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HAVINEINI



**פרשת
בלק**

תשפ"ה

YEAR 3

ISSUE 131



SHIURIM OF

HARAV SHIMON
SPITZER SHLIT"A





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The Difference Between Wisdom and *Bitachon*

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Creating New *Shefa* Through True *Bittul* to *Ratzon Hashem*

“Life Wisdom” Is the First Step

We have elaborated on the difference between life experience and wisdom (which is also rooted in the Torah, and which generally assures us that things will turn out okay) and true reliance upon Hashem, which comes with *emunah* and *bitachon*. Understanding this difference, we can properly navigate life in all the situations it presents us.

The Ribbono shel Olam created every person with a precise *cheshbon* and a precise plan for the way his life will go. Every person has a pre-ordained journey that he will need to traverse. Certain aspects of his passage bring a person pleasure, while others are less enjoyable... but we must know that **prior to coming down to This World, our *neshamah* agreed to all of it, because it recognized the purpose and the ultimate mission within the journey.**

However, when a person finds himself with the negative effects of these life events, he doesn't want to accept it. “I was enjoying a smooth and uneventful life, and now this unexpected event happened to me,” he complains.

Proper Thoughts of Wisdom

This is where a *Yid* must employ his “life wisdom and experience.”

He must reiterate to himself that **he can't change reality in any case, so he may as well make peace with the situation. Calm down. Don't invest money or energy into trying to change it**—because this is the mission for which you came down to This World. The entire purpose of coming down to This World was only for this challenge. “If so, instead of exhausting my energy on fighting reality, I will accept my situation. There are so many other things going right in my life... I will choose that this aspect of my life will not bother me.”

Then Come *Emunah* and *Bitachon*

This is called *חכמת חיים*, and this is the wise course according to the Torah—because the *Ribbono shel Olam* doesn't want us to fight what He has ordained for us. The *ratzon Hashem* is for us to allow ourselves to be led according to His plan.

But a *Yid* must ascend to the next level. We haven't come down to This World only so things won't bother us... our purpose of existence isn't simply to “accept our circumstances” and move on. We have come down to the world to recognize that there's a G-d in the world.

When we encounter a difficult situation and not only don't we allow it to affect us—we accept it and we “make peace” with it—we are compared to a child whose father punishes him and the child says, “It doesn't even hurt.” Our true purpose is to *embrace* the situation—and **to remember the One Who placed us in this situation.**

I don't feel pained by the situation, because there's a higher purpose here, and I rely completely on Hashem that this is good for me. I am joyful despite being in a state of fear or danger. I strengthen myself amid the challenge and assure myself that things will improve—not because “*it will be good...*” but because the *Ribbono shel Olam* is a *טוב ומטיב*, and He will surely do what is best for me.

Striving Higher

A *Yid* must not be satisfied with simply going through life distracting himself from unpleasant feelings; he must strive for more.

When a non-Jew experiences a difficulty, there are a several ways he can distract himself from it. He may consume alcohol in order to forget his problems. He may take substances that numb his pain, or he may go on vacations to get fresh air and distract himself with fun activities. If his parents have raised him with wisdom, he may even employ the strategy of understanding that nothing good will come from dwelling on the problem, and that it is best to accept the situation and move on.

But if a *Yid* employs the same thinking—simply skating by through distraction so as not to become depressed by his challenges—he has only accomplished fifty percent of the goal. Yes, he’s not fighting his situation, and his life *will* be more serene. This is rooted in the Torah. Because if it aligns with the “wisdom of our world” (of which the Torah is a blueprint), then it is consistent with the wisdom of Torah. But a *Yid* **didn’t descend to the world for mediocrity.**

A *Yid* came down to This World in order to be *davuk* in Hashem, and to connect with the Ribbono shel Olam through the situations in which he is placed. **If a *Yid* were to employ *emunah* and *bitachon* in these situations,** he will not only be calm and serene, **he will attain his תכלית** *החיים, his purpose in his life.*

The Third Step: Drawing Down New *Shefa*

And then comes the third stage. After a *Yid* was successful in his *emunah* and *bitachon*... he has attained serenity and calm by completely relying on the Ribbono shel Olam... he will have a tremendous secret of the Torah revealed to him, a secret that was revealed to Klal Yisrael alone—a secret is unique to those who have been given the Torah. And what is that secret? **That things *can* change!** That there *is* a solution to every problem, even the most difficult one.

It’s like a person who comes into a very busy attorney’s office with a very complex legal problem, and there are many people in the waiting room. He approaches the lawyer who tells him, “I’m sorry, but I can’t help you.” But then he winks to him to wait until everyone else has left. Later, when the office is empty, the lawyer shares with him, “There is

a *mehalech* for you to extricate yourself from this problem. I just didn't want everyone to hear it...."

