

תורת אביגדור

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SEFER DEVARIM - THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION

IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE MERON AND SURFSIDE TRAGEDIES,
AND AS A ZECHUS FOR THE YESHUA OF KLAL YISROEL

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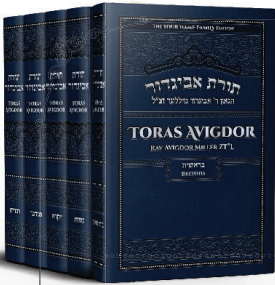
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פרשת ואתחנן

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

With All Your Mind

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Part I. The Whole Mind

The Biggest Diamond Mine

וְאַהַבְתָּ אֶת הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ – *And you should love Hashem your G-d with all your heart.* It's a *possuk* from this week's *sedrah* that we say every day – a few times every day – and therefore it pays for us to understand what the Torah is requiring of us here.

Of course, we'll only have time tonight to scratch the surface, but that itself will be very valuable because every *possuk* in the Torah is like a diamond mine, and when you're mining an important *possuk* like this one, then even on the surface you'll find the biggest diamonds. And so we're going to talk tonight about loving Hashem with all your heart. What does that mean? How do we do it?

A Fiery Love

Now, when we speak about this great subject, we must understand that there are various levels one higher than the other. The highest level is described by the Rambam in his Hilchos Teshuva (10:3): וְכִיצֹר הִיא הָאֱהָבָה – What is the proper kind of love? That word ‘Hare’uyah’ means the most fitting, the top level. הָרְאוּיָה – What is the proper kind of love? That word ‘Hare’uyah’ means the most fitting, the top level. הוּא שִׂיאֵהֵב אֶת הַשֵּׁם אֲהָבָה גְדוּלָה יִתְרָה עִזָּה מְאֹד – that’s when a person loves Hashem with a great and excessive love! Azah me’od! A fiery love so powerful, עַד שֶׁתְּהֵא נַפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה בְּאֲהַבַת הַשֵּׁם – that his soul is bound up in love of Hashem.

Now, how can you see that someone has achieved that? What’s the symptom that gives it away? וְנִמְצָא שׁוֹגֵה בְּהַ תְּמִיד בְּאֵלּוֹ חוֹלָה חֲלִי הָאֱהָבָה – He is immersed in that love at all times as if he was sick with love, שְׂאִין דְּעֵתוֹ פְּנִיָּה, מְאֵהֶבֶת אוֹתָהּ אִשָּׁה וְהוּא שׁוֹגֵה בְּהַ תְּמִיד בֵּין בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ בֵּין בְּקוּמּוֹ בֵּין בְּשִׁעָה שֶׁהוּא אוֹכֵל וְשׁוֹתָהּ – he can’t keep his mind off Hashem; whether he’s sitting in his house or walking in the street, when he’s eating or drinking, he’s always immersed in thoughts of Hashem (ibid.)

I remember there used to be a Rav Dovid Rappaport in the Slabodka kollel, an *adam gadol*. He would walk in the street and he was talking in learning to himself like this, walking and talking, walking and talking. When he bumped into the telegraph pole he said, “Anshuldigs. Excuse me,” and he moved aside and kept on talking in learning. He said excuse me to a telegraph pole! He was so immersed in learning he didn’t know he bumped into a pole; he thought it was a person. They used to laugh at him but Rav Dovid couldn’t help himself – he couldn’t keep his mind off the Torah; he was lovesick.

Intoxicating Love

And that, says the Rambam, has always been the model of one who loves Hashem. The Gemara (Shabbos 88a) tells us a story about Rava. In those days they sat on the ground when they were studying Torah and so he was sitting on his feet and learning. And as he was studying, in his enthusiasm he bounced up and down and he didn’t notice that he was pressing on his thumb. As he bounced, each time a spurt of blood came out of his thumb. And he didn’t feel it. Because he had such an enthusiasm, such a delirious ecstasy in the love of Hashem’s Torah, he wasn’t aware of the pain.

