

לעילוי נשמת
הר"ר ישראל
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THE GAON AND TZADDIK
REBBE YITZCHOK MYER MORGENSTERN SHLIT"A

SEA OF WISDOM

Recent Teachings

The Power of Unity

The Meor V'Shemesh relates the following story. Reb Zusha of Anipoli once asked his brother, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk, to reveal the secret behind his ability to perform *mofsim* (wonders) and to bring *yeshuos* (salvations) for those in need. Reb Elimelech replied that all miracles and wonders are brought about through the unity, love and friendship between tzaddikim.

In truth, this applies not only to tzaddikim but to all Yidden. Through the *achdus* (unity) of Yidden, great *yichudim* (spiritual unifications) are formed between the *sefiros* above. It is known that every Jew serves as a chariot for a different *sefirah* or spiritual persona in the higher worlds. Through the power of these unifications, which are achieved through *achdus*, *yeshuos* and *mofsim* are drawn down.

Hearing the Cry of Another Yid

Even if a person is deeply involved in *davening*, learning Torah, or any other spiritual pursuit, the cry of another Yid cannot be ignored! Even if it seems to "disturb" their *dveikus* or their current *avodah*, the cry and pain of another Jew take precedence over everything else.

Each person must strive to emulate *Adam Kadmon* on their level, which means being able to connect to the highest spiritual realms, yet still descend to the lowest levels to feel and respond to the pain of another Yid. Even someone engaged in lofty and wondrous *avodah* must remain attuned to the suffering of others.

If a person becomes so absorbed in higher levels that they no longer notice or hear the cry of another Yid, this is a serious failing. It is never permissible to be so elevated spiritually that one cannot feel or respond to another's pain. One must always remain sensitive to the broken heart and suffering of a fellow Jew, no matter how small or insignificant their distress may seem. A person must be ready, when necessary, to set aside their own *avodah* to help another Yid find relief from their pain.

The Ultimate Knowledge

The ultimate knowledge is to know that we do not know. This means that after a person reaches a certain level of understanding, the next step is to ascend to an even higher level, recognizing that they truly do not understand. As the Baal Shem Tov said, "הלואי אותי עזבו ותורתי שמר", which means *halivai* we should reach the level where we grasp that we do not truly know (אותי עזבו), specifically after שמרתי, after first meriting to comprehend and attain knowledge according to one's level.

How to Say Selichos

Selichos should be recited in the manner of the Chazzen in the times of the Baal Shem Tov, who would say *Ashamnu, Bagadnu, Gazalnu* with a *niggun*. He explained that while saying these words, he felt as though he was holding a broom and shovel and cleaning the courtyard of the King. This is a great privilege and a cause for joy and song. The Baal Shem Tov greatly praised this approach.

Building the Beis Hamidash

The main *avodah* now, during the time of *Bein HaMetzarim*, is to mourn the destruction of Yerushalayim. However, we must understand that it is not enough to simply mourn the past. We must actively begin to build the Beis HaMikdash through our *avodas Hashem*.

The *neshamos* of Yidden carry a deep inner longing for the *geulah*, and the path to merit *geulah* is through contemplating Elokus. Through *hisbonenus*, Klal Yisrael has the ability to ascend from *ani hanifrad*, the sense of "I," a self that feels separate from G-dliness, to *ani ha'amiti*, the true "I" — the awareness of "I am Hashem your G-d."

The goal is to reach a state where every part of life becomes connected to the Unity of Hashem. Above, in the higher realms, the true reality that everything is one is clear. Here below, reality appears to be many separate and detailed parts. Through toiling in the *avodah* of *hisbonenus*, we can raise these fragmented details of the world and connect them to the Oneness of Hashem. This is how we can build the Beis HaMikdash spiritually.

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יואל ישראל בן מרדכי

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Pnimityus HaParshah



וידבר משה אל ראשי המטות לבני ישראל לאמר זה הדבר אשר צוה ה'.

"And Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of Bnei Yisrael, saying: This is the thing which Hashem has commanded." (Bamidbar 30:2)

Seeing the Suffering of Others and Becoming a Rosh HaMateh (Head of the Tribe)

Chazal teach us that Moshe Rabbeinu merited to lead Klal Yisrael because he "saw their suffering" in Mitzrayim. This sensitivity to their pain is what opened the gate for his leadership. Chazal also teach us that Bnei Yisrael were commanded to fulfill three *mitzvos* upon entering the Eretz Yisrael: to appoint a king, to destroy Amalek, and to build the Beis Hamikdash. These three *mitzvos* correspond to the *avodah* of the three weeks of *Bein HaMetzarim*. Each one reveals a path for *tikkun* and personal *geulah*.

