

Hashem tzilcha — Hashem is your shadow.⁹ The Baal Shem HaKadosh says: the same way you behave with Hashem, He behaves with you. When we trust Hashem and believe in people, that is called giving. And Hashem trusts us with the world, because the world was created to give, and we are givers — givers of trust and of belief.

MEKOROS

1. Bereishis 6:5 2. Bereishis 6:6 3. Chullin 139b 4. Yevamos 20a 5. Bereishis 6:11 6. Bereishis 6:8
7. Shemos Rabbah 2:3 8. Eruvin 65b 9. Tehillim 121:5

And the Nesivos Shalom adds one thing more. *B'einei Hashem* — Noach guarded his eyes, because a person's eyes need to stay holy; they are called *einei Hashem*. And one who guards his eyes guards his connection to the Ribbono shel Olam, and finds chen in His eyes.

קונטרס

The Ways of My Heart

נתיבות לבי

Adapted from the shiurim of
R' Dovid Steiman shlita

Noach Found Chen

Parshas Noach

נתיבות לבי

THE WAYS OF MY HEART · WEEKLY SERIES

נתיבות לבי — The Ways of My Heart

A WEEKLY MAAMAR · ADAPTED FROM THE SHIURIM OF R' DOVID STEIMAN
SHLIT" A

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

Nesivos Libi — The Ways of My Heart is a weekly maamar on emunah, bitachon, and avodas Hashem, adapted from the shiurim of R' Dovid Steiman shlit" a in the derech of the *Nesivos Shalom*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Noach matza chen. The letters of *chen* are the letters of *Noach*.

Everyone today is very much into looking for themselves. We want to be present. We are all trying to find ourselves in something. Noach found himself — *b'einei Hashem*, in the eyes of the Ribbono shel Olam.

How? I thought about it for a long time to the point that I could not fall asleep.

It was trust. The Ribbono shel Olam trusted him: *from you I am going to build a new generation*. And why did Hashem trust him? Because he trusted Hashem. Completely. He was told to build a teivah, and he

built — for a hundred and twenty years, in the hope that people would begin to ask what he was doing. He nullified himself to the decision of the Ribbono shel Olam.

It is easy for us to say, and it is not easy for us to do. To know, in a situation where nothing can be done, that only the Ribbono shel Olam can change it, and to say: *You know what You are doing*. That is trusting Hashem. And then Hashem trusts you — He gives you the job of being here, of being *mechazek* others, of saying a good word. Hashem gives because we give.

his cup, in his pocket, and in his anger.⁸

His cup. The pasuk says that after the mabul Noah became drunk. How can that be said about Noah? The Gra explains that after the mabul everyone was weakened. The wine was from before the mabul, and Noah drank what he had always drunk — only now he was weak, and it overcame him. But see what that proves: all those years, he never once drank past his limit. And a person who can hold his limit in that can hold it in arayos.

..... **Noah found himself**

Here is the main thing I wanted to bring out.

His anger. One who stays calm, who does not burn when somebody says something to him, will never come to shefichus damim.

And his pocket — for money is connected to avodah zarah. But Noah received a nevuah from the Ribbono shel Olam Himself; with him there was no question of avodah zarah.

Small things. And it is the small things that keep us from the great aveiros and create a force that guards us and even others. It affects the entire world.

Noach Found Chen

In a world Hashem was ready to wipe away, one man found favor in His eyes — and it began with the small things

The pasuk says: *Vayar Hashem ki rabah ra'as ha'adam ba'aretz* — Hashem saw how great was the evil of man on the earth, and that every thought of his heart was only bad, all day long.¹ And then: *Vayinachem Hashem ki asah es ha'adam ba'aretz, vayis'atzev el libo*. Hashem reconsidered having made man, and He was pained in His heart.²

The Nesivos Shalom asks: how can we understand such a pasuk? We know what it is to reconsider, and we know what it is to be pained. But Hashem looked at His world when He made it and said *ki tov*. He knows what was, what is now and what will be! How can it be that now He reconsiders?

..... **The world is still ki tov**

The simple explanation, says the Nesivos Shalom, is that Adam HaRishon brought a curse onto the earth. It was good, and he was the one who made it into what it is now — so the world could not go on existing as it was.

But there is something here for us. Often we look at how much *ra*, how much bad, there is in the world and we think we have no strength against the yetzer hara. The Nesivos Shalom says

that is not true. The Ribbono shel Olam created the world entirely *ki tov*, and there is so much good in it that the damage, the *ra*, that Adam did is simply not enough to overpower a person.

