

## The Stepping Stone To Emulating Hashem

Based on the weekly Shmuess given by HaRav Shaya Cohen, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshiva Zichron Aryeh

לעילוי נשמת גיטל בת הרב אליעזר מנוח | הרב יוסף חיים בן מאיר | רפאל חיים דוב בן בן-ציון שלום | ר' ברוך בן ר' יהודה | שרה בת ר' יחזקאל | ראובן יוסף בן יהושע | דב בעריש בן פסח צבי  
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The Rabbeinu Yonah in his Sefer Shaarei Teshuva writes the following, “One of the warnings that is dependent on the heart is, ‘Be careful, lest you forget Hashem your G-d’. Our sages say that anytime that it says ‘be careful lest’...behold this is a negative commandment. We are warned in this Mitzvah to always remember Hashem, and a person is obligated to constantly try to acquire the conduct that emanates from this remembrance. For example, fear, modesty, adorning our thoughts, and all types of Middos. This is because the holy nation will understand all his beautiful conduct that crowns and elevates a person by remembering Hashem..”

The Rabbeinu Yonah is delineating a three step process. The first step is remembering Hashem. This does not mean just remembering the name of Hashem without having a picture and focus of who Hashem is, as he writes that what emanates from here is a person conducting themselves like Hashem. So it seems clearly that the first step is remembering Hashem, and all His Middos. Step two is that when a person reaches this understanding, they are elevated and crowned with the Chochmas Hashem. As we say in Zemiros on Shabbos, “דעה חכמה לנפשו והיא כתר לדאשך”, which was a Zemirah the Alter of Slobodka emphasized due to this line. These two steps result in step three; an obligation for a person to acquire these Middos within themselves, through Mussar.

This three step process highlights the fact that step one alone will not obligate a person to conduct themselves like Hashem. Perhaps if a person knows the Middos of Hashem, and how He conducts this world, he will feel that this is a goal too lofty and it is beyond him. However step two which results from step one is the bridge between knowledge and action. Once a person knows the Middos of Hashem, he is elevated, and then becomes obligated to instill these Middos within himself.

This idea has ramifications in how we approach working on our Middos. At times people try to skip just to step three, and work on their Middos without acquiring the Chochmas Hamussar. We see from here, that one won't be able to attain these Middos and proper conduct, unless he first focuses on the Middos of Hashem.

Understanding this process can be extremely helpful as we prepare for the Yom Hadin. Reb Yisrael ZT”L taught us that to be in the category of those doing Teshuva, one has to just begin the process. Knowing this formula can allow us to begin with the first step of knowing Hashem, which will lead us to elevation and the refining of our Middos to be more like Hashem.



## Shir HaShirim Insights

In loving memory of Mr. Marvin Halpern

The famous quote from Chazal, “Open for me an entrance the size of a needle head, and I will open for you an entrance as wide as a grand hall,” is often cited to encapsulate the spirit of Elul. At first glance, it seems to express the kindness of Hashem, who, despite our year-long distancing from Him, tells us, “If you make the first small move to return to Me, I’ll do the rest.” However, when we explore the source of this teaching, we discover an even deeper expression of Hashem’s boundless love and compassion.

The source is rooted in the Pasuk (Shir HaShirim 5:2) where Chazal explain the beautiful imagery: “My Beloved (Hashem) is knocking” at the door of our hearts, saying, “Out of My immense love for you, I have come bearing all the good in the world, from one end to the other, for your benefit. If only you would ‘open for Me’ just a sliver—an opening of teshuvah the size of a needle’s tip—I will open for you gates wide enough for carriages laden with blessings to pass through.”

The Pasuk continues: “My sister, My wife, My dove”—Hashem is likened to a dove, a bird that, once it finds its mate, remains loyal and does not allow it to seek another. So too, Hashem will never allow us to forsaken Him. “My perfect and innocent one, My twin”—just as twins feel one another’s pain, Hashem assures us, “I am with you in your suffering.”

And yet, how often do we respond with reluctance: “I have taken off my robe; how can I put it back on? I have washed my feet; how can I soil them again?” (Shir HaShirim 5:3).

Despite this hesitation, Hashem does not remain distant. He doesn’t sit passively on His throne, waiting for us to make the first move. Rather, even when we are spiritually “asleep,” He comes right to our doorstep, pleading with us to open it just a tiny bit - “like the opening of a needle.” Why? Because His greatest desire, the very purpose of creation, is to shower us with infinite goodness!



## ELIEZER INSTITUTE Emunah Highlights

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The Pasuk in Tehillim (147:10-11) states, “He does not prize the strength of horses, nor value the fleetness of men; but Hashem desires those who fear Him, those who await His kindness.”

The Zohar in Parshas Beshalach explains that those who fear Hashem are those who rely on Him for their daily sustenance, eagerly awaiting His provision. Rav Yeysei Saba exemplified this by refusing to set his table each day until he first davened to Hashem for his food, saying, “Let us not set the table until our food is given to us by the King.” After some time, he would declare, “Now is the time, it has been bestowed upon us by the King.” This deep sense of reliance and trust in Hashem, anticipating His kindness daily, is the essence of those “who fear Him.”

From this, we see that the concept of fearing Hashem is closely linked to Bitachon. This can be understood through the Rambam’s explanation of Yiras Hashem in Yesodei HaTorah (2:2). The Rambam teaches that true fear of Hashem arises when a person contemplates His works and creatures, and witnesses the boundless wisdom displayed in the creation. This reflection leads to a profound sense of awe and humility, as one realizes their own insignificance before the infinite wisdom of Hashem. As David HaMelech said, “My soul thirsts for Hashem, for the living G-d” (Tehillim 42:2).

When a person recognizes Hashem’s absolute power and His control over every aspect of the universe, they come to the clear understanding that there is no one else to turn to for salvation or sustenance but Him alone. This understanding fosters both awe and trust, for those who fear Hashem are the same people who rely completely on His kindness.