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Bitachon Weekly

Chovos HaLevavos,
Shaar HaBitachon—Shiur #73 Part 1

No One in the World Has Power Over Me

Relying on a Human Being Contradicts Bitachon

▼ No One Can Help Me

Previously, we learned five of the seven factors that would cause a person to depend on another entity. The **sixth factor** is when the matter for which we depend upon him is *fully* in the control of that person. We understand that **he's the only one who can get it done, and no one can help us in this matter other than him.**

This element, explains the *Chovos HaLevavos*, is when the needy person feels *completely dependent* upon the other and feels that **no one can harm or benefit him, cannot do good for him nor avert damage from him, other than this person—just as a servant feels when he is incarcerated in the domain of his master.** This is a *marshal* that the *Chovos HaLevavos* presents to illustrate utter dependence and the feeling that *no one in the world* can

affect the person other than his master. The prison and its entire surroundings are in the domain of the master, and no one other than the master can even come near the person to free him or help him.

It doesn't even occur to this servant to reach out for help to anyone else in the world. "You know what? I will call my friend, and he'll get me out of here...." Such a thought doesn't even enter his mind—because he knows with clarity that *only* his master can help him. This brings about true reliance and dependence upon the master.

▼ No One Else

The first five elements necessary for *bitachon* are the knowledge that: 1. Hashem has the greatest mercy and kindness toward us; 2. He *wants* to help us; 3. He's all-powerful and has the ability to help us; 4. He knows best what's good for us; and 5. He has always helped me until now.

Havineini Weekly

Bechukosai

Learning To Tolerate Others—Despite Their Shortcomings

Hashem Carries Our Burdens

We're all familiar with the song based on the words of Rabbi Akiva מזה מוקוה מטהר את הטמאים אף הקב"ה מטהר את ישראל, *just as the mikvah purifies the impure, so too, HaKadosh Baruch Hu purifies Klal Yisrael.* We don't always appreciate how much love lies in the idea that Hashem purifies and cleanses us. We know how unpleasant it can be when a person who is not clean walks into a room—and the same applies to spiritual impurity. For this reason, the Ribono shel Olam tells us that before we approach our *avodas Hashem*, we should first do *teshuvah*, which will cleanse us. Otherwise, how can we become *davuk* in Hashem in our impure state?

A person enters the *mikvah* in an impure state—along with all his burdens. He emerges a different person, without the *shmutz* with which he had entered. The *mikvah* absorbs all

Says the *Chovos HaLevavos*, we must know that if we tell ourselves that perhaps there's *someone* in the world who embodies these five qualities, we do not have true *bitachon*. If a person thinks, "I have a wealthy relative who can help me and wants to help me; I know a person with influence who can get my kid into yeshivah; I know a well-connected person who can arrange an appointment with a specialist for me..." these thoughts choke off the feeling of *bitachon* in Hashem.

▼ The Anatomy of Reliance

We have explained in the past that the *Chovos HaLevavos* in *Shaar haBitachon* is clarifying the *anatomy* of reliance and dependence—how it works. He's explaining to us which factors and qualities cause a person to rely or not to rely on another.

If we find someone who possesses the first five qualities, but there's *another* person who *also* possesses these qualities, this will diminish our exclusive reliance on the first person. We won't feel completely and exclusively reliant upon the first person, since we have someone else who can assure us as well.

This applies to our *bitachon* in the Ribbono shel Olam as well. **It's not enough to know and trust that Hashem has the first five qualities, because there's a hole from which the bitachon can leak out!** Even if we know and reiterate that the Ribbono shel Olam is a

טוב וחסיד and a כל יכול... and even if we will list a litany of Hashem's praises and mighty abilities... if we retain even a shred of reliance on another person—"if plan A doesn't work, I'll try plan B"—**then all our bitachon in Hashem leaks out**, and we remain without *true* reliance on Hashem.