And that is cited by the Gemara as an example of תְּשׁוּגָה תְּמִיד – he was so engrossed in the love of Hashem by means of His Torah that he was oblivious of his surroundings. And that has always been the model

for our people, what we aspire to – an *ahavas Hashem* of intoxication; to be drunk with love of Hashem.

A Goal for Everyone

And the Rambam tells us that it's not a *middas chasidus*, an optional way of forging ahead in the service of Hashem. It doesn't say in our *possuk*, "If you want to be a *chossid* then you should love Hashem with all your heart." Oh no! This great ideal, this grand obsession, is a command upon all of us – men and women, boys and girls alike.

And so we should at least *aspire* to it – "Maybe someday I'll arrive there and I'll love Hashem *bechol levavi*, with all my heart." Now *that's* an aspiration! Achieving a heart that loves Hashem! Whether you're doing it or not, at least it should be a picture before our eyes, the great mountain you hope to climb someday – and there on top is the great summit, the grand ideal of *v'ahavta es Hashem Elokecha bichol levavcha*, being lovesick over Hashem and immersed in thoughts about Him always.

Heart and Brain

Now, before we go on we'll translate the word *levavcha* so there shouldn't be any ambiguity about the terms. In scripture when you wish to denote thought, you always say heart. You never say brain. You never say mind. You never say head. In Torah vernacular all thinking is with the *lev*.

Now, why that is so is not difficult to understand. It's because the brain doesn't have the reactions of the emotions – it's only a mathematical machine, a calculator. But when we want to love Hashem we don't want it to be with cold logic. Of course it means logic too but the cold logic of the brain must be translated into warm impulses in order to have some reality in life.

You know that today when a person makes a statement there's a machine that can detect his candor, his honesty. The lie detector machine will indicate how his pulse is reacting while he's saying the words. So we see that even though a man may make a statement that he logically prepared with his intellect, yet his heartbeat reacts to that in a certain way and he cannot conceal it.

Rejecting Rhetoric

If a person is a cold philosopher, a stoic who is capable of uttering grand banalities, noble statements that are remote from his own emotions, the Torah language doesn't care for such people.

Only a man who *lives* his ideals is respected. That's why all the great men of our past were revered only for personifying their ideals. For formulating rhetoric, smooth and polished phrases, no one was given any honor. Even Josephus, although he was a man of polished phrases and a master in Greek rhetoric, he writes that among us we don't give honor to orators and writers, only to men of virtue and wisdom (Antiquities XVIII 1:3).

And so, that's the *pashtus* of the *possuk*; to love Hashem means that you should utilize all of your thoughts to love Him – but it's thinking that's backed up with a heartbeat; it's concentrated and energetic thought backed by convictions and emotions.

More Than Just Rules

Now this may seem an extreme demand. We would like to be loyal Jews by performing certain precepts; by doing everything and living in a kosher, decent, Jewish manner. But now we're beginning to understand that when we talk about being a Jew it's not only being a Jew with your hands and your feet. Surely you have to have Jewish hands. You *must* put on *tefillin*. Surely you have to have Jewish feet. You *must* go to the synagogue. You have to go to kosher places. **אַם תְּשִׁיב מַשְׁבֵּת רַגְלֶךָ**; you have to turn back your foot on Shabbos (Yeshaya 58:13); Shabbos you don't go.

You have to have everything Jewish, even Jewish eyes. You look only at kosher things. You have to have a Jewish stomach and a Jewish mouth. No question about it. You cannot talk about things that a Jewish mouth doesn't say. A Jew can't say dirty words. *Nivul peh*, bad language, is a very big sin among Jews.

But of all the things you must have, more than a Jewish mouth and Jewish hands and Jewish feet, you must have also a *yiddische kop*. That's what makes a Jew – a Jewish head – a head filled with good thoughts. Of all the things that are required, the one that counts most is *bechol levavcha*, the Jewish head.

Sage Instruction

It's too much work? Well, it's like all things – the more you put in, the more you'll take out. It's like making money; it depends how much time you want to give. You want to work three hours a day? Probably you'll make less money. If you want to go all out for money, so you spend more than eight hours a day and you'll make more money in most cases. The one who wants to succeed in this career of loving Hashem should know that

the more he's going to devote his mind to the subject, the greater a man he's going to become.

