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Bo | The Foundation To Redemption



MESILLOT Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha by **Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l**

> From the weekly lectures of his son, Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita

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.... A PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL Com. 1

Parashat Bo - Don't Be Smart



Don't Be Smart

Yankal'e was very well known in his town for his good relations with many government officials, the police chief, and other important people. Anyone who got caught up with one of these people, or with all of them, would go straight to Yankal'e, and he, after charging a hefty fee, would solve all their problems.

Apart from that, Yankal'e was a very simple Jew. He hardly understood how to use a *siddur*, let alone read a *Chumash*. Once, he went to the synagogue on Shabbat and said to the *gabbai*, "My father's yahrzeit is next week, on Tuesday. Please arrange for me to be the *maftir* and *chazzan* for *mussaf* and give me an *aliyah* on Tuesday !"

The *gabbai* answered, "The *maftir* and *mussaf* are yours. But there's no Torah reading on Tuesday..." **Yankal'e** grew angry, "Did you forget who you're talking to?! If Yankal'e says there'll be an *aliyah* to the Torah, then there'll be an *aliyah* to the Torah !"

The *gabbai* dismissed his comments and left.

Enraged and hurt, Yankal'e turned to one of the men standing next to him and said, "I remember there being a Torah reading on a weekday!"

The man confirmed, "Indeed, on Mondays and Thursdays, we read from the Torah."

"What about on Tuesday ?" he asked.

"There's no Torah reading on Tuesday," he replied.

"Never ?" Yankal'e insisted.

"Rarely," clarified the man, "Only if a fast day happens to be on Tuesday..."

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"When is there a fast day ?" Yankal'e inquired.

"On the 10th of Tevet, on the 17th of Tammuz... Or when there's distress and the rabbi decrees a fast. In times of danger or epidemic..." the man replied.

A sly smile appeared on Yankal'e's face. His eyes sparkled with evil...

On Sunday morning, he rushed to the liquor store and bought a bottle of vodka. He then went to the police station and placed the bottle in front of the bored police chief, his close friend. He poured two large glasses, and they enjoyed themselves. Yankal'e then stated, "Do you remember that the Tzar decreed that Jews were only allowed to live in certain places, and our town is officially outside

those Jewish boundaries ?"

"Who cares ?" the police chief said and then took a sip of vodka.

"What do you mean, 'who cares?' They'll come from Petersburg for an inspection, and who will be scolded? You !"

"Who will come? Who will scold?" the police chief dismissed the concerns, "They don't even know that this town exists!"

"They will come !" Yankal'e pronounced, "And they'll scold you !"

The vodka started to kick in, clouding the police chief's judgment, "What shall I do then?" he asked.

"Today is Sunday. Go to the town square and announce that by next Sunday, all the Jews must evacuate the town. If not, they'll be driven out by force! And don't agree to talk to any Jew except me!" Yankal'e asserted.

"I will do as you say," the police chief promised, finishing the rest of his glass.

An hour hadn't passed before the town was bustling. Shopkeepers closed their stores, and peddlers closed their stalls. They all gathered at the rabbi's house to know what to do. They decided to send an emissary to bring Yankal'e, the lobbyist..."

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The messenger returned empty-handed. Yankal'e had been lying in his bed since he returned from the police station, almost seized by a stroke, and

thus, he couldn't come.

They decided that if Yankal'e couldn't come to the assembly, the assembly would come to Yankal'e. They all got up and headed to the lobbyist's house. The rabbi sat down next to his bed, and everyone stood around

them in reverence.

Yankal'e opened his mouth and told them...

I was called to the police station and was told about the terrible decree. I didn't take things lightly. I reminded the evil police chief of all the good he'd received from me. I even cried and begged, but to no avail.

I then tore my shirt and screamed shoot me, just don't let me witness the evil you will do to my people! But the wicked police chief stood firm. He said that he received orders from above, from the province's minister, maybe from Petersburg, and that he couldn't be of any help. I returned home broken. The end of our glorious community has arrived..."

Yankal'e burst into tears...

They listened, shocked. The rabbi was the first to come to his senses, "Even if a sharp sword is placed on a man's neck, let him not despair of mercy," he reminded everyone,

"Something must be done."

"There's nothing to do," Yankal'e declared.

"We have to do something !" the rabbi said.

Yankal'e sighed, "First of all, we must find out where the decree originated. If from Petersburg, there's no way of changing it. But if from the province's minister, there might be a chance. I have a friend who is very close to the province's minister. If he receives a gift, he might be able to do something."

"What can we give him?" they asked.

Yankal'e said to them, "There's no choice. You must

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collect 50 rubles and travel expenses."

"Fifty rubles?!" they cried, terrified, "The town is so poor! How will we collect 50 rubles?!"

"Here, that's a lot of money," he agreed, "But in the minister's city, that's nothing. Anything less won't work. You must hurry if you want him to

travel to the minister."

They hurried and made a flash fundraising campaign. They succeeded in raising the 50 rubles as well as the travel fees.

That evening, Yankal'e went to the rabbi's house.

He sat on the living room chair and said, "I have good news and bad news. The good news, the decree didn't come from Petersburg. The minister's advisor caused this trouble. It's indeed possible to nullify the evil decree. The bad news is it

will cost you 500 rubles !"

"Five hundred ? !" the rabbi yelled in horror.

Yankal'e shrugged his shoulders, "My friend will take a

little for himself and give the majority to the minister's secretary and some to his friends... And ultimately, there's no guarantee that all this will help..."

"What do we do?" the rabbi muttered.

"First thing, collect the money.Here, I donate 50 rubles.Secondly, decree a fast for tomorrow," Yankal'e said.

"It's not possible for tomorrow," said the rabbi. Yankal'e already investigated and knew that it was impossible for tomorrow. "In order to decree a fast, you have to accept it the day before. Thus, I can only decree a fast for Tuesday."

"Tuesday it is!" agreed Yankal'e, "In the meantime, I'll go and see what can be done."

They succeeded in raising 450 rubles, the remainder of the wretched town people's money. Yankal'e got up and went into action, their prayers accompanying him. That evening, he returned, announcing that all measures had been taken, but he doesn't know to what extent he was successful.

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He'll only know tomorrow, the day of the fast.

