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## Becoming a *Ba'al Bitachon* by Davening for Even the Smallest Things

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**Davening to Hashem at Every Step  
Is the Best Recipe for *Bitachon***

### Davening for Everything Is the Best Reminder

When it comes to the reward for *bitachon* and how we attain true *bitachon*, tzaddikim have taught us that the easiest and most practical way to grow in our *bitachon* is to do what Yosef HaTzaddik did (as noted in the *Midrash Tanchuma*): He davened to Hashem for every small detail in his life.

When a *Yid* davens for everything, it is not only a matter of *tefillah*... yes, he is a person who davens often—but **this is also a vessel and a vehicle through which he is transformed into a *ba'al bitachon*.**

How does this work? When you daven for the *small things*, it serves as a constant reminder that you cannot manage on your own—you must rely on the Ribbono shel Olam for *everything*.

The greatest problem people have is that we try to manage most of our affairs on our own. **We tend to remember Hashem only when we encounter bigger issues—that's when we remember to reach out to Him.** But for the smaller things, we try to go it alone. And this is why we have difficulties in the first place....

## Embarrassing Hashem by Not Davening When Things Are Good

The *Midrash Tanchuma* in *Parashas Mikeitz* (*Bereishis* 43:14) says, based on *pesukim* in Tanach, “Do not embarrass [Hashem] in times of plenty by not davening.” This means that there are people who embarrass the Ribbono shel Olam, so to speak, by davening only when they’re in a quandary. Says the *Midrash*: Don’t embarrass the *Eibishter* when times are good by not davening to Him during those times, because this suggests that you don’t need to come to Him for everyday matters.

### Don’t Think for a Second That You Can Do It Alone

The Midrash continues with these incredible words:

HaKadosh Baruch Hu said: Just as I am compelled to give rain and dew to give vitality to the plants so as to give sustenance to the creations, so too are *you* compelled to daven before Me and to give thanks to Me in accordance with My actions—**and do not say, “I am experiencing plenty... why should I daven? I will daven when I am in a quandary. Be sure to daven before Me before the onset of a tzarah.”**

The Ribbono shel Olam tells us: You must rely on Me for *everything*, even the smallest thing. If one does not do so, he is “embarrassing Hashem,” so to speak.

One must know that *nothing* is certain and *nothing* is assured—even the things we think are already in the bag. In one moment, we can, *chas v’shalom* lose everything—and in one instant, the “small” things can become “big” problems, *R”l*. Therefore, one must always be *mispallel*—even for the things that he already has—that the Ribbono shel Olam should continue to give them to him. HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants us to rely on Him at every turn, and not for one moment tell ourselves that we can get along on our own.

### Causing Embarrassment to the Ribbono shel Olam

If not for these pointed words of the *Midrash*, we would never look at

things this way (that someone who doesn't daven for the small things is embarrassing Hashem).

We are accustomed to understanding that someone who sees a *siddur* fall to the ground and doesn't bend down to pick it up, or someone who engages in idle chatter in shul... *he* is someone who embarrasses Hashem. But we would never imagine that someone who doesn't daven for the small things embarrasses HaKadosh Baruch Hu!

This is a mistake, says the Midrash. Because the truth is that when we don't daven, we hold back *Elokus* from the creation. And this holds back the Heavenly blessings. Thus, such a person is called a *mevazeh Hashem, R"l*.

### *Halevai* That a Person Should Daven All Day Long

In *Mesechta Berachos*, Rabbi Yochanan exclaims, "הלוואי שיתפלל אדם כל היום כולו, *Halevai* that a person should daven all day long." Says the Divrei Yisrael of Modzitz in the name of his father, the Admor of Zwolin, this is the *peshat* : *Halevai* that a person should constantly be *davening* for his needs large and small—such that the Name of Hashem is constantly on his lips, all day long, just as the *Midrash* taught us about Yosef HaTzadik in the court of Potifar.

This is the only path to ensuring that we remember to rely on Hashem for everything in our lives.

### Rely on the Ribbono shel Olam, Not on Your Abilities

"*Halevai* that a person should daven all day long" means that a *Yid* should daven for every little thing that he needs, in *gashmiyus* as well as in *ruchanyus*! **Every time that he needs something, he should turn to the Ribbono shel Olam** instead of relying on "his own" abilities and strengths, for these, too, come from Hashem.

This is what the *Chovos HaLevavos* teaches us: every person has *bitachon*, reliance, on *something*. The question is only on *what* they rely! The problem is that some of us have *bitachon* in other people or in ourselves

rather than in the Ribbono shel Olam. When a *Yid* davens even for the small things, he is demonstrating his reliance on HaKadosh Baruch Hu – bringing G-dliness and blessing into the world and meriting ה'סוד הבוטח בה' חסד יסובבנו, *one who trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by lovingkindness.*

### Eliezer Davened for Simple Water

The Divrei Yisrael continues: It is for this reason that Eliezer, the servant of Avraham, davened to Hashem that someone should bring him water to drink. To daven for bread and *parnassah* is understandable. But water is free! People don't think of davening for it. No one asks for water... we just walk over to the faucet and turn it on!

