

האקנת' כי אדבר

TEFILLAH PROGRAM



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DEAR STUDENT,

The exciting **Program** האמנותי כי אדבר - השגחה פרטית will help you develop the “eyes to see” Hashem’s workings in everything that transpires in your daily life. The goal is to give you a strong, clear and personally meaningful sense of Hashem’s real השגחה. Over time, you will be able to connect to the the daily hidden miracles with which Hashem showers us in every moment of our lives. For example, your ability to see, hear, stand, speak, walk, etc. are just a few of the enormous amount of hidden miracles that Hashem performs every moment of each and every day.

As you build the recognition that Hashem runs even every small detail of your life, you will discover how words of *tefillah* can connect you to His ongoing kindness, compassion and powerful blessings. You will learn how to connect the three dots: Your knowledge of *emunah*, your feeling of Hashem’s Presence, and the powerful words of *tefillah*--a real conversation with the One who created the world, runs the world and guides your life with true love for you.

FORMAT OF THE PROGRAM

13 Weekly Lessons with a Lifetime Impact

Each weekly lesson, which can take as little as 15 minutes to complete, will include:

- **Words of *Tefillah* (p. 1)** – The actual words of a section of the *Shacharis tefillah*.
- **My Connection (p. 1)** – The connection between the words of the *tefillah* and the lesson of Hashem's involvement, השגחה פרטית, in some aspect of our lives.
- **My Eyes to See (True Story) (p. 1)** – True stories and parables that illustrate the lesson as it plays out in real life.
- **I Can See It Too [Write Your Story] (p. 2)** – You are asked to write about a personal experience that most reminds you of the message in the lesson you just read.
- **Hint (p. 2)** – Ideas to guide you in writing your own true story.
- **My Mindful *Tefillah* Moment (p. 2)** – The message of Hashem’s השגחה פרטית that you have internalized from the lesson is then connected through using the concept of “mindfulness” to the key words in *tefillah* cited in the lesson. This will bring together *tefillah* and a mindful awareness with a full body-mind experience, of the השגחה פרטית in every day events. You will, BE”H, begin to mindfully *daven* with more *kavannah*, experiencing a personal, emotional connection to the words and their related השגחה פרטית message. By doing this, you will have strengthened and grounded in all of your being the meaning of the words, enabling you to connect to this experience every time you read these words. This will, BE”H, help you have *kavannah* in the future.

GOAL OF THE PROGRAM - השגחה פרטית - כי אדבר

We hope the **program** will improve your life in several important ways. BE"H, you will begin to:

- Have a strong, clear and personally vibrant sense of Hashem's real השגחה in your daily life. By building this sense, over time you will be able to sense the more pervasive and subtle hidden miracles with which Hashem showers you in every moment of your life.
- Internalize the fact that Hashem runs everything—the good as well as the things in life that upset you.
- Realize that there is a unique purpose in your life, because everything comes from G-d and is part of His plan for you.
- Feel the real need to ask for Hashem's help in all aspects of your life.
- Mindfully *daven* with more *kavannah*, with a focus on the meaning of the words and the connection you are making with G-d through your *tefillah*.
- Appreciate that the purpose of your life—your עבודה—is to come close to G-d, the core of it all.¹

May everything you accomplish in this program help you throughout your life to pray with more *kavannah* and to reach out and connect with Hashem with all your heart. May He answer you generously whenever you call upon Him.

1. Mesilas Yeshorim, Chapter 1.

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LESSON 1

ברוך שְׂאֵמֵר [הָאֵב הַרְחֵמֵן] : Love from Above

...the G-d, **The Almighty, Merciful Father**, Who is glorified [Whose greatness is spoken about] by the mouth of His people [the Jewish nation]...

...הָאֵ-ל הָאֵב הַרְחֵמֵן
הַמְהַלֵּל בְּפִה עַמּוֹ.



MY CONNECTION

Hashem is אֵ-ל - the all-Mighty G-d. But that all-Mighty G-d is הָאֵב הַרְחֵמֵן - the Merciful Father, who takes care of His children and loves them even when they make mistakes (sins) and fall short of their responsibilities (mitzvos). A father has mercy; he loves and supports his children while they're still far short of what they can become. That's just a drop of Hashem's mercy for us, His beloved children.

How much does Hashem love us? The Vilna Gaon wants us to know that Hashem's love for us is beyond anything we can imagine:¹ "Klal Yisrael is more beloved to Hashem than the מלאכי השרת, the heavenly angels."

1. *Chulin* 91b



MY EYES TO SEE



The Gulf War broke out in 1991 when the country of Iraq invaded its neighbor, Kuwait, and the United States sent its army to repel the invaders. The dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, responded by attacking Israel with Scud missiles.

What is a Scud missile exactly? How dangerous was this attack? A Scud missile is a "smart missile" that is computer-guided to its target. Each missile is 38 feet long – standing upright, it would be as tall as a telephone pole. It weighs 7 tons, approximately the weight of a full-grown elephant. Iraq sent thirty-nine of these missiles to rain down upon the population of Israel.

Although the Scuds landed mostly in populated areas, miraculously, no one was killed directly by

these weapons. Some commentators said they were not surprised at the ineffectiveness of the missiles. For instance, the General of the American army commented, "All they (the Scuds) do is make lots of noise like the thunder in Nevada. But they are basically harmless." However, his point was disproven by the fact that when Hussein fired one Scud at the American military base in the country of Jordan, there were 27 casualties.

Hashem showed the world the Scuds' deadly power so that when they failed to harm the Jewish people, the message would be clear: "It could happen, but it won't, because I am protecting my beloved nation as an אב הרחמן, a loving father, would protect his children."

Hashem is good to all
[even to those who are not deserving] and His mercy is on all His creations [not just on people].