The next day, he participated in the prayers, of course, and also received an *aliyah* to the Torah. After the prayers, he took out a bottle of vodka and went to the police station, everyone's eyes watching him and praying for his success. This time, the police chief drank alone. Yankal'e was fasting. Together with the police chief, he exited the building, their

That's how this shocking story ended. We don't have any details of what happened next. Did the elderly *gabbai* wake up from his indifference and connect the dots ? Did he remain enclosed in his indifference ?

However, we'll allow ourselves to fly on the wings of imagination and continue the story...

Yankal'e is now old. His teeth have fallen out, and his legs don't stop shaking... One

eyes glowing. The police chief announced that the decree was null and void. Yankal'e was the savior of the day...

Yankal'e disdainfully stared at the elderly *gabbai*, who refused to give him an *aliyah* on Tuesday. Yankal'e resolved. Thus, Yankal'e achieved. What did the *gabbai*'s indifference cause? Three days of sorrow and mourning, a day of fasting, and a loss of 500 rubles...¹

Pathways To The Imagination

bright day, without any prior notice, he passes away !

The old men, who still remembered him, approach the new rabbi of the town and tell him, "Rabbi, do you know who Yankal'e was? Only thanks to him, thanks to his dedication, this town exists ! Rabbi, we must hold an honorable funeral for him !"

All the announcement systems in the town activate simultaneously, "According to the rabbi's request, all the Jews of the town, men,

^{1.} Maayan HaShavua - Shemot (p. 136).

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women, and children, must come and participate in Yankal'e's funeral !"

Yankal'e lies in the middle of the town square, covered with a sheet. One after the other, the eulogists praise the tzaddik, Yankal'e, for his *Ahavat Israel*, who, although almost unconscious on his bed, sacrificed his life, running from place to place until, with the miraculous help of Hashem, he saved the Jews of the town...

The eulogies come to a close, and the crowd takes his body and buries him deep in the ground. They approach the nearby well and wash their hands.

The funeral is over.

Yankal'e is left alone. Suddenly, an angel appears and says to him, "Come, it's your turn to appear in the High Court !"

Yankal'e replies, "Wait! Didn't you hear what they said about me?! I can't arrive like this, full of sand and dirt. I have to tidy up." He quickly does his hair, shakes off the dust, and sets out on a journey with the angel... **He** stops at the entrance of an enormous, magnificent palace, astonishing in its decor. With rapturous eyes, he surveys the entrance and sees the words "House of Judgment" engraved

in letters of fire...

Yankal'e walks into the palace. There, in the middle of the grand chamber, is a massive table with the members of the High Court sitting around it, all of them angels of consuming fire, staring angrily at Yankal'e...

His entire body begins to tremor...

The head of the court turns to him and says, "*Rasha*! Not even *gehinom* can cleanse your soul! It doesn't have enough power to repair your soul from the terrible blemish you caused throughout all the worlds during those three dark days when you distressed the townspeople..."

Yankal'e gathers courage and says, "I was once told that it's very beneficial to receive an *aliyah* to the Torah on a yahrzeit. I just wanted to honor my father. That's

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why I did everything I could to receive an *aliyah*! What do you want from me?! All I cared about was my father's honor!"

The head of the court replies, "You fool! If you had learned Parashat Bo, you wouldn't have made such mistakes!" **"Parashat** Bo? What does that have to do with anything?!" Yankal'e asked.

The head of the court answers, "Come and listen..."

But, before we hear what he explained to him, a little introduction...

When Will The Mashiach Come?

The Gemara says...²

"Hashem shall judge His people and atone for His servants, for He shall see that the hand [of their enemy] is becoming stronger, and there is salvation nor strength" no (Devarim 32:36) – Mashiach ben David will not come until Am Israel despairs of redemption, as it says, "and there is no salvation nor strength." The verse implies that their lowliness will lead them to say that it is as if there's no supporter or helper for Am Israel, that Hashem has completely abandoned them, and they will despair of redemption. Only after they reach such a poor state will the Mashiach will come.

As Rabbi Zeira - as Rabbi Zeira would be accustomed to doing, when he would find sages who were engaging in it - when he would find sages dealing with the matter of Mashiach, to know when he would come. he would say to them: Please, I ask of you, do not distance him - I ask of you to delay the time of not Mashiach's arrival through your engagement in his matters,³ As we learn in a baraita: Three things come through inattentiveness, they are: Mashiach, a lost item, and a scorpion.

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2. Sanhedrin 97a.

3. When the Malbim decided to interpret the Book of Daniel, which deals with

the time of Mashiach's arrival, as is known, the Malbim left all his other undertakings and immersed himself in the

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In truth, this Gemara is bewildering. How can one despair of the Mashiach? One of the 13 principles of faith is the belief in the coming of the Mashiach ! And whoever doesn't believe in the coming of the Mashiach is a heretic !⁴

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verses dealing with the calculation of the end of days.

Once, one of his students asked him, "Rabbi, why are you immersing yourself in such calculations? Didn't *Chazal* say (Sanhedrin 97b) that cursed be the bones of those who calculate the end of days?"

The Malbim then responded...

When I was a boy, about 8 years old, my father, Rabbi Yechiel Michel, who was in contact with the great merchants in the largest cities in Russia, was preparing to go to the city of Kharkiv. I begged him to take me on his trip, and he complied with my request. In those days, there were no railroads in Russia, and thus, it was a difficult trip that lasted several weeks.

Just as we left Volochysk, our residence, I had already begun to suffer from the trip, the swaying of the cart, the shaking...

I turned to my father and asked, "Father, is the journey to Kharkiv still far away?" My father rebuked me, saying, "Don't ask such fooling questions." I submitted to his rebuke and didn't dare ask again. Thus we drove for several weeks, stayed in many cities, lodged in numerous places, and still hadn't arrived in Kharkiv.

One morning, my father turned to the wagon driver and asked him, "Are we far

from Kharkiv?" I was stunned by my father's question. I turned to my father and asked, "Father, you yourself told me a few weeks ago that that question is foolish?"

My father responded, "That's a mistake. When we first set out on the journey, having just left our town to travel to Kharkiv and still had a long way to go, your question was considered foolish. But, now that we are very close to the journey's end, my question is entirely appropriate."

