

Havineini

Shiurim of Harav Shimon Spitzer

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Issue
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Bitachon Weekly

We May Choose *How* the Shefa Will Come

When Hishtadlus Seems to Bring Results

We have previously learned the holy words of the Tiferes Shlomo, who teaches regarding the *pasuk* טוב לב אדם להסתמך ב'ה' מבטוח באדם that sometimes we come to trust in Hashem *through* our previous failed trust in mankind. When we look back and see how futile our trust in mankind has been, we will come to greater trust in Hashem alone. When we remember how much we hoped and trusted that a fellow human will help us—only for our hopes to come to naught—we will recognize that the only One in Whom we can trust is Hashem.

However, there are instances in which we tried to gain assistance from others, and it *did* appear to have worked. This person provided us with connections and *protektzia*... and it seems to have brought results! This presents us with a great *nisayon* regarding trusting in humans. It makes us think, “*It may not always work—but sometimes, if you push hard enough, you can get places.*” And for

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Why It Often Seems That Hishtadlus Does Work

this reason, it is important to analyze this phenomenon properly, for it has the potential to greatly weaken our *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem, *chas v’shalom*.

The Ribbono shel Olam Will Send...”

The great Rav Shlomke of Zvill and his Rebbeztin were supported financially by Rav Shlomkes’ father, and the Rebbeztin would go periodically to pick up the money from her father-in-law. One day, the Rebbe said to her, “Why do you need to get money from my father? The Ribbono shel Olam is the great Supporter. Let’s rely on Him, and He will send us the money directly.”

The Rebbeztin did as instructed, and they waited a week, and then two... and still, no money came their way—until it came to a point that the Rebbeztin could take it no longer, and she complained to her husband about their dire state. “What will happen to us?” she asked. “We can’t continue like this.” Hearing this, the Rebbe reluctantly acquiesced, “If you want to go to my father, you can go.”

Havineini Weekly

פרקי אבות

The “Avodah” of Being Liked

Whether or Not to Care What Others Think

When it comes to reckoning with other people’s opinions of us, we must ask ourselves whether it makes any sense that this person disapproves of us. Is there any substance to the fact that this person is upset with us? Sometimes, we will look deeper and discover that this person is angry at us—and at his wife, his children, and a host of other people! If so, it is not worthwhile to try to please such a person. **Of course, we must work to ensure that our behavior doesn’t offend others and respects and values other people.**

The great “Chassid” Rabbi Yosef Yaavetz teaches that sometimes, when Hashem wants a tzaddik to move to another place, He implants hatred toward him in the hearts of the people around him to impel him to uproot himself. If so, this hatred does not reflect his behavior and attitude at all.

The important thing to know is that **when a person conducts himself properly toward Hashem, the**

When she returned home with a gold coin in her hand, Rav Shlomke asked, “Please tell me the precise time my father gave you the money.” When she did, he related the following incident:

▼ Hashem Doesn't Give Twice

“Shortly before you came to my father, a wealthy man visited him and wished to give him a gold coin. My father told him that it would be better if he gave the money to me, his son. Precisely at the time you visited my father’s home, this man came to me and took out a gold coin to give it to me. But he then reconsidered and placed it back in his pocket at the precise *moment* you received the coin from my father!

“So, you see,” Rav Shlomke continued, “the Ribbono shel Olam doesn’t give twice; He gives only what we need. And we can choose; either it comes to us easily—directly into our home—or we must push and plead for it. Since you chose to go to my father, we had to receive the money that way, and the *gevir* decided to return the coin to his pocket.”

▼ We May Choose the Messenger

This isn’t just a story—it holds the answer to the fundamental question we are addressing here, and it applies to the life of every *Yid*.

The Ribbono shel Olam sends *shefa* through messengers who are the conduits for His largesse. Sometimes, people are supported financially by others. Some people

receive funds through loans from family and friends, while yet others work for their money and come home with a paycheck. There are all kinds of messengers to deliver the *shefa*. The money doesn’t fall from the heavens....

Hashem has many messengers. The difference is only that **for the *ba'al bitachon*, it will be clear and evident that the Ribbono shel Olam has sent him the *shefa* from His Hand**; he will receive the *shefa* without having to extend himself, beg and plead, or incur humiliation. It comes right to his door.

