begin—even if we don't see how we will complete the job. **A Yid is mevatel himself to the Ribbono she Olam through his Pesach cleaning—when he doesn't make *cheshbonos* regarding what the outcome will be!**

Some may think that the Pesach preparations have nothing to do with becoming closer to the Ribbono shel Olam... *I will feel kirvas Elokim at the Seder, perhaps*, they say.

This is a tremendous mistake! The Ribbono shel Olam commanded us to clean and prepare—without the ability to see how it will work out—because He wanted it precisely this way. Not to know how things will turn out—and nevertheless have *bittul* to Him.

When we have toiled to clean a room for Pesach, and then a child walks in and traipses all over with *chametz*, and we *don't* become upset... **how much *kirvas Elokim* have we attained?! How much *Avodas haMiddos* have we acquired!**

Our Boss Doesn't Care About Outcomes

When we think about the difference between the boss and an employee at a company, it comes down to this: The boss is always looking at the end result, the bottom line, while the employee just needs to do his work—not focusing on the end result. He punches in and asks: What is needed from me right now? **He doesn't constantly check to see whether there are results from his work.** He is satisfied when he knows that he has accomplished what he was asked to do.

When we fulfill the mitzvah of cleaning for Pesach, let us remember that we are the laborers, the employees! **Something spilled? Just clean it again. Our Boss, the Ribbono shel Olam, takes pleasure in your work.** He isn't upset that the child spilled something. He takes everything into account. You're his employee, at the end of the day, and you're doing it for Him! So, if it doesn't bother Him, why should it bother you! **You thought that you must provide the results? No! You don't have to!** The Boss is more than happy that you're calm and serene.

This must be the attitude of every Yid. He can fulfill Hashem's mission with serenity, and thus merit *siyata diShmaya*.

The Outcome Is in His Hands, We May as Well Be Calm

The same applies to the financial side, to worries about having enough money for Yom Tov. We must know, with serenity and calmness, that the Ribbono shel Olam will send everything that we need—exactly how much we need! The same is when it comes to baking matzos. You must do yours, but this must be accompanied with the serene knowledge that “I don't need to bring results.”

Just as we know when it comes to the *chinuch* of our children that we must do our part, but at the end of the day we don't control who our children's friends will be, etc. You know that you must daven, but you can't control which friends he will have who will infuse *yiras Shamayim* into him... and you also can't control what *devar Torah* or *ma'amar Chazal* he will hear that will turn him on to *Yiddishkeit*. We can't control it. We can only be *mechanech* according to our abilities, and daven, and leave the rest to Hashem—so too it is with all aspects of *avodas Hashem* and especially so with the Pesach preparations.

We must go about this holy business while remembering that the Ribbono shel Olam will assist us in bringing in the Yom Tov with completeness.

May the *Aibshter* indeed help that we should merit to conduct our preparations for Pesach—as well as the Yom Tov itself—with great joyousness and happiness.



The Greatest Preparation for the “*Seder* Night” Is to Open Our Own Hearts

True *Malchus* Comes from Complete *Bittul* to Hashem

Every Mitzvah Needs Proper Preparation

We’re now in midst of preparing for the *heilige* Yom Tov of Pesach, when we’re commanded the mitzvah of *והגדת לבנך*, to transmit the story of the exodus from Mitzrayim to our children.

One of the great *yesodos* that we are taught by the Ba’al Shem Tov and his students is that of *hachanah*—properly preparing ourselves before performing a mitzvah. Before davening, we should learn as preparation for *tefillah*; prior to Shabbos Kodesh, we should place ourselves into the Shabbos atmosphere; and so forth, every mitzvah has its unique *hachanah* that enables us to perform the mitzvah with completeness and a full heart.

Essential to the Mitzvah

When we speak about a *hachanah* for a mitzvah, some may think that it’s solely a matter of enabling ourselves to have “good feelings” or “lofty levels” when performing the mitzvah. But this isn’t correct. **We must make a *hachanah* in order to perform the mitzvah in its most basic sense!** The fact is that if we’re lacking in the *hachanah* to the mitzvah, **we lack the technical ability to perform this mitzvah properly.**

This is very important for us to know, even though it may be unpleasant to hear, because when people “fall into” a mitzvah unprepared, they

may tell themselves, “Perhaps I am missing some of the special aura of the mitzvah... perhaps I didn’t perform the mitzvah on the most lofty level... but don’t tell me that I haven’t performed the mitzvah on a basic level.”

One who thinks this way is fooling himself.

The Ba’al Shem Tov’s intention was not merely to tell people how to attain the loftiest levels (although he also intended this); primarily, **the Ba’al Shem Tov came to teach us how to be ehrliche Yidden! Our great masters**, the *talmidim* of the Ba’al Shem Tov whose *sefarim* we study, **teach us how to perform mitzvos in the simplest sense!** They have taught us that the more we prepare for a mitzvah, the more we will be able to perform the mitzvah properly.

The Seder Night Requires a Special *Hachanah*

When we talk about the mitzvah of *והגדת לבנך*, everyone knows that it’s important to prepare warm words to relate at our *Seder*. Before Yom Tov begins, an *ehrllicher Yid* has already prepared what he will tell his children on the *Seder* night.

But when we expand on this mitzvah and on the power the Ribbono shel Olam gave us so that we can fulfill this mitzvah, we will see that to fulfill the mitzvah of *והגדת לבנך* it isn’t enough to prepare one day before Yom Tov. **It’s a great *avodah* that must take place long before.**

Let us broaden this *inyan*. First, we will introduce the teachings of *chassidische sefarim* with regard to this special and unique mitzvah, and later, we will speak in our own practical language about how we can apply it in our own lives—for although these *yesodos* are important not only for this mitzvah but also to many other mitzvos, it very strongly pertains especially to the mitzvah of *יציאת מצרים* on Pesach night.

A Mitzvah Performed with Our Mouths

We begin with the observation that the organ with which we perform this mitzvah is the mouth.

The *Sefarim HaKedoshim* have categorized the mitzvos according to which organs we use to perform them. There are mitzvos that we perform with our hands, and so forth. This enables us to better understand the mitzvah, because one who understands which limb he must use, also understands how to prepare himself for the mitzvah.

Speech Is a Heavenly Power

The power of speech the Ribbono shel Olam has given all of us is a very lofty and Heavenly power. There are other abilities that humans have that can be found in animals as well—but speech is unique to us humans, and it is a very elevated faculty. **The Ribbono shel Olam gave us mamash Heavenly kochos** by giving us the power of speech.

