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**HAVINEINI
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Contents

Preparing for Leil HaSeder 5

Shabbos Hagadol ❖ *The Source of All Brachos* ❖ *Preparing for the Seder*
❖ *How to Take the Medicine* ❖ *More Than Meets the Eye* ❖ *Accessing
the Power of tzaddikim* ❖ *From Many – One* ❖ *The Story of Your Life*
❖ *The Power of Speech*

Hachana for Shevii Shel Pesach – Our Avodah When Standing al Sfas Hayam 15

ביום ההוא את ישראל ❖ *Breaking Through the Kitrug* ❖ *Above
Nature: The First Pathway* ❖ *My Children Are in the Water!* ❖ *Don't
Tell Them About the Miracles* ❖ *Believing in Miracles: The Second
Pathway* ❖ *Love and Fear Complement Each Other* ❖ *Fusing Both
Pathways* ❖ *Why Would Bnei Yisrael Expect a Miracle?* ❖ *Removing
the Cause* ❖ *Knowing Where to Look* ❖ *Drawing from a Higher Source*
❖ *Returning to the Source of Blessing* ❖ *Teshuvah: True Hishtadlus* ❖
Accepting Authority Through Mesirus Nefesh ❖ *The Essence of
Yiddishkeit* ❖ *Heretical Thoughts Regarding Parnassah* ❖ *True Mesirus
Nefesh: Giving Up Our Desires* ❖ *Heavenly Hints* ❖ *Accepting
Hashem's Will* ❖ *Hashem Knows Everything* ❖ *Go into the Water!* ❖
Hashem Is Good and Does Good for All ❖ *The Nisayon of Akeidas
Yitzchok* ❖ *Everything Is Good* ❖ *Getting on the Path* ❖ *Acquiring the
Bizas Hayam*

Preparing for Leil HaSeder

Shabbos Hagadol

The Beis Avraham of Slonim explains the significance of Shabbos Hagadol with a parable.

A king once made a great feast for his ministers and servants. After the meal, the king invited the commoners to feast on the leftovers. But after they ate their fill, there was still much food and drink left over. It wouldn't be respectful to throw out food from the royal feast. So the criminals were released from prison and invited to enjoy the bountiful repast.

The Beis Avraham writes that his grandfather, the Yesod HaAvodah, utilized this image to explain the *pasuk* in Tehillim (25:11), וְסַלְחָתָּ לְעֹנְיָי, הוּא כִּי רַב הוּא – *You will forgive my sin, for it is great*. At times, when the *shefa* of forgiveness is great, with kindness and mercy for tzaddikim and *ovdei Hashem*, the simple Jews and even sinners receive *mechilah* from the “leftovers” of that *shefa* – for the way of a King is to benefit all his subjects, even the lowest of them.

The same applies to Shabbos Hagadol. Such an abundance of *shefa* comes to the world on Shabbos Hagadol that it empowers every Jew, even the lowest of the low, to do complete *teshuvah* and prepare himself for the holy Yom Tov of Pesach.

The Tzemach Tzaddik of Vizhnitz said that his ancestor Rav Yisrael of Rizhin told the following story.

Once there was a Rav whose custom was the opposite of the common practice. On Shabbos Hagadol (which precedes Pesach), he would give a *drashah* about *teshuvah*. On Shabbos Teshuvah (which precedes Yom Kippur), his *drashah* focused on the laws of *hagalas keilim*, *kashering* utensils.

The Rizhiner said he approved of that Rav's *minhag*. It is appropriate to focus on *kashering* vessels as preparation to Yom Kippur, because we need to purify our hearts. On Shabbos Hagadol, it is important to focus on *teshuvah*, because we need to clean and prepare our hearts to receive the *kedushah* of Pesach.

The *sefer Beis Aharon* also states that Shabbos Hagadol shares the special greatness of Shabbos Teshuvah.

The Source of All Brachos

In his *sefer Sidduro Shel Shabbos*, Rav Chaim of Tchernovitz explains the significance of Shabbos Hagadol. Chazal tell us that a great miracle occurred on that Shabbos. Bnei Yisrael risked their lives by publicly taking sheep (worshipped as sacred by the Egyptians) for *korban Pesach* and tying them to the bedposts. *Sidduro Shel Shabbos* explains that it was no coincidence that this miracle took place on Shabbos. In fact, it was the *kedushah* of that Shabbos that brought about the miracle. This is why we commemorate the miracle on the Shabbos before Pesach, rather than on the tenth of Nissan (the calendar date of the miracle).

If outlaws come and besiege a town on Sunday, and Hashem saves the townspeople on Wednesday, it's important to know that the miracle was really prepared on the preceding Shabbos. This applies to every miracle that occurs. Even if one davened for help on Monday, and was miraculously saved on the same day, it was all prepared on the previous Shabbos. On Shabbos, Hashem saw that he was destined to daven on the coming Monday, and therefore He imbued that Shabbos with the *shefa* that would miraculously save him once he davens on Monday.

Shabbos is *mekor habrachos*, the source of all the blessings and miracles in the week that follows.

There's a puzzling sentence in the *zemer Kol Mekadesh Shevi'i* (recited on *leil Shabbos*), that we can now try to understand. מודה אני לפניך...על כל. - I thank You for all of the kindness that You have done with me, and that You will do for me in the

future. As we have learned, the *shefa* that generates all the *chesed* which we will benefit from in the coming week enters the world on Shabbos, and therefore we already thank Hashem for those *chasadim*, along with thanking Him for the *chasadim* of the previous week.

Therefore, when we remember the miracles that took place on Shabbos Hagadol, we don't refer only to the miracle of taking the sheep. All the miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim are already here on Shabbos Hagadol, waiting to take place on Pesach.

The Chiddushei HaRim adds that on Shabbos Hagadol, all of the *Shabbassos* combine forces in order to bring the *geulah*. (This is based on the concept that the night of Pesach gives us *chiyus* for the entire year). He explains that when Chazal said אילו היו שומרים ישראל שתי שבתות מיד - *If Yisrael would keep two Shabbassos they would be redeemed immediately*, they meant Shabbos Hagadol, which is a conglomerate of many *Shabbassos*. This is also why the special *haftarah* read on Shabbos Hagadol speaks about the *geulah*, which will come in the merit of this Shabbos.

We should plan ahead so as to take advantage of this unique Shabbos. Certainly, the *menuchah* of Shabbos is easy to appreciate after a long week of preparing for Pesach. Even that down-to-earth *menuchah* gives us the ability to grasp the doorknob of the entrance to the King's palace. Of course, we want to open that door and experience the unique *kedushah* of Shabbos Hagadol.

