

A Kuntres: The virtue of Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro - נושא בעל עם חברו

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Dedications

לעילוי נשמת הרב ישראל יוסף אליהו בן ר' טוביה הלוי זצ"ל
אחי ורבי, ידיד נאמן, נעים בכל דרכיו

Rabbi Yosef Lasdun, zt"l, the toil of Torah was his joy

לעילוי נשמת הרב ראובן צבי זצ"ל, בן הרב מנחם יצחק הי"ו
מלמד תשב"ר, אהוב וחביב לתלמידיו לקרוביו ולחבריו

Rabbi Reuven Bauman, zt"l, beloved Yeshiva Rabbi

יהי זכרם ברוך

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Note:

To avoid confusion, there are two different terms followed by a specific number, included within parenthesis:

- **“Source”, e.g., “Source III-1”:** This refers to the sources, i.e., Hebrew texts and translation, which are quoted in this presentation. Sections I-XI, each have multiple “source boxes” which contain these source texts. For example, in Section II, the source boxes are numbered as: Source II-1, Source II-2, Source II-3, etc. Therefore, when a note, “Source II-3,” is found within the text of a paragraph, it is a cross-reference to the third source box in Section II. (Exception: The source boxes in the “Introduction” section are numbered as Source A-1, Source A-2).
- **“Ref.”, e.g., “Ref. 7”:** This is used to denote the cited references, which are enumerated in detail in the “References” list on pp. 117-120. For example, when a note, “Ref. 7,” is found within the text of a paragraph, the details of this citation are found on p. 117. Moreover, “Ref. 7,” is found many times, followed by different page numbers, e.g. “Ref. 7, p. 359” or, “Ref. 7, pp. 201-202”. These page numbers indicate the page number within citation # 7 (*Reb Chatzkel*, by Rabbi Yitzchak Kasnett).

Introduction: *Chesed* which flows from the source of the Jewish soul

What characteristic could be defined as a singularly Jewish trait? The Gemara in Mesechta Yevamos (Daf 79a) states that Dovid Hamelech said, *“There are three defining characteristics of this (Jewish) nation: They are merciful, exhibit shame and perform acts of kindness.”* Yet, we know that much kindness (*Chesed*) is also conducted by the other nations?

Rav Matisyahu Salomon (henceforth: “Rav Matisyahu”) explains that there are two types of *Chesed*: Ordinary *Chesed*, and a special type of *“Chesed which flows from the source of the Jewish soul”* (see Source III-12; p. 40). What is the meaning of *“Chesed which flows from the source of the Jewish soul?”* Rav Matisyahu explains: *“I am driven to help my friend because of our close familial (“שאר בשר”) kinship, whereby his distress adversely affects me as if I am suffering from the same pain. I save my friend because his pain is so unbearable for me and thus, I feel that I am saving myself.”* In other words, I perform this act of *Chesed* not merely because I see someone who lacks something or because my emotions are aroused by his pitiful plight. Rather, his unmet need is transformed into my own need and his difficult plight hurts me as if I stand in his metaphorical “shoes” enduring all the pain that he now suffers. Since I vicariously experience his suffering, therefore, when I help him, I feel as if I am rescuing myself from that distress.

Rav Eytan Feiner explains that when Dovid HaMelech said in Tehillim (91:15), *“נמו אנכי בצרה”* – *“I am with him in (his) distress”* – it denotes that Hashem, *kavayachol* (so to speak), feels our suffering with the same intensity that we experience it. Despite Hashem’s exalted state, with regard to the Jewish people’s suffering, He, *kavayachol*, puts himself on the very same plane as us, experiencing every last morsel of our suffering. Hashem is with us during each step we take through darkness (Ref. 1).

Rav Yechezkel Levenstein explains when Hashem created man in His Divine image **(b’Tzelem Elokim)*, he endowed us with the ability to access a portion of His capacity to share another’s feelings (Ref. 2). Thus, we were given the ability to transcend our human limitations and vicariously experience our fellow Jew’s pain or joy, as if we are living through the very events which affects him or her. Therefore, Rav Feiner says, it is within our capacity to authentically say to our fellow Jew, *“נמו אנכי בצרה”* – *“I am with you in your distress”* - if you are in pain, so am I. It does not matter where you are or what “type” of Jew you are. There are no barriers between your heart and mine; we are on the same level. ***(See p. 58 for explanation of the Tzelem Elokim concept)**

This type of empathy, whereby one person feels another person’s pain or joy as if experiencing it himself, is described in Pirkei Avos as the *ma’alah* (virtue) of *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, carrying (i.e., sharing) a fellow’s burden (Source I-1, p. 5). What gives us the ability to have such profound empathy? In *Sefer Tomer Devorah*, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero explains: *“All Jews are close familial relations (“שאר בשר”) with another because our souls are combined together ... Our fellow’s pain should cause us anguish as if we experienced the same pain ourselves. Likewise, our fellow’s good fortune should gladden us as if we experienced the same good fortune ourselves”* (Source III-3, p. 31).

In *Dearer Than Life - Making your life more meaningful*, Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, MD, writes: *“The Jerusalem Talmud states that a person should not seek revenge against someone who had harmed or offended him, any more than if one had injured his left hand, he would hit it with his right hand as punishment for having caused him pain ... The soul is part of G-d Himself, and G-d is absolute unity. Therefore, all souls are essentially one. We are separate and distinct*

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beings [only] by virtue of our physical bodies ... To the extent that we minimize the importance of the body relative to the soul and give the soul primacy, to that extent we are one, and can feel for another the way we feel for ourselves."

By viewing all Jews as part of a unified entity, it would be impossible to take revenge against my fellow Jew just as it is impossible to take revenge against myself. The Torah is hereby teaching us that, on the level of the soul, we are truly one and the same as our fellow Jew. This unity, in turn, gives us the capacity to experience another Jew's feelings of pain or joy on a sensorial level. Just as all bodily organs are impacted by a serious assault to any organ of the same body, we are spiritually "wired" to share each other's feelings (Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev; Source III-6, p. 34).

The Midrash (Source A-1) states that the Jews who left Egypt made a covenant that they would perform acts of kindness (*Gemillas Chesed*) with each other. Why does performing *Chesed* require creating a covenant?

Source A-1: Midrash: A covenant of *Chesed* that was formed by the Jews who emerged from Egypt.

Also, Dovid praised [the generation] who emerged from Egypt, for even the single Mitzvah in their hands was more pleasing to HKB"Y than many Mitzvos [that we observe]. What was the single Mitzvah in their hands? They gathered together as one united group (*literally*: one bundle) and made a covenant that they would perform acts of kindness with each other.

תנא דבי אליהו רבה כ"ג:ב':

אף דוד היה משבח את יוצאי מצרים כי אפילו המצוה האחת שהיתה בידם נוח לפני הקב"ה הרבה יותר מן כמה מצות שלנו. ומהו המצוה האחת שהיתה בידם? שנתקבצו כולם באגודה אחת וכרתו ברית שיעשו גמילות חסדים זה עם זה.

In the times of the Tanach, when a covenant was made between two parties, it was a common practice to split an animal into two halves and the parties would walk between them. *Sefer Halkarim* explains this symbolism: "*The essence of a covenant is to forge a bond between the two parties to reinforce the love between them so that they become transformed into one body, whereby each party will preserve the other's wellbeing just as one preserves oneself*" (Source A-2). While the animal was intact and alive, each organ sensed the pain of another organ that was injured or sickened. Similarly, both parties of a covenant are transformed into one body so that, "*when one party perceives injury or pain befalling the other, he will subject himself to great tribulations to save his fellow, just as he would do for himself.*"

Source A-2: *Sefer Halkarim*: Essence of a covenant: Transforming both parties into a single body

The manner in which covenants were established, as found in Tanach, is that they would split the animal into two halves, and the two parties would pass between the halves ... The reason for these actions is that the essence of a covenant is to forge a bond between the two parties to reinforce the love between them, so that they become transformed into one body, whereby each party will preserve the other's wellbeing just as one preserves oneself. Thus, splitting the animal into two halves and passing between them, has the following symbolism: During the animal's life, when both halves were joined, each half would feel the pain of the other, e.g., if illness or injury afflicted one part of the body, all other organs would

ספר העיקרים, מאמר רביעי, פרק מה':

ודרך כריתת הברית, לפי מה שנמצא בכתובים הוא שהיו חותכין בעל חי לשנים, והיו כורתין הברית עוברין בין בתריו ... והטעם לפועל הזה בכריתת הברית הוא, שכריתת הברית הוא קשר קיים בין שני אנשים כורתין הברית כדי לקשר ולדבוק האהבה ביניהם, עד שיהיו שניהם כאילו הם גוף אחד וישמור כל אחד מהם את חברו כשמירתו את עצמו. לפיכך היו כורתין בעל חי לשנים ועוברין בין הבתרים ההם, לאות כי כמו ששני הבתרים ההם היו גוף אחד בבעלי חיים ההוא בהיותו חי, והיה כל

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<p>feel it, and only death could disrupt this interconnectivity. Similarly, when two people establish a treaty together, they symbolically become like one body during their lives; this interconnectivity can only be disrupted by death. This will guarantee that when one party perceives injury or pain befalling the other, he will subject himself to great tribulations to save his fellow, just as he would do for himself.</p>	<p>חלק מהם מרגיש בצער חברו, עד שכאשר היה מגיע חולי או נזק בחלק האחד, היה חברו מרגיש בחולי או הנזק ההוא, ולא הפריד בין שני אלו החלקים רק המוות. כן שני האנשים כורתני הברית יהיו כגוף אחד בהיותם בחיים, ולא יפריד ביניהם רק המוות. ומזה יתחייב כי כאשר ירגיש האחד איזה נזק או צער בא על חברו בעל בריתו, שיכניס עצמו בדוחק להצילו, כמו שיכניס עצמו בסכנה בעד עצמו.</p>
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Accordingly, Rav Azarya Berzon (Ref. 3) suggests that the generation exiting Egypt created a covenant to perform *Gemillas Chesed* with each other, to ensure that the kindness they performed was not ordinary *Chesed*, but rather, *Chesed* performed with such intense unity as if they were one body, whereby each person felt the other person's needs as his own. When one Jew performs *Chesed* for another, it is done in the mode of a right hand bandaging the injured left hand of the same body. While it is true that the nations of the world perform many kind deeds, the uniquely Jewish kindness is that which emanates from the aforementioned spirit of intense unity, because of the treaty which forged us into a single entity. When I act kindly toward a fellow Jew in distress, I feel as if I am experiencing his situation and therefore, I am rescuing myself from that distress.

In the laws pertaining to giving *Tzedakah* (charity), the Rambam (Source A-3) states: *"The entire Jewish people and all those who attach themselves to them are as brothers ... And if a brother will not show mercy to a brother, who will show mercy to them? ... Behold their eyes are pointed to their brethren alone."* The entire Mitzvah of *Tzedakah* is imbued with the spirit of empathy for the suffering of those forced to beg for alms, as the Rambam continues (ibid, 10:4; see Source III-9, p. 37): *"He should give with a pleasant countenance, commiserating with him about his troubles, as stated (Iyov 30:25): 'Did I not weep for the unfortunate? Did I not grieve for the needy?'"* If giving *Tzedaka* was merely to exercise our social consciousness, *"weeping for the unfortunate and grieving for the needy,"* would hardly be necessary. Perforce, the "heart and soul" of *Tzedaka* is identifying with the suffering of the unfortunate, to the extent of feeling and weeping for their sorrow. The factor that enables us to perform such an exalted level of *Chesed*, is: *"The entire Jewish people and all those who attach themselves to them are as brothers,"* i.e., a single family whose members organically feel each other's pain.

Source A-3: Rambam: Spirit of the Mitzvah of *Tzedaka*: All Israel are brothers

<p>The entire Jewish people and all those who attach themselves to them are as brothers, as it states: <i>"You are children unto Hashem, your G-d."</i> And if a brother will not show mercy to a brother, who will show mercy to them? To whom do the poor of Israel lift up their eyes (for charitable assistance)? To the gentiles who hate them and pursue them? Behold their eyes are pointed to their brethren alone.</p>	<p>רמב"ם, פרק י' מהלכות מתנות עניים, הל' ב': כל ישראל והגלויה עליהם פאחים הם שפאמר (דברים יד א) "בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם". ואם לא ירחם האָח על האָח, מי ירחם עליו? ולמי עניי ישראל נושאין עיניהן? הַלְעֲכֹפִים שְׂשׂוֹנְאִין אוֹתָן וְרוֹדְפִים אַחֲרֵיהֶן? הֲאֵין עֵינֵיהֶן תְּלוּיֹת אֶלָּא לְאַחֵיהֶן.</p>
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In a eulogy for Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, his son, Rav Shmuel Auerbach emphasized his father's overwhelming compassion and empathy for his fellow man (Ref. 4). He related that his father would often recount an incident

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concerning the saintly Rav Baruch Frankel Teumim (the Baruch Taam) whose son made a *shidduch* (i.e., became engaged) with the daughter of a well-known wealthy man. During that time period, the town's water carrier became ill. The Baruch Taam was distraught over the man's illness. He could not eat. He prayed incessantly for him to return to good health. He was so overcome with concern for this man's welfare that he personally became visibly transformed. The parents of his future daughter-in-law came to town for a visit and were taken aback by the Rav's changed appearance. The first thing that came to their mind was that he had regrets regarding the *shidduch*. The girl's parents asked, "Perhaps the Rav is unhappy with the *shidduch* and would like to retract?" The family assured them that this was not the case. The distress was the result of his concern for the water carrier. When the girl's mother heard this, she approached the Rav and said, "I can understand that the Rav is concerned about the water carrier and prays for his recovery. But to become so affected by his plight - is this not a bit too much? It is hurting the Rav's health." When the Rav heard these words, he immediately called off the *shidduch* saying, "If the mother does not understand the meaning of feeling another Jew's pain - to take it truly to heart, then it is not a suitable family with which to make a *shidduch*." Merely saying a prayer for the ill man's recovery as the girl's mother suggested, would have been ordinary *Chesed*. However, the Baruch Taam experienced the man's suffering and prayed in a manner as if he was personally afflicted with his illness because he practiced "*Chesed which flows from the source of the Jewish soul*." The water carrier's plight was his own personal suffering as if his most beloved relative was stricken. To make a *shidduch* with a family who could not appreciate this exalted, uniquely Jewish type of *Chesed*, was unthinkable.

Rav Aharon Kahn relates a story regarding Rav Yeruchem Levovitz. In Poland, where the Mirrer Yeshiva was located, the authorities required the Yeshiva students to keep their identification papers with them. On one night, five Yeshiva students were walking back to their residences when they were accosted by two police officers who demanded they produce their identification papers. Dealing with the Polish police was a matter of *Pikuach Nefesh* (danger to life) due to their corruption and virulent antisemitism. The students responded that they had their papers at their residence, to which the officers said, "OK, we will go with you to your residence to inspect them." The entire group of five Yeshiva students and two officers went to the first residence, where three of the students had their sleeping quarters. After verifying that the first three student's papers were in order, the officers announced that they would now escort the remaining two students to their residence to inspect their papers. At this point, the first three students stayed behind while the remaining two students went with the police to produce their papers. The next day, when Rav Yeruchem was told about the incident, he was aghast and dismayed that the first group of three students did not accompany their two *chaveirim* (friends) with the rogue policemen. Rav Yeruchem could not fathom, "How could you sleep last night knowing that your fellow students were at the mercy of these officers? It would be proper to close the Yeshiva for such insensitivity and failure to worry about your *chaveirim* (friends)!" (Ref. 5).

To the great masters of Mussar, being a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, feeling the distress of a fellow Jew, was as essential to their Jewish identity as being warm-blooded is to the identity of mammals. *A Yeshiva in which this virtue was not preeminent was unfathomable regardless of the greatness of its Torah study. May it be Hashem's will that this work will properly describe the importance of the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* for the identity of *Am Yisrael* and our destiny as Hashem's emissaries to establish His sovereignty in the world, speedily in our days.

* This, in NO WAY, suggests that the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* was deficient in the Mirrer Yeshiva. Rav Yeruchem, however, sought to elevate it to even greater heights.

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (“נושא בעל עם חבירו”)?

I. What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (“נושא בעל עם חבירו”)?

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos lists forty-eight (48) behaviors and qualities that are instrumental for Torah acquisition. One of them is the *ma'alah* (virtue) of “*Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*” – carrying (i.e., sharing) his fellow’s burden (Source I-1).

Source I-1: Pirkei Avos 6:6: *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* – One of the 48 qualities instrumental for Torah acquisition

<p>Torah is even greater than priesthood or royalty; for royalty is acquired along with thirty prerogatives, and priesthood with twenty four [gifts], but the Torah is acquired by means of forty-eight (48) qualities, which are ... carrying (i.e., sharing) his fellow’s burden ...</p>	<p>מסכת (פרקי) אבות ו': ו' גדולה תורה יותר מן הכהנה ומן המלכות, שהמלכות נקנית בשלשים מעלות, והכהנה בעשרים וארבע, והתורה נקנית בארבעים ושמנה דברים. ואלו הן ... נושא בעל עם חבירו.</p>
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Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (henceforth: “Rav Yeruchem”; Source I-2) defines *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* as feeling our friend’s burden and pain as if it were our own, being together with him or her in a time of need. (Henceforth, the phrase “the *ma'alah* or *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*” will be shortened to “*Nesiah B'ol*,” denoting empathy). Rav Yeruchem vividly portrays *Nesiah B'ol*: A laceration of a friend’s limb feels as if our own flesh is being cut, our head throbs when our friend suffers a headache. Using the power of visualization (imagination), we “transplant” ourselves into someone’s situation to vicariously experience the struggles and emotions that he or she is living through.

Source I-2: Rav Yeruchem Levovitz: Definition of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*: My friend’s pain is also my pain

<p>The term, “<i>Nosei B'ol</i>”, or partnering in someone’s pain, denotes joining my friend in his distress. I am literally encumbered with his burden and pain, enduring the very same pain and burden that my friend bears.</p>	<p>דעת תורה, דברים, “משתתף בצערו של חברו”, עמ' רל"ט: “נושא בעול”, “משתתף בצערו”, רצה לומר כי ביחד עם חברו, הוא בעול ממש, הוא בצער ממש, הוא ממש סובל אותו הצער והמשא של חברו.</p>
<p>The <i>middah</i> of <i>Nosei B'ol</i>, means being a partner in all the pain and suffering of a friend, to feel distressed by all my friend’s troubles. When my friend’s flesh is cut, it feels as if I was cut ... To the extent that one immerses himself into the pain of his friend (i.e., the level of sharing in his distress), one alleviates the friend’s suffering.</p>	<p>דעת חכמה ומוסר, חלק א', מאמר “רוממות מדת נושא בעול עם חבירו וגודל חיובו”: ... נושא בעול הוא מדת השתתפות בכל צערו ויסוריו של הסובל להיות מיצר בכל צרותיו, ולחוש כאילו דקירות אלו דוקרות בבשרו הוא ... ובה במדה שאדם מכניס עצמו בצער חבירו מסיר הוא היסורים ממנו.</p>

Rav Reuven Leuchter explains that one who is *Nosei B'ol*, “enters into the world” of the other person’s feelings and thoughts (Ref. 6). It takes great work (*avodah*) to enter into the world of someone who is suffering, i.e., to authentically share his or her feelings. It is an even a higher level of *Nesiah B'ol* to enter into the world and share the joy of people who are experiencing good fortunes, i.e., feeling happy for them as if it was our own personal joyful event. Rav Matisyahu Salomon (henceforth: “Rav Matisyahu”) quotes Rav Mordechai Pogramasky: “If one does not share in another person’s pain as if it was his own pain, he lacks qualities of a human being, but if he rejoices in another’s time of happiness as if it was his own joy, he is an angel!” (Ref. 7).

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (“נושא בעל עם חבירו”)?

Rav Chaim Friedlander explains when we are *Nosei B'ol*, **we give someone a piece of our very being** by projecting ourselves into his or her situation to share (i.e., experience) their feelings. Therefore, the benefits of *Nesiah B'ol* surpass the relief rendered by providing goods and services (i.e., *Tzedaka* and *Chesed*). He adds, “*The essence of Nosei B'ol is not to reduce or remove the other person’s suffering, but rather, to be with him in his distress and to feel his pain, to share in his suffering even if we are unable to tangibly help him*” (Source I-3). The message we convey is: “We are with you; you are not alone in your struggles or in your joy.” The potency of *Nesiah B'ol*, i.e., its beneficial effect on others is quite astounding: The relief rendered to our friend’s suffering is directly proportional to the degree that we feel his or her pain! (Rav Yeruchem; Source I-2).

Source I-3: Rav Chaim Friedlander: Essence of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*: To be together with people in their distress (even if we are unable to tangibly help them)

The virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, rises above all of them (i.e., above *Tzedaka* and *Chesed*, previously discussed in the *Sifsei Chaim*). Rather than merely bestowing goods (or services) to someone, **we give him a piece of our very being**, identifying with our friend, feeling as if we are partners in his pain, as if it was our own personal anguish. Another application of *Nesiah B'ol* is feeling as if we are partners in our friend’s happiness. Feeling our friend’s pain or joy is a virtue that is independent of any practical assistance it offers him; we share his feelings without considering how it will reduce his pain ... The essence of *Nosei B'ol* is not to reduce or remove the other person’s suffering, but rather, to be with him in his distress and to feel his pain, to share in his suffering even if we are unable to tangibly help him.

שפתי חיים, חלק מידות ועבודת ה' (א), "ועד א - נושא בעול - נתינת הלב":

מעלת ה"נושא בעול עם חברו", היא מעלה עליונה על כולנה, שבה אין הנותן מסתפק בהענקת טובות לזולתו, אלא נותן לו את עצמותו ואת האני שלו הוא, מזדהה עם חברו ומרגיש את עצמו שותף לצער חברו כאילו זה היה הצער האישי שלו. וכן מרגיש את עצמו שותף לשמחתו של חברו. ולכן מיצר את צערו ושמחה בשמחתו בלי להתחשב אם ההשתתפות ברגשותיו של חברו מביאה לו תועלת מעשית שמורידה ממנו את צערו ... אין ענין הנושא בעול להקל ולהסיר את צרות הזולת, אלא הענין הוא להיות עמו בצרתו להרגיש את צער הזולת, להשתתף בסבלו גם אם אינו יכול לעזור לו בפועל.

Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz explains that the literal translation of the term, *Nosei B'ol*, teaches us the meaning of this great *ma'alah*. When someone is struggling to carry a physical bundle, it is obvious that inclining our shoulders (under his bundle) is helpful because we are taking a portion of the weight off his shoulders. When a person carries a “bundle” of suffering, even when we cannot offer him any tangible assistance, we help him by removing a portion of the pain from him. How do we remove some of his pain? By “inclining our heart” to him, i.e., by showing him that his pain profoundly affects us and we are with him in his distress, his suffering is alleviated (Source I-4).

Source I-4: Rav Chaim Shmuelewitz: *Nesiah B'ol*: Giving our heart to take a portion of someone’s pain from him

“Simpletons think that *Nesiah B'ol* is limited to [physically] helping another person. Imagine, if someone is injured and his wounds have been bandaged and now, he can take care of his own needs. Yet, he is still suffering. At this point, you cannot tangibly help him. What, now, will be our *Nesiah B'ol*?” Rav Chaim would cry out, “How can we help him now? We must take a portion of his pain,” Rav Chaim demanded. “What is the

קונטרס מה ולב, עמ' ק"ה-ק"ו:

”סכלים סבורים שלשאת בעול פירושו רק לעזור לשני. כאשר אדם נפצע וכבר חבשו אותו, הוא מסוגל לעשות הכל בכוחות עצמו, אבל הוא עדיין בעל יסורים ... לעזור לו אי אפשר, אך מה עם נשיאה בעול?”, היה זועק, “במה ניתן עכ"פ לעזור

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* ("נושא בעל עם חבירו")?

meaning of *Nosei B'ol*? Just as it sounds – to take a portion of his load."

Rav Chaim continued, "When a person carries a physical bundle, everyone understands (i.e., sees) his burden and they incline their shoulder to help him (i.e., to carry and lighten his load). But when a person carries a "bundle" of suffering, how are we to be *Nosei B'ol* with him? The answer in this case is, we must "incline our heart" to him (which also helps to take a portion of his suffering from him)."

לו עכשיו? להתחלק אתו בכאבו", תבע. "לשאת בעול, כוונת הדברים כפשוטן - להתחלק עמו במשא". והוסיף: "כאשר אחד נושא חבילה כולם מבינים את סבלו ומטים שכם לעזרה, וכשהוא נושא חבילת יסורים? אזי צריך להטות את הלב אליו".

Within the dimensions of our natural limitations (בדרך הטבע), it would be impossible to experience another person's feelings of pain or joy. However, HaKadosh Boruch Hu (the Holy One, blessed is He; abbreviated as: HKB"H), is not constrained by any limitations; all our thoughts and feelings are fully revealed to Him. Moreover, HKB"H, *kavachol* (so to speak), is impacted by all our feelings to the extent that He rejoices in all our happy moments and He poignantly feels every minute twinge of our sorrow and pain (Rav Yeruchem, Ref. 8). Hashem, therefore, is the ultimate *Nosei B'ol*; He carries the burdens of the Jewish nation and all His creations, which is portrayed as the Divine *middah* (attribute) of "לשאריית נהלתו" ("the remnant of Hashem's heritage") in *Sefer Tomer Devorah* (Source II-1b, p. 11). When Hashem created Man, He, *kavayachol*, "breathed into us" a particle of Himself, giving us the capacity to transcend our natural human limitations, i.e., to share another person's pain or joy (Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, Ref. 2)*. When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we actualize this Divine-like capacity and thus, fulfill the Mitzvah of "following in the ways of Hashem" (Devarim 28:9; Rav Shlomo Wolbe, Ref. 9).

*(This relates to the *Tzelem Elokim* concept, see p. 58 for explanation).

A reasonable English translation of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is "empathy", which is defined by Rabbi Jonathon Sacks as (Ref. 10): "seeing the world through someone else's eyes, entering into their feelings and acting in a way as to let them know they are understood, they are heard and that they matter." Whether people are struggling through a personal crisis, exerting themselves to study Torah or working hard to arrange their Shul's annual dinner, the common essential need we all have is **to know that we matter** and that our experiences, efforts and feelings **actually register on another person's heart**. Thus, being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* not only validates my friend's experiences and emotions, but perhaps more importantly, it affirms that his or her existence and place in this world, are needed and valued.

The introduction to *Sefer Nefesh HaChaim* was written by Rebbi Yitzchok of Volozhin, the son of this classical work's author, Rebbi Chaim of Volozhin. Rebbi Yitzchok extolls the sublime character of his illustrious father. Among the many noble virtues mentioned, Rebbi Yitzchok writes that throughout his father's life, he "gave of his soul" to revive the spirit of the downtrodden with his encouraging, comforting words and his generous financial support, bringing joy and relief to the destitute. Even on his deathbed, wracked with pain and suffering from his illness, his thoughts remained focused on the Jewish people's suffering. Rebbi Yitzchok writes, "He would rebuke me, saying that he observed I did not share in the pain of others. His constant reminder to me was: 'This is the entire essence of a person - one is not created for himself, but to help others in every possible way.'"

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (“נושא בעל עם חבירו”)?

Although we translated *Nesiah B'ol* as empathy, it is really much more than that. My empathy for a friend who struggles does, in fact, remove a portion of his pain because “a burden shared is a burden halved.” However, empathy has no power to change the course of my friend’s troubles which Heaven has allotted to him. Being *Nosei B'ol*, on the other hand, can positively change the Heavenly-decreed fate awaiting my friend. By feeling my friend’s pain or needs to the extent whereby my heart truly yearns for his or her salvation, I project this virtue of *Nesiah B'ol* into my Tefillos (prayers) on my friend’s behalf. In Section IX-E (pp. 81-82), we will see that prayers which emerge from a heart filled with *Nesiah B'ol* for someone, have special powers to change the Heavenly decree for that person. In addition, being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* arouses Heavenly mercy for fellow Jews in need in several different ways (described in Section VIII, pp. 69-73). Thus, my *Nesiah B'ol* has the power to positively alter the course of my friend’s fate in a manner that cannot be explained by simple empathy. Rav Boaz Shalom writes that one time while he was accompanying Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt”l, he mustered up the courage to express to the Rav his heartfelt feelings about him: “Every time I ask the Rav for advice or for a *Berocha*, I sense the Divine help (*Seyata Dishmaya*) inherent in the Rav’s advice and his *Berachos* (blessings) always come to fruition.” Rav Shlomo Zalman good naturedly waived his hands (to minimize his own role in actualizing these *Berachos*) and responded, “People say that having one’s *Berachos* fulfilled is related to his piety or greatness in Torah. In truth, this is erroneous; any person can accomplish this. Hashem listens to the *Berachos* of any Jew who blesses another person because he is a child of Avrohom, Yitzchak and Yaakov with special powers and ancestral lineage. However, in order for a person’s *Berachos* to be fulfilled, he must truly desire that the other person will receive good fortune (i.e., blessings). This is what I endeavor to do, I try to enter the other person’s situation and truly desire that he receives blessings. However, in reality, anyone can accomplish this through his *Berachos*.” Rav Shalom concludes: “During Rav Shlomo Zalman’s life, many people came into his humble abode for help with their difficulties and misfortunes. We witnessed before our very eyes the meaning of his words, ‘to enter the other person’s situation and truly desire that he receives blessings.’ Anyone who came in contact with Rav Shlomo Zalman would sense how he was *Nosei B'ol* with others” (Ref. 11).

In this work, we will discuss the importance of the *ma’alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* for Torah acquisition and safeguarding the identity of the Jewish nation as one unified, collective soul, as well as the criticality of this *ma’alah* for delivering Heavenly salvation both to individuals in need and to *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish nation) as a whole. Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* enhances our performance of interpersonal Mitzvos and helps us prioritize Kiddush Hashem as the primary focus of our lives. We will visit several personalities in the Torah who serve as our models of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. Even in modern times, excellence in *Nesiah B'ol* it is within our reach, as numerous inspiring stories of more recent *Tzaddikim* (righteous individuals) demonstrate. As one example, the *Nesiah B'ol* of Rav Yechezkel Levenstein (henceforth: “Rav Chatzkel”) for the suffering of the Jewish people in general and for any individual in pain, was legendary. In his eulogy for Rav Chatzkel, Rav Shmuel Rozovsky said: “We can say to future generations that we merited to see the essence of an *Eved Hashem* (servant of G-d) in the person of the *Mashgiach* (Rav Chatzkel) One only had to hear him recite a chapter of *Tehillim* over the pain of *Klal Yisrael* to become a *baal teshuvah* (repentant person)” (Ref. 12, p. 359). May the examples and teachings of these *Tzaddikim* inspire us to follow in their footsteps and actualize the Divine qualities that Hashem has endowed in us.

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (“נושא בעל עם חבירו”)?

THE MEANING OF BEING *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO*

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ If I am *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with “Chaim” (generic name), ...
 - I am a partner with Chaim in his distress or joy, as if I am living through the situation that caused him the distress or joy.
 - I immerse myself into Chaim’s suffering, using mental imagery to visualize his situation and feelings. I vicariously experience his pain, burdens and sense of vulnerability.
 - I implicitly tell Chaim, “You don’t have to go through this alone; I am with you, helping to bear your burden.” Even if I am unable to tangibly improve his situation, the fact that I join him in his distress, is in of itself, a tremendous source of comfort.
 - I emulate the ways of Hashem, Who always feels every minute twinge of pain or joy that we experience.
- ❖ The degree of relief afforded to a friend in pain is proportional to the level of our *Nesiah B'ol* – how much we feel his or her pain (as if it were our own; Rav Yeruchem).

Comment regarding use of terminology: “middah” vs. “ma’alah”

The above masters of Mussar either write the phrase “*middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*” or “*ma’alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*”. Therefore, in this essay both phrases are used interchangeably. The phrase “the *ma’alah* (or *middah*) of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*” will be often shortened to “*Nesiah B'ol*”, which is the noun form of *Nosei B'ol*.

Special Caution

Rav Chaim Dov Keller explained that the word “*middah*” (used to denote “attribute” or character trait) is related to (Vayikra 19: 35): “לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ עוֹל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט בַּמִּדָּה וְכוּ'” – “*You shall not do wrong in justice, in measurement.*” All character traits, including those labeled as “good *middos*,” must be expressed in a measured manner. Each person needs a healthy boundary regarding the level of *Nesiah B'ol* he or she can safely sustain. Attempting to utilize the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* and feel another’s pain beyond an appropriate boundary for a given individual, is unhealthy and counterproductive. Individualized guidance should be sought to determine how to set this boundary.

Comment regarding translation of sources

Most of the primary sources, such as Chumash, Rashi, Gemara and Midrash, are translated as literally as possible. However, translation of the works of Mussar (ethical teachings) is only approximate. The priority was placed on conveying the intent of the great masters of Mussar, rather than always maintaining a literal translation. These masters of Mussar include the Sabba of Kelm, Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, Rav Chaim Friedlander, Rav Shlomo Wolbe and *Yibadel L'Chaim Tovim*, Rav Matisyahu Salomon.

Section II: Who are our models of a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

II. Who are our models of a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

A) HaKadosh Boruch Hu: G-d's initial revelation to Moshe from the (burning) thorn bush:
A manifestation of His shared pain with the Jewish people:

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTE (MIDDAH) OF NESIAH B'OL - "לְשָׂאֵרִית נִחְלָתוֹ"

- ❖ **Theme of *Sefer Tomer Devorah*:** Hashem's thirteen attributes (*middos*) of mercy from the book of Michah, and the imperative to emulate His ways.
- ❖ ***4th Divine *middah*** (in *Sefer Tomer Devorah*): "לְשָׂאֵרִית נִחְלָתוֹ": A description of Hashem's empathy for the Jewish people; Hashem calls us His closest kin; hence, He feels our pain as His own pain.
- ❖ **G-d's revelation to Moshe Rabbeinu from the thorn bush:** An expression of "עָמוּ אִנְכִי בְצָרָה" – "I am with him in distress," i.e., Hashem's "sharing" in all the Jewish people's distress. Just as the Jews were in a place of pain, G-d demonstrated that He too, so to speak, was in a place of pain.

*Translated as "The remnant of His heritage".

- 1) In the introduction to *Sefer Tomer Devorah*, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (the "Ramak") describes the imperative to emulate G-d's thirteen Divine *middos* (attributes) of mercy described by the prophet Michah (Source II-1a). The underlying principle of *Tomer Devorah* is explained by Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 13): When Hashem created us *b'Tzelem Elokim* (in the Divine image), He endowed us with the ability to accomplish feats that are in the domain of "Divine" i.e., to emulate His attributes of mercy, thus enabling us to fulfill the Mitzvah of "following in the ways of Hashem," ("וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָיו"; Devarim 28:9), i.e., emulating His ways (see Section III-A, pp. 30-32).
- 2) The fourth Divine *middah* discussed in *Tomer Devorah* (Source II-1b) is "לְשָׂאֵרִית נִחְלָתוֹ" – "the remnant of His heritage", an expression of G-d's profound *Nesiah B'ol* (empathy) with the Jewish people. Citing the verse, "בְּכָל צָרָתָם לֹו צָרָה" – "in all their (the Jews') distress, He (G-d) was distressed" (Isaiah 63:9), the Ramak explains that Hashem feels our pain and He experiences our distress to such an extent, that, so to speak, He cannot bear the pain ("If I punish them, their pain will be Mine").

Source II-1: *Tomer Devorah*: (a) Introduction; (b) The 4th *middah*: "לְשָׂאֵרִית נִחְלָתוֹ" (Divine Empathy)

It is proper for a person to resemble his Creator ... [i.e., to emulate] the thirteen attributes of Divine mercy hinted in the verses (Michah 7: 18-20): "Who is a G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression for the remnant of His heritage? He does not maintain His wrath forever, for He desires kindness. He will once again show us mercy, He will suppress our iniquities. You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Grant truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham, as You swore to our forefathers in days of old." Therefore, it is proper that these thirteen attributes should be found (i.e., expressed) in man.

ספר תומר דבורה - הקדמה:
הָאָדָם רָאוּי שְׂיִתְדַמֶּה לְקוֹנוֹ ... שֶׁהוּא יִיגַד מְדוּת שֶׁל רַחֲמִים
עָלְיוֹנוֹת. וְרַמְיוֹזוֹת בְּסוּד הַפְּסוּקִים (מִיכָה ז': י"ח-כ'): "מִי
קָל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעֵבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע לְשָׂאֵרִית נִחְלָתוֹ לֹא
הֶחְזִיק לְעַד אַפּוֹ כִּי חָפֵץ חֶסֶד הוּא. יָשׁוּב וְרַחֲמֵנוּ יְכַפֵּשׁ
עוֹנֵתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיחַ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל חַטָּאתָם. תַּתֵּן אֱמֶת לִיעֲקֹב
חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתָּיִנוּ מִיְמֵי קְדָם". אִם כֵּן
רָאוּי שְׂתִמְצָאֵנָה בּוֹ יִיגַד מְדוּת אֱלֹוִי.

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<p>The fourth <i>middah</i> – “<i>For the remnant of His heritage</i>”: Behold, HKB”H acts with Israel in this way, to say, “What can I do with Israel, they are My relatives – I have a close (familial) relationship with them” ... And it is written, “<i>the Children of Israel, His intimate people</i>” – they are actually related to Him and they are His children. The verse thus says, “<i>For the remnant of His heritage,</i>” [using the word “<i>שְׂאֵרִית</i>”], which means [heritage, in this context, but also means] a close relative [“<i>שְׂאֵר</i>”]. And what does HKB”H say? “If I punish them, their pain will be Mine,” as it is written, “<i>In all their distress, He (G-d) was distressed.</i>” The word [“<i>לֵא</i>”] is written with an “א” ... but it [“<i>לוֹ</i>”] is read with a “ו”, [which means] the distress is His (i.e., Hashem’s distress). And it is written, “<i>and His spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel,</i>” [which means] G-d cannot bear their pain and their disgrace, because they are the remnant of His inheritance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>ספר תומר דבורה א': "הד' – לשאֵרִית נחלתו":</u> הנה הקב"ה מתנהג עם ישראל בדרך זה, לומר, מה אעשה לישראל והם קרובי, שאר בשר לי עמקם ... וכתוב (תהלים קמח, י): "ישֵׂרָאֵל עם קרובו", ממש קרבה יש לו עמקם ובניו הם, והינו "לשאֵרִית נחלתו", לשון שאר בשר, וסוף סוף הם נחלתו. ומה אומר, אם אענישם הרי הקאב עלי, כדכתוב (ישעיה ס"ג, ט): "בְּכָל צָרָתָם לוֹ צָר", כְּתִיב בְּאֵלֶיךָ ... וְקִרְיָנוּ בְּנֵאֻוֹ - "לוֹ צָר", וְכִתְיב (שופטים י', ט"ז): "וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁוֹ בַּעֲמַל יִשְׂרָאֵל", לְפִי שְׂאֵינֵנוּ סוֹבֵל צַעֲרָם וּקְלוֹנָם, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵם שְׂאֵרִית נַחֲלָתוֹ.</p>
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Translation adapted from: The Elucidated Tomer Devorah, by Rabbi Shmuel Meir Riachi, Feldheim Publishers.

- 3) During their enslavement in Egypt, the cries of the Jewish people ascended to Hashem, and “*G-d saw the Children of Israel; and G-d knew*” (Shemos 2:23; Source II-2a). Rashi understands, “*וידע אלקים*” – “*and G-d knew,*” to signify Hashem’s special intimate attention to the Jewish people’s suffering: “*He focused His heart upon them and did not hide His eyes [from them]*” (Source II-2b). Similarly, when speaking to Moshe from the burning thorn bush, Hashem said, “*כי ידעתי את מכאביו*” – “*for I know [the Jewish people’s] pains,*” which Rashi explains: “*I have focused My heart to understand and know his pains, and I did not hide My eyes, and I shall not block My ears to their cry*” (Sources II-3a and II-3b, respectively). In both verses, the Torah’s words, “*וידע*” and “*ידעתי*,” describe G-d’s intimate attention to the Jewish people’s pain which evoked His mercy and aroused Him to come to their aid (see Section VII-A, pp. 59-61, for additional discussion on this subject).

Source II-2: (a) Shemos 2: 23-25; (b) Rashi: The depth of Hashem’s attention to *Klal Yisrael’s* suffering in Egypt

<p>(23) And it happened during those many days, that the king of Egypt died, and the Children of Israel groaned because of the work and they cried out. Their outcry because of the work went up to G-d.</p> <p>(24) G-d heard their moaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avrohom, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov.</p> <p>(25) G-d saw the Children of Israel; and G-d knew.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שמות ב', כ"ג-כ"ה:</u></p> <p>(כג) ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבדה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבדה.</p> <p>(כד) וישמע אלקים את נאקתם ויזכר אלקים את בריתו את אברהם את יצחק ואת יעקב.</p> <p>(כה) וירא אלקים את בני ישראל וידע אלקים.</p>
<p>Rashi – and G-d knew: He focused His heart upon them and did not hide His eyes [from them].</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>פסוק כ"ה: רש"י ד"ה וידע אלקים:</u> נתן עליהם לב ולא העלים עיניו.</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

Section II: Who are our models of a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

Source II-3: (a) Shemos 3: 7; (b) Rashi: The depth of Hashem's attention to *Klal Yisrael's* suffering in Egypt

<p>And Hashem said, "I have indeed seen the affliction of My people in Egypt and I have heard its outcry because of its taskmasters; for I know its pains."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שמות ג', ז':</u> וַיֹּאמֶר ה' רָאֵה רָאִיתִי אֶת עֲנֵי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת צַעֲקוֹתָם שְׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נִגְשָׁיו כִּי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת מַכּוֹבָיו.</p>
<p>Rashi – For I know its pains: That is to say – I have focused My heart to understand and know his pains, and I did not hide My eyes, and I shall not block My ears to their cry.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>רש"י ד"ה כי ידעתי את מכאביו:</u> כְּלוּמַר כִּי שְׁמַעְתִּי לֵב לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן וְלִדְעוֹת אֶת מַכּוֹבָיו וְלֹא הִעֲלַמְתִּי עֵינָי וְלֹא אֶאֱטוֹם אָזְנִי מִצַּעֲקוֹתָם:</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 4) This theme is beautifully portrayed in the Midrash regarding the burning bush encounter. The Midrash Tanchuma explains that G-d's revelation from the thorn bush was a manifestation of the theme of "עמו אנכי בצרה" (*I am with him in distress*), i.e., Hashem's identification with the suffering of the Jewish people (Source II-4a). The Midrash Rabbah paints this theme even more descriptively, whereby G-d describes the Jewish people as His twin since He feels our pain just as one twin feels his or her co-twin's headache. Hashem said to Moshe: "Don't you know that I am in a state of distress just as the people of Israel are in a state of distress?! Know, based on the place from which I speak to you – from within the thorns – that I am, so to speak, a partner in their distress" (Source II-4b).

Source II-4: (a) Midrash Tanchuma; (b) Shemos Rabbah: "עמו אנכי בצרה" – Hashem is with us in our pain

<p>And why [did Hashem appear] out of the midst of a thorn bush and not out of a taller tree such as the palm tree? HKB"H said, "I have written in the Torah 'I am with him in [his] distress.' Just as they are suffering in oppression, so too, I am [dwelling] in the narrow straits of the bush that is entirely thorns."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מדרש תנחומא שמות סימן י"ד:</u> וְלָמָּה מִתּוֹךְ הַסְּנֵה, וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ אֵילָן גְּדוֹל, וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ תְּמָרָה? אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: כְּתִבְתִּי בַתּוֹרָה, "עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בַצָּרָה" (תהלים צ"א, ט"ו). הֵם נִתְּוֵנִים בְּשַׁעֲבוּד, וְאֵף אֲנִי בַסְּנֵה מִמְּקוֹם צָר. לְפִיכֹה מִתּוֹךְ הַסְּנֵה שֶׁכֵּלּוֹ קוֹצִים.</p>
<p>*"An angel of Hashem appeared to him." It is written: "My perfect one [תְּמִתִּי] ... R' Yonah explained: Just as with twins [תְּאֻמִּים], if one has a headache, the other one also feels it, so too, says HKB"H, "So to speak, 'I am with him in [his] distress.'" And it says: "In all their troubles, He was troubled." HKB"H said to Moshe, "Do you not realize that I am in a state of distress just as the people of Israel are in a state of distress?! Know, based on the place from which I speak to you - from within the thorns - that I am, so to speak, a partner in their distress."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מדרש שמות רבה ב': ה':</u> "וַיִּבְרָא מִלֶּאדָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ": הֲדָא הוּא דְכְּתִיב (שיר השירים ה', ב'), תְּמִתִּי בְּסִינֵי ... אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָה, מַה הִתְּאֻמִּים הִלְלוּ, אִם חָשַׁשׁ אֶחָד בְּרֵאשׁוֹ חִבְרוּ מְרַגִּישׁ, כֵּן אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כְּבִכּוֹל "עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בַצָּרָה" (תהלים צ"א, ט"ו). וְאֹמַר (ישעיה ס"ג: ט'): "כִּכְלָ צָרְתֶם לֹא צָר". אָמַר לֹא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמִשְׁהָ, "אִי אִתָּה מְרַגִּישׁ שְׂאֵנִי שְׂרוּי בְּצַעַר כְּשֶׁשׁ שִׁישְׁרָאֵל שְׂרוּיִם בְּצַעַר, הֲוֵי יוֹדַע מִמְּקוֹם שְׂאֵנִי מְדַבֵּר עִמָּךְ מִתּוֹךְ הַקּוֹצִים כְּבִכּוֹל אֲנִי שְׂתַף בְּצַעְרוֹ".</p>

**Translation from: Artscroll Midrash Rabbah, Kleinman edition, Mesorah Publishers.*

- 5) Prior to *Matan Torah* (giving the Torah at *Har Sinai*), Nadav, Avihu and the seventy Elders saw, through prophesy, an image of a sapphire brick "under Hashem's feet" (Source II-5a). Rashi explains that this brick, which was

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“under Hashem’s feet” during our Egyptian bondage, served to constantly “remind” Hashem of the Jewish people’s enslavement in Egypt (Source II-5b). The Sabba of Kelm (Ref. 14) and Rav Yeruchem (Ref. 15) caution that: (1) this should not be understood as if they saw an image of Hashem, Heaven forbid, since G-d is incorporeal; and (2) Hashem certainly requires no reminder, as there is no forgetfulness before His Throne of Glory. Although this prophesy is beyond our ability to understand, the Torah describes it in a tangible way for our human benefit, to appreciate the extent to which Hashem is always cognizant of and feels our struggles. Moreover, Hashem conveyed this prophesy for our instructional benefit, to teach us that merely thinking about another person’s struggles in our minds is inadequate; we must also channel our concern for his or her plight into concrete action, as an integral component of *Nesiah B’ol*. Lastly, the fact that the Torah deemed it necessary to give us a tangible tool to appreciate Hashem’s *Nesiah B’ol*, is an indication of the enormous importance of this *ma’alah*.

- 6) The fact that Hashem showed the image of the sapphire brick immediately before *Matan Torah*, further underscores the importance of *Nesiah B’ol*. Rav Wolbe (Ref. 9) and *Yibadel L’Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 7), note the apparent strange timing of this prophesy. This was the moment of the Jewish people’s highest spiritual elevation in history. A pedestrian image of a lowly brick at “G-d’s feet” seems incongruous with their elevated state! Perforce, we see that at the most glorious moment of *Matan Torah*, the *middah* of *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* was a “show-stopper”; the transmission of Torah is impossible if we lack this *middah* (Section VI, pp. 51-58). Moreover, our *Nesiah B’ol* with fellow Jews was a prerequisite for our redemption from Egypt (Section VIII-B, pp. 69-71). To come to fruition, both our redemption and receiving the Torah required the *middah* of *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, which perhaps adds greater meaning to the profound words of Rav Chatzkel: “*All of Israel’s salvations depend upon one’s identification with, and feelings for another’s pain and trouble*” (Ref. 12, p. 201).

Source II-5: (a) Shemos 24: 10; (b-c) Rashi: The sapphire brick – Hashem’s constant “reminder” of our pain

They saw the G-d of Israel, and under His feet, was that which had the form of a sapphire brick; and was like the appearance of the heavens in purity.	<p><u>שמות פרק כ"ד פסוק י':</u> ויראו את אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לְבַנֵּת הַסַּפִּיר וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לְטָהָר.</p>
Rashi – the form of a sapphire brick: It was in front of Him (G-d) at the time of enslavement in order to remember the pain of Israel who were enslaved in work of bricks.	<p><u>רש"י ד"ה כמעשה לבנת הספיר:</u> היא היתה לפניו בשעת השעבוד, לזכר צרתן של ישראל שקיו משעבדים כמעשה לבנים.</p>
Rashi – like the appearance of the heavens in purity: Once they were redeemed, there was light and gladness before Him (G-d).	<p><u>רש"י ד"ה וכעצם השמים לטהר:</u> משנגאלו היה אור וחדוה לפניו.</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 7) After describing the vision of the sapphire brick, the same verse states: “*and was like the appearance of the heavens in purity.*” Rashi comments: “*Once they were redeemed, there was light and gladness before Him,*” (Source II-5c). The same prophetic vision which portrayed Hashem’s sharing in the Jewish people’s suffering, also showed a tangible symbol of His rejoicing in their redemption. Hashem demonstrated to us through vivid imagery, the importance of not only sharing another’s pain, but also sharing their joy at their times of happiness. Clearly, if sharing another’s joy was a natural reaction, there would be no need for a special vision to encourage us to

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emulate G-d's ways. Sharing in another person's happy news and good fortunes in an authentic manner is quite difficult; it is far more natural to feel envious that someone else was blessed with good fortune, wishing that it would have been our own lot instead. A person who overcomes this natural inclination to genuinely rejoice in another's happiness as if it were his own, has transcended human limitations to become angelic! (Rav Mordechai Pogramasky, quoted by Rav Matisyahu, Ref. 7). Thus, it was for good reason that Hashem taught us this lesson through a prophetic vision, to demonstrate the definition of "following in His ways" and adopting G-dly qualities.

- 8) The Sabba of Kelm, quoted by Rav Matisyahu, notes that even when G-d had "*light and gladness before Him*," He still retained the sapphire brick as a "reminder" of our suffering when we were slaves (Ref. 7). What value does this "reminder" serve after the slavery period ended? The Sabba explains that Hashem demonstrated to the Jewish people through this vision, the method to experience another person's good fortune authentically as if it was our own. When contemplating another person's happiness, one must reflect upon the personal darkness from which he emerged, to get to this place of radiance and happiness. We truly appreciate the good times only if we are cognizant of the difficult journey from the antecedent hard times to the present and the contrast between them. Therefore, when Hashem showed us how He rejoiced in the redemption of the Jews, He also showed us that He keeps the symbol of our previous dark times alongside the symbol of light and happiness, so that we would learn how to follow in His ways. An application of this lesson to our lives may be, for example, at a wedding of a friend's child - we should not only think about this single moment alone, but also all the challenging school years, health scares/crises and *shidduch* anxieties that the parents helped their child work through, to fully appreciate the happiness they are now experiencing.

THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTE (*MIDDAH*) OF *NESIAH B'OL* - "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ" (SUMMARY)

- ❖ **The *4th Divine *middah*:** "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ" - Hashem's empathy for the Jewish people, His closest kin. This *middah* was instrumental for our redemption from Egypt. Hashem intimately feels our suffering and hence, He saves us as if "rescuing Himself" from the anguish He feels because of our pain.
- ❖ **The "sapphire brick" vision:** A tangible symbol for us to remember that the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* was a prerequisite for both the Exodus from the Egyptian exile and for receiving the Torah (*Mattan Torah*).
- ❖ **The "heavens in purity" vision:** A tangible symbol for us to realize the importance of rejoicing in other people's good fortune as if was our own personal joy.

*From the book of Michah, as arranged in *Sefer Tomer Devorah*.

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B) Moshe Rabbeinu set aside his regal standing to participate in the suffering of his brethren:

MOSHE RABBEINU'S *NESIAH B'OL* - INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu was selected by Hashem to become the leader of the Jewish people because he emulated G-d's *Nesiah B'ol* – sharing the distress of his brethren who were enslaved.
- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu demonstrated how to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, by exiting Pharaoh's palace to join his brethren, abandoning his privileged position and regal attire to taste the bitterness of slavery.

- 1) Rav Matisyahu Salomon notes that the Torah records very few events in Moshe Rabbeinu's life from birth until the encounter at the burning bush, a period of 80 years which is chronicled in a mere 21 verses! (Ref. 16). Rav Matisyahu cites the Sabba of Kelm to explain that the Torah only recounts those events which demonstrate Moshe's qualifications to be chosen by Hashem as the leader of the Jewish people. The few events which the Torah captures for posterity, are remarkable because they demonstrate Moshe Rabbeinu's supreme *Nesiah B'ol*, indicating that it was this *ma'alah* alone that qualified Moshe to become the Jewish people's redeemer and transmitter of the Torah. The Sabba delineates these seminal events in Moshe's Rabbeinu's life which bear witness to his exalted *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, and thus, his worthiness to lead the Jewish people:

Event A: Moshe leaves Pharaoh's palace to witness and share the brutal slavery of the Jewish people.