טוֹב ה' לְכָל,
וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל
מַעֲשָׂיו.



MY CONNECTION

טוֹב ה' לְכָל Hashem is good to all, means that Hashem shows His goodness to everyone, even if they do not realize He is their Creator.¹ Kings and popular leaders are only good to those who support them, but Hashem is kind to everyone.²

1. Eitz Yosef
2. Metsudas Dovid



MY EYES TO SEE



Yoni, a young American who was studying in Israel, was flying home to visit his parents. When the meals were served, Yoni received his kosher meal, and the man sitting next to him received a non-kosher meal. Yoni noticed that the man's meal said "Goldstein" on it, and Mr. Goldstein noticed Yoni's curious expression. "I'm Jewish," he told Yoni, "And yes, I ordered a non-kosher meal."

"Do you mind if I ask why?" Yoni answered.

Mr. Goldstein explained. During World War II, he and his son had been together in a concentration camp. Mr. Goldstein did everything he could to protect his son, but the boy was taken from him and never seen again. "That day, I told Hashem that He lost me." Yoni was filled with pity for the bitter man.

Two years later, Yoni was davening on Yom Kippur in a shul in Yerushalayim. After Musaf, he went out for some fresh air and there he noticed a man sitting on a bench smoking. Suddenly, he recognized the man's face; it was Mr. Goldstein from the plane. He crossed the street to greet him.

Mr. Goldstein was pleasantly surprised that Yoni remembered him. Yoni decided to try once more to break through to his Jewish heart. "In a few minutes, we're going back to pray, and we will be calling the names of people who have passed away. Why don't you join us and call the name of your son?"

For a few moments, Mr. Goldstein sat and thought. Was it just a coincidence that this same young man came into his life again and tried to reconnect him with Hashem? Just then, something inside of him compelled him to say, "I'm following you," Mr. Goldstein said. "But stay with me, because I haven't set foot in a shul in 60 years."

From the moment Mr. Goldstein walked into the shul, tears streamed down his face. He and Yoni went up to the bimah and gave the names of his son and his wife. When the names were read, a man with a shocked look on his face rose and approached Mr. Goldstein. "Could you please say those names again?" the man asked. Mr. Goldstein repeated the two names. The man threw his arms around Mr. Goldstein, crying, "Tatty! Tatty! They told me you were dead!"

Mr. Goldstein fainted. It took ten minutes for him to awaken, and when he opened his eyes, he told his son, "Help me get up to thank the Ribono Shel Olam for bringing me this young man (he pointed to Yoni), who brought me to you!"

Mr. Goldstein's non-kosher food wasn't a rebellion against Hashem. It was the cry from the soul of a lost child who wanted nothing more than to be found by his Father. Despite Mr. Goldstein's sins, Hashem was good to him. Mr. Goldstein was reunited with his son, and Hashem also was reunited with His son.

1. Torah-box.net /jewish-ethics-and-learning/jewish-thinking.

LESSON 3 | שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה [וא-להי אבותינו] : We Are Special

Blessed are You [the source of all blessing in the world], Hashem [Master of all, Who always was, is, and will be], our all-powerful G-d [Who constantly controls all that goes on in the world], and the G-d of our Forefathers [each one had a uniquely special relationship with Hashem], G-d of Avraham...

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'
א-להינו
וא-להי
אבותינו,
א-להי אברהם...

MY CONNECTION

The Jewish people are like no other nation in the world. There are two reasons for this. One, Hashem loved our Forefathers and promised them that they would be fathers of a nation. Just as your grandfather's very close friend will find you, his grandchildren, to be dear and special, Hashem finds the grandchildren of His "very close friends," the Avos, to be dear and special, too.. The second reason is that Hashem chose us as His "treasured nation," the עַם סֻּגְּוּלָה.¹ We are the King's personal treasure, which He keeps under His "personal protection".²

1. *Siach Yitzchok*

2. *Rabbeinu Bachye, Shemos 19:5*



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE STORY

In 1899, Mark Twain, a non-Jewish writer, described his wonder at the Jewish people's unique power to survive thousands of years throughout history: "Great and influential powers such as Egypt and Persia rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded and passed away; the Greeks and the Romans followed, and made their impact, and they are gone; others have held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they are no longer of importance. The Jew has seen them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was.

All things are mortal (and will fade away) but

the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. Many have wondered, what is the secret of the Jew's immortality--his ability to last forever?"

But we don't have to wonder. It is G-d's promise to אברהם אבינו: "And I will make of you a great nation; I will bless you, and make your name great ..."¹ Rav Yaakov Emden, in the introduction to his siddur,² called the survival of the Jewish people, a "miracle that is greater than all 'miracles and wonders' that G-d performed in Egypt when He redeemed us from servitude and split the Reed Sea and all the other miracles."³

1. *Bereishis 12:2*.

2. *Cited in Machsehves Mussar, Vol. 2, p. 46, s.v. 'HaMashgiach'.*

3. See also *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Commentary on The Psalms*, translation by Gertrude Hirschler (Feldheim Publ. 1966), Vol. 2, p. 317, on *Psalms 118:14*.

LESSON 4 | שְׂמוֹנֵה עֲשִׂירָה [עוֹזֵר] : Hashem The Protector

...and He brings the Redeemer [Mashiach closer] to [us], the [Forefather's] children's children, for His Name's sake [to glorify His name], with love. [Hashem is] King, **Helper** [Who stops an existing immediate danger from overpowering a person], and Savior, and Shield.¹

...וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי
בְּנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ
בְּאֶהְבָּה. מְלֶךְ, עוֹזֵר,
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ, וּמִגֵּן.