Preparing for the Seder

Now, we can learn about preparing for the *Seder* itself. Chazal said, חגגו ודורשו בהלכות החג, שואלים ודורשים - *Thirty days before a chag we ask and study the laws of the chag*, Rav Mendel of Riminov explained that this refers to more than knowledge of *halachah*. The word שואלין or 'asking' can also mean *tefillah*, and דורשין means seeking and searching. In the thirty days preceding the *chag*, every Yid should look through his deeds, do *teshuvah*, and daven for great *siyata d'Shmaya* to help him succeed on the night of the *Seder*.

We especially need *siyata d'Shmaya* to avoid lapsing into sadness and anger, or allowing small problems to damage the *kedushah* of the *Seder*. Coming to the *Seder* table after days of exhausting preparation, we might need a lot of help from above to avoid those pitfalls.

Rav Meir Stern, the Rav of Miron, said that the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz used to take a special trip to Miron each year before Pesach, to daven to have *da'as* on *leil haSeder* and not *chas v'shalom* become angry. That tzaddik, who understood and invested so much in the *kedushah* of the *Seder*, also knew how much we need to daven for the *siyata d'Shmaya* needed to avoid anger.

It is also told that even though the Imrei Chaim urged his *chassidim* to speak in Yiddish and avoid speaking *Ivrit* (modern Hebrew), he said, "There is one modern Hebrew expression I like very much." That was '*hakol b'seder*' (everything's okay). He would emphasize, "This expression is so true, because every aspect of the year is concealed within the Pesach *Seder*. *Hakol b'Seder* - everything is in the *Seder*."

How to Take the Medicine

The *Zohar Hakadosh* calls matzah "a medicinal food" – מיכלא דאטווא. Rav Aharon Leib of Premishlan pointed out that for a medicine to be properly absorbed in the body, it is important that the stomach should be empty of waste. The intensive labor involved in preparing for Pesach cleanses our body, preparing it for its yearly dose of that most powerful medicine – matzah.

This does not mean the time and effort involved in learning about Pesach; although of course we are meant to prepare, as for every Yom Tov and mitzvah, by learning as much as we can about it. It is clear that the tzaddik is speaking about the difficult *avodah* of preparing for Pesach. Hakadosh Baruch Hu's mitzvos require us to roll up our sleeves and throw ourselves into the exhausting tasks that must be tackled in order to celebrate Pesach *k'hilchasah*. That work, says R' Aharon Leib of Premishlan, cleanses our body and prepares it to absorb and be healed by the matzah of *leil haSeder*.

More Than Meets the Eye

In his *sefer Imrei Noam*, Rav Meir of Dzikov relates that his grandfather, the Ropshitzer Rebbe, heard Rav Mendel of Rimanov declare that he detected the scent of Gan Eden at the *Seder*. Since it is known that *malachim* participate in our *Seder* and rejoice with us, it follows that the scent of Gan Eden accompanies them. While only *tzaddikim* actually experience that aroma, we must strengthen our *emunah* that this *kedushah* is present during the *Seder* in every Jewish home. We, too, need to prepare ourselves, to the best of our ability, to welcome that *kedushah* into our homes.

In his *sefer Sha'ar Yissachar*, the Minchas Elazar of Munkacz relates that one year, the Rimanover's second *Seder* continued until daybreak. When he stepped out of his door, he saw the local peasant farmers heading to their fields. He was surprised to see these coarse, earth-bound people and exclaimed, "I thought there were no longer such *goyim* in the world!"

At his *Seder*, the Rimanover had already perceived the final *tikkun* and the return of the world to its Gan Eden-like state. He was shocked to see that the world still didn't reflect that *tikkun*.

Although we can't relate to such lofty *madreigos*, we are still obligated to try to establish even a fractional connection to them. *tzaddikim* explain that when Chazal instructed us to say, מתי יגיעו מעשי למעשי אבותי, - *When will my deeds reach those of my forefathers*, they didn't mean that we should expect to reach their level. They meant that we should aspire to a *נגיעה*, a touch, connecting us to their *madreigos*.

By repeating these stories, we remind ourselves that we know so little of what truly takes place on *leil haSeder*. Nevertheless, we can and must have *emunah* even in that which we can't see.

Accessing the Power of *tzaddikim*

The *pasuk* (Bamidbar 9:2) says, וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַפֶּסַח בְּמוֹעֲדוֹ, - *And Bnei Yisrael made the Pesach in its time.*

The *Zohar Hakadosh* asks: Why does the Torah use the generic term ויעש, without specifying what they did? R. Yosi answers: From here we learn that when a Jew does what Hashem wants him to do in this world, it is considered as if he “makes” the transformations that take place on high, in the spiritual origin of the mitzvah, and bring the resulting *shefa* to this world. When they slaughtered and ate the *korban Pesach*, they actually created or “made” the spiritual force of Pesach in the heavens.

Similarly, by fulfilling the mitzvos of *leil haSeder*, we are simultaneously bringing about the transformations above that can only take place through our mitzvos. The Yismach Yisrael of Alexander writes that prior to the *Seder*, each person should declare that everything he is about to do will be in accordance with the intentions of the Ba’al Shem Tov and his *talmidim*, and of all tzaddikim, whether alive with us today or from previous generations. This has been the custom of *chassidim* throughout the generations.

The Chida wrote a *tefillah* to be recited before the *Seder*, enumerating the mitzvos and *minhagim* that we are about to fulfill. It includes a request that everything we do should be considered in accordance with the intentions of R. Shimon bar Yochai and all the tzaddikim. By doing so, we will fulfill the mitzvos in the optimal manner in this world, and bring about the desired effect in the higher worlds.

From Many – One

We can now examine the concept of the “*seder*.” It would be a mistake to view it as a simple checklist of mitzvos and *minhagim*. The *Seder* is like a tower that is constructed of many parts, each of which is necessary to create that one magnificent edifice.

The “*Siddur*” or ordering of our *tefillah* was composed by Chazal, and therefore, we understand that we cannot just skip or remove parts of that *seder*. Each part of *tefillah* must be said in the proper order in order for the resulting spiritual construction to be complete. The same applies to the Pesach *Seder*. Each part of the *Seder* is like a specifically formed brick that must be placed upon another in a particular order.

The *simanim* (*Kadesh*, *Urchatz*, and so on) that we recite at the beginning of the *Seder* were composed by Rishonim – Rashi, according to some opinions, and according to others, the *Ba'alei HaTosafos*. In fact, there are at least eighteen other versions of the *simanim*, all composed by Rishonim. All of the versions demonstrate that the *Seder* is a spiritual construct which must be built according to a particular blueprint.