Event B: Moshe intervenes to defend the Jew who was attacked by the Egyptian taskmaster.

Event C: Moshe intervenes to stop two Jewish men from fighting with each other. This event, along with "Event B", led to Moshe receiving a death sentence and his subsequent escape to Midyan.

Event D: Moshe intervenes to defend Yisro's daughters from rogue shepherds in Midyan.

- 2) The Sabba remarks that each of these events successively illustrate higher gradations in Moshe Rabbeinu's *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. **Event A** illustrates how the mass suffering of the Jewish people affected Moshe Rabbeinu to the extent that he left his palatial office, exchanged his regal attire for a common laborer's clothes, and helped his brethren bear their onerous burdens. **Event B** demonstrates that the oppression of even a single individual by his tormentor affected Moshe so much as to jeopardize his entire standing in Pharaoh's court and his very life, by defending the oppressed person. In this case, the victim and his oppressor were well defined and distinct, innocent versus evil; thus, our instinctive reaction is to rise to the defense of the innocent victim. In **Event C**, this clear distinction did not exist since both parties were culpable for participating in reprehensible behavior. Our instinctive compassion would not easily be aroused for such people and we might easily justify not getting involved. Yet, Moshe Rabbeinu could not bear seeing his brethren engaging in such behavior and he intervened to stop them. In the above three events, Moshe Rabbeinu's intervention was on behalf of his own people in his native land, which afforded him some sense of security. However, in **Event D**, Moshe was a fugitive without shelter on foreign soil among strange people, with no one to protect him in a clash between himself and the locals. He could easily have said, "why should I meddle in the altercations between one non-Jew and another?" After all, his intervention to save a fellow Jew in a country where he knew the authorities, nearly cost him his life. Certainly, he could not expect to be treated fairly in a totally strange country

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if he intervened in a local quarrel. Nonetheless, his identification with other people's suffering pained Moshe so much that he defended Yisro's daughters from the local ruffians and even watered their animals. By selecting these events to be recorded, the Torah illustrates that Moshe's *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* was the basis for Hashem choosing him to lead the Jewish people.

- 3) We mentioned the Midrashim (Sources II-4a-b, p. 12) which explain that Hashem's initial revelation to Moshe Rabbeinu from the thorn bush was an expression of "עָמַו אֲנֹכִי בְצָרָה" – "I am with him in distress," i.e., G-d's identification with the Jewish people's distress. Moshe Rabbeinu's *Zechus* (merit), by which he merited to receive Hashem's revelation, was his own identification with the suffering of the Jewish people as the Midrash states: "The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Moshe, 'You left aside your usual affairs to go out and observe the suffering of Israel, treating them as brothers. So too, I will, so to speak, leave aside the upper and the lower realms and speak to you'" (Source II-6b). Moshe merited that Hashem talked to him, not due to his wisdom or lofty spiritual level, but rather, because he emulated G-d's *middos*, by virtue of his *Nesiah B'ol* with the Jewish people (Rav Chatzkel, Ref. 17).

Source II-6: (a) Shemos 3:4; (b-c) Shemos Rabbah: Moshe Rabbeinu's *Nesiah B'ol* with *Klal Yisrael's* suffering

<p>¹And Hashem saw that [Moshe] turned aside to see; and G-d called out to him from amid the bush and said, "Moshe, Moshe," and he replied, "Here I am!"</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שמות ג', ד':</u> וַיִּרְאֵהוּ ה' כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹקִים מֵתוֹךְ הַסֵּבֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִנִּי.</p>
<p>²What is meant by the expression, "And he saw (their burdens)?" It alludes to the fact that Moshe would see their burdens and [share their sorrow to the extent that he would] cry: "Woe is me on account of you! If only I could die for your sake! For there is no work as hard as working with clay." And Moshe would lend a shoulder and assist every one of the Israelites ... [Moshe] would remove his ³royal garments and go to rearrange the Israelites' burdens [in accordance with each one's capacity] ... HKB"H said to Moshe, "You left aside your usual affairs to go out and observe the suffering of Israel, treating them as brothers, so too I will, as it were, leave aside the upper and the lower realms and speak to you." Thus, it is written, "And Hashem saw that he [Moshe] turned aside to see." HKB"H saw that Moshe turned aside from his affairs to see the burdens of Israel. Therefore, "G-d called out to him from amid the bush."</p>	<p>מדרש שמות רבה א', כ"ז: מהו "וַיִּרְאֵהוּ (בְּסִבְלָתָם)?" שְׁהִיָּה רוּאָה בְּסִבְלוֹתָם וּבִוְכָה וְאוֹמֵר: "חֲבַל לִי עֲלֵיכֶם מִי יִתֵּן מוֹתֵי עֲלֵיכֶם, שְׂאִין לָהּ מְלָאכָה קוֹשֶׁה מִמְּלָאכַת הַטִּישׁ", וְהִנֵּה נוֹתֵן כַּתְפּוֹ וּמְסַנֵּעַ לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מֵהֶן. ... וְהִנֵּה מַנִּיחַ דְּרָגוֹן שְׁלוֹ וְהוֹלֵךְ וּמֵינִשֵּׁב לָהֶם סְבִלוֹתֵיהֶם. ... אָמַר הַקַּב"ה: "אַתָּה הַנְּחַת עֲסָקֶיךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ לְרֵאוֹת בְּצַעְרֵן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִהְיֶת בְּהוֹן מִנְהַג אַחִים, אֲנִי מַנִּיחַ אֶת הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים וְאֶת הַמַּתְחַוְּנִים, וְנֹאדָבָר עֲמֶךָ", הִדָּא הוּא דְכָתִיב: "וַיִּרְאֵהוּ ה' כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת", רָאָה הַקַּב"ה בְּמִשְׁה שְׁפָר מְעַסְקוֹ לְרֵאוֹת בְּסִבְלוֹתָם, לְפִיכָה: "וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹקִים מֵתוֹךְ הַסֵּבֶה".</p>
<p>R' Yitzchak said: What is meant by "Moshe was 'סָר' to see?" HKB"H said: "This person (Moshe) is downcast and upset upon seeing the affliction of Israel in Egypt. Therefore, [since he feels their pain], he is worthy of being their shepherd." Immediately, it states: "G-d called out to him from amid the bush."</p>	<p>מדרש שמות רבה ב', ו': אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: מַהוּ "כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת"? אָמַר הַקַּב"ה: "סָר וְנִזְעַף הוּא זֶה לְרֵאוֹת בְּצַעְרֵן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, לְפִיכָה רְאוּי הוּא לְהִיֹּת רוּעָה עֲלֵיהֶן". מִיַּד "וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹקִים מֵתוֹךְ הַסֵּבֶה".</p>

¹Artscroll Sapirstein Torah Series; ²Artscroll Kleinman Midrash Rabbah; ³Artscroll translation: "would set aside his noble status";

- 4) The Midrash Rabbah states that G-d spoke to Moshe at the burning bush: "You left aside your usual affairs to go out and observe the suffering of Israel" (Source II-6b). This is derived from the Torah's words: "Hashem saw that

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he turned aside to see" - "וירא ה' כי סר לראות" (Source II-6a), which are interpreted by the Midrash: "*Moshe turned aside from his affairs*" ("סר מעסקיו") *to see the burdens of Israel.*" Rav Friedlander (Ref. 18) insightfully deduces from here that in order to feel another's pain, we must exit ("turn aside from") our own station in life (i.e., leave our comfort zone) and transplant ourselves into the other person's situation, thoughts and feelings. We must put our own perspectives aside, to see the situation through the lens of the person who is struggling. To say to someone, "*why can't you handle this, no one else has any problem dealing with this!*," or, "*other people have much more serious problems,*" is invalidating and quite hurtful - the antithesis of being *Nosei B'ol*. At its core, such comments tell the person that his or her problem and perspective is unworthy of my empathy because it does not fit other people's criteria to be considered a "significant hardship." A true *Nosei B'ol* embraces the perspective of the person in distress (i.e., sees the problem through his lens).

- 5) This identical theme is found in Rashi, whose description of Moshe Rabbeinu's behavior encapsulates the essential elements of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. The Torah states: "*And he (Moshe) went out to his brethren and saw their burdens*" - "ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם" (Source II-7a). Rashi explains: "*He (Moshe) focused his eyes and his heart to be distressed over them*" - "נתן עיניו ולבו להיות מיצר עליהם" (Source II-7c). Rav Friedlander (ibid) explains that the words, "ויצא" and "וירא", denote that we must set aside ("ויצא") our own perspective in order to see ("וירא") and feel another's struggles.

Source II-7: (a) Shemos 2: 11; (b-c) Rashi: Moshe Rabbeinu's keen *Nesiah B'ol* with *Bnei Yisrael's* suffering

And it happened in those days that Moshe grew up and went out to his brethren and saw their burdens; and He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew man, of his brethren.	שמות ב': יא: וְנָהִי בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אֶחָיו וַיִּרְא בְּסִבְלָתָם וַיִּרְא אִישׁ מִצְרִי מַכֶּה אִישׁ עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו.
Rashi – And Moshe grew up: Has [the Torah] not already written, " <i>The boy grew up</i> "? R' Yehuda, the son of R' Elai, said: The first [mention of growth] is in terms of physical stature, and the second [mention of growth] is in terms of attainment of rank, as Pharaoh appointed him over his household.	רש"י ד"ה ויגדל משה: וְהָלֵא כָּבֵד כָּתֹב: "וַיִּגְדַּל הַיָּלֵד" (שמות ב': י"א)? אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בְּרַבִּי אֶלְעָאִי, הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְקוֹמָה וְהַשֵּׁנִי לְגִדְלָה, שְׁמִנְהוּ פְרָעָה עַל בֵּיתוֹ.
Rashi – And he saw their burdens: He focused [literally, "he gave"] his eyes and his heart to be distressed over them.	רש"י ד"ה וירא בסבלתם: נָתַן עֵינָיו וְלִבּוֹ לְהִיּוֹת מִצֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם (שמות רבה א).

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 6) The Midrash (Source II-6b) comments that Moshe "would set aside his royal garments" and help his brethren bear their physical burdens. Rav Friedlander (Ref. 18) asks, why did Chazal find it necessary to add that Moshe removed his regal attire? He answers that Chazal hereby teach us the importance of fully immersing oneself in another person's situation to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. If Moshe would have worn the garments of nobility, his *Nesiah B'ol* would have been incomplete even if he assisted his brethren in their labor, because his noble status would prevent him from fully feeling the suffering of the wretched slave. Moshe needed to set aside his royal status entirely and "transplant" himself into their situation. To do this, Moshe had to remove his regal attire and don the clothes of enslaved laborer. Only then, could he completely immerse himself in the depth of their misery to share and feel their pain.

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- 7) Moshe Rabbeinu's purpose in physically carrying the bricks and mortar (see Midrash, Source II-6b, p. 16) was not to tangibly lighten the Jewish people's workload (Rav Yeruchem, Rav Wolbe and Rav Friedlander, Ref. 8, Source XI-5 [p. 99], and Ref. 18, respectively). Millions of Jewish people were enslaved; hence, Moshe's physical assistance would not accomplish "as much as a drop in the ocean" to reduce their workload! Rather, Moshe Rabbeinu's purpose was two-fold: (1) To implant in his own heart a keen understanding of the depths of their distress, to enable him to feel their suffering; and (2) To be together with his brethren in their suffering and console them by seeing the noble Moshe share in their pain. To accomplish this, it was necessary for Moshe to advance his empathy with his brethren, from an inner passive state into concrete actions of sharing their burdens. From Moshe's conduct, we learn that developing the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* requires taking concrete action even if it does not tangibly ease someone's suffering; physical actions foster within us the emotional capacity to share another person's feelings. Moreover, when assisting someone in distress, we should not be dissuaded by "how insignificantly" (we think) our assistance will relieve the person's hardship. Often the most difficult aspect of people's pain is their sense of isolation, feeling they have no one to share their distress. Hence, even our seemingly minimal help will go a long way to encourage and strengthen the person's spirits when he or she sees how we want to share in their distress. The fact that the person no longer feels alone in his or her suffering, provides great emotional support (Rav Friedlander; Ref. 18).
- 8) Prior to his comments on the Torah's words: "וַיֵּרָא בְּסַבְלוֹתָם", Rashi interprets "וַיִּגְדֵּל מֹשֶׁה" – "*And Moshe grew up,*" to indicate that Moshe was appointed a leader over Pharaoh's household, i.e., an important official within the Egyptian monarchy (Source II-7b). From this context, the subsequent words of the Torah, "*(Moshe) went out to his brethren and saw their burdens*" ("וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אֶחָיו וַיֵּרָא בְּסַבְלוֹתָם"), take on a far greater significance. Despite his high position in the monarchy, Moshe Rabbeinu abandoned his palatial office and royal garments to participate in his brethren's slave labor. The sense of emotional support that the Jews gained from seeing the princely Moshe abandon his rank to join them in their time of suffering, was immeasurable (Rav Friedlander; Ref. 18).
- 9) Rabbi A Leib Scheinbaum comments that Moshe's sharing in the pain of his people was manifested in the names he gave his two sons. In the beginning of Parashas Yisro (Shemos 18:3-4) the Torah relates, "*And her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom, for he said, 'I was a sojourner in a strange land;' and the name of the other was Eliezer, 'for the G-d of my father came to my aid and He saved me from the sword of Pharaoh.'*" The commentators question the sequence in which Moshe named his sons. Clearly, Moshe was saved from Pharaoh's sword prior to his becoming a sojourner in a strange land. Why then did he name Gershom before Eliezer? The *Shevet Sofer* (Parshas Shemos) and Rav Leib Baron explain that even in his youth, when Moshe grew up in the Egyptian palace in security and comfort, he joined his brothers in their suffering and used any available means to help them. When he was forced to flee to Midyan, he still endured the pain and misery of the Jews. His entire mindset and feelings were focused on their suffering and captivity and he longed to return to them, to identify with their plight and help them. Moshe was worried that he would forget his brethren's plight back in Egypt since, after living in a new country for many years and becoming a prominent member of a new community, it is natural to forget about one's people and land of origin. Therefore, when his first son was born, he named him Gershom – a sojourner – to crystallize his constant awareness that he did not belong here, separated from his distressed brethren, and ensure that he would return to them at the first available opportunity (Ref. 20).
- 10) The Gemara in Mesechta Taanis (Source II-8) which discusses the imperative of sharing in the distress of the community, heralds Moshe Rabbeinu as the model for such behavior. During the war against Amalek, when

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Moshe needed to sit, he insisted on sitting on an uncomfortable stone, reasoning: “*Since the Children of Israel are steeped in distress, I, too, shall be with them in distress.*” This is another example of the importance of “translating” our *Nesiah B'ol* from an inner feeling to specific actions which demonstrate the theme of “עמו אנכי בצרה”.

Source II-8: Gemara Taanis 11a: Moshe Rabbeinu is the model for sharing in the community’s suffering

It was taught in a *Braisa*: At a time when the community is steeped in distress, a person should not say, “I will go to my house and eat and drink and peace be upon you, my soul” ... Rather, a person should suffer along with the community, for we have indeed found regarding Moshe, our Teacher, that he suffered along with the community, as it is stated (regarding the battle against Amalek): “*And the hands of Moshe were heavy, and they took a stone and placed it underneath him and he sat on it.*” And did not Moshe have one mattress or one pillow upon which to sit? Rather, thus said Moshe: “*Since the Children of Israel are steeped in distress, I, too, shall be with them in distress.*” And whoever suffers along with the community, will merit and witness the consolation of the community.

גמרא מסכת תענית דף י"א ע"א:

תניא אידך בזמן שהצבור שרוי בצער אל יאמר אדם
“אלך לביתי ואוכל ואשתה ושלום עליך נפשי” ...
אלא יצער אדם עם הצבור שכן מצינו במשה רבינו
שציער עצמו עם הצבור שנאמר (שמות י"ז: י"ב):
“וידי משה כבדים ויקחו אבן וישמו תחתיו וישב
עליה”. וכי לא היה לו למשה כר אחת או כסת אחת
לישב עליה? אלא כך אמר משה “הואיל וישראל
שרויין בצער אף אני אהיה עמהם בצער”. וכל
המצער עצמו עם הצבור זוכה ורואה בנחמת צבור.

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LESSONS FROM MOSHE RABBEINU – HOW TO BE *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO*

- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu is the paradigm for sharing in the suffering of the community, deeply reflecting upon their distress, abandoning his position of privilege and nobility to physically participate in their suffering. He completely immersed himself in their distressful situation in order to feel their pain.
- ❖ From Moshe Rabbeinu, we learn that to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*:
 - Just as Moshe left his palatial office and exchanged his regal garments for the clothes of slaves, we need to leave our own comfort zone and set aside our own perspectives to view the situation through the lens of the person in pain.
 - We should take a few moments to deeply contemplate upon the details of someone’s difficulties and imagine ourselves going through the same situation.
 - Just as Moshe performed concrete actions with the theme of “עמו אנכי בצרה”, we need to “translate” the empathy in our hearts into concrete actions that demonstrate our sharing in someone’s suffering even if the actions do not tangibly improve the person’s distressful situation.

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C) Yosef HaTzaddik excelled in sharing the suffering of others, in all his stations of life:

YOSEF HATAZDDIK'S *NESIAH B'OL*

Yosef HaTzaddik reached out to join in the suffering of others, in both his lowest and highest stations of life, as a wretched prisoner and as viceroy to Pharaoh.

- 1) In Parshas Mikeitz, the Torah states that two sons were born to Yosef HaTzaddik and his wife before the years of famine (Source II-9a). The Gemara (Mesechta Taanis 14a) derives from this verse that marital relations are prohibited during times of famine (Source II-9b). *Tosfos* comments that Yosef's abstention from marital relations during the famine was a *middas chassidus* (pious practice, but not obligatory). The Sabba of Kelm (Ref. 21) and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 22), see Yosef's pious conduct as an illustration of his exalted *Nesiah B'ol*. Because of his refined character development, Yosef intuited this practice of self-denial during a communal calamity. Although Yosef and his immediate family were shielded from the ravages of hunger because of their privileged royal status, he identified with the people's suffering to such an extent, that this pious practice was the only possible conduct for him, as if it had been formally legislated!

Source II-9: (a) Bereishis 41:50; (b) Gemara Taanis: Yosef HaTzaddik's sharing in the community's suffering

<p>*Now to Yosef were born two sons – when the year of famine had not set in – whom Asenath daughter of Poti-phaera, Chief of On, bore to him.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">בראשית מ"א. נ': ויליוסף ילד שני בנים בטרם תבוא שנת הרעב אשר ילדה לו אסנת בת פוטי פרע פהן און.</p>
<p>Reish Lakish said: It is prohibited for a person to have marital relations in years of famine as it is stated (Genesis 41:50): "<i>And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came.</i>"</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">גמרא מסכת תענית דף י"א ע"א: אמר ריש לקיש אסור לאדם לשמש מטתו בשני רעבון שנאמר (בראשית מ"א, נ'): "ויליוסף ילד שני בנים בטרם תבוא שנת הרעב."</p>

**Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers*

- 2) This reference to Yosef's piety is part of the discussion regarding sharing in the community's suffering (in Mesechta Taanis; Source II-8, p. 19) which references Moshe Rabbeinu as the paradigm of such sharing. Yosef HaTzaddik and Moshe Rabbeinu lived with the same ideal of putting themselves into the suffering of the community through specific practices of privation or pain. Even when my life is not directly affected by the suffering, I cannot sit back and enjoy the pleasures of life when my brethren are in distress, as the Gemara states, "*When the community is immersed in suffering, a person may not say: I will go to my home and I will eat and drink, and peace be upon you, my soul ... Rather, a person should suffer along with the community.*"
- 3) The Sabba notes that, although the Torah's subtle hint to Yosef's supreme *Nesiah B'ol* is mentioned only after he became the viceroy of Egypt, Hashem elevated him to royal stature precisely because of Yosef's perfection in this *middah*. Thus, Hashem observed this character refinement within Yosef HaTzaddik even before he rose to prominence. Where do we see evidence of Yosef's *Nesiah B'ol* before he became the viceroy?
- 4) Rav Nochum Zev Dessler offers the following beautiful insight: Yosef HaTzaddik was incarcerated in an Egyptian dungeon on trumped-up charges. Separated from his father and family for twenty years, he had every reason to

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be depressed, to feel sorry for himself. Yet, we find a completely different Yosef than what we would expect. Adding to the squalor in the Egyptian prison, was the type of people with whom he shared his “living quarters.” The refined Yosef, scion of the noble Patriarchal heritage of *Klal Yisrael*, was ensconced in a dungeon with hooligans – the lowest individuals in society. Among those imprisoned with him were Pharaoh’s royal baker and royal cupbearer. A prison is not a happy place, and it would take an astute, knowing and caring person to notice a change in someone’s countenance. One day, Yosef looked at his two fellow prisoners and noticed a transformation in their facial expressions, a minor alteration – but a change, nonetheless. “*Yosef came to them in the morning. He saw them and behold! They were aggrieved*” - “והנם זועפִים” (Bereishis 40:6). They appeared aggrieved, pouting, more depressed than usual. As it turned out, they had each dreamt something unusual the previous night and Yosef was able to interpret the nocturnal messages. This ultimately led to his liberation and “the rest is history.” It was all because Yosef noticed a change in their facial expression. Only a caring, empathetic person would act this way (*from: Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum; Ref. 23*).

- 5) A similar insight is offered by Rav Sholom Schwadron with the following addition: Yosef HaTzaddik’s *Nesiah B’ol* for the depressed spirits of Pharaoh’s imprisoned stewards prompted him to ask them, “*What’s wrong?*” This led to Yosef’s successful interpretation of their dreams, his release from prison to interpret Pharaoh’s dream and appointment to viceroy of Egypt, sustaining his father and brothers during the famine, and their descent to Egypt. Thus, Yosef’s *Nesiah B’ol* ultimately set the stage for all the events leading to the redemption of the Jews from Egypt, receiving the Torah and entering the Land of Israel. All from one “trivial” question (“*What’s wrong?*”). All from his deep care and concern for others! (*from: Rabbi Don Bacharach; Ref. 24*).
- 6) Rav Wolbe (Source II-10a) descriptively portrays the ordeal of someone who is suffering, as if locked in a prison of loneliness, separated from the circle of people who enjoy each other’s presence: “*A person who has been stricken by illness or other suffering ... sits alone in a cave, in subterranean darkness. No one understands his pain ... If you reach out to join him in his prison ... to feel his pain and to give over your heart to understand his distress – you have broken the chains of his isolation.*” Being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* with this person unfetters him from the “prison” of isolation, by trying to understand his distress and sharing his burden. People who are struggling, whether they are just having a “bad day” or enmeshed in more complex challenges, have one common need: To feel valued, that they “matter” and their existence is cherished by someone.

Source II-10: (a) Rav Shlomo Wolbe (b) Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein: Being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* means reaching out to unchain a person locked in the prison of loneliness.

A person who is struggling with either with an illness or other suffering ... sits alone in a cave, in subterranean darkness ... His loneliness pains him more than his illness. No one understands his pain or reaches out to him; his soul is imprisoned by his troubles. If you reach out to join him in his prison, to bear his burden with him, i.e., to feel his pain and to give over your heart to deeply understand his distress – you have broken the chains of his isolation and removed one-sixtieth of his illness. The magnitude of the salvation

עלי שור חלק א', מבוא לשער רביעי, עמ' רנב:

האדם שפגעה בו מדת הדין ר"ל, אם במחלה, אם בסבל אחר, והוא נאבק עם סבלו ... גם הוא יושב בודד, ועוד יותר ממה שכואבים לו יסוריו, כואבת לו בדידותו ... במערה הוא, לבדו, בחושך תת קרקעי, אין מכיר, אין דורש, נפשו במסגר ... והדוחק עצמו לתוך מסגר זה של זולתו, לשאת איתו בעול: להרגיש אתו הכאב, לסבול אתו יחד, לתת לב להתבונן בצרתו - הרי פרץ את כבלי

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<p>delivered to someone who is suffering by being <i>Nosei B'ol</i> with him, is boundless!</p>	<p>בדידותו, ונטל ממנו אחד ממשים מחליו. היש קץ לגודל הישועה שהנושא בעול עם חברו מושיט לסובל זה?! ספר טובך יביעו ח"א עמוד קפ"א:</p>
<p><i>Refers to Rav Wolbe's thoughts found in Source II-10a: Reaching out to a person locked in the prison of loneliness:</i></p> <p>There isn't a person, who, in one form or another, has not been locked in the prison of loneliness. Don't think that the task of reaching out into his "prison" is too difficult. Saying "good morning" or a heartfelt "<i>Shalom Aleichem</i>" can be the "elixir" that will light up his face, that removes even more than one-sixtieth of his illness! All it may take is saying "good morning" with a smile, showing respect to someone on the sidewalk, not ignoring him, not closing our eyes to pretend he doesn't exist. If someone leaves his house agitated, sullen or ill-tempered, perhaps all he needs is a kindhearted "good morning" from anyone. If we do it in a discerning manner, we can fulfill a great <i>Mitzvah</i> of reviving his life. By merely receiving him with a pleasant countenance, which takes all of 1½ seconds, his mood will be positively transformed; all the anguish, anger and agitation which enveloped him one second ago, has now vanished as if it never existed. Isn't it worth investing this little effort to "redeem prisoners" from their "dungeon"?</p>	<p>אין יהודי אחד שאינו נתון בצורה זו או אחרת, בבית כלא, "בבדידות" (עלי שור). בל נחשוב שהמשימה הזו של דחיקת עצמנו לתוך מסגר זולתנו, קשה היא מדי. לא. אמירת "בוקר טוב" או שלום עליכם "לבבי", עשויה לשפוך על פניו של הזולת נהרה של אור, ממש כאילו נטלת ממנו בכך יותר מאחד ממשים של חליו. רק אמרתי בוקר טוב "עם חיוך" על הפנים. התייחסתי בכבוד אל זה העובר לצידי במדרכה, לא התעלמתי ממנו, לא סגרתי את העיניים כמי שאיני רואהו. אדם "שמאיזה סיבה" שהיא יוצא מביתו כשהוא נרגז, כולו סר וזעף, וכל כולו ממתין ל"בוקר טוב" חייני ... אם רק נדע כיצד לעשות זאת נוכל לקיים בו מצוה גדולה של החייאת נפשות, כפשוטו. כתוצאה מהארת פנים שתארך לא יותר משנייה וחצי, יתהפך לבבו של האיש הזה לטובה, וכל הצער, הכעס והרוגז, שאפפו אותו אך לפני רגע, ייעלמו ויהיו כלא היו. וכי לא "כדאי" להשקיע את המאמץ הקטן הלוה, כדי "לפדות שבויים" מבין סורגיהם ואסירים מכלאם?</p>

- 7) Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein (Source II-10b), commenting on Rav Wolbe's thoughts, adds practical advice how to reach out to a person "imprisoned" in loneliness. *"All it may take (to uplift his mood) is saying "good morning" with a smile, showing respect to someone on the sidewalk, not ignoring him ... which takes all of 1½ seconds ... all the anguish, anger and agitation which enveloped him one second ago, has now vanished as if it never existed."* Indeed, this is the lesson we derive from Yosef HaTzaddik. Even in the depths of his own misery and abandonment, a wretched prisoner estranged from family, he reached out to others suffering in prison, exhibiting genuine concern for their anguish. In his state of suffering, Yosef's reaching out to other souls in distress was an act of supreme sacrifice. And yet – so many doors of salvation were opened by his *Nesiah B'ol* !
- 8) We see that Yosef HaTzaddik was raised from his youth to be a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, and he maintained this inner identity throughout his life, regardless of the situation in which he found himself. In both his lowest and highest stations of life, as a wretched prisoner and as viceroy to Pharaoh, Yosef reached out to join in the suffering of others.
- 9) The Midrash Rabbah (Source II-11) explains a passage in Tehillim (80:2): *"O Shepherd of Israel, You Who leads Yosef like a flock."* Dovid HaMelech composed this prayer during a famine, pleading for Heavenly mercy while referring to Hashem as the "Shepherd of Israel." Rav Matisyahu Salomon (Ref. 22), based on the Sabba of Kelm and the *Sefer Hegyonei Mussar*, explains that the appellation, "shepherd," denotes devoted attention to all the needs and wellbeing of those in one's care. One who shepherds animals, spends all his time in the heat and cold

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to look after the needs of his flock, satisfying their hunger and thirst. To carry out such a demanding task, the shepherd must be able to sense the feelings of the animals in his care. Rav Matisyahu asserts that such a faithful shepherd of animals has certainly developed his *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* towards human as well, extending kindness to others as if their needs and wellbeing are his own. When Dovid HaMelech addressed Hashem as the "Shepherd of Israel," he referred to G-d's special attention to His "flock" (*Klal Yisrael*), whereby He feels the pain of each of His "sheep" and attends to all their needs. Despite Hashem's exalted status, He, so to speak, lowers Himself to experience the feelings of His flock, which is the essence of His *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו". Yosef excelled in this *middah*, emulating G-d's "position" as a Shepherd, by worrying about the feelings and needs of all his subjects despite his own privileged position in the royal palace. He shared in the pain of the common person on a very personal level, abstaining from basic human needs while others suffered. Therefore, when Dovid HaMelech wanted to arouse Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" to save His nation, he invoked the merits of Yosef HaTzaddik, i.e., his total identification with the pain and misery of the common person.

Source II-11: Midrash Rabbah: Dovid HaMelech pleads for mercy in the merit of Yosef's shepherding.

It is written: "... and blessing will be on the head of the provider," this is an allusion to Yosef ... who fed the entire world in years of famine, like a shepherd who leads his sheep. Concerning Yosef's actions, Dovid said: "O Shepherd of Israel, You Who leads Yosef like a flock." When there was a famine in the days of Dovid, he pleaded before the Holy One, blessed is He, for mercy for the Jewish people, and he said, "Master of all the worlds! Lead Your sheep (i.e., the Jewish people) like Yosef, who fed the entire world in years of famine!"

מדרש בראשית רבה צ"א, ה':

כתיב (משלי י"א, כ"ו): "וברכה לראש משביר", זה יוסף ... זן את העולם בשני רעבון כרועה הנה שמנהיג את צאנו, עליו אמר דוד (תהלים פ', ב'): "רעה ישראל האזינה נהג כצאן יוסף". קשהיה רעב בימי דוד בקש עליהם רחמים מלפני הקדוש ברוך הוא ואמר "רבון כל העולמים נהג את צאנה כיוסף שזן את העולם בשני רעבון".

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LESSONS FROM YOSEF HATZADDIK – HOW TO BE *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO*

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ Yosef HaTzaddik reached out to give cheer to fellow prisoners even when his own situation appeared hopeless, and he shared the common person's suffering while he enjoyed supreme success and power.
- ❖ Even when our own life is not directly affected by the suffering of the community, we can share in their distress by undertaking specific practices that remind us of their pain or discomfort.
- ❖ People who are struggling, often find their sense of isolation more painful than the specific hardships that life has presented them with (Rav Wolbe and Rav Friedlander). Reaching out to them in very simple ways, e.g., greeting them with a smile and showing them that they truly matter to us, can give them the strength they need to persevere – reviving their lives!

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D) Aharon HaKohen excelled in feeling genuine joy in another person's good fortune:

AHARON HAKOHEN'S GREATNESS - REJOICING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S GOOD FORTUNE

- ❖ Aharon rejoiced over Moshe's ascent to greatness, despite the apparent "infringement" on his own leadership position.
- ❖ Because of this magnanimity, Aharon merited to become the *Kohen Gadol* who wore the *Urim v'Tumim* to provide Divine guidance for the Jewish people in their distress.

1) During the encounter of the burning bush, when Hashem deputized Moshe Rabbeinu to return to Egypt and liberate the Jews, Moshe expressed reluctance for the mission, asking Hashem to send his brother, Aharon, instead (Source II-12a). The Midrash explains the reason for Moshe's reluctance: Moshe said, "Before I rose to prominence, my brother Aharon was prophesying to them in Egypt for 80 years. Shall I now trespass my brother's domain and cause him to be pained!" (Source II-12b). Hashem assured Moshe that, on the contrary, rather, than feeling slighted by being superseded, Aharon will rejoice over Moshe's ascent to greatness: "When he will see you, he will rejoice in his heart." The Midrash comments on Aharon's happiness: "R' Shimon bar R' Yose said: The heart (of Aharon) that rejoiced in the greatness of his brother, shall be privileged to wear the Urim v'Tumim, as it says (Shemos 28: 30): 'And they shall be on Aharon's heart.'"

Source II-12: (a) Shemos 4: 13-14; (b-c) Shemos Rabbah: Aharon and Moshe rejoice over each other's rise to prominence.

<p>¹(13) He (Moshe) replied, "Please, my L-rd, send by the hand of whomever You will send!"</p> <p>(14) The anger of Hashem burned against Moshe and He said, "Is there not Aharon your brother, the Levite? I know that he will surely speak; moreover, behold, he is going out to meet you and when he will see you, he will rejoice in his heart."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שמות ד': י"ג – י"ד:</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(י"ג) ויאמר בי אד-י שלח נא ביד תשלח. (י"ד) ויסר אף ה' במשה ויאמר הלא אהרן אחיך הלוי ידעתי כי דבר ידבר הוא וגם הנה הוא יצא לקראתך וראך ושמח בלבבו.</p>
<p>²The Sages said: If you think that Moshe held back from going [because he simply did not want to go], know that this is not so. Rather, he did so as a way of according respect to Aharon. For Moshe said, "Before I rose to prominence, my brother Aharon was prophesying to them in Egypt for eighty years" ... Moshe thus exclaimed, "Shall I now trespass my brother's domain and cause him to be pained?!" This is why Moshe did not wish to go ... [Hashem said to Moshe]: "Now, regarding what you think, i.e., that Aharon will be distressed [by you superseding him] – it is not so. Rather, he (Aharon) will rejoice, as it says, 'When he sees you, he will rejoice in his heart.'" R' Shimon bar R' Yose said: The heart (of Aharon) that rejoiced in the greatness of his brother, shall be privileged to wear the <i>Urim v'Tumim</i>, as it says, "And they shall be on Aharon's heart."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מדרש שמות רבה ג', ט"ז-י"ז:</u></p> <p>ורבנן אמרי סבור אתה שהיה מעכב משה לילך, אינו כן, אלא כמכבד לאהרן, שהיה משה אומר עד שלא עמדתי היה אהרן אחי מתנבא להם במצרים שמנים שנה ... אמר משה עכשיו אכנס בתחומו של אחי ויהיה מצר, בשביל כך לא היה מבקש לילך ... ומה שאתה סבור שהוא מצר לא כן אלא שמח, שנגאמר (שמות ד': י"ד): "ויראך ושמח בלבבו". אמר רבי שמעון בן רבי יוסי הלב שמח בגדלת אחיו ילבש אורים ותמים, שנגאמר (שמות כ"ח, ל'): "ויהיו על לב אהרן".</p>

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<p>“Like the precious oil upon the head running down upon the beard, the beard of Aharon” (the word “beard” is stated twice). Did Aharon have two beards, why is “beard” repeated? Rather, [it teaches us that] when Moshe saw the anointing oil flow down Aharon’s beard, Moshe rejoiced as if he felt the oil flowing down his own beard.</p>	<p>מדרש ויקרא רבה ג', ו': “כִּשְׁמֶן הַטּוֹב עַל הָרֹאשׁ יוֹרֵד עַל הַזָּקֵן זָקֵן אַהֲרֹן” (תהלים קל"ג, ב'): וְכִי שָׁנִי זָקֵנִים הָיוּ לְאַהֲרֹן וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ הַזָּקֵן זָקֵן, אֲלֵא כִּינּוֹן שְׂרָאָה מִשָּׂה אֶת הַשְּׁמֶן יוֹרֵד עַל זָקֵן אַהֲרֹן הָיָה שְׂמֵחַ כְּאִלוֹ עַל זָקֵנוּ יֵרֵד.</p>
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Translation from: ¹Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition;

²Artscroll Midrash Rabbah, Kleinman edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) What is the connection between Aharon rejoicing over his brother’s rise to prominence and his worthiness to wear the *Urim v’Tumim*? When the Jewish people seek Divine guidance, the *Kohen Gadol* (high priest) conveys their inquiry to Hashem through the *Urim v’Tumim* which he carries in the breastplate (*Choshen*) over his heart. Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz explains that in order for the *Urim v’Tumim* to be a vehicle for Heavenly guidance during the Jewish people’s difficulties, the *Kohen Gadol* must have a heart of empathy, who identifies with the feelings of a person in his moment of distress. Rav Shmuelevitz states: “*The magnanimous heart that holds within it the exalted middah to rejoice in another’s happiness,*” i.e., Aharon’s heart that rejoiced over Moshe’s selection as the redeemer of Israel, “*is sensitized to feel the heart of each Jew, and therefore, precisely is the place for the Urim v’Tumim to rest upon*” (Ref. 25).

- 3) The verse in Parshas Tetzaveh pertaining to the *Urim v’Tumim* (Shemos 28: 30), states: “*Aharon shall bear the judgment of the Children of Israel on his heart before Hashem, constantly,*” which is interpreted by the *Sforno*: “*So that he will pray on their behalf that they would emerge meritorious in judgment.*” Rav Matisyahu deduces that Aharon’s merit, whereby Hashem would answer his prayers on behalf of the Jewish people, was directly linked to his *ma’alah* of *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, feeling their pain as his own personal distress. This serves as a lesson for all generations, that ***the effectiveness of our prayers on behalf of others, is directly proportional to the degree we experience their pain as our own*** (Ref. 26).

- 4) The Midrash Vayikra (Source II-12c), notes that Moshe reciprocated Aharon’s *Nesiah B’ol* of shared joy. When Moshe saw the anointing oil flow down Aharon’s beard during his inauguration as *Kohen Gadol*, Moshe rejoiced as if he felt the oil flowing down his own beard. The Midrash derives this from the apparent redundancy of the word “beard” in Tehillim 133:2 (“*Like the precious oil ... upon the beard, the beard of Aharon*”). Rabbi Dovid Rifkind (Ref. 45) cites Rav Shmuelevitz’s explanation of this Midrash: Moshe’s joy over Aharon’s inauguration was as great as if Moshe himself had been the one inaugurated. Although it would have been natural for Moshe to feel a twinge of jealousy over Aharon’s selection for the *Kehunah Gedolah* (high priesthood), the bond and unity between them was such that the only emotion experienced by Moshe was his joy for Aharon’s greatness. Thus, the previous verse (Tehillim 133:1), “*Behold, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers, moreover in unity,*” so aptly describe the relationship of Moshe and Aharon.

- 5) Previously (in Section II-A-7, pp. 13-14), we discussed the challenge of authentically rejoicing in another person’s good fortune - as if it was our own. This challenge would be magnified if the other person’s good fortune appears to come at the expense of our own success. Aharon could easily have viewed Moshe’s rise to leadership as an infringement on his personal “career” as the leader of the Jews, the very position Aharon held for many decades before Moshe’s return to Egypt. Yet, not only was Aharon not distressed, he actually rejoiced over Moshe’s ascent to greatness. How appropriate is Rav Pogromansky’s declaration, that a person who rejoices over another

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person's happiness as if it was his own, is an angel! (Ref. 7). Aharon HaKohen truly emulated the ways of Hashem who rejoices in the good tidings of the Jewish people, as described in the verse, *"like the appearance of the heavens in purity"* (Source II-5a, p. 13).

AHARON HAKOHEN'S *NESIAH B'OL*: REJOICING IN ANOTHER PERSON'S GOOD FORTUNES

- ❖ Aharon rejoiced when Moshe was designated as the leader of the Jewish people, as if it was his own personal good fortune. Moshe reciprocated this exalted *Nesiah B'ol* by rejoicing when Aharon was anointed to become the *Kohen Gadol*, as if he himself was anointed.
- ❖ Our fellow's good fortune should gladden us as if we enjoyed the same good fortune (*Tomer Devorah*, Source III-3, p. 31).
- ❖ One who rejoices in another's good fortune as if it was his own, is like an angel! (Rav Pogramasky).
- ❖ The effectiveness of our prayers on behalf of others, is directly proportional to the degree we experience their pain as our own (Rav Matisyahu).

E) Rebbi Akiva's *Nesiah B'ol*: The hidden promise of greatness seen by his wife, Rochel:

- 1) The humble beginnings of Rebbi Akiva is described in several Talmudic volumes. Rebbi Akiva described his early existence as an *Am Ha'aretz* (ignoramus), who used to say, *"Who will give me a Torah scholar so that I will bite him like a donkey?"* (Pesachim 49b). At the age of forty, he had not even learned the Aleph-Beis (Avos D'Rebbi Nosson 6:2). Yet, while working as a shepherd, a most lowly profession (per the Midrash Tehillim, 23:2), the Gemara (Kesuvos 62b) says that Rochel, the daughter of his employer, Ben Kalbah Savuah, noticed that the unlearned Akiva was modest and had a refined character (*"צניע ומעלי"*). Astoundingly, this observation was enough evidence of his potential greatness in the eyes of the pious Rochel, to marry him in exchange for his commitment to go off and study Torah - at the cost of being cut off from her father's vast wealth! Rav Aharon Kahn asks (Ref. 5), what did Rochel see in this lowly shepherd to be willing to sacrifice so much? It seems inexplicable for the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Israel, to choose a life of abject poverty for the pipe dream of making a Talmid Chachom out of a forty year old shepherd, when her father would have married her to one of finest young Torah scholars, while lavishly providing for all their needs?
- 2) The Midrash Rabbah states that Hashem examines righteous individuals to determine if they are worthy of leading the Jewish people, by the manner that they herd sheep (Source II-13). Dovid HaMelech, as a young shepherd, took pains to ensure that the different groups of sheep were tended with sensitivity, according to the individual vulnerabilities and strengths of each group. Moshe Rabbeinu apologized to the little goat that ran away: *You were trying to "tell" me how thirsty you were, how it must have pained you that I did not hear you!* (as explained by Rav Matisyahu Salomon, Ref. 16). G-d saw the exquisite sensitivity of Moshe and Dovid, their attentiveness to the needs and vulnerabilities of the animals in their care. This was the "test" that they passed, determining their readiness to lead Hashem's flock. Rav Friedlander (Ref. 18), and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu and Rav Kahn

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explain that the *ma'alah* which Hashem observed in Moshe and Dovid, based on the manner in which they cared for their flock, was their *Nesiah B'ol*, the very *ma'alah* that is critical for communal leadership. Rav Kahn suggests, when the Gemara states that Rochel saw Rebbi Akiva's refined character, it refers to his *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* that was evident to her as he tended the flock. As described above (II-C-9, pp. 22-23), the devoted shepherd who faithfully tends to the needs of his flock in the heat and cold, certainly has developed the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol* toward humans as well. The premise of Rochel's belief in Rebbi Akiva's potential, is that greatness in Torah is contingent on greatness in *Nesiah B'ol*. Rochel saw Rebbi Akiva's capacity to be *Nosei B'ol*; thus, she was confident that he would rise to become a great Torah leader, if given the opportunity to go and learn. For this, she was ready to exchange all the earthly privileges that she was raised with, for a life of sleeping on straw. Such was her confidence in Rebbi Akiva's future success as a Torah leader – based on his exquisite *Nesiah B'ol* !

Source II-13: Shemos Rabbah: Hashem tests the righteous through their manner of tending to the sheep.

... And whom does Hashem examine? The righteous individual, as it is stated, "*Hashem examines the righteous one.*" And with what does He examine him? With the herding of sheep. Hashem tested David with sheep and found him to be a fine shepherd ... He would restrain the larger sheep from before the smaller sheep. First, he would bring out the smaller ones to pasture so that they would pasture the soft grass. Then, he would bring out the aged ones so that they would pasture the grass of the middle grade of softness. Lastly, he would bring out the robust ones, so that they would eat the tough grass. HKB"H, said, "One who knows to tend the sheep, each according to its strength, shall come and tend My people." HKB"H also tested Moshe with sheep. Our Sages related: Once, when Moses, our teacher, peace unto him, was shepherding Yisro's sheep in the wilderness, a goat-kid ran away from him and he chased after it until it reached a thicket – where it found a pool of water, and the goat-kid stopped to drink. When Moshe reached the goat-kid, he said, "I did not know that you were running because of thirst; you must be exhausted!" He thereupon carried it on his shoulder and walked back. HKB"H said, "Just as you possess the requisite compassion to lead the sheep belonging to human flesh and blood, so, too, by your life, you will tend My sheep." Thus, our verse states, "*And Moshe was shepherding, etc.*"

מדרש שמות רבה ב', ב':

... ולמי בוחן, לצדיק, וְשֹׁאֵמֵר (תהלים י"א, ה):
"ה' צדיק יבְחֹן". ובמה הוא בוחן? במרעה צאן.
בְּדַם לְדוֹד בְּצֵאן וּמִצֵּאן רֹעֵה יָפֵה ... הֲיֵה מוֹנֵעַ
הַגְּדוֹלִים מִפְּנֵי הַקְּטָנִים, וְהֵה מוֹצִיא הַקְּטָנִים לְרֵעוֹת,
כְּדִי שְׂיִרְעוּ עֵשֶׂב הַרֹף, וְאַחַר כֵּן מוֹצִיא הַזְּקֵנִים כְּדִי
שְׂיִרְעוּ עֵשֶׂב הַבִּינוּנִית, וְאַחַר כֵּן מוֹצִיא הַבְּחוּרִים
שְׂיִהְיוּ אוֹכְלֵי עֵשֶׂב הַקָּשָׁה. אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,
"מִי שֶׁהוּא יוֹדֵעַ לְרֵעוֹת הַצֵּאן אִישׁ לְפִי כחוֹ, יבֵא
וְיִרְעֵה בְּעַמִּי". וְאַף מִשֶּׁה לֹא בְּחֵנוּ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
אֵלָּא בְּצֵאן, אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, כְּשֶׁהָיָה מִשֶּׁה רַבִּינוּ עָלָיו
הַשְּׁלוֹם רֹעֵה צֵאנוּ שֶׁל יִתְרוֹ בְּמִדְבָר, בָּרַח מִמֶּנּוּ גְּדִי,
וְרַץ אַחֲרָיו עַד שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְחֶסֶת. כִּינֹן שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְחֶסֶת
נִדְמָנָה לוֹ בְּרִכָּה שֶׁל מַיִם, וְעַמֵּד הַגְּדִי לִשְׁתוֹת, כִּינֹן
שֶׁהִגִּיעַ מִשֶּׁה אֵצְלוֹ, אָמַר "אֲנִי לֹא הֵיטִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׂרַץ
הֵיטִי מִפְּנֵי צָמָא, עֲנֵף אֲתָה", הִרְכִּיבוּ עַל כְּתָפוֹ וְהֵה
מֵהַלֵּךְ. אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, "יֵשׁ לָךְ רַחֲמִים לְנֶהֱג
צֵאנוּ שֶׁל בְּשֵׁר וְנָדָם כֵּן חֲזִיף אֲתָה תִרְעֵה צֵאנִי
יִשְׂרָאֵל", הָנוּי: "וּמִשֶּׁה הֵה רֹעֵה".

*Translation from: Artscroll Midrash Rabbah, Kleinman edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 3) We now know that Rebbi Akiva became one of the greatest Torah leaders, validating his wife's amazing belief in him. However, asks Rav Kahn, since the premise of Rochel's belief was that greatness in Torah requires greatness in the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, do we have any evidence that Rebbi Akiva became a great *Nosei B'ol*?

Section II: Who are our models of a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

- 4) Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 27) and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Kahn, cite an awesome story about Rebbi Akiva (Source II-14) which demonstrates his outstanding *Nesiah B'ol*, on a level of unfathomable *Mesiras Nefesh* (supreme sacrifice). Rebbi Akiva was in such pain over the plight of a doomed soul suffering in *Gehinnom* who was reviled by his own townspeople, that he wandered from city to city to find the surviving son of the deceased man and teach him Torah. After his attempt to teach the boy Torah failed, Rebbi Akiva fasted for forty days to appeal for Heavenly mercy on behalf of the child. Even a Heavenly voice questioning the worthiness of Rebbi Akiva's mission, "*For the son of such an evil person, you are fasting!*," could not shake Rebbi Akiva's resolve. He redoubled his efforts until succeeding in teaching the child, ultimately rescuing the father from *Gehinnom*. Rav Kahn concludes: "*It is unbelievable. For Rebbi Akiva, the world stops for the son of a Rasha (evil person), to take him out of Gehinom!*"

Source II-14: ¹Reishis Chochmah: Rebbi Akiva's outstanding *Nesiah B'ol* while rescuing a soul from *Gehinnom*.

Rebbi Akiva was once in a cemetery and encountered a man who was blackened like charcoal, carrying a load of wood on his shoulders, and running like a horse. Rebbi Akiva commanded him to halt and asked him, "My son, why do you work so hard? If you are a slave and your master placed this massive yoke on you, I shall redeem you and set you free. If you are poor, I shall make you rich." The man replied, "Please leave me [my master], I am not allowed to stand still." Rebbi Akiva asked him, "Are you from human folk or from the demons?" The man replied, "I am already deceased; each day they force me to chop wood after which they burn me with it." Rebbi Akiva inquired, "What was your work while you were alive?" The man replied, "I was a tax-collector. I would favor the rich and kill the poor. Not only this, but I violated a betrothed maiden on Yom Kippur." Rebbi Akiva asked him, "My son, did you ever hear from [the angels] overseeing you if there is a way to rectify [your suffering]?" The man replied, "Please, do not delay me, lest the [angels of] punishment become angry at me, for I have no rectification or redemption. However, I heard my overseers tell me, 'If you have a son who would stand before the congregation and exclaim, 'ברכו את ה' המבורך', we would release you from punishment. However, I [died] without a son; I left my wife pregnant and I don't know if she gave birth to a boy or a girl. And if she has given birth to a boy, who will teach him Torah [for there is no one in the world who cares about me]?' ... At that moment, Rebbi Akiva became very distressed about this man's plight and traveled from city to city until he reached the deceased man's city and inquired, "Where is [his survivor's] residence?" They replied, "May his bones be ground to dust in *Gehinnom*." He asked about his wife and they replied, "May her name and memory be obliterated from the world." He inquired about the child. They replied, "He is uncircumcised; [no one] undertook the Mitzvah of Bris Milah [on the

ראשית חכמה. פרק "גידול בנים":

מעשה בר' עקיבא שהיה בבית הקברות ופגע באדם אחד שחור כפחם שהיה טוען עצים על כתיפו ומרהיט בהן כסוס. גזר עליו ר' עקיבא והעמידו. אמר לו (א"ל): "בני מה לך בעבודה קשה כזאת, אם עבד אתה ואדונך נתן עליך עול כבד, אני אפדאך ממנו ואוציאך לחירות; ואם אתה עני אני אעשירך". א"ל: "הניחני אדוני, איני יכול לעמוד". א"ל: "מבני אדם אתה או מבני מזיקין אתה?" א"ל: "מת אותו האיש מת ובכל יום ויום מוסרין אותו לחטוב עצים ונותנין אותו באש". א"ל: "מה מלאכתך בחיידך?" א"ל: "גבאי המכס הייתי, והייתי נושא פנים לעשירים והורג את העניים; ולא עוד אלא שבעלתי נערה מאורסה ביום הכיפורים". א"ל: "בני כלום שמא [שמעת] מאותן הממונין עליך אם יש לך תקנה?" א"ל: "אל תעכבני שמא ירגזו עלי בעלי הפורעניות ולאותו האיש אין לו תקנה ולא פדיון. אלא שמעתי מאותם הממונים שהיו אומרים לי 'אם היה לך בן שעומד בצבור ואומר 'ברכו את ה' המבורך' היינו מתירין לך מן הפורענות'. ולאותו איש אין לו בן אלא שהניח אשתו מעוברת ואינו יודע מה ילדה, זכר או נקבה, ואם ילדה זכר, מי ילמדנו תורה [שאין לאותו האיש אהוב בעולם]..." באותה שעה נצטער עליו ר' עקיבא והיה הולך מעיר לעיר עד שהגיע לעירו ושאל: "היכן הוא ביתו". אמרו: "ישחקו עצמותיו בגהינם". שאל על אשתו, אמרו: "ימחה שמה וזכרה מן העולם". שאל על בנו.

