



**RABBI JUDAH**

**MISCHEL**

Executive Director, Camp HASC  
Author of *Baderech: Along the Path of Teshuva* (Mosaica 2021)

# With Heart!

Reb Mendel Futerfas was a legendary *mashpiah*, known for his incredible self-sacrifice and resilience in the face of Soviet persecution. With incredible resolve and inner strength, Reb Mendel maintained his faith and sense of self throughout 14 years of brutal incarceration and exile in Siberia. One of the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s most loyal and dedicated soldiers, Reb Mendel earned the compliment “a *real* chasid”.

At a farbrengen, Reb Mendel spoke of an *alter* Lubavitcher chasid named Reb Yeshayah Shapiro, who had a major impact on his own personal development. Reb Yeshayah was known as an *oveid*, a “servant of Hashem”, a serious person whose service of God was exceptionally intense. His weekday Shemoneh Esrei could last more than two hours. Reb Mendel once asked Reb Yeshayah how he was able to *halt kup* and stay focused for such an extended amount of time. Reb Yeshayah answered that many years earlier, as a young man, he struggled with maintaining his *kavanah* during davening, and went to consult with the Rebbe Maharash, zy’a.

When Yeshayah told the Rebbe that he did not know how to keep his mind on the davening, the Rebbe grabbed the young man by the lapels of his jacket, pulled them to the side, pointed at his heart, and said “Oyyy! Shayalah! *Rachmana liba ba’ee!* Hashem,

the Compassionate One, desires the heart!” The Rebbe Maharash began to cry, “Oy! A *Yiddishe hertz*, a Jewish heart! The heart... the heart!” Reb Yeshayah told Reb Mendel, “For more than fifty years, ever since the Rebbe tore open my coat — and my heart — I haven’t stopped davening.”

וַיַּעֲקֹב אִישׁ תָּם יִשׁוּב אֶהְיֶה

“Jacob was an innocent man, dwelling in tents.” (25:27)

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explains the inner significance of Yaakov’s efforts to acquire the *bechora*, ‘blessing of the first-born’. “Firstborn” means seeing things as though for the first time. No matter how many times Yaakov experienced something, it was fresh and alive; he experienced it with newness, wonder and *temimus*. In cultivating *temimus*, Yaakov Avinu maintained a youthful state of innocence, purity and wonder. When our *Yiddishkeit* becomes stale, withered or fossilized, it is because Torah and mitzvos have become distanced from their Source. It is a sign that we have become distanced from *temimus*.

Whenever we experience the simple purity of unrestrained laughter, the natural amazement of a moment of wonder, the



Mazal Tov to

**Dr. Harvey & Rivka Woolf and family**  
on the birth of their **granddaughter, Nili**

gallop of untethered joy, free of self-consciousness, we can attain a state of obliviousness to the cynicism, posturing and competitiveness of the adult world. We are channeling and connecting with our ‘inner child’. No matter how many times we fall away, we can again become the *לֵד שְׂעִטְעִים* (Yirmiyahu, 31:20), the “delightful child” of the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, for no matter how old and sophisticated a person may be, “the soul of a child still nestles within him.” The power to return and reveal this inner freedom is the power of *temimus*.

*Temimus* is fully expressed as *tefillah b’kavanah*, says the Maharal of Prague. As such, it is the quality by which prayer is ‘heard’. In many sidurim there are special praises of the King to be recited before the kiddush of *Leil Shabbos*. Included in its list of Divine epithets are *Melech Shomea Tefillah* and *Melech Tamim Darko*, “King who hears prayer, King whose way is *tamim*.” Reb Baruch of Medzibozh comments: these two epithets are juxtaposed because it shows a sequence of events. Hashem desires our *tefillas*, and therefore, when a person davens, Hashem ‘hears’, causing Him delight. This, in turn, ‘urges’ Hashem to act in a ‘*tamim way*’ with the *davener*. Why is the plural, *tamim*, used here instead of the singular, *tam*? It is because Hashem responds twice to the *davener* with simple love: once after a person sins and again in case the person might sin in the future.

*Temimus* cultivates heartfulness, and awakens our natural, simple expression of *tefillah* as *avodah shebalev*, the Service of the Heart (*Taanis*, 2a). On our *pasuk*’s description of Yaakov as an *Ish Tam*, Rashi writes: *כלבו, כן בפיו*, “Like his heart, so was his mouth.”

Once a Jew complained to Reb Simcha

Bunim of Peshischa that he was suffering from a headache, and was unable to pray. Wishing him good health, the Rebbe asked, “But what does the head have to do with prayer?!” *U-lavdo b’chol l’vavechem*, “And serve Him with all your *heart*” (*Devarim*, 11:13).

Every Yid has a ‘faithful heart’, waiting to beat to the rhythm of Ratzon Hashem.

David haMelech’s plea, *לב טהור ברא לי אלקים*, “A pure heart create for me, O God” (*Tehillim*, 51:12), can also be read as a statement: ‘You O God, have created me with a *lev tahor*.’

A chasid was speaking of the great sacrifice and spiritual levels reached by our Avos and Imahos in the presence of Reb Nosson Breslover. Wistfully, he bemoaned his own state, “Ayyy. If only I had a heart like our Zeidy Avraham... strength like Zeidy Yitzchak, and merited to live like Yaakov Avinu....” Reb Nosson admonished him: *Du hust oich dus heartz*, “You have the same heart! The same blood runs through your veins! You can also live with their *midos* and Emunah.. You just have to utilize it and make it pump by choosing to live heartfully!”

May we believe in the power of our own *Yiddishe heartz* with the innocence and newness of a child; may we never stop davening and being filled with wonder, openness and *temimus*. ■

Religious  
Caregiver

Car owner

For details  
050-323-1107  
Yossi