From its inception, *Chassidus* taught that even simple Jews with no understanding of *Kabbalah* should fulfill mitzvos according to the teachings of the masters of *Kabbalah*. In this way, every Jew can live with the understanding that the way he fulfills a mitzvah brings about very specific changes in *Shamayim*.

Someone once asked the Slonimer Rebbe, the Nesivos Shalom, at his *Seder*, to explain why the *simanim* include even small details that are not primary obligations. The Rebbe replied with a *mashal*.

Someone visits the cockpit of an airplane and sees that it is covered from wall to wall with buttons and switches of different sizes and colors. Lacking the pilot's training, the person might initially wonder, "What is the point of having so many buttons?"

However, as he takes a moment to consider the difficulty and complexity of enabling this huge metal bird to take off and successfully navigate the skies, he will realize that such a thing could only be made possible by synchronizing countless small details. Nobody wants to risk flying on a plane that has even one small system malfunction, because even one small error can lead to a crash.

"So too," said the Rebbe, "the great tzaddikim, who know how to take off and fly at high spiritual altitudes, understand the significance of all those details, and why each 'button' is necessary."

The Story of Your Life

We can catch a glimpse of this significance by noticing that there are fifteen *simanim* in the *Seder*, corresponding to the *gematria* of Hashem's

Name *Yud-Hey*. This is not a coincidence. The Imrei Noam of Dzikov was asked why some details of the *Seder* don't appear in the *simanim* – such as the four cups, and *mayim acharonim*. He answered that the number of *simanim* had to be exactly fifteen, in order to correspond to Hashem's Name *Yud-Hey*.

The *sefer Beis Aharon* has a long *peirush* on the paragraph from the Haggadah עלינו למקום טובות למקום עלינו – *How many favors Hashem has granted us*. He explains that the fifteen favors listed correspond to fifteen levels that a Jew ascends as he draws closer to Hashem. This is also the content of the fifteen *Shir Hama'alos* written by Dovid Hamelech. On the night of the *Seder*, we ascend those fifteen levels of closeness, by following the *simanim* of the *Seder* from *Kadesh* to *Nirtzah*, reaching a state of *achdus* with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Perhaps we can better understand this process by comparing it to the structure of an autobiography. Many people consider the thought of writing their life story. The truth is that each and every Jew has a life story that, like the Haggadah, מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח – *begins with the negative and ends with praise*. From the moment the *neshamah* enters the world, a person goes through so many experiences, interactions, trials, and difficulties. These are the external manifestation of the true battle of his lifetime – the *neshamah's* struggle to find its way back to its source, and to unite once again with its Creator.

On *leil haSeder* each of us relives the journey of our lives. We begin with גנות – the difficulties and trials that we each go through in our individual *galus*. We then begin to ascend, following the *Seder* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu designed for each of us, until at the summit of *Nirtzah*, we are totally reunited with Hashem.

The *Seder* of the *simanim* also guide our *avodas Hashem*. Dovid Hamelech wrote, סור מרע ועשה טוב – one should first *turn from evil* and then *do good*. Why at the *Seder* does *Kadesh* precede *Urchatz*? *Urchatz*, washing, represents disassociation from sin, while *Kadesh* represents positive actions of *kedushah*. Many commentaries ask this question. They answer that on *leil haSeder*, we are elevated to such a high level that

we are able to jump directly to *asei tov*. Moreover, a strong focus on *kedushah* will also lead us to separate from sins.

The Power of Speech

The *sefer Yesod V'Shoresh HaAvodah* teaches that before each part of the *Seder* we should call out the *siman* of what we are about to do, up to and including *Nirtzah*. The reasoning behind this is that there are profound secrets in every aspect of the *Seder*, as revealed by the Arizal. Some people are able to see and feel what is taking place; but even someone who isn't on that level should pronounce each *siman* with the intention to accomplish everything that is known and intended by the *tzaddikim*.

For example, the Alshich *hakadosh* explains each of the *simanim* as an instruction for *avodas Hashem*.

Kadesh - A Yid should first 'sanctify himself with those things that are permitted to him' (using them purposefully and justifiably).

Urchatz - He must then cleanse himself of *aveiros* and bad *middos*. (This is a higher level).

Karpas - He should then learn not to pursue pleasures, and to be satisfied even if he only has vegetables.

Yachatz - He will then be satisfied even with half a loaf.

Maggid, Rachtzah - he will then be able to instruct others and help them purify themselves.

Motzi Matzah - The *yetzer hatov* is far more concealed than the *yetzer hara*. By *ma'asim tovim*, positive actions, we can release the *matzah* (which represents the *yetzer hatov*) and bring it to the forefront.

Maror - Then, the *yetzer hara* will be submerged and covered in mud, just as *maror* is submerged in the *charoses* that resembles mud.

Korech - He can then wrap the *maror* and *matzah* together, serving Hashem with both the *yetzer hara* and the *yetzer hatov*.

Shulchan Orech - He will sit at a table arranged for him before Hashem.

Barech, Hallel, Nirtzah - He will thank and praise Hashem for freeing him from subjugation to his *yetzer hara* – and Hashem will desire his closeness.

We will conclude with the Chasam Sofer's answer to the question, "Why don't we make a *brachah* on the mitzvah of reciting the *Haggadah*?" He explains that we begin the *Seder* in our lowest state of גנות, meaning that we begin as not even Jews. A non-Jew can't make a *brachah*. Only as we progress and rise higher do we become Jews who can praise and thank Hashem with *deveikus*.

May Hashem help us all successfully complete the journey of the Pesach *Seder*.

Our Avodah When Standing al Sfas Hayam

וישע ה' ביום ההוא את ישראל

As we approach the awesome day of Shevii Shel Pesach, we have a tremendous *avodah* before us to analyze the *pesukim* of *Kriyas Yam Suf* and the *Shirah*, for within these *pesukim* there is much for us to learn about the ways of *avodas Hashem*. Since Hakodosh Baruch Hu included them in the Torah, they are surely instructive to us in our *avodah* as we stand at the water's edge, reliving the miracles of the Yam Suf in our own lives.

When we look into the *pesukim* of the *Shirah*, we notice that it is focused on the “success story” – relating the miracles that took place at the Yam Suf. We give thanks and we are joyful for the *nissim* that occurred. But the history really begins earlier ... and **we must consider the events and the actions that brought about those great miracles, and we must emulate the actions of the Bnei Yisrael during those moments** as we prepare to experience *Shevii Shel Pesach* this year.