Section II: Who are our models of a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

boy's behalf]." Immediately, Rabbi Akiva took the boy and circumcised him, and sat [with] him to teach him Torah. The boy did not learn Torah until Rabbi Akiva fasted forty days for him. A Heavenly voice rang out and said, "For [the son] of such an [evil] person, you are fasting?!" Rabbi Akiva answered, "Yes!" He [taught the boy to] read Aleph-Beis, brought him to his home and taught him Birkas HaMazon, Keriyas Shema, Tefillah and arranged for the child to pray before the congregation and recite, "ברכו את ה' המבורך". At this time, the deceased man was released from punishment. He came to Rabbi Akiva in a dream and told him, "May your soul rest in Gan Eden just as you have saved me from the judgment of Gehinnom. Immediately, Rabbi Akiva exclaimed (Tehillim 135): "*Hashem, Your Name is everlasting; Hashem, Your memory is for all generations.*"

אמרו: "הרי ערל הוא, ואפילו במצות מילה לא עסק". מיד תפס ר' עקיבא לבו ומל אותו והושיבו לפניו ללמוד תורה, ולא היה לומד עד שישב עליו בתענית מ' יום. יצתה בת קול ואמרה: "על זה אתה מתענה?!". אמר: "הן!" וקרא אל"ף ביי"ת והוליקו לביתו ולמדו ברכת המזון וקריאת שמע ותפילה, והעמידו והתפלל בצבור ואמר "ברכו את ה' המבורך". באותה שעה הסירוהו מן הפרענות ובאו בחלום ואמר לר' עקיבא: "תנוח דעתך בגן עדן שהצלתני מדינה של גיהנם". מיד פתח ר' עקיבא ואמר: "יהי שמך ה' לעולם ה' זכרך לדור ודור".

¹Minor portions filled in from *Sefer Or Zaruah* (vol. 2:50). ²The deceased person often speaks in the 3rd person when referring to himself.

- 5) Rav Kahn points out, what is the common special attribute that both Rabbi Akiva and his wife, Rochel, shared? They were both able to see the redeemable essence of a person beneath the seemingly unworthy external veneer. Rochel saw the inner qualities in a lowly shepherd – i.e., his *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* – that if tended with care, would enable him to sprout forth into one of the greatest Torah leaders. Rabbi Akiva saw the potential of the deceased man's descendants to change their spiritual destiny and redeem his soul. Rabbi Akiva was not put off by the deceased person's reviled status, as different as it was from his own exalted spiritual level. Even though the person was already beyond this world, seemingly doomed in an unreachable purgatory, Rabbi Akiva felt the plight of his soul so keenly, unwilling to stop until the redeemable good seed could be extracted from that family tree, saving it from destruction. From here, explains Rav Kahn, we see the depth of Rabbi Akiva's vision, penetrating beyond the veil of evil and despair to always find and extract the good kernel in every situation. No wonder he always was able to say, "*All that the Merciful One does is for the good*" (Berachos 60b-61a). Similarly, it took Rabbi Akiva's penetrating vision and unflagging resolve to always seek the good, to comfort his fellow Rabbis who were dismayed upon seeing a fox emerging from the ruins of the Beis HaMikdash (Makkos 24b; Eichah Rabbah 5:18). From this appalling sight, Rabbi Akiva saw the sprouting of the happy prophesy: "*Old men and women will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem ... filled with boys and girls playing in the streets*" (Zecharya 8:5).

REBBI AKIVA'S *NESIAH B'OL*:

THE PROMISE OF GREATNESS SEEN BY HIS WIFE, ROCHEL

- ❖ Rabbi Akiva's unflagging resolve to see the good, enabled him to empathize with, and endeavor to improve his fellow's plight with great *Mesiras Nefesh*, exemplifying an exalted level of *Nesiah B'ol*.
- ❖ Rabbi Akiva's capacity to be *Nosei B'ol*, was the quality that his wife, Rochel, with her great vision, realized would enable him to become a great Torah leader, if given the opportunity to learn.

Section III: What is the reason for the imperative to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

III. What is the reason for the imperative to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

A) The Mitzvah of “following in G-d's ways”: Being *Nosei B'ol* emulates Hashem's ways:

THE MITZVAH OF EMULATING HASHEM'S WAYS AND *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO*

- ❖ The Mitzvah of emulating Hashem's ways is derived from either “ואנוהו” or “והלכת בדרכיו”.
- ❖ The Mitzvah of emulating Hashem's ways directs us to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*.

1) Section II-A (pp. 10-14) presented several sources describing Hashem's solidarity with the Jewish nation's suffering and His sharing in our pain. Therefore, the Mitzvah of emulating Hashem's ways would obligate us to emulate His *Nesiah B'ol*, i.e., the Divine *middah* of “לשארית נהלתו” (Rav Wolbe, Ref. 9). The imperative to emulate Hashem's ways is derived by Chazal from several sources in different Talmudic volumes. In the Gemara Shabbos, the word, “ואנוהו” (Shemos 15:2), is homiletically interpreted as “אני והוא” – “*me and Him* (Hashem),” from which we derive the Mitzvah to “*be like Him, just as He is gracious and compassionate, you too, should be gracious and compassionate*” (Source III-1).

Source III-1: Gemara Shabbos 133b; and Rashi: Mitzvah to emulate G-d's attributes is derived from “ואנוהו”.

<p>It was taught in a Braisa: Scripture states (Shemos 15:2): “<i>This is my G-d and I will beautify Him</i>” ... Abba Shaul says the word “ואנוהו” implies: Be like Him – just as [G-d] is gracious and compassionate, you too, should be gracious and compassionate.</p>	<p>גמרא מסכת שבת דף קל"ג ע"ב: דתניא "זה קלי ואנוהו" (שמות טו, ב) ... אבא שאול אומר: "ואנוהו": הוי דומה לו. מה הוא חנון ורחום, אף אתה היה חנון ורחום.</p>
<p>Rashi – Be like Him: The word “ואנוהו” denotes, “me and Him,” i.e., I will make myself like Him, i.e., by cleaving to His ways.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה הוי דומה לו: ולשון אנוהו אני והוא, אעשה עצמי כמותו לדבק בדרכיו.</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

2) The Rambam in Sefer HaMitzvos derives the Mitzvah of emulating G-d's ways from the Torah's words, “והלכת בדרכיו” (you shall go in His ways): “*The 8th mitzvah is that we are commanded to emulate G-d, exalted is He, to the best of our ability. This Mitzvah is explained: ‘Just as HKB”H is called gracious, you too, should be gracious. Just as HKB”H is called compassionate, you too, should be compassionate’*” (Source III-2). The Rambam's words are based on the *Sifri* (Source VII-11, p. 67). A similar derivation is found in Gemara Mesechta Sotah 14a.

Source III-2: Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos): Mitzvah to emulate G-d's attributes is derived from “והלכת בדרכיו”.

<p>The 8th Mitzvah is that we are commanded to emulate HKB”H, exalted be He, to the best of our ability. The source of this commandment is, “<i>And you shall go in His ways.</i>” This commandment is repeated in the verse, “<i>To go in all His ways.</i>” This is explained (in the <i>Sifri</i>): “<i>Just as HKB”H is called gracious, you too, should be gracious. Just as HKB”H is called</i></p>	<p>ספר המצוות לרמב"ם: עשה ח': והמצוה השמינית היא שצונו להדמות בו יתעלה כפי היכולת, והוא אמרו (דברים כ"ח, ט'): "והלכת בדרכיו". וכבר נכפל זה הצווי ואמר (דברים י"א, כ"ב): "ללכת בכל דרכיו", ובא בפירושו: "מה הקב"ה נקרא חנון, אף אתה היה חנון; מה הקב"ה נקרא רחום, אף אתה היה</p>
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Section III: What is the reason for the imperative to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

compassionate, you too, should be compassionate.” ... The explanation (of this Mitzvah) is to emulate the good deeds and fine attributes which are used to allegorically describe G-d, exalted be He, Who is immeasurably exalted over everything.

רחום” ... ובא בפירוש שרצה לומר ההדמות בפעולותיו הטובות והמדות הנכבדות שיתואר בהם הקל יתעלה על צד המשל, יתעלה על הכל עילוי רב.

Translation from: Chabad.org

- 3) In *Sefer Tomer Devorah*, the Ramak describes the imperative to emulate Hashem’s *middah* of “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ” (Source III-3). Hashem experiences our pain and cannot bear to see us suffer because of His “שְׂאָר”-intimate familial relationship with us (Source II-1b, p. 11). Similarly, the close familial bonds within the Jewish people, which the Ramak describes as the “שְׂאָר בְּשָׂר”-bond between fellow Jews, dictate that a fellow Jew’s suffering would pain each of us, just as the members of a close family are pained when anyone of them is in distress. Likewise, our common bond would dictate that another person’s good fortune would bring us joy.

Source III-3: *Tomer Devorah: Middah 4: Emulating the Divine middah of “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ” by being Nosei B'ol with our fellow Jews* (continuation from Source II-1b, p. 11):

[G-d’s *middah* of “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ” serves] as the template how each person [should treat] his fellow. All Jews are close familial relations (“שְׂאָר בְּשָׂר”) with another because our souls are combined together. Every Jew has within himself a portion of another Jew’s soul. Therefore, the merit of a large group who perform Mitzvos is incomparable to the merit of a small group, because their souls are combined ... For this reason, all Jews are responsible for one another because each Jew has within himself a portion of every other Jew. When a person sins, he harms not only himself, but also the portion of a fellow Jew’s soul included within him. Due to their shared soul, he is responsible for the other; thus, they are like one flesh. Therefore, it is fitting to seek the benefit of our fellow, we should be pleased with our fellow’s success, and his honor should be as dear to us as our own since we are in fact one and the same ... We should not speak about nor desire our fellow’s disgrace or pain just as HKB”H does not want our disgrace or pain since we are His close relatives. [Our fellow’s pain] should cause us anguish as if we were immersed in the same pain ourselves. [Likewise, our fellow’s good fortune should gladden us as if we experienced] the same good fortune ourselves.

ספר תומר דבורה א', ד':
 כָּף הָאָדָם עִם חֲבֵרוֹ, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵם שְׂאָר בְּשָׂר אֵלָיו עִם אֵלָיו, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמוֹת כְּלוּלוֹת יַחַד, יֵשׁ בְּזֶה חֵלֶק זֶה וּבְזֶה חֵלֶק זֶה, וְלִכְךָ אֵינּוּ דוֹמֶה מְרַבִּים הַעוֹשִׂים אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת וְכָל זֶה מִפְּנֵי כְּלוּתָם ... וְכֵן מִטַּעַם זֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרָבִים זֶה לְזֶה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁמִּמֶּשׁ יֵשׁ בְּכָל אֶחָד חֵלֶק אֶחָד מִחֲבֵרוֹ וְכִשְׁחוּטָא הָאֶחָד פּוֹגֵם אֶת עַצְמוֹ וּפּוֹגֵם חֵלֶק אֲשֶׁר לְחֲבֵרוֹ בּוֹ. וְנִמְצָא מִצַּד הַחֵלֶק הַהוּא חֲבֵרוֹ עֲרָב עֲלָיו, אִם כֵּן הֵם שְׂאָר זֶה עִם זֶה. וְלִכְךָ רְאוּי לְאָדָם לְהִיטֵף חֲפִץ בְּטוֹבָתוֹ שֶׁל חֲבֵרוֹ, וְעֵינּוּ טוֹבָה עַל טוֹבַת חֲבֵרוֹ, וְכַבּוּדוֹ יִהְיֶה חֲבִיב עָלָיו כְּשֵׁלוֹ, שֶׁהָרִי הוּא – הוּא מִמֶּשׁ ... וְלֹא יִדְבַר בְּגִנוּתוֹ כְּלָל וְלֹא יִרְצֶה בּוֹ, כְּדֶרֶךְ שְׂאִין הַקִּבְ"ה רוֹצֵה בְּגִנוּתוֹ וְלֹא בְּצַעֲרָנוּ מִטַּעַם הַקְּרִבָּה, אִף הוּא לֹא יִרְצֶה בְּגִנוּת חֲבֵרוֹ וְלֹא בְּצַעֲרוֹ וְלֹא בְּקִלְקוּלוֹ, וְיִרַע לוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ כְּאֵלּוּ הוּא מִמֶּשׁ הִיָּה נְשְׂרוּי בְּאוֹתוֹ צַעַר, אוֹ בְּאוֹתָהּ טוֹבָה.

Translation adapted from: *The Elucidated Tomer Devorah*, by Rabbi Shmuel Meir Riachi, Feldheim Publishers.

- 4) The Rambam in *Pirkei Hatzlocha* writes that every person has the ability to attain a level of perfection approaching that of Moshe Rabbeinu. Rav Chatzkel applies the Rambam’s premise to assert that everyone is capable of attaining a level of *Nesiah B'ol* close to that of Moshe Rabbeinu (Ref. 13). Previously (Section II-B, pp. 15-19), we noted that Moshe Rabbeinu abandoned his palatial office and his princely attire to join in the suffering of his brethren in Egypt. By virtue of his supreme *Nesiah B'ol*, Moshe emulated the ways of Hashem

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who constantly “leaves” His Heavenly abode to attend to all the minute details of our daily lives (Rav Chatzkel, Ref. 17). In Section VII-C-4-6 (pp. 65-66), we will see that Moshe Rabbeinu’s *Nesiah B’ol* drove him to the highest level of *Mesiras Nefesh* (self-sacrifice), offering to surrender his life for the Jewish people’s survival. How then, can we presume that every person can reach Moshe Rabbeinu’s exalted level of *Nesiah B’ol*? Rav Chatzkel explains, certainly within the laws of natural behavior (בדרך הטבע), it is impossible to reach such a level of *Mesiras Nefesh* for another person. However, when Hashem created us **b’Tzelem Elokim* (in the Divine image), He endowed us with the ability to emulate His *middah* of “לשאריית נחלתו”, i.e., His *Nesiah B’ol*, thereby enabling us to transcend any natural limitation. Therefore, even Moshe Rabbeinu’s exalted level of *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* is within our reach.

*see p. 58 for explanation of the *Tzelem Elokim* concept

THE MITZVAH OF EMULATING HASHEM’S WAYS AND *NOSEI B’OL IM CHAVEIRO* (SUMMARY)

- ❖ The Mitzvah of emulating Hashem’s ways mandates that we emulate His Divine empathy (i.e., the Divine *middah* of “לשאריית נחלתו”), i.e., to be *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*.
- ❖ When Hashem created us in His Divine image (*b’Tzelem Elokim*), He empowered us to reach levels of *Nesiah B’ol* that transcend any natural limitation, just as Moshe Rabbeinu attained.
- ❖ The “שָׂאֵר בְּשָׂר” (close familial) bonds within the Jewish nation enable each Jew to feel his fellow’s pain, just as members of a close family would feel for each other.

B) Being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* promotes unity (*Achdus*) within the Jewish people:

NOSEI B’OL IM CHAVEIRO AND UNIFICATION OF JEWISH SOULS - “איחוד הנפשות”

- ❖ When the Jewish people become “אגדה אחת” – one unified group (literally: “one bundle”) – we create a welcome abode for the Shechinah (the Divine Presence) and we affirm G-d’s sovereignty.
- ❖ Jewish unity (*Achdus*) is expressed as “נפש אחת” – one unified soul, i.e., a single spiritual entity.
- ❖ Because we exist as a single entity, we are “spiritually wired” to share the feelings of our fellow Jew.

- 1) The Midrash offer comforting words regarding the dark times which sadly often confront us: “*When times are dark for you, [be reassured that] the Holy One, blessed is He, is destined to illuminate you with eternal light*” (Source III-4). However, there is one stipulation: To merit this illumination by the Shechinah (the Divine Presence), we must become “אגדה אחת” - one unified group (literally: one bundle). Only by existing as a unified nation, do we create a welcome abode for the Shechinah. This Midrash illustrates how critical our Jewish unity (*Achdus*) is: “*Israel will not be redeemed until they become ‘אגדה אחת’ - one unified group.*” When we will be unified, we will welcome the countenance of the Shechinah at our final redemption. A similar Midrash states (Source VII-8, p. 65), when we are “אגדה אחת”, we affirm (or strengthen) Hashem’s throne, so to speak.

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Source III-4: Midrash Tanchuma: When we become one united group, we will welcome the Shechinah.

“*You are standing today*”: Just as the day sometimes illuminates and sometimes darkens, so too, when [times are] dark for you, HKB”H is destined to illuminate you with eternal light, as stated, “*G-d will be an eternal light for you.*” When? When you all become one bundle (i.e., a unified group), as stated, “*You are all alive today.*” In the way of the world, if one takes a bundle of reeds, will he be able to break them in one stroke? [Obviously, not!] However, if he takes them one by one, even a baby can break them. So too, you find that Israel will not be redeemed until they became one bundle (“אגדה אחת”), as stated, “*In those days and at that time – the word of G-d – the Children of Israel will come, they together with the Children of Judah.*” When they will be unified, they will welcome the countenance of the Divine Presence. (Translation from: Sefaria.org).

מדרש תנחומא, נצבים א', א': "אתם נצבים היום" (דברים כט ט): מה היום מאיר פְּעָמִים ומאפיל פְּעָמִים, אף אתם כְּשֶׁאֶפְלָה לְכֶם, עֲתִיד לְהֵאִיר לְכֶם אִזְרַח עֹלָם, שְׁנֵאָמַר (ישעיה ס: יט): "וְהָיָה לָךְ ה' לְאִזְרַח עֹלָם". אִימְתִי, בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁתֵּהִיּוּ פְּלֶכֶם אֶגְדָּה אַחַת, שְׁנֵאָמַר (דברים ד: ד): "סִיִּים כְּלֶכֶם הַיּוֹם". בְּנֵהֶג שְׂבָעֹלָם, אִם נוֹטֵל אֶדְם אֶגְדָּה שֶׁל קִנִּים, שְׂמָא יָכֹל לְשַׁבְּרָם בְּכַת אַחַת ? וְאֵלּוּ נוֹטֵל אַחַת אַחַת, אֶפְלוּ תִינּוֹק מְשַׁבְּרָן. וְכֵן אֶת מוֹצֵא שְׂאִין יִשְׂרָאֵל נִגְאָלוּ עַד שֶׁיְהִיּוּ פֶלֶן אֶגְדָּה אַחַת, שְׁנֵאָמַר (ירמיה נ: ד): "בְּיָמֵים הַהֵמָּה וּבָעֵת הַהִיא נֵאֵם ה' יְבֹאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי יְהוּדָה יַחְדָּו". כְּשֶׁהָיוּ אֶגְדוֹת, מִקְבְּלִין פְּנֵי שְׂכִינָה.

- 2) Rabbi Judah Mischel (Ref. 28) explains that *Achdus* within the Jewish community is not merely a product of common ancestry and history, nor is it a function of loosely affiliated tribes sharing an ideology. Just as sharing DNA sequences within one family is a physical reality with real biological and health ramifications, similarly, *Achdus* is a spiritual reality, expressed by the Midrash as “נפש אחת” - “one soul” (Source III-5), formed by the coalescence of individual Jewish souls into one collective soul.

Source III-5: Midrash Vayikra Rabbah: The Jewish people are considered “one soul” – “נפש אחת”

Chezkiya taught: “*Israel are scattered sheep*” – [why] is Israel likened to a sheep? If a sheep is hurt on its head or another limb (or organ), his entire body feel it. Similarly, with Israel, if one of them sins, everyone feels it ... This is likened it to people on a ship. One of them began drilling underneath himself. The others said to him: “What are you doing?!” He replied: “What do you care - I am only drilling under my own space!” They said to him: “[We care] because the water is rising and sinking the ship!” ... There were 70 souls (members) in Yaakov’s family, but the Torah writes “soul” in the singular: “*All those who descended from Yaakov were seventy souls* (‘שִׁבְעֵים נַפְשׁ’).” Since Yaakov served one G-d, the Torah describes a single soul - “נפש אחת”.

מדרש ויקרא רבה ד', ו': תְּנִי חֲזַקְיָה (ירמיה נ: יז): "שֶׁהָ פְּזוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל", נִמְשְׁלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשֶׂה, מֵהָ שֶׂה הִזָּה לֹקָה עַל רֵאשׁוֹ אוֹ בְּאֶחָד מֵאֲבָרָיו וְכָל אֲבָרָיו מְרַגִּישִׁין, כִּדְ הוּא יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶחָד מֵהוּ הוֹטֵא וְכָל מְרַגִּישִׁין ... מִשָּׁל לְבָנֵי אֶדְם שֶׁהִיוּ יוֹשְׁבֵין בְּסַפִּינָה נֹטֵל אֶחָד מֵהוּ מִקְדָּם וְהִתְחִיל קוֹדֵם תְּחִתּוֹ, אָמְרוּ לוֹ תְּבַרְרוּ מֵהָ אִתָּהּ יוֹשֵׁב וְעוֹשֶׂה, אָמַר לָהֶם מֵהָ אֶכְפֵּת לְכֶם לֹא תַחֲתִי אֲנִי קוֹדֵם, אָמְרוּ לוֹ שֶׁהֵמִים עוֹלִין וּמְצִיפִין עָלֵינוּ אֶת הַסַּפִּינָה ... וּבִינְעֻקֵב שְׂבָעִים נַפְשׁ וְכַתִּיב בֵּיהּ נַפְשׁ אַחַת, דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיְהִי כָּל נַפְשׁ יִצְחָק יִרְדָּה יִעֲקֹב שְׂבָעִים נַפְשׁ" ... יִעֲקֹב שֶׁהוּא עוֹבֵד לְאֵלֹהִים אֶחָד כְּתִיב בּוֹ נַפְשׁ אַחַת, "וַיְהִי כָּל נַפְשׁ וְגו'".

- 3) What are the Halachic and spiritual ramifications of our existence as a collective “נפש אחת”? This phenomenon is the basis for the principle, “כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה” (Shavuot 39a) – “all Jews are responsible for each other,” as explained in *Tomer Devorah*: “*Since the souls of all Jews are combined, when a person sins, he harms not only himself, but also the portion of a fellow Jew’s soul included within him. Due to their shared soul, he is responsible*

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for the other; thus, they are like one flesh” (Source III-3, p. 31). Due to our collective soul, the effects of one person’s behavior reverberate and are felt throughout the entire Jewish nation. The Midrash compares the effects of one person’s sins on the entire nation to a person drilling a hole under his own space on a ship on high seas (Source III-5). It would be foolish for him to say to his fellow passengers, “What do you care? I am only drilling under my own space!”

- 4) Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (in *Sefer Kedushas Levi*; Source III-6), explains that the Shechinah resides among us when we exist as *Kenesses Yisrael* (i.e., an expression of the Jewish nation as a unified entity, akin to the “נפש אחת” description). Furthermore, all Jews are like multiple organs of one body, whereby all the organs “sense” the insult to the body if a serious illness or injury befalls any one organ. Therefore, says Rebbe Levi Yitzchak: “if one individual suffers pain, his fellow Jew will also feel it ... and similarly, if one individual experiences joy, his fellow Jew will also feel his happiness.” In other words, because of our existence as a unified entity, we are “spiritually wired” to share the feelings of our fellow Jew.

Source III-6: Rebbe Levi Yitzchak: Just as multiple limbs of one body, we feel each other’s pain and joy.

The entire *Adas Yisrael* (Congregation of Israel) believes that the One G-d created all of us, and the Shechinah (Divine Presence) resides among us when we exist as *Kenesses Yisrael*, i.e., as a single unified entity. Since all Jewish souls were created from one spiritual origin, if one individual suffers pain, his fellow Jew will also feel it. This is analogous to a person with a serious injury or malady to one organ, whereby his entire body also senses distress ... Likewise, if one individual experiences joy, his fellow Jew will also feel his happiness.

קדושת הלוי, פירושי אגדות, אות כז':

... שהלא כל עדת ישראל מאמינים שקל אחד בראנו וכל ישראל כאחד נקרא כנסת ישראל וזאת נקראת שכונה. ונמצא כשאנחנו באנו (ונשמת ישראל באין) ממצב אחד, כשיש לאחד צער מרגיש גם חברו, כמו אדם אחד כשכואב לו אבר אחד מרגיש כל הגוף צער ... וכשיש לאחד מישראל שמחה גם חברו מרגיש בשמחה.

- 5) **However, the reverse is also true.** The more that we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, the vitality of our close familial (“שאר בשר”) bonds will proportionally be strengthened, transforming us into a more cohesive unit. Rav Chaim Mintz, based on the Malbim on Parshas Terumah, explains that the level of the Shechinah’s presence among us is directly proportional to the extent that we exist as a unified entity (as stated in the Midrash, Source III-4, p. 33). Therefore, Rav Mintz says, when our *Nesiah B'ol* with each other is increased, the *Achdus* (unity) within the Jewish people is proportionally enhanced, thereby preparing a more hospitable dwelling place for the Shechinah among us (Ref. 29). This enhanced dwelling of the Shechinah in our midst, reverses the *Hester Panim* (concealment of Hashem’s presence) which is the cause of all suffering. Accordingly, being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* has a potent beneficial effect of reducing suffering in the world.
- 6) The unification of Jewish souls into one collective entity is expressed by Rav Yeruchem as “איחוד הנפשות” (Source III-7). Rav Yeruchem states the overarching goal of the entire Torah, i.e., all our Torah learning and Mitzvah performance, is that we reach a level of “איחוד הנפשות”, i.e., such an intense unity that we feel each other’s pain (or joy) on a sensorial level. He, therefore, declares that the *ma’alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is the foundation of the entire Torah! (This thought will be further discussed in the Conclusion section, pp. 107-109).

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- 7) Rav Dovid Goldberg states in the name of Rav Aharon Kotler (Ref. 30): The Jewish nation's existence as "נפש אחת" provides the following beneficial effect: Since the souls of all Jews are interconnected, when one Jew acts virtuously, he accrues merit not merely for his own soul, but also for all his fellow Jews, according to the Midrash (Source III-8) which states that the merits of a single righteous person reverberate globally to preserve the entire generation and the entire world. Moreover, Rav Goldberg writes, because of the interconnectivity of Jewish souls, one Jew is influenced by the spiritual elevation of another Jew, so that one person's devotion in any aspect of *Avodas Hashem* (serving G-d) inspires another to similarly elevate himself.

Source III-7: Rav Yeruchem: The goal of the entire Torah is "איחוד הנפשות", the "unification of souls," to the extent that we feel our fellow Jew's feelings on a sensorial level.

We are commanded to "love your fellow as yourself," which means "as yourself" literally. One attains this exalted level through the process of "איחוד הנפשות", the "unification of souls," so that a person's nature becomes transformed to such an extent that he feels the pain of his fellow. This transformation of nature, whereby one person's suffering elicits a reaction in another as if it were his own pain, has as its precedent, the story of the three friends of Iyov, whereby, despite the great distance of 300 *Parsah* between them, nonetheless, they felt Iyov's pain. As the Gemara tells us about the tree signal* which enabled them to feel each other's distress as if no separation existed between them, on account of their mutual love and bond of kinship. Thus, the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* has such great importance because the overarching goal of the entire Torah, both the study of Torah and performance of its *Mitzvos*, is "איחוד הנפשות" - uniting our souls into a single entity - such that we feel each other's pain or happiness etc. This is the meaning of the verse "Who is like Your people, Israel, one nation," – literally "one nation". This is the foundation of the entire Torah ... To be *Nosei B'ol*.

דעת חכמה ומוסר ח"ג. מאמר "ענין האבילות נושא בעול":
... האדם מצווה ב"ואהבת לרעך כמוך", היינו באהבת
הבריות, שיהיה כמוך ממש, היינו איחוד הנפשות, עד
שירגיש האדם בטבעו (היינו טבע רוחני) צער זולתו. כמו
שידוע, ענין שלשה רעי איוב שהיה ביניהם מרחק כשלוש
מאות פרסה, ובכל זאת הרגישו תיכף צער של איוב אף
ממקומו שהיה רחוק מהם כל כך, כידוע מאמרם ז"ל בבא
בתרא סוף פרק ראשון (ט"ז ע"ב), שסימן אילני היה
ביניהם והרגישו תיכף בלי שום חציצה איש את רעהו, מצד
אהבתם איחודם וקישורם כל כך זה בזה ... ולזאת גדול
כל כך ענין של נושא בעול עם חברו, מפני שזה כל התורה
כולה, היינו איחוד הנפשות להרגיש זה את זה, וכל לימוד
התורה, הלימוד והמעשה, הנה סוף המטרה שיתאחדו
הנפשות להיות מרגישים זה את זה שיהיו אחד ממש. וזהו
(שמואל ב' ז', כ"ג) "ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד" ממש.
וזה יסוד כל התורה כולה ... להיות נושא בעול.

*The Gemara (Bava Basra, 16b) mentions two signal systems that Iyov and his three friends had, whereby, in the event any of them was in distress, the signal would immediately alarm the others who would come to his assistance. Rav Yeruchem mentions the tree signal, whereby each of friends had three trees, each engraved with one of the friend's names. When the tree which bore the name of one of the friends withered, they knew that affliction had come upon him. The signal system immediately relayed the information, despite the distance of 300 *Parsah* (approximately 800 miles) separating them! *From*: Artscroll Talmud, Mesorah Publications.

Section III: What is the reason for the imperative to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

Source III-8: Midrash Tanchuma: The positive reverberations of one Jew's righteous behavior are felt globally.

"Your heads, your tribes, all the men of Israel": All of you are responsible for one another. Even if there is only one righteous person (*Tzaddik*) among you, you all shall survive (literally, stand) on account of his merit. Moreover, the entire world will survive in the merit of one *Tzaddik* among you, as stated, "A *Tzaddik* is the foundation for the world." When one person sins, the entire generation is stricken as we find stated by Achan, "Did not Achan ben Zerach commit treachery regarding the consecrated property?" If the entire generation was dealt punishment [on account of one person's sin], how much the more [the generation will be favored] with good fortune [on account of one person's merit] whose measure is much greater than punishment! It is therefore stated, "every person of Israel." (Translation adapted from: Sefaria.org)

מדרש תנחומא, נצבים א', ב': "ראשיתכם שבטיכם כל איש ישראל" (דברים כט: ט): כלכם ערבים זה בזה. אפילו צדיק אחד ביניכם, כלכם עומדים בזכותו. ולא אתם בלבד, אלא אפילו צדיק אחד ביניכם, כל העולם כלו בזכותו עומד, שנאמר (משלי ו: כה): "וצדיק יסוד עולם". וכשאחד מכם חוטא, כל הדור לוקה. וכן אתה מוצא בענין (יהושע כב: כ): "הלא עכן בן זרח מעל מעל בחרם וגו'". מדת פריעניות מועטת, והדור נתפס בה, מדה טובה מרבה, על אחת כמה וכמה. לקח נאמר: "כל איש ישראל".

***NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO* AND UNIFICATION OF JEWISH SOULS - "איחוד הנפשות" (SUMMARY)**

- ❖ Our existence as a unified entity renders the Jewish people as multiple organs of one body and therefore, we are spiritually "wired" to feel each other's pain or joy (Rebbe Levi Yitzchak).
- ❖ The overarching goal of the entire Torah (learning and Mitzvah performance) is that we reach a level of "איחוד הנפשות", i.e., such an intense unity that we feel each other's pain or joy (Rav Yeruchem).
- ❖ Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* fosters unity (*Achdus*), i.e., it intensifies our "נפש אחת" status (as one unified entity), which has many positive effects, including:
 - Our increased unity (*Achdus*) creates a welcome abode for the Shechinah and affirms Hashem's majesty, thus sanctifying Hashem's Name in the world.
 - The enhanced dwelling of the Shechinah in our midst (due to our *Achdus*) reduces suffering in the world.
 - As a consequence of our "נפש אחת" existence, the good deeds of one Jew positively affect and accrue merit for fellow Jews.

C) *Nesiah B'ol* transforms the interpersonal Mitzvos we perform into a service of the heart:

- 1) Rav Wolbe (Ref. 9) declares that *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is the fundamental *middah* that defines all the interpersonal (בין אדם להבירו) Mitzvos we perform: "מדה זו היא מדה שרשית העמוק לכל המצוות שבין אדם להבירו". One might ask: why must we become partners in our friend's pain, to feel it as if it were our own? Why is it insufficient to simply deliver acts of kindness (*Chesed*) to those in need?

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- 2) The acts of *Chesed* we perform, e.g., feeding the hungry, visiting the ill (*Bikur Cholim*) etc., can range across a wide spectrum – from “apathetic and disengaged” at one end – to “empathic and loving” at the opposite end. For example, the Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim*, could be carried out with genuine care, taking pains to ensure that the ill person’s needs are addressed, reassuring him that his wellbeing is of foremost importance on our mind, or we could “pay our visit” merely to do our duty and then leave without giving the person another thought.
- 3) The Rambam in Hilchos Matnos Aniyim (Source III-9a) states, “Anyone who gives charity to a poor person ... should give it to him with a pleasant countenance, with joy (to perform the Mitzvah), commiserating with him about his plight ... he should speak to him words of sympathy and comfort.” The quality of empathizing with the poor person’s plight, receiving him with a countenance that demonstrates a true joy to help him, is the factor that imbues the act of giving charity with a “living spirit”, thereby creating the holy Mitzvah of *Tzedaka* which the Rambam describes as “an identifying mark for a righteous person, a descendant of Avrohom, our Patriarch” (ibid, 10:1). Even when one has nothing to give the poor person, the Rambam says we console him with words. This theme is found in several statements of Chazal including the Midrash Rabbah (Source III-9b) and the Gemara (Bava Basra 9b). Moreover, the Midrash likens one who donates *Tzedaka* with the spirit of empathy to His Creator. Below, we suggest an approach to explain how the empathic *Tzedaka* donor is compared to His Creator.

Source III-9: Rambam (a) and Midrash (b): Empathizing with an indigent person’s sorrow is critical for *Tzedaka*.

<p>4) Anyone who gives charity to a poor person with an unpleasant countenance (with a scowl) and with his face buried in the earth (in a surly manner), loses and destroys his merit even if he gives him one thousand gold pieces. Instead, he should give him [charity] with a pleasant countenance and with happiness, commiserating with the poor person about his troubles, as it states: “<i>Did I not weep for heavily burdened; did not my soul feel sorrow for the destitute?</i>” And he should speak to him words of sympathy and comfort, as it states: “<i>I would bring joyous song to a widow’s heart.</i>”</p> <p>5) If a poor person asks [one for a donation] and he has nothing to give him, he should appease him with words.</p>	<p>רמב"ם, פרק י' מהלכות מתנות עניים, הל' ד-ה: (ד) כָּל הַנּוֹתֵן צְדָקָה לְעֵנִי בְּסִכָּר פָּנִים רְעוּת וּפְנִיּוֹ כְבוֹשׁוֹת בְּקִרְקַע אֶפְלוֹ נִתֵּן לוֹ אֶלֶף זְהוּבִים אֶבֶד זְכוּתוֹ וְהִפְסִידָהּ. אֶלָּא נִתֵּן לוֹ בְּסִכָּר פָּנִים יְפוֹת וּבִשְׂמֻחָה וּמִתְאוֹנֵן עִמּוֹ עַל צָרְתוֹ שְׂנֵאָמֵר (אִיּוֹב ל': כ"ה): "אִם לֹא בְּכִיתִי לְקִשָּׁה יוֹם עֲגָמָה נִפְשִׁי לְאַבְיוֹן", וּמִדְבָּר לוֹ דְּבָרֵי תַחֲנוּנִים וְנַחֲוּמִים שְׂנֵאָמֵר (אִיּוֹב כ"ט: י"ג): "וְלֵב אֶלְמָנָה אֲרַנֵּן". (ה) שָׁאֵל הָעֵנִי מִמֶּה וְאִין בְּיָדְךָ כְּלוּם לָמֵן לוֹ פִּיטְסֵהוּ בְּדְבָרִים.</p>
<p>“<i>[If] you offer your soul to the hungry</i>”: R’ Levi said, If you have nothing to give to [the poor person], console him with words. [For example], say to him: “My soul goes out for you because I have nothing to give you.”</p> <p>“<i>And satisfy the afflicted soul</i>”: If you have done accordingly, then, “<i>Your light will shine in the darkness, and your deepest gloom will be like the noon.</i>”</p> <p>“<i>Then Hashem will guide you always, sate your soul in times of drought (בצחצחות) and strengthen your bones</i>”: R’ Tevyomi said, if you have done accordingly, you are likened to your Creator, as it says, “<i>My Beloved is pure white (צה) and ruddy.</i>”</p>	<p>ויקרא רבה ל"ד: ט"ן: "וְתִפְקֵן לְרַעֲב נִפְשָׁךְ" (ישעיה נח: י-יא): אָמַר רַבִּי לְוִי אִם אִין לָךְ לָמֵן לוֹ נַחֲמוּ בְּדְבָרִים, אָמַר לוֹ: "תַּצֵּא נִפְשִׁי עָלֶיךָ שְׂאִין לִי מֵה לָמֵן לָךְ". "וְנִפְשֵׁךְ נִעְנָה תִשְׁבִּיעַ": אִם עָשִׂיתָ כֵּן, וְנִזְרַח בְּחֶשֶׁךְ אוֹרְךָ וְנִאֲפֵלְתָהּ כְּצִהָרִים". "וְנִנְחָה ה' תְּמִיד וְהִשְׁבִּיעַ בְּצַחְצְחוֹת נִפְשָׁךְ וְעֲצַמְתֶּיךָ יִחְלִיץ": אָמַר רַבִּי טַבִּיּוּמִי אִם עָשִׂיתָ כֵּן הָרִי אֶת כְּבוֹרְאָךְ, כְּאוֹתוֹ שְׂפָתוֹ בּוֹ (שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים ה': י'): "דוֹדֵי צֹחַ וְאֶדוּם".</p>

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- 4) Rav Yeruchem asserts that the essence of *Bikur Cholim* is, “to sense and feel the pain of the ill person in whatever manner possible, for only in this way, one truly alleviates his suffering” (Source III-10). Merely walking into the hospital room to discharge one’s obligation “does not meet the essential parameters of this Mitzvah,” and therefore, would not fulfill the Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim* even at a minimal level. Just as the Rambam described regarding the Mitzvah of *Tzedaka*, Rav Yeruchem teaches us that the *ma’alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* imbues a “living spirit” into mechanical acts of kindness, transforming them into the true “צורה” (form) of the Mitzvah which G-d commanded. Similarly, Rav Wolbe (Source XI-5, p. 99) explains that *Nesiah B'ol* is a critical component of both *Bikur Cholim* and *Nichum Aveilim* (comforting mourners). Perhaps, this why the Sabba of Kelm described *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* as “כליל המעלות” – “the crown of all virtues” (Ref. 21). Hence, Rav Wolbe’s assertion that *Nosei B'ol* is the fundamental *middah* that defines all interpersonal Mitzvos (Ref. 9), is now understandable: Since *Chesed* performed with the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol* is qualitatively transformed from a mere mechanical act to a service of the heart, therefore, this *middah* is a critical component of all interpersonal Mitzvos.

Source III-10: Rav Yeruchem Levovitz: *Nesiah B'ol* is an integral component of the Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim*.

Previously, Rav Yeruchem stated (see Source I-2, p. 5): “To the extent that one places himself into the pain of his friend, he alleviates the friend’s suffering”.

Based on this, we can understand the essence of the Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the ill). One who enters to visit the ill without [the goal of] sharing in his pain, but merely to discharge his obligation of visiting, has not fulfilled the Mitzvah at all, because [this perfunctory activity] does not meet the essential parameters of this Mitzvah. The Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim* entails being “*Nosei B'ol*,” to sense and feel the pain of the ill person in whatever manner possible, for [only] in this way, one truly alleviates [his suffering]. From here we can understand the great obligation for any person, [even] a passer-by who notices an individual encumbered by troubles, to share in his pain. One may ask, “What benefit is it [to the person suffering] if this passer-by also feels pain?” However, based on the above, it emerges that [sharing and feeling another’s pain], is the singular way to be able to alleviate another person’s suffering.

דעת חכמה ומוסר, חלק א', מאמר “רוממות מדת

נושא בעול עם חבירו וגודל חיובה”:

ולפי זה נבין מצות ביקור חולים, כי הנכנס לביקר חולה מבלי שישתתף בצער, אלא רק בכדי לצאת ידי חובת ביקור, לא קיים מצוה זו כלל, דאין זה גדר המצוה. חיוב הביקור הוא להיות “נושא בעול”, לחוש ולהרגיש בצער החולה בכל מאי דאפשר, ובאופן זה מיקל הוא באמת להחולה. ומכאן נבין עד כמה גדול החיוב להעובר ורואה חבירו שסובל שישתתף בצער, שלכאורה מה ירויח זה אם גם העובר יצטער, ולפי דברינו יוצא שרק זה הוא האמצעי היחידי שבו נוכל להקל את יסוריו.

- 5) The notion that *Nesiah B'ol* converts our acts of “giving,” from a mechanical service to a service of the heart, is corroborated by Rav Friedlander: When we are *Nosei B'ol*, “we give someone a piece of our very being” (Source I-3, p. 6). This statement is especially meaningful based on the verse (Yeshayahu 58:10): “[If] you **offer your soul** to the hungry.” The Midrash (Source III-9b, p. 37) interprets the words, “offer your soul,” as consoling the poor person with words: “My soul goes out for you because I have nothing to give you,” thus defining commiserating with the poor person’s sorrow as “giving one’s soul,” which fits Rav Friedlander’s thoughts beautifully.
- 6) The Midrash Rabbah (Source III-11) states that Avrohom personified the verse (Mishlei 21:21), “One who pursues righteousness and kindness ...” because he buried his wife, Sarah, in the Cave of Machpelah. “The Holy One, blessed is He, said to him, ‘My profession is doing of acts of kindness; you took hold of (i.e., adopted) My profession; now go and wear My garment’”. Why was burying his wife deemed such an exceptional *Chesed*, to declare that Avrohom personifies, “One who pursues righteousness and kindness”? The following answer by the

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Shaim MiShmuel (Ref. 31) can be understood based on the definition of a *Ba'al Chesed* by Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 32-34; also Appendix B, pp. 114-116). A *Ba'al Chesed* is a person who has developed his desire to do good for others to such an extent, whereby this desire becomes part and parcel of his personality. This individual's kindness most closely resembles the *Chesed* ascribed to Hashem, Who performs kindness purely out of His love to do good, not because of any obligations on Hashem (there are none!), nor because of the recipient's need. After all, G-d created the world purely to do *Chesed* despite the absence of any preexisting entity that needed His kindness. Even though Avrohom was obligated to bury his wife, he nevertheless carried out this Mitzvah because of his fundamental love for *Chesed*, rather than merely an obligation. Therefore, G-d's statement to Avrohom, "My profession is doing of acts of kindness; you took hold of My profession; now go and wear My garment," is very meaningful. The *Chesed* of Avrohom Avinu was not merely something he did. Rather, it was called Avrohom's "profession" because it defined who he was, just as G-d is described by this *middah*. The Gemara (Sotah 14a) and Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 8:13) state that Hashem visits the sick, adorns brides, comforts mourners and buries the dead. Certainly, Hashem performs these acts of kindness as an expression of His *middah* of pure loving kindness, rather than out of any obligation. Therefore, in order to emulate G-d when we feed the hungry, visit the sick, etc., our actions should be driven by our identification with their pain and desire to ease their suffering. When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, our performance of interpersonal Mitzvos will emanate from a caring and empathic heart; consequently, our *Chesed* will emulate Hashem's *middah* of loving kindness. Perhaps this explains the Midrash (Source III-9b) which likens one who practices *Tzedaka* with the spirit of empathy, to His Creator.

Source III-11: Midrash (Bereishis) Rabbah: Avrohom Avinu adopted G-d's "profession" of *Chesed*.

<p>"Afterwards, Avrohom buried Sarah his wife": This is what it says: <i>"One who pursues righteousness (צדקה) and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor."</i> "One who pursues righteousness" - this is Avrohom, as it says, "[For I love him, because he commands his children and his household after him] that they keep the way of G-d, doing righteousness and justice." "And kindness" – which Avrohom did for Sarah (when he buried her in the Cave of Machpelah). "Will find life" - [as it says]: "the [days of the] years of Avrohom were one hundred and seventy-five years." "Righteousness and kindness" - the Holy One, blessed is He, said to him, "My profession is doing of acts of kindness; you took hold of (i.e., adopted) My profession; now go and wear *My garment," as it states, "Now Avrohom was old, well on in years."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מדרש בראשית רבה נ"ח, ט':</u></p> <p>"ואחרי כן קבר אברהם" (בראשית כ"ג, י"ט): הדא הוא דכתיב (משלי כ"א, כ"א): "רודף צדקה וחסד ימצא חיים צדקה וכבוד". "רדף צדקה", זה אברהם שנאמר (בראשית י"ח, י"ט): "[כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו] ושמרו דרך ה' לעשות צדקה". וחסד, שגמל חסד לשרה. "ימצא חיים" (בראשית כ"ה, ז'): "ושני חיי אברהם מאת שנה ושבעים שנה והמשה שנים". "צדקה וכבוד": אמר רבי שמואל בר יצחק, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא אני אמנותי גומל חסדים, תפשת אמנותי בוא לבש לבושי (בראשית כ"ד, א'): "ואברהם זקן בא בימים".</p>
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*HKB" H revealed Himself to Klal Yisrael on Har Sinai, "כזקן מלא רחמים" – "as an elderly One filled with mercy" (Mechilta, Shemos 20:2).

- 7) Rav Matisyahu (Source III-12), based on Rav Eliyahu Lopian, describes *Chesed* performed with a spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, as "*Chesed which flows from the source of the Jewish soul,*" i.e., I am inspired to help my fellow Jew because I identify with his distress due to our close familial ("שאר בשר") kinship; his pain or unmet need feels as my own. Since I cannot bear this distress, when I perform *Chesed* to help him, I am, fact, rescuing myself from a personal distress (see the Introduction, pp. 1-4, which discusses Rav Matisyahu's theme in greater length). *Chesed* performed with *Nesiah B'ol*, is thus, qualitatively transformed to resemble Hashem's kindness which emanates

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from His *middah* of "לשאריית נהלתו", i.e., He feels our pain and rises to save us, as if He is saving Himself from pain (*Sefer Halkarim*, Source VII-1b, p. 59). In this light, Rav Matisyahu explains the Gemara (Sanhedrin 98b), "What shall one do to be saved from the pains of the Messianic times? Become engrossed with Torah and Chesed," referring to *Chesed* inspired the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, i.e., the "שאר בשר"-kinship between fellow Jews. Rav Matisyahu mentions that Rav Lopian recommends that when performing *Chesed*, one should intend to fulfill the Mitzvah of "והלכת בדרכיו", i.e., emulating Hashem's ways. By bearing this thought (*kavannah*) in mind, hopefully we will append the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol* to the acts of kindness we perform, enabling us to emulate our Creator.

Source III-12: Rav Matisyahu Salomon (based on Rav Eliyahu Lopian): *Chesed* performed with the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol* will protect us from the travails of the Messianic times.

The Gemara Sanhedrin (98b) states that one who wishes to be protected from the pain associated with the Messianic times, should occupy himself in Torah and performing *Chesed*. The type of *Chesed* that will protect us is not ordinary kindness; rather, it is *Chesed* which flows from the source of the Jewish soul, meaning: I am driven to help my friend because of our "שאר בשר" kinship, whereby his distress adversely affects me as if I am suffering from the same pain. I save my friend because his pain is so unbearable for me and thus, I feel that I am saving myself. When we do *Chesed* with this spirit, it is obvious we will merit to arouse G-d's *middah* of "לשאריית נהלתו", whereby He will save us because He cannot bear to endure our pain. In this way, we will be saved from the pain associated with the Messianic times.

ספר מתנת חיים, מאמר "ותקצר נפשו בעמל ישראל":
והרוצה לעבור בחבלי משיח בלי פגע, עליו לעסוק בתורה
ובגמילות חסדים כמו שאמרו חז"ל בסנהדרין (דף צ"ח
ע"ב) ... וכדי להנצל מזה לא מספיק סתם מעשה חסד
אלא צריך גמילות חסדים הנובע ממקור נפש ישראל,
אשר מחמת שהם שאר בשר זה עם זה נצטוו במצות
ואהבת לרעך כמוך באופן שירע לו ממנו כאילו הוא שרוי
באותו צער וכאשר הוא מרגיש באמת שמציל חבירו
מצעריו כי אינו יכול לסבול צער חבירו, אז פשוט הוא
שיזכה לעורר מדתו של הקב"ה אשר אינו יכול לסבול
צעריו כביכול, ובזה ינצל מחבלו של משיח.

NESSIAH B'OL IMBUES A "LIVING SPIRIT" INTO ACTS OF CHESED

- ❖ *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is the fundamental *middah* that defines all interpersonal Mitzvos (Rav Wolbe). The *ma'alah* of *Nesiah B'ol Im Chaveiro* imbues a "living spirit" into mechanical acts of kindness, transforming them into the true "צורה" (form) of the Mitzvah which Hashem commanded.
- ❖ Rav Matisyahu describes *Chesed* performed with *Nesiah B'ol*, as "*Chesed* which flows from the source of the Jewish soul."
- ❖ Through our *Nesiah B'ol*, our performance of *Chesed* will come to emulate Hashem's kindness, i.e., becoming an integral part of our personality.
- ❖ *Nesiah B'ol* is integral to the Mitzvos of *Tzedaka*, *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the ill) and *Neichum Aveilim* (comforting mourners).

Section IV: Defining the power of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

IV. Defining the power of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

A) Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is more than “feeling bad” or “feeling happy” for someone.

It denotes vicariously experiencing his or her feelings:

- 1) The Midrash explains that the sequence of the verses in Parshas Yisro (Source IV-1a) indicates that Moshe sent away his father-in-law, Yisro, prior to the arrival of the Jews at the Wilderness of Sinai for *Mattan Torah* (giving of the Torah). Why was Yisro sent away before *Mattan Torah*? The Midrash (Source IV-1b) explains, HKB”H said: “My children were enslaved with clay and bricks while Yisro sat in his house securely and serenely. Now he comes to see the rejoicing in the Torah with my children!” Since Yisro did not suffer with the Jews in Egypt, he could not be present at their moment of glory at *Har Sinai*. However, Rabbi Dovid Rosman (Ref. 35) asks, we know that the tribe of Levi (*Shevet Levi*) was exempt from servitude in Egypt. Why did *Shevet Levi* merit to participate in the joy of receiving the Torah while Yisro did not?

Source IV-1 (a-b): Midrash: Suffering in Egypt was a prerequisite to participate in the rejoicing of the Torah.

<p>*<u>Shemos 18: 27</u>: Moshe sent his father-in-law; and he went off to his land.</p> <p><u>Shemos 19: 1</u>: In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai.</p>	<p>שמות י"ה, כ"ז: וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה אֶת חֹתְנוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ לוֹ אֶל אֲרָצוֹ. שמות י"ט, א': בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי.</p>
<p>[The Torah sequences Moshe’s sending away his father-in-law, Yisro], “Moshe sent his father-in-law,” prior to [the Israelites’ arrival at the Wilderness of Sinai], “In the third month.” [What does this come to teach us?] Shlomo HaMelech said, “The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger will share in its joy.” HKB”H said: “My children were enslaved with clay and bricks, while Yisro sat in his house securely and serenely. Now he comes to see the rejoicing in the Torah with my children!” Therefore, the Torah first says, “Moshe sent his father-in-law,” followed by “In the third month.”</p>	<p>ילקוט שמעוני רמז רע"א: "וישלח משה את חותנו", ואחר כך: "בחדש השלישי". אמר שלמה (משלי י"ד: י'): "לב יודע מרת נפשו ובשמחתו לא יתערב זר". אמר הקב"ה: "בני היו משועבדין בטיט ולבנים ויתרו היה יושב בתוך ביתו בבטח והשקט ובא לראות בשמחת התורה עם בני", לפיכך "וישלח משה את חותנו" ואחר כך "בחדש השלישי".</p>

*Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) Rabbi Rossman answers this question based an approach offered by Rav Zecharyah Gelley which is recorded by Rav Boruch Simon (Ref. 36), regarding the reason Pharaoh exempted *Shevet Levi* from servitude. Rebbi Yonason Eybeschutz (Ref. 37) explains that Pharaoh saw through magic powers or astrology that the savior of Israel would come from *Shevet Levi*. Pharaoh reasoned that only someone who personally tasted the bitterness of slavery would rise up to liberate an enslaved people. Therefore, he believed by exempting *Shevet Levi* from slavery, no member of this tribe would be motivated to mount a revolt to lead the Jews out of Egypt. Rav Gelley asks, it seems that Pharaoh’s reasoning was quite clever (albeit evil). Where did he go wrong – how did Moshe Rabbeinu (who was from *Shevet Levi*) come to thwart Pharaoh’s elaborate plan? Rav Gelley answers, the one thing Pharaoh’s plot never counted on, was the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* which Moshe had in abundance! As we saw in Section II-B (pp. 15-19), Moshe Rabbeinu is the premier paradigm in the Torah for excellence in this *middah*. He completely immersed himself in the Jewish people’s suffering to share in their pain. Because of

Section IV: Defining the power of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

Moshe's exalted *Nesiah B'ol*, he experienced his brethren's pain at the equivalent level that they suffered. He suffered from their beatings as if his own back was whipped. Pharaoh was, in fact, correct. The Jewish redeemer could only be someone who experienced the bitterness of the slavery – and Moshe did just that!

