

# Torah Or

## Parshas Noach

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*Likkutei Torah-Vehachem*

*"Veyadeta Hayom Vchaseivenu..."*  
(Likkutei Torah p. 4)

This Mamar expounds upon a verse in this week's Parsha which embodies the very core of Judaism, the belief in G-d. It discusses the difference between belief versus objective reality, blind faith versus deductive reasoning and human intellect, and establishes the premise that the Mitzvah to believe in G-d and the mitzvah to know G-d are two different commands. The Alter Rebbe, in the introduction to Shaar Hachoch V'hachemdah, states that a Jew must have pure faith in G-d's unity. This means that not only must the faith be without question, but it must be a faith of purity. In other words, with regard to those matters of faith that can be intellectually understood and deduced, one is in fact obligated to strive to comprehend them. One who merely accepts these matters as articles of faith alone and does not strive to grasp them in his mind, is considered to be having impure faith. Indeed, the Christian teaching emphasizes that Judaism promotes the aggressive pondering of the human mind to conclude in G-d's existence, and to not leave this matter simply to faith. In this verse, one must know what to believe and what must be known due to human comprehension. The Mamar deals with this very fundamental part of one's faith and separates the matters of belief from the matters of knowledge. The Alter Rebbe then takes this issue a step further, stating that it is not enough to simply know G-d but one must contemplate this knowledge until it is internalized into his very nature and instincts. Furthermore, the Alter Rebbe teaches that even these matters about G-d that are of belief and faith can be internalized until they actually become objective reality. This Mamar serves as the core of many other Mamarim on the dual subject of belief and knowledge, most notably the famous Mamar of the Tzemach Lecha (the Alter Rebbe's grandson) entitled "Mitzvos Hashem Elohim," printed in Derech Mitzvoscha.

**Exploration of the Mamar**

1. What is the Mitzvah to believe in G-d? Do we believe He exists, or do we know He exists?
2. Is one commanded to try to intellectually confirm G-d's existence?
3. How does one fulfill the Mitzvah of Veyadeta Hayom?
4. How can one prove G-d's infinite existence to the finite human mind?
5. What is the difference between Emunah (belief) and Yedeah (knowledge)?
6. How does one internalize his faith and knowledge of G-d to the point that they become a reality of his very nature?

**The Question:**  
The verse states, "Veyadeta Hayom Vchaseivenu El Levaivecha/You shall know today and return onto your hearts." This seems to be redundant as the Torah already stated, "Ata Hareisa Ladava/You have been shown to know," so why must it further state "You shall know today?" To understand this we must first examine the Mitzvah of Shema. The first Mitzvah that we were commanded after the Aseres Hadbros by Mosaic Torah is the Mitzvah of Shema. What remains to be understood is why the verse mentions this Mitzvah at the conclusion of verses discussing the Jewish people entering Eretz Yisrael? The Mitzvah of Shema is an obligation which is subject to the person (body) and not just the land of Israel (location). To understand all this, we must first introduce the difference between Daas (knowledge of G-d) and Emunah (Belief in G-d).

**Two commandments?**  
Emunah in G-d and Daas of G-d are listed as two separate commands in the Torah. The verse states, "Da Is Elokei Avicha/Know the G-d of your father." This means that one is commanded to know and actually comprehend G-d. This is one Mitzvah. Another verse states, "Vayomimim

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“Vayomer Hashem Hen Am Echad..... ”  
[Torah Or p. 10b]