Thus, this sixth quality necessary for *bitachon* is different from the first five that describe the greatness and the uniqueness of Hashem's abilities and His desire to help us. Here, we're taught that our trust in this entity must be exclusive in order for it to be called *bitachon*. **If we harbor a thought of reliance on someone else, we have not placed our trust in Hashem**—even if we truly believe that He has the first five qualities.

The Great Battle to Remember That "No One Can Do Anything Without Hashem"

▼ A Difficult Avodah

This *avodah* of relying *exclusively* on Hashem is a difficult one indeed. The *Chovos HaLevavos* enumerates seven qualities necessary for *bitachon*, but without a doubt, the sixth is the most challenging of all.

Proof of this is that the *Chovos HaLevavos* repeats and emphasizes it in a few places. Immediately in the introduction—before even describing *what bitachon* is—he explains that the primary problem that people have is *not* that they

this, and he surfaces purified. Something paid the price here—the *mikvah*. Says the Ribbono shel Olam to us, "If you come to Me, I will carry and absorb your sins—**just come to Me**. Come with all your *pekelach*, your burdens, your problems, and your *nisyonos*. If you turn to Me, talk to Me, and are willing to come closer to Me, I am willing to draw you close even if you're not yet the way you should be.... Because I love every *Yid*, I am willing to draw them close despite their imperfections and impurities."

Amid Their Impurities

In truth, this concept is written in the Torah itself, as it says, השוכן אתם בתוך טומאותם, *Who dwells among them amid their impurities* (Vayikra 16:16). "I know that you have come here in an impure state," says the Ribbono shel Olam. "But I love you, and if you will seek Me out, I will speak with you and assist you." Yom Kippur illustrates this concept as well. HaKadosh Baruch Hu created a Yom Tov just for the imperfect people. The Gemara (Yoma 85b) concludes that it is the *ending* of Yom Kippur that purifies us. And thus, Hashem tells us, "Come to Me, and spend the day with Me... sing and recite *piyyutim* and daven to Me... for if you do, I'm willing to absorb all your impurities and imperfections."

With this in mind, we can approach Torah, *tefillah*, Shabbos, and other areas of *avodas Hashem*. If we come to Hashem, He will purify us the way a *mikvah* does. "I will take it upon Myself," He assures us.

Learning from Hashem

The essence of this idea is that when Hashem draws a person close—as he is, in whatever state he is—this gives him the ability to move forward in his *avodah*. More importantly, when the Ribbono shel Olam reveals His conduct to us, we must always learn from it how to behave in our own lives—and the *middah* of acceptance and forgiveness is no different. It lies at the heart of our relationships with others, and with our children—and the ימי הספירה are a time to practice this trait.

don't trust in Hashem—but that they *do* trust in others! He draws proof from many *pesukim* that our greatest battle is in this arena: *not* to trust anyone but Hashem. This is where most of our mistakes happen.

Similarly, in the third *perek*, he reiterates this *yesod* repeatedly. He understood that it is the greatest *avodah* to straighten out this crooked form of thinking—because we're wired to think of what we can do on our own... and it's very difficult to give up on our plans and remember that only Hashem can help us, in His own way and in His own time.

▼ Master of the World: I Know That No One Has Power Over Me

In his *tefillah*, which also functions as a proclamation, Rebbe Meir'l of Apta focused on this *yesod* as well. He didn't write: "Master of the World, I know that You're a טוב ומטיב... or that You never sleep... or that everything you do is for my good... or that You have accompanied me since the day I came into the world."

He wrote: **Master of the World, I know** כי הנני בידך לבד, that I am in Your hands alone! No one and nothing can help me... no schemes and no tactics, and no inhabitants of the world—even if they all line up to help me—without Your strength and assistance.