Breaking Through the Kitrug

Chazal tell us that when the Yidden arrived at the Yam Suf, there was a terrible *kitrug*, accusation, against them: הללו עובדי עבודה זרה והללו הללו עובדי ע"ז – there is *no difference* between the Yidden and the Egyptians, as they both worship *avodah zarah*! This indictment came just when the Yidden were in an extremely precarious situation and required Hashem's mercy. Thereafter, the Yidden experienced one of the greatest miracles in history: the splitting of the Yam Suf. Something extraordinary took place between the *kitrug* against them and the ultimate salvation they experienced – and we must delve into the

pesukim and the *Midrashim* to uncover that secret so that we can live with it in our times.

In every generation, people are faced with situations in which there is no rational reason for them to experience a miracle. And yet, there are actions that we can take — as we learn from *Kriyas Yam Suf* — that can overturn the *kitrugim*. The *Eibishter* wants to reveal this secret to us so that we, too, may recreate *Kriyas Yam Suf* for ourselves.

Above Nature: The First Pathway

It is interesting to observe that the *tzaddikim*, the *talmidim* of the Ba'al Shem Tov, said much Torah on the *pesukim* that precede the *Shirah*, which is the dialogue between Moshe Rabbeinu and Hashem, *מה תצעק אלי, דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו* (*Shemos* 14:15). That is because therein lies the secret that brought about this *neis*.

We find two distinct *mehalchim* in the words of the *tzaddikim* as they explain these events: The first is found in the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, in *Tzofnas Pa'anei'ach*, and in the *Divrei Moshe* (Rav Moshe of Dolina, a *talmid* of the Ba'al Shem Tov) who explain that the Yidden engaged in an extraordinary act of *mesirus nefesh*. They were told to go forward into the Yam Suf, and the simple understanding is that this would end their lives (for people don't usually emerge alive when jumping into the sea) — but they were nevertheless prepared to give up their lives without hesitation to fulfill the word of Hashem. Once they exhibited such *mesirus nefesh*, they became deserving of a miracle above the laws of nature, and the Yam Suf split before them.

Here, the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* brings the famed teaching that Hakodosh Baruch Hu conducts Himself with us in the same way that we behave towards Him (for "Hashem is our shadow" [see *Tehillim* 121:5] and mirrors our behavior). And since the Bnei Yisrael acted above the laws of nature — giving up their lives for Hashem's command — they were *zoche* for Hashem to do the same for them, going above nature in splitting the Yam Suf.

My Children Are in the Water!

Further in this vein, Rav Aaron Belz says an incredible *peshat* in the dialogue between Hashem and the *malachim* who were reciting *shirah*, “מעשי ידי טובעין בים ואתם אומרים שירה?”, my creations – the Mitzriyim – are drowning in the water, and you’re reciting *shirah*?” In truth, this is not understood, because the Mitzriyim were *resho'im*, and their death should be a cause for celebration! In addition, the Yidden themselves were saying *shirah*. Thus, why does Hashem admonish the *malachim* for reciting *shirah*?

Says the Belzer Rav: Hashem was not referring to the Egyptians who were drowning – but to the Jewish People themselves! “My children are drowning in the water – for the sake of My honor, with complete *mesirus nefesh* – and you’re saying *shirah*? **What value does your *shirah* have in comparison to this incredible act of *mesirus nefesh* of My children!**”

Thus, this underscores the understanding that the Yidden earned the incredible miracle of *Kriyas Yam Suf* through their sheer *mesirus nefesh* for Hakodosh Baruch Hu. This is instructive, teaching us that when we act with *mesirus nefesh*, above nature, we, too, will earn miracles above nature.

Don't Tell Them About the Miracles

According to this understanding, the *Divrei Moshe* explains the *pesukim* in this dialogue between Moshe and Hakodosh Baruch Hu with incredible sweetness: Moshe said to the Yidden, “Don’t be afraid; behold, you will see the salvation of Hashem” (*Shemos* 14:13). A later *pasuk* says, “And Hashem said to Moshe, “Tell the Yidden to go forward”” (*ibid.* v. 15).

Hashem said to Moshe, explains the *Divrei Moshe*, “Don’t tell them that there will be salvation – for how can they earn the splitting of the sea in such a way! **Let them think that they’re giving up their lives for Me, and then they will properly earn the miracle.** And *you*, pick up your staff and split the sea.... *You* know that there will be a *neis*,

but the Yidden must be under the impression that they are acting with *mesirus nefesh* – that is the only way they will deserve the *neis*.”

When we exhibit *mesirus nefesh* in our lives without question, Hashem removes all the *kitrugim*, and events turn in our favor.

Believing in Miracles: The Second Pathway

The Kedushas Levi of Berditchev considers two pathways to understanding *Kriyas Yam Suf*. One is the aforementioned pathway of *mesirus nefesh*: Nachshon ben Aminodov took leave of his family and jumped into the Yam Suf thinking that it was all over. But, in a lengthy essay, the Kedushas Levi determines that a second *mehalech* is the true one: Nachshon believed that **if Hashem commanded us to jump in, then this is surely good for us, and this is the path to salvation, and there will surely be a miracle!**

And this is why, says the Berditchever Rav, the Yidden were able to recite *shirah* in the future tense – או ישיר משה (ibid. Ch. 15)– foretelling the great miracles that were to come, because they believed that Hashem would not forsake them, and that a miracle would take place above the rules of nature.

This must be our approach, too, when we are experiencing challenges: We must believe that Hashem does not forsake us for a moment, and that He will surely shower us with blessings and revealed good; as it says, “Behold, you will witness the salvation of Hashem.”

Here, the Berditchever Rav employs the teaching that “Hashem is our shadow” to explain that the way we behave is how Hashem will behave towards us. (For example, if a person is compassionate towards others, Hashem will be compassionate with him, and so, too, regarding other *middos*.): **If we believe in the good that is to come, this alone will bring about miracles from On High!** This is what happened at *Kriyas Yam Suf*: **They believed in the miracle that would save them, so everything they foretold came to be a reality.**

Love and Fear Complement Each Other

We seemingly have a contradiction here between the two pathways to understanding how the Bnei Yisrael came to deserve the miracle of *Kriyas Yam Suf*. But, in truth, we know that there is a principle of *eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim Chaim*, the words of tzaddikim are all true, and no one made a mistake, *chas v'sholom*. This is clear to us even before we know *how*: The tzaddikim did not make mistakes.