Just as we understand that the power to give birth is a Heavenly phenomenon: The Ribbono shel Olam has given us the power to give birth and bring children into the world, it isn't something of This World, but rather a Heavenly gift! So too is the power of speech another of the Heavenly powers we have been given by Hashem. For this reason, a person is called a מדבר, *a species who can talk*. **He isn't just another creation: he is in a completely different category.**

This lofty power is referred to in *sefarim* as the מדת המלכות, *the measure of Malchus*. **The power of speech is connected to the middah of Malchus**, as it says in: פתח אליהו: **Malchus-Peh**.

Middas HaMalchus Bequeaths Shefa to the World

There are many ways to explain this connection between *Malchus* and *peh*, the mouth of a *Yid*—and we will seek to explain it here. We will explore how this connection is crucial for every *Yid* who wishes to fulfill the mitzvah לזוהגרת לבנוך on Pesach night, and how it is instrumental in *chinuch* throughout the entire year.

We know that there are *Middos*, Attributes, through which Hashem conducts the world. The first is *Chessed*/Mercy, then come *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod*, and, finally, *Malchus*. When the Ribbono shel Olam wishes to bequeath *shefa* to the people of the world, that *shefa* goes

through each of the *Middos*—and **it is the attribute of Malchus that directly brings the shefa to This World.**

This is mirrored in the human anatomy: His entire head—his brain, his eyes, his nose, his ears—all have desires and thoughts—but **it is the mouth**, the lowest feature on the head, **that expresses these thoughts and desires in the form of speech.** A person has an idea or a technical concept in his mind (for example, he wants his friend to fetch something for him), and **this is where the power of speech comes in.** The *peh* has the unique ability to bring out and explain and transmit to others ideas and concepts that were previously locked in his mind.

The Difference Between Jewish and Gentile Kings

When we discuss the idea of *Malchus*, there is a great difference between Jewish kings and their *goyishe* counterparts. One of the fundamental differences is as follows:

Ask any person whether a king is generally more connected to the attribute of haughtiness or to humility, and he will tell you that a king is the epitome of *ga'avah*. After all, a king is a king! Nothing can stop him! He rules the entire land, and everyone must adhere to his wishes.

At the same time, David HaMelech, the great king of the Jewish People proclaimed, עם חרפת אדם ובזוי עם, ואנכי תולעת ולא איש, *But I am a worm and not a man, scorn of humanity despised of people (Tehillim 22:7).* David HaMelech is using some of the greatest expressions of modesty and humility! It seems incongruent and counterintuitive: **The middah of humility would seemingly not have any connection to kingship!**

True Kingship Means Recognizing: “I Am Nothing”

But the truth is precisely the opposite. This is a fundamental error in understanding *Malchus*.

In *Sifrei Kabbalah*, we learn that that the *middah* of *Malchus* is referred to as מגרמה כלום לית לה, *it has nothing from itself.* During *Kiddush Levanah* we proclaim, דוד מלך ישראל חי וקיים, —because, just like the moon that doesn't

have any of its own light but takes all its light from the sun, David HaMelech knew that true *Malchus* means knowing that we have nothing on our own!

But why is this? Isn't kingship indeed diametrically different from the moon?! Doesn't kingship connote power and hubris?!

But this is precisely the difference between the *Yiddishe* concept of kingship and the *goyish* one!

Gentile Kingship Is Untethered from the Ribbono shel Olam

A gentile who attains royalty and kingship **disconnects from the Creator**. He proclaims that *he is in charge* of it all! He behaves with hubris, and he expects everyone to bow to him and his wishes.

Conversely, a pious *Melech Yisrael* is exceedingly humble—for a *ba'al ga'avah* cannot reside together with Hashem. אין אני והוא יכולים לדור, *Hashem says that he [the ba'al ga'avah] and I cannot live together*. If he is a king with hubris, he becomes distanced from the Ribbono shel Olam. And therefore, the mission of a king is to have complete and utter *bittul* to Hashem.

***Bittul* to a Jewish King Is *Bittul* to Hashem**

When the Jewish People look up to their king and honor him; when they serve him and nullify themselves to him—as the Torah states that we must nullify ourselves to the king and accord him tremendous honor, otherwise we may be punished by death, *chas v'shalom*—this *bittul* is in essence a *bittul* to the Ribbono shel Olam! For **if the great king is himself nullified to the Ribbono shel Olam, then our *bittul* to him is essentially a *bittul* the One to Whom he has nullified himself.**

Just as the moon accepts light from the sun and has nothing of his own, so too the *Melech Yisrael* is completely nullified to the Ribbono shel Olam. The moon has none of its own light, and yet when we walk outside at night, we enjoy its light—it has now become a vessel to transmit

the light of the sun, even when it's dark—so too it is with a Jewish king. He is a vessel for *bittul* to Hashem that can illuminate for all those who nullify themselves to him. And thus, one who lacks humility cannot be a *Melech Yisrael*.

A *Yid* Can Serve Only a King Who Has Submitted to Hashem

Shaul HaMelech was the chosen by Hashem. He was pure of any sin, and we have no inkling of the lofty levels that he attained. But when there was a matter in which he disregarded the wishes of Hashem, he was immediately told that he can no longer be king. Because **a *Melech Yisrael* must be utterly and completely submitted to Hashem**. Only then can he transmit and mirror the light of Hashem to the Jewish People!

If he isn't sufficiently submissive, he cannot be king. For we know the rule that a *Yid* may only be a servant to Hashem, and not the subject of a servant. Thus, how can we serve a human being? *Only* if the king ליה ליה כלום, *magr'mia klum*, has *nothing of his own*. He is merely a mirror, a clear window that brings the light of Hashem to the people. **This is the definition of *Malchus*!** This is *true Malchus*!

And with this *yesod*, we can understand that while the *Melech Yisrael* may seem to be haughty and mighty, his sole claim to dominion over his Jewish subjects is the fact that he is completely nullified to the Ribbono shel Olam. **This is the true understanding of *Middas HaMalchus*.**

True *Malchus* Exists Only with *Yiddishe Kinder*

True kingship doesn't exist for *goyim*—no matter how splendid a king may seem. **They have the *kelipah* of *Malchus***. They have taken *Malchus* and made it an entity in itself—and therefore it has no benefit.

In today's democratic world, we don't have the concept of *malchus* in any case—but *they* never really had it. For **true *malchus* that the Ribbono shel Olam created belongs to the Jewish People: It is solely a vessel to help us become submissive to the Ribbono shel Olam.**

Malchus Regarding Tzaddikim

But true *Malchus* does still exist today: the tzaddikim of our generation are wholly submissive and nullified to the Ribbono shel Olam—truly knowing that they have nothing—and the *Yidden* who follow them and are subservient to them glean from the light of Hashem through them.