Connecting to the Source of *Shefa*

After going through the stage of "life experience and wisdom," that is, our reason and logic that dictate that we shouldn't dwell on our problems or fight with them... but rather to accept them and move on.... And after experiencing the stage of *emunah* and *bitachon* in which a person nullifies himself completely to *ratzon Hashem*, and understands that it's what is best for him.... then the secret is revealed to a person how he *can* change his situation. This secret wasn't given to everyone—it is only for the Jewish People.

The *Torah HaKedoshah* has revealed to us that **when a *Yid* becomes *davuk* in Hashem, he connects with the Source of all *Shefa***, and through this he draws down a renewed channel of *Shefa*. **A *Yid* has the ability to create new worlds and new realities of wonderful *Shefa*.**

But this secret can't be shared with every child... because then, everyone with a complex case would come into the courtroom and yell out to judge that he has a way out of the verdict. *Of course*, the judge will send him away... because this isn't meant to be shared publicly. This secret isn't doled out "over the counter" for everyone who comes in....

Bitachon with Pure Intentions

It is a secret of the holy Torah that **when a *Yid* connects himself to the Ribbono shel Olam with pure intentions**—for its own sake—then **he will connect to the source of *shefa*** and this will open a torrent of השפעות טובות for him.

But if a person takes these measures simply in order to make his life easier—he uses *bitachon*, *tefillah*, *tzedakah*, *segulos*, etc. for the sole purpose of extricating himself from the situation, then he won't attain the maximum benefit that comes with *emunah* and *bitachon*.

He won't even be able to attain basic serenity, because he has invest-

ed so much into these measures, and when they don't work, he will become frustrated with all the *segulos*.... He misunderstood. He heard that there's a secret of connecting with *shefa*, **but he didn't do so with a pure intention.**

The secret works only when a person *wants* to connect with the Ribbono shel Olam. If his entire thought is *how can I change my situation*, he hasn't connected with the Ribbono shel Olam or accepted His will. If so, it won't work. He bangs on the door for the *segulah* and the *shefa*, but the door is shuttered, *R"l*.

***Bitachon* Is a Remedy That Banishes Difficult Situations**

Step by Step

The proper *mehalech* is for a person to go step by step. The first thing is to employ the wisdom of life—working on oneself to be calm, not to fight reality... simply not to get a heart attack from everything in life that deviates from what he had planned.

The second step is *emunah* and *bitachon*—to understand that we weren't sent down to This World simply to accept the situation, but rather to embrace it because this is what Hashem wants, and this is what is good for us. Not because this is a vehicle through which to attain what we want, but because we *want* to have *bittul* to the Ribbono shel Olam.

***Emunah* for Its Own Sake**

Sometimes, a person says: "I heard or read that when a person has *emunah* and he accepts his situation, the Ribbono shel Olam will give him what he needs." If so, he says, "I accept it... now can I have what I want?!" This is not what we're talking about.

This is like a yeshivah *bachur* who was expelled from yeshivah, and his parents are told that it in order for him to be readmitted, it is important for him to come back expressing humility and remorse. The boy

hears this, and he comes with a script, saying, “I was wrong... now can I come back?” It’s obvious that this boy is completely insincere... such “remorse” will have no effect. It’s not at all what was asked of him.

Only a *Yid* is Capable of Pure *Bitachon*

The *right way* of *bitachon* is for a *Yid* to rely on Hashem *solely* because he believes that Hashem does what is best for him. This is a great *avodah*, **to have *bitachon* on Hashem without wanting anything to change in his situation—pure trust and reliance that this is good.** This is a secret that has only be revealed to *Yiddishe kinder*. סוד ה' ליראיו. This secret works only when a person is *completely connected* with the Ribbono shel Olam, for its own sake. If we would tell this secret to a non-Jew, he will attempt to use it solely for the purpose of attaining his desires....

To tell whether something is true *bitachon* or not, we must turn to the words of Dovid HaMelech, who says אשרי אדם בוטח בך, *fortunate is one who trusts in You*: If you feel fortunate and blessed—even if *nothing changed*—it is a sign that your trust and reliance are real, that you have completely accepted the *ratzon Hashem*. If you have no complaints, and you’re completely at peace, this means that you’re truly בוטח in Hashem.

Accepting Pain Creates the Remedy

When a *Yid* engages in this *avodah*: he has no complaints about his situation; he always tells the Ribbono shel Olam do to what is right in *His* eyes; he understands that he’s only human, and thus limited in his grasp and understanding... **I may have dreamed that things should be different, but Hashem surely knows what He’s doing,** and I thank Him for this. I don’t need or expect the situation to change immediately.