The Malbim finished his response to his student...

My father's answer also answers your question. In the early generations, after the destruction of the Temple, when the long, arduous journey of exile was still ahead of us, our holy rabbis rightfully decreed against calculating the end of days, lest the nation despair of redemption, saying, "Who can withstand such a prolonged exile ?!"

But now, Baruch Hashem, when most of the exile is behind us, and we're standing close to the end of the journey, it's permitted to calculate the remaining distance.

- Ohr HaMeir (Sichot VeSippurim, p. 30).

4. The Rambam rules in his Mishneh Torah (Hilchot Melachim 11:1)...

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Moreover, every person who comes before the High Court after their death is asked, "Did you await salvation?" Thus, how can one be inattentive to the redemption? Also, in all our prayers, we mention the redemption, so how can we be inattentive to it ?

Certainly, the Gemara isn't to be understood literally...

The Way to Get Closer to Hashem

When Hashem's decided to create mankind, He first decided to create the holy, pure souls of Am Israel, whose only inclination is to yearn for closeness to Hashem.

He then created a coarse body from the earth, whose only inclination is to satiate itself with materiality, obscene lusts,

and bad character traits.

Then, Hashem merged the soul with the body, commanding them to live together in this world.

The King Mashiach will, in the future, restore the Kingdom of David to its initial sovereignty, build the Temple, and gather the dispersed of Israel. All earlier statutes will return to their previous state in his days: Sacrifices will be offered, the Shemitah and Yovel years will be observed according to all their laws as described in the Torah, and anyone who doesn't believe in him or doesn't await his Obviously, each one tugs to their own side. The soul craves to shed all the materiality of this world, to run and cling to Hashem. Whereas the body craves to indulge in evil lusts, money, food,

women, honor, etc...

Every Jew feels very well within themselves the intensity of this ceaseless struggle. A Jew stands in the middle, raises their eyes to heaven, and contemplates... If I sin, I'm going against Hashem, my Creator, who does only good for me. But, if I don't

coming, not only denies the prophets, but also the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu, for the Torah testifies about him, saying, "Hashem Elokecha will return you and be merciful to you, and He will return and gather you... Even if your castoffs are at the end of the heavens... Hashem Elokecha will bring you" (Devarim 30:3-5). These matters explicitly stated in the Torah include everything said by all the prophets.

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sin, my evil inclination will continue to pain me and cause me trouble.

In truth, Hashem doesn't give anyone a test that they can't withstand, and if He does give someone a test, they must know that they're absolutely capable of withstanding it.⁵

When a Jew listens to the voice of their soul and overcomes the desires of their body, in

heaven, it's considered as if

5. Once, a group of chassidim traveled from Mezeritch to Rebbe Shlomo Yehuda Leib of Lentshana zt"l. On the way, a boy orphaned from his father and mother joined them, and they drove together with the boy to Lentshana. That boy heard the following words from the Rebbe of Lentshana, "Every Jew, wherever they may be, can be a genuine, faithful Jew

to Hashem if he so desires."

Those words became fixed in his heart.

Later, when the boy returned to his town, he joined a group that traveled to London. He became very wealthy there and married a woman from that city. But little by little, he left the ways of the Torah. In truth, his wife caused him to go astray, for

she was thus learned from her youth.

One night, he saw an old man in a dream. The old man said to him, "Why don't you they had sacrificed themselves before Hashem!

And, for this "secret of the sacrifice," all the worlds were created...

Since our *avodah* in this world is like the *avodah* of the sacrifices, we must study the *avodah* of the sacrifices and understand how they are expressed in the *avodah* of the soul. We'll focus on one aspect that's connected to our discussion.

remember what I told you that every Jew, wherever they may be, can be a genuine, faithful Jew to Hashem if he so desires ! Why did you leave Hashem's Torah ?"

The old man returned to him in a dream the next night and the third night, and the young man thus became saddened by the path he chose for himself.

When his wife saw that his face was sullen and his heart wasn't with her, she pestered him to tell her what was happening. He thus told her everything that had happened, and because they were childless, they decided to get a divorce and divide their assets between them. The man later took his wealth and property, moved to the holy city of Jerusalem, married a righteous Jewish wife, and had a son...

- Mevaser Tov (Bamidbar, p. 344).

Parashat Bo - The Way to Get Closer to Hashem

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l writes...⁶

In Parashat Vayikra, the Torah begins to teach us about the *avodah* of the sacrifices and lists different types of sacrifices.

Nearly at the beginning, the Torah commands us to pour salt on top of every offering, as it says, "You shall salt all your meal-offerings with salt. You shall not omit from your meal-offering the salt of your covenant with Elokecha. You shall offer salt on every one of your offerings" (Vayikra 2:13).

But what does pouring salt have to do with the *avodah* of the soul?

In order to answer this, we must know that by offering a sacrifice, a person merits becoming closer to Hashem, and that's why it's called a **קרבן** (*korban* – sacrifice), stemming from the word הַתְּקָרְבּוּת (*hitkarvut* – becoming closer).

The Torah teaches us that if you want to become closer to

Hashem, you must take it upon yourself to serve Him at all times and in every situation, accepting upon yourself the yoke of heaven

– This is the idea of the salt.

The obligation of pouring salt on top of the sacrifices alludes to the trait of accepting the yoke of heaven in one's *avodat Hashem*. That is, a person must take it upon themselves to serve Hashem not only when it's enjoyable to them but also when their heart and mind are sealed and they have no feeling in their service of Hashem. Even then, they must strengthen themselves and serve Hashem by completely accepting the yoke of

heaven upon themselves.

Am Israel, before receiving the Torah, said, "We will do, and we will listen" (Shemot 24:7).

The aspect of "we will listen" symbolizes the stages in a person's life when the Torah burns inside their heart, and they have a great desire to learn and get a lot of enjoyment from it. Whereas the aspect of "we will

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6. Imrei Noam (Vayikra, Maamar 8).

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do" symbolizes the stages in a person's life when they don't derive enjoyment or satisfaction in learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvot, yet they still act, out of total acceptance of the yoke of heaven, for that's what the King of the world commanded them to do.