Now, the question for all of us – I'm speaking to myself too – is what do we do about this? Just to say "love Hashem," we need more than that. How do we start climbing this mountain?

And so we go back to the words of the Torah and we'll see that our sages found for us a path up this mountain in the *posuk* itself. We look at the words וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְךָ and we note something interesting: Why doesn't it say לִבְךָ לִבְךָ – with one *beis*? Why does it say לִבְךָ לִבְךָ?

Two Elements

It's a good question because everything we've said till now is included in the word בְּכָל לִבְךָ. That would have been enough – we'd understand that we have to make it our goal to love Him with all of our mind in a way that is backed up by emotion. But instead of one *beis*, it's two.

Now, we know that in our Torah whenever a word or a letter is repeated it is for the purpose of emphasis – it comes to tell us something more.

And so our sages tell us that the double *beis* intensifies the meaning of the word – instead of loving Hashem with one heart, you love Him with two hearts. And our sages explain it as follows: You should train yourself to love Hashem בְּשְׁנֵי יִצְרֶיךָ, with your two inclinations, הַטּוֹב וְהַיָּצֵר הָרָע, with the good inclination, that's the *yetzer hatov*, and with the other inclination, that is the *yetzer hora*. That's what the two *beises* are telling us.

That's already a path to start climbing up the mountain! Instead of just imagining that one day, maybe in the far off future you'll fulfill this *mitzvah* of loving Hashem, our sages are giving us a path forward that all of us can begin walking on today. And so, if we'll study this method of utilizing these two great agents, the *yetzer hatov* and the *yetzer hora*, we'll begin climbing the mountain of *Ahavas Hashem*.

Part II. The Righteous Mind

The Unmentioned One

Now, we'll start with the *yetzer hatov*, the good inclination. What is the *yetzer tov*? It's a question we must answer because if we are commanded to love Hashem with the good inclination, we have to know what it is

before we can use it. And that's a problem because the *yetzer tov* is never mentioned.

Even if you'll go to places where these things are spoken about, you'll listen to rabbis talking – it's always the *yetzer hora* who is mentioned. Maybe it's not stylish to talk about him today either but if at all, he is the one mentioned.

The truth is that the rabbis are not at fault because the *yetzer tov* is not spoken about *anywhere*. In our literature, the *yetzer hora* is personified frequently – many times there are stories in which he appears in the form of a personality like the Satan, like an angel who speaks to people in order to lure them towards forbidden things. In the book of Iyov it is related how the *satan* appeared to speak against Iyov. In the Talmud we find many stories like that where the *yetzer hora* is depicted as a personality and a spokesman.

But it's interesting that we don't find the *yetzer tov* speaking to anybody; the *yetzer hatov* is never depicted – he's never personified. We have to understand that. Here is a *yetzer hora* so it seems that the *yetzer tov* is on the other side, a counterpart, but actually it's not so. The *yetzer tov* is never described. What is it?

The Wisdom Within

And the answer is that the *yetzer tov* is a mysterious quality which we possess within ourselves. It's the quality of wisdom, a great native wisdom that comes from within. In English it's called conscience, but I don't want to make it small by using that word because when you attach that word to it, immediately it means nothing. But in the ancient times conscience had a great meaning; it derives from the Latin word *con science*, 'with knowledge' – it means a native wisdom that derives from the human mind. That's the Yetzer Hatov!

Shlomo Hamelech described it (Mishlei 20:5) as follows: **תַּיִם עֲמֻקִּים** י עֶצֶה בְּלֵב אִשׁוֹ - Wisdom, is a deep fountain in a man's mind. *Amukim* means it's very very deep; actually it's endless. Where did man get this endless fountain of understanding?

You remember when Hakodosh Boruch Hu created man, He didn't make him like He made all other creatures by means of a command – it states "He breathed into Man the breath of life." Now why did Hakodosh Boruch Hu have to breathe into man? What's wrong with commanding Man to come into existence the same way He commanded monkeys to be made?