And if a person does accept wholeheartedly what the Ribbono shel Olam sends his way, he will merit what the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh says: סמא דיסורי קבולי, *the remedy for pain comes when we accept it with love*. Because when we have truly relied upon the Ribbono shel Olam, we have *connected* with the Ribbono shel Olam, and if so, we have tapped into a new reservoir of *shefa*—as the *pasuk* says חסד יסובבנו והבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו, one who trusts in Hashem attains new *shefa*.

A Non-Jew Cannot Grasp This

This ability to change reality through our wholehearted *bitachon* is a secret revealed only to us in the Torah, and this is what is meant by חכמה בגויים תאמין תורה בגויים אל תאמין, *you may believe that there's wisdom among the gentiles, but they have no access to the Torah*. This is why it is acceptable to see even secular professionals for help with our dilemmas, because we believe that they have access to life wisdom—and this, too, is rooted in Torah, as all wisdom is. But **they cannot attain the deeper secrets of the Torah** because they haven't proclaimed נעשה ונשמע. Why didn't they do so? Because at his root, a non-Jew is incapable of complete reliance on the Ribbono shel Olam (which is the essence of נעשה ונשמע).

One who doesn't rely completely on Hashem will receive his *shefa* from the lower, *peripheral sources*. He may *know* about the *eitzos* and tactics (distraction, acceptance, etc.), but these won't help him extricate himself from his situation. *Wisdom can't change reality—emunah, bitachon, and deveikus can change reality*. For *deveikus* enables us to tap into a new reservoir of *shefa* that previously didn't exist.

A Proper Prayer

Now, after a *Yid* has completely submitted himself to the will of the Ribbono shel Olam with complete *bitachon*, then his *tefillah* is considered a proper *tefillah* that will open doors to a new flow of *shefa*.

When the *ba'al bitachon* davens to Hashem, he says to himself: **"I don't know what is good for me; I daven because Hashem wants me to connect with Him.** I want You to do what is good in Your eyes." He truly feels this, and he doesn't expect his situation to change the moment he's finished davening. He lives with great *bittul*, and he davens in order to fulfill Hashem's desire for us to daven.

Reality Can Only Change with New *Shefa*

A *tefillah* that originates from a place of *bittul* and *deveikus* can change realities. Acts such as giving *tzedakah* and visiting *kiorei tzaddikim* that come from a mindset of *bittul* to *ratzon Hashem* can change realities—

and this is the *only* way that a *Yid* can truly change his situation. It won't change simply because he wants it to change...

If we see that our situation has changed, it is for one of two reasons: Either this was the Divine plan all along and it would have happened regardless of what we did or thought, or it is because the person truly connected to Hashem with utter *bittul* to His will. He had complete *bittul*, and thus merited a new flow of *shefa*.

It is truly a lifelong *avodah* to submit ourselves with complete *bittul* in all situations and allow ourselves to be led by the Ribbono shel Olam, with complete faith that everything He does is for our good.

A Pleasant, Enjoyable Life in All Circumstances

Following the Clouds of Glory

There's an incredible *Ramban* in *Parashas Beha'aloscha* that we must internalize. They're words from a *Rishon* which are incredible instructive to us in our daily lives—enjoining us to allow ourselves to be led by the Ribbono shel Olam's plans.

The *Ramban* addresses the *pesukim* that elaborate on the travels of the *Yidden* in the desert—all of which were directed by the ענני הכבוד *the Clouds of Glory* which hovered all around them. Sometimes, the Torah says, the clouds tarried above the *Mishkan* for many days, and then the *Bnei Yisrael* kept the charge of Hashem and journeyed not. When the cloud hovered for only a few days, the Jewish People likewise followed the guidance of Hashem to uproot after a short time.

Staying Put—Because It's Hashem's Will

The *Ramban* points out that this was the great *avodah* of the *Yidden* in the *Midbar*—to constantly agree and submit to the *ratzon Hashem*. Not only was their *uprooting*—which may have been inconvenient—according to the command of Hashem, but also their *remaining in place* wasn't due to their own convenience, but *purely* because this is what Hashem commanded them to do.

Sometimes, remaining in place was difficult, and they really wanted to journey forth from that place. But Klal Yisrael learned to submit themselves completely, and heed the command of Hashem.

Learning to Listen

With this exercise, the Ribbono shel Olam taught the *Yidden* to listen. As they prepared to enter Eretz Yisrael, they would need to practice *bittul* to Hashem, because this is how a *Yid* must live:

Sometimes, a *Yid* feels that his life is going smoothly, and then it suddenly grinds to a halt. He can't proceed further. **How long will he need to wait in place? No one knows.** Perhaps a day or a month, maybe a year or more... one never knows. Now we sit in place, because this is what the Ribbono shel Olam wants. Even if it's painful, we accept what Hashem has ordained for us.