It was *davka* for this sixth quality that this *tefillah* was built—because this is the most

difficult *avodah* we have. The most prevalent thought in a dilemma is usually: What can *I* do? Where can *I* go? To whom can *I* turn?" Day and night, we're preoccupied with this area, and for this reason, the *tefillah* concludes with a supplication to "always have our eyes open to the truth of this matter." Because it's not easy.

▼ The First "Ani Ma'amin"

This sixth quality of *bitachon* is built upon the well-known *yesod* of the Ramban (*Sefer HaEmunah v'haBitachon*) that *bitachon* is the fruit of *emunah*. *Emunah* is like the tree, the foundation, and this gives birth to the fruit, which is *bitachon*. This sixth quality—the idea that *no one else* can help me—is also essentially the first principle of the *Ani Ma'amin*'s: אני מאמין באמונה שלימה שהבורא ית"ש הוא בורא ומנהיג לכל הברואים והוא לבדו עשה ועושה ויעשה לכל המעשים, *I believe with complete faith that the Creator, blessed be His Name, is the Creator and Guide of all beings, and that He alone made, makes, and will make all actions.*

The definition of הוא לבדו, *He alone*, is that I can't... my friend can't... the guy with money can't... and the person with expertise and connections can't either. No one can deliver the right *shidduch*. "Ask him. He can get it done... you need to get to him." Not true! He *cannot* help me! Perhaps *hishtadlus* demands that we approach him, but our hearts don't rely on him to bring us the results. *Hishtadlus* must indeed be done—but with indifference—because our hearts

Even if others do terrible things, we must still accept them and love them. This doesn't mean that we *approve* of what they do. They surely cause great pain to the *Shechinah*, and this must cause us great pain as well. This is all true. But what does the Ribbono shel Olam do when He feels pain—and the pain Hashem feels due to the *aveiros* of His children is unimaginable? He nevertheless hugs us tight—**because His love for us is stronger than the pain**. Similarly, every *Yid* must be willing to say regarding his fellow *Yid*: I will love him *despite* all his imperfections.

Can You Tolerate the Mud?

True *ahavas Yisrael* is seen when we're willing to go into the mud to assist a fellow *Yid*—when it's really not easy. Often, the Ribbono shel Olam wishes to test us to see whether we can tolerate our fellow *Yid*. We want to do *chesed*? Wonderful. We wish to do *kiruv*? Amazing. But are we prepared to draw others close even when they're difficult to accept? Can we look beyond the outer trappings—at the sweet *neshamah* of this *Yid*? Can we say, "Yes, there's so much mud caked onto this person... and it's terrible... but we will allow it all into our homes, because we want to be like the Ribbono shel Olam"?

Many of us are often presented with this *nisayon*, and we must remember that it is an opportunity. Hashem gave us the mission of doing *chesed* with this *Yid* who is caked with mud from head to toe. He has a difficult personality and undesirable habits and ways.

A Pauper of Character

This acceptance is no different from the many incidents of *hachnosas orchim* wherein lofty *Yidden* took in the most undesirable humans to sit at their table, and they merited great *tzaddikim* for children (as happened with the father of the Ba'al Shem Tov). The *Zohar HaKadosh* tells us that when Hashem wants to give a person a *zechus*, He sends him a pauper with whom to do kindness. This applies no less to on who is a pauper in character....

rely on Hashem, not on anyone or anything else.

▼ A Mitzvas Asei

This first of the thirteen *Ani Ma'amin's* is essentially a *mitzvas asei d'Oraisa*. The Rishonim tell us regarding the *pasuk* of *אני ה' אלוהיך* that it teaches us that just as Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim without the help of anyone else, so too He will continue to help us without anyone's assistance. And it is a *mitzvah* to reiterate this every morning and evening as we recite *Shema Yisrael. Echad* means that there's no other power in the world. He alone does everything.