Of course, we daven three times a day that *Malchus* should be revealed through the House of David in its full glory, as **now, in galus, it is hidden. But when Mashiach comes, it will be revealed.** *Malchus* is like the moon; It has phases. We are currently in a darker phase.

On Pesach night, the moon is at its peak (as it is the fifteenth of the month) and indeed, the *Middas HaMalchus* shines very brightly on that night. Hence the *avodah* of *Malchus-peh* on this night.

“A Beautiful *Levanah* on Pesach Night”

There was a well-known Stoliner *chassid*, Reb Avraham Elazar Zenwirth, who was a descendant of the Ropshitzer Rav and other tzaddikim. In Williamsburg, he was close to the Stoliner Rebbe, Rav Yochanan Perlow *zt”l*. One Pesach night before the *Seder*, the Rebbe remarked to him, “You see? There is a nice *levanah* out tonight.”

In these words lie hidden depth—alluding to the *avodah* of the *peh* of this night, and the corresponding reference to *Malchus* and the moon.

Indeed, in the *Haggadah*, we say: *יכול מראש חודש*, one might think that we can recite the *Haggadah* from Rosh Chodesh.... But it is too early. The moon is yet too small at the beginning of the month. We must wait for this great *avodah* until the *levanah* is at its brightest. This is when we can engage in the *avodah* of transmitting the light to our children.

The Power of Speech of the Tzaddikim Had Nothing to Do With Linguistic Abilities

The True Meaning of the Power of Speech

Let us delve further and seek to understand the connection between

***Middas HaMalchus* and our ability to express ourselves through speech.**

The obligation of והגדת לבנך is a mitzvah that the Ribbono shel Olam has given to every single *Yid*, beginning at bar mitzvah. From that moment, a *Yid* is obligated in this mitzvah. This is the *halachah*. One who doesn't have a child must tell the story to another person, and one who doesn't have another person must say the story to himself: **Every *Yid* must employ his *koach hadibbur*, his power of speech, on that holy night.**

The Power of Speech Among the Nations of the World

To understand the connection, let us examine the contrast in speech— which draws from the *Middas HaMalchus*— between *Yidden* and the nations of the world.

We see among the *goyim* extremely talented orators, high in demand, who command exorbitant sums for their speeches. A former president of the United States can ask for 250,000 for a speech.

We also see the concept of *goyim* who have tremendous oratorical skill and talent. Sometimes we hear quips and sayings from non-Jewish orators that people repeat years later. There exists among them the *koach hadibbur*, the power of speech.

The Words Themselves

L'havdil, when we're talking about great tzaddikim who spoke holy words to their followers, we never speak about their abilities or their oratorical talent, saying that the tzaddik could keep his audience spell-bound for four hours....

Of course, there's such a thing as a good *ba'al darshan*—and there's nothing wrong with that. There are people who can tell a story and hold their audience enthralled because they're so pleasant to listen to, **but this is not what we live on**. When we speak about our *rebbeim*, *ba'alei ruach hakodesh*, who were utterly and completely nullified to the Ribbono shel

Olam, and we repeat their holy words, **we live from their Torah, not from the way in which their words were delivered!**

Furthermore, there were tzaddikim who were barely audible, especially in their old age. It was very difficult to hear their *divrei Torah*. There were those who didn't possess clear speech, and it wasn't very pleasant to listen to them—**but no one looked at any of that!**

Beyond the Words

This underscores a very deep point:

Sometimes, there is a person who delivers a beautiful *derashah*, *mamash* exceptional. Everyone says that in the last ten years they haven't heard such a strong *derashah*. **But this speech may fall into the category of the "malchus of the nations of the world."** The kingship of the nations of the world emphasizes the *kingship itself!* Similarly, these people are impressed by the speech itself and the way in which it was delivered.

Conversely, among *Yidden*, we don't concentrate on the *derashah* itself. **The main thing is what happened later! How much *yiras Shamayim* penetrated the hearts of the listeners?** What impression did it leave for later? *This is Malchus Yisrael. This is the true power of utilizing Middas HaMalchus*, the power of speech.

A Good Speech: How Much Light of Hashem Did It Generate?

The *tachlis* is not that the speech itself should be beautiful—for the power of speech is just like the *levanah*; it has nothing in and of itself. **The measure of a beautiful *levanah* is in how much it mirrors the beautiful light of the sun.** It's not the thing itself; it's measured in how much *bittul* it brings to the *Ribbono shel Olam*.

When people say that they were awed and inspired by a speech, they're reporting what they feel in the moment. **Right at that moment, they were overwhelmed by what they heard.** It was very pleasant to listen to. This only means that the *koach haddibur* of the orator was good,

but a *Yid* must understand that the true measure of *Middas HaMalchus* is in how much it succeeds in bringing down the light of the sun that it reflects.

The moon is merely a mailman—delivering a package from elsewhere. The *Malchus Peh* doesn't have any of its own power. It is a *middah* that the Ribbono shel Olam placed into the creation so there should be light in the world.

The Ikkar Is the Purpose of the Words

In other words, if we want to know whether a *derashah* was good or not, we can't know this in its immediate aftermath. If you mean to say that the *derashah* itself was a masterpiece, this indicates *Malchus* of the nations of the world. **They make a big deal about the delivery.**

The true measure of a successful *derashah* is in a year's time. Then we can analyze whether it has succeeded in bringing the "light of the sun" into the hearts of the listeners. This is how we know whether it was effective.

The Offspring of Tzaddikim Are Their Good Deeds

This is why Chazal tell us, תולדותיהן של צדיקים מעשים טובים, *the offspring of tzaddikim are their good deeds*. When we plant a tree, we can't tell immediately whether it was successful. **Much later, when the fruit comes forth, we know that something came from our efforts.**

It is the same regarding a tzaddik: How do we know if he succeeded in bringing *kedushah* into the world through his words? After many years, often long after he has departed This World, **we see what kind of fruits he left behind, what kind of yiras Shamayim remained due to his words!** Ah! Now, we understand that the tzaddik had a true *koach hadibbur*, a true *Middas HaMalchus*.

The Impression of Holy Words Remains Forever

For this reason, we can often hear people wondering, "I don't know why... in the lifetime of this tzaddik we didn't see very much, but now,

look what's happening; there's so much fervor around his words and teachings."

