



## MATOS VOWS ELEVATING CREATION

**The Concept of Elevating the Creation** The beginning of *Parshas Matos* discusses the laws of declaring a *neder*, a vow.

There is also a deeper root to this matter. Chazal state that when Hashem created Adam HaRishon, He first showed him all of Gan Eden and said to him: "See how beautiful My handiwork is. Give your thoughts to this, so that you don't ruin and destroy My world."<sup>1</sup> The Ramchal explains in *Mesillas Yeshtarim* that when a human being becomes spiritually elevated, the rest of Creation is elevated with him, and when a person has a spiritual descent, *chas v'shalom*, the rest of Creation descends with him. The human being, as well as the rest of the creations, can become elevated. A person has the task to elevate himself, and, simultaneously, he also has the task to elevate the creations. These are the words of the Ramchal in *Mesillas Yeshtarim*: "The human being is a great elevator to the creations, when they [the creations] are used to serve the human being who is complete with the sanctity of the Blessed One."<sup>2</sup> Part of elevating the creations is through the concept of *nedarim*, vows.

When one makes a *neder*, this does not simply mean that he has prohibited himself from the use of a certain object or another person, or that he has prohibited others from benefitting from him. Rather, a *neder* is about elevating the object that one has prohibited. Now that the person has elevated the object, it becomes prohibited for use, but by its very concept, the act of making a *neder*/vow is to elevate an object to a higher level.

The *Ran* in *Tractate Nedarim*<sup>3</sup> explains that a *neder* works in a similar way to *hekdesh* (consecrating property for use in the *Beis HaMikdash*). When a person consecrates money as *hekdesh*, whether he consecrates the actual object itself or only the monetary value of the object, the money is called *mamon govoah*, "elevated money." Simply speaking, such money, objects, or property are considered to be Hashem's, and it is elevated above all other money that is in the possession of people. But there is also a deeper understanding. When a person consecrates an object as *hekdesh*, he elevates it to a higher level. Just as a person acquires an object through raising it, which is called *hagbahah*, so can a person raise an object to a higher level, through consecrating it as *hekdesh*. Through "raising" an object to a higher level, it becomes elevated – "*govoah*".

"Elevated money", *mamon govoah*, is called so because it has been raised, elevated and exalted to a higher level. Thus, such money, objects or property are on a higher level, and it is forbidden for a person to derive benefit from them, just as it is forbidden to derive benefit from *hekdesh*. Thus, a person is able to elevate the Creation in either one of two ways: (1) The more that he becomes an *adam hashaleim* (spiritually perfected person) as the Ramchal explains in *Mesillas Yeshtarim*, the more a person elevates the world with him.

(2) Or, a person directly elevates an object to a higher level, by consecrating it as *hekdesh*.

It is the same with making a *neder*. When a person declares a *neder*, he elevates the ordinary, raising it to a higher level than before. Just as it is forbidden for a person to derive benefit from something that is on a higher level than where his current one is - which is the concept we find by *hekdesh* – so too is it forbidden for a person to derive benefit from that which he has vowed not to derive benefit from. His vow has raised the object to a higher level than where he is currently, and he is not allowed to benefit from that which is on a higher level.

**The Beis HaMikdash - A Means To See The Creation As An Elevated Place** Let us understand more clearly how this concept applies to us on a personal level, and in our own *avodah*.

Chazal state that *Eretz Yisrael* is the most elevated of all lands.<sup>4</sup> Yerushalayim is the most elevated place in *Eretz Yisrael*, and the *Beis HaMikdash* is the most elevated place of Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim is situated at a high place, *Har HaMoriah*, which is rooted in the word *nam*, exalted. That is where the *Beis HaMikdash* is, where *korbonos* were brought, where the mundane became sanctified. It is the highest place in *Eretz Yisrael*, both in the physical and in the spiritual sense.

The Gemara says that there are two names of the *Beis HaMikdash*. It is called "light of the world", and it is also called "eye of the world."<sup>5</sup> The simple meaning of "light of the world" is that it is a place from which light came forth to the rest of the world. However, from a clearer understanding, it means that just as light enables us to see that which cannot normally be seen, so did the existence of the *Beis HaMikdash* enable us to see a more spiritual reality. To illustrate the idea, we see that light does not create a new reality, it simply shows us that something exists. (There is also a deeper understanding of light, but this is the explanation that pertains to our current discussion).