📖 MY CONNECTION

When we call Hashem עוֹזֵר – our Helper – we are reminding ourselves that when we come face to face with trouble, He shows His Hand and steps in to help us overcome the danger. After all, we're the grandchildren of His beloved Avos, and He treasures us just because of that.



MY EYES TO SEE

**TRUE
STORY**

On December 10, 2019, two armed attackers opened fire in a Jewish grocery store in Jersey City. Tragically, they were able to kill four people. The shooters were recorded on a security camera as they slowly rolled up to the Jersey City Kosher Supermarket in a van before they stopped in front. “They calmly opened the door with two long rifles” and “began firing from the street into the facility,” the Jersey City Mayor said at a press conference. Two officers on foot patrol nearby heard the gunfire and they

responded immediately. “From what we can tell from the camera images, had they not responded and **had they not been there in that location, more than likely more people would have died**,” said the Mayor.

Then the Mayor added a piece of information. “If the police had not come right away, the attackers would have been free to enter the room upstairs in the same building and create a far larger tragedy.”

But Hashem is an עוֹזֵר, a Helper, Who stopped the danger from spreading.

1. According to *Michtav M'Eliyahu*, Volume 4, page 65 there three levels of Heavenly help. According to Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, there are four main levels of *Siyata D'Shmaya*, Heavenly help. G-d is מְלֶךְ, Who remains in His palace, helping us from afar; עוֹזֵר, who can be readily approached for assistance with everything we do; מוֹשִׁיעַ, G-d is always close enough to rescue us from danger, even at a moment's notice; and מִגֵּן, our shield, Who protects us from danger when there is not even a moment to spare. (Jewish Meditation, Aryeh Kaplan, Schocken Books, page 117)

LESSON 5 | שמונה עשרה [והחזירנו בתשובה] : Help Me Help Myself

Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah, and bring us near, our King, to your service, and **influence us to return** in perfect repentance before You. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who desires repentance.

הַשִּׁיבֵנו אֲבִינוּ
לְתוֹרָתְךָ, וְקִרְבֵנוּ
מִלְכֵנוּ לְעִבּוּדְךָ
וְהַחְזִירֵנוּ בְּתוֹבָה
שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה ה', הַרוֹצֵה
בְּתוֹבָה

MY CONNECTION

Most blessings in עשרה end with “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’,” and then we call Hashem “the One who grants (the specific blessing, for example רְפוּאָה, healing). But when we pray to be able to do תְּשׁוּבָה, we don’t use that phrase, because Hashem doesn’t grant us תְּשׁוּבָה. Instead, we say הַרוֹצֵה בְּתוֹבָה, Who desires repentance. We have to choose it ourselves. But once we turn just slightly in the right direction, we can ask Hashem to help us along the way.¹

1. Shir Hashirim Rabah 5:2. Also see Michtav M'Eliyahu, Volume 3, page 67.



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE STORY

One cold wintry day, the Rosh Yeshivah of Telz, Cleveland, Rabbi Mordechai Gifter, was about to embark on a trip to New York to one of his close student’s wedding. But, due to a fierce blizzard in New York, the plane headed towards Washington National Airport. When it was time for Ma’ariv, the group came across an airport cleaner mopping the floor, who directed them to a storage room where they could daven undisturbed. Instead of leaving the room, the cleaner stood silently at the door, watching them intently. After they had finished, they were astonished to hear him ask, “Why don’t you say Kaddish?” “We need ten men for Kaddish,” one of the boys explained, “and we only have nine.”

To their surprise, the cleaner responded, “I am a Jew. I will complete the minyan. Please,” he begged, “let me say the Kaddish.” Haltingly, he began reciting Kaddish, stumbling over the unfamiliar Aramaic words.

After he had finished, the worker explained, “I wasn’t brought up as a practicing Jew, and I barely know anything about Judaism. I had a terrible fight

with my father about ten years before his passing. I did not even attend his funeral.”

“Last night he appeared to me in a dream and said, ‘I know you’re angry at me -- you didn’t even come to my funeral -- but still, you are my only son. You must say Kaddish for my soul!’

“How can I say Kaddish? I barely know how to say the words! And how will I find a minyan?’ I cried out.

“I will arrange it for you,’ he reassured me, and then I woke up.

“Now here you are, exactly nine of you,” continued the worker, his voice full of wonder. “Heaven-sent -- literally -- so that I can say Kaddish for the benefit of my father’s departed soul!”¹

Here was a man far removed from Jewish life, who took one tiny step toward connecting to Hashem. And what did Hashem do? He arranged a blizzard with nine religious Jews stuck in an Airport for this man, just so he could have a minyan and more importantly, so that he could realize that Hashem is involved in the world, which helped him begin to live his life with that awareness..

1. Adapted from ‘Airport Encounter’, by Esther Stern, Torah.org.

LESSON 6 : שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂרָה [תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵרֻתֵנוּ] To Be Set Free

Sound the great shofar
[a signal that the Final
redemption is upon us]
**for our freedom [from
exile],** and raise the banner
[another signal from
Hashem] to gather our
exiles...

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל
לְחֵרֻתֵנוּ, וְשָׂא נֵס
לְקַבֵּץ גְּלִיּוֹתֵינוּ...

MY CONNECTION

Hashem promises us we will be ‘free’. But aren’t we free already? We are, but it’s nowhere near the freedom we’ll have when *Moshiach* comes, because then, He will free us from all our worries – evil people and enemies that threaten us, sickness that makes us weak, and confusion that steers us toward bad choices. Then, nothing will stop us from feeling Hashem’s constant love and loving Him completely in return.¹

1. *Sefer Me’or Aina’im, Parshas Tzav*



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE STORY

Once, during a cab ride, Rav Yechezkel Levenstein's¹ driver driver felt impelled to tell the great Mashgiach about a miracle he had witnessed first-hand. As a young man, recently discharged from the army, the cab driver and some friends had travelled to a mountainous region in Africa. One night they awoke in their tent to hear one of their friends screaming in terror. The boy was enveloped by a huge boa constrictor, a poisonous snake, which was squeezing him to death.