And so the Ramban quotes the *possuk*, וְיֵתֵן חֲכָמָה מִפִּי רַעַת וְתְבוּנָה, כי השם יתן חכמה מפיו רעת ותבונה, – From Hashem’s mouth comes chochma, daas, us’vunah; all forms of understanding were breathed into a man from Hashem. מֵאֵן הִנְפַח מִדִּילָהּ נֶפֶח. – When you breathe into somebody you are breathing from yourself, and so when Hashem breathed into man, He put into him the Divine wisdom. It’s there, way down, like a deep oil well and it’s waiting for the lucky man who will come along and find some way of getting it to gush forth. מַיִם עֲמֻקִּים – It’s deep waters, וְאִישׁ תְּבוּנוֹת יִדְלָנָה, – and the man of understanding draws them forth (*ibid.*).

Uncovering The Yetzer Tov

Now, that’s a Torah teaching which today is negated by the outside world because they look at man as an animal, and an animal has no innate wisdom without his instincts. And therefore more than ever before it’s important to come back to this great principle of *mayim amukim b’lev ish*, that every human being is a wellspring, a deep fountain of wisdom. Only that we have to bring it forth. You have to lower a bucket into your mind and draw forth that wisdom of the *yetzer tov*, that perfection of achieving *ahavas Hashem*, that is concealed deep within.

How do you lower a bucket and bring forth this depth of greatness that is inside of you? By means of thinking. Thinking! To love Hashem with the *yetzer tov* means to summon your abilities and draw forth from the depths of your natural wisdom all the thoughts that will help you love Hashem.

Healthy Love

Suppose a person will make it his business to consider the gifts that Hakodosh Boruch Hu bestows upon him. Let’s say you weren’t born deaf or you weren’t born dumb; you can speak. Whereas you look around and you see there are so many people who must talk with their hands and so many who cannot hear. Some people were born with startling defects that make them uncomfortable to be displayed in public; some people remain home all the time; they are embarrassed because of their blemishes. And you are an ordinary person without these faults.

Now, most people never loved Hashem for that. Of course not, because they never thought to draw forth this wisdom from their minds. But if you would look into the depths of your heart and begin to consider how fortunate you are, you are going to have a gusher; you will open up a fountain of gratitude and you will begin to love Hashem with a very intense

fervor for rescuing you, for sparing you from all the tribulations that many people in this world must endure.

If a person will live this way and think, “How many people don’t have what I possess! A normal body!” You have no blemish; you have no big defect on your face, you are not crippled in any limb. It’s a remarkable thing; there are so many places where *chas v’shalom* it could have happened. The fact is, even superficially there are hundreds of spots where a blemish could have been. And inside, there are thousands upon thousands of possibilities *chas v’shalom*. A lack of a miniscule enzyme is enough to change a person’s nature and to have a big effect on his life.

So when a person thinks about these things which he was spared, from the depths of his heart there gushes forth a very great love to Hashem. Of course you have to do it, not merely theorize. Try it; say “I love You Hashem for making me normal, for making me healthy”. And you consider it, and little by little it begins to flow a fountain, and it turns into a river, a river of love for Hashem. And that is loving Hashem with the *yetzer hatov*, with the *seichel*.

An Excellent World

And we don’t love Hashem only for that, for our health. Once you get the knack of it you’ll begin loving Him for everything because everything that He gives us is so very good. You know how I know that? At the beginning of the Torah it states **וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד** - Hashem saw all that He had created and behold it was very good. That is a remarkable thing! Why do we have to be told that it was very good? You think He had to take a look, to see if He approved of what He created?! If He made it; of course it’s good.

The answer is, the *possuk* tells us this because most people don’t think so. Go now to the world and tell them everything is very good. They are griping at everything. The unthinking masses are unhappy people; they always have complaints – “It’s rainy,” “It’s too hot,” “It’s too cold.” If you listen to people on the street you wouldn’t know it’s a *tov me’od* world. And therefore the Torah tells us what Hashem thinks about the world He made; He gave his *psak* – Everything that He created is very very good! It’s an excellent world; it’s full of happiness.