Sometimes, it's the opposite. A person has finally settled down. He likes things just the way they are... everything is calm and good—and suddenly, Hashem wants him to uproot himself and start over. For this reason, the Torah repeats three times the phrase *על פי ה' יחנו ועל פי ה' יסעו*, *they rested or journeyed only because this was the command of Hashem*. They were completely submitted to His desire. *ושמרו את משמרת ה'*, *this is the charge of Hashem*: to go when we're told to go, and to rest when we're told to rest.

A Journey to the World of Truth

The same principle applies to our final journey in This World... the one we take on our last day of life. On the final Shabbos of his life (*Parashas Beha'aloscha*), a day before his ascension to the World of Truth, the Beis Aharon of Karlin explained that **every neshamah comes down to This World with a mission to rectify lost sparks**. And we journey in this world *על פי ה'*, *according to the command of Hashem*. *ובהעלותו יסעו*, *and when a person has completed his mission, and all the sparks have been elevated, we journey one last time, to the World of Truth*.

This person was in the midst of so many projects when he was taken

away so suddenly. It's deeply painful for his entire family, but *Yiddishe kinder* believe that this, too, is a journey from Hashem—and this is the greatest consolation and comfort: That it is a Heavenly journey with a Heavenly calculation.

Bitachon and Deveikus Every Single Day

When a person becomes used to living this way, **he will always have a pleasant and enjoyable life, in all circumstances.** Every event, large or small, that doesn't necessarily go the way he would have liked, he nevertheless accepts it with love.

The Ribbono shel Olam expressly designed the world so that **we must resolve every day anew not to become saddened or dragged down by things that happen.** One may ask, why indeed is it this way—that every single day should be a new battle to push away negative thoughts?

The answer is that **a person must strengthen his *emunah* and *bitachon* every day.** And therefore, every person—even a non-Jew—must draw on life experience and wisdom in order to live life. But an *ehrlicher Yid* will not be satisfied with this; he will elevate himself with *emunah* and *bitachon*. He will thus become *davuk* in Hashem, and merit *Olam HaZeh* and *Olam HaBa*.

Accepting Pain Brings Shefa and Banishes Judgments

Thus writes the *sefer Yesh Nochalin*, authored by the father of the Shelah HaKadosh: **"One shouldn't become excessively aggravated over negative things that happen, for these come to the tzaddik in This World so that he will merit *Olam HaBa*... and if one will accept negative things with love, they will soon depart from him."** For when a person accepts his situation, he infuses it with *Elokus*, and he draws down a new flow of *shefa* through this.

He continues: **If one will not accept the negative things with love, his aggravation and worry will not help alleviate them—to the contrary, one who revolts against his *yissurim* prolongs them and even adds to them!"** This person places himself under the reign of the *dinim*, R"l,

and in addition to his aggravation, he attracts even more judgments...

Bitachon Is the Best Investment

This is a way of life worth investing in—for **the more one toils to accept his circumstances with *bittul* to Hashem, the more pleasant and enjoyable his life will be.** The Brisker Rav would say, “The reward for *bitachon* is *bitachon* itself”: serenity, calm, and joy.

So, when a person remains only at the level of “life wisdom,” he will mostly be a calm and composed person. He will easy to get along with on most days. But **when he encounters a situation that presses the wrong button, he will lose himself completely.** All his calm and coolness were only because *it was worth it...* he calculated that it’s better for his health and well-being to distract from the negative. But when he’s touched in such a way that he feels that he’s about to lose everything, he will lose his composure. There’s a limit to how much it pays to be calm. There’s always a breaking point.

However, if one works on his *bitachon* to accept his small daily challenges—not because it’s the wise course—but because **this is what Hashem wants for him,** then he is *zocheh* to even more *bitachon* (a feeling of serenity and calm) as a reward for his reliance. **Such a Yid will prevail in being calm even when he’s affected to his core, at all his sensitive points!** This ability and strength can originate only from the Ribbono shel Olam Himself.

It’s a reward that we earn only if we work to hone our *bitachon*, our complete and utter reliance on Hashem, as opposed to the mediocrity of “life wisdom.”



Ascending to a Place of No Separation

Getting Out of the Comfort Zone

At the beginning of this week's *parashah*, Rashi teaches us that Midyan and Moav had been sworn enemies, but they put aside their differences to work together to defeat Klal Yisrael due to their fear of them.

We can learn a very great lesson from this. When two people have a disagreement, they will hold onto their gripes and resentments—as long as they remain in their respective corners. Once they emerge from their comfort zone to a place of mutual interest—for example, they share a certain dilemma and they must find a way out—**they arrive at a place their hatred has never reached. They're in common territory.**

Let's look at it as though they're residing in a multi-story building. Midyan and Moav are on the ground floor, and they're living in seething hatred of each other—but this hatred doesn't ascend to the upper levels. However, since the two never go up to the second floor, all they know is their old hatred.

