



בלבבי משכן אבנה

Bilvavi

Mishkan Evneh

TAKING THE PLUNGE

Rashi explains in *Parshas Beshalach* that Moshe was told by Hashem, “Now is not the time to *daven*. Speak to the *bnei Yisrael* and tell them to journey [into the sea].”

We were being told not to *daven*! It is certainly always a part of our *avodas Hashem* to *daven* to Hashem for help, and *tefillah* is one of the three pillars of the world. But when we are in a situation where it is naturally impossible to get out of, even *davening* will not help us. It would be like *davening* for a miracle, which is pointless, and also forbidden. So when we came to the sea, what was it that Hashem wanted to see from us? It was upon us then to reach a very deep place in ourselves, the place of *mesirus nefesh*, which goes deeper than *tefillah*. Nachshon ben Aminadav was the first to ‘take the plunge’ and reveal this deep place within the *nefesh* - he was ready to show total *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice).

When one has reached a point in his life where he feels like he has reached his limit and that he can’t get any further he feels that has reached his limit. When one reaches that point, he needs to understand that he is at his own personal “splitting of the sea”. He is trapped in his personal “desert”, and the only thing he can do is to be willing to

give himself up for Hashem. Whenever a person shows *mesirus nefesh* even when he feels like he can’t do more, he resembles the *mesirus nefesh* of Nachshon ben Aminadav when he jumped into the sea. Any person can reach *mesirus nefesh* at his own level.

The process of leaving *Mitzrayim* and crossing the *Yam Suf* is also a personal journey within ourselves that we can experience. First one has to be willing to “leave *Mitzrayim*”, to leave behind his limitations by persisting with a strong *ratzon* to persevere in his *ruchniyus*. That is the first key – having a strong *ratzon* to succeed. Then a person needs to go further by being willing to “cross the *Yam Suf*”, to plunge ahead even when it is seemingly insurmountable for him. One can only take the path of the true *bnei aliyah* when he actually shows that *mesirus nefesh* for Hashem.

That is how one can “cross over the *Yam Suf*”, where he will find the revelation of Hashem’s Presence, at other side of the *Yam Suf* – and there, he will be led to receive the Torah at Har Sinai. For through *mesirus nefesh*, one is led on a path that leads straight towards Hashem, and His Torah.

■ excerpt from the sefer *Bilvavi on the Parshah*

Without creating a joyful atmosphere in the home, children are bound to grow up without a *simchas hachaim* (a joy for life). Although true *simchas hachaim* can only come from the depths of the *neshamah*, the fact is that the *guf* has its needs. Therefore, only through the balance of a serious attitude towards about life (the *neshamah*) and having a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the home, can a parent have the ability to instill true *simchas hachaim* into the home.

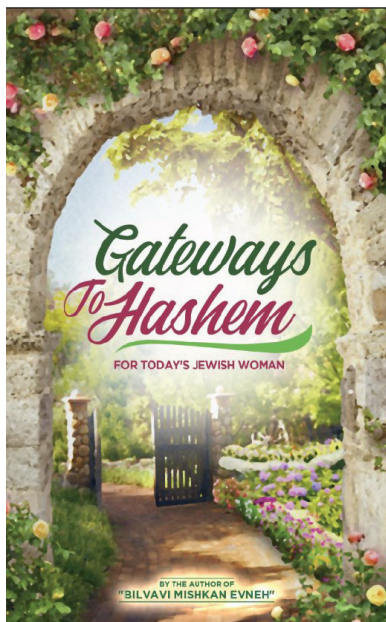
Some people won't even have to be told about the need to bring some humor into the home; they are already good at that part. But if they are overdoing the humor in their home and they never speak about anything serious with their family members, they may need to hear an opposite approach, and they will need to work on creating a more serious atmosphere in the home.

Therefore, a parent must know himself well. If he knows he is the more serious type, or if he has gone through certain events in his life

that shaped his personality to be his way, he needs to learn how to create some humor in his home, so that his home will be properly balanced. And if one knows that he has more of a funny and humorous personality, he needs to learn how to inject some seriousness into the home, so that his home shouldn't become a place of total *leitzanus*. In that way, the humorous atmosphere in his home will be balanced with some seriousness about life, in a way that is befitting for a Jewish home.

[As these columns have been explaining], raising a Jewish child is primarily to raise him or her with the attitude that this child is a G-dly *neshamah* that has been entrusted to us. [Next week's column IY"Y will address how we can practically make our children aware of how they can utilize their *neshamah* and how we can train them to continuously become closer to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu.*].

■ Chapter Six - printed for the first time from the hebrew *sefer* דע אמת ילדך



COMING SOON

Gateways to Hashem for Today's Jewish Woman

A thought-provoking compilation of *derashos* about the unique *avodas* Hashem of the Jewish woman. The author explains the special powers which Hashem has given to the Jewish woman's soul, such as the ability to use the spiritual "heart", the nature of the "extra understanding" given to women, the deeper implication of a woman's "extra amount of speech", the areas of strength which a mother has in raising children, and the deeper meaning of *tzniyus* (modesty). Included in the end of this book is a section of questions and answers with the author which offer guidance on many different areas for women of all walks of life.

An essential volume which explains how a Jewish woman can enter her *pnimiyus* and realize her true potential. This *sefer* can be a key tool for the *frum* woman's key to staying solidly anchored to an inner, safe harbor of her own.