The Tiferes Shlomo explains this concept of “*eilu v'eilu*” regarding the disagreements between Beis Shammai (which signifies *yirah*, fear) and Beis Hillel (which is the *derech* of *ahavah*, love): Both positions are true, but it always depends on the situation. In some situations, the *halachah* follows Beis Shammai, and in some cases, it follows Beis Hillel. Chazal tell us that when Moshiach comes, the *halachah* will follow Beis Shammai. We also know that in a case of *she'as hadchak*, when there is no choice, the *halachah* may follow the more lenient position. This is not merely because we rely on a more lenient position when we have no choice; rather, when the *matzav* is different – and Hashem has ordained that the circumstances will be different – then the *halachah*, too, changes according to the situation. Thus, both ways in *halachah* actually apply and are both true. There is a *halachah* for one type of situation, and there is a *halachah* for other types of situations. Sometimes the situation calls for *ahavah*, and sometimes the situation calls for *yirah*.

The same is true regarding the disagreements between Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and Rabbi Yehuda where the *halachah* follows Rabbi Yehuda. But what about the holy Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, who has a different *mehalach*? The answer is that Rabbi Shimon rules according to the path of the hidden Torah, and most of us have not yet reached the level of conducting ourselves according to that path. Does this mean that there is *chas v'sholom* a mistake in the path of *nistar*, the hidden Torah? Of course not!

When we advance in our understanding – bit by bit – we will eventually understand how two different positions not only don't contradict each other but, in fact, they complement each other.

Fusing Both Pathways

Returning to the miracle of *Kriyas Yam Suf* and the difference between the way various tzaddikim understood the *neis*, it is clear that both are true.

On an elementary level, we may say that there were different types of people present at *Kriyas Yam Suf*. There were those who understood the call of the hour to be *mesirus nefesh*, and they were prepared to jump in without question. At the same time, there were those who believed that if Hashem commanded them to go into the water, it would surely be the source of salvation. But this is only a basic understanding – because just as there were two types of people at the Yam Suf with different outlooks, **when say that both paths are true, *eilu v'eilu divrei Elokim chaim*, we mean that both *mehalchim* can coexist, and there is no contradiction at all.**

Why Would Bnei Yisrael Expect a Miracle?

There is another reason we can't look at these two pathways as separate entities: As we have elaborated above, Klal Yisrael was in a terrible situation of *הללו עובדי ע"ז והללו עובדי ע"ז*. So precarious was their situation that the *Zohar Hakodosh* tells us that even *tefillah* would not have helped them, as the *Ohr HaChaim Hakodosh* teaches us on the *pasuk* *מה הצעק אלי*. Therefore, why *would* they think that a miracle would occur?

According to the first *mehalech* that the miracle took place because of *mesirus nefesh*, it is understandable. After all, they completely transformed themselves, and they were prepared to die in accordance with Hashem's will. If so, they are like completely new people, and thus are no longer considered *ovdei avodah zarah*. But according to the Berditchever Rov's *mehalech*, that they simply trusted that all would be good ... why would they think so? They were, after all, at an incredibly low spiritual level, undeserving of miracles. Thus, we must find a way to fuse the two pathways to explain why the Yidden trusted that *nissim* would take place.

Removing the Cause

Chazal tell us that if one is afflicted with pain, he should examine his deeds. I have been asked, “Why don’t Chazal tell us to do one of the many *segulos*, whether for *ayin harah* or otherwise?” (This is not to trivialize any of the holy *segulos*, many of which have strong sources.) And the answer is obvious: It is because first, one must remove the *cause* of the issue, which he can then complement by adding *segulos*.

This is likened to the man who came to a doctor complaining that every time he drinks coffee, he is pricked in the eye. The doctor him to drink a cup of coffee so he can see what the problem is. When he did so, he saw that the man leaves the spoon inside the cup, and it is the spoon that pricks him. So, the doctor said, “**Instead of looking for remedies, just take out the spoon!**” The man replied, “You don’t understand: There are two ways to deal with this; one way is to take out the spoon, and the other way is to seek remedies!”

We understand how silly this is, of course, and the same applies in regard to *avodas Hashem*: Before utilizing *segulos*, one must ensure that the cause of the *tzarah* has been removed. And this is why one must examine his actions when *yisurim* come to a person, *R”l*.

Knowing Where to Look

When a person finds himself in a *tzarah*, *R”l* – just as the Bnei Yisrael found themselves in a terrible calamity at the water’s edge – a special *avodah* must be undertaken. The Torah lays it out clearly in the *pesukim* of *Kriyas Yam Suf*, all so we should learn how to integrate this philosophy into our lives and, when there is, *ch”v*, a *kitrug* on a person, to know how to turn it into a miracle and a *Yom Tov*.

Chazal didn’t tell us that *parnassah*, *shidduchim*, etc., are “as difficult as *Kriyas Yam Suf*” simply to tell us that life is difficult – but rather to instruct us to look to the episode of *Kriyas Yam Suf* when we face our own challenges, our own water’s edge.

This is a *sugyah* that must be learned in great depth, for our entire

navigation of life's challenges is dependent on learning this properly (it is not enough to read about this in a flyer during *chazoras hashatz...*).

Drawing from a Higher Source

The *Zohar Hakodosh* tells us, on the *pasuk* *מה תצעק אלי*, that this is not a situation that calls for *tefillah*; rather, *בעתיקא תליא מילתא*, the source of salvation is from a hidden place – a much higher place than *tefillah* – because the regular channels of salvation will not suffice in this difficult situation.

The Torah is teaching us here, as all the *tzaddikim* elaborate, that there are instances in *our lives* when we must draw down a *yeshu'ah* from a higher place. **There are situations that are “as difficult as *Kriyas Yam Suf*,” and these situations call for drawing salvation from a higher source.** All the *tzaddikim* who discuss this agree that the Bnei Yisrael did something extraordinary that during that time which made a great transformation On High, in a situation where the rules of nature did not allow for it, and we must investigate this secret.

By saying “*מה תצעק אלי*,” Hashem was telling them, “You are my children. You have the power to turn over all the worlds through your words, thoughts, and actions – **even in such a dire situation** – and this situation calls for a something higher than only calling out to Me.”

Returning to the Source of Blessing

The first thing one must do in an instance where he hopes to turn things around is *teshuvah*. It is brought down in *sefarim* (*Mevasser Tzedek*) that when the Yidden stood at the edge of the water, they did *teshuvah*, and this is what transformed *din* into *rachamim*. Since they were seen as *ba'alei aveirah* who worshipped *avodah zarah*, thereby disconnecting themselves from Hakodosh Baruch Hu, they needed to return to Hashem again.