But Eliezer teaches us differently! He davened all day long, for everything. Even when he needed water to drink, and even though **he was already at the well, with the water in front of him!** All he needed was a jug with which to draw the water. Even for such a small thing, he davened: **"Ribbono shel Olam—help me with this small detail!"**

### Davening for Every Small Detail

Every move that a person makes is comprised of so many moving pieces—and for every piece one needs so much *siyatta diShmaya*. It's not enough to daven one time that an endeavor should be successful; we must daven that every single component should be successful. In such a *tefillah* lies the recognition that "I must rely on the Ribbono shel Olam for every single step in my life."

Indeed, we find in the Zohar HaKadosh that Rabbi Abba would send up a *tefillah* before every meal—in addition to the *berachah* recited over his food—for Hashem to give him his food, food that was sitting in front of him on the table! He davened that he should be able to eat the food, that it should be beneficial to his body, that it should accomplish what was required for his health and strength.... **In this way he infused Elokus and blessing into his food.** By the time he ate the food, there was so much G-dliness and blessing infused into it.

When a *Yid* davens for something, this causes *malachim* to come and



accompany him. They bring along with them so much blessing, which remains with the person.

## **Davening in Your Own Language: A Guarantee for *Bitachon***

### **Advice from the Rebbe Rav Bunim**

In the *sefer Beis Yaakov (Parashas Veyeitzei)*, Rabbi Yaakov Aaron ABD Aleksander, a student of the Rebbe Rav Bunim of Peshischa, writes: “I heard from my master, the holy tzaddik, advice for every *Yid* never to lack anything and to remain engaged in his *avodas Hashem*, advice that will help one become a true *ba'al bitachon* who will lack for nothing:

**The advice is to habituate oneself to always daven and ask Hashem for everything, from small to large.**

Continues the Rebbe Rav Bunim: Do not think that in order to do this one must be wrapped in *tallis* and *tefillin* in seclusion with Hashem... rather, **wherever a person may find himself, even in the street**, he should look around to make sure the area is clean—as it says “and your camp shall be holy” — **and right there, he should daven to the Eibishter**. His requests will surely be granted by the “One who listens to every *tefillah*,” and simultaneously, he will ensure that he is always tethered to Hashem.

### **The Most Precious Prayer**

Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz, in a lengthy discourse in his *sefer Ya'aros Devash* (Discourse 1), expounds upon this idea. He writes that **the most precious *tefillah* is one offered by a person in his own language, straight from the heart** that Hashem should send him success in all the little details of his life. “**Such a *tefillah* ensures that a person will become a *ba'al bitachon*,**” says Rav Yonasan.

Thus, the tzaddikim are showing us the true way to become transformed into *ba'alei bitachon*. There are many *eitzos*, but **davening to**

Hashem in our own language, from the depths of our heart, the tzadikim tell us, *will make us into ba'alei bitachon.*

### The Importance of Personal Prayers

The *Ya'aros Devash* continues, saying, “Even if a person has a speech impediment and doesn’t speak with clarity, his heartfelt *tefillos* will be considered before Hashem as though he davened before Him in a sweet, clear expression. This *tefillah* is as precious to Hashem as the most beautiful prayer that exists.”

The primary benefit of such a heartfelt prayer—aside from the fact that such a *tefillah* is more easily accepted—is that it instills in our hearts the idea that **we are not in the hands of randomness and the workings of nature.** If one were in the hands of nature, then one would indeed not need to daven—because he would be dependent on his talents and his abilities. But in truth, this is not correct: because **diligence, toil, and actions are all *sheker.***

### Talented People Aren’t More Successful

People make the mistake of thinking that more talented people, people with “two right hands,” are more successful in life.

This way of thinking has become so ingrained in society. We often hear people saying, “*Of course* that person has no *parnassah*.... I mean, look at him, look at his jacket... look at his children, and his entire comportment... that’s all you need to know. This is *nebach* what he is...”

Can we properly appraise how much *kefirah* and *sheker* lies in such statements? This type of language has everything to do with the diligence and ambition that Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz decries as *sheker*. **It is simply *sheker* and *kefirah*... the opposite of the truth!**

### *Tefillah* Gives Us the *Emunah* that Everything Is Only Hashem

We must remember that talent itself is not *sitra acharah*, but *believing* in our talents—as opposed to in HaKadosh Baruch Hu—is rooted in

the worst beliefs. **If we rely on our talents and abilities, if we rely on the course of nature, if we have *bitachon* on anything other than the Ribbono shel Olam—it is pure *kefirah*!**

And it is for this reason that we must daven for every small detail, so that it becomes ingrained in us, again and again, that *nothing* happens without HaKadosh Baruch Hu's decree.

### No One Is Assured

How many “successful people” do we know who made one big mistake, and with that they buried all their previous successes?