Destroying Amalek is the work of uprooting *taavos* and the *klippas* that attach themselves to us. Just as Pinchas zealously subjugated the impurity of Amalek, each person must act with zeal against what threatens their inner purity. Amalek's essence is to sever the Jewish people from *kedushah*. Chazal describe how Amalek "cut the foreskins and threw them heavenward," which represents the act of tearing holiness from its proper place and mocking it. During these three weeks, we must strive to expand the boundaries of *kedushah* and stand strong against anything that opposes it.

Building the Beis Hamikdash in terms of *avodah* means drawing close to *Da'as*, the inner knowledge and clarity that flows through the *tzaddik emes*. The Beis Hamikdash is the vessel for this *Da'as*. Moshe Rabbeinu himself is the embodiment of the Beis Hamikdash in this sense, the source from which clarity and connection to Hashem flows.

Appointing a king is fundamental. Without it, the other two *mitzvos* cannot be fulfilled. The Rambam writes that building the Beis Hamikdash is only possible after appointing a king. In *pnimityus*, this means establishing *Malchus* in oneself. Every Jew must reach the awareness of *bishvili nivra ha'olam*, that the world was created for me. This is not arrogance but clarity. This is the foundation of kingship within, the awareness that each soul is a world and is responsible to lead that world toward *kedushah*.

Most people can understand that we must destroy Amalek, that we need to purify ourselves from *taavos* and *klippas*. They also recognize the importance of building *Da'as*, increasing Divine awareness through learning *seprim* that awaken *yiras Shamayim* and the teachings of the true *tzaddikim*. But many struggle to grasp why it is so essential to appoint a king. What does it mean to attain the aspect of *Malchus*? What is the *avodah* of becoming a "head of the tribe," of reaching the recognition that the world was created for me?

The answer is that every Jew must become like Moshe Rabbeinu, who merited leadership because he saw the suffering of his brothers. Each person must seek out the good of his fellow, not only in matters of *gashmiyus*, but even more so in matters of *ruchniyus*. When one sees a weakness in his friend, he must not judge, but uplift. He must see the pain of the other and do what he can to elevate him. For in truth, all Yidden are part of one great *neshamah*, one collective soul.

Before one can build the Beis Hamikdash within his mind and heart, he must first become a king. The king is the heart of the nation, and the heart gives life and influence to all parts of the

body. The deeper meaning of *Malchus* is to constantly do good for others, to live with the awareness that my responsibility includes the wellbeing of all. And the greatest expression of this power is through *tefillah*, when one uses the *Malchus* within to *daven* that Hashem should fulfill the desires of another Yid's heart for the good. This is true leadership. This is the beginning of building the Beis Hamikdash.

In the merit of this *avodah*, we will be worthy of receiving true *Da'as* from Moshe Rabbeinu, from the true *tzaddik*, from the Avos and great *tzaddikim*. May Hashem have mercy on Klal Yisrael so that we merit to be in a state of complete unity, especially during this critical time of the three weeks. May Hashem have mercy on us and shine upon us His Divine love and kindness. Just as Hashem loves us beyond all reason and unconditionally, so too must we love one another. This is true even if the person seems unworthy. This will bring down Hashem's mercy in preparation for the *geulah*, speedily and in our days. Amen.

Recent Points from the Rebbe

On a basic level, the *kavanos* *hatefillah* taught in Kabbalah are essentially pathways to various individual levels of *dveikus*. On a deeper level, however, these *kavanos* are meant to elevate a person to an even higher level; a state of *sha'ashuei emunah*, the bliss and delight that come from true *emunah*.

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If you find yourself in a state of *katnus* (constricted consciousness), the reason is that Hashem desires to elevate you to a higher level of *emunah*.

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In the end, what truly matters above all else is *emunah*.

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Everyone has the potential to reach every spiritual world and level.

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All beauty in this world is rooted in the beauty of the Shechinah.