However, if a person is on a lower level of *bitachon*... if he believes in the power of *hishtadlus*, then the *shefa* may need to come through greater toil. He will need to struggle and work harder for his *shefa*.

▼ The Money Will Come—The Question Is: Through Whom

Rav Shlomke Zviller understood, and truly felt, that the money doesn’t come from anyone; it’s truly all Hashem. If so, why should he be required to plead for money from his father? Why does it matter where the money comes from? **It’s so much sweeter if the money were to come directly from Hashem, without having to toil for it.**

But then he saw that his Rebbetzin wasn’t on that level, and that’s why he allowed her to go. But he knew that the money would come one way or another—and that it wouldn’t come twice.

Ribbono shel Olam will be pleased with him—and the רוח המקום, the spirit of Hashem, enters the hearts of the people. And it is only due to this that the people are gladdened by him. But if a person makes overtures—through his dress, his money, or any other way—to flatter other people, he will accomplish nothing. It is wrong from both *emunah* and *bitachon* perspectives, and it is certainly not what the Tanna has in mind when he teaches that רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו.

They're Laughing at You Behind Your Back

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 29a) tells us that Beis Din would instill fear into the hearts of witnesses before they testified, saying, “Know that if you deliver false testimony, the person who hired you may pay what he promised, but he will go home and tell his family, ‘You should know that there are people out there who will sell their souls for a couple of dollars.’ They will denigrate you to their loved ones. Know that even the people who applaud you and cheer you on think of you in the lowest terms. You can’t imagine how low they think of you.”

Says the Gemara, this is what truly instills fear in the hearts of witnesses. Why? Because **there are people who think that when they flatter and ingratiate themselves with others, they will earn respect—but the precise opposite is true.** They’re laughing at such a person behind his back.

When a person understands this, he will conclude that to work to find favor in people’s eyes is a futile endeavor. **His efforts will be focused on serving Hashem**—which includes perfecting his character and elevating his interpersonal behavior to respect and honor people. He will know that without this, he could never create a true bond with the Ribbono shel Olam, and he cannot become a vehicle for the Shechinah.

Getting It Tragically Wrong

An example of a person who’s misguided in the concept of רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו in the other extreme is the person who comes to a family *simchah*, and instead of sitting

This is the choice that we all have. We have the choice to receive the money in such a way that we'll incur toil and humiliation, or in a manner that is easy and straightforward. But it will certainly arrive. The Ribbono shel Olam will surely send the shefa. There's no question that it will come, one way or another.

▼ It's Never Our Efforts

Sometimes, we engage in very difficult *hishtadlus* to get something from someone. And when it works, we tell ourselves, “You see? It worked! This person is forgetful, and he needed my reminders until he eventually got around to doing what I needed. Can you imagine if I didn't remind him constantly?! It's a miracle that I did! This is the only way that works with him....”

But if we really analyze it, we'll realize that it's the precise opposite, in many cases. In so many instances, this person forgot even after the hundredth reminder.... Reflect and we will see that all our *hishtadlus* was for naught, and from this we will understand that even in the cases where it did seem to help, it wasn't due to our efforts and overtures. It would have come to us regardless of what we did—but we chose the more difficult path, and so it came through that path. **A person has *bechirah* to choose which way the shefa should come to him.** If we choose the direct path—from Hashem's full and generous Hand—the shefa will come to us directly.

If We're Working Too Hard, We're Barking

Up the Wrong Tree

▼ Chopping Wood for the Neighbor

The holy Ruzhiner would relate the following *mashal*: A poor man was walking on the road, tired and hungry. He passed a little village, where he heard that there was a good man who welcomed all passersby into his home and fed them well. He entered the village, looking for that home. But he mistakenly entered the neighboring home, owned by a terrible miser. When he asked for food, the miser told him, “First chop some wood for me, and then you'll get food.”

He wondered about this... and he concluded that the man wanted him to earn his food for his own dignity. After he had finished chopping the wood, he approached the man and asked for a meal. “Ah, thank you,” the miser said. “Go next door.... There's a plethora of food waiting for you.”