They had no idea how to free their friend, and they were afraid to do anything to the snake, for fear they would antagonize it and make it squeeze even harder. Facing what seemed to be inevitable death, a member of the group told his friend, “I know that when Jews are about to die, they recite יְשׁוּעָה יְשׁוּעָה. You should recite it now.”

As soon as the ex-soldier screamed, “יְשׁוּעָה יְשׁוּעָה,” the snake unwound itself and

slithered away into the darkness.

“The miracle changed my friend’s life,” the cab driver concluded. “He went directly back to Israel, and is now a completely religious Jew.”²

“And what about you?” Rav Chaskel asked the driver.

“Me? Why should I change?” the driver asked. “My friend is the one who was saved.”

Here was a person who had witnessed Hashem’s Presence in such a clear way, and yet his mind was too clouded by his irreligious view of the world to understand what Hashem was trying to tell him. Even we, who believe in Hashem, can sometimes miss the message because of all the world’s competing ideas and messages. But when Moshiach comes, we’ll be free from confusion – the blindfold will come off and we’ll live with a constant awareness of Hashem in the fullest way possible.

1. The great Mashgiach of Mir Yeshiva in Poland before W.W. II
2. The 6 Constant Mitzvos, Page 45, ArtScroll.

The offspring of Your servant David [Mashiach] **may You quickly cause to develop [like a plant],** and his horn [power and glory] may You raise through Your salvation [liberation]...

אֶת צֶמַח דָּוִד עֲבֹדְךָ
מְהֵרָה תִּצְמִיחַ,
 וְקַרְנוֹ תָרוּם
 בְּיִשׁוּעֶתְךָ...



MY CONNECTION

You plant a seed in a pot and day after day, you check it out and see nothing but dirt. Then one day, the sprout pokes through the ground. It seems like it happened instantly, but you know that it was in progress ever since you planted the seed. In this ברכה, we remind ourselves that Mashiach will come in that same way. We can be sure that Hashem is “watering and feeding” the soil so that at the right moment, the Geulah will burst into view.



MY EYES TO SEE



On August 2, 1492, King Ferdinand’s and Queen Isabella’s deadline arrived. Every Jew in Spain, where the community had grown and prospered for centuries, had to leave or convert. Those who did not obey would be burned at the stake. That final day fell on Tisha B’Av, signaling to the tens of thousands of Jews going into exile that G-d was angry with them, and yet they knew that somehow, hidden behind all the terrible troubles they were suffering, Hashem was setting the stage for the final redemption.¹

It wasn’t until two centuries later that Hashem’s plan began to come out of hiding. The Gemara teaches that God provides the cure before giving the illness, and this cure for Klal Yisrael was set in motion the very day after the exile began. On August 3, 1492, Christopher Columbus set out on his historic voyage across the Atlantic. This launched the development of a new continent, and ultimately, the creation of

the United States of America, a unique nation of religious tolerance and freedom. There, Jews would find safety from the pogroms of Europe, and the fires of the Holocaust. There, they would be able to rebuild thriving Torah communities. There, they planted the seeds for the foundation of what we hope will be the Final Redemption.

Was it just a coincidence that Columbus’s voyage and the Jewish exile from Spain happened at the same time? Clearly, it was Hashem planting of the seeds for the future well-being of His children.

About 200 years ago, Rav Chaim Volozhin said, “The day will come when the pillars of European Jewry will topple, when the yeshivos will be destroyed and uprooted. However, they will be reborn in the exile of America, the tenth and final exile of Torah, the final stop of the Jewish people before the arrival of Moshiach.”²

1. Adapted from *Triumph of Survival*, p. 38-39
 2. *Daring to Dream*, by Agudath Israel of America, page 128.

...for we hope for Your
salvation [Mashiach]
all day...

כִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ
קִוִּינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם.



MY CONNECTION

The Jewish people have been in exile for over 2,000 years. What gives us hope that Hashem will send Mashiach? The secret is having a solid belief that Hashem is 100 percent purely good. That means that although the situation may look dark at times, the only outcome He can possibly design for us is one that is good. Even if we don't see it in front of our eyes at the time, we can trust that Hashem's salvation will definitely be there.¹

1.. *Sichos Mussar, Shaarei Chaim, Maamar 13, p. 53, "Gam zu l'tovah" [5732 Maamar 9].*



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE
STORY

Rav Moshe Feinstein once wrote a postcard to his Rebbe, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, about an attempt he made to leave Russia in 1929. Rav Moshe wrote that the government announced that for one day only, it would give exit visas to anyone who would register. On a freezing winter morning, Rav Moshe rose at 5 AM to stand on line with hundreds of others. He stood all day and most of the night. Then, at 11 PM, with just two people ahead of him, the registration closed.

1. *Rav Moshe Feinstein, Artscroll, page*

Imagine standing on line for 18 hours in the freezing cold, in the hope of escaping the terrible conditions in Russia. Then, shortly before your turn arrives, the doors close! Only a ba'al emunah could have accepted that this was from Hashem, and that it was for a good reason. The rewards for remaining calm and believing in Hashem in such a situation are infinite. Rav Moshe saw this first-hand when two days later, he found out that whoever had registered on that day had been sent to Siberia.¹

LESSON 9

שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה [כִּי אֵ-ל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת וְתַחֲנוּנִים אֶתָּה] We Speak and Hashem Hears

Hear our voice [which is like the sound of a child crying] ... And accept, with mercy and favor, our prayers, because the G-d [Who is all powerful and Who shows His Presence through acts of mercy] Who always listens to prayers and pleadings [private and personal prayers], are You ...