- 3) Based on this approach, Rabbi Rossman suggests that the entire *Shevet Levi* had the same mindset as Moshe Rabbeinu: They were *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* at a supreme level with their brethren who were enslaved. Although they did not physically participate in the back-breaking labor, *Shevet Levi's* pain on account of their brethren's plight was equivalent to the suffering from the slavery. They vicariously experienced the same slavery and thus, were worthy of participating in the joy of *Mattan Torah*, by contrast to Yisro who never suffered with the Jewish people. Thus, being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is much more than merely saying, "I feel badly for someone in distress." It denotes vicariously experiencing my friend's feelings as if I were living through the same life events that he or she is going through. Precisely because of this *middah*, Moshe Rabbeinu rose up as the redeemer of the Jewish people and *Shevet Levi* were worthy of participating in the joy of *Mattan Torah*.
- 4) Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum writes that even the names of Levi's sons, *Gershon*, *Kehas* and *Merrari*, indicate their sharing in the suffering of their brethren. In Shemos 6:16, the Torah writes, "These are the names of the sons of Levi, *Gershon*, *Kehas* and *Merrari*" – "ואלה שמות בני לוי לתלדתם גרשון וקהת ומררי". Why does the Torah add the word "שמות," (names), next to the sons of Levi (in Shemos 6:16), when it does not do so concerning any of the other brothers? The *Shalah Hakadosh* explains that although *Shevet Levi* was not enslaved, nonetheless, they refused to ignore the pain of their brothers. Therefore, Levi gave each of his sons a name that related to the exile. *Gershon* alluded to the fact that they were *geirim*, strangers sojourning in a land not theirs; *Kehas* hinted to *shinayim keihas*, teeth that were blunted as a result of the exile; *Merrari* referred to the bitterness (Ref. 20).

B) Through our *Nesiah B'ol* with people in distress, we help deliver Heavenly salvation to them by annulling the *Middas Hadin* against them:

- 1) The Gemara Nedarim (Source IV-2) states that one who visits an ill person ("*choleh*") alleviates one-sixtieth of his suffering. Rav Yeruchem (Source IV-3) explains that the mechanism by which the visitor mitigates the *choleh's* suffering is analogous to a third party settling another person's monetary debt. If my friend borrowed money, I can "pay up" his loan to his creditor, thereby dissolving his debt. Similarly, the *choleh* became ill because of the *Middas Hadin* (Hashem's attribute of strict justice) which sentenced him to suffer (perhaps as atonement). Therefore, the *choleh* is viewed as the "debtor" and the *Middas Hadin* is viewed as his "creditor" collecting on its "claim" against him. If I am *Nosei B'ol* with my ill friend and feel his pain as if I were stricken with his illness, I "pay up" the "debt" that the *Middas Hadin* demands from him. Consequently, Hashem annuls his Heavenly sentence of suffering. Rav Yeruchem adds the following astounding thought: The degree of "debt reduction" (i.e., mitigation of illness) afforded to the *choleh* is directly proportional to the extent that I vicariously feel his pain. "One-sixtieth," was not intended as an absolute limit for the extent of illness mitigation. If I would feel the *choleh's* suffering in the same measure that he feels, his debt would be "paid up" in full and his illness would be cured! (See Section VIII-C, pp. 71-72, for Rav Matisyahu's elucidation of Rav Yeruchem's profound words).

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Source IV-2: Gemara Nedarim 39b: The healing power of *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the sick).

¹R' Acha bar Chanina said: One who visits an ill person ("*choleh*") takes away one-sixtieth of his suffering. The Sages said to him: If so, let sixty people enter [to visit the *choleh*], and restore him to health? He said to them: It is like the tenths of the school of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, [i.e., each visitor takes away from the *choleh*, one-sixtieth of the suffering that remains], and this applies if the visitor is ²"בן גילי".

גמרא מסכת נדרים דף ל"ט ע"ב:

אמר רבי אחא בר חנינא כל המבקר חולה נוטל אחד משישים בצערו. אמרי ליה אם כן ליעלון שיתין ולוקמוה? אמר ליה כעישורייתא דבי רבי, ובבן גילו.

¹Translation adapted from: Aron Wander, Sefaria.org;

²"בן גילי" either means the visitor is in same age bracket as the *choleh*,

per the "*Mefaresh*," or he was born under the same constellation as the *choleh*, per the Ran.

- 2) From Rav Yeruchem's profound thoughts, Rav Matisyahu Salomon (Ref. 38) declares we can appreciate the powerful impact of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*: Through my *Nesiah B'ol* with my ill friend, some or all of the *Middas HaDin's* claim against him, and therefore, his punishment, is removed. Because I suffer alongside my friend, my pain is "counted toward" the punishment he deserves, yielding a reduction of his "sentence". Hence, rather than merely a "nice *middah*", *Nesiah B'ol* is a practical solution to remove the *Middas Hadin* from my friend, just as paying up his loan obligation is a practical solution to dissolve his debt. The reason being *Nosei B'ol* has such power is because I do not merely "feel bad" for my friend; I actually experience his or her suffering as if I was the ill person.

Source IV-3: Rav Yeruchem: By being *Nosei B'ol* with the *choleh*, we "pay up" the *Middas Hadin* against him.

Chazal hereby teach us a great principle that we can pay up a friend's (i.e., the *choleh's*) "debt". Just as with monetary debts, a third party can pay up a debtor's loan ... the same applies to the *choleh* – other people can pay up the *Middas Hadin's* claim against him. The degree to which I feel the pain of my friend's illness, represents the extent to which the *Middas Hadin's* claim is paid. [Through feeling the friend's pain], the *Middas Hadin* has now "collected" the *choleh's* debt and the claim against him has thereby been removed ... The measure, i.e., the degree of debt relief [and thus illness mitigation] that I provide my friend who is suffering, is determined by how much his suffering causes me pain. If I would feel my ill friend's suffering in the same measure as he feels, in truth, I would pay up his debt in full.

דעת תורה, דברים, "משתתף בצערו של חברו":

וע"ז מגלים לנו חז"ל הק' סוד גדול, כי יכולים לפרוע חוב חברו. וכמו שבמונות מצינו פריעת חוב של חברו ... ככה הוא הענין בחולה, כי אחרים יכולים לפרוע לתביעת מדת הדין, וכמה שאחד יש לו צער ממחלת חברו באותה מדה נחשבת פריעה למדת הדין, המדת הדין כבר גבתה את שלה, והתביעה סרה! ... כי עיקר היסוד הוא שאחד יכול לפרוע את מדת הדין על חוב חברו, וכאן הוא המדידה, עד כמה שצרת חברו צר לו. ואם יהיה אחד אשר יצטער בצערו של חברו כחברו ממש, כי אז אמנם היה יכול באמת לפרוע גם כל החוב.

THE POWER OF NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ The *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* denotes vicariously experiencing someone's feelings as if I am living through the same life events that cause him distress or joy.
- ❖ The *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* enabled Moshe to rise up as the redeemer of the Jewish people and *Shevet Levi* to participate in the joy of *Mattan Torah*. This is because they vicariously experienced the pain of their brethren's harsh servitude via their *Nesiah B'ol*, despite not being physically enslaved.
- ❖ The *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* enables a person to remove the sentence of suffering which afflicts his or her friend – by "paying up" the friend's "debt" to the *Middas Hadin*, thus removing the Heavenly sentence of suffering (Rav Yeruchem).
- ❖ The degree of alleviation from suffering afforded to my friend, is proportional to the degree I feel his pain (as if it were my own suffering; Rav Yeruchem).

Section V: Examples of Mitzvos which demonstrate the importance of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

V. Examples of Mitzvos which demonstrate the importance of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

A) Lending money: Viewing ourselves as if we are the poor person in need of assistance:

- 1) When commanding us to lend money to a poor person, the Torah states (Source V-1a), “to the poor person who is with you” (“את העני עמך”). Rashi (Source V-1b) comments: “Look at yourself as if you are the poor person.” Why is it necessary to “visualize” myself as the indigent person when I am the lender; certainly, if I am lending money to someone, I am aware of his needs?

Source V-1: (a) Shemos 22: 24; (b) Rashi: Mitzvah of lending money – Imagining ourselves as the one in need.

<p>When you will lend money to My people, to the poor person who is with you, do not act toward him as a creditor; do not place interest upon him.</p>	<p>שמות כ"ב. כ"ד: אם כסף תלווה את עמי את העני עמך לא תהיה לו כנשף לא תשימון עליו נשף.</p>
<p>Rashi – The poor person who is with you: Look at yourself as if you are the poor person.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה את העני עמך: הוי מסתכל בעצמך כאלו אתה עני.</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) Rav Friedlander (Ref. 18) and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 39) explain that the Torah incorporates the imperative for empathy within the laws of loans, to define the very nature of the Mitzvah of lending money, i.e., it must be done in the spirit of compassion and concern with the borrower’s state of mind. An integral part of this Mitzvah, as well as the Mitzvah of giving *Tzedaka* (charity), is the imperative to uphold the dignity of the downtrodden spirit who, due to his misfortunes, is compelled to lower himself and ask for assistance. Therefore, the Torah instructs us that when we are approached by an indigent person for charity or a loan, we must imagine ourselves in his situation and act toward him in the manner we would want if the tables were turned. Imagine if, Heaven forbid, misfortune forced us to ask for a loan or charity, we would feel so degraded, wanting to crawl under the ground to avoid the shame of requiring someone else’s help. We would be silently pleading to be treated with understanding, that the lender would talk to us in a compassionate manner, rather than being made to feel like a failure. Thus, the Torah’s laws of lending are “laced with” compassion; we must identify with the supplicant’s suffering, his demoralized state and sense of helplessness, to fulfill the Mitzvah properly.
- 3) The Midrash, which describes Moshe Rabbeinu at the burning bush encounter (Source II-6b, p. 16), states: “HKB”H saw that Moshe turned aside from his affairs to see the burdens of Israel.” The message of the Midrash, per Rav Friedlander (Ref. 18), is that, to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we must exit our comfort zone to put ourselves into the other person’s situation, to understand how it affects him and his state of mind. In fact, this is a recurring theme which applies to all interpersonal (בין אדם להבירו) Mitzvos. Without the Torah’s instructions to “Look at yourself as if you are the poor person,” we could easily have viewed lending money as a cold business transaction, for which empathy and compassion would seem irrelevant. Moshe Rabbeinu provided the formula to reach perfection in *Nesiah B'ol*, by exiting the regal palace and exchanging his clothes of privilege with those of the enslaved laborer. To properly share the burdens of others, we need to mentally immerse ourselves in their environment (Rav Friedlander).

Section V: Examples of Mitzvos which demonstrate the importance of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

4) The following story quite literally illustrates this theme (Ref. 40): A Rabbi “made his rounds” every Friday morning, from door to door, seeking contributions to buy wood and coal for the poor. It was winter and quite cold, but the Rabbi made his way up one street and down another, stopping at each house for a donation. One house, however, had always escaped, or at least ignored the Rabbi’s entreaties – the house of the richest man in town, who always managed to have an excuse to avoid making a contribution. On this particular morning, the Rabbi decided to press the issue and knocked on the rich man’s door. After announcing himself to the servant, his host appeared at the door. “Good day, Rabbi,” he said. “Welcome, and come in. Let me offer you a glass of tea, or something to warm you on this cold, wet day.” “No, thank you,” the Rabbi responded, “I wouldn’t want to muddy your carpets, and besides, I have errands to run and only need a minute of your time.” “Good,” said the rich man, who had come to the door in his shirt sleeves and was already feeling the effects of the cold. “What can I do for you, Rabbi?” “Oh, I don’t want anything but your opinion on a matter which has been troubling me,” said the Rabbi, and launched into a discussion of not one, but a number of topics of community interest. Two or three times the host interrupted the Rabbi, asking him to please come inside, but on each occasion, the Rabbi demurred, saying he really had to go, but had just one more topic on which he wanted an opinion. Finally, the rich man, trembling with cold, speaking through chattering teeth, said “Rabbi, I am honored you want my opinion on so many subjects, but if you do not come inside and let me close the door, I will freeze to death.” “Ah,” said the Rabbi. “You are feeling for only a few minutes what the poor who barely have enough for food, let alone fuel, feel all day every day. Perhaps you would consider making a donation?” “How much?” asked the rich man. The Rabbi said the amount was up to him, because people were never asked to give more than they felt they could afford. “I beg you,” said the rich man, “just tell me how much you have collected so far today. Tell me before I turn blue from ...” The Rabbi showed him how much he had already collected, and the rich man doubled the amount.

B) Special care to avoid hurting the convert: Sensitivity arising from our own experiences:

1) In Shemos 23:9, the Torah instructs us not to oppress the convert: “*You know the soul of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*” (Source V-2a). Rashi comments: “[*You know*] how hard it is for him when they oppress him,” because you lived through the same experience as strangers in the land of Egypt (Source V-2b).

Source V-2: (a) Shemos 23: 9; (b) Rashi: Identifying with the convert through our shared experiences.

<p>You shall not oppress a stranger (convert); you know the soul of the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">שמות כ"ג ט' וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאִתָּם יִדְעֶתֶם אֵת נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.</p>
<p>Rashi – The soul of the stranger: [You know] how hard it is for him when they oppress him.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">רש"י ד"ה את נפש הגר: כמה קשה לו כשלוֹחֲצִים אוֹתוֹ.</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

2) On a perfunctory level, the Torah’s words, “*you know the soul of the stranger ... in the land of Egypt,*” are difficult to understand. Does the Torah need to justify its injunction against harming the convert? If we had never been strangers in Egypt, would it have been permissible to hurt a convert? Rabbi Jonathan Sacks (Ref. 41) shares the following powerful thought: *If there is one command above all others that speaks of the power and significance of*

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empathy, it is ... “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger: You were strangers in the land of Egypt” ... That is why this specific command is so life-changing. Not only does it tell us to empathize with the stranger because you know what it feels like to be in his or her place. It even hints that this was part of the purpose of the Israelites’ exile in Egypt in the first place ... There is only one reply strong enough to answer the question: Why should I not hate the stranger? Because the stranger is me.

- 3) Accordingly, rather than merely providing a reason not to harm the convert, perhaps the Torah is providing the formula for being a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. If we search inward, we can usually find a commonality with the experience of a person who is struggling, to help us identify with his or her hardship. Psychologist Brené Brown, Ph.D. explains (Ref. 85): “Empathy is a vulnerable choice - in order to connect with you, I have to connect with something in myself that knows that feeling.” Although my life history may be quite different from the person with whom I empathize, nonetheless, my own experiences have still instilled, “something in myself that knows that feeling.” The Torah’s message of, “you know the soul of the stranger,” teaches us that we can extrapolate from our own life experiences to connect to others through the agency of *Nesiah B'ol*. We just need to look past the external differences between us that prevent us from accessing this aptitude. Thus, the Torah’s formula for being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with the convert, applies to all types of interpersonal interactions.

C) Gladdening the hearts of the less fortunate: “Finding room” in our hearts to include them in our festivities:

- 1) When describing the Mitzvah of rejoicing on the Jewish festivals, the Torah states (Source V-3a): “You shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d – you, your son, daughter, slave, maidservant, the Levite, the convert, the orphan and the widow.” Rashi (Source V-3b) explains that the Torah lists two groups of four people. Hashem tells us that the second group – the Levite, convert, orphan and widow – are “Mine” (i.e., G-d’s). The first set – your son, daughter, slave and maidservant – are yours. G-d’s message in this verse is: “If you will make Mine happy, I will make yours happy.”

Source V-3: (a) Devarim 16: 11; (b) Rashi: Including the poor and downtrodden in our festivities.

<p>You shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d – you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, the Levite who is in your cities, the convert, the orphan, and the widow who are among You – in the place that Hashem, your G-d, will choose to rest His Name there.</p>	<p>דברים ט"ז, י"א: וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אַתָּה וּבִנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהָאֵלֶמְנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשַׂכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם.</p>
<p>Rashi - the Levite, the convert, the orphan and the widow: These are My four, corresponding to your four – “your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant.” If you will make Mine happy, I will make yours happy.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה לוי גר יתום ואלמנה: אַרְבַּעַת שְׁלִי כְּנֹגַד אַרְבַּעַת שְׁלֶךָ – בִּנְךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ - אִם אַתָּה מְשַׂמֵּחַ אֶת שְׁלִי אֲנִי מְשַׂמֵּחַ אֶת שְׁלֶךָ.</p>

Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) Why does Hashem call the convert, orphan and widow, “Mine”? In the laws pertaining to Purim, the Rambam states (Source V-4a): “There is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the converts. One who brings happiness to the hearts of these downtrodden individuals

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resembles the Divine Presence.” The Rambam then cites a verse in Yeshayahu (Source V-5a) affirming that Hashem tends to, and uplifts the spirits of the downtrodden: *“I abide in exaltedness and holiness, but I am with the despondent and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the despondent.”* Rashi (Source V-5b) explains that G-d, notwithstanding His exalted abode, “lowers” His Shechinah (Divine Presence) to dwell with the downtrodden.

Source V-4a-b: Rambam (Laws of Purim and Yom Tov): Including the poor and downtrodden in our festivities.

<p>It is preferable for a person to be more liberal with his donations to the poor than to be lavish in his preparation of the Purim feast or in sending portions to his friends. For there is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the converts. One who brings happiness to the hearts of these downtrodden individuals resembles the Divine Presence, [as the prophet Yeshayahu states that G-d Himself descends], <i>“to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the despondent.”</i></p>	<p><u>רמב"ם, הלכות מגילה וחנוכה, פרק ב' הלכה יז:</u> מוטב לאדם להרבות במתנות אביונים מלהרבות בסעודתו ובשלוח מנות לרעיו. שאין שם שמחה גדולה ומפארה אלא לשמח לב עניים ויתומים ואלמנות וגרים. שהמשמח לב האמללים האלו דומה לשכינה שנאמר (ישעיה נ"ז: ט"ו): "להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים".</p>
<p>While a person eats and drinks (in celebration of a holiday), he is obligated to feed the convert, the orphan, and the widow with all the other impoverished, downtrodden people. But if someone locks the doors of his courtyard and eats and drinks with his children and his wife, without feeding the poor and the embittered, this is not the rejoicing of Mitzvah, but rather the rejoicing of his stomach.</p>	<p><u>רמב"ם, הלכות שבייתת יום טוב, פרק ו' הלכה יח:</u> וכשהוא אוכל ושותה חייב להאכיל לגר ליתום ולאלמנה עם שאר העניים האמללים. אבל מי שנוצל דלתות חצרו ואוכל ושותה הוא ובניו ואשתו ואינו מאכיל ומשקה לעניים ולמרי נפש, אין זו שמחת מצוה אלא שמחת כרסו.</p>

Translation from: Chabad.org.

Source V-5: (a) Yeshayahu 57: 15; (b) Rashi: Hashem “descends” to revive the spirit of the downtrodden.

<p>*For thus said the exalted and uplifted One, Who abides forever and Whose Name is holy: I abide in exaltedness and holiness, but I am with the despondent and lowly of spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the despondent.</p>	<p><u>ישעיהו נ"ז, ט"ו:</u> פי כה אומר רם ונשא שכן עד וקדוש שמו מרום וקדוש אשכון ואת דכא ושפל רוח להחיות רוח שפלים ולהחיות לב נדכאים.</p>
<p>Rashi – in exaltedness and holiness: I abide, and from there, I am with the despondent and the lowly of spirit, upon whom I lower My Divine Presence.</p>	<p><u>רש"י ד"ה מרום וקדוש:</u> אני שוכן, ומשמ אני עם דכא ושפל רוח, שאני מרכין שכינתי עליו.</p>

*Translation from: Artscroll Isaiah, Later Prophets, Milstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 3) It is the way of Hashem, so to speak, to “lower” Himself and “squeeze” into the narrow straits of people who are suffering; G-d shares in their burdens. Since Hashem is “with the despondent and lowly of spirit”, we can understand Rashi’s statement that G-d calls the convert, orphan and widows, *“Mine”* (Source V-3b, p. 47). Therefore, says the Rambam, a person who, at the time of personal happiness and celebration, opens his heart to

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tend to the needs of downtrodden to bring happiness into their hearts, emulates Hashem's ways and thus, resembles the Shechinah. Similarly, the Rambam (Source V-4b) writes one is required to provide festive meals to gladden the less fortunate on *Chaggim*. Moreover, the holiday festivities of one who fails to gladden these unfortunate souls, are devoid of any Mitzvah, and instead, are festivities of gluttony. Since Hashem lowers His Shechinah to share the plight of the less fortunate, if we open our hearts and homes to share our celebratory times with them, our festivities will be graced with His Divine Presence and thus, be a rejoicing of a Mitzvah.

D) The Jewish servant and the solitary pillow: Exquisite sensitivity to the servant's feelings of degradation:

- 1) The Gemara Kiddushin (20a) discusses the required conduct for treating a Jewish servant. From the Torah's words (Devarim 15:16), "כי טוב לו עמך" – "for it is good for him with you," the Gemara derives (Source V-6a): "One who acquires a Jewish servant has, in fact, acquired a master for himself," because the master is obligated to ensure that his servant's accommodations are equivalent to his own. *Tosfos* ask, since the living accommodations that the master must provide his servant are equal to his own, why does the Gemara describe the servant as "the master" – he is merely on par with his owner (Source V-6b)? In their answer, *Tosfos* cite a ruling from the Talmud Yerushalmi. In a case where the owner has one pillow, he must give it to the servant for the following reason: If the owner uses the pillow himself, he violates the principle of "כי טוב לו עמך" since the servant has inferior accommodations. If the owner neither uses the pillow himself nor gives it to his servant, it is *middas Sodom*. (Since the owner may not use it himself, he loses nothing by giving it to his servant. Thus, denying his servant the use of the pillow is *middas Sodom* since he cannot bear someone else benefitting from his possessions). Hence, the servant must be given the sole pillow; consequently, he is deemed "a master" over his owner since his accommodations are superior.

Source V-6: (a) Gemara Kiddushin 20a; (b) *Tosfos*: Jewish servant is treated as the "master" – "כי טוב לו עמך".

It is taught in a *Braisa*: Scripture states of a Jewish servant: "For it is good for him with you." This teaches that your servant shall be "with you" in food and "with you" in drink. **This means that the following must be avoided:**

- You (i.e., the owner) eat bread from fine flour while he (i.e., the servant) he eats bread from inferior flour;
- You drink aged (superior) wine while he drinks new (inferior) wine;
- You sleep on top of soft mattresses while he sleeps on top of straw.

On account of this, it was said: Anyone who acquires a Jewish servant has acquired a master for himself.

גמרא מסכת קידושין דף כ' ע"א:

דתניא (דברים ט"ו, ט"ז) "כי טוב לו עמך":
עמך במאכל ועמך במשתה, שלא תהא אתה
אוכל פת נקיה והוא אוכל פת קיבר, אתה
שותה יין ישן והוא שותה יין חדש, אתה ישן
על גבי מוכים והוא ישן על גבי התבן. מכאן
אמרו כל הקונה עבד עברי כקונה אדון לעצמו.

Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition

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Question: Why is the servant considered “a master for himself” (over the owner)? Let it suffice that he is considered equal to his master?

Answer: As it says in the Yerushalmi: There are times when he only has one pillow. If he (i.e., the owner) himself lies on it, he fails to fulfill “כי טוב לו עמך” (“for it is good for him with you”). If he neither lies on it nor gives it to his servant, he is guilty of *middas Sodom*. Consequently, he has no option other than to give it to his servant. And that is what is meant by “a master for himself.”

תוספות ד"ה כל הקונה עבד עברי כקונה אדון לעצמו:

וקשה, מאי אדון לעצמו – די לו להיות כאדונו ?
ויש לומר, כדאיתא בירושלמי, דפעמים אין לו אלא כר אחת. אם שוכב עליו בעצמו, אינו מקיים כי טוב לו עמך, ואם אינו שוכב עליו וגם אינו מוסרו לעבדו, זו מדת סדום. נמצא שעל כורחו צריך למסור לעבדו – והיינו אדון לעצמו.

- 2) Rav Aryeh Leib Lopian (cited by Rav Matisyahu; Ref. 39), asks, why would the owner violate “כי טוב לו עמך” if he keeps his only pillow for himself? The word, “עמך” – “with you,” seemingly indicates that both the owner and servant should enjoy the same provisions, which would only pertain to a case where he owns two pillows. However, in a case where this is impossible because only one pillow is available, why must he give it to his servant? Rav Lopian answers, Chazal (our Sages) understood from “כי טוב לו עמך” that the Torah demands a level of sensitivity to another person’s emotional wellbeing, whereby we must spare the servant any degradation beyond being under someone else’s “ownership”. This sensitivity prevents us from sleeping with a pillow if the servant has none, because the servant will suffer not only the ignominy of having been sold, but also being forced to live under inferior conditions relative to his owner. Whether the owner possesses two pillows or only one, if the servant sleeps without a pillow while his owner enjoys this comfort, he suffers the same sense of degradation which the Torah deems intolerable. Therefore, if the owner only has one pillow, “כי טוב לו עמך” requires that the owner must sleep without a pillow; consequently, to avoid *middas Sodom*, it must be given to the servant. Rav Matisyahu marvels at the exalted level of *Nesiah B'ol* that Chazal personally lived at, which enabled them to unlock the Torah’s hidden message within the words, “כי טוב לו עמך”, and to extrapolate the Halacha to the case of the solitary pillow.

MITZVOS WHICH DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO*

- ❖ **Loaning money and *Tzedakah*:** “Look at yourself as if you are the poor person.” Leaving our comfort zones to view the situation through the lens of the person who is suffering.
- ❖ **Sensitivity to the convert:** “You know the soul of the stranger” – you were “in his shoes” once: Extrapolating from our own experiences to empathize with someone else’s hardships.
- ❖ **Opening our hearts to the downtrodden:** One who brings happiness into their hearts by sharing his celebrations with them, resembles the Divine Presence Who dwells with them.
- ❖ **Giving our only pillow to the Jewish servant:** The Torah’s sensitivity to his emotional wellbeing demands we spare him any degradation beyond being under someone else’s “ownership”.

Section VI: Why is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* instrumental for Torah acquisition?

VI. Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* instrumental for Torah acquisition?

A) A person who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* views situations from another person's perspective, an essential quality for arriving at the truth in Torah:

- 1) The Gemara Bava Metzia which discusses the Mitzvah of returning lost objects, records the dispute of Rava and Abaye regarding "inferred abandonment" ("יאוש שלא מדעת"). The Gemara (Daf 22a) attempted to adduce a proof to Rava's view from a *Braisa* (a Tannaic source). In response, Rava refuted this proof, explaining the *Braisa* in a way that is consistent with Abaye's view. Rather than feeling gratified that his disputant's view may be undermined, Rava took pains to see the *Braisa* through Abaye's perspective. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin notes Rava's noble behavior to explain the connection between being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* and acquiring Torah: A person who displays *Nesiah B'ol* will also take pains to hear and thoroughly consider another person's views in the study of Torah and will not limit his understanding to fit his own position (Source VI-1).

Source VI-1: Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin: One who is *Nosei B'ol* is receptive to his fellow's approach in Torah study.

Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro means to show respect for his fellow's opinion, as a person should believe there is a strong possibility that the truth lies with his fellow. For example, we find that although Abaye and Rava disagreed over a law, Rava took pains to resolve a question raised against Abaye's opinion.

רבי חיים מוולוז'ין: פירוש רוח חיים על אבות:
נושא בעול עם חבירו, להראות פנים לסברתו, כמו תרגמא רבא
אליבא דאביי וכדומה בש"ס, וחושב שמא הדין עם חבירו.

Translation adapted from: *Ruach Chaim*, by Rabbi Chanoch Levi, Targum Press Publishers

- 2) Rav Friedlander further elaborates (Source VI-2): One who is a *Nosei B'ol* has freed himself from the limitations of viewing life exclusively from a personal perspective. Instead, he views a situation through the lens of the individual living through it, and therefore, is primed to share another person's emotions. Because of this aptitude, he will also merit to arrive at the truth in Torah since he is unconstrained by personal biases and is receptive to other people's approaches in Torah learning. Similarly, Rav Matisyahu comments that a person who is a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, will listen to his friend's view in Torah with an open mind even if it differs from his own view, rather than immediately trying to refute an opposing position (Ref. 7). Consequently, his horizons will become expanded and he will experience growth in Torah learning.

Source VI-2: Rav Chaim Friedlander: To arrive at the Torah's truth, I must be receptive to my friend's perspective.

The meaning of the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol* is that I extricate myself from seeing everything through a personal bias. Instead, I can view a situation through another person's perspective or emotions. If I see everything only through the lens of "me," I am held captive to my limited self, unable to grasp another person's situation or feel his emotions; consequently, I will not share in his pain. Having such a small-minded personality will also affect my Torah learning; I will only accept and understand that which agrees with my own mind, but I am unable or unwilling to understand another person's approach. I will not merit to grasp the truth in Torah because

שפתי חיים, חלק מידות ועבודת ה' (א), "ועד ב – מעלת
נושא בעול מכשירה לחכמה, נבואה, הנהגת הכלל":
... מעלת נושא בעול היינו שמוציא את עצמו מ"האני"
שלו, ע"י זה הוא יכול להבין את הזולת. אדם הרואה רק
את "האני" שלו הוא, שבוי ביד עצמו ואינו יכול לראות
את מצבו של חברו ואינו יכול להרגיש את הרגשותיו,
ולכן אינו משתתף בצערו. תכונה זו קיימת אף בלימודו,
הוא רואה ומבין רק כפי הבנת שכלו ואינו יכול ואינו

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everything I learn is constrained to fit my limited perspective. To merit understanding the truth in Torah, the learner must investigate and seek out the truth whatever it may be (i.e., without preconceived filters), to bend one's mind to the Torah's wisdom and not the reverse. Otherwise, he will become biased by whatever logical approach his mind has rationalized.

A person who is *Nosei B'ol* has succeeded in extricating himself from the narrow constraints of (seeing everything through the lens of) "me", and therefore, is primed to feel another person's emotions. This same person can free himself from being biased by his own initial logical assumptions, and thereby, he will be able to grasp the truth in Torah. Thus, we can now understand the connection between the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol* and acquiring Torah. *Nesiah B'ol* is not merely a virtue related to performing *Chesed*; rather, it is also a necessity for arriving at the truth in Torah.

רוצה להבין דברי זולתו, כל מה שהוא לומד הוא מתאים אל שכלו ואל דעתו, כך אי אפשר לזכות לאמיתה של תורה. כדי לזכות להבנת אמיתה של תורה צריך הלומד לחקור ולדרוש ולהגיע אל האמת כמות שהיא, לקרב את שכלו לשכל התורה ולא את התורה אל שכלו, שאל"כ הריהו משוחד מהסברא שלו כפי הבנתו.

לכן הנושא בעול שזוכה לצאת מהגבולות הצרים של "האני" שלו ומסוגל להרגיש את הזולת, הוא גם יכול להשתחרר מההנחות וההבנות של עצמו, ולהבין את התורה לאמיתה. ולפ"ז מובן הקשר בין מעלת נושא בעול לקניני תורה, שאין זו רק מעלה בעשיית חסד גרידא, אלא היא הכרחית כדי להגיע לאמיתה של תורה.

B) To acquire one's portion in Torah, one must participate in the unity (*Achdus*) of the Jewish people, which is established by being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*:

- 1) The Torah was given to us at *Har Sinai* as one united community, and not as many individuals (Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz; Source VI-5a, p. 54). Rav Matisyahu elaborates: Because of the Torah's exalted spiritual nature, when we exist as individuals, no corporeal human being can grasp the Divine wisdom in the Torah (Ref. 7). However, when we exist as the unified entity of *Am Yisrael*, Hashem gives us special access to the secrets in His Torah. Special Divine assistance (*Seyata Dishmaya*) is given to the Jewish people as a united community to develop keen insight and depth in our Torah study. As discussed in Section III-B (pp. 32-36), when we band together as a community, we are transformed from multiple individual souls into one unified collective soul ("נפש אחת"). To merit the Divine assistance needed for success in acquiring Torah, we must preserve our status as "נפש אחת". This thought is reflected in the *Tannah d'Bai Eliyahu* pertaining to *Matan Torah*: "*The Holy One blessed is He, said, 'Since Israel has disavowed conflict and instead, embraced peace – creating a single encampment – now is the fitting time for Me to give them My Torah'*" (Source VI-3b). Rashi's famous words, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "*as one man and with one heart*" (Source VI-3c; pertaining to the Jewish people's encampment in the Wilderness of Sinai), convey the same message.

Source VI-3 (a-c): *Mattan Torah*: The Jewish nation was "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "*as one man and with one heart*".

*And they journeyed from Rephidim and arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the Wilderness; and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain.

שמות י"ט: ב'
וַיֵּסְעוּ מִרֶפְדִּים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי וַיִּחַנּוּ בְּמִדְבַּר וַיִּחַן יְהוָה
יְשָׁרָאֵל נֶגְדַת הָהָר.

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<p>Chizkiyah said: How great is peace! In all the travels [of the Jews in the wilderness], Scripture states, “they sojourned”, “they encamped” – they traveled in strife and encamped in strife. When they arrived at Sinai, they formed a single encampment, as Scripture states: “<i>And Israel encamped there</i>” (in the singular: “וַיַּחֲנוּ”). The Holy One, blessed is He, said: “Since Israel has disavowed conflict and instead, embraced peace – creating a single encampment – now is the [fitting] time for Me to give them My Torah.”</p>	<p>תנא דבי אליהו זוטא, פרק השלום ה': חזקיה אמר גדול הוא השלום, שבכל המסעות כתיב “ויסעו”, “ויחננו”, נוסעין במחלוקת וחוננין במחלוקת. בזמן שבאו לסיני חנו חנייה אחת, (שמות י"ט): “ויחן שם ישראל”. אמר הקב"ה הואיל ושנאו ישראל את המחלוקת ואהבו את השלום ונעשו חנייה אחת, הרי השעה שאתן להם את תורתי. (גם נמצא במכילתא על הלך רעיון זו)</p>
<p>*Rashi – And Israel encamped there: As one man, with one heart – but all the other encampments were made with complaints and argumentation.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה ויחן שם ישראל: כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלִב אֶחָד, אֲבָל נִשְׁאַר כָּל הַחֲנִיּוֹת בְּתַרְעוּמוֹת וּבְמַחְלֻקָּת.</p>

*Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) Rav Shmuelewitz applies this theme to offer a beautiful explanation of a Gemara Sanhedrin (Source VI-4). The verse in Misheli, “*Grace is false, and beauty is vain; it is a G-d-fearing [woman] that should be praised,*” is homiletically interpreted by the Gemara as follows: Although the generations of Moshe, Yehoshua and King Chizkiyah studied Torah prodigiously, their achievements were surpassed by the Torah study during the generation of Rabbi Yehuda the son of Rabbi Elai (abbreviated as: R’ Yehuda bR’ Elai). What was unique about the Torah study during the generation of R’ Yehuda bR’ Elai? The Gemara explains, that due to their extreme poverty, six of his disciples would cover themselves with a single cloak and study Torah.

Source VI-4: Gemara Sanhedrin: Superlative Torah study and selflessness during the time of R’ Yehuda ben R’ Elai.

<p>R’ Shmuel bar Nachman said in the name of R’ Yonason: What is the meaning of that which is written: “<i>Grace is false, and beauty is vain; it is a G-d-fearing [woman] that should be praised</i>”? ... “Grace is false” – this is a reference to the generation of Moshe and Yeshoshua. “Beauty is vain” – this is a reference to the generation of King Chizkiyah. “It is a G-d-fearing [woman] that should be praised” – this is a reference to the generation of R’ Yehuda bR’ Elai. They said about R’ Yehuda bR’ Elai, that [due to their poverty], six [of his] disciples would cover themselves with one cloak and labor in the study of Torah.</p>	<p>גמרא סנהדרין דף כ' ע"א: אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן אמר רבי יונתן מאי דכתיב (משלי ל"א, ל'): "שקר החן והבל היופי [אשה] יראת ה' היא תתהלל"? ... "שקר החן" – זה דורו של משה ויהושע; "והבל היופי" – זה דורו של חזקיה; "יראת ה' היא תתהלל" – זה דורו של רבי יהודה ברבי אילעאי. אמרו עליו על רבי יהודה ברבי אילעאי שהיו ששה תלמידים מתכסין בטלית אחת ועוסקין בתורה.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 3) The Gemara’s statement, “*six disciples would cover themselves with one cloak and labor in the study of Torah,*” is somewhat perplexing. How does this factor alone render the Torah study in the generation of R’ Yehuda bR’ Elai so vastly superior to the Torah study in the generations of Moshe, Yehoshua and Chizkiyah? Rav Shmuelewitz (Source VI-5b) explains when there is only one cloak for six people, normal human behavior would dictate that each person would be primarily concerned about his own need for cover and therefore, pull the cloak toward himself; consequently, none of them will be covered. Thus, by telling us that six disciples were covered with one

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cloak, the Gemara is describing their supreme level of selflessness, whereby each person was primarily concerned for his friend's needs and endeavored to cover his friend before worrying about his own need. Such selfless care for each other instilled a spirit of *Achdus*, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "as one man and with one heart," in that generation, which had no equal in any previous time period. Therefore, the generation of R' Yehuda bR' Elai merited to receive Torah on a level that surpassed even the generations of Moshe, Yehoshua and Chizkiyah.

Source VI-5 (a-b): Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz: Selfless care for others and *Achdus* (Jewish unity) are prerequisites for Torah acquisition.

The Torah was not given to 600,000 individuals, but rather, to *Klal Yisrael* – a single entity. When they needed shelter (encampment), each person was primarily preoccupied with attending to the shelter needs of his friend. Since *Klal Yisrael* thereby attained total unity (*Achdus*) – "as one person, with one heart," therefore, this was the fitting time to receive the Torah. Because each person was concerned about benefitting another and attending to his needs, they came to love each other. Through this love, they united to become "as one person, with one heart."

The laws of nature dictate that a single cloak would be incapable of covering six people. However, this applies when each person is only concerned about his own need to be covered. Since each person pulls the cloak toward himself, it will not cover anyone. However, during the generation of R' Yehuda bR' Elai, each person's primary concern was for his friend - that his friend be covered; consequently, one cloak sufficed to cover six people. When each one thinks about his friend's need - giving to the other - then everyone will be covered. This existence of "six disciples covered with one cloak," signifies their exalted level of "one person, with one heart," which had no equal in any previous generation. Therefore, their *Kabollas HaTorah* (receiving the Torah) was of a much greater stature.

שיחות מוסר תשל"ב, מאמר "אהבת הבריות":

... שהתורה לא ניתנה לס' רבוא יחידים אלא לכלל ישראל שהוא חטיבה אחת. ועל ידי שעסקו בצרכי חניה שהיה כל אחד עסוק בצרכי חניה של חברו, הגיעו לאחדות גמורה, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד", וזהו השעה הכשירה לקבלת התורה. והיינו כמו שנתבאר שעל ידי שהיטיב כל אחד עם זולתו ודאג לצורכו נעשה אוהבו, ועל ידי האהבה, נתאחדו להיות כאיש אחד בלב אחד.

שיחות מוסר תשל"א, מאמר ל':

בדרך הטבע אין טלית אחת מספקת לשישה אנשים. אבל זה רק כשכל אחד חושב על עצמו, ודואג שיהיה מכוסה. אולם בדורו של רבי יהודה ברבי אילעאי היה כל אחד דואג לחבירו, ומכסה את זולתו, ובאופן זה מספקת טלית אחת לשישה. כשכל אחד חושב על חברו, ונותן לזולתו – כולם מכוסים. מציאות זו, שששה תלמידים מתכסין בטלית אחת, מורה על מעלת "איש אחד בלב אחד", במידה שאין דוגמתה בכל הדורות, על כן היתה קבלת התורה שלהם במדרגה הנעלה ביותר.

- 4) In Section III-B (pp. 32-36), we discussed the relationship between *Nesiah B'ol* and *Achdus* (unity), i.e., the virtue of *Nosei B'ol* fosters the spirit of *Achdus* within the Jewish people. When we cultivate the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* within our community, we strengthen the interconnectivity of *Klal Yisrael* as "נפש אחת" (one collective soul). Our enhanced existence as "איש אחד בלב אחד" – "one man and with one heart" enables us to merit Divine assistance to learn and understand Torah. Rav Matisyahu adds (Ref. 7): A person who is a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* will feel a keen concern for the spiritual welfare of his brethren, and therefore, will share his Torah knowledge with them to improve their lot. Thus, there is no one who is more worthy of receiving Torah from Hashem, because his essence is bound to the communal existence of the Jewish people. He represents the ideal of "נפש אחת", and therefore, he will merit success in learning, understanding and teaching Torah.

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C) A *Nosei B'ol* searches for common roots to relate to his fellow's predicament. Torah study also seeks underlying commonalities to connect seemingly disparate topics:

The Sabba of Kelm (cited by Rav Matisyahu, Source VI-6) explains that the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* actually facilitates developing an in-depth understanding of Torah. Incisive Torah learning requires extracting the essence of a topic from the constraints of its external appearances, a skill that is also integral to being *Nosei B'ol*. Rav Matisyahu explains: To attain an in-depth understanding of Torah, I must look beyond the external appearances of a situation to access the fundamental principles, i.e., to draw analogies between cases, extrapolating the core principles from one situation to another, without being constrained by the external presentation of a case (i.e., not limiting my understanding to the superficial features of a case in the Gemara). Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, by definition, requires extrapolating (or liberating myself) from my own personal experiences and emotions, to relate to the situation facing my friend, even though his challenges may have no tangible bearing on my own life. Through extrapolation, I mentally "picture" my fellow's situation, all the myriad ways it challenges him, and imagine myself living through that very same experience with all the associated feelings. By developing this *middah*, my mind has now become primed with the skills to understand Torah properly.

Source VI-6: The Sabba of Kelm explained by Rav Matisyahu Salomon: The skill needed to be a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, is instrumental for incisive Torah learning.

The Sabba of Kelm understands that the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* facilitates gaining an in-depth understanding of Torah. Developing an understanding of Gemara requires extracting the essence from its outer trappings, extrapolating a principle from one situation to another. A person who lacks this skill of extracting the essence cannot be a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*.

Rav Matisyahu explains the Sabba's words: To succeed in attaining depth in Torah, one must look beyond the external presentation of a situation to access its fundamental principles, to extract the essence of the matter from the constraints of its external appearance, and integrate it into his intellect. Thereby, he will be able to draw analogies between situations, extrapolating principles from one case to another, without being limited by (the external presentation) perceived by his physical senses. This same skill is also crucial for being a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, i.e., the ability to transplant myself to another person's situation which ostensibly is foreign to my own personal perceptions and senses, to imagine myself personally experiencing the same situation, and to feel the burden on my friend's shoulders as if I am carrying it myself.

ספר מתנת חיים, מאמר "נושא בעול מקניני התורה":
נביא עוד מהלך *מהרש"ז אשר אליביה המדה של נושא
בעול עם חבריו מועילה לעצם הבנת עומקן של דברי
תורה ... "כי כאשר נתבונן בחכמת התלמוד הוא הפשטות
הצורות כאז"ל ב"ב ק"ל כל התורה כולה כולה דימוי מילתא
למילתא, פי' ע"י הפשטות הצורות. והנה מי שאין לו כח
בהפשטות הצורות אין לו כח בנושא בעול עם חבריו עכ"ל".
ולכאורה ביאור בהפשטות הצורות בנוגע להבנת התורה הוא
להפשיט הענין וצורתו החיצונית עד שיגיע לעצם היסוד
והתוכן שבו ע"י התדבוק בשכלו בלי צמצום צורתו
החיצונית, ועי"ז יעלה בידו לדמות מילתא למילתא להבין
דבר מתוך דבר בלי שיהיה משעובד ממה שרואה בחוש
לפניו. והלא כח ההוא להעתיק עצמו למצב שהוא מופשט
ממנו ולצייר לעצמו כאילו הוא נמצא במצב ההוא, זהו גם
ענין נושא בעול עם חבריו, ר"ל להרגיש העול שעל כתפו
של חבריו כאילו הוא נושא אותו בעצמו.

*מורנו הרב שמחה זיסל (זיו); חכמה ומוסר, ח"ב מאמר שני"א דף ש"ט

Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz explains the Sabba's approach regarding the connection between *Nesiah B'ol* and Torah acquisition. The Gemara will often compare two areas that on their surface are very different, by identifying a

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common denominator between them which will either be the basis of a question or an answer. In order to make such an analogy, one must be able to remove the superficial and incidental differences to see the true common connection that the two disparate cases share. For example, in the discussion of “יאוש שלא מדעת” – “inferred abandonment” of lost objects, the Gemara Bava Metzia (see Section VI-A-1, p. 51) attempted to adduce a proof to Abaye’s position from a *Braisa* pertaining to ritual impurity. On the surface, the laws of ritual impurity and returning lost objects are unrelated; how can a proof be brought from one topic to the other? However, beneath the superficial differences, the legal concept of “inferred abandonment or consent” has relevance for both topics. The Gemara, thus extracted the “inferred consent” aspect from the ritual impurity case and applied it to support Abaye’s position regarding “inferred abandonment” of lost objects. This same capacity, to remove the superficial differences so that things that appear different are seen as actually the same, is also required to be a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. One might argue: “*I am different than you – why should your problems impact on my well-being?*” However, if I remove the external “shell”, i.e., our physicality and materialism, and instead focus on the underlying reality that we are all one rooted in Hashem’s indivisible unity, I will understand that I am so connected to you, so that whatever is happening to you is also happening to me. A *Nosei B'ol*, has trained himself to look beneath the surface to find common roots with his or her fellow, thereby relating to the other person’s situation and empathizing with him or her. Hence, he is primed to develop an in-depth understanding of Torah.

D) When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we restore our friend’s dignity and, therefore, are worthy of acquiring the Torah to unveil Hashem’s glory in the world:

- 1) The following approach is based on a powerful discourse by Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht (Ref. 42). The Midrash states that the angels wanted to attack Moshe when he came up to Heaven to take the Torah down to earth. Hashem made Moshe’s face to appear like that of Avrohom Avinu and said to the angels, “*Are you not embarrassed before him (Avrohom) in whose home you ate?*” (referring to the angles who were served by Avrohom when they visited him). Hashem then said to Moshe, “*The Torah was given to you only in the Zechus (merit) of Avrohom*” (Source VI-7).

Source VI-7: Shemos Rabbah: Hashem gave the Torah to us in the merit of Avrohom Avinu who “fed” the angels..

<p>“<i>And Moshe ascended to G-d</i>”: ... At that moment the ministering angels sought to harm Moshe. The Holy One, blessed is He, made Moshe’s face appear like that of Avrohom. The Holy One, blessed is He, said to [the angels], “<i>Are you not embarrassed before him? Is he not the one to whom you descended and in whose home you ate?</i>” The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Moshe, “<i>The Torah was given to you only in the merit of Avrohom,</i>” as is stated, “[<i>You ascended on high, having taken captives</i>]. <i>You took gifts for man</i> (אדם).” The man (“אדם”) mentioned here refers to Avrohom, as is stated, “<i>the greatest man among the Anakim.</i>”</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">מדרש שמות רבה כ"ח, א':</p> <p>“וּמִשָּׁה עָלָה אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים” (שמות י"ט, ג'): ... בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה בִקְשׁוּ מִלְּאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרָת לִפְגַּע בְּמִשָּׁה, עָשָׂה בּוֹ הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא קְלִסְטִירִין שֶׁל פְּנִיּוֹ שֶׁל מִשָּׁה דּוֹמָה לְאַבְרָהָם. אָמַר לָהֶם הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: אֵי אַתֶּם מִתְבַּיְשִׁין הֵימָנוּ? לֹא זֶהוּ שְׂוִירְדָתְהֶם אֲצִלוּ וְאִכְלָתְהֶם בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ? אָמַר הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמִשָּׁה: לֹא נִתְּנָה לָךְ תּוֹרָה אֲלֵא בְּזִכּוֹת אַבְרָהָם, שְׁנֵאמַר (תהלים ס"ח, י"ט): “[עֲלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שְׁבִיתָ שְׁבִיתָ שְׁבִיתָ] לְקַחַת מִתְּנוּת בְּאָדָם, וְאִין אָדָם הָאָמֹר כָּאִין אֲלֵא אַבְרָהָם, שְׁנֵאמַר (יהושע י"ד, ט"ו): “הָאָדָם הַגָּדוֹל בְּעֵנִיקִים.”</p>
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Translation adapted from: *Avrohom’s Yom Tov*, by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Yeshiva University: *Shavuot To-Go*, Sivan 5770.

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- 2) Rav Goldvicht explains that the Torah was given to human beings to reveal the hidden spark of holiness that is the sustaining force behind the existence of all matter in this world. Through our toil in Torah and performance of Mitzvos, we endow our mundane activities and the physical implements needed for life, with a spirit of holiness so that they become *cheftzah d'Kedusha* (objects of holiness). When Avrohom “fed” the angels, he unveiled (or extracted) the holy spark hidden in the food, and in doing so, it became a spiritual “meal” which the angels were able to imbibe. Rav Goldvicht points out that the ability of angels to express praise to Hashem’s glory, on one hand, is much greater than that of humans since they clearly perceive the spiritual realm without any veil, but, on the other hand, they cannot add any new revelation of *Kavod Shomayim* (Heavenly glory). The angels’ ability is finite – what they see is what they get. Human beings, on the other hand, need to “extract” the spark and essence of holiness from the hidden veil of physicality in our world, which requires great effort. Because it requires such toil to unveil this holiness, our efforts heighten the level of the Heavenly glory in the world, the very purpose of Creation. It is precisely for this reason that the Torah was given to mankind rather than the angels. When Avrohom Avinu “fed” the angels, he demonstrated the ability to elevate physical matter to become *cheftzah d'Kedusha*, which is the purpose of the Torah. Moreover, Avrohom Avinu raised the angels’ own awareness of Hashem’s glory which they could not do on their own since they are shielded from the physical world. Therefore, in Avrohom Avinu’s merit, the Torah was given to his children.
- 3) Based on Rav Goldvicht’s beautiful thoughts, perhaps we can suggest an approach why the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* facilitates acquisition of Torah. When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we look beyond the exterior of the person who suffers, beyond the simple presentation of his or her difficulty that is apparent at first glance. When we meet someone who is distressed by loss of a job or a *shidduch* fizzling out, we often absolve ourselves by muttering perfunctory platitudes, “Be thankful for your health ... you will find a job or a *shidduch* in due time.” But have we taken the time to consider the dark thoughts and anxieties that are gnawing away at them, disturbing their peace of mind? Perhaps they are “stressed out”, catastrophizing about the potential fallout this setback will have on their relationships and wellbeing of family members. When we meet people with disturbing behavior, instead of further marginalizing and labeling them as “difficult individuals”, have we looked beneath their gruff exterior to see their vulnerability, the pain that they are trying to disguise? When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we look beneath the surface of their difficulties we might otherwise brush aside as unworthy of our commiseration, to validate their pain and fears, according their feelings the dignity they deserve. Rather than dismissing people with trite and empty platitudes, we restore the self-respect they often lose when mired in personal troubles. Their restored dignity, in turn, allows them to access the **Tzelem Elokim* that is hidden within the trappings of personal misery and earthly stressors – to express the Divine-like qualities that Hashem has endowed in them. Since one who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is instrumental in helping people express the Divine spark within themselves, he is worthy of being G-d’s emissary to utilize His Torah to unveil the hidden Divine spark in the world, thereby increasing Heavenly glory. Therefore, when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we receive *Seyata Dishmaya* (Heavenly assistance) to acquire Torah.

***(For explanation of the *Tzelem Elokim* concept, see p. 58)**

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HOW DOES *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO* FACILITATE TORAH ACQUISITION?

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ One who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* has broadened his perspective to view situations through the lens of other people. He will listen to his friend's view in Torah with an open mind even if it differs from his own view. Since he is receptive to all approaches, he will merit to reach the truth in Torah.
- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we strengthen Jewish unity (*Achdus*), i.e., our existence "*as one man and with one heart*" - "כאיש אחד בלב אחד", and therefore, we are deserving of Divine assistance to learn and understand Torah.
- ❖ A person who is a *Nosei B'ol*, will always share his Torah knowledge with others because of his concern for their spiritual welfare. Therefore, he is deserving of Divine assistance to acquire Torah.
- ❖ In order to relate to another person's situation and empathize, a *Nosei B'ol* has learned to look beneath the surface to find fundamental common roots with his or her fellow, despite their apparent differences. This skill will also enable one to attain depth in Torah understanding, by seeking commonalities between seemingly disparate topics and extrapolating from one to the other.
- ❖ One who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* restores dignity and self-respect to people who are struggling, thereby helping them access their hidden **Tzelem Elokim*. He is, therefore, worthy of being Hashem's emissary to use His Torah to unveil the Heavenly glory (*Kavod Shomayim*) in the world.