QUESTION How can a person reach the *Shaar HaNun d’Kedushah* (the “50th Gate of Holiness”) in daily life? And how can one be connected to the *Shaar HaNun d’Kedushah* while learning Torah - is this level only for those who learn Torah *lishmah*?

ANSWER One needs to become connected to the innermost depths of *ruchniyus*, cycling back and forth between one’s internal world of *ruchniyus* and the world outside of him. Practically speaking, one needs to be involved with the external world (daily life on this world) whenever he needs to be, and then he needs to revert back to his internal world, in a cycle. As the Baal Shem Tov taught, the true *bnei aliyah* (those who truly grow in their *ruchniyus*) are those who “dwell” above, in the inner, spiritual dimension, who “descend” back down to the world when they need to, and then revert back to their spiritual base above. As for being connected to it during learning, the *Shaar HaNun D’Kedushah* is primarily a level accessible to those who learn Torah *lishmah*, but **as long as one learns Torah with all of his energy, especially with regards to mentally exerting himself in Torah, this is in the category of *mesirus nefesh*, which is rooted in the *Shaar HaNun d’Kedushah*.**

QUESTION What does it mean to have “*mesirus nefesh*” when it comes to either (A) *avodas Hashem* (b) in our Torah learning, and in doing the *mitzvos*? Does it mean that I have to be mentally willing to be killed *al kiddush Hashem*? Does it mean that I have to spend all of my energy on *ruchniyus*?

ANSWER *Mesirus nefesh* in *avodas Hashem* means that a person works on an area which he finds personally difficult to work on, and

he perseveres in that area, through self-sacrifice to succeed, no matter what comes his way. *Mesirus nefesh* in learning Torah is that a person learns above his natural physical capabilities, and with mental exertion, until he exhausts his mind over it. *Mesirus nefesh* in doing *mitzvos* is that a person takes one *mitzvos* and does it as perfectly as possible, on his own level, according to the halachah, and with love and awe of Hashem, and with the conviction that he will never give up this *mitzvah* under any circumstance.

QUESTION Is *mesirus nefesh* only a level for *yechidim* (individuals) in the generation or is it for the general *avodah* of today’s generation?

ANSWER There is a special ability granted by Hashem to today’s generation - the ability to go above our natural energies and act with “*mesirus nefesh*”. This is actually the *ohro shel Mashiach* (lit. “light of Mashiach”), the power of Dovid HaMelech, who was called a *bar nafti*, a “stillborn”, with no life support of his own, whose entire power stemmed from acting on the level of *mesirus nefesh*. In essence, the way of serving Hashem with *mesirus nefesh* was always meant for rare *yechidim* in every generation. But, since we are currently in a time period where the “*ohro shel Mashiach*” is shining strongly, it is easier today to act with *mesirus nefesh*. Hashem made this light available specifically in our generation so that we can contend with the evil of the *Shaar HaNun D’Tumah* (the lowest level of moral depravity) which fills the world today. The only way to spiritually survive the *Shaar HaNun* is through serving Hashem with *mesirus nefesh*.

QUESTION According to the words of the Rav that Internet is the *Shaar HaNun d’tu-*

mah (the 50th level of impurity), how then can a person come out of it, since we know that it's not possible to come out of the *Shaar HaNun d'Tumah*?

ANSWER It is possible to separate from it through *mesirus nefesh* [going against one's natural will in order to do the will of Hashem, because *mesirus nefesh* brings a person to the highest levels, no matter what level he is on right now], and that is the *tikkun* for all those who fell into the *Shaar HaNun*. [This is because the only thing that takes a person out of the *shaar HaNun d'tumah* is] the *shaar HaNun d'Kedushah* (the "50th Gate of Holiness"), which is accessed when a person shows *mesirus nefesh*.

QUESTION Is the Internet something that is intrinsically evil, or is there a way to use it in the proper way? A great *Yasher Koach* to the Rav and for all of the other responses which has helped me and others in our *avodas Hashem*.

ANSWER In our times, where we are very near the End of Days, the power of *echad* ("oneness") is revealed. On the side of *kedushah*, it is the concept of "Hashem is One and His name is One", and we hope this will soon be revealed completely. Corresponding to this power is an equal force in the side of *tumah*, which is intensifying, and it is the power of "media", which connects the entire world and everything in it, together. It connects *kedushah* and *tumah* together, leaving nothing out of it. It is the most dramatic example yet of the force of "Erev Rav", the mixture of every kind of influence in the

world, and there is no bigger "*kelipah*" (impure shell) of "Erev Rav" than this. And therefore, we need to distance ourselves from it as far as possible.

QUESTION When I speak to others of how important it is to separate from the Internet, they find it too difficult to give it up. What can I do to help them internalize how bad Internet use is and how much they really need to separate from it?

ANSWER Speak to others about making gradual changes, and only tell them what they can handle at their current level.

QUESTION What is the message that I need to give to others when I speak to them about how they need to give up their Internet use?

ANSWER Your goal should be to get others to feel how Hashem is in front of them and that our lives are meant for doing His will, and that each person on his or her own level can do it, and in the way that's appropriate for them. There is no one way which works for everyone. Each person needs to search for the way [to do it] in the manner that is most appropriate for them personally.

QUESTION Can the Rav give my any practical advice on how I can quickly enter into a state of joy (*simchah*) and come out of a bad mood?

ANSWER 1) Move quickly. 2) Eat a lighter diet. 3) Get excitement from a mitzvah or from anything that's *kedushah*. 4) Verbalize any pe-sukim in *Tehillim* that talk about *simchah*.

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