

נושא בעל עם חברו - *The virtue of Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

Section #	Section Title	Page #
	Introduction	1
I	What is the meaning of being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> ?	5
II	Who are our models of a <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> ?	10
III	What is the reason for the imperative to be <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> ?	32
IV	Defining the power of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>	43
V	Examples of Mitzvos which demonstrate the importance of being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>	47
VI	Why is the virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> one of the forty-eight (48) qualities for Torah acquisition?	53
VII	The reciprocal <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> relationship between Hashem and <i>Klal Yisrael</i> and its role in Kiddush Hashem	61
VIII	How <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> activates Heavenly salvation for <i>Klal Yisrael</i>	72
IX	The virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> is a key component of Tefilla	77
X	Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>	87
XI	<i>Klal Yisrael's</i> responsibility to be <i>Nosei B'ol</i> with all mankind	96
XII	Stories of awesome <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> demonstrated by great Torah scholars	98
Conclusion:	Creating an "עת רצון" (time of favor) on behalf of our distressed brethren	101
Summary Table	<i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> : Definition, importance, and applications	103
Appendix A	Rav Chatzkel Levenstein: A Jew's obligation to respond empathically and to share in the suffering of all mankind.	105
	References	107

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

תנצב"ה

Index of subsections

Section	Section/subsection Title	Page no. (s)
	Introduction	1-4
I	What is the meaning of being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>?	5-9
II	Who are our models of a <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>?	10-31
A	HaKadosh Boruch Hu: Hashem's initial revelation to Moshe from the thorn bush – a manifestation of His shared pain with <i>Klal Yisroel</i> .	10
B	Moshe Rabbeinu set aside his regal standing to personally participate in the suffering of his brethren.	15
C	Yosef HaTzaddik, as viceroy of Egypt, experienced the hardships of his subjects on a personal level.	20
D	Aharon HaKohen excelled in feeling genuine joy for another person's success.	24
E	Rebbi Akiva's <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> : The hidden promise of greatness seen by his wife, Rochel.	27
III	What is the reason for the imperative to be a <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>?	32-42
A	The Mitzvah of "following in Hashem's ways": Being <i>Nosei B'ol</i> emulates Hashem's ways.	32
B	Being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> promotes unity (<i>achdus</i>) within <i>Klal Yisroel</i> .	35
C	<i>Nesiah B'ol</i> defines the interpersonal Mitzvos we perform as a service of the heart.	40

Index of subsections

Section	Section/subsection Title	Page no. (s)
IV	Defining the power of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>	43-46
A	Being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> denotes vicariously experiencing another person's feelings.	43
B	Through our <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> with people in distress, we help deliver Heavenly salvation to them by annulling the <i>middas Hadin</i> against them.	44
V	Examples of Mitzvos which demonstrate the importance of being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>	47-52
A	Loaning money: Viewing ourselves as if we are the poor person in need of a loan.	47
B	Special care to avoid hurting the convert: Sensitivity arising from our own painful experiences.	48
C	Gladdening the hearts of the less fortunate: "Finding room" in our hearts to include them in our festivities.	49
D	The Jewish servant and the solitary pillow: Exquisite sensitivity to the servant's feelings of degradation.	51
VI	Why is the virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> one of the forty-eight (48) qualities for Torah acquisition?	53-60
A	A person who is <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> views situations from another's person perspective, an essential quality for arriving at the truth in Torah.	53
B	To acquire one's portion in Torah, one must participate in the unity of <i>Klal Yisroel</i> , which is expressed by being <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> .	54
C	A <i>Nosei B'ol</i> searches for common roots to relate to his fellow's predicament. Torah study also seeks underlying commonalities to connect seemingly disparate topics.	57
D	When we are <i>Nosei B'ol</i> , we restore our friend's dignity, and therefore, are worthy of acquiring the Torah to unveil Hashem's glory in the world.	58