***Explanation of the *Tzelem Elokim* concept:**

Disclaimer: The following is very "watered-down" explanation (due to my limited and cursory understanding).

*We have noted several times that man was created *b'Tzelem Elokim* (in the Divine image). The term, "***Tzelem Elokim***", is loosely defined as man's potential to develop noble qualities that mirror Hashem's Divine attributes. The Ramban writes (on Chumash and *Sha'ar Hagemul*, 36) regarding (Bereishis 2:7): "[G-d] breathed into [Adam's] nostrils the soul of life," that Hashem, so to speak, "breathed" [a minute portion] from His own soul into man. This "Divine portion" endows a human being with the ability to spiritually soar and transcend the constraints of his physical existence, by contrast to animals who remain constrained by their physical existence. Moreover, the *Tzelem Elokim* enables us to fulfill the Mitzvah of "*following in the ways of Hashem*" ("והלכת בדרכיו", Devarim 28:9), which is explained by Chazal: "*Just as the Omnipresent is called merciful and gracious, you, too, should be merciful and gracious*" (see Source VII-10, p. 67).

VII. The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between G-d and the Jewish people and its role in Kiddush Hashem

A) The Divine *middah*, “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ”: Hashem’s *Nesiah B'ol* with the Jewish people’s suffering:

- 1) In the section of *Tomer Devorah* pertaining to the *middah*, “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְחֻלָּתוֹ” (Hashem’s empathy - He intimately feels our suffering), the Ramak writes: HKB”H says, “*I have a close relationship with Israel*” - “שֹׂאֲרַ בְּשֹׂר לִי עִמָּהֶם” (Source II-1b, p. 11). The expression “שֹׂאֲרַ בְּשֹׂר” is defined by Rav Yaakov Haber (Ref. 43) as “extensions”, using a neurophysiology analogy. When a person’s foot is injured, the central nervous system (brain) receives the pain sensation via communication from the nerve endings in the foot. In an analogous manner, Hashem, so to speak, is the central nervous system and we are His extensions, i.e., the nerve endings attached to Him. As such, any pain we experience, is His own pain. Moreover, the root of “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית” is “שֹׂאֲרַ”, which, in Parshas Emor (Vayikra 21:2; “לְשֹׂאֲרוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו”) refers to a person’s nearest kin (i.e., his wife, per Rashi, *ibid*), indicating that Hashem considers the Jewish people as His closest kin, and therefore, our pain is His pain.
- 2) *Sefer Shoftim* (Source VII-1a) describes Hashem’s response to Jewish people’s suffering due to severe oppression at the hands of their enemies: “וּתְקַצֵּר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעַמְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל” – “*and [G-d’s] spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel.*” The Ramak (*ibid*) explains, this verse illustrates that “[G-d] cannot bear [the Jewish people’s] pain and their disgrace, because they are the remnant of His inheritance.” When the Jewish people suffer, Hashem, so to speak, undergoes unbearable distress, and hence, intervenes to alleviate His own suffering (as if He is saving Himself). *Sefer Halkarim* (Source VII-1b) similarly understands the analogy portrayed by the aforementioned “וּתְקַצֵּר נַפְשׁוֹ” to a person who feels such anguish over a friend’s troubles that he feels compelled to put himself into a precarious position to save his friend. *Sefer Halkarim* states that it was such Divine *Nesiah B'ol* that brought about the redemption of Israel from the Egyptian enslavement.

Source VII-1: (a) *Shoftim* 10: 16; (b) *Sefer Halkarim*: Hashem’s anguish over the Jewish people’s distress.

<p>And they removed the strange gods from among them, and they served Hashem; and His spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel.</p>	<p><u>שׁוֹפְטִים י', ט"ז: וַיִּסְרִיּוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַגֵּזֶר מִקִּרְבָּם וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת ה' וַתִּקְצֹר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעַמְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.</u></p>
<p>The verse, “<i>and His spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel,</i>” depicts Hashem in the manner of a person who is anguished, whose spirit feels pressed on account of a friend’s hardship and puts himself into great difficulty to save his friend. This analogy applies to Hashem, blessed is He: Although the Jews sinned and were unworthy of that great salvation, nevertheless, Hashem saved them [to alleviate] His own [pain], as if He was personally affected by their distress and burdens. This is analogous to [Shemos 3: 7-8]: “<i>I have indeed seen the affliction of My people ... I shall descend to rescue it from the hand of Egypt,</i>” [whereby G-d declared He will save the Jewish people on account of His anguish for their suffering].</p>	<p><u>ספר העקרים. מאמר שני, פרק יד: ועל זה הדרך הוא מה שאמר הכתוב, “וּתְקַצֵּר נַפְשׁוֹ בְּעַמְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל”, שעשה פועל כאדם המצטער ונפשו קצרה בעמל חברו ומכניס עצמו בדוחק להושיעו, כן השם יתברך אף על פי שישראל חטאו ולא היו ראויים באותה שעה לאותה הצלה גדולה, הושיעם מצד עצמו כאילו התפעל מצרתם ועמלם, על דרך (שמות ג', ז'-ח'): “ראה ראיתי את עני עמי אשר וגו' וארד להצילו מיד מצרים וגו'”.</u></p>

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- 3) The *Mechilta D'bai Rabbi Yishmael* presents numerous verses from Tanach illustrating that the Shechinah (the Divine Presence) was exiled and subjugated to suffering together with the Jewish people throughout our many exiles: “You find that whenever [the Jewish people] were exiled, the Shechinah was exiled with them ... and when they return, the Shechinah will return with them” (Source VII-2).

Source VII-2: *Mechilta D'bai Rabbi Yishmael: The Shechinah was exiled with us and will be redeemed with us.*

You find that wherever Israel was exiled, the Shechinah was exiled with them. When they were exiled to Egypt, the Shechinah was with them ... When they were exiled to Bavel, the Shechinah was with them ... When they were exiled to Eilam, the Shechinah was with them ... When they were exiled to Edom, the Shechinah was with them ... And when they return, the Shechinah will return with them, as it is stated: “And Hashem, Your G-d will return.” It is not written “והשיב” (i.e., Hashem will bring you back) but, rather “ושב” (i.e., Hashem, Himself will come back). And it is stated: “With Me, from Levanon, My bride, with Me from Levanon will you come.” ... What is the intent of the words, “My bride, with Me from Levanon”? You and I were exiled from Levanon (i.e., Eretz Yisrael) and we will ascend together to Levanon.” ... When the end [of their exile period] arrived, HKB”H did not delay [their redemption] even for the blink of an eye.

מכילתא דבי רבי ישמעאל מסכתא דפסחא, בא י”ד:
 וכן את מוצא, בכל מקום שגלו ישראל, כבכל גלותה
 שכינה עמם: גלו למצרים, שכינה עמם ... גלו
 לבבל, שכינה עמם ... גלו לעילם, שכינה
 עמם ... גלו לאדום, שכינה עמם ... וכשעתידין
 לחזור, כבכל שכינה חזרת עמה, שנאמר (דברים
 ל, ג): “ושב ה' אלוקיך את שבותך.” אינו אומר
 “והשיב”, אלא “ושב”, ואומר (שה”ש ד, ח): “אתי
 מלבנון כלה אתי מלבנון תבואי” ... ומה תלמד לומר
 “אתי מלבנון כלה?” כבכל אני ואת מלבנון גלינו,
 אני ואת ללבנון עולים ... וכשהגיע הקץ, לא עכבן
 הקדש ברוד הוא כהרף עין.

Translation adapted from: Sefaria.org; (a similar version appears in *Sifrei Bamidbar* 4:4)

- 4) Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (Ref. 8) explains that Hashem is so finely “tuned in” to our feelings, that He perceives our minutest sensations, even those which we are unaware of. When the Torah states: “G-d knew” – “וידע אלקים” (Source II-2a, p. 11), describing the moment that Hashem “tuned in” to the Jewish people’s suffering in Egypt, this certainly does not mean that until that moment, He was unaware of their pain. Although Hashem always sees and knows everything, at times He remains in a state of *Hester Panim* (literally, “hidden face”, an allegorical representation of distancing oneself emotionally), so that our distress does not elicit His response, as if He was “in hiding”. In fact, Rashi (Source II-2b) explains the words, וידע אלקים: “He focused His heart upon them and did not hide His eyes [from them].” From this Rashi, Rav Friedlander (Ref. 44) deduces that until this moment, Hashem was in a state of *Hester Panim*, during which it appeared to us that, so to speak, His “eyes” were closed and misfortunes occurred by happenstance as if, Heaven forbid, no one was guiding the world. Accordingly, Rav Yeruchem explains, at the moment that Hashem “roused Himself” from His state of hiding, He felt even the slightest twinge of the *Bnei Yisrael’s* pain. Even the most minute sensation of their suffering came before Hashem’s throne of glory and thus, He immediately rose to champion their cause. Accordingly, “וידע אלקים” denotes a special, intimate level of attention to the troubles of the Jewish people, whereby their distress became Hashem’s “personal” suffering. Hashem would not allow the Jewish people to endure even one more second of pain, as if He simply could no longer bear it, as the *Mechilta* (Source VII-2) states “When the end [of their exile period] arrived, HKB”H did not delay [their redemption] even for the blink of an eye.”

HASHEM'S NESIAH B'OL FOR KLAL YISRAEL -

THE DIVINE MIDDAH OF "לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְהָלְתוֹ"

- ❖ The Divine *middah* of "לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נְהָלְתוֹ" is an expression of Hashem's intimate kinship with the Jewish people. As a result, our distress deeply affects and anguishes Him.
- ❖ When G-d rises up to save us, it is as if He is rescuing Himself – as if He can no longer endure the pain He suffers on our account. He saves us with the spirit of partnership in all our suffering.
- ❖ The Shechinah (Divine Presence) was exiled with us throughout our many exiles and will return to *Eretz Yisrael* with us upon our redemption.

B) Being *Nosei B'ol* with for G-d's pain and the responsibility to pray for relief of His pain:

1) The Mishna in Mesechta Sanhedrin (Source VII-3), which discusses the Torah's requirement for prompt burial of executed convicts, states that the Shechinah is anguished when a person is beset by suffering, even when caused by his own sins: "When a person suffers, the Shechinah says: 'I am burdened by My head, I am burdened by My arm.'" Therefore, Rav Wolbe advises (Source VII-4), when praying on behalf of an ill person (*choleh*), the primary intent of our prayers should be that the Shechinah be relieved of pain when the *choleh* is cured. Our prayer should also express our wish to see Hashem's glory (*Kavod Shomayim*) amplified when the person recovers and serves Hashem in full strength, as Rav Wolbe writes, "This is the entire focus of all Tefillah – to plead that the Heavenly Glory be revealed in the world."

Source VII-3: Mishna, Sanhedrin Daf 46a: The Shechinah is anguished when a person suffers.

<p>Rebbi Meir said: At the time when a person suffers [for his sins], what expression does the Divine Presence articulate? [So to speak, G-d says]: "I am burdened (I feel heavy) by My head, I am burdened by My arm." If the Omnipresent is pained for the spilled blood of the wicked, how much more so [is He pained] for the blood of the righteous.</p>	<p><u>משנה סנהדרין דף מ"ו ע"א:</u> אמר רבי מאיר: בשעה שאדם מצטער שכינה מה לשון אומרת? "קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי", אם כן המקום מצטער על דמן של רשעים שנשפך קל וחומר על דמן של צדיקים.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

Source VII-4: Rav Wolbe: Being *Nosei B'ol* with the Shechinah by praying that *Kavod Shomayim* be restored.

<p>We should be <i>Nosei B'ol</i> not only with our fellow man, but also with the Shechinah! In many Tefillos we plead for Kiddush Hashem, i.e., that Hashem's Name be sanctified in the world. The purpose of all that we request is, "Not for our sake, Hashem, not for our sake, but for Your Name's sake give glory, for Your kindness and for Your truth." This is the entire focus of all Tefillah – to plead that the Heavenly glory be revealed in the world. It is mentioned in holy writings that even when praying for one's ill friend to be healed, we should focus</p>	<p><u>עלי שור חלק א', מבוא לשער רביעי, עמ' רנג – רנד:</u> ולא רק עם האדם, כי גם עם השכינה עצמה! כמה תפילות אנו מתפללים על קידוש שם שמים בעולם, כי "לא לנו ה', לא לנו כי לשמך תן כבוד על חסדך ועל אמיתך" (תהלים קטו: א)! כי בעצם זהו כל ענין התפילה, לבקש על גילוי כבוד שמים בעולם. ומבא בספרים כי גם המתפלל על חבירו שיעמוד מחליו, אין</p>
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primarily on the anguish of the Shechinah Who suffers along with the *choleh*. Our underlying intent should be that the Shechinah be spared further anguish when the person is healed, and moreover, that, once recovered, he will be able to serve his Creator with greater strength, thereby elevating the Heavenly glory in the world.

לו להתכוון אלא על צער השכינה הסובלת עם כל חולה, ויכוון שהשכינה לא תסבול עוד, ועוד כי הלא יבריא ממחלתו יוכל לעבוד את בוראו ביתר שאת, ויתרבה על ידו כבוד שמים בעולם.

- 2) Rav Wolbe teaches us that, in addition to the imperative to be *Nosei B'ol* with our fellow Jew, it is incumbent upon us to be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem's pain, i.e., His pain because of His creation's suffering and because of the diminution of His glory in the world. The ideal opportunity to demonstrate *Nesiah B'ol* with Hashem is when we speak directly to Him in prayer. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin states in *Sefer Nefesh HaChaim* (Source VII-5): "[When an individual is in pain], he should plead to Hashem [for relief of His pain], for every human pain produces great anguish [to the Shechinah] Above." Moreover, the subjugation of the Jewish people to oppression by the nations during our exile, causes Chillul Hashem (desecration of Hashem's Name), as the prophet Yechezkel states (36:20), "It (the Jewish people) came among the nations where they came (in exile), and they desecrated My holy Name when it was said of them, 'These are the people of Hashem, but they departed His land.'" Thus, the *Nefesh HaChaim* says: "[when Jews suffer from oppression], we are required to pour out our souls in prayer over the desecration of Hashem's Name." When our motivation in requesting relief from suffering is to remove the Chillul Hashem, we are, in fact, *Noseh B'ol* with Hashem since the theme of our prayers is our identification with His pain.

Source VII-5: Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin: Placing the focus of our prayers on Hashem's anguish.

When praying for relief of suffering, our purpose must be for the sake of Heaven. For example, when Jews suffer from oppression, we are required to pour out [our souls] in prayer over the desecration of Hashem's Name. [By oppressing the Jews, the tormentors show their contempt of G-d]. Similarly, when an individual is in pain, even if his suffering does not involve desecration of Hashem's Name, he should plead to Hashem, blessed be He [for relief of His pain], for every human pain produces great anguish [to the Shechinah] Above, as Chazal say: "R' Meir said: When man suffers, what does the Shechinah say? 'I am burdened by My head, I am burdened by My arm!'"

נפש החיים, שער ב', פרק י"א:
 אמנם תכלית הכוונה צריכה שתהיה רק צורך גבוה, כי במקום שיש חילול שמו יתברך כגון צרת כלל ישראל, "באמור עם ה' אלה" (יחזקאל ל"ו, כ') והמה מוכים ומעונים, ומחוייבים לבקש ולשפוך שיח לפניו ית"ש על חילול שמו יתברך, ואך למען שמו יעשה. וגם היחיד על צערו אף אם אין חילול השם בדבר, יש מקום ג"כ לבקש לפניו יתברך על גודל הצער של מעלה בזמן שהאדם שרוי בצער למטה, כמאמרם ז"ל במשנה פ"ו דסנהדרין, אמר ר' מאיר, בזמן שהאדם מצטער שכינה מה הלשון אומרת "קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי".

Translation adapted from: *Nefesh HaChaim*, Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov Finkel, Judaica Press

- 3) How immense is Hashem's pain as long as the Jewish people remain in exile! The Gemara Berachos says when Hashem hears us praise His Name, He shakes His head and says: "Fortunate is the King who is praised this way in His house. How great is the pain of the Father Who exiled His children! Woe to the children who were exiled from their Father's table" (Source VII-6). Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (Ref. 46) explains that when the Beis HaMikdash (בהמ"ק) was extant, we would praise G-d with the expansive, "ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד", (Blessed is the Name of His glorious kingdom for eternity). Since the destruction of the בהמ"ק, our words of praise are deficient, i.e., the response, "יהא שמה רבא מברך וכי" (which we say in Kaddish), lacks mention of "His glorious kingdom".

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It is a source of great anguish to Hashem that His children can no longer praise Him in the *בהמ"ק*. Hashem greatly desires to return us to the *בהמ"ק* where He will hear us glorify His Name properly again.

Source VII-6: Gemara Berachos: Hashem's constant pain over the exile of His children.

It was taught in a *Braisa*: R' Yose said: I was once traveling on the road, and I entered one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Elijah the prophet, Who is remembered for good, came and waited for me at the entrance until I finished my prayer ... He said to me: "My son, what voice did you hear in that ruin?" I said to him: "I heard a Heavenly voice cooing like a dove and saying: 'Woe to the children because of whose sins I destroyed My house, burned My Temple, and exiled them among the nations.'" He said to me: "By your life and by your head, not only in this moment does the Heavenly voice say this, but it repeats this [lament] three times every day. Not only this, but at the time that the people of Israel enter the synagogues and houses of study and respond (in Kaddish): 'May His (G-d's) great Name be blessed (for eternity),' HKB" H shakes His head and says: 'Fortunate is the King who is praised this way in His house. What remains for (i.e., how great is the pain of) the Father Who has exiled His children! Woe to the children who have been exiled from their Father's table.'"

גמרא מס' ברכות דף ג' ע"א:

תניא א"ר יוסי פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך ונכנסתי לחורבה אחת מחורבות ירושלים להתפלל. בא אליהו זכור לטוב ושמר לי על הפתח עד שסיימתי תפילתי ... ואמר לי: "בני מה קול שמעת בחורבה זו?" ואמרתי לו: "שמעתי בת קול שמנהמת כיונה ואומרת: "אוי לבנים שבעונותיהם החרבתי את ביתי ושרפתי את היכלי והגליתים לבין האומות". ואמר לי: "חייך וחיי ראשך לא שעה זו בלבד אומרת כך, אלא בכל יום ויום שלש פעמים אומרת כך. ולא זו בלבד, אלא בשעה שישראל נכנסין לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות ועונין: "יהא שמייה הגדול מבורך", הקב"ה מנענע ראשו ואומר: "אשרי המלך שמקלסין אותו בביתו כך, מה לו לאב שהגלה את בניו, ואוי להם לבנים שגלו מעל שולחן אביהם."

Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 4) A practical application of our *Nesiah B'ol* with G-d's pain is to plead for the restoration of His glory (*Kavod Shomayim*) via the ultimate Redemption, as stated in Yechezkel (36:23-24): "I will sanctify My great Name that is desecrated among the nations ... I will take you from among the nations and gather you from all the lands, and I will bring you to your own soil." This theme is expressed by the *Mesillas Yesharim* (Source XI-2; p. 96) "[A pious person] surely ought to experience constant, authentic anguish over the exile of Israel and the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, inasmuch as this (state of exile and destruction) causes a diminution of Hashem's honor, blessed be He. And he will yearn for the redemption because through it there will be an elevation in the honor of Hashem, blessed be He." In the *Shemoneh Esrei*, we have an awesome opportunity to express our yearning that Hashem's glory be restored, e.g., within the *Berachos* of "ולירושלים עירך" (*Return to Your city, Jerusalem, with compassion*), "את צמח דוד" (*Cause the offspring of Your servant, David to flourish speedily*).
- 5) Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D. writes (Ref. 47): Chassidic writings are replete with the concept that ideally prayer is not intended to ask for things for oneself, but for Hashem's sake, as King David says "Not for our sake, Hashem, not for our sake, but for Your Name's sake give glory" (Tehillim 115:1). In our prayers we often say, "Do for Your sake if not for ours." Even when we ask for healing, it is because "You are the faithful and compassionate Healer," i.e., to give glory to Your Name as a healer. In the *Amidah*, we pray, "We hope for Your salvation all day long." "Your salvation" should not be understood as "the salvation You provide for us," but rather **Your salvation**, because when Jews are in exile, the *Shechinah* is in exile, and we pray for the *Shechinah*.

BEING *NOSEI B'OL* WITH G-D'S PAIN AND PRAYING FOR RELIEF OF HIS PAIN

- ❖ When praying on behalf of someone in distress, our primary intent should be to plead for the relief of the Shechinah's anguish since Hashem suffers along with anyone in pain (*Nefesh HaChaim* and Rav Wolbe).
- ❖ The underlying theme of all prayer is to plead that *Kavod Shomayim* (Heavenly Glory) will be revealed in the world (Rav Wolbe).
- ❖ Hashem's Name suffers desecration while we are in exile. We are *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem during our prayers when we express our yearning for His Name to be sanctified (especially the great Kiddush Hashem at the ultimate Redemption from our exile).

C) Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* sensitizes us to prioritize Kiddush Hashem in our lives:

- 1) The Sabba of Kelm writes (Source VII-7a), one who develops his character to feel another person's pain, will also feel the pain of the Shechinah (Ref. 14). In other words, our personality will become one that aspires to find ways to heighten *Kavod Shomayim* (Heavenly glory) wherever we turn, and any diminution of Kiddush Hashem (sanctification of Hashem's Name) in the world will become our personal pain. Similarly, Rav Chatzkel (Source VII-7b) declares, one who feels pain for his fellow's suffering will develop a desire and concern to ensure that Kiddush Hashem will arise from every situation. Conversely, one who is apathetic to his fellow's suffering, will have little concern for Kiddush Hashem, may Hashem spare us.

Source VII-7: a) Sabba of Kelm; b) Rav Chatzkel Levenstein: One who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* places paramount importance on sanctifying Hashem's Name.

<p>One who feels the pain [of another person], will also be greatly distressed over the pain of the Shechinah, so to speak.</p>	<p><u>מכתבי הסבא מקעלם ז"ל, מאמר נחמד ונעים:</u> ואחרי שהוא מרגיש הצער, מצטער הרבה כביכול על צער השכינה.</p>
<p>One who attains love of his fellow man, will also attain love of Hashem, blessed be He. A person who feels pain for his friend's suffering, will also feel concern for Kiddush Hashem (i.e., upholding the honor of Hashem will be of paramount importance). However, one who is apathetic to the pain of his friend, will also have little concern for Kiddush Hashem.</p>	<p><u>אור יחזקאל, חלק מדות, מאמר "נושא בעול עם נפטר":</u> וכל שישגי אהבת הבריות כן ישיג אף אהבת השי"ת, שבעת שמצטער בצער תבירו כן מטריד אותו אף קידוש השם. וכאשר אינו טרוד מצער זולתו רחוק אף מקידוש השם.</p>

- 2) How does being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with our fellow Jew cultivate an inner concern for *Kavod Shomayim* and a desire to sanctify Hashem's Name in the world? In Section VII-A-1 (p. 59), we explained that the "שְׂאֵר בְּשָׂר" relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people denotes the fact that we are Hashem's extensions, akin to nerve endings that are extensions of the brain (per Rav Yaacov Haber). If I am *Nosei B'ol* with my fellow Jews, i.e., feeling the pain of Hashem's extensions, I will develop the ability to be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem Himself (i.e.,

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feeling His pain due to His children's suffering). My *Nosei B'ol* capability will also progress to feeling Hashem's pain from the desecration of His Name (e.g., due to our exile and destruction of the Beis HaMikdash). As a corollary, I will endeavor to uphold Hashem's honor by always acting in a way that sanctifies His Name.

- 3) Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 48) mentions the following statement from the Vilna Gaon's letters and *Sefer Reishis Chachmah* (*Sha'ar HaYirah*, chapter 12): "When a person is brought to reckoning after 120 years, he is asked 'Did you coronate your Creator, did you coronate your friend?'" What is the meaning of this passage? Rav Chatzkel explains the Jewish nation's mission is to recognize Hashem's kingdom, proclaiming that there is no force in the world governing our existence other than Hashem ("אין עוד מלבדו"). The fulfillment of this mission is contingent upon the Jewish people uniting for the singular goal of advancing the Torah's mandate. Our proclamation of Hashem's sovereignty is directly proportional with the extent of our unity, i.e., our existence as "נפש אחת" (one collective soul). In the above passage, by "coronating my friend," I declare the purpose of my entire existence is to ensure the wellbeing and flourishing of the Jewish nation, i.e., I identify my existence as part of the "נפש אחת" entity. From the phrasing of, "Did you coronate your Creator, did you coronate your friend?," Rav Chatzkel concludes that coronating our friend is of equal importance as coronating Hashem. The reason for this equivalence is now clear: The degree to which we coronate our friend, i.e., establishing our "נפש אחת" existence, determines the degree we succeed in coronating Hashem. This is supported by the Midrash (Source VII-8): "When is His throne, so to speak, established above? When Israel becomes 'אגדה אחת' (one bundle)." We mentioned above (Section III-B-6, p. 34), when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we strengthen our existence as "נפש אחת". It follows, logically, that by leading a life of *Nesiah B'ol*, we help affirm G-d's majesty, thus creating Kiddush Hashem.

Source VII-8: Hashem 's sovereignty is strengthened when we become "אגדה אחת" - one united group (bundle).

<p><i>"Who builds His upper strata in the Heavens and He founds His group upon the earth; [Who calls to the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the face of the earth – Hashem is His Name]."</i></p> <p>To what is this compared? To a palace that was built upon boats. As long as the boats are connected, the palace upon them will stand. Thus, <i>"Who builds His upper strata in the Heavens"</i>: When is His throne, so to speak, established above? When Israel becomes one bundle ("אגדה אחת"). It therefore states, <i>"Who builds His upper strata in the Heavens,"</i> i.e., [His upper strata will be built] when <i>"He founds His group upon the earth."</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">מדרש במדבר רבה ט"ו, י"ח:</p> <p>(עמוס ט: ו): "הבונה בשמים מעלותו ונאגדתו על ארץ יסדה והקרא למי הים וישפכם על פני הארץ ה' שמו".</p> <p>למה הדבר דומה? לפלטין שהיתה בנויה על גבי הספינות, כל זמן שהספינות מחברות פלטין שעל גביהן עומדת. כך הבונה בשמים מעלותו, כפיכחול כסאו מבוסס למעלה בזמן שישאל עשויין אגדה אחת. לכה נאמר: "הבונה בשמים מעלותו". אימתי? ונאגדתו על ארץ יסדה."</p>
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- 4) After the sin of the Golden Calf, G-d told Moshe Rabbeinu that He would destroy the Jewish people and make Moshe into a great new nation. Moshe prayed for the forgiveness and survival of *Klal Yisrael*, (Source VII-9, verse 32): "And now, if You would but bear their sin! – but if not, erase me from Your book that You have written." Hashem responded (v. 33): "Whoever has sinned against Me, I shall erase him from My book," indicating that Moshe's plea, "but if not, erase me from your book," was unable to swing the scales of justice to save *Klal Yisrael* from annihilation. Yet, in the very next verse (v. 34), we see that Moshe Rabbeinu's prayer succeeded in securing his nation's survival, when Hashem said: "And now, go, lead the people to that which I have spoken to you."

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Source VII-9: Shemos 32: 31-34: Moshe Rabbeinu pleads with Hashem to spare *Klal Yisrael* from destruction.

<p>(31) Moshe returned to Hashem and said, "I implore! This people has sinned a great sin and made for themselves a god of gold.</p> <p>(32) And now, if You would but bear their sin! – but if not, erase me from Your book that You have written."</p> <p>(33) Hashem said to Moshe, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I shall erase him from My book.</p> <p>(34) And now, go and lead the people to that which I have spoken to You. Behold! My angel shall go before you, and on a day that I make an accounting, I shall bring their sin to account against them."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>שמות פרק ל"ב:</u></p> <p>ל"א: וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי חָטָא חֲטָא הָעָם הַזֶּה חֲטָאָה גְדוֹלָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהִי זָהָב.</p> <p>ל"ב: וְעַתָּה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֵךָ אֲשֶׁר פָּתַבְתָּ.</p> <p>ל"ג: וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מִי אֲשֶׁר חֲטָא לִי אֶמְחִנּוּ מִסִּפְרַי.</p> <p>ל"ד: וְעַתָּה לֵךְ נַחֵם אֶת הָעָם אֵל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ הַנְּהַ מִּלְאָכָי יֵלְךָ לְפָנָיִךָ וּבַיּוֹם פְּקֹדֵי וּפְקֹדֹתַי עָלֵיהֶם חֲטָאתָם.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

5) Rav Friedlander (Ref. 49) asks, since Moshe's plea, "but if not, erase me from your book," (v. 32) was ineffective from the perspective of Hashem's justice, how then, did his prayer succeed to save the Jewish nation? Rav Friedlander cites Rav Eliyahu Dessler's explanation, based on the Gemara Berachos which states that Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to sacrifice his life to suffer the very same fate of annihilation decreed upon *Klal Yisrael* (Source VII-10). Thus, Rav Dessler explains, the factor which saved *Klal Yisrael* from destruction, was the merit (*Zechus*) created by the supreme level of Moshe's Rabbeinu's *Nesiah B'ol*, i.e., he was unable to bear living without the Jewish people. Moshe's total identification with the lot of his brethren whereby he felt his entire existence tied to their survival, provided the *Zechus* to annul the decree for their destruction and granted them a reprieve.

Source VII-10: Gemara Berachos 32a: Moshe wants to forfeit his life to save the Jewish people from destruction

<p>"And Moshe pleaded before Hashem": Shmuel said, [the term, "וייחל"] teaches that Moshe gave (i.e., he wanted to give) his life for Israel, as it is stated: "And now if You would forgive their sin – but if not, erase me from Your book [of life]."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>גמרא ברכות דף ל"ב ע"א:</u></p> <p>"וַיִּיחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת פָּנָיו" (שמות ל"ב: י"א) ... וְשִׂמוּאֵל אָמַר: מִלְמַד שְׂמִסָּר עֲצָמוֹ לְמִיתָה עָלֵיהֶם, שְׂנֵאָמַר (שמות ל"ב: ל"ב): "וְאִם אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֵךָ".</p>
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Translation adapted from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

6) Wherein lies the power of *Nesiah B'ol*, even at Moshe Rabbeinu's supreme level, to override the decree of punishment that was justly warranted by the immense Chillul Hashem (desecration of G-d's Name) caused by the sin of the Golden Calf? Rav Friedlander explains that Moshe Rabbeinu created a great Kiddush Hashem through his exalted *Nesiah B'ol* with such *Mesiras Nefesh* (self-sacrifice), when he declared he could not bear to see the suffering of the Jewish people. This Kiddush Hashem was of such a great magnitude that it "repaired" the Chillul Hashem created by the sin of the Golden Calf. Thus, the mechanism by which Moshe Rabbeinu's *Nesiah B'ol* saved the Jewish nation, i.e., by generating Kiddush Hashem, was not through an extralegal clemency, but in fact, through the laws of justice itself, by reversing the Chillul Hashem that had previously condemned them.

7) Rav Matisyahu, in his commentary on *Sefer Tomer Devorah* (Ref. 50), comments that when we emulate Hashem's ways, in addition to fulfilling the Mitzvah of "ויהלכת בדרכיו", our behavior creates Kiddush Hashem in the world.

Section VII: The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between G-d and the Jewish people and its role in Kiddush Hashem

Since we are created in the Divine image, our sublime behavior which resembles Hashem's *middos*, proclaims the greatness of our Creator Who endowed us with a "portion" of His Divine qualities. On this basis, Rav Matisyahu explains the *Sifri* (Source VII-11) which infers a reference to the Mitzvah of emulating Hashem's ways from the verse (Yoel 3:5): "כל אשר יקרא בשם ה' ימלט". The *Sifri*, based on its homiletic interpretation of this verse, "Everyone who will be called by the Name of Hashem will escape," asks, "Is it possible for a human being to be called by Hashem's Name?" The *Sifri* answers, a person is "called by the Name of Hashem" by following in His ways: "Just as the Omnipresent is called merciful and gracious, you, too, should be merciful and gracious." When the world sees that our noble behavior is governed by the exalted *middos* (attributes) through which G-d is described, this itself proclaims the greatness of Hashem's Name, thereby publicly creating a Kiddush Hashem. Accordingly, Rav Matisyahu's beautiful insight helps us understand how being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* enables us to prioritize Kiddush Hashem in our lives since our behavior resembles Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", and thus, we will be counted among those "who will be called by the Name of Hashem."

Source VII-11: *Sifri* Devarim 49:1: The Mitzvah of emulating HKB"H, derived from "ללכת בכל דרכיו".

<p>"To walk in His ways": What are the ways of HKB"H? "Hashem, Hashem, G-d, Merciful and Gracious, Slow to Anger, and Abundant in Kindness and Truth; Preserver of Kindness for two thousand, Forgiver of Iniquity and Willful Sin, and Error, and Who Absolves." And it is written: *<i>"Everyone who calls in the Name of Hashem will escape."</i> Is it possible for a human being to be called by Hashem's Name? Rather, [the intent is] just as the Omnipresent is called merciful and gracious, you, too, should be merciful and gracious and give gratuitously to all. ... And it is written: <i>"Everyone who is called by My Name and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have fashioned, even perfected."</i></p>	<p>ספרי דברים מ"ט: א': (דברים יא: כב): "ללכת בכל דרכיו": אלו דרכי הקב"ה שנאמר (שמות לד: ו-ז): "ה' ה' קל רחום וחנון ארץ אפים ורב חסד ואמת נוצר חסד לאלפים נושא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקה". ואומר (יואל ג: ה): "כל אשר יקרא בשם ה' ימלט". וכי היאך אפשר לו לאדם להיקרא בשמו של הקב"ה? אלא מה המקום נקרא רחום וחנון, אף אתה הוי רחום וחנון ועשה מתנת חנם לכל ... ואומר (ישעיה מג: ז): "כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו, יצרתיו אף עשיתיו".</p>
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**Sifri* interprets this verse homiletically: "Everyone who will be called by the Name of Hashem, will escape."

- 8) The *Sefer HaChinuch* (Source VII-12), while discussing the Mitzvah of loving our fellow Jew, lists several practical applications: "One must take care to spare (or enhance) his fellow's honor ... One who treats his fellow with love, peace and neighborliness, seeking his benefit (i.e., to improve his fellow's situation) and rejoices about his good fortune, Scripture states about him, "You are My servant Israel, through whom I am glorified" (Yeshayahu 49:3)."

Source VII-12: *Sefer HaChinuch*: Mitzvah 243: The Mitzvah of "אהבת ישראל": Loving a fellow Jew

<p>The Mitzvah of loving a fellow Jew: To love every Jew with the love of one's soul ... as the verse states, "And you shall love your fellow as you love yourself." Our Sages said in Sifra: "Rebbi Akiva said, 'This is a great principle in the Torah.'" The meaning is: many Mitzvos are dependent upon it, i.e., one who loves his fellow like himself will not steal his money, commit adultery with his wife, cheat him monetarily, hurt him with words, encroach his boundaries or hurt him in any</p>	<p>ספר החינוך – מצוה רמג: מצות אהבת ישראל: לאהוב כל אחד מישראל אהבת נפש ... שנאמר (ויקרא יט יח): ואהבת לרעך כמוך . ואמרו בספרא: אמר רבי עקיבא זה כלל גדול בתורה, כלומר שהרבה מצות שבתורה תלויות בכך, שהאובה חברו כנפשו לא יגנב ממונו ולא ינאף את אשתו ולא</p>
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other manner. Furthermore, many other commandments are dependent on this Mitzvah ...

The elements included in this Mitzvah follow the general principle that one should treat another person in the way he would treat himself, e.g. protecting his property, preventing him from being harmed, speaking only well of him, respecting him, and certainly not glorifying oneself at his friend's expense ... One who treats his fellow with love, peace and neighborliness, seeks his benefit and rejoices about his good fortune, Scripture states about him, "*You are My servant Israel, through whom I am glorified.*"

Translation adapted from: Sefaria.org and Ner LeElef: "Ahavat Yisrael"

יונהו בממון ולא בדברים ולא יסיג גבולו ולא יזיק לו בשום צד, וכן כמה מצות אחרות תלויות בזה ... ודיני מצוה זו כלולים הם בתוך המצוה, שכלל הכל הוא שיתנהג האדם עם חברו כמו שיתנהג האדם עצמו לשמר ממונו ולהרחיק ממנו כל נזק. ואם יספר עליו דברים יספרם לשבח ויחוס על כבודו ... והמתנהג עם חברו דרך אהבה ושלוש ורעות ומבקש תועלתם ושמה בטובם עליו הכתוב אומר (ישעיהו מ"ט, ג'): "עבדי אתה ישראל אשר בכך אתפאר".

- 9) Previously (Section II-A-7, pp. 13-14), we said that one who rejoices over his fellow's good fortune exemplifies a remarkable level of *Nesiah B'ol*. It is therefore very fitting that the *Sefer HaChinuch* proclaims the display of such exalted *Nesiah B'ol* (i.e., "*one who ... rejoices about his [fellow's] good fortune*") as a fulfillment of, "*My servant Israel, through whom I am glorified*" (Yeshayahu 49:3), the same verse that the Gemara Yoma (Daf 86a) associates with a person whose noble personal conduct brings about Kiddush Hashem in the world.

NESSIAH B'OL SENSITIZES US TO PRIORITIZE KIDDUSH HASHEM IN OUR LIVES

- ❖ Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with our fellow Jew cultivates an inner concern for Hashem's glory and a desire to sanctify His Name in the world.
- ❖ Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* strengthens our existence as "נפש אחת" (one collective soul), thereby perfecting our coronation of Hashem, Whose kingdom becomes established when the Jewish people exists as "אגדה אחת" (one united bundle).
- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu's great level of *Nesiah B'ol* with *Klal Yisrael* created an immense Kiddush Hashem, which reversed the Chillul Hashem caused by the sin of the Golden Calf. Moshe's *Nesiah B'ol* was the sole factor that saved the Jewish nation from destruction (see Rav Chatzkel, Section IX-D-2, pp. 80-81).
- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, our behavior resembles G-d's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", thereby proclaiming the greatness of our Creator Who created us in His Divine image.

Section VIII: How does our *Nesiah B'ol* arouse Heavenly salvation for the Jewish people?

VIII. How does our *Nesiah B'ol* arouse Heavenly salvation for the Jewish people?

A) Our *Nesiah B'ol* with each other activates G-d's *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” to flow toward us:

At the end of chapter one of *Sefer Tomer Devorah* (Source VIII-1), the Ramak explains that emulating G-d's *middos* of mercy provides a special benefit. By emulating one of the Divine *middos* in our interactions with fellow Jews, we open the channels for that same *middah* Above, activating the Heavenly flow of this Divine *middah* toward us, on a level proportional with our efforts. Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 38) applies this to the Divine *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” which we emulate by being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (see Section III-A, pp. 30-32). When we are *Nosei B'ol* with each other, we open the Heavenly channels for “לשארית נחלתו” to flow toward us. Because of this *middah*, G-d cannot bear to see us suffer as the Ramak states (Source II-1b, p. 11): “*He cannot bear their pain and their disgrace, because they are the remnant of His inheritance.*” Thus, by inducing the flow of “לשארית נחלתו”, our *Nesiah B'ol* helps deliver Heavenly salvation for the Jewish nation.

Source VIII-1: *Tomer Devorah* – conclusion of Chapter 1: The flow of G-d's *middos* of mercy toward us from above, is activated when we manifest the same *middah* below.

With this, we conclude the thirteen attributes through which a person can resemble His Creator, which are the highest (supernal) traits of mercy. Their special quality (power) is: Precisely in the manner we act [in the earthly world] below, we merit to open [the Heavenly channels, inducing the flow of] that same supernal attribute from Above. Just as we behave [in the earthly world], so too, we influence [the flow from] Above, causing that same attribute to shine in the world.

ספר תומר דבורה - סיכום של פרק א':

עד כאן הגיע שלש עשרה מדות שפיהן יהיה האדם דומה אל קונו שהן מדות של רחמים עליונות וסגולתן כמו שיהיה האדם מתנהג למטה כך יזכה לפתח לו מדה עליונה מלמעלה ממש. כפי מה שיתנהג כך משפיע מלמעלה וגורם שאותה המדה תאיר בעולם.

Translation adapted from: *The Elucidated Tomer Devorah*, by Rabbi Shmuel Meir Riachi, Feldheim Publishers.

B) We merited redemption from Egypt because of our *Nesiah B'ol*. Our final redemption will be activated by being *Nosei B'ol* with each other:

- 1) In Parshas Shemos (3: 6-22), Hashem deputized Moshe Rabbeinu to demand Pharaoh to release the Jews. Pharaoh responded (verses 5: 6-9) by increasing the difficulty of the Israelites' labor, forcing them to collect their own straw without reducing their quota for brick production. Consequently, when the oppressed laborers could not fill the quota, the Jewish officers were beaten by their Egyptian taskmasters. Rashi (verse 5:14) explains that the Jewish officers were ordered by the Egyptians to force their fellow Israelites to fill the draconian quota, but because of their pity for their fellow Jews, they chose to be brutally beaten rather than subject their brethren to additional suffering, a display of great *Nesiah B'ol*. Moshe believed his “disastrous” mission only served to worsen *Bnei Yisrael's* suffering, making their lives unsurvivable. Thus, Moshe said to Hashem in dismay (Source VIII-2, verse 5:22): “*Why have You harmed this people, why have You sent me.*”
- 2) Rav Eliyahu Lopian (quoted by Rav Salomon, Ref. 51) explains that Hashem knew that the redemption of *Bnei Yisrael* required His *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” because their merits were inadequate to deserve redemption. However, to activate this Divine *middah*, it was necessary for the Jewish people to be *Nosei B'ol* with each other. To induce this *Nesiah B'ol* between fellow Jews, Hashem engineered a chain reaction, whereby Moshe's

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overture to Pharaoh triggered the latter's harsh decree, leading to the Jewish officers' display of great *Nesiah B'ol*, submitting themselves to brutal beatings to spare their brethren further suffering. This *Nesiah B'ol*, in turn activated Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", with which He redeemed *Klal Yisrael*.

Source VIII-2: Shemos 5:22 – 6:1: Hashem reassures Moshe Rabbeinu of His masterplan to redeem the Jews.

<p>5: 22: Moshe returned to Hashem and said, "My L-rd why have You harmed this people, why have You sent me?"</p> <p>5: 23: From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he harmed this people, but You did not rescue Your people."</p> <p>6: 1: Hashem said to Moshe, "Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh, for through a strong hand he will send them out, and through a strong hand he will drive them from his land."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">שמות פרק ה-ו':</p> <p>פרק ה', כ"ב: וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-י לְמָה הִרְעַתָּה לְעַם הַזֶּה לְמָה זֶה שְׁלַחְתָּנִי.</p> <p>פרק ה', כ"ג: וּמֵאֵז בָּאתִי אֶל פַּרְעֹה לְדַבֵּר בְּשֵׁמֶךָ הֲרַע לְעַם הַזֶּה וְהִצַּל לֹא הִצַּלְתָּ אֶת עַמִּי.</p> <p>פרק ו', א': וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה עֲתָה תֵרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶעֱשֶׂה לְפַרְעֹה כִּי בְיַד חֲזָקָה יִשְׁלַחֵם וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה יִגְרֹשֵׁם מֵאֶרֶצוֹ.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 3) Rav Matisyahu explains the verse, "**Now** you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh ... through a strong hand he will drive them from his land," (Shemos 6:1; Source VIII-2), as follows: Hashem responded to Moshe's cry of despair ("Why have You harmed this people etc.") by reassuring him that his "disastrous" mission, in fact, was an integral part of His Divine plan to redeem the Jews - by activating His *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו". **Now** that My *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" has been activated through the Jewish officers' *Nesiah B'ol*, I will mobilize My might to redeem the Jewish people. Rav Lopian's explanation concurs precisely with the Ramak's words (Source VIII-1), "Precisely as he behaves [in the earthly world], so too, he influences [the flow from] Above, causing that same attribute to shine in the world."
- 4) Rav Matisyahu states that the mechanism by which we will be redeemed from our current exile, will mirror our redemption from Egypt. We must take the first step – to be *Nosei B'ol* with each other, thus arousing G-d's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", through which He will redeem us.
- 5) Rav Avrohom Yaffon (Ref. 52) offers an illuminating insight regarding the incident in Parshas Shemos when Moshe Rabbeinu killed the Egyptian who was beating a Jewish man (Source VIII-3). Moshe Rabbeinu had a prominent position in the Egyptian monarchy and thus, had the unique opportunity to wield positive influence to help his brethren, which, in fact, he used to convince Pharaoh to allow the Jews to rest on Shabbos. By killing the Egyptian to save one Jew, Moshe was forced to flee and give up all his power and good standing with Pharaoh, which could have benefitted many more Jews than the one individual he saved. From the perspective of the risk-benefit ratio, the cost of saving a single Jew does not appear to justify the lost opportunity of helping an entire nation?

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Source VIII-3: Shemos 2: 11-12: Moshe Rabbeinu's *Nesiah B'ol* drives him to strike down the abusive Egyptian

<p><u>11</u>: And it happened in those days that Moses grew up and went out to his brethren and saw their burdens; and He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew man, of his brethren.</p> <p><u>12</u>: He (Moshe) turned this way and that, and saw that there was no man, so he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">שמות ב', י"א - י"ב:</p> <p>י"א: וַיְהִי בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם נִגְדַל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אֶחָיו וַיִּרְא בְּסִבְלָתָם וִירָא אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם מַכֶּה אִישׁ עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו.</p> <p>י"ב: וַיִּפֶן כֹּה וְכֹה וִירָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיִּךְ אֶת הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַחֹל.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

6) Rav Yaffon answers based on the Zohar, when the Torah states (Source VIII-3): “וַיִּפֶן כֹּה וְכֹה וִירָא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ” – “He turned this way and that, and saw that there was no man,” this does not mean Moshe looked around to ensure no one would witness him killing the Egyptian (which is the more common interpretation). Rather, it means Moshe looked to see if anyone else would be aroused to rise up on behalf of his fellow Jew being beaten, but he saw no one sufficiently inspired with the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol* to come to the victim’s defense. Their spirits were so broken that everyone could only look out for his own survival. Moshe realized that without this spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, there was no hope of the Jewish people meriting G-d’s redemption. Any consideration of risk-benefit ratio, i.e., saving one individual versus millions, was immaterial since without the merit of *Nesiah B'ol*, all of Moshe’s influence and good standing in Pharaoh’s palace would not accomplish anything. Moshe, therefore, took matters into his own hands, rising up for his imperiled brother, creating an inspiration of *Nesiah B'ol* below, to arouse the Divine *middah* of “לְשֵׁאֲרֵיִת נְהַלְתּוֹ” Above, through which Hashem would redeem His people. Rav Yaffon adds that in every generation, the holy Shechinah searches for people willing to put aside their personal interests and take the worries and needs of the community upon their shoulders. In each generation there is a “Moshe Rabbeinu,” i.e., when he sees “כִּי אֵין אִישׁ”, i.e., no one else is inspired to feel the Jewish people’s pain and cry out in prayer for their suffering, he takes this responsibility upon his shoulders. The Shechinah seeks out this individual who is inspired with the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, and through his *Mesiras Nefesh* (sacrifice) below, G-d’s *Nesiah B'ol* above will be aroused to save the Jewish people.

C) Three approaches how our *Nesiah B'ol* with someone in distress helps deliver Heavenly salvation:

Previously we saw the Gemara which states that one who visits an ill person (*choleh*) takes away a portion of his illness (Source IV-2, p. 43). Rav Yeruchem explains the mechanism (Source IV-3, p. 43): When I am *Nosei B'ol* with the *choleh*, I effectively “pay up” the “debt” that *Middas HaDin* (Hashem’s attribute of strict justice) “demands” from him, just as a third party can settle a debtor’s monetary obligations by paying the creditor on his behalf. Rav Matisyahu poses the following question: The notion of “paying up” the *choleh*’s “debt” to the *Middas Hadin* seems unlike paying up another person’s loan obligation. The creditor merely wants to recover the sum of money that he loaned; whether he gets it from the debtor or a third party is immaterial to him. However, the *choleh*’s “debt” is based on the *mishpat* (the Heavenly judgment) which he – and only he – deserves because of his wrongdoings. As “payment” for this debt, the *Middas Hadin* demands the *choleh*’s suffering in order to “balance the ledger”. Even if I am *Nosei B'ol* with him and feel his pain as if I were stricken by his illness, how does this repay the debt created by his actions? Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 38) presents three approaches to explain Rav Yeruchem’s profound thoughts:

Section VIII: How does our *Nesiah B'ol* arouse Heavenly salvation for the Jewish people?

- 1) “משפטי ה' אמת צדקו יחדיו” – *The judgments of Hashem are true, altogether righteous* (Tehillim 19:10):
*Rav Yisrael Salanter explains this verse as follows: When Hashem judges any individual for a wrongdoing, He determines the effect of that individual's deserved punishment on his or her loved ones and friends, before issuing the sentence. If any of the relatives and friends do not deserve the “collateral damage,” i.e., the pain they would suffer when their loved one is punished, the sentence is annulled, and the defendant is saved from his sentence. Thus, the above verse can be explained: “משפטי ה'”: all the ramifications that would arise from G-d's judgment of one individual, are all “אמת”, because “צדקו יחדיו”: they all must pass the “righteousness test” to determine if the “collateral damage” upon any affected person is deserved. Accordingly, Rav Yeruchem's notion of “paying up” the *Middas Hadin's* demands on behalf of another person, can be understood. If I am *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* and immerse myself in my friend's pain, I become his or her “co-defendant” since I suffer the same pain that he or she suffers. However, since the *Middas Hadin* has no claim against me, I do not deserve to suffer my co-defendant's pain, and therefore, Hashem annuls the *Middas Hadin's* claim against my friend and his pain is removed or reduced.

*Rav Matisyahu states Rav Yeruchem heard this from the Sabba of Kelm who attributed it to his Rebbi, Rav Yisrael Salanter.
- 2) In *Sefer Tomer Devorah, middah 4*, the Ramak discusses the close familial bonds within *Klal Yisrael* (Source III-3, p. 31): “Each Jew has within himself a portion of every other Jew ... Due to their shared soul, he is responsible for the other; thus, they are ‘שאר בשר זה עם זה’ (one flesh).” This close familial connectivity within the Jewish nation, which is described by Rav Yeruchem as “איחוד הנפשות” – **unification of Jewish souls** (i.e., becoming “נפש אחת” - *one soul*; Source III-7, p. 35), enables the merits of my good deeds to benefit my friend (Rav Dovid Goldberg in the name of Rav Aharon Kotler; Ref. 30). Previously (Section III-B-5, p. 34) we mentioned when we are *Nosei B'ol* with each other, we fortify the “נפש אחת” status of *Klal Yisrael*. Therefore, if I feel my friend's pain as if I was stricken with his illness, our “נפש אחת” status is reinforced; consequently, our souls are bound to each other, as a close partnership. Although the *choleh* was sentenced to suffer to attain atonement for his sins, my immersion in his pain, and thus, our “נפש אחת” partnership, works equally well to achieve his atonement in the place of his continued suffering, just as the merits of my good deeds benefit him. Consequently, his debt is paid up, i.e., he has “served his term” of punishment in full and his suffering is relieved.
- 3) In the Chapter 1 summary of *Tomer Devorah* (Source VIII-1, p. 69), the Ramak declares when we act in a way that emulates one of Hashem's *middos* of mercy, we open the channel above for the corresponding Divine *middah* to flow down to us. Therefore, when I feel my ill friend's pain as if I am personally suffering, this exalted level of *Nesiah B'ol* activates Hashem's *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” in a proportional manner. The Ramak states (regarding the *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו”; Source II-1b, p. 11): “Behold, the Holy One, Blessed is He, acts with Israel in this way, to say, ‘What can I do with Israel, they are My relatives ... If I punish them, their pain will be Mine.’” Our immersion in the *choleh's* suffering fulfills the Mitzvah, “to walk in His (Hashem's) ways,” on such an elevated plane, arousing the Divine *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” to the extent that Hashem can no longer bear to see the *choleh* suffer. Consequently, the *Middas Hadin's* claim against the *choleh* is annulled and his pain is removed.