Happiness of Heat

Here is a man who comes home, and he has to go through the kitchen in order to go let’s say to the bathroom, and the oven is on; it’s hot! So he tells his wife “What? In this hot weather you’re cooking?” So she says “Yes,

dear. I'm going to turn it off." She turns it off. When he comes out of the bathroom, he says "Is supper ready?" She says "no".

And so in September all the ripe red apples are out on the stands. How does an apple become red and juicy and sweet? It's only because Hakadosh Baruch Hu turns on the oven. The summer is the kitchen that ripens these delicious fruits that we're going to eat all winter. And therefore are we going to complain because of the good times that are waiting for us? Summer is the time when all the fun for the ensuing year is being prepared.

Now that's only one aspect of the heat. The truth is there's much more to it; people who have a tendency to arthritis, they love the summer because the sun bakes their old bones and it bakes the pain out of their bones. Wintertime, they're reminded of the good old days that they had last August when the sun was making things comfortable. Now they're taking aspirins to make up for the sun.

And so there are many compensations. Our knowledge of medicine today, although it made great leaps in the last 75 years, but it's nothing compared to what will be known in the next 75 years. And so some day people will realize that the winter is good for us and the summer is good for us, and each season brings blessings of its own.

Wonderful Water

Now, these words fall flat on our ears when we hear them. It could be that you nod in agreement but actually you're not convinced yet. And that's because we're not thinkers! *Bichol levavcha* means that Hashem wants us to think! One of the most important ways of drawing forth bucketfuls of *ahavas Hashem* is to think about this world, to consider the fact that this world is crammed with delectable and enjoyable things.

There are so many things in the world. You have water to drink, that glorious elixir of life. It is clear of all the dirt that they put in soda water; the dirt and the coloring. Pure water! It's life giving. It causes your eyes to sparkle. It causes your joints to be lubricated. It gives you 65% of your body weight. It helps you cool off in summer time because you begin perspiring and the water evaporates and cools you off. It's the vehicle that causes your blood to flow through your blood vessels; otherwise the blood would congeal, would thicken. Water, that is life itself! Water causes the process of creating starches by the action of the sun upon the chlorophyll. It is water that is the catalytic agent. Water is everywhere.

Now, when you understand that all that Hashem did is very good, the world is full of good things, then you begin looking at the world in a different way and you will begin loving Hashem for the water. You will begin loving Hashem for the food. You will begin loving Hashem for your clothing.

The truth is we have to love everything because Hakodosh Boruch Hu intended all of these things as gifts; they are all really good. And once a man gets that into his head, this lesson of the Torah will transform his life into one long pian, a lyric of thanksgiving and praise and happiness. There is no end to the implications of this vast teaching! No end to the love of Hashem that we are capable of drawing forth from within ourselves by means of the Yetzer Tov.

Part III. The Wicked Mind

Loving by Breaking

Now, before we go home we'll try to tackle the second *beis* of the word לִבְבֵּךָ – it's the subject of loving Hashem with your *yetzer hora*. Of course, right away the question arises, how is that possible? What does it mean to love Hashem with the evil inclination?

There are a few *peirushim* on this and they're all true but we'll begin with one of them, something that's practical for all of us.

Here's a woman who has a mean nature; she's a tough lady and because her *yetzer hora* has been left unchecked for years she has a habit of belittling her husband or saying biting words. And she feels she cannot restrain herself; the *yetzer hora* has full control over her.

So she has to think, "Am I fulfilling my obligation of loving Hashem with all of my heart? I say these words every day, but am I even trying?!" And so she embarks on a program. "I'm going to get busy loving Hashem now by means of trying to break my *yetzer hora*; by quashing my bad *middos*."

A Period of Niceness

How do you do that? You have to take counsel with yourself: "When is the time that I'm most liable to let my tongue go?" Let's say she knows that when her husband comes back from work and she is tired and exasperated from being with the children all day long, that's when she sometimes lets go with a barb at him. So she makes a plan; "When my

husband comes home today, I'm going to show my love to Hashem by controlling my *yetzer hora*; I'm going all out for Hashem!"