Index of subsections

Section	Section/subsection Title	Page no. (s)
VII	The reciprocal <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> relationship between Hashem and <i>Klal Yisrael</i> and its role in Kiddush Hashem	61-71
A	The Divine <i>middah</i> , “לשארית נחלתו” – Hashem’s <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> for the Jewish people’s suffering.	61
B	Our <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> for Hashem’s pain and the responsibility to pray for relief of His pain.	64
C	Being <i>Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro</i> sensitizes us to prioritize Kiddush Hashem in our lives.	67
VIII	How <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> activates Heavenly salvation for <i>Klal Yisrael</i>	72-76
A	Our <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> with each other activates Hashem’s <i>middah</i> of “לשארית נחלתו” to flow toward us.	72
B	We merited redemption from Egypt because of our <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> . Our final redemption will be activated by being <i>Nosei B’ol</i> with each other.	72
C	Three approaches how our <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> with someone in distress helps deliver Heavenly salvation.	74
IX	The virtue of <i>Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro</i> is a key component of Tefilla	77-86
A	The proper mindset of shared suffering during our prayers on behalf of people in distress.	77
B	Reclaiming the quality of Tefilla with <i>Neisah B’ol</i> that was present in previous generations.	78
C	Avrohom Avinu merited that Hashem spoke to him because of his <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> during his fervent prayer to spare the Sodomites.	80
D	Moshe Rabbeinu saved the Jewish nation from destruction through prayer which emanated from his outstanding level of <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> .	83
E	<i>Nesiah B’ol</i> during our prayers on behalf of people struggling (e.g., with illness).	84
F	Recent Tzaddikim whose Tefillos were punctuated with <i>Nesiah B’ol</i> on behalf of fellow Jews.	85

Index of subsections

Section	Section/subsection Title	Page no. (s)
X	Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>	87-95
A	"Picture" the details of someone's struggle in our mind and imagine ourselves experiencing it.	87
B	<i>Nesiah B'ol</i> communicates the message: "You are not alone, I am with you in your struggles," even if we have no tangible solution for their problem.	89
C	Leaving the boundaries of "self" to see life situations from the other person's perspective.	90
D	Focusing our prayers to request Divine help for people in need, fosters feelings of <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> .	91
E	Listening and empathizing in an attentive and non-judgmental manner.	92
F	Acts of kindness, whether large or small, foster authentic feelings of <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> , even if they start out on a perfunctory level.	93
XI	<i>Klal Yisroel's</i> responsibility to be <i>Noseh B'ol</i> with all mankind	96-97
XII	Stories of awesome <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> demonstrated by great Torah scholars	98-100
	Conclusion: Creating an "עַת רְצוֹן" on behalf of our distressed brethren	101-102
Summary Table	Summary: <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>: Definition, importance, and applications	103-104
Appendix A	Rav Chatzkel Levenstein: A Jew's obligation to respond empathically and to share in the suffering of all mankind.	105-106
	References	107-110

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-X, 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. 107-110. For example, when a note, “Ref. 7,” is found within the text of a paragraph, the details of this citation are found on p. 107. 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

Introduction

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 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 explains that there are two types of *chesed*: Ordinary *chesed*, and a special type of *“chesed which emanates from the source of the Jewish soul,”* (see Source III-9; p. 42). What is the meaning of *“chesed which emanates 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 I cannot bear my friend’s pain 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 plight hurts me as if I stand in his stead enduring all the pain that he now suffers. My own pain on account of his suffering hurts me so much, that I am driven to do whatever I can to ameliorate the pain or at least share in his distress.

Rav Eytan Feiner explains that when Dovid HaMelech said in Tehillim (91:15), *“נמו אנכי בצרה”* – *“I am with him in distress”* – it denotes that Hashem, *kavayachol* (so to speak), feels our suffering to same extent that we experience it. Despite the exalted state of HaKadosh Boruch Hu (HKB”H), with regard to the Jewish people’s suffering, He, *kavayachol*, puts himself on the very same plane as us, feeling every twinge of our pain and anguish. He is with us during each step we take through darkness and suffering. HKB”H does not spare Himself even one iota of our pain – He experiences every last morsel of our suffering (Ref. 61).

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. 4). 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”* – every step of the way. It does not matter where you are or what “type” of Jew you are – if you are in pain – so am I. There are no barriers between your heart and mine – we are on the same level.

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? Sefer Tomer Devorah 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 were to suffer the same pain ourselves. Conversely, our fellow’s honor and success should gladden us as if we were to enjoy the same good fortune ourselves,”* (Source III-3, p. 33).