This is the deep definition of how the *Beis HaMikdash* was the "light of the world". Simply speaking, this is because it is said of Yerushalayim that it was a place which 'whitened' [atoned] the sins of Yisrael<sup>6</sup>, and that a woman in Yerushalayim was able to sift wheat because of the light that came from the *Simchas Beis HaShoeivah*<sup>7</sup>. But the deeper understanding of how the *Beis HaMikdash* was the "light of the world" is because the power of the *Beis HaMikdash* made it possible to see reality in a higher and more elevated way.

The *Beis HaMikdash* was the most elevated point in the loftiest place in the world. It was the "light of the world", and the depth of this

1 *Koheles Rabbah* 7:13

2 *Mesillas Yeshtarim* ch.1

3 *Ran to Nedarim* 33a

4 *Kiddushin* 69a

5 *Bava Basra* 4a

6 *Gittin* 56b

7 *Succah* 53a

# MATOS VOWS ELEVATING CREATION

is that the light of the *Beis HaMikdash* came from this high place that is called *mamon govoah*, “elevated money”. This light extended outward to the rest of the world, and it showed people how to view reality in a higher way. This is how it was the “light of the world” and the “eye of the world”. There was a certain light that came from it, as well as a higher perspective. It was a way to see, view and perceive the entire reality in front of us. It was a higher view of reality - and that is what the *Beis HaMikdash* was all about.

When the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed due to our sins, this did not just mean that we descended from the highest place in Eretz Yisrael, Yerushalayim, down to the nations of the world, Babylonia. Rather, the depth of the destruction was that we lost the “light”, and the “eye”, of the world. We lost the higher perspective towards Creation, the way to see things from a higher viewpoint. Ever since then, all that we see is from a lower view - we see things from an earthly perspective, and not from an elevated one.

**Connection Between Vows and The Beis HaMikdash**  
When the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, we were connected to the level of the *Beis HaMikdash* and the view it afforded us. We would bring *korbonos* there, and make vows, to offer *korbonos*. This meant that when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, the concept of making a *neder/vow* was in its revelation. Certainly, one can make a vow even after the *Beis HaMikdash* is no longer here, but the primary manifestation of a vow was more apparent when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood.

The existence of the *Beis HaMikdash* enabled people to see a higher perspective in the entire world around them. This also translated into action, through the three festivals when we trek to the *Beis HaMikdash*, which was called *aliyah l'regel*, “ascending to the festival”, for we would ascend on the festival to a higher level. We ascended on the festival because we received a higher perspective, a higher vision, as hinted to in the *korbon olas re'iyah* that was brought on the festival. This enabled us to have a higher *re'iyah*, vision, of the world, to see it as elevated money. That was what the *Beis HaMikdash* offered.

Thus, the main manifestation of *nedarim* was in the time when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, when people often made *nedarim* by vowing to donate a *korbon*. Though the laws of *neder* are forever, their main manifestation was in

the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Chazal said “It is better for a person not to make a vow, then to make a vow and pay it”, but in spite of this, the *Beis HaMikdash* was still based on the vows and donations of *korbonos*.

A *neder* is therefore more than just a vow. It was not just a way for a person to make a prohibition on himself, but a way to elevate something to a higher level, “*mamon govoah*”. It enabled a person to see a higher perspective in the mundane. As a hint, the word “*neder*” (נדר) is from the words “*nun dar*” (נדן), “The 50<sup>th</sup> should dwell”<sup>8</sup>, to dwell in an elevated place, a more spiritual plane, mimicking the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the exodus, when the Torah was given. That is the depth of the concept of a *neder*.

**The Light of the Beis HaMikdash Spread Outward To The Rest of the World**  
To explain this in clearer terms, the *Beis HaMikdash* was called the “light of the world” and also the “eye of the world”, because it revealed a certain perspective, a certain spiritual “light”, which also enabled one to “see” the entire Creation in a different manner. What was the perspective that it revealed? It was the realization of the verse, “*All has been called in My Name, for My glory I created it, fashioned it and also made it.*”<sup>9</sup> The innermost place of the *Beis HaMikdash* was the *Kodesh HaKodashim*, which was on the level of the *Kisei HaKavod* (Throne of Glory).

This “light” that came forth from the *Beis HaMikdash* - the realization of the verse “*All has been called in My Name, for My glory I created it*” - came specifically from the *Kodesh HaKodashim* (the Holy of Holies), the particular place where Hashem’s glory was revealed. There, the Kohen Gadol would enter on Yom Kippur, wearing the honorable *bigdei kehunah* (special white garments), which were worn “*l’kavod u’litaferes*”, “for glory and for beauty”. There was a revelation of “*The glory of Hashem hovers above him*” upon the *Mishkan*. This was especially true regarding the *Kodesh HaKodashim*.