**HOW OUR *NESIAH B'OL* AROUSES HEAVENLY MERCY FOR FELLOW JEWS IN NEED
(SUMMARY)**

- ❖ Our *Nesiah B'ol* with fellow Jews opens the Heavenly channels for Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" (Divine empathy) to flow toward us on a proportional level to our *Nesiah B'ol*.
- ❖ The supreme *Nesiah B'ol* of the Jewish officers in Egypt, who opted to get beaten rather than subject their brethren to additional suffering, opened the channels of the Divine *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", arousing Hashem to redeem the Jewish people.
- ❖ Our redemption from the current exile requires our *Nesiah B'ol* with each other, which in turn, will activate Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", with which He will redeem us (Rav Matisyahu).
- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol* with a friend in distress (e.g., an ill person, *choleh*), we "pay up" the "debt" that the *Middas HaDin* demands from him, annulling his Heavenly sentence of suffering (Rav Yeruchem). Three approaches for this phenomenon were suggested by Rav Matisyahu:
 - My *Nesiah B'ol* renders me as the *choleh's* "co-defendant". Since I do not deserve the punishment that the *choleh* was sentenced to suffer, his sentence is annulled.
 - Due to our "איחוד הנפשות" (joining of souls) partnership (i.e., our "נפש אחת" status), the pain that I suffer on account of the *choleh's* illness enables him to achieve atonement in the place of his continued suffering.
 - My *Nesiah B'ol* activates Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" so that He can no longer bear to see the *choleh* suffer. Consequently, the *Middas Hadin's* claim against him is annulled.

Section IX: The virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is a key component of Tefilla

IX. The virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is a key component of Tefilla (prayer)

A) The proper mindset of shared suffering during our prayers on behalf of people in distress:

- 1) The Gemara Berachos states that one who has the opportunity to pray for mercy on behalf of someone in need but fails to do, is considered a sinner (Source IX-1). Rava adds, if the person in need is a Talmid Chachom (Torah scholar, abbreviated as ת"ת), one is required to make himself ill on the Talmid Chachom's behalf.

Source IX-1: Gemara Berachos: The imperative to pray on behalf of others in need.

<p>Rabbah bar Channah the elder said in the name of Rav: Anyone who has the opportunity to beseech G-d for mercy on behalf of his fellow and does not beseech Him is called sinner, as it is stated, "And I also – far be it from me to sin against Hashem, to refrain from praying on your behalf." Rava said: If the person [who is in need of mercy] is a Torah scholar, one is required to make himself ill on his behalf.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>גמרא ברכות דף י"ב ע"ב:</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">וְאָמַר רַבָּה בַּר חֵינִינָא סָבָא מִשְׁמִיה דְּרַב: כּל שְׂאֵפְשֵׁר לוֹ לְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים עַל חֲבִירוֹ וְאִינוּ מְבַקֵּשׁ נִקְרָא חוֹטֵא, שְׂנֵאָמַר (שְׂמוּאֵל א י"ב, כ"ג): "גַּם אֲנֹכִי חֲלִילָה לִי מִחֲטֵא לְה' מִחֲדָל לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדְכֶם". אָמַר רַבָּא: אִם תִּלְמִיד חֹקֵם הוּא, צָרִיךְ שְׂיִחְלָה עֲצֻמוֹ עָלָיו.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) The Maharal of Prague opposed reciting the prayer in *Selichos* named "מכניסי רחמים" in which the supplicant asks the ministering angels to usher in our pleas for mercy before Hashem. The Maharal's reason is that we should not channel our prayers through intermediaries; rather, we speak directly to Hashem who listens to our Tefillos (prayers). In his responsa, the *Chasam Sofer* was presented the following question regarding the Maharal's logic: Why, the questioner wondered, do we find in Tanach that people would go to prophets to pray to Hashem on their behalf? What is the difference between this practice and the above prayer?
- 3) The *Chasam Sofer* answers that the two situations are quite different (Source IX-2). The prayer, "מכניסי רחמים", appears to channel prayers through angels. Since Hashem cherishes His special relationship with us, He awaits our Tefillos eagerly – our personal communication with Him. Speaking to Hashem through angels as intermediaries, therefore, belittles our special relationship with Him and demonstrates a lack of faith. However, when a prophet or Talmid Chachom prays on our behalf, he does not approach G-d as a third-party intermediary. Rather, he approaches Hashem as a first-party supplicant, pleading on behalf of his own needs because he shares the other person's pain. It appears that the *Chasam Sofer's* words are not limited to a Talmid Chachom. Any Jew who prays on behalf of his fellow, should do so in the mode of a first-party supplicant, pleading for delivery from personal suffering rather than viewing it as someone else's problem.
- 4) The *Chasam Sofer* describes our mindset when praying on behalf someone in distress: "The entire Jewish people are partners with a single body and soul. When one person is in pain, his friend also feels it and suffers alongside him" (Source IX-2). These thoughts accord with Rebbe Levi Yitzchak's words in Source III-6 (p. 34). A parable to understand this is: Imagine we are all on a ship and a hole is ripped in the deck of a ship under "Chaim's" cabin. Everyone on that ship feels the same anguish when the water rushes into Chaim's cabin since the entire ship is in danger of sinking. Similarly, if Chaim becomes ill or suffers any personal distress, his pain becomes our pain as well because we all share a collective soul. Consequently, when we pray for Chaim's salvation, we do so, not as a

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third-party intermediary, but rather, as a first-party supplicant for our own needs, just like everyone on the ship would pray that the hole under Chaim's cabin be plugged before the ship sinks.

Source IX-2: *Chasam Sofer*: Praying on behalf of others in need: With the mindset as if I am the one in need.

All the Jewish people are partners, with a single body and soul. When one person is in pain, his friend also feels it and suffers alongside him. In this vein, when we pray on behalf of our friend ("Chaim"),¹ we must make ourselves ill on his account, i.e., we view ourselves as if we are also the *choleh*. Since both (Chaim and the ת"ת²) are now in pain, it is preferable that the "head" (the ת"ת) should approach G-d in prayer rather than the "foot" (Chaim) who is slightly censured. Since Chaim and the ת"ת are "co-defendants" (i.e., both are considered 1st party supplicants - they are equally in pain and in need of G-d's help), therefore, it is preferable that the "head" approach G-d. The ת"ת is not acting as a 3rd party intermediary for another (but rather, as a 1st party supplicant for his own suffering).

שו"ת חתם סופר, אורח חיים סימן קס"ו:
... אך כל ישראל שותפים וגוף אחד ונפש אחד,
וכשאחד מצטער גם חברו מרגיש ועמו מצער.
ועל דרך זה המתפלל על חברו צריך שיחלה עצמו
עליו, פי' שיראה כאלו גם הוא חולה. וכיון
ששניהם בצער טוב יותר שיכנס הראש משיכנס
הרגל, על דרך משל הת"ח הוא הראש והמצטער
שהוא עתה שרוי בדין הוא בבחינת רגל וקצת נזוף,
טוב להכניס הראש כיון ששניהם בעלי דברים ולא
כמליץ בעד אחר.

¹This refers to the Gemara Berachos 12b (Source IX-1);

²ת"ת = Talmid Chachom, a Torah scholar.

³The analogy of "head" and "foot" is based on the notion that Chaim (i.e., our friend who is suffering) is slightly censured, having been found deserving of punishment by Heaven. Thus, he is the "foot", while the ת"ת, who is in good standing, is the "head".

- 5) When the Gemara (Source IX-1) states that one must make himself ill when praying for mercy on behalf of a Talmid Chachom, the *Chasam Sofer* interprets this as follows: When a Talmid Chachom is ill, *we should view ourselves as if we are stricken with his illness. The *Chasam Sofer* and Rav Friedlander (Ref. 49) state that this directive is not limited to praying on behalf of a Talmid Chachom in distress. When praying on behalf of any Jew in distress, we need to approach Hashem with the emotional urgency of someone who desperately needs a personal salvation. This illustrates the importance of incorporating *Nesiah B'ol* into our prayers; we must imagine how we would feel if our friend's distress would, ה"ו, befall us and how we would plead for Divine mercy. We should apply the identical emotional force to our prayer on behalf of our friend, so that it will emerge from the depths of our hearts.

B) Reclaiming the quality of Tefilla with *Neisah B'ol* that was present in previous generations:

- 1) The Gemara Shabbos discusses practices which are subject to the prohibition of following in the Emorite's ways (Source IX-3). Abaye and Rava permitted a practice which has evident therapeutic value, even if it was also practiced by the Emorites. The Gemara then asks, it appears from a *Braisa* that an Emorite practice is permitted even if has no evident therapeutic value. The *Braisa* states if one has an overly vital tree which sheds its fruits prematurely, one weighs down its branches with rocks and dyes the tree with a red pigment, both of which were Emorite practices. Surely the red pigment has no therapeutic value for the tree; yet it is permitted? The Gemara answers, the purpose of dyeing the tree was to inform the public of the orchard owner's misfortune, i.e., that his tree produces inedible fruit, so that people will pray for Heavenly mercy on his behalf. Thus, this practice is permitted just as one that has evident therapeutic value.

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Source IX-3: Gemara Shabbos: A signal to pray for Heavenly mercy on behalf of the owner of a "sick" tree.

Abaye and Rava both say: Any practice that is of evident therapeutic value is not subject to the prohibition of following in the Emorite's ways. This implies that an Emorite practice with no evident therapeutic value, is prohibited. But a *Braisa* has taught: One who possesses a tree that sheds its fruit prematurely, dyes it with red pigment and burdens its branches with rocks. We can understand [the therapeutic value of] burdening the tree's branches with rocks – so that its vitality will be sapped [and its fruits will no longer ripen prematurely]. But dying it with red pigment – what healing has he performed? [The Gemara answers: The tree is dyed to draw the attention of the public] so that people will see his misfortune and pray for mercy on his behalf. As it was taught in a *Braisa* regarding a *metzora*. The verse states: "And he shall call out: 'I am impure, I am impure,'" to teach us that one must inform the public of his misfortune so that they will beg for mercy on his behalf.

גמרא שבת דף ס"ז ע"א:

אביי ורבא דאמרי תרוייהו כל דבר שיש בו משום רפואה אין בו משום דרכי האמורי. הא אין בו משום רפואה יש בו משום דרכי האמורי. והתניא אילן שמשיר פירותיו סוקרו (וצובע אותו) בסיקרא וטוענו באבנים. בשלמא טוענו באבנים כי היכי דליכחוש חיליה, אלא סוקרו בסיקרא מאי רפואה קעביד? כי היכי דליחזייה אינשי וליבעו עליה רחמי, כדתניא (ויקרא י"ג, מ"ה) "וטמא טמא יקרא", צריך להודיע צערו לרבים ורבים יבקשו עליו רחמים.

Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 2) Rav Yeruchem recounts that the Sabba of Kelm would frequently express the inspiration he derived from this Gemara: "How deeply the middah of sharing in another's pain was ingrained in the hearts of former generations!" (Source IX-4). Consider this situation: Somewhere there is an orchard with a single "failing tree" which yields inedible fruit. The owner of the orchard has not uttered a word about his misfortune; he just painted a red mark on the tree. A passerby who does not even know the owner, immediately upon spying red dye on the tree, is so distressed at the owner's plight that he prays for Heavenly mercy on his behalf! Rav Friedlander further elaborates: We see the ability of those generations to place other people's hardships upon their shoulders and view it as if it were their own personal misfortune or loss, arousing them to prayer (Ref. 49).

Source IX-4: Rav Yeruchem recounts the Sabba's inspiration by the awesome *Nesiah B'ol* of former generations.

This is the entire essence of Tefilla (prayer): Tefillah is defined by the degree that we are *Nosei B'ol*, i.e., how much we share another's pain, how much distress we have on account of his suffering. This is the definition of Tefillah for a friend.

Our master and teacher, the Sabba of Kelm, Z"l, would constantly mention the following observation based on a Gemara: *One dyes a red pigment on a tree that sheds its fruit prematurely so that people would see it and pray for mercy on his behalf.* The Sabba was greatly inspired – how deeply the *middah* of sharing in another's pain was ingrained in the hearts of former generations! From the simplest to the greatest of people, whenever they passed by and noticed a failing tree, they implicitly understood that the tree's owner was in distress even if he said nothing, and thus, became so deeply immersed in his pain that they would pray for

דעת תורה, דברים, מאמר "משתתף בצערו של חברו":

וזה עיקר כל ענין של תפלה - תפלה נקראת כמה שנושאים בעול, כמה שמשתתפים בצערו, כמה שבצרתו לו צר, וזו היא תפלה על חברו.
אדמו"ר הסבא ז"ל מקלם היה אומר תמיד זו ההערה: בגמ' (שבת סז.) איתא דאילן המשיר פירותיו היה סוקרו בסיקרא כי היכי דליחזייה אינשי וליבעי רחמים עליה. להתעורר מזה לראות כמה היתה מדה זאת להשתתף בצערו של חברו מושרשת בלבן של כלל ישראל בדורות הראשונים מקטנם ועד גדולם, דעוברים ושבים, ויהיו פשוטים שיהיו, הנה בראותם אילן מתליע מבלי שיתבקשו על זה, אלא שיבינו מעצמם שבודאי יש לו לבעל האילן

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mercy on his behalf. Such was their exalted level of sharing in their fellow's pain, [that it effervesced into heartfelt prayer on his behalf]. The essence of Tefilla is, *"I pour out my expression (of troubles) before Him, my distress I declare before Him,"* i.e., *when the pain and anguish is too great to be contained in one's heart, it pours forth in prayer, begging for salvation. This is the secret of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (i.e., my intense feeling for my fellow's plight overflows into heartfelt prayer).

צער, יהיו כבר גם הם שרויים בצער חבירם כל כך הרבה עד כדי להתפלל ולעורר רחמים, שזהו השתתפות בצער חבירם במדה גדולה, דענין תפלה הוא: "אשפוך לפניו שיחי צרתי לפניו אגיד" (תהלים קמב ג), שהצער והכאב כל כך גדול לבלי נשוא, עד שמתפלל ומבקש לישועה, והוא סוד "נושא בעול עם חברו" ודאי.

*Adapted from: Artscroll Tehillim, Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Mesorah Publishers.

- 3) Rav Yeruchem explains, in Tehillim (142:3), *"I pour out my expression (of troubles) before Him, my distress I declare before Him,"* Dovid HaMelech teaches us the process whereby true prayer emerges from a Jew's heart, i.e., *"when the pain and anguish is too great to be contained, it pours forth in prayer."* We see from the above Gemara that the intensity of distress which the anonymous passerby felt for orchard owner's misfortune, was so uncontrollable that it burst forth in prayer, begging for Heavenly mercy on his behalf! Rav Yeruchem concludes, *"this is the secret of Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro,"* i.e., my intense feeling for my fellow's plight overflows into heartfelt prayer.
- 4) Rav Shimshon Pincus comments: *"If for a single 'sick' tree, it was common practice among Jews who saw it, to beseech for mercy, how much more so, if we see a Jew suffering, we should plead for mercy. Imagine, when we see at-risk youngsters who fritter away their days on the street and in unwholesome environments, how much agony their parents are going through! How much agony their Creator has for them!"* When we see people in this predicament, we must habituate ourselves to offer a short prayer for their restoration to a healthy state of life. Imagine we knew someone who was struggling financially and we have a wealthy friend who happily offers help to such people. Certainly, we would seize that opportunity to contact our affluent friend to help the financially strapped person get back on his feet. How incongruous it is, that we have a "beloved Friend" in Heaven with unlimited resources to help anyone in need, and we fail to seize the opportunity to beg for His mercy on behalf of people in dire straits (Rav Pincus, Ref. 53).

C) Avrohom Avinu merited that G-d spoke to him because of his *Nesiah B'ol* during his fervent prayer to spare the Sodomites:

- 1) Rav Chatzkel Levenstein (Source IX-6, p. 79) opens our eyes to an entirely new dimension of *Nesiah B'ol*. Avrohom Avinu exemplified the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* when he prayed to avert the destruction of Sodom. Avrohom's readiness to be a *Nosei B'ol* was unaffected by the unworthiness of the evil Sodomites. In Bereishis (18: 17-19; Source IX-5a), Hashem enunciates His decision to inform Avrohom about Sodom's impending doom: *"Shall I conceal from Avrohom what I will do?"* (Pasuk 17). The Ramban (Source IX-5b) explains Hashem's reasoning for this decision: *"Now he (Avrohom) is destined to become a great and mighty nation, and his memory will be a blessing ... Therefore, I will not conceal My plans from him, for otherwise, future generations will say, '... how could the righteous Avrohom be so cruel (נתאכזר) toward his neighbors who dwelt at his side, not having mercy on them and not praying for them at all?"*

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Source IX-5 (a) Bereishis 18: 17-19; (b) Ramban: G-d reveals His plans regarding Sodom to Avrohom Avinu

<p>¹17: And Hashem said, “Shall I conceal from Avrohom what I will do?”</p> <p>18: For Avrohom is surely to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through him.</p> <p>19: For I have known him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, acting with righteousness and justness, in order that Hashem might then bring upon Avrohom that which He had spoken of him.”</p>	<p align="right">בראשית פרק י"ח: פסוקים י"ז – י"ט: י"ז: וְהָאֵלֹהִים הִמְכִּסָּה אֶנִּי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה. י"ח: וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוּ יְהִיָּה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְעַצוֹם וְנִבְרָכְךָ בּוֹ כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ. י"ט: כִּי יָדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דְרָדְךָ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה' עַל אַבְרָהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלָיו.</p>
<p>²The soundest interpretation is that Hashem, blessed be He, spoke these words for Avrohom’s honor. He said: Now, Avrohom is destined to become a great and mighty nation, and his memory will be a blessing among his descendants and among the nations of the earth. Therefore, I will not conceal My plans from him, for otherwise, future generations will say, “How did Hashem conceal it from him? Or, if He did tell him about it, how could the righteous Avrohom be so cruel (נתאכזר) toward his neighbors nearby, showing no mercy – he did not pray for them at all?” Furthermore, it is good and appropriate to reveal My plan to him, for I know about him that he recognizes and knows that I am Hashem, Who loves righteousness and justice, that is, I perform justice only with righteousness, i.e., compassion, and because of this he will command his sons and household after him to adhere to My ways.</p>	<p align="right">רמב"ן על פסוק י"ח: והנכון כי השם יתברך דבר בכבוד אברהם. אמר הנה הוא עתיד להיות לגוי גדול ועצום ויהיה זכרו בזרעו ובכל גויי הארץ לברכה, לכן לא אכסה ממנו כי יאמרו הדורות הבאים: "איך כיסה ממנו או איך נתאכזר הצדיק על שכיניו החונים עליו ולא ריחם ולא התפלל עליהם כלל?" והגלוי אליו טוב ויפה כי ידעתי בו שהוא מכיר ויודע שאני ה' אוהב צדקה ומשפט כלומר שאני עושה משפט רק בצדקה ולכך יצוה את בניו וביתו אחריו לאחוז דרכי.</p>

Translation from: ¹Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition;

²Artscroll Ramban, Mesorah Publishers

- 2) Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 17) deduces from the Ramban that one who fails to pray on behalf of another in need, exhibits “אכזריות” (cruelty). Although the word, “אכזר”, is typically translated as “cruel person”, it contains the root “זר” which means “stranger” or “foreigner”, i.e., an apathetic person who views another person’s difficulties as “foreign affairs” which don’t concern him. Hence, one who is not sufficiently moved by another person’s troubles to pray on his or her behalf, is considered an “אכזר”. Avrohom Avinu’s destiny to transmit the legacy of righteousness and justness to his descendants, per verse 19, “... because he commands his children and his household ... acting with righteousness and justness,” required that he display *Nesiah B’ol* with the Sodomites. Had Avrohom Avinu failed to pray on the Sodomite’s behalf, this (albeit minor) display of cruelty would have jeopardized his transmission of righteousness and justness to future generations.
- 3) During his prayer on behalf of the Sodomites, Avrohom Avinu offered multiple arguments to spare them. The Midrash (Source IX-7, p. 80) says: “The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Avrohom, ‘You love finding virtue for My creations and you are loath to condemn them. Accordingly, ... there were ten generations from Noach to you; yet, from all of them, I spoke to you alone.’” Thus, Rav Chatzkel says (Source IX-6): “HKB”H spoke to [Avrohom], not because of his great Emunah (faith) or piety, but rather, in the merit of his middah of *Nosei B’ol* on behalf of the Sodomites.” Just as Moshe Rabbeinu merited Hashem speaking to him because of his *middah* of *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* (see Source II-6b, p. 16), the same was true for Avrohom Avinu.

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- 4) Although the Sodomites did not deserve any mercy, this did not minimize Avrohom's obligation to be *Nosei B'ol*, because as Rav Chatzkel explains, the love for doing kindness (*Ahavas Chesed*) is an internally driven trait, independent of the worthiness or need of the recipient. Avrohom's internal love for *Chesed* propelled him to be *Nosei B'ol* with the Sodomites, despite their unworthiness. Similarly, after his *Bris Milah*, Avrohom's internal *Ahavas Chesed* drove him to seek out people upon whom he could bestow *Chesed*, despite the absence of travelers who required hospitality. (See Ref. 32-34 and Appendix B, pp. 114-116, for a more comprehensive explanation of the *ma'alah* of *Chesed* by Rav Chatzkel).

Source IX-6: Rav Chatzkel Levenstein: Avrohom Avinu taught us the importance of *Nesiah B'ol* while praying on behalf of others.

Rav Chatzkel quotes the Ramban (Source IX-5b, p. 78), followed by:

(From the Ramban), we see that a Tzaddik is obligated to pray and exhibit concern for the wellbeing of the people in the world. One who fails to pray accordingly, exhibits the *middah* of cruelty.

Although Hashem, blessed be He, wants to punish the evildoers, this has no bearing on one's obligation to pray and be concerned for them. In fact, the Midrash (Source IX-7) tells us how Avrohom profusely prayed for the Sodomites, offering multiple arguments to spare them. From him, we learn that we are obligated to be concerned about others and endeavor to help them with any available measure.

Chazal teach us one is obligated to make oneself ill over a Talmid Chachom who is ill. This is the essence of being *Nosei B'ol* with another, i.e., one is obligated to place the burden and hardships of his fellow upon himself as if he himself carries them - this itself alleviates his fellow's burden. We find the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol* modeled by Moshe Rabbeinu, e.g., he literally picked up his fellow's load and carried it himself. Similarly, this *middah* was exemplified when Avrohom prayed on behalf of the Sodomites, as the Midrash tells us that HKB"H spoke to him, not because of his great *Emunah* (faith) or piety, but rather, in the merit of his *middah* of *Nosei B'ol* on behalf of the Sodomites.

How can a person reach this height of *Mesiras Nefesh* (sacrifice) on behalf of his fellow? The singular route is by possessing the *middah* of *Ahavas Chesed* (love of kindness), which means looking after his fellow needs even if he does not ask him for anything. This person's *Ahavas Chesed* emanates from his own internal burning desire to do good for another, as we see that Avrohom Avinu felt anguish when there was no possibility to do *Chesed* (i.e., when Hashem sent a supernatural heat to prevent wayfarers from "troubling" Avrohom after his *Bris Milah*; see Appendix B).

אור יחזקאל, חלק מדות. מאמר "ואהבת לרעך כמוך":

ומבואר שחייב הצדיק להתפלל ולדאוג לטובת אנשי העולם, וכל שלא יתפלל ע"ז הרי זה ממידת האכזריות, ואע"ג שהרי רצון השי"ת להעניש את הרשעים, מ"מ אין זה נוגע לחובת התפילה והדאגה עבורם. ובאמת חזינן שאברהם הרבה בתפילה עבור אנשי סדום ... שהחובה לדאוג ולהשתדל עבור זולתו בכל המאמצים והאפשרויות שבכוחו, וראה במדרש כמה וכמה טענות שטען אברהם. ... ומוכח בחז"ל (ברכות י"ב ע"ב) שחייב אדם להחלות את עצמו עבור תלמיד חכם שחלה, והיינו נושא בעול עם זולתו, שחייב ליטול על עצמו עול וסבל חבירו כביכול והוא בעצמו סובל זאת, ובכך יקיל מעול זולתו. וכדמצינו במדרש גבי משרע"ה ... שהיה נוטל משא זולתו ממש ונושא בעצמו, וזה מה שמצינו גבי אברהם בתפילתו על אנשי סדום, ושכרו הרבה מאוד וכדחזינן שם בחז"ל (בראשית רבה מ"ט) שכל מה שזכה לדיבור עם הקב"ה לא היה עבור גדולתו באמונה ובצדקות אלא עבור המידות שהיה נושא בעול עם הסדומים.

והיאך יגיע אדם למעלה זו של מסירת נפשו עבור זולתו? הדרך היחידה לכך רק בשעה שנמצאת בו מדת אהבת חסד, כי אהבת חסד הביאור שדואג עבור חבירו אף בשעה שאין חבירו מבקש זאת ממנו, אלא הדבר נובע מחמת התשוקה הבוררת בעצמותיו להיטיב לזולתו, וכדחזינן גבי אע"ה שהצטער על שאין ביכולתו לגמול חסד.

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Source IX-7: Midrash: Avrohom Avinu merited that G-d spoke to him because of his efforts to save Sodom.

R' Ada said, [Avrohom said to G-d]: "You swore never to flood the world [again]; now You would cunningly circumvent the oath. You will not flood with water, but You would flood with fire. If so, You have not fulfilled Your oath." R' Levi said, [Avrohom said to G-d]: "**Shall the Judge of the earth not do justice?**" – "if You desire the world to endure, there can be no strict judgment, while if You desire strict judgment, the world cannot endure. You are holding the cord by both ends, desiring both the world and absolute judgment! Unless You forgo a little, the world cannot endure." The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Avrohom: "**You love righteousness**" – "you love finding virtue for My creations"; "**and you hate wickedness**" – "you are loath to condemn them."
"**Accordingly has G-d, your G-d, anointed you with oil of joy above your peers**" – "there were ten generations from Noach to you; yet, from of all of them, I spoke to you alone," [as stated]: "**And Hashem said to Avrohom, 'go for yourself.'**"

מדרש בראשית רבה מ"ט, ט':

אמר רב אדא גשבעת שאין אתה מבול לעולם, מה את מערים על השבועה, מבול של מים אין אתה מביא, מבול של אש את מביא, אם כן לא יצאת ידי שבועה. אמר רבי לוי, "השפט כל הארץ לא יעשה משפט" (בראשית י"ח, כ"ה): אם עולם אתה מבקש אין דין, ואם דין אתה מבקש לית עולם, את תפיס חבלא בתרין ראשין, בעי עלמא ובעי דינא, אם לית את מותר צבחר, לית עלמא זכיל קאים. אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: אברהם, "אסהבת צדק ותשנא רשע" (תהלים מ"ה, ח'): אסהבת לצדק את בריותי; "ותשנא רשע": מאנת לסייבן; "על כן משחה אלקים אלקיך שמן ששון מחבריך" (תהלים מ"ה, ח'). מהו מחבריך? מגם נעד אצלה עשרה דורות ומכלם לא דברתי עם אחד מהם אלא עמך, "ויאמר ה' אל אברהם לך לך".

Translation adapted from: Sefaria.com.

D) Moshe Rabbeinu saved the Jewish nation from destruction through prayer which emanated from his outstanding level of *Nesiah B'ol*:

- 1) After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe Rabbeinu prayed for the Jewish people's survival. The Gemara says that he asked that his life be taken rather than see their destruction (Source VII-10, p. 66). Moshe's intense identification with the Jewish people made it unbearable for him to go on living without them. Based on the Zohar, Rav Chatzkel explains that Moshe was prepared to forfeit his *Olam Habboh* to save the Jewish people (Ref. 2). In the merit of his *Nesiah B'ol*, G-d annulled the decree for their destruction (Rav Dessler and Rav Friedlander, see the discussion in Section VII-C-5, p. 66).
- 2) During World War II escape of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Shanghai, the Mashgiach, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, urged the Yeshiva students to uphold their awesome responsibility of pleading for mercy on behalf of their brethren trapped in the raging inferno in Europe. Rav Chatzkel impressed on them that their own Tefillos – emerging from a heart brimming with *Klal Yisrael's* pain – can reach the level of Moshe Rabbeinu's pleas to annul the decree for destruction (Ref. 12, pp. 201-202):

"We read 'Va'yechal Moshe ...' [And Moshe pleaded ...], on a fast day to impress upon us that all of Israel's salvations depend upon one's identification with, and feelings for another's pain and trouble ... **From Moshe Rabbeinu's actions we learn it is within the power of one person – the personality whose soul is filled with the suffering of Klal Yisrael – to annul even a Heavenly decree of destruction.** Do not think that it was because of Moshe Rabbeinu's exalted spiritual stature that his prayers were accepted and Klal Yisrael was forgiven for the sin of the Golden Calf. This is not so. It is because he was willing to stand in the breach and have his name erased

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from the Torah for Israel's sake that he was answered. It was because of his complete Mesiras Nefesh for others that overturned the Heavenly decree. Moshe exerted himself for Klal Yisrael's salvation until he became ill."

E) *Nesiah B'ol* during our prayers on behalf of people struggling (e.g., with illness):

- 1) The *Beis Yosef* (Ref. 54) writes in the name of the Ramban that one who visits an ill person (*choleh*) without praying for his recovery, does not fulfill the Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the ill). Why is praying for the *choleh's* recovery considered a critical component of *Bikur Cholim*? Rav Avrohom Weinroth explains (Ref. 55): One of the essential purposes of *Bikur Cholim* is to create a feeling of identification with the *choleh's* plight, so that my prayers on his behalf will emerge from the depths of my heart. When I see the *choleh's* dire situation before my eyes, I identify with his plight and feel his suffering with a sense of urgency and a clear understanding that there is no one to rely on besides our Father in Heaven. This state of mind is most conducive to evoke heartfelt Tefillah.
- 2) The Gemara Nedarim (Source IX-8a) states that one who visits the *choleh* causes him to live, whereas one who fails to visit causes him to die. The Gemara explains: When a person visits, he will beseech Hashem for mercy that the *choleh* be saved, whereas by failing to visit, he will not pray; consequently, the *choleh* will not be saved. The *Rosh* (ר"א"ש; Rabbeinu Asher ben Yechiel; Source IX-8b) writes that failing to visit is a great wrongdoing because, if he had visited, perhaps it would have been an "עת רצון" (time of favor) for his prayers to be accepted, resulting in the *choleh's* recovery. Now that he failed to visit, the opportunity for the "עת רצון" is lost and alas, the *choleh* will not recover.

Source IX-8: (a) Gemara Nedarim; (b) *Rosh* (ר"א"ש): Life preserving effects of *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the sick) are due to the visitor's prayers which are accepted by Heaven at a time of favor ("עת רצון")

<p>*Rav Dimi said: One who visits the sick causes him to live and one who fails to visit the sick causes him to die ...</p> <p><i>The meaning of Rav Dimi's statement is: Whoever visits a sick person will supplicate Hashem for mercy that he will live ... But one who does not visit the sick will not pray for Hashem's mercy [that he should live].</i></p>	<p>גמרא מס' נדרים דף מ' ע"א: כי אתא רב דימי אמר: כל המבקר את החולה גורם לו שיחיה, וכל שאינו מבקר את החולה גורם לו שימות ... כל המבקר את החולה מבקש עליו רחמים שיחיה ... וכל שאין מבקר את החולה אין מבקש עליו רחמים.</p>
<p>[Failing to visit] is a great wrongdoing (dereliction). If he would have visited, he would have prayed for Hashem's mercy on the <i>choleh's</i> behalf, and perhaps it would be a time of favor, enabling his prayers to be heard. But now that he refrained from visiting, he has caused the <i>choleh</i> to die.</p>	<p>ר"א"ש מס' נדרים ד"ה אינו מבקש עליו רחמים: זו היא רעה גדולה, שאם היה מבקרו היה מבקש עליו רחמים, ואפשר שעת רצון ותהא תפילתו נשמעת, ומניעת הביקור גורם שימות.</p>

*Translation from: Artscroll Talmud, Schottenstein Edition, Mesorah Publishers.

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- 3) Rav Weinroth explains the ש"א as follows: During my visit with the *choleh*, my total identification with his plight will evoke heartfelt prayer. Such heartfelt prayer which emerges from an anguished heart that identifies with another person in distress, creates an "עת רצון" for our Tefillos to be accepted, and thereby, will elicit salvation for the people whose plight touches our heart. However, one who fails to visit has neglected the opportunity to create an "עת רצון" and save the *choleh*. Therefore, his dereliction is a great wrongdoing because it is an expression of apathy and indifference, the polar opposite qualities of *Klal Yisrael's* identity as "נפש אחת".
- 4) We see from here that Tefilla which emerges from an anguished heart that identifies with another person in distress, can create an "עת רצון" to save the person from a grim fate that he would otherwise have suffered. How great is the power of being *Nosei B'ol* ! Our *Nesiah B'ol* has the power to **create a window in the gates of Heaven** to allow our heartfelt Tefillos to penetrate and elicit salvation for people who are suffering.

F) Recent Tzaddikim whose Tefillos were punctuated with *Nesiah B'ol* on behalf of fellow Jews:

- 1) Rav Elazar Menachem Shach repeated a story told by the Ponovezher Rov about his visit to Radin to receive a Brocha from the Chofetz Chaim. When the young Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman arrived at the Chofetz Chaim's home, he was told that the *Gadol* had left and would be returning shortly. As he sat and waited for the Chofetz Chaim to arrive, he began hearing piercing cries from the upper story of the house, and he felt compelled to investigate what was happening there. The Chofetz Chaim's family assured him, though, that there was no need for concern; the voice belonged to the Chofetz Chaim himself. "Before you came," they explained, "he was told that a certain woman is having a difficult childbirth and her life is in danger, and he went upstairs to say Tehillim." When Rav Shach repeated this story, he declared, "*The Chofetz Chaim wept so passionately because he was a Nosei B'ol; he shared the burdens of others. The woman was not his granddaughter or niece; she was simply another Jew. But who else would be concerned for her, if not the Chofetz Chaim? We must learn from him to share the burdens of others*" (Ref. 20).
- 2) Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, ZT"l, the legendary Rosh HaYeshiva of the Mirrer Yeshiva, was well known for his keen sensitivity to the suffering of others and his awesome *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, of which many stories abound. During the 1976 Entebbe hostage crisis, the Mirrer Yeshiva in Yerushalayim scheduled a gathering to recite Tehillim on behalf of the hostages. As Rav Chaim walked up the stairs leading to the Beis HaMedrash, he began whimpering to himself as his mind filled with images of frightened people trapped away in the darkest of situations. He then attempted to enter through the back of the Beis HaMedrash, but when he took one look at the huge tense crowd waiting to say Tehillim, the Rosh HaYeshiva could go no further, he grabbed onto a chair and began to sob uncontrollably for several minutes. Finally, Rav Chaim composed himself enough to walk to front of the Beis HaMedrash to speak to the yeshiva *talmidim*. Through his muffled sobs, the Rosh HaYeshiva managed to force out only one sentence in a barely audible voice choked with pain: "*Imagine how you would be saying Tehillim if it were your father or mother, your brother or sister, who was there*" (Ref. 56). Clearly, Rav Chaim was urging the *talmidim* to internalize the suffering of the hostages through mental imagery as if they were personally victimized, in order to ensure that their Tefillos would arise from the depths of their souls. We now know the "rest of the story", how their prayers were answered when nearly all hostages were rescued alive in a miraculous and daring raid by the courageous *Chayalim*. From Rav Chaim we learn when we visualize a fellow Jew's pain and then channel our shared anguish into heartfelt Tefilla on his behalf, the opportunities for salvation are endless.

**INCORPORATING NESIAH B'OL INTO PRAYER ON BEHALF OF PEOPLE IN DISTRESS
(SUMMARY)**

- ❖ What is the proper mindset when praying on behalf of a friend in distress? (*Chasam Sofer*)
 - The entire Jewish people are partners with a single body and soul. When our friend is in pain, we also feel it and suffer alongside him.
 - We approach G-d to request for delivery from **personal suffering** because our friend's pain is our own pain as well. Imagine how we would feel if our friend's distress would, וְיָפַד, befall us and how we would plead for Divine mercy. Pray with same sense of urgency for the friend.
- ❖ The *middah* of sharing in another's pain was deeply ingrained in the hearts of former generations! When a passerby spied a "sick" tree painted with red dye in an orchard, he became so distressed at the plight of the unknown orchard owner that he would pray for Heavenly mercy on his behalf!
- ❖ Avrohom Avinu merited that Hashem spoke with him because he was *Nosei B'ol* with the Sodomites, by taking up their cause and praying on their behalf.
- ❖ Why did Moshe Rabbeinu's prayers succeed in overturning the decree of destruction? (Rav Chatzkel)
 - Moshe's *Nesiah B'ol* – his total identification with the pain of the Jewish people - was the sole factor that enabled his prayers to save them from destruction.
 - From Moshe Rabbeinu, we learn it is within the power of any person – the personality whose soul is filled with the suffering of the Jewish people – to annul even a Heavenly decree of destruction.
- ❖ Tefilla which emerges from an anguished heart that identifies with someone in distress, can create an "עת רצון" (time of favor) for our prayers to be accepted, thereby saving the person from the grim fate he otherwise would have suffered (the ש"א).
- ❖ The secret of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is sharing in my friend's pain to such an extent that the anguish in my heart effervesces into heartfelt prayer on his or her behalf (Rav Yeruchem).

Section X: Forming the human connection: Using all our “senses” to be *Nosei B’ol*

X. Forming the human connection: Using all our “senses” to be *Nosei B’ol*

In this section, we will discuss using all our “senses” to be *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, and how this enables us to form a vital connection with the person who needs our empathy and support. Through creating the bond of shared suffering, we lighten the burden on another person’s shoulders. The “senses” for creating this bond, include:

- 1) Our vision, i.e., seeing with our eyes and with mental imagery to visualize (i.e., imagine) someone’s struggles;
- 2) Our hearing, to internalize the words and the feelings a person conveys to us;
- 3) Lastly, we use our facial features to project a radiant countenance (e.g., bright smile), reassuring the person of our good will to be with him or her in their time of need.

A) The antidote to “אין לי מכיר” (“no one gets me”) is being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro!*:

- 1) Rav Friedlander explains (Ref. 18), when people go through difficult times, a significant aspect of their difficulty is their sense of isolation (“no one understands me or shares my pain”). Our role is to give them the same message that Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu by the burning bush (Source II-4a-b, p. 12): “עמו אנכי בצרה”, “I am with him in distress,” which is independent of any practical help that we can offer. By merely showing them that we identify with their suffering, i.e., we value their feelings and recognize their troubles as worthy of our concern and support, we ease their pain significantly because they are no longer alone in their struggles.
- 2) In Tehillim (142:5), Dovid HaMelech says: “הביט ימין וראה ואין לי מכיר אבד מנוס ממני אין דורש לנפשי” (Look to the right and see that I have no friend; escape is lost to me, no one seeks to rescue my life). Mrs. Rivka Yudin (Ref. 57) explains: When a person feels that “אין לי מכיר” – no one gets me, no one is looking out for my interests - this is the epitome of desperation and loneliness, such that “אבד מנוס ממני” – all hope for escape is lost. Rav Wolbe picturesquely portrays this scene (Source II-10, p. 21): “He sits alone in a cave, in subterrrestrial darkness ... No one understands or reaches out to him, his soul is imprisoned.” However, says Rav Wolbe, “If you reach out ... to bear his burden with him, to feel his pain and to give over your heart to understand his distress ... The magnitude of the salvation delivered to someone ... by being *Nosei B’ol* is boundless!” Hence, Mrs. Yudin says, the antidote to “אין לי מכיר” is *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro!* Psychologist Brené Brown, Ph.D. similarly affirms (Ref. 85): “Empathy fuels connection, empathy is feeling with people. Empathy is a vulnerable choice - in order to connect with you, I have to connect with something in myself that knows that feeling.”
- 3) We see from the above that perhaps the most basic aspect of being *Nosei B’ol* is **forming the human connection** with someone in a vulnerable predicament who feels “down and out.” More than ever, people who are struggling need to feel connected, that their troubles register on another person’s heart and mind, i.e., **they matter** (Rabbi Sacks; Ref. 10). Yet, Mrs. Yudin explains, we often shy away from approaching a person in distress because, “I won’t know what to say.” Often, what people need, says Mrs. Yudin, is to feel heard, to know that someone really wants to listen and understand their anguish or anxiety, rather than any specific response or solution. Brené Brown explains that often our natural response to people’s sorrowful story is to try to make things better instead of simply being present with them in their pain: “Rarely can a response make something better. What makes something better is connection.” This is elegantly synopsised by Rabbi Eytan Kobre (Ref. 71): “Sharing the pain of others is about giving to others a piece of your very being. It is about joining in their suffering even when you can’t improve their plight. **It is about creating a bond of shared pain.**”

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- 4) In Section II-B-9, (p. 18), we mentioned that Moshe Rabbeinu named his firstborn Gershom to ensure that the plight of his brethren was continuously on his mind while he was in Midyan. The Torah notes Moshe’s “**seeing**” his brethren’s suffering on two separate occasions during the Egyptian exile, approximately six decades apart:
- (a) In Egypt, before Moshe fled to Midyan: The Midrash comments on “וירא בסבלותם” (he saw their burdens): *Moshe would see their burdens and cry and say, “Woe is me on account of you! If only I could die for your sake!”* (Source II-6b, p. 16);
 - (b) At the burning bush episode: The Midrash comments on “וירא ה' כי סר לראות” (Hashem saw that [Moshe] turned aside to see): *HKB”H said, “Moshe is downcast and upset upon seeing the affliction of the people of Israel in Egypt. Therefore, he is worthy of being their shepherd.”* (Source II-6c).

Rav Yissocher Frand (Ref. 59) points out that the burning bush episode, when Moshe was eighty years old, took place at least sixty years after the earlier event. During the intervening period, Moshe had absolutely no contact with his brothers and sisters, physically separated in far off Midyan. Yet, in both cases, the subject of Moshe’s “**seeing**” was identical: He saw their slavery with his eyes and felt their anguish in his heart, even during his lengthy separation from his brethren, with such intensity that Hashem said, “... *he is worthy of being their shepherd.*” Rav Frand insightfully derives the following lesson from Moshe Rabbeinu: **The antithesis of “out of sight, out of mind,” is being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*.** Often, we feel and demonstrate concern when we first learn of people’s hardships, but as time elapses, their troubles recede from our consciousness. We learn from Moshe that just as he “*focused his eyes and his heart to be distressed over them*” (Rashi, Source II-7c, p. 17), we must safeguard the plight of fellow Jews in our hearts to ensure it will not fade from our consciousness. In practical terms, when people go through difficult times, we should endeavor to keep their plight in our prayers for as long as they remain in distress. Moreover, we should occasionally reassure them we are continuing to pray for their wellbeing. I have witnessed the moral support and encouragement people feel when we reassure them that their plight remains in our prayers over the “long haul.”

B) The Sabba of Kelm’s fundamental principle of mental imagery: Visualizing someone’s struggle is critical to be *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*

- 1) The Sabba of Kelm offers fundamental advice for developing the *middah* of *Nosei B’ol*: Being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* is not merely an emotive process. If our empathy is no more than an emotional reaction to someone’s misfortune, it will be fleeting and inconsequential. We must also use our cognitive processes, i.e., mental imagery, to visualize the details of someone’s suffering. In a letter, the Sabba writes: “*It is impossible to reach the level of feeling another’s pain, unless we abundantly utilize mental imagery, i.e., visualizing ourselves, Heaven forbid, experiencing the pain, hardship or illness that another person is suffering*” (Source X-1). For example, says the Sabba (Ref. 58), if our *Nesiah B’ol* is merely a visceral, emotional reaction, we will empathize with a *choleh’s* condition only when his illness is severe or profoundly impedes his ability to function. However, once his condition has improved from the severe stage to the recovery phase, our natural, visceral empathy dissipates even though he may still experience considerable pain, disability or sadness during his recovery period. However, if our *Nesiah B’ol* is also *middah* of the intellect, we will continue to visualize the *choleh’s* discomfort and struggles and hence, share his pain and discomfort until he is restored to perfect health. Thus, to authentically share another’s feelings, our *Nesiah B’ol* must originate from our cognitive faculties.

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Source X-1: The Sabba of Kelm: Using mental imagery to be *Nosei B’ol* with someone who is struggling:

Our Sages taught us a fundamental understanding in a person’s development, that it is impossible to reach the level of feeling another person’s pain and to be *Nosei B’ol* with him, unless we abundantly utilize mental imagery, i.e., visualizing ourselves, Heaven forbid, experiencing the pain, hardship or illness that another person is suffering. Whatever we would want someone to do for us, or, at the minimum, whatever *Nesiah B’ol* we would want someone to exhibit for us, we must demand of ourselves to do for another person.

מכתבי הסבא מקעלם ז"ל, מאמר "נחמד ונעים":
הורו לנו ידיעה רבה בחינוך האדם והוא כי בלתי אפשר
לבוא להרגיש בצער זולתו, ולישא בעול עם זולתו רק
ע"י ציורים רבים שכל מה שקרה לזולתו ממיני הצער או
ממיני היסורים והמכאובים, כאלו קרה לו ח"ו. ומה
שהיה דורש מזולתו שיעשה לו, או לכה"פ שישא בעול
עמו, כן ידרוש מעצמו לעשות עם זולתו.

- 2) This strategy of using mental imagery to develop our feelings of *Nesiah B’ol*, is further developed by the Sabba using an example (which is recorded by Rav Matisyahu; Source X-2). Imagine that a *Meshulach* (charity collector) who needs to raise several hundred thousand dollars for his family’s vital necessities in Israel, knocks on our door. If our empathy for his situation is merely an emotional reaction, it will fade as soon as he leaves our line of sight. Rather, says the Sabba, we must “escalate” our *Nesiah B’ol* to a *middah* of the intellect by thinking about the details of his situation, and imagining ourselves living through the very same situation. Rabbi Yechiel Spero (Ref. 59) suggests imagining that circumstances forced us to travel to a foreign land to solicit charity donations from hundreds of people we never met before, to support our family’s needs. What thoughts would enter our mind as we walk toward the door of each potential donor? Imagine the exhaustion and apprehension each day as we face the daunting task of knocking on yet more doors to plead our case. We would desperately hope to be welcomed warmly with a smiling and gracious reception, to receive magnanimous assistance as the Rambam states (Source A-3, p. 3): “*And if a brother will not show mercy to a brother, who will show mercy to them?*” By “painting this picture” in our minds, we will feel the anguish of the *Meshulach* as he trudges from door to door, and therefore, respond to him in the same way we would want if the roles were reversed. We will welcome him with a hearty, “*Shalom Aleichem, how are you? Please come in and warm up with a hot drink. Tell me what’s wrong.*” These thoughts are in consonance with Rashi’s comments regarding the Mitzvah of loaning to the poor (Source VI-1, p. 45): “*Look at yourself as if you are the poor person.*” Moreover, since this cerebral *Nesiah B’ol* was created through deliberate toil, it will be sustained long after the person has left our presence, by contrast to a visceral emotional reaction which quickly fades. Thus, utilizing mental imagery to imprint another person’s struggles on our mind, is a vital element of *Nesiah B’ol*.

Source X-2: Sabba of Kelm, quoted by Rav Matisyahu Salomon: Imprinting detailed images of someone’s struggles on our mind – a vital tool to be *Nosei B’ol*.

This is further elucidated by the Sabba of Kelm: ... If my awareness [of my fellow’s suffering] requires engagement of my physical senses, it remains a visceral reaction that requires no effort from my intellect (i.e., cognitive faculties). Consequently, my awareness will only be sustained as long my physical senses remain engaged. However, once the situation (i.e., my fellow’s suffering) no longer confronts my physical senses, my awareness fades so that only a vague memory is retained, but the fine details are lost. For example, the natural (i.e., visceral) *middah* of

ספר מתנת חיים, מאמר "נושא בעול מקניני התורה":
ודבר זה יותר מבואר בכתבי הסבא מקעלם (ח"א דף
קמ"ח) ... כל שהבנתו הבנה חושית ר"ל בלא עמל
השכל, ידע כל הענין רק בעת השתלמות החוש
ובעבור החוש מענין לא ידעהו עוד ולכן יזכור רק
הכלל ולא הפרט. המדה בטבע כמו רחמנות על העני,

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compassion for a poor person is only evoked when my sense of vision is engaged, i.e., while he stands before my eyes. Once he leaves my presence, I forget the pauper and this visceral *middah* of compassion is no longer active. By contrast, if my compassion is also a *middah* of my intellect, I will delve into the details of the poor person’s hardship, forming an imprint on my mind that will not be forgotten. Even after the poor person has left my presence, all the detailed mental images of his suffering will remain alive in me with full force A person cannot be *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* unless he utilizes this mental imagery.

בטבע הרחמנות הוא רק חושית ולא ירחם כי בעת
שהעני נגדו ובעבור ממנו לא יזכור את העני ולא
ישתמש במדתו. לא כן הרחמנות מדה בשכל ידע
ויכניס עצמו בהפרטים ויזכרהו תמיד עד כי לא ימוש
זכרו אם כי העני כבר עבר ממנו, אבל עדיין חי אצלו
הכח ההוא אשר צייר לפניו כל פרטי סבל העני ...
והאדם לא יכול לשאת בעול עם חבירו כי אם ע"י
ציור המבואר.

C) The vision of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach: “Seeing” through the lens of the person in need

- 1) In Section VI-A (pp. 51-52), we mentioned that one of the ways the *middah* of *Nosei B’ol* primes a person for Torah acquisition is by developing the aptitude of seeing a situation through another person’s lens. The Torah’s description of Moshe Rabbeinu’s *Nesiah B’ol* is encapsulated in two words: “ויצא” (*he went out*) and “וירא” (*he saw*) (in the verse: “ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם”; Source II-7a, p. 17). Rav Friedlander explains, from these two words, we learn that to become a *Nosei B’ol*, we must put our own perspectives aside in order to “see” the situation through the perspective of the other person (i.e., to fully immerse ourselves in his or her situation).
- 2) A beautiful story which vividly describes a Tzaddik who possessed this skill in abundance, was told by Rav Michael Yammer about his Rebbi, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Ref. 60). A Jewish religious couple in Israel who experienced fertility difficulties, adopted a non-Jewish infant girl. A non-Jewish child who is converted by Jewish parents, must accept Torah and Mitzvos before reaching Bar/Bas Mitzvah to validate and complete the conversion. This girl was not told about her adopted status until shortly before she reached Bas Mitzvah, at which time she announced she would not complete the conversion; she decided to live the rest of her life as a non-Jew. For a full month, the teachers at her religious school valiantly tried to persuade her of the immense privilege to be a member of the *Am Segulah* (treasured nation) and the Jew’s eternal reward in *Olam Habboh* (World to Come), but to no avail. The sense of desperation of her parents cannot even be imagined, but there was another problem that even magnified their anguish. After they adopted this girl as an infant, Hashem blessed them with several natural children. If this girl would have gone on to live as a non-Jew, her parents would have to raise her to adulthood – as a non-Jew, in the same household with their Jewish children! Who can even fathom the depths of their heartbreak! In desperation, the girl’s mother took her to see Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, a couple of days before her twelfth birthday. Upon hearing the mother’s description of the situation, the Rav asked to privately speak with her daughter. After three minutes of private conversation, the girl emerged from the Rav’s study, ran to her mother and announced that she wanted to become a full-fledged Jew. Her shocked mother, who felt hopeless until one second ago, asked the Rav if he could repeat what he told her daughter. With the girl’s permission, the Rav said, “I promised your daughter that if she becomes a *Bas Yisrael*, she will merit to have a husband who will stay faithful to her until 120 years and will never abandon her.” The mother, still stunned, asked, “The Rav did not speak to her about *Olam Habboh*, etc.?” The Rav answered, “What was bothering your daughter that prevented her from committing to a Jewish life? It was not a lack of appreciation for *Olam Habboh*. One month ago, she learned that her biological mother abandoned her as an infant and she was afraid that it will

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happen again – this is what bothered her. Therefore, I had to go into her Neshoma (soul), to feel what troubled her and allay her anxiety and pain, and then she was happy to accept Torah and Mitzvos.”

- 3) In the depths of her heart, this girl really wanted to grow up as a Jewish woman, but without the amazing ability of Rav Shlomo Zalman to “go out” (“ויצא”) into her world and “see” (“וירא”) the situation from her perspective – to see the anguish in her soul, she would have been lost to the Jewish people forever. All because of these two words, her parent’s lives were transformed from unimaginable heartbreak to joy and jubilation in three minutes!
- 4) A story with a similar theme is told regarding the Rebbe Maharash (Rebbe Shmuel of Lubavitch) whose clothing would constantly be drenched with perspiration when receiving visitors who sought his counsel. The Rebbe explained that each time a visitor would come and pour out his tale of woe or ask for his wise advice, he had to see the situation through his visitor’s eyes in order to relate to that person’s dilemma. Hence, “I must divest myself of my own personality and clothe myself in theirs. Then, in order to answer them, I must re-assume my own personality and put back ‘my clothes’ as their spiritual guide.” This arduous labor of constantly “removing” and putting back “the clothes” of many people throughout the day, literally bathed the Rebbe in perspiration such that he actually required multiple physical changes of clothes during the day (Ref. 61).