This Mamar discusses the famous episode involving the Tower of Babel, also known as the Dor Haflaga. As the Torah relates, a few generations after the flood the newly inhabited world gathered together and decided to build a tower. The verse states that the purpose of the tower was to prevent dispersion of the people, as they desired to remain united. The building of this tower did not find favor in Hashem's eyes and He decided to cause a confusion of language amongst the tower builders, which consequently halted the tower's construction and ended the scheme of the people to remain united. The verse states that Hashem was worried that if the people would succeed in building this tower, they would usurp power from Him and take control of the world. The Gemara states [Sanhedrin 107a] that the sin of the Dor Haflaga was so severe, that it caused them to forfeit their portion in the world to come. They are viewed as even worse than the generation of the flood. This entire affair is filled with wonderments and puzzling questions. What was wrong with the Dor Haflaga's desire to be united? Why was Hashem so worried about losing control that He had to respond the way he did? Is anything out of His power? Can anything be done against His will? Furthermore, how can one possibly say that such a sin was worse than the generation of the flood which transgressed the most severe of sins? The Mefarshim explain that the purpose of the tower was to rebel against Hashem and try to fight Him. This is a most puzzling explanation. How could building a tower in any way fight G-d? Were they that primitive to believe there is a physical G-d standing up high against whom they could send up soldiers to do battle? The clarification of these wonderments leads to a pointed treatise on the subject of unity and the importance of being together, and showing open acceptance and love for each other. The Gemara states [Sanhedrin 109a] that the tower of Babel is still in existence. A third of it was burnt, a third was swallowed in the ground and a third remains standing until this very day. The lesson of the tower of Babel is pertinent to all people and to all times. It teaches us the greatness of having true acceptance and open heartedness for each other, and the magnitude of uniting as one people and as one nation for the purpose of serving G-d.

**Explorations of the Mamar**

1. What grave sin was committed by building the tower of Babel?
2. Why did Hashem fear that building the tower would take control of the world? Is there anything that He can't control?
3. What is so special about unity amongst people and how does it affect the world?
4. What is the significance of the Divine attribute of Tiferes?

**The Question:**

The verse states, “And Hashem said: They are one nation and one language...they will now be able to do whatever they desire... let us descend and confuse their language.” This statement is most puzzling. How can people have the power to do something against Hashem's will? Who can decide what will occur in the world if Hashem did not decree it? Furthermore, what was the purpose in making a tower that would reach the heavens and how would this tower empower the people to do “whatever they desire”?

**Using the names of G-d for man's benefit:**

In Likkutei Torah of Rav Chaim Vital, it states regarding the generation of the tower of Babel that they desired to draw down blessings of prosperity and tranquility from Hashem through using His Divine names, even though they were not spiritually deserving of the blessing. [The Dor Haflaga were people who were extremely advanced in the knowledge of G-d and the works of Kabala, and they desired to use this knowledge to guarantee their continued prosperity and enjoyment of life without having to actually work and serve Hashem. Serving Hashem is the

prerequisite that Hashem established in the world for one to benefit from His blessing of peace and tranquility, and the Dor Haflaga had knowledge in how to bypass the fulfillment of this condition and still receive the material blessings they desired. The following however remains to be understood: How can one use Kabala and G-d's names to do such an act? How could Hashem have created such an option if he does not desire it to be used? How can they use Hashem's names against Hashem's will?]

### **The names of Hashem:**

It is written in the writings of the Arizal and in Pardeis of the Ramak, regarding the seven names of Hashem that cannot be erased, that the name Keil is in Chesed, the name Elokim in Gevurah and the name of Havayah is in Tiferes. This refers to the vessels of the Sefiros, as every Sefirah contains an Or [light-G-dliness], and a vessel [Keli] which holds the Or. The Keli/vessel of every Sefirah is different and corresponds to a different name of Hashem. The vessel of Chesed is rooted in the name Keil, the vessel of Gevurah in the name Elokim and the vessel of Tiferes in the name Havayah. This difference however only applies to the vessel of the Sefirah, as the Or [G-dliness] found in each Sefirah is the same since they each derive from the same name of Havayah. Now, the greatest of all names is the name Havayah, or Yud Kei Vav Kei, and in conclusion we find that Tiferes contains the highest root of all the Sefiros as both its Or and Keli derive from the name of Havayah. This is opposed to the other Sefiros for although their Or all comes from Havaya, their Keli corresponds to a different name, as explained above. This then begs the question as to why specifically the third Sefirah of Tiferes corresponds to the name Havayah, the highest of all the names. What indeed is so significant about the Sefirah of Tiferes? To understand this we must first introduce the basic difference in the anatomy of the world of Atzilus, or Tikkun, versus the world of Tohu.