The perspective that views all of Creation as *govoah*/elevated was, essentially, that a person was able to see that Hashem’s glory was contained in anything. When one sees anything in Creation and one sees that it serves a higher purpose, that it is meant to “honor”

something that is higher than it - that it is the perspective of “*govoah*”. When one sees an object and simply sees it as it is, it appears as if he and the object are in the same realm. But this comes from the lower perspective, borne out of the *shiflus* (lowliness) that has taken over ever since the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. In contrast, when one sees an object and one realizes that it only serves to reveal a higher purpose, that it is the depth of the perspective of seeing everything as *govoah* - that was the perspective which the *Beis HaMikdash* offered to the world.

“*All is called in My Name, for My glory I created it, fashioned it and also made it*” - this was the light that came from the *Beis HaMikdash*. It did not just remain as a light for the *Beis HaMikdash* alone; it spread outward to the rest of the world. The *Menorah*’s light took it even further and spread it further outward to the rest of the world, as the Gemara says, “Is it [the menorah] needed for its light? Rather, it is testimony to all those who enter the world.”<sup>10</sup>

What exactly was this “light” that spread outward to the rest of the world? It was the perspective that everything can be seen with a higher perspective. Simply speaking, this perspective means that a person sees an ordinary object and says, “I see it in a more elevated purpose in this object.” That is true, but there is a more precise definition. It means that a person sees something in Creation and understands that it is nothing but a revelation of the glory of Hashem. Whenever one sees any object, one can see it as an object that belongs to Above. When one sees the entire Creation with this perspective, he sees how everything is really *mamon govoah*, “elevated money” - objects that are all part of revealing Hashem’s glory.

**The Depth Behind Making A Neder/Vow: The Awareness That All of Creation Is Elevated**  
When one makes a *neder* and one is not aware of this perspective, of this kind of person Chazal were referring to when they said, “It is better not to make a vow, than to make a vow and not pay [fulfill] it.”<sup>11</sup> There is an argument in Chazal if it is better to make a vow and keep it, or if it is better to not make the vow at all, and in what circumstance. The same argument is found concerning one who becomes a *nazir*: If it is better to become a *nazir* and fulfill the

8 Shem M'Shmu'el parshas Vayeitzei

9 Yeshayah 43:7

10 Berachos 22b

11 Chullin 2a, Menachos 81a

# MATOS VOWS ELEVATING CREATION

laws, or if it is better not to have accepted *nezirus* at all. The depth of the argument is as follows.

If a person is found at the higher perspective of Creation and views everything as *govoahl* elevated, it is because he sees how all of Creation serves to reveal the glory of Hashem. He is on the proper level to make a *neder* or to become a *nazir*. Whereas if a person is found in the lower, more worldly perspective and he makes a vow or accepts *nezirus*, he is not raising anything to a higher level, and is simply forbidding himself to benefit from it. In the case of *neder*, either a person is forbidding the object upon himself, or he forbids himself upon the object. This is in contrast to making an oath (*shevuah*), where a person is placing a prohibition upon himself, without elevating the object in question.

Thus, one who is at the proper level of making a *neder* is one who is able to have the higher perspective towards the entire Creation, where the *neder* not only prohibits the object upon him, but also raises the object to a higher level [he is aware that all of Creation is elevated, for it all serves to reveal the glory of Hashem].

There are famous words of the Ramban on the verse “*Awake, and awaken the love, until you desire*”<sup>12</sup>, that one should internalize every awakening and desire [of love for Hashem] until it becomes like an object he has acquired into his possession. When one has the higher perspective towards Creation as described here, and he has awakened it and he also wants to internalize the perspective, he makes sure to acquire it well, like acquiring an object.

This was the perspective when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, when there was a place that revealed the glory of Hashem.

**The Glory of Hashem Unified All of Creation Together**  
The Kohanim guarded the *Beis HaMikdash* not only to protect it from vandals, but also to honor it. When the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed, its honor (*kavod*) was diminished with it.

To give a more precise definition, when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, its stones were attached and connected with each other. When it was destroyed, this unity was broken apart, and the stones were separated

from each other. It can be compared to a house and attic owned by two different people, and when the building is demolished, each of the owners take back the stones that belonged to each of them, where the stones are now separated.