Therefore, Am Israel preceded "we will do" to "we will listen" to express that they are ready to accept the Torah and its commandments in every situation, even if they feel no pleasure in doing so, rather only out of acceptance of the yoke of heaven.

Anyone who wants to become closer to Hashem must come to a complete agreement in their heart to give up all the pleasures of this world for the honor of Hashem. After all, *avodat Hashem* requires a lot of labor and effort, sacrifice and dedication, which is the complete opposite of the natural desire of the body and animal soul, which is to delight in the pleasures of this world.

A Jew constantly stands in the middle between the fierceness of their body and the purity of their soul. All their life, they see how

the two struggle with each other, struggles that exhaust the soul and body. If they don't use "salt," if they don't take "salt" and sprinkle it on top, they'll face many difficulties to be on the side of the soul.

A Jew must reveal the emotion of "the acceptance of the yoke of heaven" within themselves. They must genuinely feel that they're serving Hashem, and it's forbidden for a servant to

rebel against their master.

More so, Hashem isn't just a regular master who orders his servant around and doesn't care how he'll be able to fulfill them. Hashem isn't only a "master" but also, and above all, a Father, a good, merciful Father, Who desires and longs for us to have only good, only happiness, and pleasure. That's why He created us down here. By fulfilling His commandments, we'll merit the complete, true goodness and lofty, sublime delights which no other creation has even a hint of recognition...

And even though sometimes the body resists the above

Parashat Bo - The Way to Get Closer to Hashem

assertion, "I think that if I eat this non-kosher food, I'll enjoy it more," we must know that these are thoughts of nonsense and ignorance that stem from the blurring of the truth,⁷ for truthfully,

7. The waiting room of the pediatric clinic was packed and full of agitation...

While rocking his baby in the stroller, Dov tried to learn the book he had brought, but it was too hard to concentrate. From time to time, he surveyed the line in which he had been waiting for about an hour and a half and assessed the pace of his progress to the long-awaited entrance to the doctor. The boy behind him in line cried continuously as his grandmother tried to calm him down. The old woman herself occasionally sighed, complaining of her own pains, and also urged him constantly to find out how many people

were still ahead of them in line

As his entrance to the doctor approached, Dov tried to memorize everything his wife had told him to mention to the doctor, the child's leanness, lack of appetite, and all the strange, unexplained symptoms that had appeared in recent weeks.

Finally, around 9:30 am, the lady in front of him entered the doctor's office with her daughter. Dov stood near the door, ready and willing to enter, arranging his words to the doctor in his mind. Then the old woman turned to him, begging him to allow her to enter before him. She herself is sick, she the good that Hashem prepares for us is good to its perfection !

Thus we find that the salt. acceptance of the yoke of heaven, is the gateway to closeness to Hashem...

said, and her grandson has a fever, and she hopes it will only take a few minutes.

Dov hesitated and struggled with himself. On the one hand, he wanted to end the nerve-racking wait as quickly as possible and return to his affairs. But on the other hand, he had the chance to fulfill the mitzvah of kindness in exchange for a few minutes of extra waiting. How did the tzaddik, Rebbe Moshe Pallier of Kovrin, say? "A day in which a Jew didn't do a favor for another Jew isn't considered a day in their life."

With a pleasant smile, Dov moved his baby stroller aside and gave the old woman his place by the door. She showered him and his child with barrages of blessings and wishes for a complete recovery from all her heart. Within minutes, she entered the doctor's office with her grandson.

For a few minutes, Dov had a

wonderful feeling from doing kindness. But as the minutes ticked by, Dov's restlessness grew, and he began to doubt whether he had acted wisely when he gave his turn to the old woman. His baby also began to move restlessly, which added his to annovance.

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A different voice was heard in Dov's mind. "I was foolish and naive. How did the old woman manage to convince me so quickly? Did I come here with a healthy baby? Am I not busy? Nothing would've happened to her if she had waited a few minutes for her turn. Here she is now, sitting inside and chatting. Fourteen minutes have already passed since she entered," stated Dov angrily, looking at his watch.

When the doctor's door opened, Dov jumped into the doorway with the baby in his arms. The old woman barely managed to leave with her grandson when the doctor left the room after her and locked

the door announcing, "Break !"

Dov then remembered that the doctors had a break at 10:00 am. "How long does the break last?" he asked. "Fifteen minutes," answered one of the people waiting. "I hope he returns in another 30 minutes," another person added bitterly.

This time Dov was attacked by frustration. The voice inside him burst into reproach, "This is the punishment of fools! Do kindness at home with your wife and children, not with some old woman, and not at the expense of your sick child! You also promised your partner that at 10:00 am at the latest, you'd be after the doctor's appointment...

Dov tried to concentrate on his book, but he just couldn't calm down. The hands of the clock were moving slowly, and more people were arriving... Suddenly, two mothers pushed to the doctor's door with their babies, one with a high fever and the other with a rash suspected to be contagious. The nurse determined that they would enter first without an appointment.

Dov's desperation and frustration reached their peak. If he weren't around others, he would've burst into tears. "I did all this to myself," he said. "What an unsuccessful fool I am. A man my age shouldn't be so naive. It's time to grow up. From now on,

I will no longer do such favors."

Fearing contagion, Dov moved to the corner of the waiting room with his baby. It was quieter there. He tried to calm down.

"Wait a minute," he said to himself, "I did a favor out of sensible consideration. It's not my fault that it turned out that I lost more than I had planned. No one is to blame for this, not even the old woman. Why should I regret a good deed that I did? I don't want to be one who regrets his previous deeds. That way, I'll also lose the mitzvah. After all, Hashem runs the world. Apparently, He wants to test me. That's it !"

Dov calmed down, but his test wasn't yet finished. At 10:15 am, the indignation of those waiting increased, and they began to cause a commotion. The nurse came in and announced that the doctor had to leave, but a substitute doctor was called.

"He's due any minute," she said.

At 10:45 am, no doctor had arrived, and Dov's calmness was fading away minute by minute. But his irritation peaked when he remembered that his baby had to eat at 10:30 am. His cooked porridge was ready in the fridge, and Dov was supposed to feed it to his baby when he returned home from the doctor.

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The baby began to whimper, and all of Dov's doubts returned, "If it hadn't been for the favor I did for the old woman, this whole nightmare would've been long over."