Here, too, we see that the Rambam didn't incorporate any of the other six qualities of *bitachon* into the *Ani Ma'amin's*, because this one is at the heart of being a *Yid*. This is how we begin the day and enter the night. This is the *yesod* of *Yiddishkeit*: Only **the Ribbono shel Olam can help us; no one else can do anything.**

▼ A Battle for the Purpose of Creation

Given the importance of this *yesod*, we can understand why the *yetzer hara* invests so much effort into this *nekudah*, wishing for us to trust in people or entities other than Hashem. He doesn't care so much if we believe that Hashem is good, and so forth. His main battle is to make us forget that **no one in the world has any power over us other than Hashem.**

He knows full well that this is the very purpose of creation. Why is it the purpose of creation? Because Hashem created the world whose purpose is mankind, and the purpose of mankind is to come to the recognition that there's a Great Conductor in the world, to live with the belief in the first *Ani Ma'amin*. When a *Yid* lives with this *emunah*, he has fulfilled the purpose of creation, and if he doesn't live with it, he has not fulfilled the purpose of creation. This is why the *yetzer hara* battles fiercely so we will think "I'll take care of it myself...." This is a difficult battle that takes place every day.

Four Reasons It's So Hard to Rely Exclusively on Hashem

▼ Know Thy Enemy

Now that we understand that this is the primary arena in the battle with the *yetzer hara*, let us examine the "rules of the war." The rule is that we must always know our enemy and his tactics, recognize the weapons he employs, and find the strategies to overcome him.

When we think about it, there are four primary methods with which the *yetzer hara* prevents us from relying exclusively on the Ribbono shel Olam.

▼ 1. The Entire Creation Screams the Opposite

The first is that the world is arranged in such a way that people

And when we encounter such a person, we must begin singing *מקוה ישראל ה'*... and to remember what Hashem does for each one of us... how much tolerance and love He has for us... for us, for our difficult brother-in-law, for our brother who's different from us.... Hashem says, "I want all of you! And I want you to behave in the same way."

When we hear such words, we appreciate the teaching of the Beis Aharon, who said, **"Just as HaKadosh Baruch Hu is for everyone, so too is Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai for everyone—even for the worst ones among us."** Who taught this to Rabbi Shimon? Surely, his rebbi, Rabbi Akiva! Yes, we must all accept the *פחותים*, the *lacking ones*, and slowly but surely transform and elevate them.

Tolerating and Accepting

A *mechanech* dealing with a child caught him in a lie, and every fiber of his being wishes to tell it to him to his face. "Don't you see that I know you're lying?! I can't deal with a liar." But the *neshamah* says, "It's true. He lied. But how can we help him right now? Isn't it sad that he felt it necessary to lie in the moment to save his skin? Can you imagine how low he must feel to contrive lies to save himself?" Yes, we can tolerate him too....

When we're told to walk in the ways of Hashem, it most certainly applies to tolerance. The Ribbono shel Olam tolerates so much, and then some. And we too must learn to tolerate one another with all our imperfections.

It is true that not everyone is born with the same tolerance level. Some people are built to serve in Hatzolah and see all sorts of terrifying situations while maintaining their composure, and some people could never do it.... But a *Yid* must learn to tolerate and accept the situation with which Hashem has presented him.

True Tolerance

It's an interesting phenomenon. One would think that a person who's kind and merciful

are constantly doing things—creating the illusion that we’re the ones accomplishing—and we must go against the current and say: **No, no one can do anything to change anything.** All the while, the world itself seems to testify to the opposite; that we can influence outcomes. And this is why it’s so important to reiterate and repeat the truth every single day. Doing so yesterday isn’t enough for today....

The other *yesodos* aren’t as difficult to ingrain into ourselves, and thus they don’t require as much emphasis. Everyone knows that the Ribbono shel Olam is אלהים—we need only look around at the creation to see it clearly.

But when it comes to this *yesod* that *no one else* can help us or harm us, the entire creation seems to say the opposite. All day, every day, we see people doing things that seem to result in an outcome. And for this reason, we must constantly reiterate and ingrain the truth into our hearts.