*Kavod*, glory, is about revealing the glory of the King. It is to show that all parts of Creation are “*All is called in My Name*”, that each part of Creation serves to reveal the glory of Hashem. Everything in Creation is connected together because they are all parts that reveal Hashem’s glory. This was the perspective at the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. It was not simply another stone and another stone which formed the *Beis HaMikdash*. That was but a result. All of the stones were parts of the glory of Hashem. After the destruction, each stone stands apart, and the glory of Hashem is not recognizable. Instead, there are disparate parts.

Compare this to when we see a wise Torah scholar, who knows all of *Chumash*, *Mishnah*, *Gemara*, *halachah*, *agaddta*<sup>13</sup>, *maaseh beraishis*<sup>14</sup>, *maaseh merkavah*<sup>15</sup> and all the other parts of Torah. The glory of Hashem is revealed more through a Torah scholar, as stated in the verse, “*The wise inherit honor*”.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, a child says one verse and then another verse, but he does not reveal the glory of Hashem, because all of the words of Torah he is saying are not connected. When someone knows all of the Torah, he is revealing the glory of Hashem, because it is all together. Contrast this with a child’s learning, where each word of Torah learned is separated from the other and the child doesn’t see the connection. This kind of Torah learning doesn’t reveal the glory of Hashem (though the father is certainly teaching his child Torah). This gives us an idea of the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* – a scattered state which doesn’t reveal the glory of Hashem, because everything has become disparate.

Thus, the perspective of the *Beis HaMikdash* is that many stones are connected together, and that the many stones reveal the glory of Hashem. The destroyed *Beis HaMikdash* is the perspective that a person sees scattered parts, where there is no complete picture. The light of the world, the eye of the world,

13 homiletics

14 *The secrets of Creation*

15 *The secrets of the “Holy Chariot” (as described in Yechezkel 1:1)*

16 *Mishlei 3:35*

is absent. In clearer terms, when a person sees the world with a higher perspective – as we see from the concept of *neder*, where a person elevates an ordinary object to a higher level – he sees something else entirely in the Creation. He sees that there is a Creator, there are His creations, and all of His creations are nothing but a revelation of the glory of Hashem – and nothing else.

This is true even about the lowest realm in Creation, the realm we dwell on. In the higher worlds, there are even higher levels than this. But even in this world, one is able to see how “*All is called in My Name, for My honor I created it, fashioned it and also made it*”. One can see the general picture of the entire Creation, how all of the details connect, and that they are all nothing but the revelation of the glory of Hashem. This view is gained by one who is attached to the Torah, as implied by the earlier quoted verse, “*The wise inherit honor*”. It is a view where one sees how all of the world is like a sanctuary (*Heichal*) of Hashem, as in the verse, “*The sanctuary of Hashem, are they*”<sup>17</sup>. That was the level which the *Beis HaMikdash* afforded us.

But ever since the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, a person sees an endless amount of creations and he doesn’t see the connection. One may be able to see that there are some parts which can be used for *mitzvos*. He can see a *lulav* and understand that it is possible to fulfill a *mitzvah* with it in the proper time, and he can see the same with *matzah*, *tzitzis*, *tefillin*, etc. These acts of *mitzvos* are certainly ‘sparks’ of revelation of Hashem in the world, but the person still sees a huge world in front of him with an endless amount of creations, and he doesn’t see how they are all tools to reveal the presence of the Creator. He doesn’t see how they all give honor to Hashem. That is the “destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*”, in terms of the soul.

**A Personal Rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash**  
Chazal state, “Whoever doesn’t have the *Beis HaMikdash* built in his days, it is as if it was destroyed in his days.”<sup>18</sup> This destruction also takes place on an inner level, in one’s own soul [when he is missing the perspective that all of Creation is meant for a higher purpose: to reveal the glory of Hashem].

When one reveals the perspective that all of reality serves to reveal the glory of Hashem,

17 *Yirmiyah 7:4*

18 *Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1*

12 *Shir HaShirim 5:3*



# MATOS VOWS ELEVATING CREATION

of him it is said, “And I will dwell amongst them”<sup>19</sup>. This means that Hashem dwells in every individual<sup>20</sup>. This is because a person can become a resemblance of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Chazal state that one can merit a level in which it is considered ‘as if’ the *Beis HaMikdash* was built in his days<sup>21</sup> – meaning that the person is living on the level of the *Beis HaMikdash*. (It is only ‘as if’, though, because it is a private revelation, and not a collective revelation.) This means that one can merit it even in the present [and not just in the future]. This is true when one has become more of an *adam hashaleim* (one who has attained spiritual perfection), where he is living on the level when the *Beis HaMikdash* is actually built and standing.