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*

Introduction

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. More than just a prohibition against the specific act of revenge, the Torah is telling 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 on a sensorial level, another Jew's feelings of pain or joy. We are thus, spiritually "wired" to share each other's feelings just as all parts of one biological organism are impacted by a serious assault to any one component of the same organism (see Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev; Source III-6, p. 37).

The Midrash (Tanna D'bai Eliyahu, Source A-1) states that the Jews who left Egypt made a covenant that they would perform acts of kindness (*Gemillas Chessed*) 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, David praised [the generation] who emerged from Egypt, for even the single Mitzva in their hands was more beautiful to HKBH than many Mitzvos [that we observe]. What was the single Mitzva 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

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

Introduction

<p>symbolism: Just as during the animal's life, when these two 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 feel it, and only death could disrupt this interconnectivity. Similarly, two people who establish a treaty together become like one body during their lives; this connectivity 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>ועוברין בין הבתרים ההם, לאות כי כמו ששני הבתרים ההם היו גוף אחד בבעלי חיים ההוא בהיותו חי, והיה כל 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 כורתי 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 suggests that the generation exiting Egypt created a covenant to perform *Gemillas Chessed* with each other, to ensure that the kindness they performed was not ordinary *chesed*, but rather, *chesed* performed with the spirit of unity, as if they were one body, whereby each person felt the other person's needs as his own (Ref. 64). 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 kindness that is uniquely Jewish is "*chesed which emanates from the source of the Jewish soul,*" as described by Rav Matisyahu, 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 a eulogy for Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, his son, Rav Shmuel Auerbach, Shlita, emphasized his father's overwhelming compassion and empathy for his fellow man. He related that his father would often recount an incident concerning the saintly Rav Baruch Frankel Teumim, zt"l, the Baruch Taam, whose son entered into a shidduch 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 Baruch Taam's changed appearance. The first thing that came to their mind was that he had regrets regarding the shidduch. The parents of the girl 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 Baruch Taam 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 Baruch Taam 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," (Ref. 62). Merely praying for the water carrier's recovery as the girl's mother suggested, would have been ordinary *chesed*. However, the Baruch Taam prayed as if he was personally afflicted with the water carrier's illness because he practiced "*chesed which emanates from the source of the Jewish soul.*" To make a shidduch with a family who could not appreciate this exalted, uniquely Jewish type of *chesed*, was unthinkable.

Introduction

Rav Aharon Kahn related a story regarding the great master of Mussar, the Mashgiach of the Mirrer Yeshiva, 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 local 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 satisfying the police officers that their 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 utterly 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!*" (Ref. 63).

To the great masters of Mussar, being a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, worrying about and 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*?

I What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

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 48 qualities, which are ... carrying (i.e., sharing) his fellow's burden ...</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מסכת (פרקי) אבות ו': ו':</u></p> <p>גדולה תורה יותר מן הכהנה ומן המלכות, שהמלכות נקנית בשלשים מעלות, והכהנה בעשרים וארבע, והתורה נקנית בארבעים ושמונה דברים. ואלו הן ... נושא בעל עם חברו.</p>
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Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (henceforth abbreviated as "Rav Yeruchem"; Source I-2) defines *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* as sharing (partnering) in our friend's pain, being together with him or her in a time of need, feeling the friend's burden and pain as if it were our own. (Henceforth, the phrase "the *ma'alah* or *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*" will be often shortened to "*Nesiah B'ol*"). 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 our imagination, we transplant ourselves to vicariously experience the same events, thoughts and feelings that another person 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, means being together with my friend in his distress, I am pained and suffering with the very same burden and pain that my friend bears.</p>	<p><u>דעת תורה, דברים, "משתתף בצערו של חברו", עמ' רל"ט:</u></p> <p>"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 places himself into the pain of his friend (i.e., the level of sharing in his distress), one alleviates the friend's suffering.</p>	<p><u>דעת חכמה ומוסר, חלק א', מאמר "רוממות מדת נושא בעול עם חברו וגודל חיובה":</u></p> <p>... נושא בעול הוא מדת השתתפות בכל צער ויסוריו של הסובל להיות מיצר בכל צרותיו, ולחוש כאילו דקירות אלו דוקרות בבשרו הוא ... ובה במדה שאדם מכניס עצמו בצער חברו 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. 1). It takes great work (*avodah*) to enter into the world of someone who is suffering, i.e., to authentically share his 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 and happy times, to truly feel happy for them and to celebrate with them as if it was our own personal joyful event. In fact, 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. 2).