▼ “What Dream? He Bothered Me...”

A *mashal* that illustrates our attitudes in This World very well tells us of a person who comes to his friend and says, “I had a dream that so-and-so bothered me.” The friend shakes his head and says, “Okay.”

The next day, he returns and says, “I dreamed again that so-and-so bothered me. It’s so terrible... it’s so wrong of him. Do you

know what I have done for him?! Where are his *middos*? Where’s his gratitude?” The third day, he comes in huffing and puffing: “I can’t even sleep anymore; I cannot understand how a person can be like this. I simply can’t bear it.”

His friend cannot hold it in any longer and says: “My friend! It’s only a dream!” Says the dreamer, “Whatever...but he bothered me!”

▼ Living a Dream

This story may sound silly, but we essentially do the same thing every day. **“Of course, I believe that everything is *bashert* and that Hashem does everything... but why does this person have to bother me?”** And this makes us so upset and stressed.

We will ourselves acknowledge, **“It’s not him, it has nothing to do with him... it’s only a dream.”** But in the same breath, we will say, **“But why does he have to be so rotten?”** It’s very uncommon for a person to live in such a way that it truly won’t bother him.

If we were living properly, we would be laughing at ourselves, just as we laugh at the person with the dream. But this is the *nisayon* of This World: These things seem to be the reality. We live in a world of dreams and illusions. What seems to our eyes as reality are actually silly dreams, illusions and facades placed here so that we will overcome them and remember the truth that there’s no force or power in the world other than the

is a soft person. We will say, “This person is so soft... he couldn’t hurt a fly.” But the truth is just the opposite. Yes, it requires softness... but also herculean strength. True tolerance is when we see another person doing terrible things and we have the strength to love him still. This is not easy, and it takes much inner strength on our part.

We understand that this person did such and such.... But we have resolved not to let that get in the way of our love for him. It hurts us, and it hurts the Shechinah. But we will channel the Ribbono shel Olam and walk in His ways.

It’s Worthwhile

The truth is that patience and tolerance are good for us and good for the world. It brings the world much perfection when we behave this way. If we react to a situation impulsively and immediately, things generally become worse. We see this also regarding fear of animals... the first rule is never to turn and run, but to be calm and relaxed.

The same applies to interpersonal interactions. We must build up our tolerance and patience and acceptance of others—just as Hashem models for us. And when we see that the world is designed in a way that it is better to be thoughtful and tolerant, that means it is rooted in Torah—for the entire creation of the world is rooted in Torah.

We must all learn to retain our joy and composure and serenity even in situations that disturb us—so much so that it shouldn’t even be evident that we were bothered. As noted, this requires much inner strength, but we must learn from Hashem and strive to be like Him. All this is included in the words מזה מקוה מטהר את הטמאים אף הקב"ה מטוהר את ישראל. The Ribbono shel Olam behaves this way, and so must we—especially as we prepare ourselves for *Kabbalas HaTorah*. A person who channels the Ribbono shel Olam and learns tolerance and acceptance, will truly be a vessel for *Kabbalas HaTorah*.

Ribbono shel Olam. This is the *nisayon* of our world.

This is the first reason why this battle is so difficult: because the world is seemingly designed to the contrary.

▼ 2. Habits

The second reason is that that we have become accustomed to living the contrary. We're used to thinking that people do things and affect outcomes... that we, or others, can help ourselves.

There's a well-known principle from the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* regarding *shemiras einayim* stating that if we'd never seen anything we shouldn't, we wouldn't even be tempted to look where we shouldn't. The problem is that improper sights are already inside our minds, and we're drawn to old habits and pleasures that we once experienced.

The same applies regarding the difficulty of achieving true *emunah*: We have become used to thinking that everything is the result of human action. The "reality" of the world is one layer of darkness... but we have only added to the darkness through our habit of looking at the world through a distorted lens, and now it's much more difficult to believe that there's no power in the world besides the Ribbono shel Olam.