It's really very simple. In his lifetime, this tzaddik was planting. The blossoms weren't here yet: **This we see only later, when we reflect on how many Yiddishe homes and yeshivos and kollelim were built with the koach of this tzaddik!**

Now, forty and fifty years later, we see *Yidden* drawing *yiras Shamayim* from people who you couldn't even hear when they were alive. Do you know why? Because the tzaddik had the *true* power of speech! He was completely nullified to Hashem!

The tzaddik was under no illusion that he is a master orator. He was well aware that he may have been difficult to understand. But he didn't care—because he wasn't selling *himself*! He was selling *Yidden* on *avodas Hashem* and *yiras Shamayim*!

Chassidische Sefarim Aren't Books of Parables

In general, we seldom hear *chassidische Yidden* talk about how sweet the Rebbe's *mashal* was or that he used a nice *mashal* to explain a certain concept. We don't find too many *meshalim* in the *chassidische sefarim* altogether. **This wasn't their thing.** Elsewhere, there were *maggidim* who presented very nice parables, and we find many *meshalim* in their *sefarim*. But regarding the *chassidische tzaddikim*, this wasn't a thing.

When we hear the titles of the great luminaries such as the Mezericher Maggid, the Chernonyler Maggid, or the Koznitzer Maggid—some may think that we're talking about people who said nice *vertlach* and parables... but when you open their *sefarim*, you won't find anything of the sort.

Tzaddikim Had the True Power of Speech

Why is it indeed so difficult to learn some of these *sefarim*? **Because these tzaddikim had the true koach of speech**—proof of this is that we're repeating and learning their Torah two hundred years later! If we're able to draw *chiyus* for an upcoming Yom Tov from a *shtickel Avo-*

das Yisrael, then this tzaddik was surely a Maggid! This is true sign of a *koach hadibbur*!

The holy Me'or Einayim of Chernobyl didn't allow his *chassidim* to transcribe his Torah that he remembered. "If I can remember it, then maybe it has too much to do with *me...*," he said. If so, he didn't want it in the *sefer*. The Torah that he *didn't* remember, this he allowed to be transcribed. **This Torah is from a true *koach hadibbur*.**

Nothing Remains of Secular Kingship

This is the koach haddibur. Everything else is surrounding the dibbur. The true power of speech is the power of *Middas HaMalchus* that exists in Klal Yisrael. We implore Hashem to have mercy and compassion on the *Malchus* of the House of David... for *he* possessed real *Malchus*; *bittul* to Hashem. Our perceived royalty is worthless.

All the kings and royals of the world are preoccupied with leaving "a legacy" – **because they know that nothing will remain of their kingdom the moment they cease to rule.** And so, they spend all their years in office engaged in trying to matter, passing significant laws and bills, and so forth, so that *something* will remain from their kingship. But then someone else takes over, and nothing remains from their tenure. He was elected because he speaks well, and in the end, nothing remained from all the speeches.

Conversely, the words of a tzaddik are eternal—even one hundred or two hundred years later. This is because the tzaddik wasn't speaking his own words. He was speaking the words of Hashem—bringing eternity down to This World for millennia to come.

The Mitzvah of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* Isn't Only for Orators

On Pesach Night, We Don't Call the Best Storyteller

As this concept relates to us: When the Ribbono shel Olam gave us the mitzvah of *והגדת לבנך*, every *Yid* received the *koach haddibur* from the

Aibishter. No one said, “We need to have the best storyteller on Pesach night to tell the story of ”. יציאת מצרים.

One might think that—just as on Rosh Hashanah we look for an expert to blow the *shofar* beautifully and smoothly—we should also seek the same for the mitzvah of יציאת מצרים. **But on Pesach night, it doesn't work this way—every *Yid* has the power of *dibbur*.**

You Only Need Heart!

People may say, “How can I conduct a Seder? I am not a person who can tell stories. I don't know how to do it.” But we tell this person: “You don't understand the point. You must grasp that this isn't what the *koach haddibur* is all about!”

What is the *koach haddibur*?! Chazal have told us this: דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב, *words that emanate from heart enter the heart*. It is very simple to understand. **The effectiveness of words is measured by whether they're able to illuminate the heart of another.**

Remembering the *Point* of Telling the Story

Sometimes, a person feels that he *does* have it... he prepared to tell his young children all about the blood and the frogs, and so forth... he makes a big to-do about it, and the children loved it. **But even this isn't necessarily the *tachlis*.** We don't mean to minimize this, but we must understand: What are we seeking here?

Sometimes, a person may feel down about himself. *This person who knows how to speak must have the most amazing seder*, he thinks. *His children must be sitting with their mouths agape, listening to how he tells the story of the Makkos...* and this may be the case in that person's home. **But this is still not necessarily the essence of the *koach haddibur*!**

It's *How* You Say It

There are *kehillos* in which **the *minhag* is not to speak at all during the entire Seder.** Some would raise their eyebrows at this and say: It's all well and good to have *minhagim*... but *you need to fulfill the basic mitzvoah of* והגדת לבנך!

It is true that this isn't the *minhag* all over, and in most places, they tell the סיפור יציאת מצרים with flair and at great length—but this only illustrates the point of what we're attempting to say: It may be that a father will speak for three hours—keeping the children spellbound all the while—and he hasn't necessarily accomplished all that much.

Conversely, there may be a *Yid with a broken heart for the Ribbono shel Olam* who said his few words from the heart—and **it deeply penetrated the heart of his listeners!** The holy Apta Rav says that on Pesach night there is a special *segulah* and power that the words that emanate from our hearts will penetrate the *neshamah* of our children—illuminating their hearts so that the words will accompany them for life.

Of course, if a person has the talent, he should certainly utilize it—but he should always know and remember, “What am I looking for?” **Ensure that you will have** מן הלב דברים היוצאים, and it will surely enter the hearts if your listeners.

The Greatest Preparation for Pesach Is a Pure Heart

People are accustomed to preparing for the *Seder* with nice *vertlach* and purchasing nice *Haggadahs*. This is wonderful, because a person must have vessels, receptacles, in which to deliver the words—the *vertlach* and stories are like the vessels for the illuminations. But **we must remember that this is merely the external preparation for the Seder night.** If you prepare your heart, your words will emanate from the heart. **If you cry out to the Ribbono shel Olam to have the proper words, you will have a pure heart to transmit to your children.**

Praying for Heart

The Imrei Chaim of Viznitz would journey to Meron every year prior to Pesach to beseech the Ribbono shel Olam in the merit of Rabbi Shimon that he should be *zoche* to a proper *Seder* night.