In his imagination, he saw the old woman leisurely walking around her house while he was stuck with a sick and hungry baby without a doctor. "I did this to myself. I'm a big fool," he said. In his despair, he stopped looking at the clock. But he immediately came to his senses, "What about all the conversations from the mashgiach in yeshiva about Avraham Avinu and kindness? It's not a big deal to do a favor that costs 5 minutes. The real test is to remain faithful to the kindness I did even after the circumstances show me that I supposedly lost because of the kindness. No !" He said firmly as he mobilized all his mental strength, "I don't regret my actions !

Not even if I get home at 1:00 pm !"

At that moment, the doctor arrived. Within minutes, he finished the treatment of the two urgent cases and received Dov and his baby. The doctor carefully examined the asked many questions, baby, and scrutinized his diet. "You're extremely lucky," said the doctor, "The baby suffers from a rare food allergy. A different doctor would've diagnosed the allergy only after weeks and maybe months of various complicated tests and experiments with different foods. Luckily for you, this is my particular field of expertise, and I immediately recognized his sensitivity. Take a page and write down the child's special diet for the upcoming few months. Throw his baby food in the garbage. It's

poison for him. Follow this diet, and the child will be healthy..."

The main characteristic of this world is concealment. The world doesn't respond to our behavior as we would like and expect it to. Whoever walks a child across the street doesn't find gold on the other side of the road. The brazen liar doesn't accidentally bite his tongue immediately after telling a lie. Often, you even see the doer of evil becoming successful, and apparently, the evil deed is the cause of success. Often a person does a good deed that is followed by a loss or failure that seems to result from the good deed.

This is the test of this world. The world doesn't respond immediately to our moral behavior. It deceives us. It makes us reconsider or even regret our previous deeds and praise evil and its doer. The true reward is hidden for the righteous. Retribution for evil is also not executed quickly. How does one stand firm in this deceptive world?

Even a beginner pilot knows how to take off with a plane, maneuver it, and land it safely. This is provided that the flight takes place on a windless spring morning. When it's necessary to turn to the right, for example, and lower the right wing for that purpose, the pilot clearly sees the wing compared to the horizon line and the ground's contours. The pilot clearly sees when the plane

soars upwards or lowers its nose.

But what does a pilot do when flying a plane in thick fog or on a cloudy night in the pouring rain? Looking out through

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Parashat Bo - The Exploits of The Early Generations

The Exploits of The Early Generations

Accepting the yoke of heaven is the gateway to all the halls of *kedusha*. Therefore, the

first action that Adam HaRishon did after he was created was to accept the yoke of the Kingdom

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the windshield will show them nothing. There's no horizon, no signs. Looking outside doesn't indicate at all if they're 2,000 feet in the air or if they're about to scrape the ground with the belly of the plane. Such a flight requires a pilot trained in instrument flying. An altimeter tells the pilot how high they are above the ground; another device checks the balance of the plane's wings, and a third device shows them whether the plane is soaring or its nose is leaning down. The trained pilot doesn't even look outside.

The dense fog can even mislead them.

During their life in this world, a Torah observant Jew is like a pilot during instrument flying. Their simple vision can't testify as to whether a certain act is right and good or the opposite. Only the four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch*, as well as the "fifth part," can guide them. Only they can tell them what is good and what is bad, and only on them can they rely on whether to regret an act they did or to hold on to it with all their might, even though their eyes show them that it's as

if they did something foolish.

It's absolutely not simple to go from the rank of a beginner pilot who flies on a

windless morning to the rank of a pilot who knows how to fly in any weather while relying only on instruments. What's required of them goes against their basic, simple nature. To overcome the urge to look outside to see if they're flying straight, and instead, to look at the fixed instrument on the instrument panel and determine their position by the position of a bubble or small metal ball. To overcome the simple habit of looking outside to determine their position using scenery and instead to look at the map and compass.

That's exactly what's required of a genuine Jew who doesn't follow the deceptive appearance of their eyes.

Dov returned home with his baby and clearly saw that it was that old woman who caused him to be so late, and in fact, she served as a messenger to do him and the baby a huge favor. After just a few hours, Dov received proof that a good deed has a good reward. But even if he wasn't proved immediately, how could he have thought that he would be punished for doing an act of kindness, and deny the 11th of the 13 principles, that Hashem rewards those

who keep His commandments?

- BeAyin Yehudit (Vol. 1, p. 118).

Parashat Bo - The Exploits of The Early Generations

of Heaven. Thus, when all the creatures gathered to him, he announced, "Come, let us bow down and kneel; let us kneel before Hashem our Maker" (Tehillim 95:6).

But it didn't last...

Rabbi Ezriel Tauber zt"l writes⁸ that only once in history did all of humanity accept Hashem as King and devote themselves to Him with all their hearts and souls. No creature in the world refused to surrender themselves to Hashem. This happened when Adam HaRishon was created on Rosh Hashanah !

On that first Rosh Hashanah, on the sixth day after the creation of the world, Adam HaRishon was created. As soon as he was created, Adam recognized the glory of Hashem and accepted Him as King over him. Thus he said, "Hashem shall be King over all the earth" (Zechariah 14:9). Hashem was King of all of creation, and no one betrayed him. **However,** not long after he was created, Adam HaRishon sinned, turning the entire world against Hashem and removing the Kingdom of Heaven from the earth! After the sin, Hashem remained only a Ruler, but not a King, for "there is no king without a nation."

During the first ten generations, Adam HaRishon from until Noach, the whole world, except for Noach, rebelled against Hashem. They emptied the world of the Kingdom of Heaven, "the earth was filled with theft... for all flesh had corrupted its ways on the earth" (Bereshit 6:11-12), this is the generation of the flood. The method of the generation of the flood was to empty the earth of the Kingdom of Heaven, but heaven itself, they didn't touch. It didn't concern them. As if they said, "Let it remain in the heavens, just that it doesn't bother us down here..."

Ten generations later came the generation of the dispersion, "The

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^{8.} Pirkei Machshava (Yerach HaEitanim, p. 117).

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Parashat Bo - The Exploits of The Early Generations

whole earth had one language, one speech" (Bereshit 11:1), and the whole earth became united. They wanted not only to rebel and desecrate the earth from the Kingdom of Heaven, but they also sought to desecrate the heavens !