▼ Battling Old Habits

The *Hafla'ah* (introduction to *Kesubos*) explains that while a person attains a *yetzer tov* at his bar mitzvah, we don't see that his spiritual battle becomes any easier, and perhaps it becomes even more difficult.... He

explains that this is because he's battling the old habits that have become ingrained in him. His *yetzer tov* may have arrived, but there's a massive element of habit fighting it.

When it comes to *emunah*, our brains are flooded with countless thoughts of the opposite of *emunah*! We can't even fathom how many tens of thousands of thoughts go through our minds in a day that are contrary to *emunah* and the way a *Yid* must think—and this is why it's so difficult to shake it off. "*This family does well financially, because the father is shrewd and adept... he got his daughter into this office and his son another good job... if my father were the same, we'd also be financially set...*" We think such thoughts day and night—as if people can help themselves or others. This only adds fuel to the concealment of This World.

▼ 3. It's Not So Bad...

Another point that prevents us from relying exclusively on Hashem is that we think that it's not so terrible—from an *emunah* and *Yiddishkeit* standpoint—to think that another person can help us.

When a person becomes angry, he understands very well—after the fact—that it wasn't good for him... he shouldn't have done it.

The same happens when a person is worried. Looking back, he realizes that not only didn't his worry accomplish anything, but it also only dragged him down. The *nefesh* of the person is uncomfortable when it is worried, and we all know that worry isn't good for us. Knowing this enables

us to wean off these behaviors more easily—because it's easier to wean off habits that we know to be bad for us.

▼ Relying on Others Brings False Security

Trusting in others, however, doesn't give us this bad feeling; instead, it feels good. A friend assures his friend, "You can go to sleep calmly... don't worry... I'll take care of everything." This friend feels that he can rely on someone, and this brings pleasure to his *nefesh*. He's calm and assured.

Dovid HaMelech, however, tells us *אל תבטחו בנדיבים*, *do not place your trust in nobles*. Don't do it. It's not good for us, and it will lay waste to our *ruchniyus* and our connection to Hashem. Where are we running? When we placed our trust in another person, we have thus abandoned Hashem! It's a terrible thing. But we don't feel this; we haven't developed the understanding that it's very wrong to rely on others.

▼ Feeling Bad

For most *aveiros* in the Torah, we feel bad when we commit them. But in this case, we think that it's not even an *aveirah*. Perhaps it's a lofty *madreigah* to rely only upon Hashem, but it's not terrible if we don't.

When we call a friend one hundred times to see if a matter has been resolved, we feel that it's not an *aveirah*. We don't feel that this will bring us damage and delay the *yeshuah*. It may not be very wise, because this person will become annoyed with us, but we feel fine doing it. And this is a big problem. **We may work for decades on our *bitachon* and not get**

anywhere—because we don't feel that relying on others is so terrible. Only when we internalize that it's a terrible thing to rely on anyone or anything besides Hashem can we move forward in our journey of bitachon.

▼ "Maybe It's Hishtadlus"

The fourth challenge with this *yesod* of *bitachon* is that there's always the doubt that maybe we are obligated to do this for *hishtadlus*. We know it's wrong to rely on humans, but we think

that perhaps we're obligated to call this person because of the *hishtadlus* obligation. "Let me call him again and ask him for this favor...."

This is different from the third challenge in which we sit complacently and do nothing because we rely on another person to take care of it. We don't feel we're doing anything wrong, and we don't bother to change. Here, we're speaking about something else: We know that we must rely only on Hashem for the outcome. But we

always have the doubt, "Maybe we need to do this for *hishtadlus*? Maybe this is what we are obligated to do... after all, there's an entire *sugya* called *hishtadlus*."

This brings us to the burning question of the line between *hishtadlus* and *bitachon*, and this is truly an entire *sugya*. But the doubt that we have in this area makes it extremely challenging to rely solely on Hashem, and it often causes us to place our trust in humans.