Lately, someone related to me that he was part of a group that would make investments together. While the rest of the group would take on risks, he was always the more cautious one—always checking carefully into every potential investment before going into it. “Worst thing, I’ll make less money, but I won’t take inordinate risk,” he would say. His strategy worked out for him, and he was successful in his ventures. Until, one time, he invested *all* his money into an insecure investment—and the entire thing fell apart. He lost all his money, and even went into heavy debt. “**I can’t explain it, he said. “I don’t know where my brains went.”**

And there are so many such examples. It happens every day. The Ribbono shel Olam takes away one’s presence of mind for a moment, and in that moment, he can lose everything. **Because this is the *ratzon Hashem*.** The *yetzer hara* wants us to forget about relying on *ratzon Hashem*, and he does everything possible so that we should forget it. He wants us to remain living in this mistake, **as though success has anything to do with talent and ambition.**

### Daven for Every Step So You Remember the Truth

Therefore, says the *Ya’aros Devash*, a person should always be davening—in order to remember that *everything comes from Hashem through Hashgachah Pratis!* Every loss and every pain that comes to a person is all from Hashem—and every *good* thing is also from Hashem.

If we live this way, we will be far less likely to do *aveiros*, because we are always with the Ribbono shel Olam.

The *Ya'aros Devash*, the Rebbe Rav Bunim, and many other tzaddikim are all teaching us the same thing: Talking and davening to Hashem for every matter, large and small, is the way to be transformed into a *ba'al bitachon*!

This is how a *Yid* lives with HaKadosh Baruch Hu the entire time! And if a person is a *ba'al bitachon*, he will automatically see success. The moment one is with Hashem, he is surrounded by success and blessing—it goes together, hand in hand.

### Begin With Small Steps

When dealing with the *sugya* of *bitachon*, it is important to note that an *ehrliche Yid* doesn't have *bitachon* in order to see success. His primary objective is to attain closeness to Hashem; success is not his ultimate goal! Such a *Yid* says, "I need to be an *eved Hashem*. And the way to become an *eved Hashem* is by speaking to Hashem constantly about everything. This is the way I will always remember Hashem."

It begins with small steps. In the beginning, it is okay for a person to daven to Hashem for material success. But as he grows and progresses, and he tastes the sweetness of being surrounded with *chessed*, he also feels the sweetness of always being close to the Ribbono shel Olam.... Slowly but surely, he begins davening for the express reason of wanting to be close. The blessings will come anyway, but he isn't fixated on this—because the *tefillos* and the *bitachon* bring him such closeness to Hashem Yisborach.

### Even for the Next World

As we learned earlier, the *Chovos HaLevavos* teaches us, in the ninth "superiority" of the *ba'al bitachon* over the alchemist, his *bitachon* accompanies the *ba'al bitachon* to the Next World. It remains with him forever, even to *Olam HaBa*.

From these holy words, we see that our entire discussion about *bitachon* isn't merely to see success in matters of This World. In order that the *bitachon* will accompany us into the Next World, it must be a *bitachon* of the sort that has currency in the Next World, a *bitachon* predicated on closeness to Hashem. A *bitachon* that will make it good for the person in This World as well as in the Next World.



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## Transforming Ourselves and Others Through Love

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### The Power of Love to Ignite Souls

#### *Teshuvah Through Ahavas Yisrael*

The *Yismach Moshe*<sup>1</sup> brings a *mashal*:

A boat was traversing the waters, and the people aboard couldn't find the port. Suddenly, they saw a tiny boat heading toward them, and they were overjoyed, thinking that this person will now guide them to dry land. When they encountered the man in the little boat, he said, "I hate to disappoint you; I, too, am lost. But I have a solution for you. Since you're many people, build a large, strong boat together, and this way you'll eventually make it to land. I only ask that—in return for my advice—you will allow me to join you on your boat."

Said the *Yismach Moshe* in his humility to his *chassidim*, "I, too, don't know the way back.... **But if a congregation of Yidden wants to return, to do *teshuvah*, this has tremendous power, and I only ask that you allow me to join you on your journey of *teshuvah*.**

These holy words of the tzaddik can be understood in many ways, just like words of Torah in which we can continuously find new meaning for

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1. Authored by Rav Moshe Teitelbaum (1759-1851) of Uhel, a talmid of the Chozeh of Lublin. His *yahrzeit* falls on the 28th of Tammuz.

as long as we toil in them (*Eruvin* 54b). One of the ways we can understand the *mashal* and the *nimshal* is that doing *teshuvah* on one's own is not a simple matter. However, ***ahavas Yisrael, love of fellow Yidden for one another, has tremendous power to bring people to teshuvah.*** And ***when Yidden gather as one, that has the power to take them out of the galus (as the Zohar HaKadosh teaches), for the love between Yidden has the power to bring them to teshuvah.***

### Piercing the Layers Through Love

Let us broaden this concept, for it is a tremendous *yesod* in Torah and in *avodas Hashem*.

Why is it that when we see a person doing something wrong, we want to awaken him and explain where he is going wrong? It is because we want to illuminate his life with the light of Torah. He is missing a crucial bit of knowledge or understanding in Torah, or he is without a critical tool to fight the *yetzer hara*. We want to enable the missing *pasuk* to penetrate to his *neshamah*. For example, we want to awaken him to the importance of *kedushah* by teaching him the *pasuk* of *ולא תתורו אחרי עיניכם*, etc.