"And they said: Let us build for ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves" (Bereshit 11:4) – They wanted to remove Hashem from heaven so that He wouldn't exist there either. After twenty generations, the Kingdom of Heaven was desecrated until it had no place left, not only on earth but also in heaven.

This is where the immense power of humans, who were created in the image of Hashem, is manifested. Hashem gave us the ability to rebel against Him and, so to speak, to desecrate the world and remove the Kingdom of Heaven! After all, Hashem brought the flood and dispersed the dispersion generation, but that's only the conduct of a government, not of a kingdom. Only we, out of our own free will, can crown Hashem King.

The Mishnah says⁹ that there were ten generations from Noach to Avraham in order to demonstrate the extent of Hashem's tolerance, for each generation provoked Him continually until Avraham came and received the reward of them all.

"For each generation provoked Him continually" – the generations rebelled against the Kingdom of Heaven. They removed it from the earth. This angered Hashem. It hurt Him that His Kingdom wasn't revealed, that the purpose of the world wasn't being fulfilled.

"Until Avraham came" – Avraham Avinu took upon himself the task to restore the

Kingdom of Heaven to the earth.

"And received the reward of them all" – What is meant by "the reward of them all?" Avraham Avinu restored every portion of the Kingdom of

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Parashat Bo - The Covenant

Heaven that the generations removed from the earth and the heavens, and for that, he received the reward of them all

But even though Avraham succeeded in this, he still didn't

The Covenant

When Avraham reached the age of 70, the miraculous event, "The Covenant Between the Parts," took place.

At that time. Hashem removed the veil from the dimension of time, and all the days of the world, from the first day of creation to the last day of the existence of this world, were revealed to Avraham Avinu.

Thus, after showing Avraham all of history, everything that Am Israel would go through, he said to Avraham Avinu, "But the only possibility that there'll be an existence for Am Israel is if they willingly accept My Kingship upon themselves and agree to fulfill all that I command them."

Hashem continued...

achieve his goal – to establish a special nation that would take upon itself the voke of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Then, after many years of opportunity work. the was presented...

Don't let this matter be simple in your eyes, for according to the current state of human beings, it seems far from reality. From the time Adam HaRishon sinned, all of mankind distanced themselves

from accepting My Kingship.

And in order for there to be a nation that'll be qualified for this, I will make them slaves, and only then, through many years of hard labor, will they acquire the nature of submission, the nature of accepting the yoke of heaven, within their souls. Then, when they stand at the foot of Mount Sinai, they'll be able to proclaim, "We will do, and we will listen !" (Shemot 24:7)

Am Israel will live in foreign land deprived of all rights, without any status, despised by everyone,

Parashat Bo - The Stubbornness Of The Leviim

enslaved by a nation constantly trying to break their spirits through torture and hard labor...

"Know surely, that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs, and they shall be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years: But I will judge the nation they shall serve, and

ultimately, they shall leave with great wealth" (Bereshit 15:13-14).

But all for their benefit...

And so it was...

Am Israel went down to Egypt, became enslaved, and was forced to work hard in the field. All of Am Israel, except the tribe of Levi !

The Stubbornness Of The Leviim

The Midrash says¹⁰ that in order to tempt Am Israel, the Egyptians announced, "Anyone who needs money can make bricks. For each brick you produce, you'll receive a dollar." The Jews overworked themselves to make a lot of money, except for Amram, who wasn't tempted and made only one brick every day...

Paraoh, the king of Egypt, broadcasted live throughout all the available media channels, "The Royal Council is looking for construction workers to build two new cities, Pitom and Ramses. Payment will be made in cash, plus improved conditions for those who qualify !"

The rumor spread like wildfire, and all the Jews wanted to register...

The only ones who remained sane were the Leviim. Thev approached Am Israel and questioned, "You have everything vou need... Why are vou running like crazy to be construction workers?"

The Jews were surprised at their question, "What happened to you guys?! Here's a golden opportunity to get rich... Every brick is worth a dollar... You

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^{10.} Midrash HaGadol (Shemot 1:13).

.... C PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL Com. 21

Parashat Bo - The Torah Brings About Submission

can buy a house without a mortgage after three months of work !"

They went to work with great desire and joy...

At the conclusion of the first day of work, Paraoh arrived at the construction site and asked. "Is everyone here?"

The Jews replied, "Everyone, except the tribe of Levi. They don't care about anything. They're continuing to learn !"

Paraoh then announced, "Okay. Well, in my own name, I declare, from now on, you are all slaves! And every day, you must accomplish exactly what

The Torah Brings About Submission

The answer to our question is simple. The tribe of Levi was privileged to study Torah with the right intentions, and through their learning, they merited

11. For that's what Rabbi Nechunya ben HaKana said (Pirkei Avot 3:5): Whoever who accepts upon themselves the yoke of Torah, the yoke of the government and the voke of working is removed from you did today ! No excuses will accepted! You've be been warned!!!!"

Since the tribe of Levi didn't submit to the lust for wealth, no permission was given from heaven to Paraoh to rule over them,¹¹ and they remained free people during the entire period of exile !

But one thing isn't clear. We explained above that the purpose of their slavery was to produce the feeling of submission and acceptance of the yoke of heaven within them. Thus, if the tribe of Levi wasn't enslaved, how was the feeling of submission formed in their hearts?

having the feeling of submission naturally develop within their hearts.

The Rebbe of Alexander writes¹² that through studying

upon them. And whoever breaks off from upon themselves the yoke of Torah, the yoke of the government, and the yoke of

working are placed upon them.

12. Karmenu (Issue 45, p. 8).

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Parashat Bo - Course Complete

Torah, one merits submission, as it says in the Zohar¹³ that the Torah is the name of Hashem. And it says, "He was נְחָת (in awe) of My name" (Malachi 2:5), and Rashi comments,¹⁴ נְחָת meaning humbled/submitted. Thus, one merits submission and humility through learning the holy Torah, which is the name of Hashem.

This is the meaning of the Gemara...¹⁵

If this wicked one, the evil inclination, confronts you, seeking to cause you to throw off the yoke of heaven, the only recommendation to save yourself from him is to drag him to the Beit HaMidrash and study Torah. If he's of stone, he'll be crushed by the Torah. If he's of iron, he'll be shattered.