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

Rav Chaim Friedlander explains that *Nesiah B'ol* rises above *tzedaka* (charity) and *Gemillas Chesed* (acts of kindness), because, more than providing goods or services, **we are giving someone a piece of our very being**, projecting ourselves into another person's situation, feeling the other person's pain or joy as if we are experiencing it ourselves. He adds, "The essence of *Nosei B'ol* is not to alleviate 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 positive effect on others, as characterized by Rav Yeruchem, is quite astounding: The relief rendered to our friend's suffering is directly proportional to the degree that we feel his or her pain! (Source I-2).

Source I-3: Rav Chaim Friedlander: Definition of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*: Being with people in their distress

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 are giving 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 pain. 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 benefit it offers him; we share his feelings without considering how it will reduce his pain ... The essence of *Nosei B'ol* is not to alleviate 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 load off his shoulders. When a person carries a bundle of suffering, even when we cannot offer him any tangible assistance, we help him by taking a portion of the pain from him. How can we take a portion of his pain? By inclining our heart to him – showing him that his pain profoundly affects us and we are with him in his distress – his suffering is greatly 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 meaning of *Nosei B'ol*? Just as it sounds – to take a portion of his load."

קונטרס מח 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*?

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. 3). HKB"H, 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 נחלתו" ("the remnant of Hashem's heritage") in the Sefer Tomer Devorah by Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (Source II-1b, p. 11). When HKB"H 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. 4). 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" ("והלכת בדרכיו", Devarim 28:9; Rav Shlomo Wolbe, Ref. 5).

A reasonable English translation of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is "empathy", which is defined by Rabbi Jonathon Sacks as (Ref. 6): "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 Rabbi Yitzchok of Volzhin, the son of this classical work's author, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin. Rabbi Yitzchok extolls the sublime character of his illustrious father. Among the many noble virtues mentioned, Rabbi 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 were focused on the Jewish people's suffering. Rabbi Yitzchok writes, "He would rebuke me, saying that he observed I was not sharing 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 [to the full extent of his abilities].'"

Although we translated *Nesiah B'ol* as empathy, in reality, it is 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 travails which Heaven has allotted to him. *Nesiah 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 on my

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

friend's behalf. In Section IX-E (pp. 84-85), we will see that prayers which emerge from a heart filled with *Nesiah B'ol* have special powers to change the Heavenly decree for the person for whom we beseech Hashem's mercy. 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 HaRav 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* 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 listen 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 blessings to be fulfilled, he must truly desire that the other person will receive (Heavenly-sent) good. This is what I endeavor to do, I try to enter the other person's situation and truly desire that he receives good. However, in reality, anyone can accomplish this through his *Berachos*." Rav Shalom concludes his writing: "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 good.' Anyone who came in contact with Rav Shlomo Zalman would sense how he was *Nosei B'ol* with others," (Ref. 65).

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 *Klal Yisrael* 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 abbreviated as "Rav Chatzkel") for the suffering of *Klal Yisrael* 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,*" (Ref. 7, 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 all of us.

Special Caution

I heard an explanation from Rav Chaim Dov Keller, the Rosh HaYeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago, for the use of the word "*middah*" to denote a "virtue" or "character trait." The Torah's use of "*middah*" in (Vayikra 19: 35): "לא תעשו עול במשפט במדה במשקל ובמורה" – "*You shall not do wrong in justice, in measurement ("מדה"), in weight, or in volume,*" refers to measurement. Rav Keller explains that all character traits, including those labeled as "good ones", must be expressed in a measured manner; hence the words "*middah*" and "*middos*" are used to denote character trait(s). Each person needs a healthy boundary regarding the level of *Nesiah B'ol* he or she can safely

Section I: What is the meaning of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

sustain. Attempting to force oneself to utilize the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* and feel another's pain beyond the healthy boundary that is appropriate for a given individual, would inundate and exceed this person's emotional capacity. Complete preoccupation on the suffering and misery that sadly often surrounds us, would be counterproductive. Individualized guidance should be sought to determine how to set this boundary.