▼ Working for Nothing

He entered the home and was indeed welcomed with open arms. He was served like a king, together with many other guests, who didn't stop lauding the generosity of their host. But this *Yid* noted to them that while the food was indeed plentiful and delicious, he had been required to work long and hard for it, which was quite unpleasant. Everyone around the table looked at him in wonder, not understanding what he was talking about. “Wait,” he said. “Weren't all of you made to chop wood to earn your meal?!”

with his loved ones and spending time with them, he sits with his nose in a *Mishnayos*, not giving his family a second glance. This causes a feeling of unpleasantness all around him. Or, he doesn't attend the *simchah* at all because the next morning he plans to awaken early to learn. “I don't go to events,” he says. *Kevias ittim* l'Torah must be at all costs, and this is his *mesirus nefesh*... to miss out on family *simchos*. But this comes at the cost of *kibbud av v'eim*, and at the cost of family togetherness.

“How will I be able to keep my learning schedule if I'm constantly going to *simchos*?” he complains. He also uses this excuse when his wife asks him to take a child to the doctor. He used to think that the proper path is one that *כל שהיא תפארת לעושיה ותפארת לו מן האדם*, brings glory to him as well as to humanity (*Avos* 2:1). But then he learned that everything is really all about *רוח המקום* *נוחה הימנו*. “This is the right thing to do! *Kevias ittim* is non-negotiable! You think people won't understand?! Or course they'll understand!”

In the past, he would say, “I don't care what people think.” But he had an issue with the *תפארת לו מן האדם*, that his actions should bring glory to humanity. Now that he has learned the words of the Chovos HaLevavos, who teaches that it's all about *רוח המקום נוחה הימנו*, he tells himself that the Ribbono shel Olam will implant favorable feelings about him in people's hearts. All his brothers-in-law will surely appreciate him and say, “We don't know what we did to deserve as relative who's such a *masmid*!” He doesn't need to do anything to please and satisfy them. All he needs to do is to serve Hashem.

This is a great mistake that an unwise person may make when taking this principle too far.

Getting the Message

The aforementioned scenario may be a bit extreme, and we bring it to illustrate the point of how a person can take this concept to the opposite extreme. But there are many

It took a moment for the story to sink in, but his fellow guests soon explained to him that there were no strings attached... their host was truly altruistic in his generosity: the poor man had simply gone to the wrong address!

▼ The Ba'al Bitachon Need Not Toil

And the nimshal, explained the holy Ruzhiner, is: **The Ribbono shel Olam provides all our needs without the need for us to toil.** We needn't work so hard to obtain our needs, and indeed, we supplicate Hashem in many tefillos for our *parnassah* to come to us with gladness and without pain. **The world isn't designed for us to be required to work very hard for our *parnassah*.** (The words אדם לעמל יולד, man was created for toil, refer to the toil of avodas Hashem; not to the toil of *parnassah*).

The problem arises when a person doesn't have proper bitachon, and he thinks that he will earn his money through his own power—and then he must indeed work with all his might to acquire his *parnassah*. But when a person is zocheh to open his eyes and recognize that everything is from Hashem, then all the toil is superfluous. **The difficult toil is completely disconnected from the *parnassah* that is ordained for us in any case.** This person simply chose to enter the wrong home, where he was made to chop wood; then he told himself that he only received his food on that account. The truth is that the toil and the *parnassah* had no connection to one another.

▼ Chasing Off the Flies

The *pasuk* (Bereishis 28:12-13) tells us that Yaakov Avinu lay down to sleep and saw angels going and down on a ladder. But then, וַיָּרָא ה', וַיַּעַבְרֵי עָלָיו, Hashem stood over him. Says the *Midrash*, this can be likened to a young prince who lay asleep in his cradle, and flies were hovering over him. But as soon as his nurse came and stood over him, all the flies flew away. So too, says the *Midrash*, as soon as Hashem was revealed over Yaakov, all the angels disappeared.

▼ The Slumber of Illusions

Rebbe Yisrael of Grodzisk explained this *Midrash* as follows: The prince in the story alludes to those of us who are asleep—oblivious to Who really provides our *parnassah*. The flies hovering over him allude to the illusions and fantasies that confuse the person... “Do this, do that... reach out to this person to make the call for you... maybe this person will agree to give me...” He makes various efforts and overtures, he engages in crooked dealings, and he does other things he shouldn't—all in the pursuit of his *parnassah*. The Rebbe notes that in some instances, these efforts may even bear fruit—because Hashem will lead a person on the path that he chooses.