The Gemara then elaborates...

If he's of stone, he'll be crushed, as it says, "Ho, all who are thirsty, go to the water" (Yeshayahu 55:1), and there is no water except for Torah, and it says, "Water wears away stone" (Iyov 14:19). If he's of iron, he'll be shattered, as it says, "Behold, My word is like fire, says Hashem, and like a hammer that shatters rock" (Yirmiyahu 23:29).

Thus we learn that the Torah brings about submission. The Leviim merited submission to Hashem and the acceptance of the yoke of heaven by studying Torah for its own sake.

But Am Israel, who had the yoke of the Torah lifted from upon them, had to go through a crash course in "the ways to acquire submission and acceptance of the yoke of heaven" in order to move on to the next stage...

Course Complete

Am Israel's course in submission lasted 116 years !¹⁶ Through hard, cruel labor, they were purified from their coarseness and haughty spirit and were almost ready to receive the yoke of the

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- 13. Zohar (Vayikra 13b).

14. Brachot 12a.

15. Sukkah 52b.

16. Seder Olam (Ch. 3).

Parashat Bo - Course Complete

Kingdom of Heaven by accepting the Torah and its mitzvot...

But, before the course ended, Hashem revealed Himself to Moshe Rabbeinu and said, "They have now reached the last stage of the course. Now they must learn what happens to someone who doesn't submit to My will and instead strongly desires reality to

go according to their will...

I'll send you to Paraoh to ask him to free Am Israel. But that crude, haughty man will object. He'll refuse to accept My Kingship, and he'll take a deserved beating! Thanks to him, Am Israel will understand that it's not worth removing the yoke of heaven from upon them.

Moshe Rabbeinu returns to Egypt, gathers Am Israel, and informs them about the redemption...

Immense joy prevails in the Jewish ghetto in Egypt. A festive spirit manifests in the street. The faces of all beam with bliss. One greets the other with a holiday blessing. Everything is influenced by the wonderful news of the redemption from the great Moshe and Aharon. The time of the desired redemption has arrived! They will soon untie the Egyptian shackles, leave the land of their slaveholders, and return to the

land of their forefathers.

Moshe and Aharon, the liberators, walk down the streets of Ramses and start their way to the magnificent palace of Paraoh in order to dictate to Paraoh the writ of liberation. They enter his palace and order

him to send out their people.

But Paraoh refuses.

Moshe and Aharon receive another divine command to return to Paraoh and demand from him, in the name of Hashem, to free Am Israel and send them out of the land of Egypt. After Paraoh rejects them this time as well, they teach him a lesson and inflict him with severe plagues, one after the other, which breaks his stubbornness somewhat softens and the firmness of his heart...

Paraoh finally understood that it wasn't worth opposing the

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Parashat Bo - Why Didn't You Lean Parashat Bo?

will of Hashem. Paraoh understood that the key to success in life is submission before Hashem and acceptance of the yoke of heaven.

Admittedly, it took Paraoh an entire year to understand this. He had to receive ten plagues for a spark of understanding to penetrate his big head, but finally, it succeeded, and a little sense entered his hollow mind...

Paraoh felt on his own flesh the power of Hashem's rule and believed in the existence of Hashem, the Ruler of the entire world, in whose hands lies the fate of all the nations...¹⁷

Why Didn't You Lean Parashat Bo?

The head of the High Court turned to Yankal'e and said, "Do you now understand?! If you had learned Parashat Bo, you would've understood that the basis of all Judaism is submission and acceptance of

the yoke of heaven !"

Hashem, the Creator of time, in His divine providence, made your father's yahrzeit fall on a Tuesday, a day on which there's no Torah reading. If you had submitted to Hashem's will, you would've reacted differently. You would've raised your eyes to heaven and said, "Hashem! You commanded me to honor my father, and I want to fulfill Your will. But his yahrzeit falls on a Tuesday. Thus I can't get an *aliyah*. But I submit myself to You. I will honor him according to the way You want me to honor him..."

Inevitably you wouldn't have made such mistakes, and you wouldn't have distressed and caused such a loss to the people of your town...

Now, there only remains for us to clarify the words of the Gemara...

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Parashat Bo - Submission – The Foundation of Redemption

Submission – The Foundation of Redemption

One *Motza'ei Shabbat*, in the home of Rebbe Chanoch Henoch Bornsztain of Sochatchov, on HaChida Street in Bayit VaGan in Jerusalem, a group of chassidim sat around the table for the *Melaveh Malka* meal. Rebbe Chanoch then told them...

The *Melaveh Malka* meal is called "The meal of David Melech HaMashiach." It's known that David HaMelech's unique trait was total submission to Hashem, and indeed, this will be the unique trait of the Mashiach. This is hinted at in what's written about him, "Humble, riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

Undoubtedly, the generation of the Mashiach also has the unique trait of submission, as it says, "I will leave with you a poor, needy people, and they shall find refuge in the name of Hashem" (Tzefaniah 3:12), and the Targum Yonatan writes, "A humble people who accept humiliation."

But the trait of submission isn't as it seems. The main aspect

of submission is to submit to Hashem and to remember that a person isn't their own property, but the servant of Hashem, and they must complete their *avodah* regardless of whether they receive a reward for it or not.

The Gemara says: "Mashiach ben David will not come until Am Israel despairs of redemption" – *Chas v'shalom* to say that this must be understood literally, for the belief in the redemption is one

of the 13 principles of faith !

Rather, the meaning is that in the generation of the Mashiach, the light of the soul will be obscured, and all the pure, holy feelings that pulsated in the hearts of every Jew throughout all the generations will be concealed. Jews, in that generation, will walk throughout the world without any feelings of *kedusha*, without lofty levels or attainments, without revelations or spiritual leaders.

But it won't stop there.

In the last generation, the *kelipah* will increase significantly,

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Parashat Bo - Submission - The Foundation of Redemption

the forces of impurity will reveal all their weapons, and the ferocity of materiality will intensify...

In that generation, the fierceness of the body will be very much felt, and when Jews see this, they will despair in their hearts, saying, "We aren't worthy of redemption! There's no way that Hashem will want to redeem lowly and distant people like us !"