And now she's prepared. As she hears him unlocking the front door, she steels herself and says, "I am making a *shvuah* that for the next fifteen minutes, I won't say anything unkind." She should swear! Fifteen minutes you can risk. And for those fifteen minutes, she's all sugar and spice and everything nice. It's a quarter of an hour of loving Hashem! Don't disdain that – it's a tremendous achievement!

Training Yourself

Or if the husband is the kind who comes home embittered from the office and delivers a blast at his wife, "Why isn't the house cleaned up," or "Why isn't supper ready," or something else. He also has to make a program of loving Hashem by means of his *yetzer hora*. The evil inclination of anger and arrogance and dissatisfaction is going to be his ladder to climb the rungs of *ahavas Hashem*. "Out of love for you Hashem, I'm going to do one of the hardest things that a man can do in this world – I'm going to break my bad *middos*."

So as he is fumbling with the doorknob, let him stop for a moment and say, "I take upon myself in the next half hour just to keep quiet. No matter what my wife will say, I am not going to say anything mean. If I can't say anything kindly, I will keep my mouth shut." For a half hour.

Of course after the half hour he will let go! But that's a good beginning because for a half hour he loved Hashem with his *yetzer hora*. After that, maybe next week, he might increase it to an hour; he might add on the mornings too. It's a good idea by the way, to love Hashem in the morning too. Of course Shabbos is a problem! You're home all day long with your wife on Shabbos – now that's a big job! But you can do it; slowly but surely you can train yourself.

Opportunities for Love

Now, I say wife and husband because that's the most common opportunity to express your love for Hashem by overcoming your bad traits. But it applies to everyone. Anyone who means business will find many opportunities to overcome his negative qualities of character.

Some people don't get along with their neighbors. Some people have friction with members of their family; they dislike their relatives – some even dislike their fathers and mothers. Maybe your mother-in-law is difficult – she'll say you're the difficult one. Your coworkers or your

chaveirim in the yeshiva. All of these interactions are opportunities to go out to battle against the *yetzer hora* because of our love for Hashem.

And by the way, little by little you'll change your nature too. Don't be discouraged; if you begin practicing, it's remarkable how different people can become when they take this program seriously. In the course of years you become somebody entirely different; you won't be recognized anymore. And you'll be happier too! But most important of all is the reason you're doing it. When you engage in this battle out of love for your Creator, that's how you fulfill the *mitzvah* of loving Hashem all the days of your life.

Climbing on Your Yetzer

Now, there's another aspect of this *mitzvah* of loving Hashem with your *yetzer hora* that I wanted to speak about; *bichol levavcha* includes taking all the *middos* that the *yetzer hora* uses to stir up trouble, and utilizing them for the purpose of serving Hakodosh Boruch Hu. The word "love" includes that – taking *everything* you have and dedicating it to the object of your love.

We'll take an example; *kavod*, the desire for glory. "The desire for glory is capable of removing a man from this world" (Avos 4:21). To us it seems to be that *haroidef achar hakavod* is a contemptible person. What's lower than a man who's always looking for glory? We despise him as a man who is overcome by his *yetzer hora*. But actually the *yetzer hora* for *kavod* can come to good use. We'll see now that you can climb the ladder of *ahavas Hashem* with your desire for glory.

Pulled By The Horse

Now let's be honest with each other – glory is the sweetest thing to people. We want *kavod* more than anything else, that's the truth. Why do people become *lamdanim*? Between me and you, they don't do it *l'sheim Shomayim*. I'm not criticizing them for that by the way. The *gemara* says (Pesachim 50b), *לְעוֹלָם יַעֲסֵק אָדָם בְּתוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת שְׁלֹא לְשָׂמָה* – it's recommended always that a man should labor in Torah and in mitzvos shelo lishma, *שְׂמִתוֹךְ שְׁלֹא לְשָׂמָה בָּא לְשָׂמָה* – because eventually he will come to *lishma*. All those who excelled in learning didn't do it because of *l'sheim Shomayim*. *Kavod* is what's pushing him.