What happens when they suddenly face a dire threat to their lives? The fear and the worry compel them to run upstairs, and once there, they meet each other cordially. *Shalom aleichem!*

No Need to Break Barriers

We learn from here that when, *chas v'shalom*, there's a disagreement between *Yidden*, the entire *פירוד לבבות* is only on the "ground level." **As soon as they ascend a bit higher, such as in times of desperation and distress, we immediately see all the barriers fall away. Every *Yid* will come to the aid of another *Yid*, and their *ahavas Yisrael* is revealed in all its strength.**

So long as a person remains on the “lower level,” preoccupied with smallness and pettiness—“this is mine and that is yours”—there can be separation. **As soon as he elevates himself a bit, there’s no separation at all.**

Regarding the Torah’s commandments in the interpersonal realm—mitzvos such as *וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ* and *לֹא תִקוּם וְלֹא תִטּוֹר*—one may say, “What can I do? I can’t topple the barriers. They’re built of concrete blocks ten feet high. Everyone has already tried to bring peace between us, to no avail.” Says the Ribbono shel Olam to this person, “You know what? You don’t *have to* topple the barrier. You can leave it right where it is. **I will show you how to ascend to a place where there are no differences or divides.**”

There’s Always a Level

This is what a person must understand in every situation of separation between *Yidden*. Let’s concede that this person wronged you. Granted, he didn’t behave properly toward you...the barriers reach the second floor... **yet there’s always a higher level where the dispute and the strife don’t reach—for each of our *neshamos* emanates from the same exalted place.**

Indeed, if there’s a greater conflict and discord is greater, Hashem expects a person to ascend to the fourth or fifth level. A person *must* get there, and he *can* get there. If the Torah commands us *לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ*, *you shall not harbor hatred to your brother in your heart*, this means that you *can ascend* to the fifth floor, a place where there’s no separation.

No Need to Shatter Disputes

Sometimes, a person will say, “You think I can resolve this bitter dispute?! It’s been ongoing for fifty years! *More than fifty years!* You don’t know the history here. Furthermore, I’m a small and simple person. How can I stand against such a great and fiery fight? I don’t have the tools for it.”

The answer to this person is: No one asked you to resolve the fight.

You can leave the barriers right where they are. This path in *avodas Hash-em* or another... this person is right or that person... leave everything in place. Just elevate yourself above it all. There you'll be able to sit together, because there are no barriers in that place.

Divides in the Most Exalted Place on Earth

When we think about it, we will find something fascinating: The Beis HaMikdash was the heart of all of Klal Yisrael—the nerve center where every tribe was able to come and find their place with the Ribbono shel Olam. If so, one would think that since the Beis HaMikdash *unites* everyone, the Ribbono shel Olam will surely say: This isn't the place to divide between *Yidden*; the Kohanim to sacrifice the קרבנות, the Leviim for the *Avodah* of song...the Yisraelim to stand and observe... what's the difference? They're all *Yidden* anyway.

But this was not the case: Every *Yid* had to remain carefully in his designated place—the Yisraelim were constantly warned not to trespass where it was forbidden, and only the Kohanim could perform the *Avodah*, and only at specific times. We see that time and place and *nefesh* occupied an important place—*specifically* in the Beis HaMikdash, the most exalted place on earth. Anything that occurred outside the proper time and place could result in the punishment of *kareis*. This is an astonishing phenomenon. One would think that in the Beis HaMikdash we would see everyone eating together from the *korbanos*... united in friendship and brotherhood.

Different Attire Is No Reason for Strife

The wonder goes even further. In *Maseches Menachos* we learn that if even a small tear occurred in the בגדי כהונה, the priestly garments, worn by the Kohen, he was considered מחוסר בגדים, lacking the proper attire, and subject to severe punishment (either *kareis* or death at the hands of *beis din*). Again, it begs understanding: Is this the place to insist on the outer layers of attire? In such a holy place, should we be preoccupied with external matters? Why does it matter which kind of hat he wears? The main thing is that he's a *Yid*!

Indeed, from this we see an incredible thing: **When a person is on a higher level, he has no difficulty accepting that everyone in the world has a different calling and mission.** The Kohen with his *Avodah*, the Levi with his song, and the Yisrael with his observing. This doesn't bring any divide or separation. To the contrary—he understands that from all the individual *Avodos* comes one beautiful and complete *Avodah* for the Ribbono shel Olam. It is impossible to offer the *korban* without the presence of the Kohen, the Levi, and the Yisrael.

Every person who comes to the world has a different mission, according to his שורש נשמה. One with Torah, one with *avodah*, and one with *gemilus chassadim*, etc. This person cherishes one mitzvah, and another person feels connected to another mitzvah—but these are all only לבושים, *outer layers*. A לבוש means a set of tools with which the person executes his specific mission. **Up in Heaven, there are no לבושים. There, everything reaches a complete state of oneness,** for everything really emanates from one exalted place. **Here, in This World, a person receives לבושים as a vehicle to attain דביקות and connection.**

Different Elements Create Harmony

Often, when we encounter a person with different *levushim* or attire than our own, we tend to be on edge.... We feel like telling the person, "You may be very distinguished, but go to your own people, to your own community. You're not one of ours...."