If one doesn’t merit to see the *Beis HaMikdash* rebuilt in his time, it means that he doesn’t have the elevated perspective of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Instead, he sees many scattered details and parts around him, an endless amount of creations – and with a scattered perspective like this, the *Beis HaMikdash* is considered to be ‘destroyed’ in his lifetime. All he can see is how there are “Foxes walking in it”<sup>22</sup>, and how “Sacred stones are scattered, at the heads of every street”<sup>23</sup>. He sees and thinks about the many stones of the *Beis HaMikdash* that have become separated and scattered from each other [he sees a disparate state in Creation, and he doesn’t see how all the parts of Creation connect together to reveal Hashem’s glory]. Even though he knows they are all holy stones, the *Beis HaMikdash* is still destroyed in his lifetime, because he has only the lower perspective that comes after the destruction.

The word “*neder*” is from the words *nun dar*, “the 50th should dwell”, which is a hint that a *neder* is a way for a person to see what kind of dwelling this world is. It represents the perspective where a person sees the entire Creation as elevated, how it is all a revelation of the glory of Hashem.

**Reaching Our Neshamah's Desire To Reveal The Glory of Hashem** In order for a person to attain the perspective described here, one must be aware that the depth of every single Jew’s

*neshamah* (Divine soul) has a great yearning and demand for the recognition of the glory of Hashem in the world.

When there is nothing but *chilul Hashem* (profanity of Hashem’s Name) in the world, of this it is said, “In the concealed places, my soul weeps.”<sup>24</sup> The *neshamah* weeps, together with Hashem, so to speak, over the lack of this recognition in the world. One “joins with the pain of the *Shechinah*”, when one is bothered at the absence of the revelation of Hashem’s glory on the world. This is the simple nature of a Jew’s soul, which desires to reveal the glory of Hashem. The soul of a Jew is in pain and it suffers and it cries, over the situation of *chilul Hashem* in this world.

But when the soul comes down into This World, it joins with a physical body in this world – described in other terms, the *neshamah* joins with the *nefesh habehaimis* (the animal level of the soul) What happens to the yearning of the soul to reveal Hashem’s glory? The soul will demand glory and honor, but not the honor of Hashem. The true desire to reveal Hashem’s glory will become concealed by the soul’s lower, unrefined layers (the *nefesh habehaimis*). The *neshamah* desires to reveal Hashem in the world, but the *nefesh habehaimis* will demand honor for its own sake.

This is the deeper reason why a person demands to be honored by others. It is a result of the destroyed *Beis HaMikdash*, where all the stones are scattered, when one is stuck in pursuing his own personal glory and he isn’t interested in revealing the collective glory, the glory of Hashem, in the world.

As long as a person is demanding honor because his *nefesh habehaimis* wants to experience personal honor, he is stuck in his own honor and he doesn’t desire to reveal the collective honor, the honor of Hashem. Instead of being on the level of “*They all declare [His] glory*”, the person demands his own personal honor. This is the perspective that results from the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*! This personal demand for honor conceals the deep yearning of the *neshamah* to reveal the honor of Hashem in the world.

When one merits shedding his *nefesh habehaimis* – at least by refining it and by weakening his desire for personal honor – the deep desire of the *neshamah* will surface, and

he will feel the yearning to reveal a higher kind of honor, the honor of Hashem. This is what it means to desire the rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

**The Avodah of Bein HaMitzarim – To Lesson Our Personal Honor and Reveal The Honor of Hashem** These days, as explained in the words of the *Poskim*, especially the day of *Tisha B’Av*, are days where one should lessen one’s own personal honor. The source of this is clear in *halachah*, and the depth of it is what we are explaining here.

As long as a person isn’t lessening his personal honor, his desire to reveal the honor of Hashem will remain hidden and concealed. As a general definition, the *nefesh habehaimis* conceals the light of the *neshamah*. To be more precise, the *neshamah* demands the revelation of the glory of Hashem, while the *nefesh habehaimis* desires personal honor. The desire for personal honor is a result of the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, disparity, an absence of the big picture. When that is the case, one is certainly living his life for *shelo lishmah* (not for the sake of Heaven) and *l’garmei* (self-serving motivations).