This is instructive to us as well; to turn things around – whether we understand that we're in need of a miracle or whether we don't properly appreciate that we're in need of a miracle – we must come

back to the Source of all Blessing, and automatically things will become better. *Teshuvah* is the first step, and it is a necessary step.

This is what the Yidden did at the edge of the Yam Suf. Tzaddikim relate that in order to leave Mitzrayim, the Yidden needed a special *zechus*; this was the application of the blood on the doorposts. And the tzaddikim ask, what was the *zechus* for *Kriyas Yam Suf* – a much greater miracle? *Teshuvah!* – *Teshuvah* is a much greater act that goes to the heart of everything. This was the first step that the Bnei Yisrael took.

Teshuvah: True Hishtadlus

The *Zohar Hakodosh* (*Parashas Acharei*) explains how *teshuvah* is effective in the most real and physical sense. Some may think that the real change takes place through the actions of a person who says, “*Teshuvah* is wonderful, but, *tachlis*, I need to do something!” The person does not understand that *teshuvah* is the primary vehicle for changing fortunes.

In the world of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, returning to Hashem is all that matters when one wishes to bring down a *shefah*, and all other actions are almost irrelevant. When Rabbi Shimon saw people working the land, he exclaimed, “Fools! You are not doing anything.”

Rabi Shimon explains that when a person does *teshuvah*, he evokes the Upper World of *Binah*, and this draws down *shefah*. When a person’s heart is broken and he comes before Hashem, talks to Him, and asks Him to accept him back, and he searches within himself for what he must change – this is akin to lifting the heaviest load, and it turns over worlds in his favor. The entire *avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur was surrounding this world of *Binah*, and this is why he was able to draw down *shefah* to This World through his *avodah* – and this is what we accomplish through *teshuvah*.

This is the first thing that Bnei Yisrael did at the bank of the Yam Suf: They did *teshuvah*, and this removed the *kitrug*, enabling the salvation to come.

Accepting Authority Through Mesirus Nefesh

However, there were no Torah and mitzvos at that time with which to return to Hashem. Therefore, Hashem gave them this tremendous mitzvah of obeying Him by entering the Yam Suf, and since a mitzvah draws a person closer to the One who commanded him to do the mitzvah, this enabled their *teshuvah* to be effective. And this was no small mitzvah; rather, it was the essence of returning to Hashem from their *avodah zarah* – a mitzvah that cleanses from within.

In order to return to Hashem from worshipping other entities, they needed to exhibit *mesirus nefesh* as a way of accepting Hashem's Authority – which is the essence of the mitzvah of *Kriyas Shema*.

Hashem was telling the Bnei Yisrael: **Until now, you were *ovdei avodah zarah*, and now that you seek to convert to Yiddishkeit, you must accept this mitzvah, the essence of Yiddishkeit**, which is to carry out Hashem's commands without questions. **Do you want to be the Bnei Yisrael or not?**

When you were in Mitzrayim, you served idols – and you still have these heretical thoughts reverberating in your minds, as evidenced by your dialogue and complaints against Moshe: "If only we had done differently ..." or "I can arrange things on my own, without Hashem ...," etc.

Thus, the *teshuvah* must include giving over all our thoughts – and all we possess – to Hashem.

The Essence of Yiddishkeit

Yiddishkeit is not merely a collection of 613 commands/*segulos* – Yiddishkeit means giving ourselves over completely to Hashem: one's money, one's possessions, and one's emotions. Thus, Hashem wanted to know whether the Bnei Yisrael were ready to submit to this mitzvah. That is why He commanded them to go into the water – as a way of accepting Yiddishkeit upon themselves. If they had hesitated and begun to think which reward they would receive for this, it would indicate

that they had not reached the first step of what it means to be a Yid; rather, they want to remain *ovdei avodah zarah*.

Clearly, it was for this reason that Hashem brought them to a situation of *mesirus nefesh*: to enable them to prove their readiness to leave behind *avodah zarah*. What were they thinking when they complained to Moshe Rabbeinu? That Hashem did all the miracles of *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim* only to have it all end at the sea's shore? It is obvious that Hashem saw that they had not yet rid themselves of heretical thoughts of *avodah zarah*, and **entering the water with *mesirus nefesh* would remove these heretical and doubtful thoughts from their minds for good.**

Heretical Thoughts Regarding Parnassah

Given this, we understand very well the Chazal (*Pesachim* 118a) that קשין מזונותיו של אדם כקריעת ים סוף, a person's *parnassah* is as difficult as *Krias Yam Suf*, for **this is where so many thoughts of *kefirah* come to a person, such as, "This person has money because he is smart or successful," and other similar heretical thoughts.** As long as a person is still an *ovaid avodah zarah* – attributing material success to anything but Hashem – he will remain at the water's edge.

A person must ask himself the same question that the Yidden asked at *Kriyas Yam Suf*: Did Hashem do all these miracles for me – from the day that I took my first breath: food, shelter, clothing, yeshivos, *chinuch*, parents, etc., etc., – only until I reached the age of forty-two?! Did Hashem not take into consideration that there would be inflation around the time I am preparing to marry off my second child, and Pesach is approaching?! Did He bring me up to the water's edge without a plan forward?

And the answer for why we find ourselves in these situations is the same as it was at the Yam Suf: Because our thoughts are not straight – and we are *R"l* in a state of הללו והללו; we need help in order to change. Therefore, Hashem brings us to a situation where we have nowhere to turn but to do *teshuvah* – and then it will be good for a person in This World as well as the Next World.

True Mesirus Nefesh: Giving Up Our Desires

And how does one do *teshuva*?

The first thing one must do is to answer the question of Hakodosh Baruch Hu: Do you want to be Yid or do you not want to be a Yid? The person answers, "Sure, I recited *Shir HaShirim* for forty consecutive days!" Comes the question again: "Do you want to be Yid or do you not want to be a Yid ... being a Yid means to give away everything." The person asks, "But I want to know ... will the money come in the end?" Says Hakodosh Baruch Hu, "ואהבת את ה' אלוקיך ... אפילו הוא נוטל את נפשך, **I want to know whether you're prepared to be a Yid – to enter the water without any conditions** and without any assurance of a reward!"

And when Hashem does bring a person to a situation where there is nowhere to turn, it is not so one will pour lead against *ayin harah* or employ other *segulos* ... but in order to determine whether one is prepared to "become a Yid," which means acting with *mesirus nefesh*, being prepared to give away everything to Hashem.