### **The purpose of the names:<sup>1</sup>**

Why does Hashem need names, and what is the meaning of having these names correspond to the Sefiros? To understand this we must first explain the purpose of the Sefiros themselves. The Sefiros serve as the command center of all the worlds and creations. There is absolutely no occurrence in any of the worlds of Beriyah, Yetzira or Assiyah that does not have a root of action found in this command center. For example, for a person to be able to drink a cup of water, something had to have happened in the command center of the Sefiros in Atzilus which gave the person this ability and allowed the water to be there at that time. For a drop of rain to fall below on earth, an influx of Divine blessing from the command center of Atzilus, mainly the Sefirah of Gevurah regarding rain, had to have been drawn below. It is similar to a person making a purchase, in which every purchase requires money from the buyer, and for the buyer to have this money he must have an income. Similarly, every action and creation in the worlds is considered an "expense" which requires an income of G-dliness from the Sefiros of Atzilus for it to occur. This then is the meaning of the Divine names of Hashem. The names don't just represent these Sefiros, they are actually the tools in causing the specific corresponding Sefirah to influx its Divine blessing to this world. For example, the name of Elokim that is recited in a blessing causes the Sefirah of Gevurah to actually influx G-dliness below and give a budget for the rain we request in this world. The same applies for each name of Hashem-- when used

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<sup>1</sup> See Likkutei Torah Behar p. 82; Torah Or Bo; and in great length in Derech Mitzvosecha "Shores Mitzvas Hatefila"

properly within a blessing, it actually draws down from that Sefirah within that blessing. From this we can understand the greatness of a blessing in general and of Shemoneh Esrei in particular, and the power that we have been entrusted with by having the ability to pray and recite the blessings. The recital of a blessing possesses the creative might to make change in the worlds and cause influx from the Sefiros. It is like a child that is given a computer which runs the entire system of a bank who, by pressing the right buttons, can transfer money to various accounts. Now, the Sefirah of Tiferes contains the greatest level of G-dliness, even though it is only the third Sefirah on the list after Chesed and Gevurah. It thus remains to be understood why specifically Tiferes merited this high level.

### **The foundation of stability in the world of Tikkun:**

It is well known that there existed a world of Sefiros prior to our current world of Tikkun. The world of Tikkun refers to the world of Atzilus which contains the Sefiros that correspond to Hashem's name and serves as the command center of the worlds. Prior to the creation of this world of Tikkun there existed a world which was called the world of Tohu. In Kabala these two worlds are also referred to as Berudim and Nekudim. The world of Tikkun or Atzilus is called Berudim, while the world of Tohu is called Nekudim. Similar to Atzilus, the world of Tohu was also made up of ten Sefiros but was of a much higher level than our world of Tikkun. Nevertheless, the world of Tohu did not exist for long. It suffered an explosion within the vessels of its Sefiros causing it to fall apart. After [and as a result of] its destruction the world of Tikkun was created. Why did the world of Tohu not contain stability within its Sefiros? What caused them to collapse and fall apart? What was changed in the world of Tikkun that insures its stability against the explosive destruction of the Sefiros that occurred in the world Tohu? The answer is that there was an essential difference in the structure of the Sefiros of the two worlds. In the world of Tohu the Sefiros contained an outstanding intensity of G-dliness within them. Due to this intensity, the Sefiros were incapable of working with each other. The intensity of the Sefirah of Chesed prevented it from being able to work with the Sefirah of Gevurah and vice versa. Thus, each Sefirah was enclosed in its own trait and could not incorporate any other aspect which could actually help moderate its Divine light. This caused a serious dysfunction within the Sefiros until eventually the vessels of these Sefiros could no longer contain the intense light. The result was a rupture in the vessels and a dispersion of the light contained within them. It is for this reason that this world is referred to as Nekudim [dots], being that each Sefirah was its own separate dot and was incapable of joining any other Sefirah or dot. In contrast, in the world of Tikkun the Sefiros were initially created with a much lesser intensity of Divine light, hence allowing them to work in unison and incorporate each other's aspects. This allowed for the light to remain within the vessels and guaranteed their stability. It is for this reason that this world is called Berudim, as Berudim refers to a group of dots, just like the world of Atzilus in which each Sefirah incorporates elements of the other Sefiros. In conclusion, the basic difference between the two worlds is the ability of the Sefiros to unite. In Tohu, where the Sefiros were unable to unite, the Sefiros did not have stability and eventually shattered. In Tikkun, where the Sefiros were able to unite, the Sefiros enjoy long lasting stability and function. Based on this we can now explain the advantage of the Sefirah of Tiferes over the other Sefiros in Tikkun, which is why Tiferes receives the highest level of Hashem's Divine names.