However, the moment Hashem reveals Himself, they all disappear! When Hashem illuminates our eyes to His Presence—to know that it is He Who is providing us everything—all these illusions and facades instantly fly away. Then we stop toiling so hard, because

examples that are much more common. Perhaps a person behaves normally at public events, but what about the home? Does he use his avodas Hashem as an excuse not to help his wife and children?

This person may say, “Look, I am learning Torah now. The entire פמליא של מעלה is descending from Above to hear me learn Torah, and the Ribbono shel Olam derives so much nachas from me. I simply can't be bothered. Surely my family understand... surely my wife won't become upset.”

The problem is that although his heart may be in the right place, reality will hit hard when he comes home and things don't go as he had planned. And the question we ask this person is: You see that the Ribbono shel Olam didn't smooth out the way for you... **the people around you weren't overcome with a spirit of appreciation for you... what will you do about it in the future?**

First, he must entertain the idea that his Torah is possibly not תורה לשמה—as unpleasant as this thought may be for him. But more importantly, the Ribbono shel Olam clearly wants our avodah to be one that respects others. **One simply cannot be an eved Hashem and a yerei Shamayim without respecting others.**

Being Normal Can Be Done Only by You

When Only You Can Do It

The Gemara (Mo'ed Kattan 9b) tells us that when a mitzvah can be performed only by you, it takes precedence over even Torah learning. When your brother-in-law celebrates the bris of a child, but you have a chavrusa, attending the simchah is a mitzvah that cannot be accomplished by anyone but you! No one else can take your place. Everyone will notice if you're not there. No one can fill in the chessed that it is to attend this event. And this is what the Torah means when it says that when it's a mitzvah that cannot be performed by anyone else, you close your Gemara.

it is clear to us that it's all from Hashem.

▼ A Pleasant Flow

The Rebbe adds to this point: We know that Eretz Yisrael is called *ארץ זבת חלב ודבש*, *a land that flows with milk and honey*. “Flowing” connotes a *shefa* that comes without toil, as though on its own. This can only occur in Eretz Yisrael—the place on which Hashem’s eyes are always trained. Where there’s great revelation that Hashem is in charge—and that only He provides everything to us—there’s also a great *shefa* that flows forth.

For this reason, Chazal tell us that when Mashiach comes, Eretz Yisrael will spread out to all the lands. This *shefa* and flow will be seen throughout the world. Because when Mashiach comes, the entire world will be filled with Hashem’s wisdom and revelation. There will be complete clarity that Hashem provides everything, and thus, the flow will likewise be effortless.

▼ What Is Bashert Will Certainly Come

Of course, there’s a concept of *mazal*. Some people are born with a *mazal* to be poor, *R”l*, and some are born with a *mazal* to be wealthy. There are some people for whom wealth would be a terrible thing. When we say that *bitachon* will bring a *shefa* of flow, it doesn’t mean that we will receive more than we can handle, it means that the *shefa* will come effortlessly to the *ba’al bitachon*.

A person must remember that he will receive what is good and

ordained for him in any case. The Ribbono shel Olam will never give us something that isn’t good for us. So why should we toil so hard to draw out the milk when you can just as well receive an effortless “flow?”

You Can’t Receive More, But You Can Receive Easier

▼ \$5000 Is the Maximum...

Let us take an example of a person who needs \$5000 a month to feed his family, and indeed, he earns \$5000 at his job. But one day, this person decides to push himself and work to earn \$8000 a month.

Says Rav Shlomke Zviller, this person will certainly not earn more than \$5000—because he doesn’t need more than that! But he has a choice. He can choose that the \$5000 will come to him with ease, or he can choose to work very hard for the same \$5000. He closes one faucet, and he opens another faucet which is much more constrained....

▼ You Shut Off the First Faucet...

Sometimes we’ll hear people say, “You see? It’s a miracle that I worked so hard on a new source of income—because my first stream of revenue just dried up! It’s a miracle that I did all this, because I would have remained with nothing.”