And *mesirus nefesh* has many levels. Even if a person isn't standing before a literal fire, there are always desires that he can sacrifice for Hashem. For example, a person is faced with a *tzarah* and he knows that he has a problem with *lashon harah* and *rechilus*, and he is hurtful to others verbally; he knows that this is wrong, but he suppresses the guilt because a) he doesn't believe that he can change, b) he is afraid to lose all the friends who look up to him as he always has something to say.

What does someone like this do when he finds himself in a bind? He runs to Rabbi Shimon in Meron! But Rabbi Shimon shows him what it says in his *Zohar*, "Don't come to me to run away from your problems. You have a big issue that you must rectify, and this is your solution!"

For this person, giving up on forbidden speech is exceptionally difficult, and it constitutes real *mesirus nefesh*. True, it will very hard to give it up, but Hashem will help him. Not only that, but until he

addresses this problem, he will wander at the water's edge, and there will be nowhere to turn other than to accept the yoke of *mesirus nefesh*.

Heavenly Hints

This is only one example of *mesirus nefesh*, but it can easily be translated to all the other mitzvos in the Torah — for Hashem will generally bring a person *yisurim* that hint at what the person must rectify. This is all part of the *chessed* of Hashem as He nudges us towards growth. The *Pri Megodim*, in his *sefer Rosh Yosef*, explains the above *Gemara*: If a person sees *yisurim* coming to him, he should examine his deeds. If he examined his deeds and he didn't find any issues, he should attribute it to *bittul Torah* "if he didn't find [another] lack that would make sense for his particular *tzarah* to come because of it," says the *Pri Megodim*.

This is the basic rule: **A person must rectify the *middos* in which he knows himself to be lacking.** And he must know that if he doesn't fix these issues, nothing will fall into place, and if he *does* work on these things, it's not merely *teshuvah*, but this is *mamash mesirus nefesh*.

Every person with his issues — and **everyone knows themselves and their innate traits that they must change** — undertakes *mesirus nefesh* when making a big change. And **when a person changes himself, despite all the difficulties involved, he is doing what the Bnei Yisrael did at the Yam Suf — an act that is above nature — and he is touching that esoteric world.** Because nature would dictate allowing things to remain as they are. Changing nature is going above nature. If so, Hashem will surely conduct Himself in kind, going above the rules of nature on his behalf.

Accepting Hashem's Will

But there is yet another form of *mesirus nefesh*, a higher level, and it must be very well understood: accepting Hashem's will, no matter what it entails, with regard to the *tzarah* itself in which he finds himself.

For example, when it comes to the health of an ailing loved one, a

person believes that his loved one will become well again, and live a happy, long life. He doesn't want to even contemplate the opposite outcome. But what will happen if Hashem wants differently? It is true that many times situations can be changed drastically through *tefillah* and *teshuvah*. But what if Hashem makes it clear that He wants a different outcome – that it is better for the person and his ultimate *tachlis* to leave this world, *R"l*? Are we prepared to accept that? One says, "But the Ba'al Shem Tov says that through strong *bitachon*, everything can be changed." "Fine, but do you accept it if Hashem wills it otherwise?"

If a person can't answer in the affirmative, then he is not prepared for *mesirus nefesh*, and he does not emulate the actions of our forefathers at the Yam Suf.

Imagine that a person has a court case against him for two million dollars. It is owed to widows and orphans, and he has no way to pay it. He has done every *segulah* possible to avoid paying it, and he can't even think of the eventuality of being found guilty – it would be *that* catastrophic. And then he thinks, "And what if this is what Hashem wants, that I should have to pay the two million?" If he cannot proclaim, "This is Hashem's Will and I accept it," he is lacking in *ואהבת*. Because he is not willing to give up *his* will for Hashem's will. Can Hashem help him? Surely, He can. But are you willing to accept the outcome even if it goes against what you want?

This is the *mesirus nefesh* that we speak about in emulating our forefathers at the Yam Suf: accepting what Hashem wants even if it's not what we want.

Surely there were people at the Yam Suf – and we can relate to this to those who promised that were Hashem to rescue them they would make a great *seduas hoda'ah* every year and remain awake to learn all night and distribute large sums to *tzedakah*, – and surely they came to Moshe Rabbeinu with their "deal" and waited for his response from Hashem.

And then **Moshe Rabbeinu** came back and said, **Hashem did not accept your proposal**. דבר אל בני ויסעו. **Go forward into the water**. Hashem wants your *mesirus nefesh* ... accepting Hashem's will in that moment is what turned the situation around.

Hashem Knows Everything

Suppose a person has a son who is getting on in years and hasn't yet found his *zivug*. And he speaks to Hashem, as follows, "Don't you see how my son is suffering, and how things are only getting worse? The suggestions for him are getting weaker, and what do You, Hashem, have from all this?"

And Hashem answers, "I heard everything, and now I want to ask you a question: If I tell you that this situation is exactly what I want. Until when? That's already out of your purview. But this is what I, Hashem, want right now. Not because you will eventually see loads of *nachas* in the end, not because you will be rewarded in another way ... **but simply because this state of affairs is what I want. Do you accept that?**"

How do we know that this is what Hashem wants, and how can it be that this is what He wants? Because this is precisely how He has ordained things to be. And He understands better than we do what is good. We find this regarding Chizkiyahu HaMelech (*Brochos* 10a) who didn't want to marry because he foresaw that he would have evil children. What did *roman and HaNavi* tell him in the name of Hashem? "Why are you mixing into Hashem's affairs? This part has nothing to do with you! If this is what Hashem wants, you must accept it, and not try to avoid it."

And this is a clear *gemara*, not some obscure teaching. The same is with the evil children of Avraham and Yitzchok. This was Hashem's will, and the *Avos Hakedoshim* accepted it. If a person cannot proclaim: This is what Hashem wants, so I accept it completely," such a person cannot move forward, because he does not have *mesirus nefesh* in the very thing that he is asking to change.

Go into the Water!

The Bnei Yisrael stood at the water's edge and cried out that the *tzarah* is terrible! The answer was: "I heard your *tefillos* and your cries, and My decision is for you to go forward into the water!" "But we davened so strongly" "Yes, but My decision is still for you to have *mesirus nefesh* in wading into the Yam Suf – **not because this will bring about a salvation, or some other calculation, but because Hashem willed it.**"

Once they behaved with *mesirus nefesh* in accepting Hashem's will, no matter the outcome – they caused nature to be overturned. For **nature can't be overturned if a person isn't prepared to accept Hashem's will.**

Hashem is telling a person, "I don't want you to continue standing at the edge of the water; I want you to jump in." Now there is a battle of wills between Hashem's desire and what a person wants. And this is the question with every *nisayon* that a person has, spiritually or materially, in small things and in big things: Will he follow Hashem's will or his own will.