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ... וְקַבֵּל
בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת
תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ. כִּי אֵ-ל
שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת
וְתַחֲנוּנִים אֶתָּה...



MY CONNECTION

One of the most important parts of praying is that as we're talking to Hashem He hears our requests and truly wants to help us because He really loves us! Furthermore, by praying to Hashem for everything, we realize that everything we need in life comes to us from Him.¹ Hashem is really interested in our requests and totally involved in everything in our lives.²

1. *Sifsei Chayim – Middos Va'avodos Hashem*, Vol. 1, p. 296.
2. See *Alei Shur*, Volume 2, page 588.



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE STORY

In 1991, the Soviet Union, which was the cruel Communist government of Russia, collapsed. The Russian Jews, who for 70 years had been forbidden to practice their religion, were allowed to leave the country, and many fulfilled their dream of settling in Eretz Yisrael. No one could have imagined that the mighty Soviet Union with its tanks and armies and secret police, would have fallen. No one could have predicted that the brave Jews who learned Torah at risk of their lives, who were imprisoned, tortured and exiled to labor would be free to observe the Torah and emigrate to Israel.

The historians and experts could find many factors that brought down the Soviet Union, but they would be missing the real cause. In the 1930s, when Communism's terrible impact on Jewish life was being recognized, the Chofetz Chaim and R' Chaim Ozer Grodzenski sent letters to Jewish communities all over the world telling them what was happening. Shuls and schools were being closed down; rabbis were being exiled to Siberia and Torah scrolls burned

in the streets. Millions of Jews were being torn away from Judaism. Help was desperately needed, but what kind of help could the average Jew offer? "Pray for our people! Pray! Pray! Pray!" their letters urged.

And they did pray! They begged Hashem to relieve the people's misery. For 70 years, Jews all over the world kept the Russian Jews in their minds and their tefillos. Finally, in the most miraculous and astounding way, G-d used these millions of prayers to bring down the Soviet Union—without even a shot being fired and without any blood shed! Just like that, when the right time came, it was over.¹

The Chofetz Chaim and Rav Chaim Ozer knew the power of sincere prayers. Not one word is lost in the air when we talk to Hashem. Hashem hears our requests and truly wants to help us because He really loves us. Whenever we pray with the real sense that we're speaking to Hashem and feel that connection to Him, He listens and answers.

1. *With Hearts Full of Faith* (Rabbi Mattisyahu Salomon, Art Scroll, page 250).

LESSON 10 | שְׂמֵחָה עֲשִׂירָה [עַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ] : You're Wonderful

and for Your wonders
[everyday, familiar
events], and for Your
favors in every time [of the
day],—evening, morning
and afternoon.

וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ
וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יֵעַת,
עֶרֶב וּבֹקֶר וְצַהֲרָיִם.

MY CONNECTION

Imagine there's this toy that you wanted when you were younger. It is a pair of red glasses. With them on, you can look at a picture that is printed in red and green. The red glasses make the red ink of the picture seem to disappear, so that you clearly see the hidden picture, which is printed in green. Those are the glasses we put on when we thank Hashem for, נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ, Your wonders [everyday common familiar events that we are used to seeing]. The miracles are there, but hidden within our ordinary picture of a world that runs according to nature. The more often we look at the world through those glasses, the more we feel Hashem's incredible love and care.¹

1. Adapted from "My Father My King" (ArtScroll) by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE STORY

Nowadays, there are those who say that Israel's victory in the 1967 Six Day War could have been predicted. However, the truth is that the situation looked disastrous. In April, 1967, Syria increased its shelling of Israel's northern settlements. In May, the Egyptian President demanded that the "peacekeeping troops" that United Nations had sent to the Sinai must leave. Then Egypt blocked Israel's access to the sea, which was an act of war. Soon, Egypt and Jordan had joined together and the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization boasted: "We will wipe Israel off the face of the map, and no Jew will remain alive."

The people of Israel were frightened. The people needed encouragement, but their leaders couldn't provide it. The chief of the military, Yitzchak Rabin,

1. *Tehillim* 118:23.

had become ill and gone to the hospital in the midst of the crisis. The children of Tel Aviv were taken out of school to dig bomb shelters, black out windows and fill sandbags.

But, B"H, the expected doom turned to victory. On the third day of the 1967 Six Day War, Israeli paratroopers entered the Old City of Jerusalem and took control over the Kosel. When the Israeli army miraculously defeated the Arabs three days later, General Moshe Dayan went to the Kosel and was the first person to pray there. He placed a kvital in one of the cracks of the wall. A curious news reporter took the kvital from the Kosel and reported what Dayan wrote. It was a passuk from Tehillim¹: מֵצֵאת הַיָּם הָיְתָה זֹאת הִיא נִפְלְאוֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ "This was from Hashem; it is wondrous in our eyes." By then everybody realized that Hashem runs the world!

It is our duty to praise the Master of all, to credit greatness to the One who formed creation...

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן
הַכֹּל, לְתֵת גְּדֻלָּה
לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית...



MY CONNECTION

What does it mean when we call Hashem אֲדוֹן? אברהם אבינו was the first person from the times of Creation to call Hashem by this name¹, because he was the first to realize that Hashem didn't just create the world, but controls it moment by moment. The people of that time thought that the stars controlled people's fate, but אברהם אבינו taught them that G-d controls absolutely everything.

1. Berachos 7b



MY EYES TO SEE

TRUE STORY

Rav Avigdor Miller was born in 1908 in Baltimore. There were no yeshivas in those days, so he attended public school and went to an afternoon Talmud Torah.