He would cry out to Hashem because he understood that the *avodah* of Pesach night is to be a mailman; he is merely delivering the words... they're not *his* words! **I should come and tell my stories?! They won't**

leave any impression! This won't give me the *koach haddibur* to illuminate when it is dark.

A truly beautiful moon must be able to illuminate the darkness. **A true *koach haddibur* must leave an impression on a child that will never depart him.** This can happen only when there's a *true dibbur*—like the words of a tzaddik, which leave an everlasting impression.

A *Yid* must be able to say in his old age., **"I can never forget the warmth that I felt as child on the Seder night."** He may not remember the story or the *mashal* that his father told, but he'll remember the warmth and the heart of those bright nights.

Memories Based on Emotion

We see an interesting phenomenon: The *Ribbono shel Olam* calibrated humans so that **the memory of a person is closely linked with his emotions.**

People don't easily remember technical information and knowledge. You tell a person a phone number, and he forgets it a moment later. But emotions are remembered well. People remember a time when they became very emotional. They can't forget where they were standing in those moments. It so overcame him, and tears were streaming down his face in those moments. **He remembers it years later.**

Why is this? Because it was a situation of *לב אל הלב*. That is why he became so emotional. And if it entered the heart, then it must have been a true *koach hadibbur*. **A true word out of his heart has the power to get into the heart very deeply. This is the power of *dibbur*!**

Pure Words Are Forever

The *eitzah* to attain this *koach hadibbur* is that the words should *יוצא מן הלב*, *emanate from the heart*. Therefore, we must first and foremost know what we are seeking to achieve—our intention is to ensure that the words will penetrate the hearts of our children and remain with them for generations.

This is the power of true words. They have the power to cause a person to remember—enabling him to fulfill *ה' מצוות כל*, *to remember all the mitzvos of Hashem*. **A word spoken in purity is forever. It penetrates the heart, and it refuses to leave.** It is for this reason that the words of a tzaddik leave a long-lasting impression.

One Word Gave *Chiyus* for Three Years

In this vein, there's a story about the Beis Aharon of Karlin that we will do well to remember in these days before Pesach night:

A *chassid* of the Rebbe didn't come to the Rebbe for three years—and when he finally did come, the Rebbe asked him about his long absence.

The *chassid* explained that the last time he was in Karlin, he heard words from the Rebbe—and these words continued to serve him in his *avodas Hashem* throughout these three years, such that there was no reason for him to return until now!

When the Rebbe asked what it was that he heard from him all those years ago, he said: **“Which creation can dare to serve Hashem? But how good is it to serve the Ribbono shel Olam *however we want, whenever we want, and with whatever we want!*”**

The Power of Speech Comes from *Bittul* to Hashem

These words have tremendous depth, and we can analyze and study them at length. But one may say, “Now that I know these words, I can surely repeat them to others and give *them chiyus* for three years!” It's obvious that it doesn't work this way. It only works when it emanates from the heart of a tzaddik. **When the tzaddik says it, and they emanate from a holy heart, it settles into the heart of the listener, and it remains there.**

Their power of speech stems from their *bittul* to the Ribbono shel Olam. *Koach haddibur* means that **the *Yid* invests efforts for his own heart to have utter *bittul* to the Ribbono shel Olam**, and he davens that the words should enter the hearts of his children.

The Ribbono shel Olam says to every *Yid*: I want you to use your *koach hadibbur* on Pesach night, and I'm telling you this on Rosh Chodesh—immediately with the appearance of a new moon. **Ensure that on Pesach night there will be a “beautiful *levanah*.”** Your *koach haddibbur* should shine bright and illuminate for your children.

The more you have *bittul* to the sun, the more you have *bittul* to tzadikim, to the Torah, to the Ribbono shel Olam—the more you will fashion your heart, a heart that will later be able to influence the hearts of all those who listen to you.

The Mitzvah Is for Our Own Good

Mitzvos Were Given to Us for *Our* Completeness

This is a *yesod* that we must reiterate over and over: There's not a mitzvah in the Torah that was given for us to help the Ribbono shel Olam—everything is so that we should thereby come closer to the Ribbono shel Olam.

The mitzvah of *tzedakah* wasn't given to us because the Ribbono Shel Olam needs our help to feed the pauper, and *kimcha d'Pischa* isn't because there's *nebach* a person who doesn't have money for Yom Tov. **Every *Yid* is an only child in the Ribbono shel Olam's eyes.** He has more money and much more compassion for this person—but **He also has *rachmanus* on you!**

Hashem wants *you* to be an *ehrlicher Yid*—and this is why He gave you *kimcha d'Pischa*. He has compassion for you, and He wants you—through this *tzedakah*—to be spared from all misfortune.

The Mitzvah of Chinuch Isn't for Your Child—It's for *You*

The same applies to the *chinuch* of our children—and the *koach hadibbur* that we receive from Above on this exalted night.

The Ribbono shel Olam didn't ask a person to speak with his children about *emunah* on the *Seder* night because He needs the *child* to become a *ba'al emunah*. He has enough ways to accomplish this. He can give the child an inspiration from Above or ensure that he'll find the right *sefer* to inspire him – and He has done so for so many people! The Ribbono shel Olam can make your child into a true *ba'al emunah* and *bitachon* – and He has many better ways to accomplish this than through the *vertlach* that we say at the *Seder*.

The Ribbono shel Olam commanded us to tell this story once a year on Pesach night – **because He has compassion on your soul!** He wants *you* to be an *ehrlicher Yid*.

The Key to Your Child's Heart Is in Your Hands

The Aibishter says to a person: “*Tzaddik'l*, come here for a moment. I'm asking you to speak to your children on Pesach night.” The person asks, “What does this mean, that I should talk to him?” And the answer is, “Look into the *chassidische sefarim* and how they discuss the *koach hadibbur*, and you'll understand what it means.”

The *Yid* looks and says, “Ah, I understand that speech means the type of speech that will penetrate the heart... this is the *tachlis*. The *tachlis* isn't simply to find a nice *mashal* or a *gematria* to say over. But how can I accomplish this? I don't have the key to my son's heart! I know him... he's unfortunately not willing to hear anything... how can I make my words have power and potency?”

For this Chazal tell us: דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב. But how is this accomplished?

And this person is answered from Above, “We didn't wait until Pesach night to tell you about this – we tell you about this special night in advance, and that **the Ribbono shel Olam is waiting for you to prepare your heart, a broken heart...** to do *teshuvah*. To daven for a *koach haddibbur*. You should meditate and reflect on what it is you want to say. Later, your words will enter the hearts of your listeners.”