The more we merit to remove from our souls the desire for personal honor and we can truly rejoice when we experience shame, it can then be revealed in us the deep demand in our *neshamah* for the glory of Hashem, for “*All is called in My Name, for My glory I created, fashioned and also made it*”. This reveals the deep pain of the soul about the concealment of Hashem’s glory in this world. Then we can truly desire the coming of Mashiach, the rebuilding of Yerushalayim, may it return speedily in our days.

In the depths of one’s *neshamah*, there is a yearning for the rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash*, for the revelation of the glory of Hashem. To the degree that one merits to connect oneself with the soul’s demand for the glory of Hashem<sup>25</sup>, a person will merit a personal rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash*, as if it was built in his own times. Even more so, may we merit that this year should be the rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash* in its completion. Amen, and Amen.

[from BILVAVI ON THE PARSHAH]

*25 Editor’s Note: The concept of desiring to reveal the glory of Hashem on the world is elaborated upon at length in sefer Daas Tevunos of the Ramchal*

19 Shemos 25:8

20 Alshich HaKadosh (*sefer Toras Moshe*) and Shelah HaKadosh, *ibid*

21 Berachos 33b

22 Eichah 5:18

23 Eichah 4:1

24 Yirmiyah 13:17

## Why Many People Don't Want To Be Happy

There are many people who have a hard time with being happy. They find it more difficult than anything! They have a hard time being happy with life in general, and especially when it comes to trying to uncover their strongest ability and to be happy with it. This is because they also see (or they are mainly seeing) their shortcomings and their difficulties, which mars any joy they have.

Their way of thinking is, “What good does it do for me that I have certain good qualities in me? These are basic good qualities that most human beings have, it’s not like there’s anything special about me. Also, the qualities that I do have aren’t even that lofty or important. In stark contrast to that, my faults and my drawbacks are many, and they’re huge. I have so many problems. Even my strongest and best ability doesn’t mean that much to me, because others also have this strong ability. What’s so special and unique about it? And what can I do with it? I won’t even talk about how others are much better at using this quality, and that I am weaker at it than most people, who make much better use of this quality....”

This perspective comes from a severe error, in which a person that “Everything is supposed to be coming to me” and that he is owed everything. But the truth is that Hashem could have made it that you weren’t created. And even after He created You in His great compassion, He could have made you stay naked, abandoned, and with nothing at all to keep you alive and nourished.

But He didn’t do that. Hashem loves His creations, and gives all of them food and clothing and so much goodness in all areas of life, in the spiritual and in the physical. He sustains everyone, feeds and supports everyone, even though nothing is ‘coming’ to them and He doesn’t owe them anything. He does it from His great compassion, His awesome love, for all that He has created, and He gives each what they need individually.<sup>1</sup>

*1 Even a person’s shortcomings and drawbacks are also for his benefit, and they were given to a person out of Hashem’s love for him. Our shortcomings were given to us by Hashem so that we can complete ourselves on this world by working on our weaknesses, so that we will receive great reward for having overcome our personal challenges and tests on this world. It may also be for the purpose of atoning our sins, or for the purpose of purifying our souls and elevating our souls (but at this point, let us instead focus on being*

Hashem gave a person his strongest ability, all as a gift to him, from His love and from His will to bestow good on a person, even though He owes nothing to the person and there is nothing that He “has to” give him. The greatest gift that a person has is his particular strongest ability, because his strongest ability is a part of his being and it serves as his source of vitality.

So, let us think a lot about how Hashem is not obligated to give us anything – not our life in general, and not our strongest power. These are all great gifts that Hashem gave us, for free. And since Hashem didn’t owe us anything and still gave us so much good, from His great love and compassion for us, let us be happy with every detail He gave to us, even the smallest one. And certainly we should be happy with the greatest gift He has given us – our personal strongest ability.

## Appreciating Our Strongest Ability

Another reason why a person isn’t happy with his personal share in life – his strongest ability that he possesses – is because he is simply unaware of the benefits and gains that come from this unique gift that Hashem has given him.

Hashem said to Moshe, “I have a good gift in My treasury, and Shabbos is her name, and I want to give her to the Jewish people. Go and inform them.”<sup>2</sup> The treasury of Hashem contains only the most important things, the most precious things that there are. Shabbos is the root of the week and the purpose of Creation, so it is called the good gift which Hashem kept in His treasury, and Hashem wanted Moshe to tell the people about how valuable it is, so that they could recognize its worth and be happy about it.

Similarly, our strongest ability is the “good gift” which Hashem has given us. Our strongest ability is the root of our soul, and through it we will reach our purpose. So we should be aware of the goodness and benefits that come from it, and to be happy with it.