Surely a person should daven for a change, but if a person sees that it is not changing, accepting Hashem's will is *mesirus nefesh*. A person knows what he wants, and when he sees that Hashem is doing the opposite of what he wants, it is not easy to accept. But he must understand that Hashem is not doing this to push him away, but rather to give him an opportunity to "submit his will to Hashem's will" with *mesirus nefesh*.

We must internalize this fact: Hashem is not distancing us when He doesn't accept our pleas; He is helping us to stop being *ovdei avodah zarah* who think that we can understand what is good on our own. The Yidden accepted Hashem's will at the Yam Suf without question, no matter the outcome, and this is precisely what brought about their salvation and the *shefah* of miracles.

Hashem Is Good and Does Good for All

This brings us to the next phase, and this is **the belief that Hashem is good and does good for all**. His desire is to give good to a person with revealed good, in This World and in the Next World. He only wants us to take ourselves out of the classification of *ovdei avodah zarah*.

It is not enough to accept Hashem's will with *mesirus nefesh*, as outlined above – but we must internalize that if Hashem wills it this way, then it is truly good. Failure to recognize Hashem as good is a lack in *deveikus b'Hashem* and in submitting to Hashem. A person must recognize that Hashem is bringing him to a better place through this, but to get there, he must first have the *avodah* of *mesirus nefesh* in accepting Hashem's will.

When Chazal (*Brochos Perek 9, Mishnah 5*) said, “חיב אדם לברך על הרעה, כשם שהוא מברך על הטובה just as he gives thanks for the good,” this is what they had in mind: A person must believe that when Hashem gives him something that seems bad at the moment, it will surely bring good at the end – even though we cannot know where and how.

The Nisayon of Akeidas Yitzchok

According to *sefarim*, this was a main part of the *nisayon* of *Akeidas Yitzchok*: the confusion of not knowing if this is good or bad. On one hand, Avraham was assured that Yitzchok will be considered his offspring, and on the other hand, he is being told to sacrifice his son. The confusion was a major *nisayon* for him: Is this good or bad? But this confusion is the way it had to be in order for Avrohom to prove himself.

But how can it be good when we are going to sacrifice a precious child? There are no questions! First there needs to be an *Akeidas Yitzchok* in the heart – to accept the command of Hashem – and once that happens, everything falls into place.

What happened in the end? Yitzchok was unable to conceive children because he came from the feminine world (*Ohr HaChaim*,

Bereishis 17:19), and it was only through going onto the *mizbei'ach* that it changed. Therefore, the assurance of Hashem that he will have offspring through Yitzchok came to fruition *davka* through what seemed so dire in the beginning.

A person can say to Hashem, "You promised me that things will be good." Says Hashem: "I am in the process of giving you so much good! But it is only through going onto the *mizbei'ach*, sacrificing your will with *mesirus nefesh*, that you will arrive at that good that I have prepared for you.

Everything Is Good

A person must shake that holy and esoteric world of "*Atika*" (the hidden world) from where all the good will come. And how can he shake it up if he knows from the beginning that it will be good, and he is only doing it with that in mind? The answer must be *mesirus nefesh* – without knowing – and then the *yeshu'os* come forth.

And this is how things must work: When a person sees that he is stuck in a situation and he has nowhere to turn, he must know that he is in a situation of הלוו הלוו ... there is a *kitrug*, *R"l*, and he must do *teshuvah* – and the *teshuvah* must be on a level of *mesirus nefesh*, and part of this *mesirus nefesh* is to become accustomed to saying, "I want, and I still want, and I am not fooling myself into thinking that I don't want, but I know that Hashem runs the world and He has His calculations and it may be that He wants differently for me, and I accept that. Although it is difficult for me to fathom the negative outcome, I give it all up for Hashem."

This is *Akeidas Yitzchok*.

But one must know all the while that everything is good, and everything is headed toward good, and all the *neshamos* will return to their source. But there is a process, even if it can be a painful one at times – still, everything is headed toward good. And **once a person believes this, one is able to sing and dance even as he is having *mesirus nefesh* to accept Hashem's will.**

One must say, "I am prepared for all eventualities, and at the same time, I am confident that I will soon merit revealed good. It doesn't matter to me in which way I will receive the good, or what will be the conduit for the good – for we are told (Rashi, *Devarim* 18:13) 'Do not explore the future.' It doesn't even interest me to know the details; I have full trust in Hashem's good."

Getting on the Path

All of us deal with this struggle of acceptance of Hashem's will every day. Whether in *parnassah* or *shidduchim* or otherwise ... there are always challenges and struggles. And a person must know, first and foremost: If he has a problem, he must "shake worlds."

First, he should daven for the situation to change, and then he should begin the process of *teshuvah* and *mesirus nefesh*. Even though the process may be an extended one, the tzaddikim taught us that just by getting on the path of piety, it is enough for one to be called pious – just as when someone gets on the train to his destination, he is said to be "on the way."

And so, he begins the process – even though he knows that he has a long distance to go. One small step at a time, davening to Hashem for the success of his *teshuvah*, aware that "I know what I need to do, and I am committed to doing it, even at a high price. I know that I will never lose out for doing the will of Hashem. How will I not lose? I don't know. But once Hashem commanded me to love Him with my heart and soul, I am prepared to carry it out, and I am confident that I will not be cast away because of this."

Acquiring the Bizas Hayam

Rashi says (*Shabbos* 88b) regarding the acceptance of the Torah before we even heard what was in it: "התהלכנו עמו בתום לב כדרך העושים מאהבה" וסמכנו עליו שלא יטעננו בדבר שלא נוכל לעמוד בו *temimus*. like those who do out of love, and we trusted that He will not saddle us with something that we cannot handle." This is the foundation! During *Yetzi'as Mitzrayim*, every Yid received recognition of Hashem, and from then on, we know that Hashem will never forsake

us and never take us to a place that isn't good for us. And when a Yid hears from Hashem that this is what He wants, he can rest assured that this is what is good for him – and he should not try to outsmart Hashem.

Hakodosh Baruch Hu knows what is good, and when a person jumps into the water for the Ribbono Shel Olam, and carries out His Will with closed eyes, then he merits *deveikus*, closeness to Hashem, and to *Kriyas Yam Suf* – then the ultimate good is revealed before him, and he is transformed from an *oved avodah zarah* to one who can walk through the dry land amid the raging water; he has the ability to point out the incredible Revelation – זה אלי ואנוהו (*Shemos* 15:2) – and then he merits the בית הים and all the good that has been prepared for him.



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