But despite this feeling, Am Israel will strengthen themselves and serve Hashem out of the acceptance of the yoke of heaven. They'll serve Hashem because that's His will. They'll genuinely serve Hashem even if they don't deserve redemption !

Precisely in the last generation, in the generation empty of spirituality, the acceptance of the yoke of heaven will be revealed in its perfection ! And from this, immense abundance and lofty lights will fill all the upper worlds, and the Mashiach will be revealed !

The virtue of the acceptance of the yoke of heaven that will be in the generation of the Mashiach will be like the degree of the Baal Shem Tov, who once heard it being announced in heaven that he lost his entire Olam Haba because of an act he had done. But not only was he not discouraged by this, on the contrary, he was happy to hear that from now on, he would serve Hashem to the fullest extent without any hope for reward.

It's also told about the Maggid of Mezeritch, who said of himself that even if he had committed one of the most severe sins, he wouldn't fall from serving Hashem, for if he receives gehinom, chas v'shalom, that means that he'll stop serving doesn't Hashem?! He serve Hashem for the reward, for if he doesn't receive a reward, he'll stop serving Him. Rather, he serves Hashem as a faithful servant without any expectation of reward...¹⁸

This is the special virtue of our generation, the last generation.

Parashat Bo - Submission – The Foundation of Redemption

that we serve Hashem with Mashiach soon in our days, innocence and simplicity, we

In the merit of our *avodah*, will merit the revelation of the Amen!



Shabbat Shalom !

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Parashat Bo - The Pathway...

The Fathway...

1. When Hashem's decided to create mankind, He first decided to create the holy, pure souls of Am Israel, whose only inclination is to yearn for closeness to Hashem. He then created a coarse body from the earth, whose only inclination is to satiate itself with materiality, obscene lusts, and bad character traits. Then, Hashem merged the soul with the body, commanding them to live together in this world.

2. Obviously, each one tugs to their own side. The soul craves to shed all the materiality of this world, to run and cling to Hashem. Whereas the body craves to indulge in evil lusts, money, food, women, honor, etc...

3. Every Jew feels very well within themselves the intensity of this ceaseless struggle. A Jew stands in the middle, raises their eyes to heaven, and contemplates... If I sin, I'm going against Hashem, my Creator, who does only good for me. But, if I don't sin, my evil inclination will continue

to pain me and cause me trouble.

4. In truth, Hashem doesn't give anyone a test that they can't withstand, and if He does give someone a test, they must know that they're absolutely capable of withstanding it. When a Jew listens to the voice of their soul and overcomes the desires of their body, in heaven, it's considered as if they had

sacrificed themselves before Hashem ! And, for this "secret of the sacrifice," all the worlds were created...

5. The Torah commands us to pour salt on top of every offering, "You shall salt all your meal-offerings with salt. You shall not omit from your meal-offering the salt of your covenant with Elokecha. You shall offer salt on every one of your offerings" (Vayikra 2:13). The question is, what does pouring salt have to do with the *avodah* of the soul ? In order to answer this, we must know that by offering a sacrifice, a person merits becoming closer to Hashem, and that's why it's called a אַרָּבָּו (korban – sacrifice), stemming from the word

הְתְקָרְבוּת (hitkarvut – becoming closer).

6. The Torah teaches us that if you want to become closer to Hashem, you must take it upon yourself to serve Him at all times and in every situation, accepting upon yourself the yoke of heaven... This is the idea of the salt.

7. The obligation of pouring salt on top of the sacrifices alludes to the trait of accepting the yoke of heaven in one's *avodat Hashem*. That is, a person must take it upon themselves to serve Hashem not only when it's enjoyable to them but also when their heart and mind are sealed and they have no feeling in their service of Hashem. Even then, they must strengthen themselves and

serve Hashem by completely accepting the yoke of heaven upon themselves.

8. Am Israel, before receiving the Torah, said, "We will do, and we will listen" (Shemot 24:7). The aspect of "we will listen" symbolizes the stages in a person's life when the Torah burns inside their heart, and they have a great desire to learn and get a lot of enjoyment from it. Whereas the aspect of "we will do" symbolizes the stages in a person's life when they don't derive enjoyment or satisfaction in learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvot, yet they still act, out of total acceptance of the yoke of heaven, for that's what the King of the world commanded them to do. Therefore, Am Israel preceded "we will do" to "we will listen" to express that they are ready to accept the Torah and its commandments in every situation, even if they feel no pleasure in doing so, rather only out of

acceptance of the yoke of heaven.

9. Anyone who wants to become closer to Hashem must come to a complete agreement in their heart to give up all the pleasures of this world for the honor of Hashem. After all, *avodat Hashem* requires a lot of labor and effort, sacrifice and dedication, which is the complete opposite of the natural desire of the body and animal soul, which is to delight in the pleasures of this world.

10. A Jew constantly stands in the middle between the fierceness of their

body and the purity of their soul. All their life, they see how the two struggle with each other, struggles that exhaust the soul and body. If they don't use "salt," if they don't take "salt" and sprinkle it on top, they'll face many difficulties to be on the side of the soul.

11. A Jew must reveal the emotion of "the acceptance of the yoke of heaven" within themselves. They must genuinely feel that they're serving Hashem, and it's forbidden for a servant to rebel against their master.

12. More so, Hashem isn't just a regular master who orders his servant around and doesn't care how he'll be able to fulfill them. Hashem isn't only a "master" but also, and above all, a Father, a good, merciful Father, Who desires and longs for us to have only good, only happiness, and pleasure. That's why He created us down here. By fulfilling His commandments, we'll merit the complete, true goodness and lofty, sublime delights which no other creation has even a hint of recognition...

13. And even though sometimes the body resists the above assertion, "I think that if I eat this non-kosher food, I'll enjoy it more," we must know that these are thoughts of nonsense and ignorance that stem from the blurring of the truth, for truthfully, the good that Hashem prepares for us is good to

its perfection !

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Shabbat Times



B0 6th of Shevat, 5783

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Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

To love a child doesn't only mean hugs and kisses.

To love a child is to address the needs of their soul, which are more important than the needs of their body.

You have to "feel" your children and understand them. When dealing with children, you must be sensitive, gentle, and careful with everything you do...



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