### **Q&A**

#### **Why did Hashem create the world of Tohu if He knew it could not exist?**

This matter was all part of the Divine plan, and was done intentionally. The destruction of the Sefiros of Tohu gave room for the creation of evil, enabling man to have a choice between good and evil and right from wrong. Without the explosion of the world of Tohu only good would exist in this world and there would be no challenge in man's service of G-d. This matter is extensively dealt with in various Chassidic Mamarim and deserves a full discussion in its own right.

#### **A Parable:**

We all suffer from some level of ego and self-absorbance. The intensity of each person's ego varies based on his personality. One with a mellow ego and calm feeling of self is able to hear another's opinion, let go of his wants for the sake of others, and live in harmony with friends, family and community. In the long run, this grants a feeling of tranquility and happiness within the person himself. One with an intense ego and feeling of self is incapable of hearing another's opinion, or of forgiving his personal desires for the sake of others, and has difficulty living harmoniously with friends and family. Eventually, this intensity takes a toll on the person himself as he is incapable of being happy with his lot, causing him to suffer from anxiety and other symptoms that are a result of self-absorbance. In the extreme case, it can lead to "a rupturing of the vessels" in which the person becomes delirious due to his feelings of grandeur which can lead to a psychiatric condition.<sup>2</sup> The Sefiros of Tohu were so intense that they could not handle other Sefiros which eventually led to the rupturing of their own vessels. However in Tikkun the Sefiros are calm and mellow, allowing them to work in unity with each other and grant each other a stable environment of existence.

#### **The Sefirah of Tiferes:**

Based on the above one can now understand the reason for the advantageous corresponding name of the Sefirah of Tiferes over the other Sefiros. The Sefirah of Tiferes is the intermediary through which the incorporation and unity of the Sefiros is deemed possible. The Sefirah of Chesed is, on its own, an extreme form of Chesed that does not incorporate a true act of Gevurah. The Sefirah of Gevurah is an extreme form of Gevurah that does not incorporate a true act of Chesed. Tiferes however, is the Sefirah that joins and combines the two aspects and mediates a proper and balanced approach towards the influx to the worlds. Thus, it is specifically the Sefirah of Tiferes that holds the unity which gives the world of Tikkun its stability. It is for this reason then that Tiferes is home to the highest level of Hashem's names, the name of Havyah. For in order to facilitate the harmony of the two opposing Sefiros of Chesed and Gevurah, a very sublime and high revelation of G-dliness is required to dwell upon Tiferes that can nullify the opposing aspects of the two Sefiros of Chesed and Gevurah, which it is intending to unite and combine.