Why We Like to Hear Firsthand Stories

We see that people enjoy hearing stories from the people involved in it. “Really?! You were there?! I must hear it again! Tell me the story again!”

Maybe it’s because we want to hear the story accurately, firsthand. But it really goes deeper.

The reason that we want to hear the story from the person involved is because **then the story has much more heart!** This person says the story with all the drama and emotion.

He Draws the People into His Emotions

When we hear a story from five hundred years ago about a *Yid* who went into the forest and got lost, it doesn’t take over our heart so much. We don’t follow along with his emotions.

When the subject himself tells the story, **he draws the person into his heart with his feelings!** Because the story happened to him, and therefore he invests his heart in it when he tells the story. When a person tells the story of his own past, **he will always say it with more heart**, and this is why his story enters the heart.

Relaying the Story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* with Heart-felt Emotion

Every *Yid* has experienced events in which the Aibishter brought him freedom. Everyone has experienced their own exodus to freedom. We must be able to give this over with feeling.

There’s one way to do it: When a person says to his children on Pesach night, “Children, I want to share with you how the Ribbono shel Olam brought me salvation,” that’s one way.

But according to what we have shared here, there’s another *mehalech*. Even if a *Yid* doesn’t speak during the entire Seder, or if he doesn’t want to share his personal stories with his children—but he wants to transmit

emunah to his children—he can transmit this *emunah* by preparing his heart, so it should be “words that emanate from the heart.”

The main thing is for a *Yid* to have these feelings in his heart, to become moved by the words that we say. He davened to the Ribono shel Olam before Yom Tov, he reiterated words of *emunah* to himself before Yom Tov—he is now ready to speak words of *emunah* on the *Seder* night.

When a person prepares himself before Yom Tov to build up his heart with *emunah*—so that the *emunah* will overtake him—he builds vessels that enable him to fulfill the mitzvah of והגדת לבנך on Pesach night in the most spectacular way, with results that will last within his children and *their* children for eternity.



All the Waters Cannot Extinguish the Love

On Pesach, we learn Shir HaShirim, which Rashi tells us is a metaphor of the love between the Ribbono shel Olam and Klal Yisrael. Here, we analyze the *pasuk* *מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה* as it relates to the love and the *chiyus* that we must invest in our relationship with the Ribbono shel Olam:

The Many Waters of Lust

The *Sefarim HaKedoshim* teach us that *מים* corresponds to the *כח התאוה*, the power of lust in a person. It is the source of *ta'avah*, the source of love, the power of being drawn after things. The meaning of the words *מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה*, *many waters cannot extinguish the love* (*Shir HaShirim* 8:7) is that when a person feels strong emotion toward the Ribbono shel Olam, when his emotions are immersed in being drawn after the Ribbono shel Olam, then the *מים*—the forces of love and lust—cannot overcome it.

That is, the Ribbono shel Olam created the world in which there is a very strong force of fire, and yet, the nature of fire is that water can extinguish it. This is true when the fire is small. When there is an enormous blazing fire, no amount of water can extinguish it. We see that there are wildfires that it takes *months* to put out. People pour on enormous quantities of water—of which there is no shortage—and still are unable to control the fire. Water is effective only when the fire is small.

When the Fire Is Great

Says the *pasuk*, in This World, one struggles with *ta'avos*... the *מים רבים* that threaten to sweep him away—in this way or that way. He battles the *yetzer hara*—sometimes more successfully and other times

less so. Every person has his *nisyonos*, every person fights his unique battle.

But the *pasuk* tells us the important principle that **when the fire is great, it cannot be extinguished**. When the fire of connection to the Ribbono shel Olam is blazing within a person, no water in the world can overpower it. The fire dries up any water that attempts to overtake it.

As it relates to our *avodas Hashem*, the *pasuk* explains—and the ways of *chassidus* are established on this premise—that the true way to be successful in this fight against the waters of *ta'avah* is not to battle so much directly, but rather to introduce a *koch*, a fire in *avodas Hashem*. And when we stoke these flames of *ahavas Hashem* and *avodas Hashem* within ourselves, then the “waters” suddenly don’t take up as much space. The fires of *טוב עשה טוב* cancel out the waters of *טור מרע*.

Struggling in the Darkness

Some *chassidim* of Rav Uri of Strelisk came to Ruzhin following the passing of their Rebbe. They complained that while Rav Uri guided them on pathways of *avodas Hashem*, providing them with *eitzos* and strategies to withstand their *yetzer hara* and serve their Creator, they didn’t find that as much in Ruzhin.

Hearing this, the *Heiliger Ruzhiner* related the following *mashal*: Once there were three people who sat in a dungeon, deep underground. Food was supplied to them by way of a pail that was suspended above, and the warden would lower food to the inmates through this pail. The difficulty was that if one didn’t grab the pail immediately as it reached the dungeon, it was in danger of spilling all the food to the ground—and the inmates would go hungry. Two of the three inmates knew how to hold the rope in such a way that the food wouldn’t spill, but the third one was a *shlimazel*... he couldn’t figure it out. Every other day, his food would spill out.

One of the others took pity on the hapless man and began to teach him the art of holding the rope in just the right way, so that he too would obtain his food. But the third man took no interest in helping

out. Turning to him, the second man said: “Why don’t you lend a hand here?! Don’t you see that we’re struggling here?!”

Working to Bring the Light

And this is what the man answered: **“While you’re busy working in the darkness to help this man cope with the rope, I am working to broaden the small opening that brings us light!** Once there is more light, everything will be fine. He will be able to reach his food and to hold onto it. “

Said the Heiliger Ruzhiner, “Until now, you were busy in the darkness, struggling and groping your way forward... searching for ways and strategies to contend with your *yetzer hara*. I am working to *illuminate* the darkness for you so that you don’t have to struggle in the first place! You will no longer need any *eitzos* to grope your way in the darkness.”

The Necessity of Light

This *yesod* must be studied and internalized. We can work all our lives to cope with the darkness—to find *eitzos* and solutions to the מים רבים that threaten to sweep us away. And it is true that a person must strategize and establish guardrails and boundaries against his *yetzer hara*. But **there is no better *eitzah* for a person than adding just a bit more light!**

This means that a person who understands that **he must be able to become emotional and excited in his *avodas Hashem***: this *must* happen—not because he is seeking some lofty *madreigah* or because he wishes to become a great *oved Hashem*—but because he needs to be *ehrliche Yid* on the most basic level! If not for excitement in *avodas Hashem*, he doesn’t stand a chance against the מים רבים! For what is his plan? How will he deal with the draws, lusts, desires, *yetzer hara*, *ta’avos*, and *nisyonos*?