The reason for this feeling is that we're distant from the Beis HaMikdash. **We're at the lowest level, a place where every difference creates separation.** But when we ascend to the Beis HaMikdash, the *levushim* remain—but *we embrace the differences!* "How wonderful is it that you came," says the Kohen. "I need to bring the *korbanos*, and I need a Levi to sing!" Without this, the *korban* wouldn't arouse people to *teshuvah*.

Embracing Differences

When a person ascends to higher levels, he begins to see the complete picture. He understands that the Ribbono shel Olam gave him *this* mission, and his friend has a *different* calling. He understands that without

each of them, the *Shechinah* cannot rest in Klal Yisrael, and none of us could attain דביקות.

If the nations of the world could put aside their differences when push came to shove, how much more so could *Yidden*—who are one at their very core—surely unite as one. **A *Yid* understands that to achieve גאולה there must be אהבת ישראל**—and this requires ascending to the highest level.

When a *Yid* engages in Torah and *tefillah* with ביטול, automatically, no strife and differences will remain. People think that we need to appoint great activists to bring peace and unity between *Yidden*. There's no need. **When *Yidden* do *teshuvah* and ascend to higher places, all barriers between them cease to exist.**



Shabbos Kodesh: Acquiring a New Outlook on the World

Choosing the *Real* Side

On Shabbos, It's Easier to See the *Real* World

Shabbos is the gift that the Ribbono shel Olam gave to Creation. It is **the gift that enables us more easily to look at the world clearly—and not to become impressed by the way things seem to work.** On Shabbos, the Ribbono shel Olam removes the concealment, and we're able to see what's really happening. When we say וישבות, *Hashem rested from all the work of the weekdays*, it means that **He infused kedushah into the world.**

The non-Jew can't feel this, for a person needs the proper “internal battery” in order to see it. A *Yid* receives a נשמה יתירה on Shabbos, and thus he has the ability to see the world in a new light. The entire creation has become elevated, and **now he can feel: This is what I really want. This is the truth.** Everything else is emptiness and meaninglessness.

The moment a *Yid* has his נשמה יתירה, he connects to the essence of Shabbos (i.e., the true view of the world)... he *thinks* in a way that's appropriate for Shabbos, and he *sings* in a way that's fitting for Shabbos. He sees the creation in the way that it really is—and this bleeds into the rest of the week. The *Zohar HaKadosh* teaches us, מִיְּנִיָּה מִתְּבָרְכִין כָּל, *שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִין*, *the six days of the week are blessed by Shabbos.* For, **if we look at the world properly—that the Source of all *chiyus* is the Ribbono shel**

Olam—our entire week will be different, and we will receive entirely different results. Why? Because we aren't so impressed by or afraid of the order of nature.

The Expressions of the Four Elements

In his introduction, the Toldos Yaakov Yosef writes at length about the concept that every attribute in a person stems from a source, which can express itself in a good way, or, *chas v'shalom*, the opposite way. He quotes Rabbi Chaim Vital as follows:

All negative traits are divided into four categories:

The element of **fire** can be expressed as **גאווה** since this element is lighter and jumps higher than all others. Included in this is **anger** and the **lust for dominance** over others, as well as **hatred** of others.

The element of **air** is expressed in the **power of speech: idle speech, flattery, lies, gossip, and bragging.**

The element of **water** gives forth the traits of **desire for pleasure:** including **desire, lust, and jealousy.**

The element of **earth** may be expressed in the qualities of **depression** in all its aspects: including laziness preventing a person from fulfilling Torah and mitzvos due to his sadness over his ability to acquire material matters of this world (or due to the lack thereof).

All these attributes stem from the side of the *yetzer hara*, which distorts these elements.

The Positive Side

The *positive side* is the opposite end of the spectrum of these qualities—all of which are contained within a person, ready to be expressed:

Fire: Humility is when one distances himself from any sort of **anger** or **hubris**.

Air: Silence is when one chooses *not* to speak. He feels as though he's

losing life, his very self, when he speaks. **Just as a person can derive pleasure from speaking, he can also learn to enjoy silence.** If he must communicate, he will write down what he wants to say—not because he has accepted upon himself a ... תענית דיבור he simply doesn't want to squander his life. There's an actual desire within a person to want to be with himself, not to speak with anyone.

Water: Abstinence is when a person chooses to refrain from indulging in material pleasures. He doesn't want to become מגושם, and he wants no part of גשמיות other than for the purpose of sustaining his body. He doesn't want to squander his sense of pleasure on material things—only to channel them for spiritual enjoyment.