You know it's very hard to learn. It's difficult to become a *lamdan*; it's like pushing a heavy wagon up a mountain. But suppose you find a nice strong horse that's willing to pull your wagon up the mountain and the horse's name is *Kavod*? So harness your wagon to that horse and let him

pull along with you! You're using your *yetzer hora* to climb that mountain of *ahavas Hashem!*

Now, when you come to the top of the mountain, you look down and say, "I need a horse? I could do it *l'sheim Shomayim* too." And little by little *l'sheim Shomayim* comes into you. Ah – that's *lishma*. Now you're learning Torah because you love Hashem! But you got there with your *yetzer hora!*

Not only learning. With your desire for *kavod* you can accomplish many great things. You can become a *baal middos*, a good husband, a good neighbor. You can *daven* better and do *mitzvos* in the best way possible. You'll acquire a *kesser shem tov*, a very good name for yourself. Once a person understands how to use his *yetzer hora* in order to serve Hashem, his entire life is transformed.

Contrarian Policewomen

Another example. Everybody has within them the instinct to be a contrarian. The *yetzer hora* to resist wells up in the heart of all humans. Resist what? It doesn't matter – something you have to find. That is why today the youth revolt. No matter what the government is, the youth are in revolt. It's a senseless form of nihilism – "Down with the establishment!" There's no logic to it – just to upend society.

That's why once upon a time you had to be six feet tall to qualify for the police force. When I was a boy, if you saw a police officer, you had respect for him! But today the contrarians made a fuss and so when you walk down the street, you see a girl, a little Chinese girl, this big, wearing a police uniform! What kind of respect could you have? You'll be afraid of her?! It's ridiculous!

I'm walking down Kings Highway, and here's a policeman, six feet high, and standing next to him is a tiny policewoman who is up to his belly-button! And that little girl – it looks like she's playing dress-up – gets the same salary that the big tall Irishman, the six footer, used to get; even more! It's just liberal window-dressing that costs us money for nothing. But no matter; the *reshaim* have been conquered by their *yetzer hora* to be contrarians, to be different and to buck the tide.

Contrarian Jews

Now when we see such a thing, such a senseless way of living, what are we supposed to think? It reminds us that *everybody* has within him such a contrary instinct! Not only the liberals – we too have that *yetzer hora*. And *bichol levavcha* means that we have to love Hashem by using this contrariness for His sake.

The Jew says, "I'm going to be a contrarian too! I'm going to be different! I'm not going to yield to the majority opinion of the gentiles! I'll be stubborn; we are the *am kesheioref*." And so the Jew who loves Hashem spends all of his days in building up fences and fortifications against the outside world. He'll wear Jewish clothing that makes him look different and he's proud of it! He's a contrarian; he's standing up to the world!

That's why Orthodox Jews don't go to dances. That's why they don't go to movies and that's why they disapprove of television. The Orthodox Jew has successfully withstood the onslaughts of all the wickedness – no nation in the world has ever been as pure, as self-controlled as the Am Yisroel! And a great part of that is because they love Hashem; and part of the love is demonstrated in utilizing the *yetzer hora* of contrariness.

Lovely Anger and Hatred

Haven't we seen many times that quiet people have stepped into a breach and utilized the quality of anger to stand up for Hakodosh Boruch Hu? How did they do that? Because the love for Hashem inflames their hearts and they're capable of using their *yetzer hora* to do great deeds! Someone who loves Hashem is intolerant of wicked things.

It's the great subject of אֹהֲבֵי הַשֵּׁם שֹׂנְאֵי רָע – *Those who love Hashem hate evil* (Tehillim 97:10). Now I understand that today, it's not the style to hate – the word hate is not a kosher word anymore. You can't hate murderers or criminals. Of course, I don't want to say another word, an ugly word, but everybody knows the ugly word, you can't hate them either.

And the truth is that hate is a contemptible *middah*. People who hate their mothers-in-law or their neighbors are failures, no question about it. But like every *yetzer hora*, we must use hate for a good purpose, for the love of Hashem. *Bichol levavcha* means that we recognize this *yetzer hora*, this *middah* of the evil inclination and we make use of it to express our love of Hashem. We love You Hashem and so we hate immorality! Certainly! We hate atheism! If you love Hashem so you hate atheism, certainly!