In 1932, at the age of 24, Rabbi Miller went to Europe to study at the famous Slabodka Yeshivah in Lithuania. There, he married and had two children. When he realized in 1938 that the Nazis were becoming a real threat, he wanted to return to the United States. However, matters were complicated

because his wife and children were not U.S. citizens. Fortunately, the American consul in Kovno at the time was a classmate from Rav Miller's public high school days in Baltimore. The consul quickly arranged for Rav Miller and his family to enter the U.S.

Meeting an old classmate, even from so many years earlier, is not a miracle. However, such a story allows us to clearly "see" Hashem's Hand in getting Rav Miller out of Europe, and strengthens our belief that G-d is involved in every aspect of our lives.

You are to know this day
and take to your heart
that Hashem is the only
G-d..."

וַיִּדְעַתְּ הַיּוֹם
וְהִשְׁבֹּתְ אֶל לְבָבְךָ
כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים...



MY CONNECTION

Even if we know in our thoughts with perfect clarity that “Hashem is the only G-d”, there’s more for us to grow. We must reach for the level of “וְהִשְׁבֹּתְ—and take to your heart.” This means that not only do we need to know it to be true, we need to *feel* it to be true.



MY EYES TO SEE

**TRUE
STORY**

Esther Malka, an eighth grader, told of the time when her family was speeding along at 75 miles an hour on a clear highway when suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, they encountered heavy traffic, which forced them to slow down. As they were crawling along at 10 miles an hour, one of their van’s front tires shredded a mere 20 feet from a gas station. Once the tire was replaced and the van got back on the road, there was no more traffic for the remainder of the trip.

When she told the incredible story, Esther Malka said, “The unusual part of the story, with the shredded tire and the sudden traffic, was only half the story. Earlier in the trip, we had driven up the West Side Highway through Manhattan. However, because there was a big traffic accident in that part of the city, we had to take the side streets, which delayed us for about twenty minutes. Because of the delay, we wound up in that unusual traffic jam on the highway exactly at the point in the road

that was right near the gas station.”

“First, do you realize what would have happened if the tire would have shredded going 75 miles per hour? And if that would have happened far away from a gas station?” she marveled. “Everything from the detour through Manhattan because of the traffic accident, the sudden traffic jam on the highway to the traffic suddenly disappearing when we got back on the road, was so obviously Hashem’s hand, bringing us safely to our final destination. And this isn’t something I read about in a story. This is something I experienced myself—I ‘sensed’ Hashem’s Presence guiding us safely to our final destination.”

Although the unusual events in Esther Malka’s trip were not miracles, the fact that she herself experienced the so clearly out of the “normal flow of events”, enabled this eighth-grader to easily “feel in her heart” Hashem’s Presence.

... in heaven above and on the ground [Earth] below, there is none other [than Hashem Who controls everything, even nature does not hold any power].

... בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל
וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת,
אֵין עוֹד



MY CONNECTION

When we hold onto Hashem with total belief that only He can protect us against anything—ה' הוא Hashem, He is the G-d—There is none besides Him, Rav Chaim Volozhin² says Hashem rewards us by showing us His protection. This is like a small child standing on the stairs who is unfazed and completely trusts his father who says, "jump! You have nothing to fear! I will catch you when you jump down from the third step of the stairs." If he just relaxes and lets his father take care of him, he will be safe and sound!

1. Devarim 4:35
2. See Chullin,7b and Sefer Nefesh Ha'Chaim, 3:12.



MY EYES TO SEE



When Reb Velvel, the son of Rav Chaim of Brisk, reached draft age, he was called for an interview by the local draft board in Europe. It was not easy to be released from the obligation to serve in the army, but being drafted would have seriously threatened Rav Velvel's spiritual and physical life. On the appointed day, Rav Chaim and his son sat together and concentrated on the thought "אין עוד מלבדו"—there is no power beside Him [Hashem].¹ Rav Chaim Brisker told his son to continue concentrating on this thought throughout the visit until he received a release, and indeed he was released.² This story illustrates that when the words "אין עוד מלבדו" are said with full conviction, they serve as protection from even the greatest dangers.

Yet, this merit to protect us from any harm applies when anyone sincerely thinks "אין עוד מלבדו".

When a shiny new car driven by an Arab pulled up at the Erez checkpoint on its way to Gaza, the soldiers on duty made their routine inspection to determine that it was not a stolen vehicle. Coming from behind the car, the commander approached the Arab and demanded to know whether the vehicle was his. The Arab confessed that he had stolen the car and its documents in Ma'aleh Adumim.

"Sir, what made you suspect that the car was stolen," asked the surprised Israeli soldiers of their commander, "are you some kind of prophet?" "I'm no prophet," he replied, "but come here behind the car and look at the bumper sticker." What they saw were three Hebrew words that explained everything: "אין עוד מלבדו"—there is no power beside Him.³

1. Devarim 4:35
2. Adapted from Reb Chaim of Volozhin by Rabbi Dov Eliach, ArtScrollMesorah Publ. History Series, p. 199.
3. Mystery of the Stolen Car, Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Ohr Somayach, February 20, 2010.

The Importance of the אמנתנו כי אדבר Program

As you were growing up, you probably learned the famous song, “Hashem is here, Hashem is there, Hashem is truly everywhere.” The trouble we have with completely understanding this idea is that we can’t actually see Hashem anywhere! He is not a physical Being.¹ The reality is that Hashem’s Presence is hidden in our physical world. But why did Hashem hide His Presence? If He wants us to do mitzvos with our whole heart, why did He not make it easier for us by letting us at least feel or even “sense” somehow that “Hashem is here, Hashem is there, Hashem is truly everywhere”?