The truth is, however, that he would not have remained with nothing. He simply closed the first faucet when he engaged in all this toil. When we’re trying

And one shouldn’t have the attitude that he’s being forced to do this chessed. For the Ribbono shel Olam has enough bored people in the world whom He could have sent there... but He placed you at this time and place **because it is good for your neshamah to stop all the other good things that you’re doing and attend this simchah and merit the mitzvah.**

The Tosafos on this Gemara ask, why indeed is it that a person must stop learning in order to perform a מצוה שאי אפשר להיעשות על ידי אחרים, a mitzvah that cannot be performed by anyone else? We know that תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם, Torah learning supersedes every other mitzvah. The answer is that your neshamah needs this mitzvah! Now isn’t the time to learn! Now is the time to sweat for kibbud av v’eim! Now is the time to take care of your child! You need this! And so, **if the Ribbono shel Olam expects you to spend time schmoozing with someone, it means that you need this now.**

Do It Like a Yid

And why, indeed, is this so important? One reason a person must pause his learning so he can help others is simply to diminish his hubris. It is very important to engage in helping others, so that his גאווה is diminished—because hubris destroys everything and robs a person of everything. And for this reason, the Ribbono shel Olam requires us to go among people and to be normal.

You must sit among others and schmooze with them. You must move tables with them when needed. Yes, we know that you’re a big askan, and that everyone is waiting to talk to you—and the Ribbono shel Olam knows it as well. But He says to you, “Do you want to hold onto all the chassadim that you do for others, or do you want to throw them away?! Surely you want to hold onto them! If so, you must learn how to do the chessed like a Yid. If you can’t learn to do your chessed like a Yid, it’s a sign that this was never about Hashem. It was all to build

to fill a glass with water, and we pour in from both sides, the glass will soon overflow, and everything around it will become ruined. For this reason, the Ribbono shel Olam designed the world so that there will always be the same balanced *shefa*.

▼ More Emunah, Less Work

A *Yid* who has the right level of *emunah* will always daven that Hashem should lead him on the proper path, that he should utilize his day as he should, and that if it is *bashert* for him to work for his *parnassah*, it should be in a proper and upright way. This *Yid* understands that his *hishtadlus* is part of his *avodas Hashem*; his *parnassah* comes to him through his *emunah* and through Torah and *tefillah*. Because he understands that he's obligated to do his work and that it is part of his *avodas Hashem*, he davens that he should always remember the truth: Everything is from Hashem.

The more a person reflects that his *parnassah* isn't dependent on any work or *hishtadlus*, and that it doesn't have to come through this channel at all, his *parnassah* will become easier and more serene. He will see with clarity how his *parnassah* comes to him in far less complicated ways.

▼ The Secret of Yaakov Avinu's Wealth

The Grodzisker Rebbe explains that Yaakov Avinu acquired his wealth in a very interesting way that had no natural explanation. When he was promised one type of livestock, all the livestock were

born that way, and on and on it went—no matter what Lavan tried to do—until he became very wealthy.

The reason for this, says the Zohar HaKadosh, is that the more a person is *davuk* in Hashem, the more he will receive *Hashgachah* from Hashem. One who is always and constantly *davuk* in Hashem will merit constant *Hashgachah*. Yaakov Avinu had an ironclad *bitachon* in the promise of Hashem, and he remained calm and serene in the face of all adversity that came his way. It didn't matter to him which way his *parnassah* would come to him—because he knew that the Ribbono shel Olam is the One giving him the *parnassah*, and that it has nothing to do with his *hishtadlus*. He was thus *zocheh* that Hashem gave him his *parnassah* with great *shefa* in ways that could never have occurred to anyone.

A *Yid* can begin living with the belief that “my *parnassah* does not come from *hishtadlus*—although I must continue to engage in it because it is my obligation. It is possible that Hashem will show me that I have a different calling in the future.” The more a *Yid* thinks this way, the less he will be afraid that his source of livelihood will dry up one day. He will understand that this is only a conduit, a channel through which Hashem has been sending His *shefa*. He will see with clarity that when it ends here, it begins somewhere else, and if it ends there, it will come from a third place—because *everything* originates from the One true Source.

yourself up.... Let go of your Gemara and do what everyone else is doing.