But what happens when there are old *aveiros* or other problems that are preventing the person from hearing you? They create a blockage in his heart and don't allow the Torah to penetrate to his mind!

To this end, the Ribbono shel Olam gave us another pathway. Sometimes, the situation calls for a different solution... not to overload the person with words of Torah, not to teach him *Chumash* and *Mishnayos*, and not even to tell him inspiring stories of *tzaddikim*—rather, give him your love, your dedication... your *neshamah*! **Since the Torah is etched into your *neshamah*, when you give a person your *neshamah*, the Torah will automatically be transmitted to your fellow *Yid* without a single word being exchanged!**

### *Neshamos* Ignite Each Other

When *Yidden* come together for the purpose of serving Hashem, but they don't know how... everyone must say, **"I have a *neshamah*, and**

***you have a neshamah, and this person has a neshamah...wonderful!*** The Torah is etched into the souls of each of us, but until now we have had difficulty feeling the light of Torah that is alive inside the other person's soul because there's a *guf* that blocks this light. But now that we come together in a desire to serve Hashem, one soul will illuminate the next one, and in this way the barriers fall away, and then everyone will understand what they need to do." It's as though they have listened to an hour of *mussar*.

**The *neshamah* itself wants to do *teshuvah*... it simply needs to be ignited.** And when another *neshamah* connects to it through love, it becomes ignited through this connection. And **this is a tremendous *eitzah* on how to emerge from the bitter *galus*.** While attaining great levels in Torah is more difficult than in past generations and we don't have the vessels of yesteryear, a *Yiddishe neshamah* remains holy and powerful, and this is never changes. And this why tzaddikim spoke so much about *ahavas Yisrael*—especially during the era before *Mashiach*—and explained that this is the way out of the bitter *galus*.

### **“The Most Important Thing Is That Everyone Should Love One Another”**

A story in this vein is told about the Belzer Rebbe, Rav Yisachar Dov Rokeach, when he escaped to Hungary in 1914 at the beginning of World War I. As he was one of the great sages of his time, a great gathering coalesced around the Rebbe in a town called Ratzfert, and a local *rav* got up to speak before the assembly. “Klal Yisrael is in a time of pain and suffering, and we must do *teshuvah*,” he said. “Belzer Rav!” he continued, “if you will awaken everyone to do *teshuvah*, surely we will merit a complete salvation.”

When he finished his words, Rav Yisachar Dov responded, **“If *Mashiach* will come, everyone will automatically be brought to *teshuvah*. The most important thing is that everyone should love one another, even the weakest among us, and *this* is how the *yeshuah* will come. To the contrary, the love that *Yidden* will have for one another is the greatest catalyst for *teshuvah*, and in turn the coming of *Mashiach*!”**



## Love Is the Catalyst for All Mitzvos

In the famous story of Hillel HaZaken, he told the convert, “Do not do to others what you would not want to have done to yourself—everything else is a commentary on this central tenet. With this, Hillel was telling him that **when you will fulfill the mitzvah of loving another Yid, you will begin to understand the Torah.** Because when there is love between *Yidden*, one soul ignites the other, and when the *neshamah* is ignited, it discovers the Torah within it, and he begins to understand the Torah and its mitzvos.

Usually, we understand Hillel’s words to say that by fulfilling the mitzvah of *ואהבת לרעך כמוך*, one will automatically fulfill all the other mitzvos that pertain to the interpersonal relationships which stem from this mitzvah. But according to what we have learned, we understand this on a deeper level: **When *Yidden* love one another, their *neshamos* become ignited, and each *neshamah* knows all the mitzvos**—including *shatnez* and *shiluach hakein* and other mitzvos seemingly unrelated to interpersonal relationships. Thus, **a person will know all 613 mitzvos through loving other *Yidden*.**

It is said that when tzaddikim did not have a *mikveh* in which to immerse, they would say, “מקוה ישראל ה’, *Yidden* themselves are a *mikveh*. We can immerse ourselves among *Yidden*.” Thus, they would bow their heads into the crowd of their chassidim, “immersing” themselves into the love and brotherhood of their fellow *Yidden*.

### Looking at the *Neshamah*

We see this in another way as well. The Chozeh of Lublin said that a **good *yedid*, a *chaver tov*, has the power to effect a *yeshuah* for a person just as a tzaddik can.** How does this work? When a person needs a *yeshuah*... for example in the area of *parnassah*... he understands that he needs the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu to reach him, but there is a blockage, something standing in the way. He searches for a way to remove that barrier, and one of the ways to accomplish this is by coming to the tzaddik who infuses him with G-dliness, and where there is *Elokus*, there is blessing.