Our Very Lives Depend on It

There is one *eitzah*, and this is what we’re learning here in *Shir HaShirim*: !אהבה את האהבה! מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה! If there’s an ironclad love, noth-

ing can wash it away—all these forces become dried up by the heat of the fire! The excitement of a person must be employed in the endeavor of *avodas Hashem*—and a person must be preoccupied with activating this force of excitement.

A person must be consumed with finding the right environment for his davening—awakening and evoking the fire of this love and excitement, for if he doesn't, he will, *chas v'shalom*, fall prey to the worst of the worst.

Excitement for Hashem Is Our Basic Need

Suppose we would say about a *Yid* that he's *mamash* complete, a מושלם, perfect in his *avodas Hashem*. But there is one thing: His *middos* are atrocious. This is the one area that he's lacking. Everyone understands that this is a sad joke... for how can the *Shechinah* rest upon such a person—even in his Torah and *tefillah*—without *middos*? This aside from the fact that such a person generally becomes angry, which is akin to worshipping *avodah zarah*.

Similarly, it is a sad joke to suggest that one can serve Hashem properly in all areas, but lack *only* in the area of excitement, fire, and fervor in his *avodas Hashem*. Take the concept of feeling a taste in Shabbos Kodesh as an example. Some may think that attaining this taste, a *ta'am* in Shabbos, is a lofty level, but the truth is that without a *ta'am* in Shabbos, a person is not only not in the Heavens—he is deep in the ground! He eats, he sleeps... he doesn't work.... So, what is his Shabbos all about? Can we say that he had a *basic* Shabbos?! Of course not! There is no middle. We need the אהבה and the fire to dry up the מים רבים!

Your Heart Should Be in It!

Thus, a person must search for ways to invoke this love... he must speak to the Ribbono shel Olam... he must take small steps... and he must meditate deeply about what may be impeding his excitement and fervor. Sadly, in many cases, a person can go for *dozens* of years without getting to the bottom of what is robbing him of his fervor in *avodas Hashem*.

A reflective person thinks about these things. Where are the “holes” in my Shabbos Kodesh? What precisely is robbing me of *chiyus*? And the same applies to Torah. Chazal tell us לעולם ילמד אדם מה שלבו חפץ, *one should always learn what one’s heart desires*. This isn’t providing us with a leniency, stating that a person should stick to learning only what he likes. Chazal were telling us, “We don’t want you to ‘just learn’; rather, we want your heart to be in it...! לבו חפץ! Your learning should be bringing you love for the Ribbono shel Olam—and if this isn’t happening, close your Gemara, and find something that *does* work!

What Your Heart Wants

The holy Maggid of Mezeritch said in the name of the Ba’al Shem Tov that the *yetzer hara* cannot tell a person not to learn Torah at all—but he will do everything possible so that a person will learn only things that won’t change him for the better. You want to learn? Okay. But don’t learn things that will arouse your heart to the Ribbono shel Olam. Which Torah works best as a תבלין, *a potion* against the *yetzer hara*? **The Torah that is לבו חפץ—that which arouses your heart to Hashem.**

When we implore the Ribbono shel Olam on Yom Tov, והשיאנו ה' אלוקינו, את ברכת מועדיך, *to bequeath to us the blessings and the aura of the Yom Tov*, we ask Hashem, ותן חלקינו בתורתך, *give us our portion in Torah*. What does it mean to have a portion in Torah? A portion in Torah means that this aspect of Torah speaks to your heart and arouses it to Hashem! A place where you can enjoy learning! A person pleads with the Ribbono shel Olam: Please don’t let me depart from Yom Tov without this memento to take along. I am looking ahead to frightfully ordinary and mundane days! How will I contend with the מים רבים that I will encounter? And the Ribbono shel Olam says, “Of course I will give it to you to take along.”

If this is what we ask of the Ribbono shel Olam, He will surely give it to us—and it will surely work to inspire and warm our hearts with all the fortitude that we will need to extinguish the מים רבים, *the many waters* that threaten to sweep us away.

The Entire Creation Bends to the Torah *Yid*

The *Zechus* of *Emunah* Alone Is Enough to Split the Sea

Klal Yisrael stood at the water's edge, not knowing what to do next. Here they thought that they were already finished with the Egyptians, and suddenly they find themselves with the sea in front of them and the *Mitzriyim* behind them. It's a terrible situation.

They cry out to Hashem and begged Moshe Rabbeinu to speak to Him; however, Hashem tells Moshe Rabbeinu, "Why are you talking to Me? Speak to the Jewish People and they shall journey forth!" (*Shemos* 14:15). This is a difficult *pasuk* to understand—for aren't we taught that crying out to Hashem is *precisely* what we are to do when we're in trouble?!

Rashi explains this *pasuk*: **They must only journey forth, for the sea will not stand in their way. The merit of their forefathers and their own merit, and the faith they have placed in Me is sufficient for the sea to be split before them.** There is nothing else for them to do but go into the water. Even if there's a sea before them, let them go further and see that the water won't be an impediment! They have many merits that will cause the sea to split before them.

If We Have *Emunah*, We Need Not Fear the Order of Nature

You see an ocean, and you understand that it will stand in your way. Know that it can't stop you! Go forth! "The water won't stand in your way!" Why? **Because there is זכות אבות, and the *zechus* of the *emunah***

that you have placed in Hashem. Your *emunah* is stronger than the water. Don't be afraid... you can proceed in peace.

In our context, we would say it this way: One person sees that a second person doesn't allow him to do something, and he is searching for a way to do it regardless. He tells a third person, "I am afraid to go... this person doesn't let me." Says the second person: *Him?! You're afraid of him?! He is nothing!* **You can go as planned, and you will see that he won't be able to stop you!"**

Sometimes there is a 21-year-old young man who makes a whole *matzav*... he permits... he doesn't permit.... **Who is he to make the rules?!** If you need to go, go right ahead.

Go with the Ribbono shel Olam—Nothing Will Stop You

In general, when a person needs to act, and nature is standing in his way — it's simply won't work according to the laws of nature — he understands that he must go along with reality. At the end of the day, he is a mere mortal, and this reality is far stronger than he is. "I can't go to war against it—it's a very strong impediment."

Says the Ribbono she Olam to the person: **It actually depends on you!** If you're a simple person, and you have a wall of water in front of you, then you're right; the order of nature is stronger than you. But if you have the holy *Avos*, if you have *emunah* in Hashem, **then they are stronger.** You can proceed further—right into the water.