Our strongest ability is also the main driving force behind *happy with the good that we’ve been given, which we are more consciously aware of).*  
<sup>2</sup> Talmud Bavli Shabbos 10b

the rest of our soul's abilities. A person can only think, behave, and achieve in the way that he does, only as a result of the strongest power that dwells within him. In fact, our strongest ability is motivating us even if it is inactive. Even when it's not active, that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Unconsciously, we are being motivated by the strongest ability that's deep down in us, even as it remains dormant.

But a person usually isn't aware that his strongest ability is moving him at all times, and this is because since it is always been inside him ever since he was born, he never learned to recognize it. He is not conscious of it, and therefore he never thinks about it, even for a moment – he never thinks “What would my life look like, without my best ability?”

The way to recognize the value of your strongest ability and to open your awareness towards it is only when you think a lot about what your life look like if you didn't have it. From being aware of the absence of this ability in your life, that is exactly how you will come to appreciate it. “There is no light except that which is extracted from darkness.”<sup>3</sup> In order to be happy with our strongest ability, we need to think about it a lot and picture for ourselves what our lives would look like if we wouldn't have our strongest ability, and what our lives look like right now that we have it.<sup>4</sup>

We can think about this in general terms, by thinking of the aspects that we would be missing, which areas we wouldn't be successful in, and which attainments we could have not reached, unless we had our strongest ability. Then we should think what our life looks like right now, when we do have this strongest ability. We can then understand how our life is so much better and wonderful because of it (and that is an understatement!). We can also get more specific by thinking of events that happened to us in which we have had acted very differently (to our detriment) if we would not have had this strongest ability, and now let us see how we are able to go about our life with our strongest ability.<sup>5</sup>

If we skim through our life like this, thinking about it generally and also honing in on specific events, we will be filled with joy over what we have been given, which Hashem has given us in His kindness and goodness. That will intensify our strongest ability and activate its potential even more.

## Thanking Hashem For Our Greatest Ability

So far, this chapter explained several important points: (1) Nothing is coming to us – Hashem doesn't owe us anything. (2) Whatever we do have is a gift from Hashem. (3) Our strongest ability is the “good gift” that has been given to our personal soul. (4) Our strongest ability is the moving force behind all of our various abilities and achievements.

In order to ingrain these principles in us, we should allow expression to them, by thanking Hashem. There is a general way to thank Hashem and also a specific way to thank Hashem. We generally can thank Hashem by thanking Him for everything, collectively. We can also thank Hashem more specifically, by thanking Him for our strongest ability that He gave us. That is what we should mainly be thanking Him for. If we need to be thanking Hashem for external things, certainly we need to be thanking Him for things that are more internal and more attached with our being. It is not enough to thank Hashem mentally or by mumbling it weakly. It must come from recognizing intellectually the goodness that He did for us, as well as feeling this with our heart, and then verbally expressing our gratitude.

If we have traversed the steps that have been explained until now, we have acquired several keys in relation to our strongest power. We have learned how to recognize it, we have identified with it, we have connected to it, we desire to invest ourselves in it, we understand that it is a gift, and we understand that it is the great moving force of our life. From an inner place of recognizing and inwardly experiencing it, we should now verbally thank Hashem, for our strongest ability. We should fuse our intellect and

3 Zohar Shemos 184

4 You should only make this contemplation on condition that you like your strongest ability and you feel positive about it.

5 For example, take at least 10 experiences in your life and contemplate this. Try to take central events of your life and see how

your best ability helped you. It will “suddenly” become revealed to you how most of the important parts of your life and most of your greatest achievements and successes were all in the “merit” of your strongest ability.

heart together and allow them to be expressed together, through the speech of our mouth. As the Chovos HaLevovos says, "The tongue (speaking) is the ink of the heart and the messenger of our hidden reserves."<sup>6</sup>

The more that we are thanking Hashem verbally for our strongest ability, the more we will become conscious of

6 Chovos HaLevovos Shaar HaBechinah 5

it and it will become an inseparable part of our lives, and the main source by which our soul can derive its needed vitality. This will fill our lives with a goodness that we are conscious of, and that will connect our souls to the path of "Do good", where we will become connected to good.