D) Listening with undivided attention and in a non-judgmental manner

- 1) A major impediment to being *Nosei B’ol*, is the inability or reluctance to totally “tune-in” to the other person, to fully listen and give our undivided attention to someone. In addition, often even while we “listen” to someone, we are already formulating a response in our minds. Clearly then, it is impossible to fully internalize and truly hear what the person is saying. While we may hear the words of the person’s message, the feelings behind those words have simply gone “down the drain,” completely unregistered on our hearts. Rabbi Yechiel Spero (Ref. 59) incisively depicts this with an adage: *“Anyone can be a great storyteller. It takes someone special to be a great ‘story hearer’ – to listen and really hear what people are saying.”* This special skill is needed for us to become a *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*.
- 2) Mrs. Tamar Shames (Ref. 62) quotes Rav Aharon Feldman who explains that all our sensory organs have both input and output functions, except our ears. For example, our eyes take in sights, but also communicate non-verbally to the external environment. Our mouths take in food and articulate speech. However, human ears only have an input function, to receive sound; they have no output function (by contrast to certain animals). Therefore, when people talk to us, rather than formulating a response in our mind, we should maintain our focus on internalizing their “story,” i.e., both the words and the feelings they are conveying.
- 3) The Gemara Eruvin (13b) asks: Why did Beis Hillel merit that the Halacha was established according to their opinion? The Gemara responds by describing several noble virtues of Beis Hillel which merited them special Heavenly assistance. When Beis Hillel studied Torah, they articulated both their own view and the view of (the opposing school of) Beis Shammai. Moreover, when deliberating logical arguments, they presented the approach of Beis Shammai before their own approach, to ensure that all possible angles were thoroughly examined before concluding the Halacha. From Beis Hillel’s conduct, says Mrs. Shames, we see the importance of humility and flexibility to listen to other views with an open mind before reaching a conclusion, rather than rigidly holding onto our own preconceived notions. For example, when we encounter people who voice complaints or lament difficult situations, we are often quick to “judge” their complaint or grievance as

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unwarranted or unworthy of our commiseration. To be a *Nosei B’ol*, we must listen to people with an open mind, giving our full attention to hear their words and feelings **in a non-judgmental manner**.

- 4) Previously, we mentioned the Gemara Shabbos regarding the red sign painted by an orchard owner on his “sick”, tree, to arouse people to beseech mercy on his behalf (Source IX-3, p. 76). The Gemara compares the orchard owner’s sign for arousing public prayer to the *Metzora* who calls out, “*I am impure, I am impure,*” to arouse people to beseech mercy. Rav Friedlander (Ref. 49) asks: How can the Gemara compare the two situations? The *Metzora* is afflicted with a serious spiritual malady, for which he is defiled and isolated from his entire family and community, while the orchard owner suffers merely financial loss, and only from a single “sick” tree out of his entire orchard of healthy, fruit-bearing trees? Rav Friedlander answers, from this Gemara, we learn a vital lesson. The magnitude of my friend’s hardship has no bearing on my obligation to be *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*. If my friend is in pain, my responsibility is to share that pain and pray on his or her behalf, regardless of how minimal the problem may seem to me.
- 5) Rav Friedlander’s profound analysis of this Gemara underscores the importance of listening and empathizing **in an attentive and non-judgmental manner**. One could easily have dismissed the orchard owner’s problem as trivial, not worthy of our empathy and prayers. Chazal are hereby teaching us that we do not “sit in judgment” over other people’s distress, i.e., whether the magnitude of their problem warrants their emotional reaction. When we encounter people who express or display anguish over a misfortune, the last thing they need is for us to challenge the legitimacy of their emotional reaction. Being told that my feelings of anguish are either unwarranted or an overreaction to the seriousness of the problem, often feels like “salt poured in an open wound” - the pain it causes can persist far longer than the original distressful situation. Although people may need to adjust their perspective if they frequently overdramatize life’s disappointments, the time for giving such advice is not when they are in acute pain and distress. Honoring a person’s feelings, rather than judging them, will pay far greater dividends, by establishing a bond of understanding – the essence of *Nesiah B’ol*.

E) The power of smiling and receiving people with “האררת פנים” - a beaming countenance

- 1) No discussion of the “human connection” can be complete without including the power of smiling and greeting people with a resplendent countenance (“האררת פנים”). The Torah (Devarim 4: 41) states that Moshe Rabbeinu prepared cities of refuge for unintentional killers in the TransJordan: “*Moshe designated three cities in the TransJordan, toward the rising sun* (‘מזרחה שמש’).” The words, “מזרחה שמש”, are homiletically interpreted by the Gemara Makos (Source X-3): “*G-d told Moshe, ‘You caused the sun to shine for (unintentional) killers.’*”

Source X-3: Gemara Makos 10a: Moshe shined the sun upon unintentional killers exiled in cities of refuge

R’ Simlai explained: What is the meaning of that which is written:
“*Then Moshe designated three cities in the TransJordan, toward the rising sun?*” HKB”H said to Moshe: “Cause the sun to shine for killers [by preparing their living necessities in the refuge cities].” Others explain, HKB”H said to Moshe: “You have caused the sun to shine for killers [by separating cities to provide for their refuge].”

גמ' מס' מכות דף י' ע"א:
דרש רבי שמלאי מאי דתיב: (דברים ד, מא) "אז יבדיל
משה שלש ערים בעבר הירדן מזרחה שמש"? אמר לו
הקב"ה למשה "הזרח שמש לרוצחים". איכא דאמרי אמר
לו "הזרחת שמש לרוצחים".

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- 2) Rav Wolbe (Source X-4) was greatly inspired by this Gemara: *“The father of all prophets (Moshe) - immediately before his death - found no more important Mitzvah than ‘shining the sun’ for the distraught and downtrodden souls exiled in cities of refuge.”* The “take home” message, Rav Wolbe explains, is that *“This is the entire essence of a person – to be an individual who shines the sun, (i.e., one who greets everyone with a resplendent countenance). This is the foundation of all interpersonal Mitzvos and all our relationships with friends.”*

Source X-4: Rav Shlomo Wolbe: Moshe Rabbeinu “shined the sun” on downtrodden souls throughout all his life

Rav Wolbe explains the Gemara Makos (Source X-3) as follows: HKB”H said to Moshe: “You have caused the sun to shine for killers.” HKB”H praised Moshe for exerting himself to fulfill the Mitzvah of setting up cities of refuge, which was the final Mitzvah of his life. The father of all prophets - immediately before his death - found no more important Mitzvah than “shining the sun” for the distraught and downtrodden souls exiled in cities of refuge. Moshe Rabbeinu’s beginning (as a *Nosei B’ol*) was, “He saw their burdens” (in Egypt), and his final (act of *Nesiah B’ol*) was preparing cities of refuge. This underscores the fact that his entire life consisted of “shining the sun” magnificently for his own generation as well as all future generations. This is the entire essence of a person - to be an individual who shines the sun, (i.e., one who greets everyone with a resplendent countenance). This is the foundation of all interpersonal Mitzvos and all our relationships with friends.

עלי שור ח"א, מערכת "דעת קצות דרכיו" פרק ט*:
במס' מכות: אמר לו הקב"ה למשה: "הזרחת שמש לרוצחים", משבח הקב"ה את משה רבינו ע"ה שהתאמץ לקיים מצות ערי מקלט, המצוה האחרונה בחייו. לא מצא אבי הנביאים מצוה חשובה יותר להתעסק בה סמוך למיתתו, אלא זו: להזריח שמש לקשיי יום אומללים. התחלתו - "וירא בסבלותם", וסופו - ערי מקלט, כי כל חייו הזרחת שמש כבירה לדורו ולכל הדורות. זהו כל האדם: להיות מזריח שמש. זהו היסוד לכל המצוות ולכל יחסינו בין אדם לחבירו. * (עמ' קצ' - קצב')

- 3) The Gemara Kesuvos (111b) states, *“Rebbi Yochanan said: One who whitens his teeth to his friend (by smiling at him), is better than one who gives him milk to drink.”* Rav Wolbe explains the Gemara: Who knows which is more important for a baby to remain healthy and develop properly - the milk that the mother gives him, or the smiles and radiant countenance (“הארת פנים”) that she showers upon him? A baby who is raised without his parent’s shining countenance is likened precisely (“בדיוק”) to a plant which is deprived of sunshine - it is impossible for the child to develop in a healthy manner; he or she is in danger of emotionally wilting.
- 4) From Rav Wolbe’s words, it is now evident how the Gemara’s words, *“shining the sun,”* refer to greeting people with a smile and “הארת פנים”. Just as the sun’s rays are converted by a plant into life-giving nutrients, similarly, the smiles we greet people with are converted into energy and vitality by the recipients, as Avos D’Rebbi Nosson comments (Source X-5): *“One who receives his friend with a cheerful countenance, even if he does not give him anything, Scripture considers it as if he had given him all the finest gifts in the world.”* When we greet people with a warm and cheerful countenance, we demonstrate that we are glad they are in this world - one of the most precious gifts of love. The message of, *“I am happy to be with you,”* is truly a life-sustaining gift (Ref. 63).

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Source X-5: Avos D’Rebbi Nosson 13:4: The power of greeting people with a radiant countenance

“Receive everyone with a cheerful countenance” (Pirkei Avos 1:15): How so? This teaches that if a person gives his friend all the finest gifts in the world, but does so with a downcast face, Scripture considers it as if he had given him nothing. But one who receives his friend with a cheerful countenance, even if he does not give him anything, Scripture considers it as if he had given him all the finest gifts in the world.

אבות דרבי נתן י"ג, ד': "והוי מקבל את כל האדם בסבר פנים יפות" (פרקי אבות א: ט"ו): כיצד? מלמד שאם נתן אדם לחבירו כל מתנות טובות שבעולם ופניו זעומות, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו לא נתן לו כלום. אבל המקבל את חבירו בסבר פנים יפות אפילו לא נתן לו כלום, מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו נתן לו כל מתנות טובות שבעולם.

- 5) Rav Yisrael Ciner writes that on one Erev Shabbos, he was in the “shuk” (marketplace) in Jerusalem where many indigent people collect alms. He explained, “Usually we rush to complete all our final shopping in honor of Shabbat, and then mechanically toss a few coins into the poor person’s cup in an impersonal manner, accompanied by a mumbled ‘Shabbat Shalom.’” On one Erev Shabbos, Rav Ciner took note of the distraught appearance of an elderly man as he handed him the coins, and, *“I looked into his eyes, smiled and asked him how he was feeling, I shook his hand and warmly wished him a Shabbat Shalom. Then an unbelievable change occurred. He would not let go of my hand. He followed me out of the ‘shuk,’ holding my hand, all the while thanking and blessing me! I was very moved by this encounter, seeing the incalculably great impact of a ‘small’ Mitzvah, by merely giving a few coins with a simple smile and a few kind words that demonstrate concern”* (Ref. 64). Perhaps this story serves to validate the wisdom of the Rambam’s declaration (Source III-9, p. 37): *“Anyone who gives charity to a poor person ... should give it to him with a pleasant countenance, with joy, commiserating with him about his plight ... he should speak to him words of sympathy and comfort.”*
- 6) In Tehillim (80:20), Dovid HaMelech says: *“G-d, Master of Legions, return us, illuminate Your face that we may be saved.”* In the Midrash Tehillim (4:13), Rebbi Yochanan says, *“The children of Israel say to HKB”H, ‘All we want is for You to illuminate Your face.’* All we want is the “הארת פנים” of Hashem - His affirmation of us. What can be more important to us than knowing that Hashem is happy with us? Similarly, says Rav Wolbe, there is nothing we want more than the affirmation of our friend, i.e., knowing that someone cherishes us and is happy to see us, i.e., being received with “הארת פנים”. Rav Wolbe explains that when Hashem created us in His Divine image (*b’Tzelem Elokim*), He endowed man with the power of “הארת פנים”, which we actualize by greeting people with a smile.
- 7) The following correspondence was written by a young man who approached Rav Wolbe for help with a personal difficulty: *“I merited that the Mashgiach (Rav Wolbe) graced me with a smile so special, of which I never experienced ... The entirety of the Mashgiach was immersed in the short conversation with me. I felt so esteemed by the manner with which he shared in my predicament, demonstrating how much he wanted to help me ... The Mashgiach’s radiant countenance was like a great light, illuminating and warming me in a dark forest where the light is most precious, revealing hidden pathways for troubled people. The Mashgiach’s radiant reception fortifies and recharges (resuscitates) people who meet him, with enduring vitality”* (Ref. 65).
- 8) In his final year of life, the Sabba of Slabodke spoke before the blowing of the Shofar in Rosh Hashanah, in the Slabodke Yeshiva in Chevron: *“How can we merit a positive judgment on this awesome day of judgment? With what merit can we approach the Heavenly court? By saying ‘good morning’ to our friend every morning with a resplendent countenance – this will tilt the scales to the side of merit (L’kaf Zechus)”* (Ref. 66).

Section X: Forming the human connection: Using all our “senses” to be *Nosei B’ol*

- 9) Rav Wolbe once asked a young man who returned to his religious roots, “What led you to begin studying Torah?” The man replied that he had grown up in a secular neighborhood in Israel, and whenever he went to school each morning, the only person on the street who daily greeted him was an elderly man who wore the garb of an Orthodox Jew. Years later, when he began to search for more meaning in his life, the memory of the religious man who had greeted him so warmly every morning inspired him to enter a Yeshiva (Ref. 67).
- 10) Finally, we return the theme of connection. Smiling and receiving people with a radiant smile strengthens interpersonal bonds, as the *Orchos Tzaddikim (Sha’ar Ahavah)* states: “One should receive all people with joy and a cheerful countenance, for such kindness strengthens love.” Rav Moshe Gerelick (Ref. 68) writes that a sincere smile emanates from the *Tzelem Elokim* (Divine image or spark) within each person’s soul: “At the moment a person smiles and greets another resplendently, the two souls, the smiling person and the recipient, become connected.” The heartfelt smile is, thus, the channel through which the warmth of the “giving” person is transmitted into the soul of the recipient. Thus, our smiles and kind facial appearance truly “shine a sun” toward people. Even when we have no practical way to help someone, let us remember the story about the radiant countenance of Rav Wolbe, i.e., how it shone light and warmth and resuscitated people with new vitality.
- 11) In summary, our eyes and ears are the sensory organs with which we internalize the plight of a person in distress. We externalize the *Nesiah B’ol* in our hearts toward that person through our smiles and cheerful facial expression, which illuminates the darkness within troubled souls and revitalizes them to march forward.

USING ALL OUR “SENSES” TO BE *NOSEI B’OL IM CHAVEIRO* FORMING THE HUMAN CONNECTION (SUMMARY)

- ❖ *Nesiah B’ol* is about creating a bond of shared pain even when you cannot improve someone’s plight. Giving over our heart to understand someone’s distress, helps him feel less alone. It is the antidote to “אין לי מכיר” (“no one gets me”) and to “אבד מנוס ממני” (hopelessness).
- ❖ Sabba of Kelm: Using mental imagery to visualize the details of someone’s distress and to imagine ourselves in his or her situation, facilitates an authentic and sustained *Nesiah B’ol*.
- ❖ Putting aside our own perspective to view the situation through the lens of the other person, is essential for being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*. It is the key to connecting with a person in distress.
- ❖ *Nesiah B’ol* requires listening in an attentive and non-judgmental manner to hear and internalize the words and emotions that people convey to us. Resist the urge to formulate a response in our minds when they talk to us, or to judge their perspective or emotions. Honoring a person’s emotions, rather than judging them, goes a long way to establish a bond of understanding.
- ❖ Greeting and receiving people with an authentic smile and radiant countenance, illuminates the darkness within troubled souls and revitalizes them. This the entire essence of a person – to be an individual who “shines the sun” at others – the foundation of all our relationships (Rav Wolbe).

XI. Additional strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nesiah B'ol*

A) Implementing the wise counsel of the Sabba of Kelm: Stories and practical examples

In Section X-B, (pp. 85-86), we mentioned the fundamental thesis of the Sabba of Kelm. The Sabba explains the importance of using mental imagery, i.e., visualizing the details of another person's suffering, to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. We are blessed that the Sabba's illustrious students and other inspiring personalities have given us practical solutions for implementing the Sabba's wise advice. The following are either: (1) stories from the lives of these Mussar personalities, from whom we can learn by example; and (2) suggested practical examples that we can implement. We will conclude this section with one anonymously suggested example.

- 1) Rav Yeruchem was told about an individual, who, due to his illness, was unable to turn from side to side in bed (Ref. 15). For most of us, hearing about this person's disability, would hardly evoke much of an emotional response. However, Rav Yeruchem states that hearing about this person's condition taught him a fundamental message. To have a grasp of this individual's suffering, Rav Yeruchem said, we need to deliberately consider how many times we typically turn from side to side before finding a comfortable position to fall into a restful sleep. Then, we can begin to imagine this individual's agony as he lies awake in bed for hours, unable to make himself comfortable and fall sleep. In *Visions of the Fathers*, Rabbi Abraham Twerski, M.D., adds: Rav Yeruchem says he realized at that point that he had never properly fulfilled the Mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim*. It had not occurred to him to think of how limited a sick person may be in doing what everyone takes for granted, something as simple as turning from side to side. *"How great is the suffering of the sick person who cannot do this! I had never given it any thought. I did indeed visit the sick but I was remiss in not sharing their suffering."*
- 2) The following two stories from the Artscroll biography of Rav Chatzkel, illustrate in "living color", how magnificently he employed the Sabba's approach of mental imagery (Ref. 12, p. 312 and pp. 201-203):
 - (a) *Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz was once present when the Mashgiach (Rav Chatzkel) returned from visiting a sick person. Upon entering the room, the Mashgiach proceeded to explain with deep emotion, at great length and in minute detail, each aspect of the person's mental, emotional, and physical pain and anguish – literally recreating the patient's condition to all of those present. Later Rav Lefkowitz commented, "We then saw what it means to bear the suffering of another."*
 - (b) In 1941, just weeks after the Mirrer Yeshiva refugees arrived in Shanghai, Rav Chatzkel stressed the imperative of feeling the anguish and pain of their brethren trapped in the indescribable horror of World War II: *"We need to clearly visualize the awesome suffering that now consumes the world and, in particular, the suffering of our brothers and sisters. We need to visualize their suffering as if we are personally witnessing their suffering: we are hearing their cries, witnessing their bitterness, feeling their agonizing hunger, the freezing cold, their torture, and the savage acts done to them. We need to hear the death cries that pour out from the hearts of our people."* Rav Chatzkel was urging his students to use mental imagery to "picture" in a detailed manner, the many aspects of the unspeakable horror and suffering that the Jews in European inferno were subjected to every day. This underscores the importance of not merely "feeling bad" about someone's misfortunes in a general way, but to itemize in one's mind the details of his or her suffering, how it affects the person's daily life.

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- 3) Rabbi Yechiel Spero (Ref. 59) offers a practical example to incorporate the Sabba's approach of mental imagery into our lives. When we complete saying *Shemoneh Esrei*, stand in the back of the Shul and look at people who are still saying *Shemoneh Esrei*. Imagine each of these individuals has a sign on his back. "Visualize" the various signs saying, "*I need Parnosah (a livelihood)*"; "*I don't know how I'll pay my mortgage in three days*"; "*Please let **someone** pick up the phone and suggest a shidduch for our daughter*"; "*I got a cutoff notice from the utility company.*"
- 4) One final example for implementing the Sabba's advice in our lives, pertains to prayer on behalf of couples struggling with infertility, but applies equally to prayer on behalf of people facing other difficulties. When we light candles on Erev Shabbos, think about a childless couple at a Shabbos Seudah watching how other families are privileged to give Kiddush wine and Challah to their sweet little children. How much their hearts ache for that very simple joy – just to be able to lovingly give a beautiful child a sip of Kiddush wine, watching their precious child thirstily drink it. What a simple, tiny pleasure – and how much it hurts to be deprived of it. Think of a Jewish wife who has been yearning to be a mother for years, as she lights candles and recites the prayer, "*Grant me the merit to raise children and grandchildren ... who love Hashem ... who illuminate the world with Torah and good deeds ... Please hear my supplication at this time ...*" Imagine her heartache as she recites this prayer every week and yet her home is so still without the lively sounds of children. Now imagine this couple going through this anguish, Shabbos after Shabbos, month after month, year after year, walking home alone from Shul while other families walk with their children. After thinking about this - and internalizing their pain for a couple of moments – then say a short Tefilla for their happiness. Beg Hashem to send them a speedy salvation so that they will be blessed with beautiful, healthy children – to be able to celebrate Shabbos and Yom Tov with those beautiful children *b'Simcha* - just as we do. Our prayers at candle lighting time will accompany them into Shabbos, helping them feel less alone, which is the essence and purpose of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* – to be together someone in his or her time of need.

B) Focusing our prayers to request Divine help for people in need, fosters feelings of *Nesiah B'ol*

- 1) Perhaps no time is as opportune for developing the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* as during our prayers on behalf of people in need, as suggested by Rav Chatzkel: "... by toiling in Tefillah which was formulated in the plural form ... When reciting Tehillim for an ill person, we should feel a true desire in our hearts for the person to be restored to perfect health By focusing on these thoughts during prayer, the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* will gradually become implanted in us" (Source XI-1). Rav Chatzkel's directive, to "*feel a true desire in our hearts for the person to be restored to ...*," perhaps can be fulfilled by visualizing both the person's current difficult situation, as well as the happy situation that we hope he or she will soon be blessed with. Keeping the contrast between the two situations in our mind, will effectively enable us to pray with a "*true desire in our hearts.*" For example, when praying on behalf of couples struggling with infertility (see Section XI-A-4, above), visualize their current pain and then imagine the joy and radiance that will reign in their home on Shabbos once they are blessed with children. We should sincerely yearn for that happy image to come to fruition as we pray on their behalf.
- 2) As Rav Chatzkel advises, since our Tefillos were formulated in the plural form, it is virtually effortless to pause for one moment before one of the middle *Berachos* blessing in the *Shemoneh Esrei* to think, "*May this help my fellow Jews who are in need.*" For example, before the *Berocha*, "אתה חונן לאדם דעת" (the request for wisdom), we can think, "*May this help Jews who are struggling to understand Torah.*" Before the *Berocha*, "השבינו אבינו לתורתך"

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(the request for assistance to repent), we can think, *“May this help all Jews who are spiritually adrift.”* What a simple solution that is formulated for us in a routine manner, for developing the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*.

Source XI-1: Rav Chatzkel Levenstein: Prayer on behalf of others facilitates development of *Nesiah B'ol*.

By toiling in Tefillah which was formulated in the plural form, we will reach the level of a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* and gradually lessen our innate *middah* of apathy (or cruelty).

This following strategy is offered for becoming a *Nosei B'ol*:

When reciting Tehillim for an ill person, we should feel a true desire in our hearts for the person to be restored to perfect health, and beseech Hashem that He heal the ill person. By focusing on these thoughts during prayer, the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* will gradually become implanted in us.

אור יחזקאל, חלק מדות, מאמר "נושא בעול עם נפטר":
 אמנם בעת שמתגגע בתפלה שנתקנה בלשון רבים, על ידי
 זה יגיע להיות מכלל הנושאים בעול עם זולתינו, ומדת
 האכזריות שבנו מתמעטת והולכת ...
 ובאמת זו יכולה להיות עצה בשבלינו בענין "נושא בעול",
 שיחשוב בעת התהלים שברצונו באמת שהחולה ישוב
 לאיתנו ויתפלל על זה להשי"ת, ובמשך זמן כאשר יחשוב
 על כך, יושרש בקרבו מעלת נושא בעול עם חברו.

- 3) Throughout their difficult exile in Shanghai during the desperate times of World War II, Rav Chatzkel stressed to the Mirrer Yeshiva students that although each Jew has an obligation to pray for the well-being of others and thus, share in their pain and suffering, a *ben Torah* is obligated even more than others: *“It is the responsibility of the ben Torah to seek the welfare of the Jewish people at all times and this is especially true now when there is so much danger, illness and suffering ... It is all important that the ben Torah spends time each day to deeply reflect on the troubles confronting Israel and to share in the burden of both the congregation and the individual. It is of greatest importance that you concentrate on the well-being of the Jewish nation during prayer”* (Ref. 12, p. 41).
- 4) Rabbi Avrohom Asher Makovsky quotes the Sefer Chassidim (Siman 553) who asserts, *“Some people pray and their requests are answered, while other people’s prayers are not answered. The reason that some people’s prayers go unanswered is because they do not take the suffering and humiliation of others to their heart, i.e., the pain of another fails to arouse them to pray on their fellow’s behalf ... If a person fails to take his fellow’s pain to heart to pray for him, what difference is there between him and an animal who cannot feel its fellow animal’s pain?!”* This corroborates Rav Matisyahu’s assertion (Section II-D-3, p. 25) that the effectiveness of our prayers on behalf of others is directly proportional to the degree we experience their pain as our own. If we contemplate the struggles of fellow Jews by visualizing their pain before praying for them, our prayers will be so much more effective.

C) “Tuning in” to Hashem’s anguish, yearning and praying for it to end via our redemption:

- 1) Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev (Ref. 69) says that one should contemplate how much contentment (*“Nachas”*) Hashem received when the Beis HaMikdash (בהמ"ק) was extant, i.e., the great level of *“Nachas”* we would give Hashem through our daily *Avodah* (priestly service in the Temple), the Yom Kippur *Avodah* and all sacrifices. Then, reflect on the contrast between then and now, how we presently cannot deliver such contentment to Hashem, and the pain this causes Him. Our prayers for the redemption will thereby be driven by our “sharing” in Hashem’s sorrow, yearning and expressing our desire to see His pain removed when the בהמ"ק is rebuilt. Similarly, the *Mesillas Yesharim* states (Source XI-2): *“One surely ought to experience constant, authentic anguish over the exile of Israel and the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, inasmuch as this causes a diminution of the honor of Hashem ... And he will pray persistently for the redemption of Bnei Yisrael and for the restoration of the honor of Heaven.”*

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Source XI-2: *Mesillas Yesharim*: Feeling anguish for the diminution of Hashem's honor due to our exile. Yearning and praying for the restoration of Hashem's honor via our redemption.

<p>"[A pious person] surely ought to experience constant, authentic anguish over the exile of Israel and the destruction of the <i>Beis HaMikdash</i>, inasmuch as this (state of exile and destruction) causes a diminution of the honor of Hashem, blessed be He. And he will yearn for the redemption because through it there will be an elevation in the honor of Hashem, blessed be He ... And he will pray persistently for the redemption of the Children of Israel and for the restoration of the honor of Heaven."</p>	<p><u>מסילת ישירים פרק י"ט: בבאור חלקי החסידות:</u> הנה ודאי צריך שיצטער תמיד צער ממש על הגלות ועל החורבן, מצד מה שזוה גורם מיעוט כביכול לכבודו יתברך, ויתאוה לגאולה לפי שבה יהיה עילוי לכבוד השם יתברך ... ויתפלל תמיד על גאולת בני ישראל והשבת כבוד שמים לעילוי.</p>
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- 2) Previously we noted that Rav Wolbe (Source VII-4, p. 61) advises: *"We should be Nosei B'ol not only with our fellow man, but also with the Shechinah! ... This is the entire focus of all Tefillah – to plead that the Heavenly Glory be revealed in the world."* Expressing our yearning for Hashem's glory to be magnified when we pray for our redemption, is a wonderful way to be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem. Moreover, the act of praying for Divine help for a fellow Jew in need, also presents an ideal opportunity to be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem, *"for every human pain produces great anguish [to the Shechinah] Above"* (*Nefesh HaChaim*, Source VII-5, p. 62). Therefore, when praying on behalf of an ill friend, our primary focus should be that Hashem's anguish be removed upon his recovery and that His glory will be magnified by our friend's enhanced ability to serve Hashem (Rav Wolbe, *ibid*). When we focus our intent accordingly during our prayers, we are *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem, as well as the ill friend.
- 3) Shir HaShirim (Source XI-3a) states: *Hark! My Beloved is knocking: "Open up for Me, My sister, My beloved, My perfect one, for My head is full of dew, My locks with the drops of the night."* The Midrash (Source XI-3b), comments on this verse: *"The Holy One, blessed is He, says: For how long must I wander without a home? Behold, My head is drenched with dew. Construct for Me a Sanctuary so that I won't need to remain outside."*
- 4) What vivid imagery the Midrash portrays! G-d, so to speak, is standing outside our door, knocking, *"Let Me in. Look at Me - My head is drenched with dew* from waiting outside your door all night (i.e., during the exile). *Build Me a Sanctuary* so that my interminable wait will end."

Source XI-3: (a) Shir HaShirim 5:2; (b) Shemos Rabbah 33:3; (c) Tanna Debai Eliyahu Zuta 21:

The Midrash presents vivid imagery of G-d's sorrow and "wandering" during the years of our exile.

<p>I sleep, but my heart is awake. Hark! My Beloved is knocking: "Open for Me, My sister, My beloved, My dove, My perfect one, for My head is drenched with dew, My locks with the drops of the night."</p>	<p><u>שיר השירים ה', ב':</u> אָנִי יְשֻׁנָּה וְלִבִּי עֹר קוֹל דּוֹדִי דוֹפֵק פֶּתַח־לִי אֲחֹתִי רַעֲיָתִי יוֹנָתִי תִמְתִּי וְשָׂרָאִשִׁי נִמְלֵא־טֶל קִנְצוֹתַי רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה.</p>
<p><i>"Open for Me, My sister, My beloved."</i> [G-d says to the Jewish people]: "How long must I wander without a home – 'For [behold], My head is drenched with dew!' [Please] - 'Construct for Me a Sanctuary' – so that I won't need to remain outside."</p>	<p><u>שמות רבה ל"ג:ג':</u> "פֶּתַח־לִי רַעֲיָתִי" (שה"ש ה, ב): עַד מָתִי אֲהִיָּה מְתַהַלֵּךְ בְּלֵא בֵּית, "שָׂרָאִשִׁי נִמְלֵא טֶל" אֲלֵא עֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׂלֵא אֲהִיָּה בְּחוּץ.</p>

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[At the time of the redemption], HKB"H says to Israel: "My children, from the day that I destroyed My home below, I never ascended and dwelled in My home above. Instead, I sat in the dew and rain (i.e., I remained without a home). And, if you don't believe Me [that I have never entered My home], place your hands on My head and see that it is drenched with dew, as is stated (Shir HaShirim 5:2): *'For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the drops of night.'*"

סדר אליהו זוטא פרק כ"א : אומר להם הקב"ה לישראל:
 "בני מיום שהחרבתי את ביתי של מטה, לא עליתי וישבתי
 בביתי של מעלה, אלא הייתי יושב בטל [בטל ומטר], ואם
 אין אתם מאמינים לי [שאני לא נכנסתי לביתי], תנו את
 ידיכם על ראשי ותראו שהוא מלא טל, שנאמר (שה"ש ה,
 ב): 'שראשי נמלא טל קווצותי רסיסי לילה'."

- 5) The powerful image portrayed by this Midrash is further developed in the Tanna Debai Eliyahu (Source XI-3c) which describes Hashem's comforting words to the Jewish people at the time of the Redemption: *"My children, from the day that I destroyed My home below, I never ascended and dwelled in My home above. Instead, I sat in the dew and rain. And, if you don't believe Me that I have never entered My home, place your hands on My head and see that it is drenched with dew."* The physical aspects of this awe-inspiring image are intended as an allegory, to convey Hashem's powerful desire to end His interminable wait during our exile, to enter our lives with the special closeness we experienced when His Divine Presence had a Sanctuary to reside within.
- 6) What tools do we have to be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem during our prayers? Just as the Sabba of Kelm suggests using mental imagery to visualize another person's suffering, we can do the same to be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem. In the *Shemoneh Esrei*, before we recite the *Berachos* of "ולירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב" (*Return mercifully to Jerusalem, Your city*), and "ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים" (*May our eyes witness Your return to Zion in compassion*), let us take a moment to ponder Hashem's suffering, His longing for His children to reunite with Him and visit His home for the *Chagim*. Remember Hashem's reassurance: *"If you don't believe Me that I have never entered My home, place your hands on My head and see that it is drenched with dew."* Thinking of this allegory will help us feel Hashem's anguish; consequently, we will recite these prayers with a true yearning for the day that these prayers will be answered, speedily in our days.
- 7) The recitation of "יהא שמה רבא מברך וכו'" in the Kaddish, affords us readily available opportunities to be *Nosei B'ol* with G-d's pain. The following two thoughts are suggested to facilitate this endeavor:
 - (a) The Gemara (Source VII-6, p. 63) says that Hashem laments: *"How great is the pain of the Father Who has exiled His children,"* each time we recite "יהא שמה רבא מברך וכו'" (*May His great Name be blessed forever and for all eternity*) in the Kaddish. G-d's pain for the destruction of the *במה"ק*, is "reaggravated" every time we recite the above phrase because, as Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky explains (Ref. 46), it "reminds" Him how much more expansive our words of praise were in the *במה"ק* (which included *"His glorious kingdom"*).
 - (b) Rav Zev Leff (Ref. 70) explains that "יהא שמה רבא מברך וכו'" is an expression of our desire that Hashem's Name be magnified at the time of the redemption. At that time, we will perceive that all that Hashem did from time immemorial until the end of time, was for our ultimate good. Hashem's ineffable Name, with the letters, *Yud-Kei-Vav-Kei*, signifies the past, present and the future, and therefore connotes His attribute of mercy. Until the redemption, our perception of Him is diminished, limited by the boundaries of time; consequently, misfortunes appear as harshness. Because we cannot appreciate that which Hashem's Name signifies, His Name is incomplete until our redemption. Therefore, when we say "יהא שמה רבא מברך וכו'",

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we express our yearning for the time when the truth and our perception will coalesce, i.e., at the redemption, at which time Hashem's Name will be magnified because of our increased recognition of His greatness.

Accordingly, when we answer, "יהא שמיה רבא מברך וכי", we can bear in mind how much Hashem wishes for us to praise his Name properly in the more expansive manner in the rebuilt ק"ה, as we used to do. As the Rebbe Levi Yitzchak suggests, think how much pleasure G-d received from us when the ק"ה was extant and how much He misses it currently. Let's "reserve" a place in our hearts to yearn that Hashem's "*Nachas*" and happiness will be restored when we recite His praises in the Kaddish. Moreover, let us utilize these moments to think about the day when Hashem's Name will be magnified because of our increased perception of His greatness, when we will realize how He had always cared for us with utmost mercy. By bearing these thoughts in mind, we can *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem several times each day, and thereby, hopefully hasten the time when His pain will disappear forever.

D) Acts of kindness, whether large or small, foster authentic feelings of *Nesiah B'ol*, even if they start out on a perfunctory level

- 1) Not everyone is blessed with the innate ability to empathize with others. The Chazon Ish reassures us that our *Nosei B'ol* capacity is molded by action, in consonance with Rav Wolbe, "*Nesiah B'ol is not confined to thought and feeling; it also requires specific action*" (Sources XI-4 and XI-5, respectively). Taking concrete action to help or bring cheer to someone in pain, even if it feels forced initially, fosters authentic feelings of *Nesiah B'ol*. In time, we will achieve authentic *Nesiah B'ol* capacity because of our actions. Even if the effort is minimal, the positive effects of our actions can be profound. The "Tzaddik of Jerusalem," Rav Aryeh Levin, would make a point of greeting the street cleaners he passed early in the morning on his way to Shul. He appreciated their thankless, low-paid, repetitive job and expressed his appreciation of its value (Ref. 67). Surely, we can also extend a bit of courtesy toward people with menial jobs, if only to help them feel appreciated for their difficult and unrewarding work. When we meet them, let's make a special effort to smile and thank them for their work, especially since they typically go through their daily chores without anyone even glancing at them, as if they were fixtures on the wall. By according respect to them and recognizing their work as meaningful and valued, we lift their spirits, putting a spring in their step for the entire day. It is also an amazing way to create a daily Kiddush Hashem.
- 2) Rav Moshe Feinstein would help the Gabbai in Yeshiva Tiferes Yerushalayim (where he was the Rosh HaYeshiva) by climbing on benches to put away Seforim before Shabbos. On Erev Yom Kippur, Rav Moshe would help count the Tzedaka contributions so that Gabbai could make it home in time to eat before the fast began. If such an august Torah leader, whose shoulders carried weighty life and death Halachic queries world-wide, was happy to lighten the burdens of the Gabbai, surely, we can undertake small tasks to lighten the load of other people, at home, work and in Shul.

Source XI-4: The Chazon Ish: Concrete actions to help someone in pain fosters authentic *Nesiah B'ol* within us.

Are you lacking the feeling of sharing in another person's pain? The solution for this is by taking concrete actions to help another and spare him from pain. Your actions will transform your heart. Similarly, prayer on behalf of another in distress, even if it does not feel truly heartfelt (will foster authentic *Nesiah B'ol*). Take these actions even if the distressed person is simple or undistinguished.

קובץ אגרות (חזון איש) ח"א, סי' קכ"ג: חסר לך הרגש של השתתפות בצער זולתך? והעצה לזה, ההשתדלות להיטיבו ולהצילו מצער, והמעשה פועלת על הלב, וכן להתפלל על צרת זולתו, אפילו שאין הדברים יוצאים מן הלב, ואף אם המצטער הנו הדיוט ובזוי.

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- 3) We mentioned several times, the purpose of being *Nosei B'ol* is not to solve someone's problem, but rather, to be together with the person in pain and share his burden. Rav Wolbe states that this especially applies to two Mitzvos for which *Nesiah B'ol* is an integral component: *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the ill) and *Nichum Aveilim* (comforting mourners) (Source XI-5). Rabbi Dovid Rosman recorded Rav Noach Weinberg's explanation for the Halacha that we may not initiate speech when comforting a mourner (Ref. 35). If the mourner does not initiate conversation, we just sit quietly by his or her side. What is to be gained by sitting still as a statue in the mourner's presence? Rav Weinberg answers that the purpose of the Mitzvah of *Nichum Aveilim* is to be *Nosei B'ol* with the mourners, to be present with them and share in their pain. If the mourner does not feel up to speaking, merely sitting with him itself is a source of comfort since it demonstrates that we are in pain with him. With *Bikur Cholim* as well, although one is required to look after the *choleh's* needs and use whatever means available to improve his situation, the primary focus of the Mitzvah is to be present with the *choleh* in his trying time.

Source XI-5: Rav Wolbe: Developing authentic *Nesiah B'ol*: Perform concrete actions of sharing in people's suffering.

Nesiah B'ol is not confined to thought and feeling; it also requires specific action. *Nesiah B'ol* is an integral aspect of the Mitzvos of comforting mourners and visiting the sick, as we know - when visiting an ill person, we must look after any of his needs and pray on his behalf. Therefore, one who wants to train himself to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, should designate a concrete uncomplicated action or practice to undertake. This, in of itself, is considered *Nesiah B'ol* even if it does not tangibly solve the other person's difficulty, as we see Moshe Rabbeinu went out to take his brethren's burdens and carry them himself. On a practical level, Moshe's assistance hardly relieved any of the immense suffering of the entire Jewish population who were enslaved. Rather, Moshe's intent was to simply participate in their suffering. We learn from Moshe Rabbeinu how to be *Nosei B'ol* with others: We must take specific actions in which we share in the suffering of others.

עלי שור חלק ב', עמ' רח': נושא בעול עם חברו אינו ענין למחשבה והרגשה בלבד. נשיאה בעול מחייבת הנהגה במעשה. וכן מצינו בניחום אבלים ובאבילות עצמה ובביקור חולים. המבקר את החולה צריך לבדוק אם יש לחולה צורך באיזה דבר וכן להתפלל עליו (יו"ד סי' שלה). לכן הרוצה להתלמד להיות נושא בעול עם חברו יקבע לעצמו איזה מעשה קטן או הנהגה קטנה שע"ז יהיה ממש נושא בעול עמו. חז"ל אמרו על מרע"ה שכתוב "ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו לראות בסבלותם", שלקח מאחד ומשני את משאו ונשא הוא בעצמו. בודאי לגבי צערן של ישראל היתה זו הצלה פורתא ואין בזה כלל הקלת צער הרבים; אבל כוונתו להיות נושא בעול עמהם. הרי הדרך להיות נושא בעול עם אחרים הוא לעשות מעשים שיש בהם נשיאה בעול.

- 4) The Chofetz Chaim, in his work, *Nidchei Yisrael*, stresses the importance of looking after the spiritual wellbeing of people who lack Torah knowledge, gathering them together to teach them Torah. The Chofetz Chaim writes that this creates a great Kiddush Hashem, magnifies Hashem's honor in the world, breathes life into the "dry bones" starving for Torah and brings them into *Olam Habboh*. Rav Chaim Mintz (Ref. 29) cites this as an example of being *Nosei B'ol* – feeling for the spiritual hunger of people who were not fortunate enough to have a Torah education. If we truly believe in the unity of one collective Jewish soul, the spiritual pain of a Jew who hungers for Torah should cause each of us pain and therefore, motivate us to do our utmost to facilitate their Torah learning.

E) "Tuning-in" to other people; neutralizing the impediments to being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

- 1) Mrs. Tamar Shames (Ref. 62), a special education teacher, elegantly explains the role of interacting empathically to intervene and attain positive outcomes with children with chronically challenging behaviors. Often, these children are conditioned to thinking that, "adults won't bother listening to me; my opinion does not matter."

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However, when the children see people taking the time to try to understand them and realize that, "*someone actually hears me, s/he gets me,*" they can take the necessary steps toward positive change, because, "*I matter.*" Mrs. Shames explains this theme is one of the premises of Collaborative Problem Solving, a model successfully used to modulate challenging behaviors, and in fact, points out several Torah sources for this very concept.

- 2) It is a magnificent act of *Chesed* to show the people who are talking to us that we are authentically "tuned-in" to them, internalizing their "story," i.e., both the details as well as the emotions they are trying to convey. What can we do to give a proper reception to the person who needs our attention? One tool which Mrs. Shames "borrowed" from her special education work, is: After the person has completed his or her "story", we can briefly reiterate what we believe he or she has told us, e.g., "*It sounds like your co-worker is very difficult to work with etc.*" This reassures the other person that he or she has been heard.
- 3) What are some impediments to being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* ?
 - (a) A common misconception is assuming that whatever "minimal" help I can offer will be too trivial to alleviate the suffering of a person who is struggling. Rav Friedlander (Ref. 18) advises us that the relief provided by being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with someone who is struggling far exceeds the level of practical help we can provide. Even our seemingly insignificant help will strengthen the person's spirits when he sees our earnest desire to share in his distress. The huge benefit of relieving the sense of isolation which often haunts people in crisis, is much greater than the tangible assistance we can offer. The fact that the person no longer feels alone in his suffering, provides great emotional support. Furthermore, the Sabba of Kelm (Ref. 58) makes an astounding observation: The selection of Rivka as a wife for Yitzchak Avinu by Eliezer was precisely due to her desire to extend even "minimal" *Nesiah B'ol*. Rivka watered Eliezer's camels because she wanted to spare his servants the trouble, even though the effort needed by ten strong servants would have been trivial. Yet, it was only because of this "minimal" *Nesiah B'ol*, that Rivka merited to become Avrohom Avinu's daughter-in-law, Yitzchak's wife and Matriarch of *Klal Yisrael*. Had Rivka discounted the importance of such "trivial" *Nesiah B'ol*, her destiny as the Matriarch of the Jewish nation would have been lost forever. Look, says the Sabba, how much eternal reward arises from diligently seizing life's "minimal" *Nosei B'ol* opportunities. Conversely, how great is the loss when these "trivial" nuggets of eternity are squandered.
 - (b) Another impediment is the misgiving, "*I can't approach someone in distress because I won't know what to say.*" The rebuttal to this misgiving was discussed in Section X-A-3, p. 84.
- 4) Some suggestions to help us "tune-in" to people who express their thoughts and feelings to us:
 - (a) When people talk to us, resist the urge to formulate a response in our minds or to judge their thoughts or feelings. Simply focus on internalizing the person's message and feelings, free of distractions. Maintain eye contact, avoid glancing at distracting sights. Perhaps there is no greater "turn off" to someone trying to unburden his soul than seeing the other person repeatedly glancing at his cell phone.
 - (b) Briefly summarize the thoughts and feelings that the person has conveyed (see paragraph #2 above).
 - (c) Greeting someone with a bright smile demonstrates that I am truly happy to give the person my attention and I am genuinely interested in hearing what he or she has to say. Saying, "*It's good to see you,*" really picks up people's spirits by showing we are happy they are in the world!

DEVELOPING AND EXPRESSING THE *MIDDAH* OF *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO*

(Summary: Strategies and practical solutions)

- ❖ The wise counsel of the Sabba of Kelm, i.e., visualizing another person's situation, is applicable to each of us, to enable us to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. The following are two suggestions for implementing the Sabba's advice:
 - When approached by an *Meshulach* (charity collector), imagine ourselves thousands of miles from home, knocking on door after door to raise money for our family's needs. How would we want to be greeted and treated? Then, do the same for the *Meshulach*.
 - When lighting candles on Erev Shabbos, think about people whose pain of loneliness is especially poignant on Shabbos, such as childless couples, singles, widows, orphans, divorcees and their children, and plead for Hashem's mercy to remove their sadness and to imbue their Shabbos experience with joy.
- ❖ Praying on behalf of people in need is the ideal opportunity for developing the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. Sefer Chassidim states: "The reason that some people's prayers go unanswered is because they do not take the suffering and humiliation of others to their heart." The effectiveness of our prayers is directly proportional to the degree we experience the pain of others as our own (Rav Matisyahu).
- ❖ We are *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem's pain when we pray that His Glory be magnified at the time of our redemption. Rebbe Levi Yitzchak advises to contemplate how much "*Nachas*" Hashem derived from our service in the *Beis HaMikdash* and how much pain He currently endures because of our inability to give Him such "*Nachas*". When praying for the redemption, ponder Hashem's "homelessness" during our exile, and His yearning for His children to reunite with Him in His beloved home.
- ❖ When we respond, "יִהְיֶה שְׂמֵחַ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ", in the Kaddish, if we consciously yearn for the glory of Hashem's Name to be magnified at the time of the redemption, we are *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem.
- ❖ Concrete actions to help someone in need, even if they feel forced initially, will foster authentic feelings of *Nesiah B'ol*. Our emotions are molded by our actions (the Chazon Ish). Try to "sacrifice" a few seconds every day by cheerfully greeting or thanking people who have menial, thankless jobs, to let them know their work is appreciated and their contribution to the world is recognized.
- ❖ When a person sees that we are "tuned-in" to him or her, i.e., someone genuinely want to hear his or her thoughts and feelings, the person realizes: "*I matter, someone 'gets' me.*" It is perhaps the greatest *Chesed* we can do for someone in distress. Listen attentively and perhaps summarize their comments afterwards, to let them know that they truly have been "heard".

XII. The Jewish nation's responsibility to be *Nosei B'ol* with all mankind

- 1) We are assuming that the term, *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, as described in Pirkei Avos, refers specifically to the empathy we must have for our fellow Jews, rather than for all mankind. Nonetheless, we may not absolve ourselves from feeling and expressing *Nesiah B'ol* towards everyone including non-Jews, even if that level of empathy does not reach the ultrahigh bar of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* toward fellow Jews. The Midrash states that G-d rewarded Avrohom Avinu for his outstanding efforts in attempting to save the Sodomites from destruction: *"You love to find virtue for My creations and you are loath to condemn them. There were ten generations from Noah to you; yet, from of all of them, I spoke to you alone,"* (Source IX-7, p. 80). Despite the fact that the wicked Sodomites were completely unworthy of any sympathy, Rav Chatzkel states: *"G-d spoke to him (Avrohom Avinu), not because of his great Emunah or piety, but rather, in the merit of his middah of Nosei B'ol on behalf of the Sodomites"* (Source IX-6, p. 79).
- 2) In May 22, 1960, Chile was struck by the most powerful earthquake ever recorded (the "1960 Valdivia earthquake"). This catastrophe left approximately two million people homeless and untold thousands injured and dead across three continents. During a *mussar* address following the earthquake, Rav Chatzkel reprimanded his students for failing to be *Nosei B'ol* with those who were devastated by this disaster and for not feeling sorrow for their unimaginable suffering (*see Appendix A, pp. 112-113, for excerpts from Rav Chatzkel's address*):
"We are obligated to feel the pain of the nations of the world. If we have a Torah obligation to care about the pain of animals, how much more so we must feel the pain of people who are created in the Tzelem Elokim. [The root of our failure to feel the pain of the earthquake victims] is also the reason we fail to be Nosei B'ol with patients in agony from severe illnesses, who we observe whenever we visit the hospital. We [leave the hospital and] return home in complete tranquility and serenity. [Our inability to share in the pain of ill people as well as the victims of the earthquake] is due to our rejoicing in other people's misfortunes."
- 3) Rejoicing in another person's misfortune is a character flaw that is severely condemned by Chazal. Yet, Rav Chatzkel did not hesitate to call out his students, characterizing their failure to feel the pain of the victims of the Valdivia earthquake, as "rejoicing in another's misfortune." It is impossible for us to adequately capture Rav Chatzkel's anguish and sorrow for the desperate suffering of the earthquake victims, or his disappointment over the failure of his students to respond similarly. Nonetheless, merely reading the words of this great Tzaddik should arouse us to improve our ways, as the Chazon Ish said about him, *"Rav Yechezkel has a pure heart. The words emanating from his heart will certainly penetrate the hearts of his listeners."* Rav Chatzkel points out that Rabbeinu Yonah in Sharei Teshuva uses an identical phrase regarding two negative *middos*: "אכזריות" (cruelty or apathy) and "שנאה" (hatred). In both cases, Sharei Teshuva states, *"we have been admonished to remove the middah of אכזריות or שנאה,"* rather than, *"we have been admonished not to acquire the middah of אכזריות or שנאה."* Rav Chatzkel explains that Rabbeinu Yonah is telling us that these negative traits are innate, lying dormant within us, just awaiting the opportunity to rise to the surface and influence our behavior, unless we consciously exert much effort to overcome and uproot them. Thus, if we are apathetic to the suffering of non-Jews, excusing ourselves, *"oh well, they are just Goyim,"* this attitude is simply an expression of our *middah* of אכזריות and/or שנאה. With these *middos* operating unchecked within us, there is no hope of us attaining *Ahavas Yisrael* (love of

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Jews) or *Ahavas Hashem* (love of G-d), because negative *middos* have a “ripple effect”, eroding our entire moral character including our behavior toward fellow Jews and our relationship with Hashem. How we should shudder any time we are inclined to brush off a calamity we hear on the news simply because the victims are non-Jews. How unbecoming this behavior is for the children of Avrohom, Yitzchak and Yaakov, merciful ones, children of merciful ones.

- 4) On May 23, 1960, Israel announced to the world that Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann, *yemach shemo* (may his name be blotted out), had been apprehended and would stand trial. This news caused a considerable stirring of emotions within Israel, including a sense of relief and jubilation that finally one of the Nazi murderers would have to pay for his atrocities and barbarism. In the above Mussar address, Rav Chatzkel pointed out that while we have an obligation to carry out the Torah's justice, it antithetical to the Torah's outlook to gloat over Eichmann's capture or rejoice at the suffering of (even) such a thoroughly wicked person. In fact, because of the proximity in the timing of these two cataclysmic events, Eichmann's capture and the catastrophic Valdivia earthquake, Rav Chatzkel contrasted the reaction of the religious community to both events:

“If murder was so terrible in our eyes, how incongruent it is that the earthquake, which killed many thousands, has no effect at all on us and it occupies no room in our thoughts?! ... We are obligated to feel the pain of all the victims swept away by the catastrophic earthquake and to feel the terror of those who live in that area ...

If these principles would be evident to us, we certainly would not be so enamored with this murderer's capture. Rather, we would be far more aroused by the recent earthquake; we would perceive the punishment which Hashem brought to teach us ... that nothing in the world is by happenstance. All events [are directed by Heaven] for us to take heed and learn ... If only our hearts were imbued with love of mankind, we would be alarmed and aroused by this catastrophe; we would perceive and feel Heaven's punishment [warning to us to repent]. Thus, endeavoring to perfect our middos is the path to awakening and strengthening ourselves in Emunah (faith).”