A close friend may not be among the *tzaddikei hador*; nevertheless, when you come together, the *neshamos* connect. They understand each other, they *know* each other—and a *neshamah* has the power to bring the *Shechinah* to a person. The reason that when two close friends meet, they become filled with joy is because all the outer layers, the *levushim* that conceal their *neshamah*, fall away for the moment. They don't think about the differences between them on the outer level—but they look at the *neshamah* of each other, and from there flows tremendous love, because at that level they're one and the same, they come from the same Source. **When this togetherness happens, it is another way to bring the Shechinah and blessing to a person.**

The concept of “כל המתפלל על חברו והוא צריך לאותו דבר הוא נענה תחילה, *one who davens for his friend, and he too is in need of the same thing, he will be answered first,*” works in the same way: When a person davens for his friend, he davens for him with all his heart—and with this he awakens his *neshamah*, bringing him a *yeshuah*.

A person must habituate himself to look away from all the differences and *levushim* of another person. “I don't even look there. I know one thing; he is a *neshamah*, I am a *neshamah*. **I love him with all my heart.**” And with this he brings *shefah* to the other person.

### The Level of a Rebbe

A story in this vein is told about Rav Meir Shapiro, the founder of Yeshiva Chachmei Lublin and the innovator of Daf Yomi:

When he was young, Rav Meir came to his Rebbe, Rav Yisrael of Chortkov, and asked for a *berachah* to be chosen for the *rabbonus* of Lublin. The Rebbe answered him, “Not Lublin, but a city close to Lublin.” Rav Meir returned home, and within a short time, the *rabbonus* of Galina, a small town not too distant from Lublin, was offered to him. He returned to the Chortkover, and expressed his amazement at the Rebbe's clear *Ruach HaKadosh*.

But the Rebbe said, “This, any good friend can make happen.” The *gabbai* who was standing there asked the Rebbe in jest, “If

good friends can make *yeshuos* come, then why do we need a Rebbe?"

And the Rebbe responded, "**To be on the level of wishing your friend well from the depths of your heart, one needs to have attained true *ahavas Yisrael*, and to attain such a level, one needs to be a Rebbe!**"

## Beyond Love

These profound words from the Chortkover Rebbe can be understood in the following way: To remove the barriers from blocking the *shefah*, to view the *neshamah* of the next person as it is—pure—and to love a person with a deep love... this is very difficult—and it is a very high level for a person to reach. We'll say it this way: **It's impossible to be a *ba'al aveirah* and simultaneously love a fellow *Yid* with true love.**

Some may think that when we ask for *ahavas Yisrael*, the idea is that a person can remain the way he is... the main thing is that he loves another person. But the truth is that this is impossible. When a person digs into his own soul to be able to love another for the simple reason that he is a *Yid*, he is *moser nefesh* for that *Yid*, he does for him, he davens for him, and even when it's difficult he gives everything away in order to help him, he is automatically elevated! He is transformed into a tzaddik!

One of the attributes of the tzaddik is that he loves his fellow *Yid* with true love. It's not easy to carry the load of countless *Yidden*, to be *moser nefesh* for them, to daven for them, and to give up personal considerations for the welfare of others... it is a tremendous *avodah*.

## What *Ahavas Yisrael* Means

### The Measure of *Ahavas Yisrael*

Chassidim once approached the legendary Lubavitcher chassid, Reb Mendel Futerfas, with the following question. "It is said that it will be with true brotherly love and *ahavas chaverim* that we will go toward

*Mashiach*. How do we measure true *ahavas Yisrael*?" Reb Mendel answered as follows:

There are many levels in *ahavas Yisrael*. The first level is **when you hear that your friend has transgressed a terrible *aveirah*, *R"l*, and the first emotion that comes to mind is genuine sadness that your friend stooped to this, and the second immediate thought is, "How can I help him."** There is no anger, there is no judgment of "Look at what people stoop to these days...." **There is simple compassion and a desire to help.** This is the *basic* level of *ahavas Yisrael*.

### Not Being Afraid to Share

The second level, continued Reb Mendel, is when *you* were, *R"l*, entrapped into doing an *aveirah*, and you know that you have a good friend in whom you can confide, and you aren't afraid of his judgment or that you will be lowered in his eyes—and to the contrary, you are confident that he will do everything to help you to return to the proper way... **this is the second, even higher, level of *ahavas Yisrael***: it doesn't occur to you that you will be judged; you think, "*Of course I will share my failure with him; we are such close friends!*" **Where there is true friendship, there is no issue being open with our flaws to one another.**

### Rejoicing at the Sight of Your Friend

And **the third level of *ahavas Yisrael***, said Reb Mendel, is when you're walking in the street in a downcast state, and suddenly you see your friend approaching...And the moment you set eyes on him, you forget all your troubles and you're filled with great joy. This is the pinnacle of *ahavas Yisrael*.

And we will explain: **What do people need when they're down? They need HaKadosh Baruch Hu to smile down at them...** this is what would uplift them. If he were to encounter the *Shechinah*, the meeting would completely lift him up; all his sadness would immediately disappear.