NEXT WEEK- *The Attitude of Ingratitude*

[מהספר הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש]



נפש האדם עשויה רבדים רבדים - שכבות שכבות, והכניסה לרובדי הנפש על ידי מהלך של הכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש היא המפתח לחיים הטובים, ובמילים חדות יותר - היא המפתח לעצם החיים. בכדי לחיות, עלינו לעבוד את הבורא יתברך ולקיים את מצוותיו, לבנות לעצמנו צורת חיים נכונה, מתוקנת ומלאת חיות ושמחה, להוציא את כוחותינו מהכח לפועל ולפתור את בעיותינו. כמו כן, עלינו להביט אל פנימיותנו, ולהיות באחדות - עם עצמנו, עם זולתנו, ועם בוראנו. והדרך לכך הינה; הכרה עצמית ועבודה מעשית של העצמת הנפש בצורה מובנית, יסודית, היקפית ועקבית.

וזה עיקר מגמתו של ספר זה - הדרכה מעשית להכרה עצמית והעצמת הנפש. כשמו - כן הוא. בנוסף, ספר זה הינו הפתח הראשי למערכת שלמה של דרך "ארבעת היסודות", הכוללת מספר חלקים, שתכליתה לאפשר לאדם להתחבר לעצמו במקום בו הוא נמצא, ומשם להתקדם הלאה בבניית צורת החיים הנכונה לו - על כל המשתמע.



# בלבבי משכן אבנה

הפצה אברומוביץ 03.578.2270 משלוח ברחבי העולם

AVAILABLE IN THE USA FROM SHIRA DISTRIBUTORS 718.871.8652



ספר זה עוסק בכוחות הנובעים מיסוד המים, ובו מתפרטים הכוחות השונים הנובעים מיסוד המים, בצירוף היסודות האחרים - כל פעם לפי סדר אחר ואופן שונה. רבי חיים ויטאל בספרו 'שערי קדושה' מבאר, כי המידה הרעה הנובעת מיסוד המים - היא מידת התאוה.

כח המים הוא כח יסודי באדם, שמעורר בו את כח התאוה. באופן טבעי כאשר האדם אינו עובד על מידותיו התאוה מתגלית אצלו כמידה רעה, אך כאשר הוא מתקן את מידת התאוה בשורשה - היא הופכת להיות מידה טובה. ספר זה עוסק בביאור פרטי מידת התאוה הרעה שבאדם, והדרכה מעשית לאופן תיקונה.

האופנים שבהם מתגלית מידת התאוה בנפש האדם רבים הם מאוד. בספר זה מובאים ט"ז האופנים היותר עיקריים והיותר בולטים, שבהם מתגלית מידת התאוה בנפש האדם.



בגאולתם של ישראל, ישנה גאולה כללית, וישנה גאולה פרטית. הגאולה הכללית - זוהי הגאולה של כלל כנסת ישראל, והגאולה הפרטית - זוהי הגאולה של כל נפש ונפש פרטית מישראל. היפוכה של הגאולה - זוהי הגלות. ועניינה של הגלות היא, כאשר הדבר איננו נמצא במקומו, אלא הוא גולה ומתגלגל למקום אחר. ומצד כך, בספר זה עסקנו בס"ד לבאר מהי הגלות הפרטית של נפש האדם, וכיצד היא הגאולה הימנה. לאמור, שביארנו מהי הגלות והגאולה בכל אחד מכוחות הנפש, מהכח התחתון ביותר בנפש - כח המעשה, עד הכח העליון ביותר בנפש - כח ההוויה. כיצד כל כח מתראה כאשר הוא איננו נמצא במקומו - בתיקונו, אלא הוא נמצא בגלות, וכיצד כל כח מתראה כאשר הוא נמצא בתיקונו - במקומו, בגאולתו.

אולם, כל עת שלא זכינו לגאולה הכללית השלמה של כלל כנסת ישראל, הרי שאין בידינו להגיע לגאולה הפרטית השלמה של כל נפש מישראל, אך להקטין את הגלות הפרטית - יכולים אנו, ולשם כך מיועד ספר זה.

וכפי שמבואר בדברי רבותינו, כאשר כל אחד ואחד מישראל יזכה לגאול את נפשו מגלותה הפרטית, אזי כל כנסת ישראל יזכו לגאולתם הכללית, במהרה בימינו, אמן.

ספרי אברומוביץ

רח. קוטלר 5,

בני ברק 03.579.3829

הפצת ספרי קודש

רח. דוד 2,

ירושלים 02.623.0294

ספרי מאה שערים

רח. מאה שערים 15,

ירושלים 02.502.2567

ניתן להשיג גם בסניפי ספרי אור החיים