- 5) It is worthwhile to record a few vignettes of Tzaddikim who demonstrated remarkable sensitivity and pain over the suffering of non-Jews. Rav Yeruchem mentions that when the Sabba of Kelm saw non-Jews traveling long distances to their houses of worship, he felt unbearable sorrow for them, imagining their great disappointment when would they leave this world and realize all their toil was for naught (Ref. 72). When the Ponovezher Rov, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, returned from a fund-raising trip in South Africa, he visited the Chofetz Chaim and reported his observations. The Chofetz Chaim expressed his concern and pain over the appalling living conditions that the black population in South Africa were subjected to at that time. Rav Yaacov Haber recounts that after the devastating tsunami of 2004, Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl, former chief rabbi of the Old City of Jerusalem who was nearly 70 years old at the time, packed his bags intending to travel to the disaster site to personally participate in offering humanitarian aid. It was only with great effort that his family managed to dissuade him from undertaking this very strenuous trip. We cannot turn the “empathy button” on and off at will. To reach the exalted level of being a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* toward our fellow Jews, we must also demonstrate significant empathy to non-Jews as well. To do otherwise, is to turn our backs on the great heritage that Avrohom Avinu bequeathed to us, as stated in Bereishis 18:19: *“למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו ושמרו דרך ה' לעשות צדקה ומשפט”* - *“For he commands his children and his household after him that they keep the way of Hashem, acting with righteousness and justness.”*

Section XIII: Stories of awesome *Nesiah B'ol* demonstrated by great Torah scholars

XIII. Stories of awesome *Nesiah B'ol* demonstrated by great Torah scholars

Our actions of *Nesiah B'ol* need not be performed in the presence of the person in need. Moreover, his or her knowledge of our actions is not required to be considered *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. Numerous stories of great Torah scholars and Tzaddikim illustrate this point (in addition to the stories recorded in the earlier sections):

During World War I, the saintly Chofetz Chaim, zt"l, could not rest. He grieved constantly for the suffering endured by *Klal Yisrael* throughout Europe. He was well into his eighties when his wife woke up in the middle of the night and noticed that her saintly husband was not in his bed. She rose quickly to see if he was feeling well, and found him lying on the cold, hard floor, with his hands bent under his head in place of a pillow. Seeing her elderly husband in such a position frightened her, so he explained his actions: "I was lying so comfortably in my warm bed, and then I began to think of all my fellow Jews who have been forced from their homes by the advancing armies and have no warm bed to sleep in. *How can I sleep in my bed while others sleep on the cold, hard floors? I too will do the same. So, I arose and lay on the floor, as well*" (Ref. 73). In a slightly different version, the Chofetz Chaim explained that at a time when Jewish soldiers were struggling, fighting for their lives in bunkers and foxholes, grappling with the bitter cold in the winter and the unbearable heat in the summer, he just could not permit himself to sleep in a bed. Similarly, when Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, zt"l, was the Rav of Brisk, half the city burned down leaving hundreds of Jews homeless. Rav Chaim promptly moved out of his home and slept on a hard bench in a Beis Medrash, exclaiming. "How can I sleep in a comfortable bed when so many people do not have a roof covering them?!"

Another example of profound *Nesiah B'ol* involves Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer (the father-in-law of Rav Aharon Kotler). His grandson, Rav Shneur Kotler, who was engaged to be married, escaped the horrors of Europe during World War II while staying with Rav and Rebbitzin Meltzer in Israel (Palestine). His future Rebbitzin had escaped to Shanghai. Needless to say, the grandparents became very close to Rav Shneur. After the war, when it was time to say goodbye to Rav Shneur who was leaving for America to be married, Rav Meltzer escorted him down from their fourth-floor apartment. Halfway down, Rav Meltzer stopped on the stairs, blessed his grandson, wished him "Mazel Tov" and went back up to his apartment. People who saw this were astounded – why didn't the Rav accompany his grandson down to the taxi waiting in the street? Rav Meltzer explained, "Do you know how many people in this building would do anything to have a child, let alone a grandchild, who survived the war? Do you know how hard it would be for the woman across the street looking out the window, who lost her entire family? *How could I go down to the street and embrace my grandchild, flaunting my joy publicly, when these people can't do the same?!*" (Ref. 28 & 74).

During Israel's Six Day War in 1967, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein demanded that his students "visualize" the suffering of the Chayalim through vivid imagery: "*We must project ourselves into their dire state, 'picturing' them in our mind as they are assailed in the foxholes in the cold and heat, while the peril of death hovers overhead ... we dare not remain apathetic*" (Ref. 75). As the war began, he told his *talmidim*, "In a time of war we must feel the danger of our soldiers. The loss of one Jewish soldier, even when measured against the destruction of thousands of our enemies, is incalculable. And for every soldier who arrives home from battle alive our joy must be unbounded." After the victory he exhorted his *talmidim* to identify with the people who lost family in the conflict: "Hand-in-hand with our victory another reality was created; thousands of Jewish lives have been lost. How many thousands of families are bereft with a pain that is so great that it cannot now be consoled? How many dear ones have been killed? How much this must

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weigh upon every Jewish soul. *How much must we feel their pain - actually feel it as our own. More than our rejoicing over our enemies we must feel the pain of our grieving brothers and sisters*" (Ref. 12, pp. 343-344).

Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz wept and spoke every Yom Kippur about the need to empathize with the dangers that the IDF soldiers face on a daily basis. He stated that we all owe a tremendous debt of *Hakaras Hatov* (gratitude) to the IDF soldiers (Ref. 76). Once, when told of the loss of a IDF soldier's life, Rav Shmuelevitz cried, paused, cried again, paused and cried again. He explained, *"First I cried for his life cut so short, then I thought of his mother's pain, and then, his father's pain"* (Ref. 77). While studying at the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem, Rav Chaim Walkin recalled the following event about his Rosh HaYeshiva, Rav Shmuelevitz: "During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, he entered the Beis HaMidrash and asked: 'Young men, did you sleep last night? Are you sleeping well at night? Do you know how many mothers are not sleeping at night because their sons are at the battlefield? How can you sleep peacefully? *Where is the sharing in the pain of another person? Where is the Nosei B'ol?'*" (Ref. 78).

The following story about the amazing *Nesiah B'ol* of Rav Moshe Feinstein was written by Rabbi Chaim Walder (Ref. 79). As a Rosh Yeshiva of great renown, many families sought to honor Rav Moshe to officiate at their children's weddings. Consequently, it was not infrequent for Rav Moshe to officiate at two or more weddings in one night. On one such evening, after officiating at the first Chuppah ceremony, Rav Moshe and his assistant who would drive him to the next wedding, made their way to the elevators to exit the hall. Many men crowded around them to hear a good word from the smiling Rav or just shake his hand. Rav Moshe, always amiable and warmhearted, displayed no sign of impatience, but his assistant nonetheless quickly ushered the Rav into the elevator. The elevator doors closed while the crowd strained to catch a final glimpse of the humble Rav. To the utter astonishment of his assistant, when the elevator reached the main floor, Rav Moshe said, "We need to return to the wedding hall." The two men went back upstairs where Rav Moshe quickly strode into the hall and looked intently from side until side until a hint of recognition registered on his face. He made his way straight to one of the tables, approached one of the guests, and with a wide smile, exclaimed a hearty "Shalom Aleichem" to him. Rav Moshe then asked the ecstatically surprised guest, "And, how are you?", happily exchanging pleasantries with him for several minutes, never letting on that he needed to be in the car ten minutes ago! After his parting good wishes, Rav Moshe left with his assistant into the night to do it all over at the next wedding. The flabbergasted assistant could not help but wonder what urgent business required Rav Moshe to return to the hall after he had already left. The driver surmised, "I assume the Rosh Yeshiva was close to this gentleman and he had to go back to see him." "Actually," replied Rav Moshe, "I never saw him before tonight. When we stepped into the elevator to leave the first time, I saw his face in the crowd surrounding us. He was trying to shake my hand and offer a greeting, but the doors closed before I could respond. As we rode down the elevator, I could not help thinking how disappointed he was after getting caught in the crowd, trying with no avail to get my response. *How could I leave the wedding hall without returning his greeting and exchanging a few good words with him?!*" One must consider the utter sacrifice Rav Moshe made to officiate at so many weddings, when he had so many pressing worldwide Jewish problems, complex Halachic inquiries as well his own yeshiva's needs, all of which awaited his return from the final wedding of the night several hours later. In addition, he had to forego so much time from his beloved Torah study to bring joy to thousands of brides and grooms who would never forget the day this Torah giant led them through their nuptials. With all this pressing on his mind as the elevator doors are about to close, Rav Moshe suddenly sees one Jew who is trying to exchange a "Shalom Aleichem" with him. His immediate reaction? "We are going back upstairs, because I can't bear the thought of one Jew who I never met

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before, suffering disappointment!" Rav Moshe was happy to put aside all the pressure on his shoulders, just to give his undivided attention with a shining, smiling countenance, to a Jewish person he never met before.

The following story regarding Rav Elazar Shach, zt"l, the Rosh HaYeshiva of the Ponovezh Yeshiva, was written by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen (Ref. 80). Rav Shach was once informed that a particular Jew who had lost his wife was plunged into a deep depression. In his grief he ceased to eat, speak or function. Rav Shach immediately went to visit him but there was no response when he knocked on the door. Seeing that the door was not locked he went inside and took a seat next to the couch upon which the poor fellow lay. Placing his hand on the fellow's shoulder he said to him:

"I understand you so well. I too am a widower and I also felt as if my world had come to an end. We share the same grief, for whoever is without a wife, our Sages say, is without simcha. You need simcha and I need simcha." A spark of life was suddenly visible in the eyes of the listener and Rav Shach continued: "I have an idea of how we can help each other. I know how to prepare a good cholent for the Shabbos meal. I will prepare such a cholent on Erev Shabbos and send it to you here. On Shabbos I will come to your home. We will eat together, sing *zemiros* together and give strength to each other." For the first time a smile came to the lips of his listener who gently protested that there was no way for him to thus impose on the Rosh Hayeshiva. "If so," concluded Rav Shach as he departed, "please think of some other plan. In any case I will visit you again tomorrow because I gain strength from being together with you."

Rav Chaim Stein, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva, often spoke publicly about the plight of young women having trouble finding a *shidduch*. Incredibly, he even invoked these women's anguish during his heartrending eulogy for his own son, Rav Sholom Refoel Yehuda Stein, zt"l, who passed away at a relatively young age. During his eulogy, the Rosh Yeshiva leaned over his son's *aron* (casket) and spoke to him in almost a whisper: "My dear Sholom Rephoel Yehuda, don't forget your widow, don't forget your mother and your daughter and the entire family. Don't forget *alleh Yiddishe techter* (all of the Jewish daughters) who need to find their *zivugim* (marriage match). Go to the *Kisei Hakavod* (Divine Throne of Glory) and say '*kra roah gezar dineinu*' – 'tear up the harsh decree.'" Rav Chaim repeated this last plea three times before he stepped down from his eulogy (Rabbi Avrohom Birnbaum; Ref. 81).

The following story about the sterling character of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, zt"l, was told by Rabbi Michael Taubes (Ref. 82). At the time of the Six Day War in 1967, a rally was held in Washington, DC, to encourage US support for Israel. Several busses went from Yeshiva University (YU) with students and faculty members, including Rav Aharon on board. When the busses returned to YU, it was very late at night. A student offered to walk Rav Aharon home (who lived several blocks from YU at that time). The people quickly filed off and this student found himself waiting on the sidewalk for Rav Aharon whom he did not see anywhere. Assuming that Rav Aharon must have somehow gotten off the bus unnoticed and walked home by himself, the student was about to leave when he decided to go back onto the bus just to check one more time. And there indeed he found Rav Aharon helping the bus driver collect all the bags, wrappers, cans, and bottles which the students had left on the bus, explaining that the driver too wanted to get home and there is no reason that he should have to be delayed because people had left garbage behind.

May the merit of these great *Tzaddikim* help us follow in their ways to attain great heights in *Ahavas Yisrael* and in the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*.

Conclusion

Conclusion: We are NOT powerless; our *Nesiah B'ol* saves the day for our brethren in need!

(See the table on pp. 110-111, summarizing the major points in this presentation).

The entire thesis of *Sefer Tomer Devorah* is: “It is proper for a person to resemble his Creator,” so that our existence of “*b’Tzelem Elokim*” (in the Divine image) will reflect the goodness of our Creator and bring honor to Him. The “human equivalent” of the fourth Divine *middah*, “לשאריית נחלתו” (Hashem’s empathy due to His intimate kinship with us), is *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, which is defined by Rav Yeruchem as feeling our friend’s burden and pain as if it were our own, being together with him or her in a time of need. Rav Wolbe states that *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* is the underlying fundamental *middah* which promotes optimal fulfillment of all interpersonal Mitzvos, i.e., I am inspired to help my fellow Jew because I identify with his or her distress (Ref. 9). When *Chesed* is done with a spirit of *Nesiah B’ol*, the recipient is not left feeling as a charity “basket case,” but rather, as part of a larger collective entity, whereby one limb helps another limb of the same body – as if my right hand bandages my left hand. *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* might, therefore, be characterized as the “gateway *middah*” – by integrating this *middah* into our personality, we will fulfill the interpersonal Mitzvos in the optimal manner, just as the Mitzvah, “ואהבת לרעך כמוך” (*love your fellow as yourself*) is the “כלל גדול בתורה” (the overarching principle) which encompasses many interpersonal Mitzvos (*Sefer HaChinuch*, Source VII-12, p. 67). A profound insight by Mrs. Rivka Yudin (Ref. 57) is that all positive *middos* are much more attainable when a person is a *Nosei B’ol*. Take, for example, the *middah* of *savlanus* (patience). When we encounter people with annoying behaviors such as “cutting” ahead of us in the supermarket, if we take the time to imagine the stressful day the person might have gone through, it will facilitate maintaining a more patient and relaxed state of mind.

Perhaps this can help us understand Rav Yeruchem’s declaration that the overarching goal of the entire Torah, both the study of Torah and performance of Mitzvos, is “איחוד הנפשות” – uniting all Jewish souls into one collective soul (which the Midrash describes as: “נפש אחת”), to the extent that we feel each other’s joy and pain (Source III-7, p. 35). Why is this goal of the entire Torah? When we are *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, we intensify the unity (*Achdus*) of the Jewish people i.e., our “נפש אחת” status is magnified. We, thereby create a desirable abode for the Shechinah to dwell among us and fortify Hashem’s throne, increasing the Heavenly glory in the world. Our increased unity (*Achdus*) strengthens our state of “כאיש אחד בלב אחד” – “as one person with one heart,” which is so vital for receiving the Torah (*Mattan Torah*). In addition, our “נפש אחת” status is the basis for: (1) the merit of one Jew’s positive behavior benefitting and protecting his fellow Jews; and (2) the spiritual elevation of one Jew (i.e., devotion in any aspect of serving Hashem) positively influencing his brethren, inspiring them to follow suit (Rav Dovid Goldberg, Ref. 30). All these blessings come to fruition because of the *Nesiah B’ol* of one Jew for another which fosters unity among us. Perhaps this helps us understand Rav Yeruchem’s profound statement: “This is the foundation of the entire Torah – to be *Nosei B’ol*.”

The Ramak writes in *Tomer Devorah*, “Precisely as he behaves [in the earthly world], so too, he influences [the flow from] Above, causing that same *middah* to shine in the world” (Source VIII-1, p. 69). Accordingly, Rav Matisyahu writes that Hashem is waiting for us take the first step, i.e., to be *Nosei B’ol* with each other in order to activate the flow of His supernal *middah*, “לשאריית נחלתו” toward us, with which He will redeem us from our exile (Section VIII-B, pp. 69-70). Just as Hashem redeemed the Jews from Egypt when they displayed *Nesiah B’ol* toward each other, He is currently waiting for us to be *Nosei B’ol* with each other to arouse His *middah* of “לשאריית נחלתו”, with which He will redeem us.

Conclusion

We often feel helpless in the face of the immense suffering that surrounds us. We see parents with desperately ill children, adolescents barely hanging on the fringe, couples struggling with infertility etc. After all, what can we do to relieve their anguish? Our sense of futility often causes us to retreat and hide from them. Consequently, they are sadly left to suffer all alone, compounding their anguish.

Mrs. Rivka Yudin (Ref. 57) explains that the antidote to “אין לי מכיר” (*no one “gets” me, no one cares about me*), is being *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*. We cannot be apathetic to the suffering of our fellow Jews all around us. In times of distress, their need to feel cared for, to be heard and to know that we identify with them, is more urgent than ever. However, we still feel powerless. Empathy is wonderful, but what am I doing to remove their suffering? Rabbi Yechiel Spero (Ref. 59) explains that people who are overcome by personal crisis or grief often describe a feeling of an impossibly heavy stone weighing on their heart, unable to remove this unbearable weight. It requires another person to lift the crushing stone off them, by listening to them, truly hearing and empathizing with them. Rabbi Spero explains, every time we lift this unbearable weight from the heart of another Jew, we lay the foundation for the *Bayis Shlishi* (the third Beis HaMikdash). Although we may think that we are just holding someone’s hand, listening to him or her cry, we are accomplishing so much more. In fact, with these very actions, we help remove the pain of a person in distress and we reverse the pain of the *Churban* (destruction) of the Beis HaMikdash by laying the foundation for its rebuilding.

Rabbi Spero points out an astounding observation: **One of the greatest *Nosei B’ol* personalities in Jewish history was Rochel Immeinu** (our Matriarch, Rachel)! How so? Rochel gave the “signs” to her sister Leah to enable her to marry Yaakov, and to spare her the shame of being discovered as an imposter! Rav Elya Lopian points out that although Yaakov understood Lavan’s designs to deceive him, he could never imagine anyone, even Rochel Immeinu, was capable of such *Mesiras Nefesh* to give away her privilege to be the Matriarch of the twelve tribes. However, asks Rav Ephraim Wachsmann, although Rochel did an amazing kindness for her sister, how was she allowed to hurt Yaakov by being a party to this deceit? Rav Wachsmann answers, **Rochel visualized Leah’s pain and shame** when she would be unable to answer Yaakov’s query about the “signs”. Rochel said, **“I cannot bear my sister’s pain and shame**. Although deceiving Yaakov may be wrong, I simply cannot take my sister’s pain.” Accordingly, says Rabbi Spero, perhaps this explains the Midrash (Eichah Rabbah, Pesichta) describing the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. The Patriarchs and Moshe Rabbeinu pleaded *Bnei Yisrael’s* case before G-d, but He responded: “Your children have sinned; I can’t help you.” Then, Rochel Immeinu “jumped” before G-d: “Maybe *Klal Yisrael* does not deserve mercy,” argued Rochel, “but how can You bear the pain of Your children’s suffering? Look how I pushed aside my own wishes and needs because I could not bear my sister’s pain.” Thereupon, G-d’s mercy was aroused and He responded to Rochel, **“For your sake, I will return Israel to their home.”** All because of the merit of Rochel’s *Nesiah B’ol* - her visualization of Leah’s pain – this merit alone saved the day for the Jewish people! We mistakenly believe our efforts to help people in distress are futile. However, we learn from our Mamma Rochel that the merit of *Nesiah B’ol* alone, through visualizing another person’s suffering, elicits Hashem’s mercy and salvation even when all other avenues of hope appear lost.

A man once came to the holy Chassidic master, Rebbe Yitzchak Vorker, and cried, “My child is so sick and is in danger of dying! Rebbe, please pray for my son to get well.” The Vorker Rebbe sat very still. He closed his eyes and swayed back and forth for a while. Then he looked at the *Yiddele*, the simple Jew, and said sadly, “I’m so sorry to tell you, but all the gates of Heaven are closed so tightly there’s nothing I can do to open them.” The father despondently climbed back on his wagon and started out on his way back home, sobbing the whole time. He had been traveling for some time when

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suddenly he heard a wagon chasing him. He turned around. It was the holy Vorker himself! The Rebbe pulled up beside the *Yiddele*. Both men alighted from their wagons and sat together by the side of the road. "After you left," the Rebbe went on, "I couldn't stop thinking about you and your son. Your sad plight broke my heart. Then I realized ... I may not be able to help your son, but at least I can cry with you." And the Rebbe put his arm around the *Yiddele*, bowed his holy head, and began to sob from the deepest depths of his heart. The two men sat crying together for a long time. Suddenly the Rebbe lifted his head, wiped away his tears, and he smiled. The man turned to the Rebbe and asked, "What is it?" The Rebbe said, "Something amazing has just happened ... the gates in Heaven have suddenly opened!" (Ref. 83). Indeed, we are certainly NOT powerless or helpless. When we share the pain of another Jew, this itself has the power to change his or her fate in a most positive manner (see Section VIII, pp. 69-73). When we are *Nosei B'ol* with a fellow Jew, G-d's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" becomes aroused. Consequently, suddenly a hopeless situation has a complete turnabout for the better. Our *Nesiah B'ol* helps to deliver great salvations!

The *Rosh* (רא"ש; Source IX-8b, p. 81) explains that Tefilla which emerges from an anguished heart which identifies with another person's distress, can create an "עת רצון" (time of favor) for our prayers to elicit Hashem's mercy on behalf of our fellow Jews. By projecting *Nesiah B'ol* into prayer, feeling the pain of people in need, a window is created in the gates of Heaven for our prayers to penetrate and change Hashem's decree to deliver salvation for people in darkness and pain. These thoughts are described powerfully by Rav Yeruchem: "*Tefillah is defined by the degree that we share another's pain ... when the pain and anguish [for my friend's pain] is too great to be contained in one's heart, it pours forth in prayer. This is the secret of Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*" (Source IX-4, pp. 76-77). As we learn from the awesome story of Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz (during the Entebbe hostage crisis; Section IX-F-2, p. 82), when our prayers on behalf of a fellow Jew in distress emerge from a heart of shared anguish, the opportunities for salvation are endless.

Several years ago, the Mishpacha magazine published a letter by a woman struggling with the anguish of infertility. In her letter, *Mrs. R.* explains that although her pain recedes to the background during the busy week, her anguish roils to the surface on Shabbos when everything that she and her husband yearn for and miss, is most starkly felt. She implored the magazine's readers: "*Don't pity us, do something for us, Daven for us*" (Ref. 84). I suggest a very attainable goal – dedicating two minutes after lighting candles before Shabbos, to reflect on the anguish of people who lack the basic happiness that we take for granted when we celebrate Shabbos with our families, and then channel our feelings of *Nesiah B'ol* into heartfelt Tefilla on their behalf. As Shabbos is about to enter, let us think about the plight of people whose hearts are filled with anguish, whose loneliness is felt most keenly on Shabbos, such as desperately ill children and their parents, childless couples, adolescents who are struggling in the darkest of places, singles who need a *shidduch*, widows, orphans, Agunot, children of divorced homes, etc. **Let us sanctify these two minutes to create an "עת רצון" during which we implore Hashem to have mercy on them** and fill their lives with the happiness they desperately crave, so that their Shabbos experience will be as happy and radiant as ours.

May it be Hashem's will that we will merit to truly be *Nosei B'ol* with each other, to emulate His ways and to bring immense honor to His Name in the world. In this merit, may we soon witness the day when the pain of the Shechinah and *Klal Yisrael* will be replaced with jubilation on the day when Zion will be told, "*Your G-d has reigned.*"

Summary: The virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*: Definition, importance, and applications

<p>Being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>, means ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being together with someone in his or her distress or joy, sharing the person's feelings, as if we are living through same the situation that caused the distress or joy. • Immersing ourselves in the person's world, giving him or her "<i>a piece of our very being</i>" to feel what he or she is going through, even if we are unable to tangibly help them.
<p>Being <i>Nosei B'ol</i> carries the message ...</p>	<p><i>"I am with you in your distress or joy, living through it with you. I hear ("I get") you, I value your feelings and troubles - you matter. You are not alone in this journey."</i></p>
<p>Hashem's <i>middah</i> of "לשארית נחלתו" is ...</p>	<p>An expression of His intimate kinship with us. Hashem feels every pang of our anguish as His own and He rejoices in all our happiness.</p>
<p>When we are <i>Nosei B'ol</i>, we emulate ...</p>	<p>Hashem's <i>middah</i> of "לשארית נחלתו", thereby proclaiming the greatness of our Creator Who created us in His Divine image (<i>b'Tzelem Elokim</i>).</p>
<p>The basis for our ability to be <i>Nosei B'ol</i>, is ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hashem created us <i>b'Tzelem Elokim</i>, endowing us with the ability to emulate His Divine <i>middah</i> of "לשארית נחלתו", thereby transcending our natural human limitations. • The Jewish people are one unified entity ("נפש אחת"), akin to multiple organs of one body. Therefore, we are "spiritually wired" to share the feelings of our fellow Jew.
<p>From R' Akiva's wife, Rochel, we learn ...</p>	<p>Greatness in Torah is contingent on a person's virtue of <i>Nesiah B'ol</i>. This was the basis for her belief in him, even as a shepherd, that he could become the great R' Akiva.</p>
<p>3 reasons why being <i>Nosei B'ol</i> helps us acquire Torah:</p> <p>Because the virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens our existence as "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "<i>as one person with one heart,</i>" thereby earning us Divine assistance to learn and understand Torah. • Develops our aptitude to view situations through another's perspective. We, therefore, become receptive to different views in Torah, which broadens our horizons. • Enhances our concern for another's spiritual welfare. Therefore, we will naturally share our Torah knowledge with others, earning us Divine assistance to acquire Torah.
<p>Some positive effects of being <i>Nosei B'ol</i>:</p> <p>By developing this virtue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We strengthen our existence as one unified entity ("נפש אחת"), perfecting our coronation of Hashem, Whose kingdom becomes established when we are united. • We transform our interpersonal (בין אדם להבירו) Mitzvos from mechanical acts to a service of the heart. This is the virtue that defines all our interpersonal Mitzvos. • We cultivate an inner concern for Hashem's honor and a desire to sanctify His Name. • We activate the Heavenly flow of Hashem's <i>middah</i> of "לשארית נחלתו" toward us on a level proportional to our <i>Nesiah B'ol</i>. • We arouse Heavenly help for another person in pain. The degree of relief afforded to that person is proportional to the degree with which we feel his or her pain.

Summary: The virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*: Definition, importance and applications

<p>Nesiah B'ol in Tefillah (1):</p> <p>When we pray on behalf of a fellow Jew in pain ...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We beseech Hashem for relief from personal suffering <i>because our friend's pain is our suffering as well.</i> Imagine if our friend's distress would, ה"ו, befall us, how would we pray to Hashem? Pray with the same sense of urgency on behalf of the friend. • We also (implicitly) plead for the relief of the Shechinah's anguish since Hashem suffers along with anyone in pain. • Prayer which emerges from an anguished heart that identifies with someone in distress, can create an "עת רצון" (time of favor) for our prayers to be accepted, thereby saving the person from the distress. • The effectiveness of our prayers on behalf of others in need, is directly proportional to the degree we experience their pain as our own.
<p>Nesiah B'ol in Tefillah (2):</p> <p>Praying to end the pain of the Shechinah (Divine Presence):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are <i>Nosei B'ol</i> with Hashem when we express our yearning for His Name to be sanctified during our prayers. An application is when we respond, "יהא שמה רבא מברך", in the Kaddish, we should consciously yearn for the glory of Hashem's Name to be magnified at the time of the Redemption. • When praying for our ultimate redemption, ponder Hashem's suffering, His "wandering" without a home during our exile, and His longing for His children to reunite with Him in His beloved home. Taking a moment to reflect on Hashem's anguish, will enable us to recite these prayers with a true yearning for the day that this dream will come true.
<p>Suggestions for developing and expressing the virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Enter the world" of another person's feelings and thoughts, using mental imagery to visualize the person's distress and imagine ourselves being in his or her situation. • Reach out to people in their "prison" of loneliness: Greeting people with a smile and showing them that they truly matter to us, can give them the strength to persevere. • Listen in an attentive, non-judgmental manner. Resist the urge to formulate a response while people talk to us or to "judge" the "appropriateness" of their emotional distress. • "Sacrifice" a few seconds every day by cheerfully greeting or thanking people who have menial, thankless jobs, to let them know their work is appreciated and their contribution to the world is recognized. • When lighting candles on Erev Shabbos, take a moment to think about people whose pain of loneliness is especially poignant on Shabbos. Plead for Hashem's mercy that their pain will be removed, and that their Shabbos experiences will be filled with joy.

Rav Chatzkel's response to the Great Chilean earthquake (in Valdivia, Chile on May 22, 1960):

It behooves us to reflect upon the misfortunes and pain in the world. The (Chilean) earthquake has left thousands killed, injured and homeless with no roof overhead. Yet, this has left no impression upon us [we remain apathetic to their terrible suffering]. I do not see anyone talking about this. Why are we not thinking about the tremendous calamity that has befallen the residents of the impacted countries?

Rabbeinu Yonah writes, *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart. We have been admonished to remove the middah of hatred from our souls. This middah is the cause of many iniquities and leads to many corrupt practices ... such as evil gossip, seeking another's harm and rejoicing at another's misfortune."*

The reason that we are not aroused by the severe suffering and multiple tragedies that have befallen the world is because of our *middah* of rejoicing at another person's misfortunes; thus, we remain unmoved. We take pleasure and joy when we hear about other people's troubles; hence, we are incapable of feeling someone else's pain. Therefore, even this terrifying earthquake has no effect on us. We are too busy rejoicing at other people's misfortunes to be bothered when suffering comes to the world.

Let's take a look at what has captured our attention, versus what we are apathetic to. Now, they captured the murderer (Eichmann), may his name be blotted out. Everyone talks incessantly about it, we hear people remarking, *"We have merited to see 'To execute vengeance ...' against the murderer and 'Hashem is G-d of vengeance.'"* In truth, these comments are senseless; we are so far from the Torah's view. If murder was so terrible in our eyes, how incongruent it is that the earthquake, which killed many thousands, has no effect at all on us and it occupies no room in our thoughts?!

Moreover, our entire approach to this (i.e., gloating over the capture of Eichmann) is completely antithetical to the Torah's outlook. According to the Torah's approach, even when confronted with a thoroughly wicked person who violated the most severe transgressions such as murder, our response should not be absolute hatred. Our emotions should be dictated by defending the glory of Heaven, i.e., since he is a murderer and a *Rodef* (who pursues to kill), we are obligated to fulfill the Torah's laws (to eliminate evil and protect mankind). However, it is forbidden to desire and take pleasure over his blood; we may not rejoice over the suffering of a murderer.

[Rav Chatzkel returns to the earthquake tragedy]: The entire concept of *Tzelem Elokim* (man is created in the Divine image) has been lost from us. We fail to understand that a person's purpose is to be "מדיני",

אור יחזקאל, חלק מדות, מאמר "לעשות נקמה בגויים":
 ... היה עלינו להרגיש שיש רע ועונש וצער בעולם ... אלא
 עלינו היה לחשוב אודות הצרות הללו. לדוגמא, הרעידת אדמה
 שהיתה לאחרונה בחו"ל והותירה מאחוריה אלפי הרוגים
 ופצועים ואנשים ללא קורת גג מעל לראשם, לא השאירה בנו
 כל רושם, ואינני רואה שמדברים אודות זה ומדוע לא נחשוב על
 הרעות והעונשים הגדולים שבאו על תושבי המדינות הללו ...
 כתב הרבינו יונה (שערי תשובה ג': ל"ט) "לא תשנא את אחיך
 בלבבך" – "הוזהרנו בזה להסיר מנפשינו מדת השנאה. והיא
 מדה מעוללת פשעים רבים ומסבבת כמה עלילות נשחתות ...
 כמו לשון הרע ... דרישת רעה, והשמחה לאיד...".
 ומעתה כיון שנתבאר שיש באדם מדת השמחה לאיד, הלא פשוט
 שאינו מרגיש כלל בצרות הרעות והרבות שבאו לעולם ואינו
 מתעורר מכך, שבעת ששומע מהרע מתמלא שמחה ועונג ואינו
 יכול לחוש כלל בצער הזולת, ולכן אף הרעידת אדמה הנוראה
 אינה תופשת אותו, שהרי אינו מרגיש כלל שצרה באה לעולם
 כי עסוק בשמחתו למראה צער השני.
 ובואו ונראה מה תופש את אנשי העולם, ומה איננו מרגישים
 כלל. הגנה תפשו עתה את הרוצח ימ"ש (איכמאן שר"י) ... וע"ז
 מדברים הכל בלי הרף, ונשמעים בציבור דברים כי זכינו
 "לעשות נקמה" ברוצח ימ"ש "וקל נקמות ד". ובאמת אלו
 דברי הבל ורחוקים אנו מכל הבנות התורה, ולו באמת היה ענין
 הרציחה חמור בעינינו כל כך, ומדוע בענין רעידת האדמה
 שנהרגו בה אלפים רבים אינו תופש אותנו כלל, ואינו עולה
 במחשבתנו ענין זה ...
 וביותר יש להוסיף בזה שכל גישתנו לענין הנ"ל רחוקה מאוד
 מהשקפות התורה ... כי על פי דרכי התורה צריכה להיות
 ההסתכלות אף על הרשע הגמור ביותר, לא בשנאה גמורה
 מחמת שעבר עבירות חמורות כרציחה וכדומה, אלא רק משום
 כבוד שמים, שכיון שרצח ודינו כרודף חייבים לקיים בו דין
 תורה. אבל אסור לבקש ולרצות בדם הרוצח ואין לשמוח בצרת
 הרוצח.

ונשכתח מאתנו כל ענין צלם אלוקים, וכן איננו מבינים כי
 תכלית האדם להיות "מדיני"

i.e., to be concerned about and seek out the wellbeing of the entire world and all its creations, as the Gemara states regarding R' Yochanan ben Zakai - no one ever preempted his greetings to anyone, even a non-Jew in the street, because a person must be "מדיני". The Midrash states, "What is the difference between Jewish prophets and non-Jewish prophets? The Jewish prophets prophesized with the attribute of mercy toward Jews and non-Jews alike, as Yirmiyah said, "my heart moans for Moav like flutes" (because of his great anguish over the suffering of the non-Jews). Thus, HKB"H demands from us that we empathize with and have compassion for non-Jews as well. We are obligated to feel the pain of all the victims swept away by the catastrophic earthquake and to feel the terror of those who live in the affected areas.

If a prophet would have come and foretold that all catastrophes which befall the world are a punishment for our sins, we would have trembled from the Heavenly punishment. The reason our *Emunah* (faith) is not aroused by this, is because our thinking is enshrouded by feeling joy for other people's misfortunes, especially toward the nations of the world who we disparage, and we hope for their misfortune; their suffering brings joy to our heart. Therefore, we fail to see Hashem's judgment and the Heavenly punishment in this catastrophe. Our view is **NOT** the path of truth. Rather, **we are obligated to feel the pain of the nations of the world.** If we have a Torah obligation to care about the pain of animals, how much more so we must feel the pain of people who are created in the *Tzelem Elokim*. [The root of our failure to feel the pain of the earthquake victims] is also the reason we fail to be *Nosei B'ol* with patients in agony from severe illnesses, who we observe whenever we visit the hospital. We [leave the hospital and] return home in complete tranquility and serenity. [Our inability to share in the pain of ill people as well as the victims of the earthquake] is due to our rejoicing in other people's misfortunes. Consequently, we fail to see [that the earthquake] comes from Hashem's judgment [towards us].

If these principles would be evident to us, we certainly would not be so enamored with this murderer's capture. Rather, we would be far more aroused by the recent earthquake; we would perceive the punishment which Hashem brought to teach us ... that nothing in the world is by happenstance. All events [are directed by Heaven] for us to take heed and learn. Accordingly, the prophet states: "Is the Shofar ever sounded in the city and the people not tremble? Can there be misfortune in a city, if Hashem has not brought it?" If only our hearts were imbued with love of mankind, we would be alarmed and aroused by this catastrophe; we would perceive and feel Heaven's punishment [warning to us to repent]. Thus, endeavoring to perfect our *middos* is the path to awakening and strengthening ourselves in *Emunah* (faith).

הדיינו השואף ודואג לטובת כל העולם כולו וכל ברואיו, "אמרו עליו על ר' יוחנן בן זכאי, שלא הקדימו אדם שלום מעולם ואפ"י לנכרי בשוק" מחמת שהאדם צריך להיות "מדיני". ואיתא בחז"ל (במדבר רבה כ: א'): מה בין נביאי ישראל לנביאי אומות העולם וכו' שכל הנביאים היו במדת רחמים על ישראל ועל עובדי כוכבים, שכן מצינו ירמיה אומר (מ"ח: ל"ו): "לבי למואב כחלילים יהמה" [מחמת רוב צערו בצער הנכרים]. וזו תביעת הקב"ה מישראל להרגיש ולרחם אף על הגויים. ומעתה אף בענין הרעידת אדמה חייבים אנו לחוש בצערם של התושבים הנספים באסון, וכן בכל הפחד שיש לכל התושבים באותו מקום ...

לו היה בא נביא ומעיד מראש שכל העונשים שיבואו הם כעונש על חטאינו, הלא ודאי היינו מזדעזעים מענשי שמים ... הסיבה לאי ההתעוררות באמונה מכך, היא אשר הקדמנו שכיון שקרובים אנו להרגשות שמחה לאיד, וביותר כלפי אומות העולם שאנו מזלזלים בהם ושואפים רעתם, וצרותם משמח את לבבינו, ולכן איננו מרגישים כלל שמשפט ועונשי שמים יש בכך. ואין זה דרך האמת, חייבים אנו להרגיש בצערם של אומות העולם, שהיא אף צער בעלי חיים דאורייתא עאכו"כ צערם של הנבראים בצלם. וזו הסיבה כאשר אחד נכנס לבקר בבית חולים ורואה מאות אנשים הסובלים מחלות ויסורים קשים, ושב למקומו בשקט ושלווה ואינו נושא בעול עם הסובלים, כי השמחה לאיד סובבת אותו ולכן אינו משתתף בצערם ואינו רואה עונשי שמים ומשפט ד'.

לו היו יסודות אלו מחוורים לנו, ודאי שלא היינו להוטים כ"כ אחר ענין תפיסת הרוצה, והיינו ממוקדים ומתפעלים יותר מרעידת האדמה שהיתה לאחרונה, והיינו רואים בזה עונשי שמים שהקב"ה עשה כדי ללמדנו כינה ודעת ... כי אין כל דבר בבריאה שנעשה בסתמא והכל כדי שנלמד ונבין דרכי שמים. הנביא אומר (עמוס ג': ו'): "היתקע שופר בעיר והם לא יחרדו, אם תהיה רעה בעיר ודי לא עשה", כי זו כל הנקודה ללמד את עם ישראל. לו היה אהבת הבריות בלבנו היינו מתעוררים ומתפעלים מכל הנעשה, והיינו רואים ומרגישים עונשי שמים, נמצא שעבודת המדות היא דרך להתעוררות והתחזקות באמונה.

We must explain the concept of the *ma'alah* (virtue) of *Chesed*. Michah states, "What does Hashem require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with G-d." The words, "to love kindness," rather than to perform kindness, indicate that *Chesed* is not merely giving *Tzedaka* or doing a kind act for a friend. Rather, *Chesed* is a defining characteristic (*ma'alah*). When one is meritorious, his essence becomes transformed to a spiritual existence of *Chesed* [i.e., the *middah* of *Chesed* defines who he is, whereby his physical nature, (*Tevah*), no longer limits his capacity to bestow good. Rather, he has unlimited capacity to do good because the *middah* of *Chesed*, a Divine quality, has transformed his nature]. This is the meaning of a "Ba'al Chesed": His nature is transformed to an existence of *Chesed*. The phrase, "to love kindness," indicates that a person's very nature "demands" of himself to perform kindness. Just as a person's body demands that he eat and drink, similarly, the *Ba'al Chesed's* essence yearns to do *Chesed*. Until he performs *Chesed*, he feels famished and empty; his craving is only satisfied when he performs *Chesed*.

This phenomenon has a logical explanation: *Chesed* is one of Hashem's *middos*. G-d created the world only to deliver goodness to His creations, even though prior to Creation, no entity existed which needed His kindness. Thus, the very essence of Hashem's *middah* of *Chesed* is His inherent desire to bestow kindness on His creations – the very reason He created the world [rather than a response to an external need]. Similarly, a human *Ba'al Chesed* performs *Chesed* because of his internal drive to do good, without any extraneous factors. The driving force is that *Chesed* is one of Hashem's *middos*, [which he seeks to emulate]. One who acquires this *middah*, will merit to cleave to the splendor of the Shechinah. Since this person's *Chesed* is a derivative of Hashem's *middah* of *Chesed*, he cleaves to G-d and derives pleasure from the splendor of the Shechinah in this world.

This was the *ma'alah* of Avrohom Avinu as seen in *Parshas Vayera*. Our Rabbis tell us it was the third day after his circumcision, (when Avrohom was 100 years of age). Hashem came to visit Avrohom [who ended his visit when he saw the three "men" and ran to extend hospitality to them]. Now, we would assume that even a *Ba'al Chesed* who yearns to do good, only does so when his mind is free of worries and personal troubles. However, when one is preoccupied with illness involving *Pikuach Nefesh*, the notion of perfecting his *Chesed* performance is the last thing on his mind. This would apply even more when one sees that there is no opportunity to do *Chesed* (i.e., G-d prevented wayfarers from visiting Avrohom because of his pain).

אור יחזקאל, חלק מדות, מאמרים "מעלת החסד", "מדת החסד דרך לאמונה", "מעלת החסד כדרך להשגת השלימות", "עשות משפט ואהבת חסד":

ותחילה עלינו לבאר ביאורה של מעלת החסד. "הגיד לך אדם מה טוב ומה ד' דורש ממך עשות משפט אהבת חסד והצנע לכת עם אלוקיך" (מיכה ו': ח'). הנה נאמר בכתוב "אהבת חסד", לא נאמר עשיית חסד או גמילות חסד אלא אהבת חסד, כי חסד אין פירושו נתינת צדקה או עשיית חסד והטבה לחבירו, אלא חסד היא "מעלה", וכאשר זוכה האדם נהפך להיות מציאות של חסד, וכשם שנמצאת חיות באדם וזו מציאותו של האדם שהוא "חיי", כן בעל החסד נעשה למציאות של חסד ... וענין זה נקרא "אהבת חסד" שמציאותו דורשת עשיית החסד, וכשם שגוף האדם דורש אכילה ושתייה כן מציאות בעל החסד שואף לעשיית החסד, וכל זמן שאינו עושה חסד מרגיש רעב וחסרון ורק בעשיית החסד כאילו נשלמה תאוותו.

ובאמת פשוט, שכיון שמדת החסד מדתו של הקב"ה, וכן היא מדת טובו של השי"ת, שהרי ברא את כל העולם כדי להיטיב עם הנבראים. ואע"ג שכל זמן שאין הבריאה קיימת עדיין אין נבראים הזקוקים להטבה, אלא כך מדת טובו של הקב"ה שבורא נבראים כדי להיטיב עמם. והמדה צריכה לבוא מכח רצון להטבה ללא כל סיבת צדדיות, אלא מפני שהיא ממדותיו של הקב"ה, והזוכה למדת החסד זוכה להתדבקות בזיו השכינה ... כיון שמדת החסד מדתו של הקב"ה, בעת שזוכה ומגיע למדת החסד בשלימות, הרי מדובק בהשי"ת, והיינו שנתבאר הנאה מזיו השכינה בעוה"ז.

ומעלה זו היתה מעלתו של אברהם אבינו ע"ה וכדחזינן בתחילת הפרשה. "וירא אליו ד' באלוני ממרא" (בראשית י"ח: א), ואיתא בחז"ל (ב"מ פ"ו ע"ב): "יום שלישי למילתו היה ובא הקב"ה לבקר את החולה". ונתבונן נא בפרטי הדברים. זקן בן מאה שנה שמל את עצמו ויום השלישי למילתו היה, והנה אף בעל החסד ששואף לעשיית חסד, כל זה רק בעת שפנוי מכל דאגות וטרדות עצמיות ואז דעתו פנויה לעשיית חסד לזולתו. אולם בעת שטרוד אדם במחלתו והדבר תלוי בפקוח נפש ממש ודאי אינו דואג להשלמת החסד, ובפרט בשעה שאין רואה לפניו מקום לעשיית חסד.

Yet, we see that Avrohom did not rest even in such a situation, as the Gemara Bava Metzia (86b) says he sent Eliezer out to seek out people upon whom to bestow hospitality, but Eliezer returned, telling him no one was about. Avrohom did not believe Eliezer and ran out to seek guests to bestow *Chesed* upon, even though this was the first day that Avrohom had no guests as Chazal say that Hashem removed the supernaturally hot sun from its sheath so that Avrohom would not be troubled with performing hospitality. Nonetheless, Hashem saw that Avrohom's suffering because of his inability to do *Chesed* was greater than the pain associated with serving guests in his medically precarious condition. Therefore, Hashem sent three angels appearing as humans so that Avrohom could perform *Chesed*.

We see from here that the *middah* of *Chesed* (exemplified by Avrohom Avinu) is even greater than which Hashem demands, since Hashem sent a supernatural heat to prevent guests from coming to Avrohom. [Yet, Avrohom could not be stopped from doing *Chesed*.] A true *Ba'al Chesed* [is not swayed by impediments or exemptions because when he is unable to perform *Chesed*], he feels as if part of his existence is missing. The *middah* of *Chesed* pushes him; all his personal interests and feelings fade away before his desire to do *Chesed*. This entire *Parsha* demonstrates that Avrohom Avinu's desire to bestow *Chesed* was a *ma'alah* of the soul (i.e., a spiritual quality, above the limits of human nature). Therefore, the recipient's level of need (whether his need could be met without the *Ba'al Chesed's* efforts) is immaterial.

We see from here that the *ma'alah* of *Chesed* is above any human limitation. Only when a person's baser *middos* (or material interests) exert their influence, then one's ability to perform *Chesed* is limited, and one cannot reach the loftier levels of *Chesed*. However, the power of the *ma'alah* of *Chesed* itself is boundless because this *ma'alah* is a spiritual entity, and with regard to spirituality, no limitations exist. When a person merits the *middah* of *Chesed* fully, he merits to transcend the boundaries of nature, i.e., he receives a gift from HKB"Y, as if Hashem grants an additional portion to his soul. The verse in Michah says, "Grant truth to Jacob, kindness to Abraham": Hashem gave Avrohom the power of *Chesed*, one of His own *ma'alos* (attributes), which Avrohom developed to perfection. When a person adopts one of Hashem's attributes (into his spiritual repertoire), there are no limitations to its power because it transcends the laws of nature. The *ma'alah* of *Chesed* itself "desires" and "demands" performing acts of *Chesed*, a phenomenon that is completely above and beyond a human being's natural abilities.

ואילו גבי אאע"ה חזינן שלא היה במנוחה אף בשעה זו. ואיתא בגמ' ששלח אאע"ה את אליעזר לבקש ולראות היש בחוץ מי שאפשר לגמול עמו חסד, וחזר ואמר שאין נפש, ואמר אאע"ה שאין מאמינו ויצא בעצמו לרוץ לחפש אורחים כדי לגמול להם חסד, ולא היה חסר לו זמן רב אורחין אלא יום אחד בלבד ... שהוציא הקב"ה באותו יום חמה מגרתיקה כדי שלא להטריחו באורחין, שידע הקב"ה שקשה לו לאאע"ה מפאת מחלתו לטרוח באורחים ... וכאשר ראה הקב"ה זאת שקשה לו אי עשיית החסד יותר מכאביו מהטרדה הנמצאת בהכנסת אורחים, שלח לו ג' מלאכים כדי שיגמול עמם חסד.

חזינן שמדת החסד היא יותר אף מתביעת הקב"ה שהרי הוציא הקב"ה חמה מגרתיקה כדי שלא יבואו האורחים, כי בעל החסד האמיתי אינו מרגיש בזאת מפני שחסרה לו במציאות עשיית החסד ומרגיש כביכול חסר לו מציאותו. מפני שמדת החסד דוחקת בו ואינו מרגיש שום הרגשה אחרת מלבד הרצון לעשיית החסד. וכל הפרשה מוכיחה רצונו של אברהם אבינו ע"ה להיטיב שהוא מעלה ממעלות הנפש, ולכן אין משנה לו מדת ההצטרפות של הנזקק, וכן אין שום דבר פוגע בכבוד הנותן.

חזינן מהכא כח ענין "מעלת החסד" שהוא באמת למעלה ממדת האנושי, בשעה שהמדות פועלים מכה טבעי האדם יש תכלית וגבול לכח המדות ויש מדריגות שאין בכח האדם להגיע אליהם. אבל כח המעלה בעצמה אין לה סוף, כי המעלה היא מעלה רוחנית, ולרוחניות אין גבול. ... כן אף בענין מדת החסד, שכאשר האדם זוכה למדה בשלימותה זוכה להיות למעלה מגדר הטבע, ומקבל מתנה מיוחדת מאת השי"ת וזוכה למדתו של הקב"ה, וכביכול קיבל מאת הקב"ה עוד חלק בנפש. "תתן אמת ליעקב חסד לאברהם" (מיכה ז': כ'): אברהם אבינו זכה למדת החסד בשלימותה, ובעת שזוכה למדה ומעלה ממעלותיו של הקב"ה הרי זה למעלה מהבנת ודרכי הטבע, והמעלה בעצמה רוצה ותובעת עשיית החסד. ואין זה שייכות לעצמיות וטבעי האדם.

Appendix B: Excerpts from *Sefer Ohr Yechezkel: The ma'alah (virtue) of Chesed (kindness)*

This helps to explain the verse (in *Parshas Vayera* in which Avrohom asked Hashem to wait until after he attended to his guests): “Please do not depart from Your servant,” from which Chazal derive, “This teaches us that welcoming guests is greater than greeting the Shechinah.” This poses a difficulty: Is there any greater pleasure than greeting the Shechinah? [Behold greeting the Shechinah] is the true delight and greatest pleasure of pleasures that can be found (*Mesillas Yesharim*)? The answer is per the above discussion: Since *Chesed* is one of Hashem’s *middos*, the *Ba’al Chesed*, i.e., one who adopts this Divine *middah* authentically, cleaves to Hashem’s *middos*. Therefore, his performance of *Chesed* is itself an experience of greeting the Shechinah, and hence, he receives the pleasure from the splendor of the Shechinah even in this world.

Similarly, from the test which Eliezer assessed Rivka’s (worth to become Yitzchak’s wife, in *Parshas Chayei Sarah*), we can begin to understand how exalted the level of “loving kindness” (*Ahavas Chesed*) is. Eliezer’s “test” was to say to the girl: “Please tip over your jug so that I may drink.” To “pass,” she needed to respond: “Drink, and I will even water your camels.” Only then, would she be deemed fit for the house of Avrohom. This seems difficult. There were ten mature (robust) servants standing before Eliezer, and yet, he demanded that a young girl offer to water the camels rather than asking the servants to take care of this? This seems like an extraordinary demand, for in the normal course of life, it should never enter the mind (of a child) to do such a thing? Nonetheless, this is the true barometer of an *Ohaiv Chesed* (one who loves to do kindness). Only the person who can pass this test, is fit to enter the house of Avrohom. The explanation is per the above discussion. Just as one who loves money always seeks out ways to gather more wealth, similarly, one who loves kindness will not look at any factor (that could deter him from performing kindness). The fact that there are servants who are capable of watering the camels, is immaterial to the *Ba’al Chesed*. This is because a *Ba’al Chesed* – whose personality is one of *Chesed* – “profits” when he carries out acts of kindness. Thus, even when the task can be carried out another way, he does the *Chesed* because performing kindness is his desire and fulfillment of his yearning.

ובזה יובן היטב דברי חז"ל (שבת דף קכ"ז ע"א): "ויאמר אברהם אל נא תעבור מעל עבדך" (בראשית י"ח: ג'), שאמר אברהם להקב"ה שימתין עד שיקבל פני האורחים, "מלמד שגדולה הכנסת אורחים יותר מקבלת פני השכינה". ולכאורה וכי יש עונג יותר גדול לאדם מקבלת פני השכינה, והלא זה העונג האמיתי והעידון הגדול שבכל העידונים שיכול להמצא (מס"י)? אלא דהן הדברים שנתבאר ששבשעה שמקיים מדת החסד בשלימותה, ומדת החסד היא מדתו של הקב"ה וכמש"נ, א"כ עשיית החסד וההטבה אף היא אותו עונג של קבלת פני השכינה שהרי מתדבק במדותיו של הקב"ה ... שבשעה שגומל חסד בשלימות הרי דבק למדותיו של הקב"ה ומתחבר לאור והרי נהנה מזיו השכינה.

והנה כאשר נראה להבין ... בבחינת אליעזר את רבקה, נוכל מעט להבין עד היכן מדריגת אהבת חסד. "ואמרה שתה וגם גמליך אשקה", והיינו שיאמר אליה הטי נא כדך ואשתה בעצמי, והיא תוסיף ע"ז ותאמר שתה וגם גמליך אשקה, היא הראויה לביתו של אברהם. ולכאורה הרי עומדים לפניו עשרה עבדים מבוגרים, מכל מקום דורש אליעזר מנערה צעירה בשנים שתאמר שבעצמה תשקה את הגמלים ולא תבקש מהעבדים שיעשו זאת? והרי זו דרישה מופלאה, שבפשטות לא היתה צריכה כלל לעלות על דעתה לעשות כן, מ"מ כך היא הבחינה האמיתית של אוהב החסד. ורק מי שיעמוד בבחינה הזו ראוי להכנס לביתו של אברהם. והיינו כהנ"ל, שכשם שאוהב הממון מבקש דרכים לאסוף ממון, כן אוהב החסד אינו מביט על שום דבר ואין נוגע לו אם יש עבדים שיכולים בעצמם לעשות כן, שהרי בעל החסד ענינו האישי לעשות חסד ואל אף שיכול לא לעשות חסד, מ"מ הרי בעצמו מרויח בעשיית החסד, ולכן עושה החסד, כי עשיית החסד זה רצונו וקיום תאוותו.

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