We hate murderers! We would like all murderers to get the electric chair. Look what happens today when they stopped hating murderers. America has become the place where homicide is practiced more than any other country. A country that is supposedly so far advanced in civilization is not able to control the epidemic of murder. A very sick man, Cuomo, one of the worst *cholei hanefesh*, said, "It's barbaric to kill murderers." He's the real barbarian because anybody who says it's barbaric to kill murderers is a barbarian himself. That's what happens when the *yetzer hora* is in control! And so we control the *yetzer hora*, and we hate those whom Hashem hates.

The Volcano Within You

Well, I'd like to talk to you more about the subject, but my time is up. It's a big subject and I don't have time to exhaust it. But the bottom line is, we are all capable of fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Hashem*. It's inside of us. How much is there? A great fire! You know inside the earth a great fire is burning. A subterranean fire is under the earth. Sometimes you can see it when there's an eruption of a volcano. We're amazed. So much heat, so much flame, so much energy is hidden in the bowels of the earth.

In every Jew, there's a volcano. There's a fire of *ahavas Hashem*. No question about it. But it can be locked in forever and ever; a *rachmanus*. And our job is to bring it forth. And it's possible, no question about it – there are a lot of ways in which it can erupt! But one of the most important is by utilizing the secret that our sages uncovered in the word לְבָבָךָ.

When we make use of our *Yetzer Tov* and *Yetzer Hora* in the ways we spoke about tonight – *and we do it with the intention of expressing our love for Hashem* – that's one of the ways of bringing to the fore this great fire, the “powerful and fiery love” that the Rambam speaks about. And the more work we put into it, the closer we come to the top of that mountain of *ahavas Hashem* where a person finds that נִפְשׁוֹ קְשׁוּרָה בְּאַהֲבַת הַשֵּׁם – *his soul is always bound up in love of Hashem* (Rambam *ibid.*)

Have A Wonderful Shabbos

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Loving Hashem With Both Inclinations

This week, every day when I say the words אֶהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ, I will *bli neder* pause for ten seconds and remind myself about this obligation to practice loving Hashem with both of my *yetzers* and commit myself to fulfill it sometime during the day.

And then, during the day I will find at least two opportunities to make use of the methods delineated in this booklet [1. Drawing forth gratitude from within my mind. 2. Conquering one of my bad *middos*. 3. Channeling one of the *middos* towards the service of Hashem] and I will make sure to say beforehand, “I am doing this now because I want to fulfill the *mitzvah* of loving Hashem.”

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

S-9 - Seeking Glory | 276 - With All Your Mind

440 - With Both Your Inclinations | 445 - With All Your Heart

670 - Motivations to Serve Hashem | 750 - Approach to Ahavas Hashem

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

How do we celebrate *chamisha asar b'Av*?

A:

We celebrate it, first of all, by saying ברוך אתה השם המעריב ערבים – *Thank You Hashem for the night*. How wonderful it is to have nighttime! Nighttime is a very great blessing; you have to study the nighttime. It's not just lack of the day. No! בחכמה פותח שערים ובתבונה – *משנה עתים* – Nighttime is made with wisdom. So start studying the wonders of nighttime.

And tomorrow morning say, ברוך אתה השם יוצר המאורות, Thank Hashem for the sun. And at breakfast, say בחן בחסד וברחמים – He gives us food with flavors and with colors and aromas. Food is delectable! So thank Him for the food you ate. And so on and so on during the rest of the day. And that's a good way to celebrate *chamisha asar B'Av* and *shisha asar B'Av* and *shiva asar B'Av*! Every day in Av and every day in Elul too.

Now, in the days of the Beis Hamikdash לא היה ימים טובים לישראל – *כחמשה עשר באב* – *There were no happier days for the Am Yisroel than the 15th of Av*. In those days, Chamisha Asar B'Av was celebrated with the *kedusha* that existed at that time. I don't have time to explain it right now but today it's different. And therefore we're not able to celebrate anymore like they did in the days of old.

TAPE # 835

— This week's Q&A sponsored: —

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