Earth: Joy in serving Hashem is the opposite of melancholy. This person is joyful with his lot and with his privilege to serve the Ribbono shel Olam. שש אנכי על אמרתך כמוצא שלל רב, *I rejoice over Your word like one who finds abundant spoils (Tehillim 119:162).*

Your Choice

Thus, we say to a person: Just as you have negative qualities that emanate from the **four elements**, you also have four positive attributes that stem from the same root and source! They're the very same nature. **These attributes, when expressed in negative ways, disturb your avodas Hashem greatly,** and they destroy your life.

But when you channel them in the right direction, and you daven to the Ribbono shel Olam, that they shouldn't be expressed in improper ways, the positive side will be revealed. We tell this person, "If you have found within yourself the *improper* expressions of these attributes, **it must also be that you have the proper and positive expressions.** For there's no such entity as כעס—it is only an expression of the element of fire within us. If you have anger in your system, you must also have the proclivity to express fire and fervor in *avodas Hashem*. The same applies to pleasure; you can channel your pleasure to spiritual pursuits.

This is why Chazal taught us, הגדול מחבירו יצרו גדול הימנו, *one who is greater than his peer, his yetzer hara is also greater than his.* What is peshat?

Simple: If a person struggles with a strong *yetzer hara*, it is telling us something... if he has deep desire for negative pursuits, **this means that he can also have deep desires for holy and good things, and these can assist him in overcoming all his spiritual challenges.** Until now, it may have been expressed in the wrong way, but the person has the ability to channel those proclivities and inclinations to the good side—in all areas of his nature.

Crying Out for the Oppressed Attributes

The *Toldos* adds that the “four who must give thanks” featured in *kapitel* of יהודו לה' correspond to the four elements we have just mentioned. And they cry out to Hashem out of a feeling of being oppressed... channeled in the wrong direction. ... ויצעקו אל ה' בצר להם. **a person cries out to Hashem, asking that his *kochos* be expressed in good ways.**

Through *emunah* in Hashem with his whole heart—knowing that He is the Master of all and the Orchestrator and the Root of everything, and he places his trust in Him—יתפרדו כל פועלי און, *the forces of wickedness are dispersed.*

For this *Yid* recognizes the truth, and he says: When my *ria*/רוח attribute expressed itself through idle chatter and schmoozing about politics, that's not my actual nature. **I don't have a quality like that.** Yes, people approach this person for his take on the news... and they lick their fingers afterward because he knows how to deliver it with such brilliance. But this is not *him*! It's a lie. This is not the actual you. It's only one *way* your attribute has expressed itself. **Now, learn how to express it in the proper way.**

Believe, and You Can Change

When a person believes in this, the *Ribbono shel Olam* will help him change the habits and proclivities of his “animal soul” and reveal their true essence. Then, not only will they not disturb him, but to the contrary, they will *assist* him in his *avodas Hashem*. This person will regret his past transgressions, for he knows that they give strength to the other side... he is aware that his bad habits give power to the *הטומאה* that

encourage the negative side to express itself. But he knows that this isn't his true self.

Now, when a person davens שמונה עשרה, this is essentially what he's doing. He davens to Hashem: אתה חונן לאדם דעת, *You bequeath wisdom to a person*. This person acknowledges that all wisdom is from the Ribbono shel Olam. "I don't have my own *sechel*... I don't have my own way of thinking." He recognizes that every aspect of his life is really Hashem, and he understands that all his thoughts really emanate from an exalted place. That they sometimes later express themselves in distorted ways has been added later... but they can always come back to their pure root.

During אשרי, when a person says מלכותך כל עולמים, *Your Kingdom is a Kingdom of all worlds*, he's essentially returning everything to its pure root. **He remembers where everything originated. In this way, he does teshuvah for the improper expressions of the past. And in this way, he receives the kedushah of Shabbos** (which is essentially the idea of understanding the real and true root of things).

Knowing the Source of All Things Gets Us to the Truth

Knowing Where You Come From

To illustrate this point, let us take the mitzvah of כיבוד אב ואם, one of the fundamental tenets of the Torah and one of the *Aseres HaDibros*. One of the explanations of the importance of this mitzvah is that **when a person knows where he comes from, he tends to live more closely with the truth**. Conversely, when a person forgets the root and the source—he lives only with a distorted version of the truth.

When a person remembers the journey that he traveled until he attained what he attained... he remembers all the people who helped him get there... he will be humbler and kinder. The Dubno Maggid tells us regarding our recounting of the story of עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים that it's like the rich man who takes out the clothes he wore when he was

a pauper—**for when we remember our roots, we live better and truer.** But if we forget everything that we went through, we adopt an attitude of being on top of the world: “I have this and I have that... this person won’t tell me what to do... I won’t call this person back; let him run after me...”