And every time we eat and drink and make a brachah, we are removing that damage from this world. We are given the chance to help fix it. And this is how Hashem wants it.

..... **Why is it our debt?**

Now comes a difficult question. Why are all of us responsible for what Adam HaRishon did? If

someone else makes a mistake, why is it mine to fix?

We know that Adam included everything within himself —

One time he came, and sitting beside Reb Shmelke was a man he knew: Moshe the bookbinder, who had passed away. People used to bring him their sefarim, and he trimmed the edges of the pages to make them even. That was the whole job.

Moshe, he said, how did you get here?

Do not call him Moshe, said Reb Shmelke. Call him Reb Moshe.

..... **Three small things**

So Noach was surely tested in small things — and there is something here for us to learn. Which small things?

And the bookbinder explained. When I trimmed the pages, little strips of paper fell onto the table — blank, not even part of the page. I never threw them out. They were part of a sefer. There is kedushah in them.

The Midrash says: *Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu nosein gedulah l'adam ad shebodkehu b'davar katan* — the Ribbono shel Olam does not give greatness to a person until He has tested him in a small thing.⁷

chamas is stealing.⁵

But stealing is one lav. For one lav, the Ribbono shel Olam wipes away the whole world?

The Maharil Diskin explains. Hashem created the world for one reason: to give. Pure chesed. He needed nothing; He made it all in order to give to others — and everything He created was meant to carry on with that same purpose. When people began taking from one another, they were doing the exact oppo-

site of what the world was made for.

And there is another pshat. The Nesivos Shalom writes that the world was full of gilui arayos, shefichus damim and avodah zarah.

In the middle of all that, the pasuk says: *V'Noach matza chen b'einei Hashem.*⁶ How? With so much anger, when the whole world was about to be wiped away — how does one man find chen?

..... The bookbinder's scraps

There is a story of a great tzaddik who was able, while still alive, to go up to Shamayim and learn from the tzaddikim there.

One of those tzaddikim he went to was Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg.

every neshamah that was ever going to come into this world was part of him. And I want to suggest something, though I may be wrong.

The Gemara asks: *Haman min haTorah minayin* — where is Haman hinted at in the Torah? And it answers: *hamin ha'etz* — "from the tree," in the pasuk about the fruit that Adam ate.³

What is the connection? Haman had everything. Everyone accepted him. Only Mordechai would not acknowledge him — and Haman could not swallow it. A person can have everything in the world, and just "One Thing" he cannot

have: that is the idea of what Haman is all about.

Adam HaRishon in Gan Eden had everything. Everything was permitted to him, except one tree. And there was nothing wrong with that tree in itself. The only thing wrong was that the Ribbono shel Olam did not want him to eat from it.

There is an inyan brought down in many seforim, that a person should be *mekadesh b'mutar* — make himself holy even in what is permitted to him. Even when it is kosher, you do not have to have it.⁴

So we can say: That force was inside Adam HaRishon — the

force that pushes a person to take the one thing he is not meant to have. And we, too, were part of this force. I don't

..... **The cake and the pillow**

A well-known yeshivah once made a great dinner for all its former talmidim, in a fine hotel, with the best of everything. They served a beautiful cake with a picture of the yeshivah on it, and everyone was admiring it.

One man pushed the cake away. Why are you not eating? his friend asked him.

I want to hold myself back, he said. There is nothing wrong

think it needs to be proven; look where we are holding today. That is why it is ours to correct.

with eating the cake, especially if it's good.

Around that same time, a father overheard his daughter on the telephone saying: *finally I am going to be able to sleep on a pillow*. He did not understand.

We have plenty of pillows in our house. When she put the phone down, he asked her.

My friend's mother is sick, she said, and my friend has been sleeping beside her in the hospital, without a pillow. I wanted

to feel her pain, and by doing something I don't deserve, sleeping without a pillow, to help her get out of this *matzav* with her mother.

And in the end her friend's mother felt better, and she was sent home.

Do you know whose daughter she was? She was the daughter of the man who pushed away the cake. Because the whole house runs on that force her father created. A person who is *mekadesh* himself in what is

permitted brings a *shmirah* into himself, and not only for himself — and the caring, the feeling for somebody else, grows only in a place like that.

This is our work today, in a generation of beautiful advertisements, for ice creams and for every kind of desire — you want to eat the picture itself. We can say to ourselves: *I do not have to have this*. Because this is the thing that will disconnect me from the Ribbono shel Olam — the same way it happened to Adam HaRishon.

..... **What filled the world**

Now we come to the mabul. *Vatimalei ha'aretz chamas* —

the earth was filled with chamas, and the simple meaning of