The answer is that if we lived in a world in which Hashem's Presence was plainly revealed, we would not be able to earn the great reward for doing mitzvos out of our own free choice.² If Hashem's Presence were obvious to us we would have no more choice to do mitzvos or aveiros than someone who is offered a choice of receiving 10 million dollars or jumping into a fire. Therefore, Hashem created our world where His Presence is hidden. Not coincidentally, the root meaning of the Hebrew word for world—'עולם', is 'נעלם', “hidden”,³ because the עולם is where Hashem's Presence is hidden.⁴ Yet, the truth is that everything that happens in the world only happens through the will of Hashem, though to us that fact is hidden, and it mistakenly appears as if we and others are the cause of events.

Yet, despite the fact that Hashem’s Presence is hidden from us, as Mesilas Yeshorim states,⁵ our ultimate mission and the highest goal of every Jew— the core of it all, is to find Him – everywhere, to come close to G-d. But if we have difficulty ‘sensing’ His Presence how do we come close to Him? The answer is that Hashem took good care of us as a loving Father would. He gave us His most prized gift—the Torah.⁶ To enable us to come closer to Him and to make the right choices in life, we learn Torah, perform mitzvos and we have tefillos to recite which help us grow spiritually and to be more aware of and to feel His Presence in every aspect of the world. This results in our coming closer to G-d—“connecting to His Presence”⁷ which means we gradually begin to do everything with Him in mind.⁸ When we live life this way we gain all the blessings that enables us to live life to the fullest⁹ and our life in the Next World will be full of incredibly fantastic reward.¹⁰

HOW INCREDIBLE IS OUR REWARD

Consider for a moment: The reward of a single *mitzvah* is of a quantity and quality so amazing that it cannot possibly fit into our life in this physical world. Although we know that for some mitzvos, the “fruits” of the incredibly fantastic reward are in this world,¹¹ the only place that can hold the “principle” (or main) reward is the

1. Ani Maamin

2. See Da’as Tevunos, Ose 170.

3. נעלם—*ne’elam*

4. See Alei Shur, Volume 2, page 476; Michtav M’Eliyahu, Volume 5, page 18.

5. *Mesilas Yeshorim*, Chapter 1

6. Nedarim 38a.

7. See ‘The Six Constant Mitzvos’, Rabbi Yitzchok Berkowitz, ArtScroll, page 18.

8. *Mesilas Yeshorim*, Chapter 1.

9. See Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah 9:1.

10. See Rabbeinu Yonah (Mishlei 3:6) who says that the reward for bitachon in G-d is “great beyond the heavens”.

11. This is based on a passuk (Vayikrah 26:3) and is expounded upon in the Mishnah (Yerushalmi, Peah, 1:1): “*These are the things whose value cannot be measured: These are things the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world, while the principle remains for him in the World to Come: Honoring father and mother, acts of kindness, and bringing peace between a man and his fellow. But the study of Torah is equal to them all.*” Also see Maharsha, _____ that the reward for doing ‘lifnim m’shuras hadin, beyond the mitzvah requirement is in this world.

World to Come. To experience the greatest reward without limits, we need a world without limits—which is only the spiritual World to Come.

Rav Dessler¹² teaches that even if *all* the pleasures, excitement, happiness and benefit that *ever were enjoyed by all the people ever created* from the beginning of the world until the end of time were gathered and squeezed into *one* single moment, it would still not equal the smallest bit of the “the pleasures, excitement, happiness and benefit” that the *neshamah* actually enjoys in the World to Come.¹³

Let us attempt, if possible, to try to feel what this would be like by picturing just a very few of the moments of incredible excitement and unbelievable happiness you and people you know can enjoy in this world. For example, imagine the total amount of incredible happiness your parents would feel at the wedding when they married off the last of their many children; **and** the tremendous joy of someone in your family having a child after 12 childless years of marriage; **and** the incredible feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment that your married brother, who was a huge תלמיד חכם had; **and** the amazing relief and remarkable gratitude of someone who is cured of a deadly disease; **and** the fabulous thrill of winning a \$50 million lottery. **And what about you**—add your happiness to the total. The thrill you felt when you got into the camp you wanted, **and** the happiness you felt when you got that new gift you always desired, **and** the delight you experienced when you met that great tzaddik that you always read about, and the thrill you had when you became a bar mitzvah boy and had all your friends show up at the simcha. **Add it all up**, and then **add** in the small and great joys of every person who live now, **add** the happiness of anyone who ever lived in the thousands of years in the past and **add** all the happiness of every person who ever will live in the future. The total pleasures, excitement, happiness and benefit of all these people combined **can not compete** with even the smallest particle of joy your נשמה actually enjoys in the World to Come for even one מצווה.

השגחה פרטית UNDERSTANDING

As we concluded, the ultimate goal of each individual is to “connect to G-d”—to live life with an awareness that absolutely everything in our world comes from Him. The first step in connecting to Hashem is to understand that He alone created everything that exists, and that He continues to pump the power of life and existence into this world moment by moment. The Rambam¹⁴ says that “the foundation of all foundations and the pillar of wisdom is to *know* that there is a Primary Being [Hashem] Who brought into being all existence. All the beings of the heavens, the earth, and what is between them came into existence only from the truth of His Being.”

Beyond this belief that Hashem alone created the world, *emunah* means realizing that Hashem is in control of everything that happens from grand historical events—i.e., a crippling blizzard in your city, to seemingly insignificant personal incidents—i.e., you stub your toe—ouch.¹⁵ This is the concept of השגחה פרטית—that Hashem supervises His creation moment to moment, and that **nothing** happens by chance, but only because He wills it.¹⁶

As Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein explains¹⁷, “Just as Hashem *alone* created the world so too He *alone* runs the world. And whoever does not believe this does not believe in השגחה ... *is not considered to be a believer in G-d*”.