Point to Ponder

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without it, and this is what gives us the *siyata diShmaya* that we need to think properly, as a *Yid* must think.

One may ask, am I then on the level to have טהרת הלב, *purity of the heart*? The answer is that it is something that can be steadily built up. Purity of the heart comes when we feel warmth and fervor for matters of *Yiddishkeit*. It also comes when we appreciate the greatness of a *Yid* and the greatness of the Ribbono shel Olam—remembering and singing about how fortunate we are to be *Yidden*. Third, using our hearts to feel for another *Yid* with our emotions purifies our hearts. And then there's a fourth element: When we train ourselves to be honest with ourselves, not to mix in our biases and personal interests—this results in purity of

the heart that brings us success in Torah.

True Success in Torah—A Warm Heart

What does it mean to be successful in Torah? Sometimes, person doesn't understand how to speak to other people; he doesn't understand how to bring warmth into his home; he doesn't appreciate or enjoy a proper davening.... His brain is like a computer: He can give you many facts, but he has no heart. **This is the opposite of success in Torah.**

Every person has failures and shortcomings, but a person who "succeeds in Torah" has warmth in his heart. He doesn't offend or hurt other people, he doesn't think highly of himself, and he experiences the right feelings when things don't go as planned—this is considered success in Torah, because his heart and mind are in sync for Hashem.

You can tell that the *Shechinah* rests upon this *Yid*, that he lives with *yiras Shamayim*, that he feels and emotes properly, and that he knows how to react in every situation like a *Yid*. When he's tested in *chinuch* situations, he knows how to balance love with firmness—because his heart is pure, and he receives the *siyata diShmaya* for how to behave. This isn't a simple matter. It must come from the right place within our hearts, not due to laziness or apathy.

The truth is that the *sheleimus* of our hearts is something that only the Ribbono shel Olam can give us, but we must do all possible *hishtadlus* to attain it. When we do our part, then there's an awakening from below, and the Ribbono shel Olam will surely give us טהרת הלב from Above, along with all the necessary wisdom and intuition to think and speak properly as a Torah *Yid* must.

Point to Ponder

Why Does A Woman Need Ruach HaKodesh?

The Ruach HaKodesh of Jewish Mothers

The holy Beis Aharon of Karlin was once walking with his son, Rav Asher, on an Erev Shabbos. He pointed at the smoke emanating from the chimneys of the homes as the women were preparing for Shabbos. "You see, my son. *Malachim* are ascending from those chimneys. Jewish women can attain lofty levels of *ruach hakodesh* when they toil to prepare for Shabbos... but if they become upset, they may lose all these *madreigos*."

A *chashuve* woman asked about this, saying, "Why does a woman need *ruach hakodesh*? If she has a question, she can ask her husband,

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and if she has a bigger question, she can ask a Rebbe. What does she need *ruach hakodesh* for?"

Answering in the Moment

But, answered this wise and pious woman, sometimes, a child asks his mother a question, and she must provide an answer on the moment.... She must feel what the child is feeling in the moment, so she will know what answer her child needs to hear.

Sometimes, a parent will reply with the "correct" answer, and it goes on to light a fire that takes two weeks to extinguish... and sometimes the parent will answer the "wrong" answer—according to the rules of *chinuch*—but this satisfies the child

and stills his curiosity in the most wonderful way.

This is something that cannot be forecast; it has to do only with the Ribbono shel Olam. No matter how much we study and prepare...how many *chinuch* lectures we attend and listen to, it's all good for *hishtadlus*, and so that we shouldn't be so haughty... but sharing the truth in the right moment is dependent on pure *siyata diShmaya* from Above.

Purity of the Heart

The purity of heart that we need to attain the truth of Torah, and indeed for every step of our lives, is critical for all of us—men and women alike. It is impossible to reach the truth

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