If a person doesn't have a close friend, he is compelled to climb out of his sad state of his own accord— which is a very difficult endeavor—either by learning a *blatt* Gemara or by davening to Hashem. But sometimes, he is so confused and bewildered that he is unable to learn and daven properly. He opens the *siddur*, and the words swim before his eyes... he opens a Gemara, and he is unable to put the words together. He has no way of “meeting” HaKadosh Baruch Hu, no way to see His smile. Thus, he enters a vicious cycle: he falls into deeper sadness, and he is further unable to learn and daven, and so on, and so forth....

**But if this person encounters a really good friend, he is able to bring the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu to his *neshamah* despite his low state.** This person is now able to “meet” the *Eibishter*. For who else smiles to you as your friend is smiling to you?...

### Forgetting Your Troubles

If you meet your friend in the street and it causes you to forget all your troubles, it is a wonderful sign! It's a sign that your *neshamah* encountered Hashem! When two friends love each other, their souls are ignited, and it's as Chazal said, “If a man and wife merit it, the *Shechinah* rests between them.” When there is no separation and the souls come together, they're automatically illuminated and thus they encounter Hashem.

We find in *Divrei Yisrael* and in many other *sefarim* the idea that the redemption will come through *chessed* and *ahavas Yisrael*. And indeed, we see today—the moments before the *geulah*—that *chessed* is spreading and proliferating in Klal Yisrael as in no other time before. The reason for this is that when Klal Yisrael finds itself in a lower state, the people don't possess the vessels to understand grandiose or esoteric concepts of Torah... *chessed* and love are the only way to lift them up in these times.

### The Language of the Heart

When a person is distant, you must speak with him in the language he can understand. You can't speak with him philosophically, because

he is not there. He may fool himself, and others, that he is there.... He may pose questions and challenges as though he is just trying to understand things, but we know the truth—and this is a rule that doesn't have an exception: **When people ask questions in *Yiddishkeit*, they're heavily immersed in *ta'avos*.** How often do we see people who say, "No, no... it has nothing to do with *ta'avah*, I have sincere questions." But this is because the *klipah* whose spell they're under allows them to lie bold-facedly... but **after some of the layers fall away, they're able to admit that they were fully immersed in *ta'avah*.**

Such a person cannot be spoken to intellectually, because he doesn't have the vessels for it. **When we attempt to give *seichel* to a person, it may have the power to bring him pleasure and to uplift him—but only if he has already begun to ascend the ladder, and he therefore understands what you are saying to him.** If so, then the *seichel* can bring him light. **When a person is in a lower state, we can speak words from a deeply emotional state that will ignite his soul... but these words, too, must be built on *something*; that is, the prior readiness of the listener.**

But the language of *ahavah* is a language that can be spoken even to a person in an *extremely* low state. We see this clearly; when a person is in a low state—whether in *ruchanyus*, in *gashmiyus*, or even both—and we give him deep love, from a pure place, simply because he is a *Yid*... not looking at anything else, we can overtake the person to the point of tears. Why? Because, **through our love and connection, we have brought him the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.** And this is precisely what he was missing.

### The Essence of the *Avodah* of a Tzaddik

However, if the person giving the love is distant from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the results will be diminished. But if he is a *Yid*, a *yerei Shamayim* who is searching for Hashem and pines for Him, then he is transmitting "Ribbono shel Olam" through his connection... and this causes the barriers to fall away completely.

The generation before Mashiach will also merit revelation of *Elokus*, G-dliness, even though we will find ourselves in a lower state. But which vessel of Torah will be employed? In what way will we bring HaKadosh Baruch Hu to this generation? By having a *Yidden* who will be fervent in their *emunah*, by having *Yidden* who will daven fervently... and by *Yidden* who will love other *Yidden*—igniting their souls through love.

And the more elevated and holy these *Yidden* are, the more they will impact the *Yidden* whom they love. And, in essence, **this is the *avodah* of tzaddikim: Uplifting other *Yidden* through their *ahavas Yisrael*. A tzaddik who is holy, pure, and refined, and then he loves *Yidden*...** he is *moser nefesh* for other *Yidden*... he davens all night for *Yidden* in need, working on behalf of other *Yidden*—amid a strong spirit of *emunah* and *bitachon*—and he listens to another *Yid* as he unburdens himself, carrying his load, and the load of so many others... *this* is how he transmits G-dliness into the hearts of other *Yidden*, again and again. *This* is what will redeem Klal Yisrael from the bitter *galus*. With *this* we will go toward Mashiach. And this is why it is important for every *Yid* to work on this *avodah*, each according to his *madreigah*.

### We Are All Tzaddikim

The Slonimer Rebbe, the Beis Avraham, writes in the name of his father, Rav Shmuel (Weinberg) of Slonim, “ועמך כולם צדיקים, *your entire nation are tzaddikim* (Yeshayahu 60:21) **When *Yidden* sit together with brotherhood, and love each other with a true love, they’re able to draw down all sorts of *shefah*, goodness, and blessings, and to uproot all of the evil roots, just as a tzaddik would.** Therefore, in our generation, **the *yetzer hara* does everything to prevent this level of brotherly love.** Even if he allows people to succeed in their Torah and *tefillah*, he will not allow a person to love other *Yidden*—**because he knows that it has the power to uproot all evil roots.** Thus, *all Yidden* are truly tzaddikim.”