Being Normal

We find a source for this in the Gemara (Ta'anis rob), which brings the opinion of the Tanna that not every person who wishes to establish a fast day for himself may do so. One may wonder, why not? He's not bothering anyone or offending anyone. Why can't a person simply fast if he so chooses? Rashi explains the reason: **Because he is seen as hubristic, and we have learned that** כל שרוח הבריות נוחה הימנו רוח המקום נוחה הימנו, and having hubris would be the opposite of gladdening the הבריות רוח.

This person is doing the wrong thing by fasting! Because it brings him to hubris! You're being different from others, and you're deciding that you're above them. In other words, although you're fasting, you're really eating—perhaps not food, but a full portion of *ga'avah*. The Ribbono shel Olam says, “This isn't good for you. Stop it.”

If a person does something that's very difficult for him without anyone knowing, there's something to discuss—but if you're doing something that illustrates that there are the “simple people” and you're above them, it's very damaging for you. And thus, behaving normally is a מצוה שאי אפשר להיעשות ע"י אחרים... If someone else sits and schmoozes with your relative, perhaps he will cease being a *ba'al ga'avah*. But you will remain one. If you behave differently from others, it causes discomfort and unpleasantness to those around you. **This causes harm to them, but even more so to you.** A person must be flexible not only in his outside behavior, but also in his essence.

The Importance of Respect for Others

Why Rav Moshe Drank Uncertified Whiskey

When a person announces that he's different from everyone, it is the opposite of רוח הבריות נוחה and רוח המקום

הימנו. **If you can't serve your Creator without stepping on others**, the problem isn't that people are offended by you—it is only a sign that something is wrong with your avodas Hashem. The bigger problem is that you aren't advancing, that you're on the wrong track. You're going... but you're going in the wrong direction. This person may be taking on more and more stringencies—but with every measure of avodah, he fills himself up with two measures of hubris. The proof of this is that he struggles in other areas of his life—which can only come from ga'avah.

Rav Moshe Feinstein was once asked whether spirits require a reliable hechsher, and he ruled that they do. “And if you have seen me partake of uncertified mashkeh when I sat at a dais, **I only did so out of respect for those rabbanim who are more lenient and who were in attendance.** But in general, it is preferable not to drink it.”

The peshat is that sometimes by withholding from doing something, a person may lose more than he gains. He may have taken one step by taking on a chumrah, but he took two steps back by insulting another person. **Yes, it is difficult to strike the perfect balance, but we must at least consider these things and think about what the רוח הבריות נוחה הימנו is telling us.**

Taking the Middle Path

Thus, there are proper ways to understand this important concept of רוח המקום ורוח הבריות as taught to us by the Chovos HaLevavos, and there are wrong ways to interpret it. Veering too much to the right or the left (not caring at all about the effects of his actions on others or being overly obsessed with flattering and satisfying others) is misguided, and it is a complete misunderstanding of this idea. **The proper way is that שיהא שם שמים מתאהב על ידו**, the Name of Heaven should become beloved through him.

The Ribbono shel Olam commands us to take the middle path. This means that **one's mind should be preoccupied with one thing: how to bring pleasure to Hashem.** Simultaneously, he should understand that if he can't get along with people, the Ribbono shel Olam will not derive pleasure from his actions.

It's All About the Mindset

The problem with ga'avah is that it illustrates a lack of comprehension of the world. This person learned the Mishnah בשבילי נברא העולם, the world was created for my sake, and he thinks that no one else learned it. He is convinced that the Ribbono shel Olam requires his avodah more than He requires anyone else's. He did not learn the Gemara asking, Why do you think that your blood is redder than another's? This person's mindset of superiority ruins everything for him.

Conversely, when a person lives with the right mindset and attitude, he begins to respect others—not in order to seek their constant approval or their smile. And when he respects others, he is drawn closer to the Ribbono shel Olam, and this causes the רוח הבריות to be favorable to him. They go together. **If you go in the right direction, you will get to the right place.**

Who Is Respected?