When a person has **כיבוד אב ואם**, it means that he remembers where he came from. **Go back to your roots and behave like that.** Of course, you’re no longer a little child, and of course, you must use the wisdom you have attained in the ensuing years. But now, **using your acquired sechel, remember where you came from. This is especially true as it relates to remembering the Ribbono shel Olam,** and the great kindness that He has done for us since the day we were born.

He Gives You Strength

When we speak in the language of **העלאת ניצוצות**, *elevating the lost sparks*, it is likewise important to know their exalted Source. We tell a person: Remember the root and the source of things.

When a person makes decisions in life, he would do well to ask himself: **What does the One Who gave me this wisdom to make decisions have to say about this? A person lives much better, much healthier, and much purer—spiritually and materially—when he remembers where everything has originated. This is the essence of Shabbos Kodesh: but in order to make the transition from weekday to Shabbos, one must adjust his outlook.**

Let’s take as an example the consumption of food. Were a person to imagine that he’s a poor person who doesn’t have anything to eat, and the Ribbono shel Olam gave him food... he would be embarrassed to treat food in a materialistic and indulgent way. Because he knows that it’s not even due to his efforts—and the One Who gave him the food doesn’t want us to approach food in such a way. He wants us to use as a means to recognize His greatness and to recognize that it is He Who sustains us. This is an example of recognizing the true source of things in the world.

Remembering the Root

Some people forget the source. They build mansions... that's one thing. But on top of this, it's very important for them to show the whole world how much money they have, and how much they can invest in their temporary dwelling because of this money. With this, the rich man untethers himself from the Source—because he doesn't remember the One Who gave him the money. **This mindset stands in diametric opposition to the essence of Shabbos.** It's impossible to feel a taste in Shabbos if we forget where everything is truly rooted.

Shabbos comes to us only when we minimize nature and recognize that everything is the Ribbono shel Olam. Anyone who thinks that things are his own is lying to himself. Everything belongs to the *Aibishter*.

Sometimes, a person witnesses a story firsthand; he's the primary source of the story. With time, the story spreads, and one day, he hears someone telling the story with all kinds of exaggerations. He walks over and asks, "Where did you hear this story? This isn't a well-known story... **I am the source of this story! It comes from me!**"

Correct Colors

So long as a person lives under an erroneous impression of the world, there's no chance that he will know the truth. But **the pleasure of Shabbos**, the *chiyus* that he receives on Shabbos, **comes from the ability to see the world in the correct colors.**

This transformation and this clarity take place during Minchah of Erev Shabbos...as we recite יהודו, and ידיד נפש, and אשרי, and קרבנות and קטורת... they all assist in this process of transition to Shabbos—for their purpose is to bring a person to *teshuvah* and to the recognition that everything is from the Ribbono shel Olam. He does everything, He orchestrates everything, and nothing is as it seems on the surface.

And *then*, a person can sing לכו נרננה לה'. The waters and the fields won't sing to Hashem if you think that they belong to *you*. **They will sing only after you have removed your ownership from over them.**

And then we come to מזמור לדוד, and the ז' קולות, in which we bring everything back to Hashem. **After we have abandoned the old path, we can recognize the song of creation.** We cannot see Creation singing if we think everything belongs to us.

Connecting to the Song of Creation

And so, at Minchah of Erev Shabbos, we recognize that everything is from the Ribbono shel Olam, and then we stand in song and praise about the Creation as we see it through a clear and truthful lens. When a *Yid* performs this *avodah*, even if he's still in the weekdays, he's proclaiming the truth. It's still Erev Shabbos, but he proclaims the truth that all this belongs to the Ribbono shel Olam.

Through the *avodah* of this proclamation, he elevates the נִצְיוֹת back to the *Aibishter* Who placed them into the world. He concealed them in many places, and **it is our *avodah* to see through the façade and illuminate every place with G-dliness.** Through this, a person removes the concealment—especially from those things that are connected to him, the concealments and restrictions that apply to his life (e.g., his negative inclinations and habits, and his unique proclivities that pull him in the wrong direction).

If he can recognize the root of all these things in his life and not to be intimidated or impressed by habits that he has become accustomed to—and the Minchah of Erev Shabbos must cause a person to become less intimidated by “reality”—**then the Ribbono shel Olam will surely redeem him.**

This is the *avodah* of the Minchah of Erev Shabbos and indeed all of Shabbos Kodesh. A *Yid* remembers that *parnassah* is from the *Aibishter*: we won't recite בָּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ again until *Motza'ei Shabbos*.... This is our last opportunity of the week to proclaim that it's all His. The same applies to health and success.

With this, a *Yid* can indeed shed his clothes of the weekdays and enter the spirit of the holy Shabbos.