### What the *Yetzer Hara* Abhors

Rav Shmuel himself writes in *Divrei Shmuel* (*Parashas Toldos*), “ומברכיך, ברוך, *and those who bless you will themselves be blessed*. Our Torah is giving us good advice for how to be aided in a time of crisis: **to love a fellow Yid with all your heart, to rejoice when your fellow is successful, and to bentch him—and then you too will be gebentched with all the blessings**. All of this is alluded to in the words “ומברכיך ברוך.” HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to every *Yid*: If you will *bentch* another *Yid*, you, too, will be blessed. **What does it mean to bentch another Yid? To root for his success and to rejoice in it;** to constantly wish for his good and to daven to Hashem, “May Hashem help that this person should have everything good.” Because you love him so much, and you mean it with all your heart—and this is why it will likewise be a source of blessing to you.

The *Divrei Shmuel* continues: “**In many cases, the yetzer hara succeeds in fomenting jealousy and hatred toward another, so that in this way he, too, will be prevented from meriting a yeshuah**. This is the work of the *yetzer hara* (who also functions as the Satan and the Malach HaMaves): That *we* shouldn’t have it good...to ensure that *you* will not merit the *shefah* that is meant to come to you. How does he accomplish this? By implanting jealousy into a person’s heart... even if he doesn’t say anything... this will cause the *shefah* to be blocked, R”l”

Often, it happens that a person carries a grudge against another person. He doesn’t carry on any overt *machlokes*... but he is bitter... “I have to carry around all my *tzaros*, while *he* has wonderful children, a great business, he is well-liked, etc.” It hurts him, and with this he is preventing the *yeshuah* from coming to him, because he has separated himself from another *Yid* and he doesn’t wish him well.

### Wishing Good for Your Fellow *Yid*

“I understand your pain,” says the Ribbono shel Olam, “and I want to help you. But you must battle these thoughts, and to work with all your might to *bentch* this person, to mouth a *tefillah* on his behalf. **Fight**

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your *yetzer hara* until you truly wish for the good for your fellow. Do favors for him, for this will influence your attitude – and through this you will draw down the *yeshuah* for yourself.”

And these are the words of the *Divrei Shmuel*: “You must fight against this *middah* [of jealousy], and exert yourself to rejoice in the joy of your friend and wish him well – and then you will draw down a great *yeshuah* for yourself.”

### Where There Is the *Shechinah*, There Is Blessing

All of this is built on the *yesod* that the reason a person lacks *berachah* is because he lacks the Presence of the *Shechinah*. For where there is the *Shechinah*, there is *berachah*. In the times of the Beis HaMikdash, the *Yidden* sat “each under his grapevine and each under his fig tree.” For when the *Shechinah* is present, there is blessing in all facets: People are able to attain Torah, and there is success all around. The *parashah* of ויהי עמך שמוע assures us that when a person adheres to the mitzvos of Hashem, he will automatically have material goodness. If a person lacks *shefah*, it is a sign that he is lacking השראת השכינה.

### When All Else Fails: Connect with Another *Yid*

But let us clarify. Usually, when we speak about a lack of השראת השכינה, people think of the difficult things. “I know that I need to learn more, to have more *kavannah* during davening... I know. But what can I do? I tried ten times, and it doesn’t go! I have no concentration; I have no patience... it just doesn’t go! I can’t fight reality!”

HaKadosh Baruch Hu reveals an incredible secret to us: **If you see that it doesn’t go, one of the primary reasons is because you don’t have the *keilim*, the vessels, for this right now, because you’re in a lower state. You need to ascend the ladder upward.** And how does one go up a level? By attaining השראת השכינה in your current state; through this you can begin the ascent to the next level, and to the next after that. We aren’t talking, *chas v’shalom*, about giving up on Torah, *tefillah*, *kedushah*, *taharah*, *emunah*, and *ehrllichkeit* – these are all necessary and vital. But the question is how to get there. How do we *begin*? **When you know a *Yid***

who is a vehicle for the *Shechinah*—because he is a *Yid*—connecting with him is like connecting with the *Shechinah*. When you do this, you're truly able to go higher and higher.

### The Simplest Way: Doing for His Good

When a person wants to grow in his *ahavas Yisrael*, there are a number of practical ideas regarding how to begin. The simplest *eitzah* is found in *Maseches Derech Eretz Zuta* (Perek 2): **if you want to merit more *ahavas chaverim*, do actions for his good.** Begin acting on your fellow's behalf. Even if you don't love him yet, begin doing for him. Dedicate yourself to his welfare, express concern for him. The fact is that actions affect the heart. It never remains a dry action, but an emotional connection is formed. And when this happens, the love begins to blossom.

The reason for this is that אדם נפעל כפי פעולותיו, *a person is affected in accordance with his actions*. His attitude and feelings are changed as a result of the things that he does. And the truth is even deeper: In truth, there is a burning love toward another *Yid* inside every *Yiddishe* heart—but something is required in order to awaken the *neshamah* and cause the love to come forth. But as soon as a person suppresses his hubris and pushes away the separations, the love automatically comes forth and begins to shine brightly.