Sometimes we see that a person is afraid to do a certain thing. If we know the person, we can tell him, "You have nothing to be afraid of! You're stronger than this! You can make it! You can calmly proceed." This is what the Ribbono shel Olam did for the Jewish People. He explained to them, **"You are stronger. There is nothing that can stop you!"**

The *Eitzah* Against Prosecutors: More *Emunah!*

In the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* on this *pasuk*, it is brought that the *Yid-*

den were in a very difficult situation. They were in a *matzav* of *dinim*. The *Mitzriyim* and the Heavenly prosecutors were all calling out, "הללו והללו זה עובדי עבודה זרה, *Both these and those worship avodah zarah.*" This statement implies that there was no reason to help the Bnei Yisrael, as they were no better than the *Mitzriyim*. It was not a simple situation.

Said the Ribbono shel Olam to Moshe Rabbeinu: **The *eitzah* against these prosecuting angels is for the *Yidden* to connect with the *Aibishter*.** The prosecutors always seek to stand between the Ribbono shel Olam and the person, creating a barrier. **But when a *Yid* becomes close to the Ribbono shel Olam, through *emunah* and *bitachon*, he breaks through the barrier!** And if you break through the barrier, then you're close to the Ribbono shel Olam, and you have nothing to fear.

Says the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*, this is what Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu: Speak to the *Yiddische kinder*. Explain to them that while things are very strained...there are prosecutors... there are terrible problems—but if they have *emunah* and *bitachon*... if they listen to Me when I tell them to go forward, and they won't fear the order of nature—knowing that they're doing the right thing—**then the merit of this *emunah* will be stronger than any prosecutor!**

The *emunah* ensures that a *Yid* becomes connected with the Ribbono shel Olam, and then he is stronger than any *mekatreg*! With the *zechus* of *emunah*, he will surely succeed.

We're Heavenly Messengers!

The same idea is stated in *Kedushas Levi*. The reason that the sea split before Nachshon ben Aminadav was not solely because of his *mesirus nefesh*—but because he understood that if the Ribbono shel Olam tells him to go, then he is a messenger of the Ribbono shel Olam, and thus he is assured of success!

Indeed, the *Midrash Tanchuma (Parashas Vayigash)* tells us that **when a person fulfills a mitzvah, he becomes a messenger of Hashem.** He becomes connected with Hashem because שלוחו של אדם כמותו, *the messenger of a person is like the sender himself*. If someone is the messenger of

Hashem—**he can easily slice through the entire order of nature.** There is nothing to fear!

The Entire Creation Submits to the Torah

We learn an incredible *yesod* in this *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* which we must study very deeply:

Every time a *Yid* wants to do a mitzvah and wishes to advance in his *avodas Hashem*, one factor tends to hold him back: The restraints, the restrictions, and the parameters and boundaries of nature. The “nature outlook” tells the person, “What can you do? You can’t go this way. You can’t go that way. The time doesn’t allow it....” Or the person may think, “I’m too afraid... it doesn’t suit me...” and other such expressions and thoughts that are rooted in the natural outlook.

But at *Krias Yam Suf* the Ribbono shel Olam taught the *Yidden* that **when you see that the order of nature contradicts what you know you must do, it is merely a *nisayon*!** Speak to the Bnei Yisrael and tell them to go forward! Go! And you will see that the creation will get on board.

This Rule Applies Eternally

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* elaborates on this point in the *pasuk* וישוב הים לאיתנו, *that the water returned to its prior condition (Shemos 14:27)*—the condition that the Ribbono shel Olam made at the beginning of Creation that if the *Yidden* fulfill the mitzvos, then the creation must assist them in this.

He further writes that **this applied back then, and it continues to apply for all generations!** In all generations, there have been tzaddikim who were able to bend nature—for example, Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya’ir, who was able to split the sea. So too, this order continues always; it’s the same creation with the same rules. *Ehrliche Yidden* in all generations can bend nature to their holy wishes.

Krias Yam Suf Taught Us a New Concept

When Klal Yisrael stood at the water’s edge, they knew that they had to go forward, but at the same time they were afraid to go because “na-

ture” didn’t allow it. And therefore, the Ribbono shel Olam told them, **“You are going to demonstrate to the whole world, for the first time, how the creation truly works! And this will be transcribed into the Torah for eternity.”**

Until that time there was no Klal Yisrael; only now, at *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*, did they become a nation. And at this time the Ribbono shel Olam told them, “Come, I will explain to you a new concept in how the world works.” He placed them at the water’s edge, and they didn’t know what to do. But Hashem said: Speak to the Bnei Yisrael—you have a new name! From now on, you are Bnei Yisrael!

This is like an average employee who was one day promoted to be the CEO of the entire business—but he continues to comport himself like a lowly employee. He asks ten times before he does anything... and we tell him, **“You’re now the boss! You can do whatever you want!”**

The Aibishter says to the *Yidden*: You are now Bnei Yisrael! Go forward! Don’t stop! But they ask: What do you mean, we should go? There’s raging water here! Says the Ribbono shel Olam: **This is exactly what I want to show you!** If you do this, if you go forward, then your descendants for all eternity will know that the more they will connect to the Ribbono shel Olam and His Torah, the more the entire creation will bend to them.

When You Accept Wholeheartedly, the Entire Creation Bends for You

And the *Yiddishe Kinder* learned this lesson well. They jumped into the water, and later they did it again—when the Ribbono shel Olam offered them the Torah. What did they answer? נעשה ונשמע! We accept everything even *before* we know whether or not we can do it. This was a direct result of the lesson that they learned at the water’s edge.

In general, when we tell a person to get up early every day, to learn two hours every day, to daven Minchah and *Korbanos* with a minyan, he may give you a long speech, “Listen, you need to be realistic... there are all kinds of days, and all kinds of situations. Nature presents many

boundaries and restrictions of all kinds—I can't make such a commitment."

But *נעשה ונשמע* means that, yes: *Before* making such a commitment, you indeed cannot take on such an obligation. But *after making the commitment, the entire creation will conform to you.*

Jumping into the Sea

When a person says that it's very difficult to do an aspect of *סור מרע* or *עשה טוב*, he is correct! It's very, very difficult. **But a person must know that the moment he "jumps into the sea," he proclaims *נעשה ונשמע!*** He proclaims his belief that the entire creation conforms to Torah and those who adhere to it! And he commits to this because he *knows* that the Ribbono shel Olam will help him!

Once a *Yid* is connected to the Ribbono shel Olam, he knows that the Aibishter will certainly help him, and the entire creation will bend and conform to his *avodas Hashem!*