This Yid says, “I do my best to serve the Ribbono shel Olam, but I have struggles and challenges. **I know that this other Yid and his avodah are just as precious before the Ribbono shel Olam.** If the Ribbono shel Olam created him, it means that from the time of the Creation of the World there was no one like him, and he is needed in order to fulfill a special mission. I will never know who is doing a better job at executing the mission...” Thus, **he gives true respect to others.** He doesn't think that because the other person goes on a different path, he is a sheitzet.

His attitude is: I need to do what I need to do. This is what it says in Shulchan Aruch, and this is what my rebbeim have taught me—and I have a long way to go toward executing this mission. I don't know anything about the other person. **In his mind, he is truly respectful to the next person, and since he respects another, he learns to respect himself as well.** Chazal taught us this: איזהו מכובד המכבד את הבריות, Who is respected? One who respects others.

Respect Comes Around

This person feels respected not because the other person in turn respects him, **but because he has learned to respect himself, and thus needs other people's affirmation less.** He is fulfilled and satisfied with his life, and he doesn't have time to flatter other people. He's not an empty shell who lives off other people's smiles that affirm how smart and good he is. He is guided by the feedback of others periodically to ensure that he's on the right track—but not much more than that.

When a person treads this path, the רוח המקום approves of him, and the Ribbono shel Olam in turn causes others to like him as well, and the רוח הבריות is also נוחה הימנו. Conversely, if a person chooses the mistaken path of flattery and seeking to be liked, it will only lead him to anger and disappointment. He'll end up lashing out at others, accusing others of wrongdoing, and he will discover that he really has never earned their respect... and he won't be viewed favorably by Hashem or by the people.

As noted, the true purpose of gauging the רוח הבריות is to ascertain whether we're fulfilling our mission on This World of bringing pleasure to the Ribbono shel Olam, that it should be רוח המקום נוחה הימנו, that Hashem should derive satisfaction and pleasure from his deeds.

Point to Ponder

A “Higher” Promotion

There’s a wonderful *gilyon* called “טהור עינים” that assists tens of thousands of *Yidden* to maintain the *kedushah* of their eyes; the following incredible story was recently published:

One day, a *yungerman* was driving down a street where there were great *nisyonos* in *shemiras einayim*, and he struggled mightily not to look where he should not. *B’chasdei Hashem*, he was successful in leaving the areas spiritually unscathed. In that moment, he remembered the words of the holy Beis Aharon, who said that when a *Yid* returns home after walking in the street, and he hadn’t stumbled in his *shemiras einayim*, he must take out a violin and sing *ארומוך ה' כי דליתני*, *I will exalt You, Hashem, for You have lifted me up*. A *Yid* must be so joyful that he overcame a *nisayon*—and it must move him to sing and dance in praise of Hashem!

This *Yid* contemplated and reflected that he had driven through the fire

and hadn’t stumbled, and it just so happened that joyful music—*niggunim* of praise—was playing in his car at that moment. He fervently sang along with the soundtrack, and he *mamash* attained *deveikus* in Hashem. “Thank You, Hashem, for helping me overcome the *nisayon*!”

When the song ended and the car went quiet, his phone suddenly rang. On the line was his boss, who said, “I have a proposal for you. Perhaps you would like to take on a higher position in the company, managing an entire division? You’ll have more people under you, and the work will be more complex... but you’ll earn three times as much as you do now....”

This *Yid* was beside himself with emotion—stunned at the smile from above, a clear acknowledgement of his *avodah*. His boss continued, “I’ll tell you the truth. Just five minutes ago, the idea came to me to promote you to a higher

position, and I decided that I wouldn’t put it off. So, I called you immediately and offered it to you.”

The lesson of this story isn’t that great *shefa* comes to a *Yid* who guards his eyes; this goes without saying! A *Yid* who refrains from *aveiros* receives great plenty from Hashem. This is how *shefa* works.

But the *real* lesson of this story is that this *Yid* was *zocheh*—through this special mitzvah—to “see” the Ribbono shel Olam! That is something that we see even in our time. There are so many stories and anecdotes of *Yidden* who took on special resolutions in *shemiras hamitzvos*, and they received the gift of revelation.

Indeed, the Sefas Emes in *Parashas Shelach* tells us that the mitzvah of *tzitzis*—which is connected to the mitzvah of *shemiras einayim*—enables us to see Hashem clearly in This World.

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