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<sup>2</sup> The Baal Shem Tov stated that the main reason for the suffering of various psychiatric disorders [known today as schizophrenia, manic episodes, or Jerusalem syndrome], is result of an uncontrolled feeling of self and ego, which leads to an unrealistic feeling of grandeur and eventual disillusion of reality. [Brought in "Heichal Baal Shem Tov" in name of Baal Shem Tov]



**A Parable:**

The difference between the three Sefiros of Chesed, Gevurah and Tiferes is explained in Chassidus in the following way: The Sefirah of Chesed is similar to a philanthropist who is not careful in arbitrating who is fit to receive from his charity and thus distributes money to all; be they poor, wealthy, hard working or lazy. He is Chesed to the extreme and does not limit his benevolence. The Sefirah of Gevurah is the exact opposite. It is like the wealthy miser that does not give charity to anyone, always finding a reason why the recipient is undeserving even if he is a truly hardworking fellow. The Sefirah of Tiferes is the proper and balanced approach. It is similar to the philanthropist that does acts of kindness and charity but arbitrates and judges as to where the funds will go, and gives criteria for who is deemed worthy of receiving from the fund. Hence, a hardworking well-budgeted man that needs the extra help will receive from him, while the lazy fellow that is simply looking to live off others, or the wealthy man looking for extra money, will be turned down. Tiferes incorporates both aspects of Chesed and Gevurah. It gives Chesed when necessary and employs Gevurah when necessary.

**The scheme of the Dor Haflaga:**

After all the above we can now understand the intent behind the Dor Haflaga's scheme to build the tower and use the names of G-d to achieve prosperity without work. Hashem made the reception of blessing from the world of Atzilus/Tikkun contingent on the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos. The Dor Haflaga knew that in order to receive blessing from the world of Tikkun, they would need to serve Hashem and nullify their desires for the sake of G-d. The foundation of all Torah and Mitzvos and the three pillars of Torah, Avodah and Gemach on which the world stands, is to have Bittul Hayeish, to nullify one's self for Hashem's sake. Through doing so one elicits the incorporative Bittul contained in Tiferes, which in turn gives stability to the Sefiros of Atzilus, and initiates an influx of blessing towards the worlds. The Dor Haflaga however had no desire for the self limitations involved in the service of G-d and hence, using their knowledge of the structure of Atzilus, decided to find a different method that would bring them its blessing. They decided therefore, to unite with each other and live together in sole harmony and peace, hence emulating the Sefirah of Tiferes. By imitating the incorporative harmony of the Sefirah of Tiferes, they too could draw down from the name of Havayah through their peaceful and unified life, and will not have to resort to serving Hashem. This is the meaning of the statement quoted earlier that "they knew how to use the names of Hashem," as they knew the secret behind the function of Tiferes and wanted to use that secret to receive their blessings. They thus built a tower which would serve as their great center of gathering and the main area for which their harmonious relationship could find expression. This however is completely against G-d's will, as although Hashem desires that people live in harmony, it must be for the purpose of serving Him and making peace with Him as well. However, the Dor Haflaga in essence wanted harmony only amongst themselves and to use that to remove G-d's power from their environment, which would in turn allow them to perform all sorts of evil. Thus, Hashem descended and ruined their scheme, destroying their tower and confusing their tongue, and ultimately causing discord amongst the people. Lack of doing so would have allowed the Divine influx of the world of Atzilus to enter into the Kelipos. On this it says "The dispersion of the evildoers is good for them and good for the world, the gathering of Tzaddikim which have Bittul to Hashem, is good for them and good

for the world” for the unity of the righteous brings the desired Divine blessing to all mankind. On this it says that peace is the vessel that holds the blessing. [It is for this reason that the Dor Hafalaga does not have a portion in the World to Come, as they intended to fight against G-d Himself and obliterate any of His influence from this world. This is unlike the generation of the flood which did not make an outright battle against G-d, they were simply a depraved people.]

### **A Parable:**

A wealthy businessman with many children is overjoyed to see his adult children working together in the business with peace and tranquility. How sad it would be for him to discover that the reason for their harmonious business relationship is simply to overthrow their father and take over the company. Upon such a discovery he would separate the children to prevent their scheme from taking place. The people of the Dor Haflaga unified for one purpose: to remove G-d’s influence from their midst and allow them to do as they please in His world.