Sichos Yam HaChochmah



The Greatness and Importance of Learning Gemara

The Obligation to Complete Shas

Every person has an obligation to complete the entire Shas. Without learning Shas, one cannot reach the higher levels of *hasagos Elokus*, understanding and perception of G-dliness. Therefore, one must be careful not to fall into the trap of the *yetzer hara*, who will bring many excuses to avoid this goal. For example, a person may think, "I am too old," or "I am too young," or "I need to spend my time learning Halachah or Kabbalah".

But this is all completely untrue! Hashem calls out to each person with the words *משכו וקחו לכם* - *Draw (yourselves) and take for yourselves*. The letters *משך* have the same *gematria* as *Shas*, and the letter *vav* in the word corresponds to *yesod*. This teaches that a person must make a supreme effort to draw themselves toward Shas and connect it to *yesod*. This connection will cause the removal of spiritual blockages, which are caused by *kelipos* and *aveiros*, and will open the gates to true *dveikus* and purification.

Learning Gemara Precedes Learning Kabbalah.

Certainly one must learn Kabbalah, *kavanos* and *yichudim*. However, when Chazal say *אשרי מי שבא לכאן ותלמודו בידו* - *Fortunate is one who comes here and his talmud is in his hand*, many commentators explain that this refers specifically to Talmud (Gemara). First, a person must learn Shas.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that Shas corresponds to the letter *yud* in the *Shem HaVaYaH*, while Chassidus and Kabbalah correspond to the *kutzo shel yud*, the crown or point atop the *yud*. One cannot reach the top, the apex, without first having accessed the body. Without Shas, it is impossible to truly grasp the depths of *pnimiyus haTorah*.

As it says, *שמעי בת וראי* - *Listen, daughter, and see*. First comes *shmiah* (hearing) which refers to Gemara. This is indicated by the term *ta shma* (come and hear) that is used in the Gemara. Only afterward can one merit *re'iyah*, (seeing), which refers to Kabbalah. This is indicated by the term *ta chazi* (come and see) that is used by the Zohar. This reflects the inner G-dly vision that comes through connection with *pnimiyus haTorah*.

Revealing Dveikus Through Gemara: The Higher Path

It is important to understand that the *dveikus* and revelation of *Elokus* that comes through learning Gemara is - in a certain aspect - an even greater level. While attaining *dveikus* through learning Kabbalah is certainly uplifting,

it is relatively easier, since the light of Kabbalah naturally brings a person *mochin*; an expanded state of spiritual consciousness.

However, there is a unique *avodah* to reveal *Elokus* and to connect to the light of Hashem specifically through Gemara. It is precisely within the revealed Torah, where the light is more concealed, where the challenge and the potential greatness is hidden. In truth, the ultimate revelation of the *Ohr Ein Sof* takes place through the *niglos* of *Torah Sheba'al Peh*, the revealed Torah.

When learning Gemara, one must strive to perceive *Elokus* in every detail. Every *sugya*, every concept and every distinction is an opportunity for revelation. This process of revealing Hashem within the specifics of Gemara is an aspect of *memaleh kol almin*; how Hashem fills all worlds.

In contrast, the main purpose of the study of the hidden Torah is to reveal the oneness of Hashem's light. All of Kabbalah revolves around the essential concept of the secret of the Divine names *א, ב, ג, ד, ה, ו, ז, ח, ט, י*. At its root, this knowledge is about recognizing that everything is *Elokus*, which corresponds to *sovev kol almin*, how Hashem encompasses all worlds. The ultimate *avodah* is uniting *memaleh* with *sovev*, which means experiencing Hashem's light not only in the abstract or hidden but even within the revealed dimension of Torah.

Q&A with the Rebbe

Question:

What is the practical difference between *bitul* (self-nullification to Hashem) and *emunah* (faith in Hashem)?

Answer

Bitul is indeed a very great level. However, the highest point at the highest level of *bitul* is *emunah peshutah* (simple faith). In truth, every spiritual level can be described as a form of *bitul*, but the ultimate *bitul* is the essence of simple faith.

Emunah peshutah is so lofty that it surpasses even the greatest level of *bitul*. All levels of *bitul* still apply while a person retains some sense of their own existence, experiencing and feeling themselves as "present." But *emunah peshutah* is beyond one's existence. It is the highest point of one's greatest self-nullification.