### *Ahavas Yisrael* Is the Pathway to *Ahavas Hashem*

A chassid once came to the Rebbe Rav Uri of Strelisk and asked for practical advice on attaining *ahavas Hashem*, love of Hashem. Said the tzaddik, "The way to attain *ahavas Hashem* is through loving your fellow *Yid*, and so I will give you advice on attaining *ahavas Yisrael*. **Carry a box of matches with you so that when a fellow *Yid* needs a match, you will be able to provide it to him.**"

Often, we see older men who serve as the shul's "candy man," distributing candy to the children. Many of us don't understand what he wants to accomplish with this. **They don't appreciate his desire to put a smile on a child's face.** The truth is that *even you*, the thirty-year-old, can do so as well. We don't appreciate how egotistical we can sometimes be....

Imagine if one day a young *talmid chacham* would decide to become a candy man; we would summon a psychologist to assess him!

And it doesn't need to be candies. Adults also need candies... of another sort: They need compliments, positive words, words of affirmation and kindness. Every person needs to become a candy man who distributes candy left and right—the sort of candy that adults need and appreciate.

This is the advice that the *Chazon Ish* gave to a man who came to him. "I see that you don't possess the emotion of participating in the pain of others. The *nitzah* for this is to do for others. Begin doing favors for other people, and daven for the *tzaros* of another, even if you don't feel what you're saying." Thus, the *Chazon Ish* was telling him that the way to change our internal feelings is by doing outward actions of *chessed*.

### The Importance of *Mi SheBeirach*

Rav Shmuel Engel of Radomishla (1853-1935), one of the great *gaonim* in Galicia, came to his rebbe, the *Divrei Chaim* of Sanz for Shabbos. He had brought with him a *lomdishe sefer*, and he was perusing it between the *aliyos*. This did not find favor in the eyes of the *Divrei Chaim*, who said, "It is during this time that we recite a *Mi SheBeirach*, which is filled with *berachos* for your fellow *Yid*, and we recite a *Mi SheBeirach* for the sick people. The *avodah* of *tzaddikim* is to participate in this! To pay attention, and join the *tzibbur* in fervently wishing them well!"

Sometimes we see people coming up to the *gabbai* and giving him more and more names of *cholim*. You know that many of them are critically ill... join in the *tza'ar*. Daven for them. Say a *perek* of *Tehillim* for them. When we do actions of caring for others, we become transformed into *ohavei Yisrael*.

Rav Chaim Brim of Yerushalayim related that he once asked the *Chazon Ish* how to grow in his *ahavas Yisrael*. The *Chazon Ish* answered, "Make a list of all the sick people in Haifa and daven for them. In this way, you will awaken *ahavas Yisrael* in yourself." It must be noted that Haifa of those days was a secular city, and nevertheless, the *Chazon Ish*

said that this is what he himself does; “This is what I do, and so should you.”

### Habituating Ourselves to Think of Others

Unfortunately, it takes awakening and awareness for people to start this process. Generally, people don’t wake up in the morning and think, “Whom can I help today? To whom can I say good word?” People are so busy with a million and one things... and when they have a moment, they want to learn a little bit.

But how special would it be if we could habituate ourselves to think of others. How much more *avodas Hashem* would it bring! How much *Yiddishkeit* would it build – both for yourself and for the recipient of your kindness! We cannot comprehend the greatness of this, because we have lost the sensitivity of pure goodness and kindness toward others.

### *Chessed* Conquers the Heart of a Person

A person must understand that doing *chessed* for others is no less important than *shemiras einayim* and other important aspects of *avodas Hashem* – not because *shemiras einayim* is less important, but because *chessed* toward others will *aid him* in his *shemiras einayim* and all other aspects of *Yiddishkeit*. *Chessed* conquers the heart of a person and transforms his essence – causing him to feel the Presence of the *Shechinah*.

The story is told of a *chassid* of the Ruziner who was tempted with a terrible *aveirah*, and nothing helped to calm the fire of temptation – until he thought, “Come Shabbos, and I will need to sit with my beloved *chaverim*. How will I be able to look them in the eye after having done such an *aveirah*?” Indeed, the power of friendship and brotherhood brings the *Shechinah* and stops us from *aveiros*.

So often, people look for *eitzos* for their *nisyonos* – without thinking about the fact that Hashem has given us the tools and the *kochos* to come close to Him by loving other *Yidden*. How does a person begin loving another *Yid*? By *doing* for other *Yidden*! This is an *eitzah* that the *tzaddikim* gave us: To succeed in our *avodas Hashem*... to ignite our own

*neshamos...to overcome nisyonos – chessed and love for fellow Yidden will show us the way.*

It is the *eitzah* for everything. As we learned above, this is what will bring the *geulah* for *all* Klal Yisrael. And if this has the power to redeem all Klal Yisrael, how much more so can it be the redemption for each of us out of our personal *galus*.