12. Volume 1, p.4.

13. Avos 4:17: מִכָּל תַּיִי הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא, מִכָּל תַּיִי הַעוֹלָם הַזֶּה.

14. *Hilchos Yisodei HaTorah* 1:1

15. Chulin 7b.

16. *Ramban, Rabbeinu Bachya, Bereishis* 18:19; *Ramban, Moreh Nevuchim* 3:17-18

17. *Orchos Rabbeinu LeHaRosh, Piskah* 25, cited in *Ohr Yechezkel, Emunah* p. 105

We see from this, that belief in Hashem's constant involvement controlling the world is an extremely important basis for our life as a Jew. Yet, nature trains us to think that things happen according to a natural system of 'cause and effect'. However, the truth is that the real Power behind it all, G-d, stays behind the scenes and runs His world.

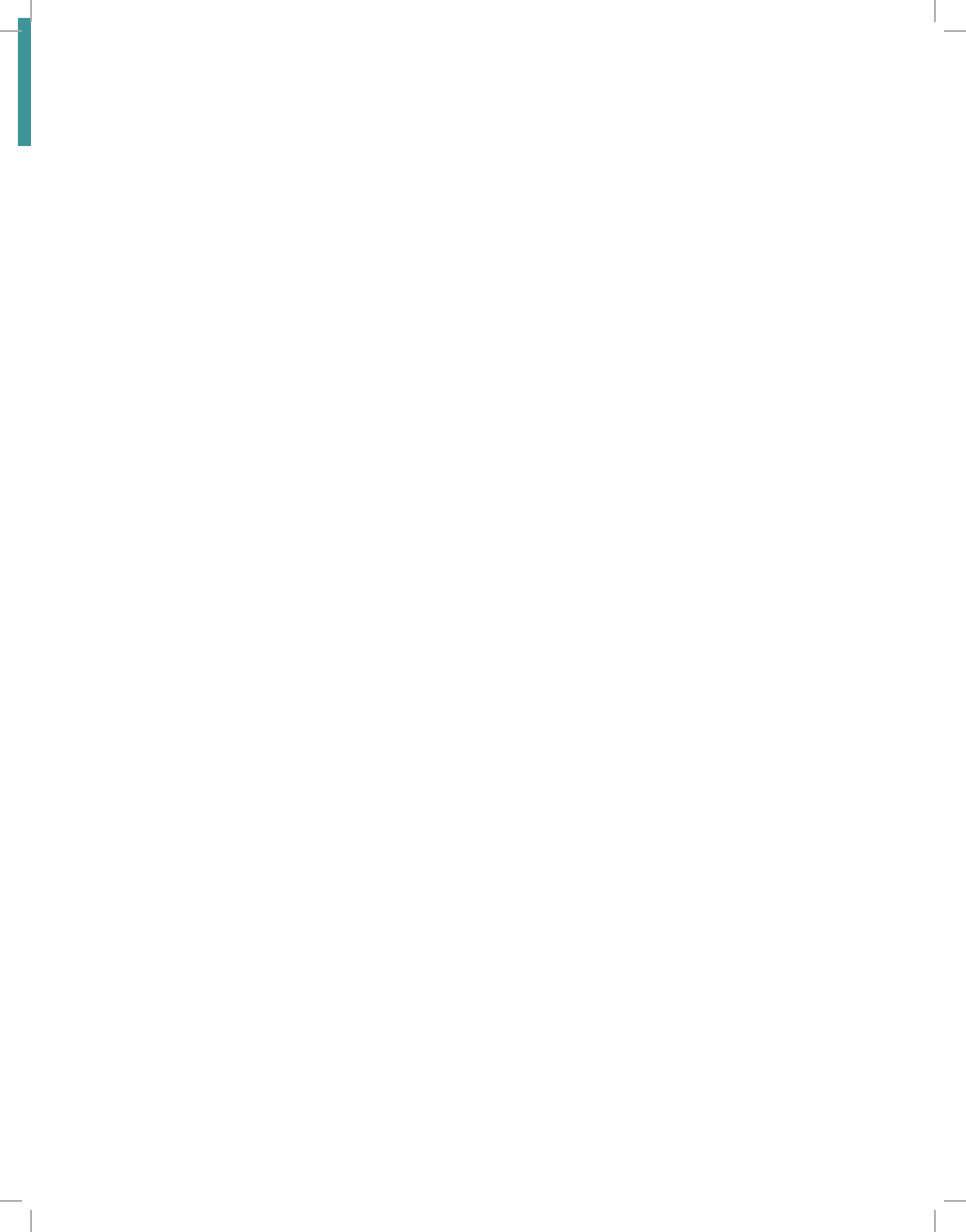
TEFILLAH: BUILDING OUR CONNECTION WITH HAKADOSH BORUCH HU

Rav Yechezkel Levenstein¹⁸ teaches that davening to Hashem is one of the most powerful tools for connecting with Hashem's Presence and to internalize His השגחה פרטית.

"This understanding that nothing in Creation can exist independent of Hashem, is expressed and strengthened every time we pray to Him. By coming to Hashem for our needs, we clear away the mistaken idea of 'cause and effect', strengthening in our hearts that there is no 'cause' but Hashem's will."

This is a life's worth of effort. But as soon as we experience a bit of success, we will find that the effort becomes more and more rewarding. The more we feel Hashem's Presence in our lives, the more it seems that He shows His hand and the happier we will become. Eventually, with continued focus and growing *emunah*, we will experience the tremendous happiness of "living with Hashem" in this world. Our *mitzvos* and *tefillos* and Torah learning become exactly what they are meant to be; strong, live connections to our loving Father.

18. *Ohr Yechezkel, Emunah* p. 64



האקנת' כי אדבר



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