Likutei Yam HaChochmah

Tisha B'Av

Believing in the Power of Our Mourning

One must be careful not to mistakenly think that our mourning over the destruction of Yerushalayim is ineffective. We must not doubt the importance of truly seeking Yerushalayim and revealing its holiness, and also not lose faith in our ability to do so. If we fail to believe that we can accomplish this, we distance ourselves from engaging in this *avodas Hashem* as we truly should.

Even in our generation, everyone who serves Hashem becomes a *mishneh l'melech* (viceroys to the King) and is granted spiritual powers and capacities. It is within our reach to genuinely mourn for Yerushalayim and long for its rebuilding, and to believe in the tremendous power that every Jew possesses to enter deeply into this *avodah* of longing and yearning. Through this, we shine an *ohr chodosh*, an ever-growing light, revealing the holiness of the true Tziyon and Yerushalayim.

Achdus and Kinno

It is related that Reb Yechezkel of Kozmir *zy"a* was once asked by someone in the middle of reciting *kinno* on Tisha B'Av whether he should interrupt to do a favor for a friend who had requested his help. Reb Yechezkel responded, "You should definitely interrupt your *kinno* to do your friend a favor. By being good to another Jew, you are ensuring that we will not need to recite *kinno* again next year!"

May Hashem have compassion on us and awaken within us a deep love and a desire to do kindness for other Jews. Hashem loves Klal Yisrael with a love that is beyond all logic and understanding (*lema'ala mi'ta'am v'daas*). Therefore, we too must love our fellow Jews on a level that transcends reason, even when it seems that they do not deserve our kindness or love. We must emulate Hashem's boundless love.

Avodah Beyond Emotion

During these holy days, and especially while saying *kinno* on Tisha B'Av, we engage in the *avodah* of *tefillah* that is rooted in *din* (judgment); a state of *katnus ha'mochin* (limited consciousness). We mourn over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and also feel the pain of our own personal "destruction." These events and experiences bring us into a state of *katnus ha'mochin*, where our higher consciousness is diminished. All of this is an extension of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

However our *avodah* is to rise above this. We must redeem ourselves from *din* and judgment by holding firm to our *avodas Hashem*. During these days of mourning, we are not able to rely on the superficial emotions that usually dwell on the surface of our hearts. Instead, we need to focus on the inner core of the heart, the hidden depths that lie beyond emotion, the place of pure connection to Hashem.

Klal Yisrael has the power to unite *din* (judgment) and *rachamim* (compassion) within the same *tefillah*. We can exist in two worlds at once: one in which we cry out with an expression of *din*, and another in which we express *rachamim*, both flowing together within a single prayer.

Mourning the Past, Longing for the Future

When we mourn the destruction, our focus should not remain on the past; on what once was. Rather, our mourning should awaken within us a deep yearning to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash. During this period, we must enter the *avodah* of *tefillah* and contemplation of *Yichud Hashem*.

Even when we *daven* and when we learn Torah, our sole aim should be to seek connection with *Elokus* (G-dliness). We should strive to bind Torah and *tefillah* together until they form a complete *Yichud*, so that even in mundane activities like eating and drinking we sense the light of Heaven, purify the body and experience the holiness of true, eternal *dveikus*.

These days are meant to awaken us to ask ourselves: "What would life have been like had we not sinned and had we merited the full revelation of G-dliness in this world? What would it mean to have the Beis HaMikdash with the Shechinah dwelling below and to live with true *dveikus*?" By thinking in this way, we awaken our spiritual longings.

On the one hand, our *avodah* now is to mourn and long for the Beis HaMikdash. But that alone is not enough, as we must also strive to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash. This is accomplished through *tefillah*. The weekday prayers have the power to restore the second Beis HaMikdash, while Shabbos tefillos can restore the holiness of the first. We must reach complete *Yichud* through *tefillah*, causing the light of Torah to shine within our prayers, so that our lives become lives of *dveikus* with the Shechinah. In this way we can strive toward the level of *מבשרי אמונה*, which is the level we will attain when the Beis HaMikdash is rebuilt.

May Hashem help us truly mourn over Tziyon and Yerushalayim, and may we merit to see her in her joy. May the Heavenly light begin to shine upon us now, and may the Beis HaMikdash be rebuilt soon and in our days, Amen.



The Rebbe by the Kosel