### **Lessons of the Mamar**

- The greatness and importance of prayer and blessings, through which one draws Divine blessing to the world.
- The importance of unity amongst communities, friends and family and how it lends stability to the worlds.
- The necessity to include Hashem and His will within our quest for unity and peace, and that the purpose of the unity must lead to service of Hashem.

### *Halacha Corner*<sup>3</sup>

#### **Cutting nails on Thursday:**<sup>4</sup>

Some<sup>5</sup> are particular to not cut the nails on Thursday.<sup>6</sup> [Thus beginning from Wednesday night one should not cut his nails.]

#### **If one will not have time to cut his nails on Friday may he be lenient to do so on Thursday?**<sup>7</sup>

Yes.

#### **If Yom Tov falls on Friday may one cut his nails on Thursday?**<sup>8</sup>

Yes. It is a Mitzvah to do so.

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<sup>3</sup> Top be learned within our Daily Halacha lessons found on Shulchanaruchharav.com

<sup>4</sup> 260/2

<sup>5</sup> The Aruch Hashulchan [260/6] argues against this custom. Likewise he writes that all these cautions mentioned by nails are not required by the letter of the law, and one who is not particular in them, has not done any transgression.

<sup>6</sup> The reason: As the nails begin growing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after being cut and hence if they are cut on Thursday they will begin growing on Shabbos, thus some avoid cutting it on Thursday. [ibid] Now, although there is no prohibition involved if the nails begin growing back on Shabbos, nevertheless it is not respectful that the nails which one ridded himself of in honor of Shabbos begins growing back on Shabbos. [Machatziz Hashekel 260/1] The above applies only to nails however a haircut may be given on Thursday being that hair begins to grow back that same day. [Kuntrus Achron 260/1]

Regarding if also the toe nails are not to be cut on Thursday according to this opinion: Perhaps one can say that this custom only applies to the hand nails being that they are visible. However the toe nails which are not visible, and thus there is no Mitzvah to cut them before Shabbos, then likewise there is no issue if they are cut on Thursday. Practically the M”B 260/6 rules that one is to cut the toe nails on Thursday. However the wording of Admur seems to imply that they avoid cutting all nails on Thursday. Vetzaruch Iyun.

<sup>7</sup> Aruch Hashulchan 260/6

<sup>8</sup> Aruch Hashulchan 260/6

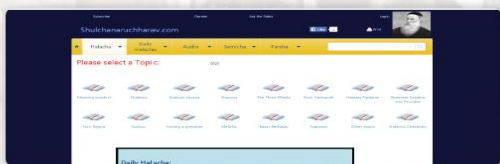
**May a Chasan and Kalah cut their nails on Thursday if their wedding is taking place that night?**

If they did not cut the nails beforehand and will be unable to cut the nails on Thursday night, they may be cut on Thursday.

**May one cut his toe nails on Thursday?**

It is unclear if those which avoid cutting nails on Thursday are only particular regarding the hand nails.<sup>9</sup>

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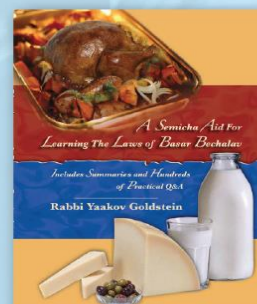
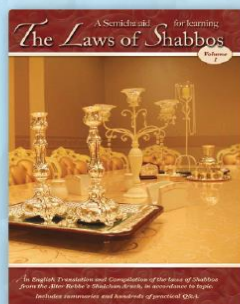
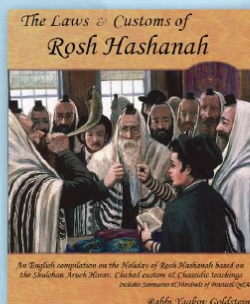
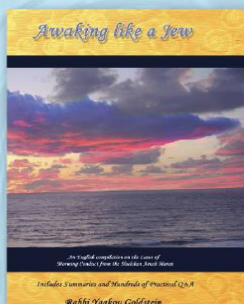


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