MEANING OF BEING *NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO* (SUMMARY)

- ❖ If I am *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with *Chaim, 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.
 - Giving Chaim a piece of my very being, using mental imagery to "enter into his world" and to vicariously experience his emotions and sense of vulnerability.
 - Implicitly telling Chaim, "You don't have to go through this alone, I am with you, helping to bear your burden."
 - Emulating 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 was our own).

*Generic name

Comment regarding translation of sources

We attempted to translate most of the primary sources, such as Chumash, Rashi, Gemara and Midrash, as literally as possible. However, with regard to the works of Mussar (ethical teachings), the translation 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.

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 and denote the same meaning. The phrase "the *ma'alah* or *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*" will be often shortened to "*Nesiah B'ol*".

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: Hashem's initial revelation to Moshe from the thorn bush – a manifestation of His shared pain with *Klal Yisrael*

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

- ❖ **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*:** "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלְתּוֹ" - "*The remnant of His heritage*": Expression of Hashem's empathy for *Klal Yisrael*; G-d calls us His closest kin, and therefore, He feels our pain as His own pain.
- ❖ **The "sapphire brick" vision:** A tangible symbol of Hashem's continuous empathy with *Klal Yisrael* during the Egyptian exile.
- ❖ **The "heavens in purity" vision:** What was its purpose and why was it needed?

- 1) In the introduction to his Sefer Tomer Devorah, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (the "Ramak") describes the imperative to emulate Hashem's thirteen Divine *middos* (attributes) of mercy described by the prophet Michah (Source II-1a). The underlying principle of Sefer Tomer Devorah is explained by Rav Chatzkel: When HKB"H 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 (Ref. 8). This is the basis for the Mitzvah of "following in the ways of Hashem," ("והלכת בדרכיו"; Devarim 28:9), i.e., emulating His ways (see Section III-A, pp. 32-34).
- 2) The fourth Divine *middah* stated in Michah is "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלְתּוֹ" – "*the remnant of His heritage*", a description of Hashem's profound *Nesiah B'ol* (empathy) with the Jewish people. Citing the verse, "בכל צרתם לו צר" – "*in all their (the Jews') distress, He (Hashem) was distressed*" (Isaiah 63:9), the Ramak explains that HKB"H, feels our pain and He experiences our distress to such an extent, that, *kavayachol*, Hashem says, "I cannot bear to see My children suffer," (Source II-1b).

Source II-1: Tomer Devorah: (a) Introduction; (b) *Middah* 4: "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלְתּוֹ" – "To the remnant of His heritage"

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:

הָאֲדָם רָאוּי שְׂיִתְדַמֶּה לְקוֹנוֹ ... שֶׁהוּא י"ג מְדוֹת שֶׁל רַחֲמִים עֲלִיוֹנוֹת. וְרַמְיוֹזוֹת בְּסוּד הַפְּסוּקִים (מִיכָה ז': י"ח-כ'): "מִי קָל כְּמוֹהוּ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעֵבֵר עַל פְּשַׁע לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלְתּוֹ לֹא הִחְזִיק לְעַד אַפּוֹ כִּי חָפֵץ חֶסֶד הוּא. יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמְנוּ וְיִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיחַ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל חַטָּאתָם. תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעַתָּ לְאַבְתְּרָנוּ מִיְמֵי קְדָם". אִם כֵּן רָאוּי שְׂתִמְצָאָנָה בּוֹ י"ג מְדוֹת אֱלֹהִים.

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

The fourth *middah* – “*To the remnant of His heritage*”: 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, “*the Children of Israel, His intimate people,*” – they are actually related to Him and they are His children. The verse thus says, “*To the remnant of His heritage,*” [using the word “שְׂאֵרִית”], which means [heritage in this context, but also means] a close relative [“שְׂאֵר”]. And what does Hashem say? “If I punish them, their pain will be Mine,” as it is written, “*In all their distress, He (Hashem) was distressed.*” The word [“לא”] is written with an “א” ... but it [“לו”] is read with a “ו”, [which means] the distress is His (i.e., Hashem’s distress). And it is written, “*and His spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel,*” [which means] He cannot bear their pain and their disgrace, because they are the remnant of His inheritance.

ספר תומר דבורה א': "הד' – לשארת נחלתו":
הנה הקב"ה מתנהג עם ישראל בדרך זה, לומר, מה
אעשה לישראל והם קרובי, שאר בשר לי עמקם
... וקתיב (תהלים קמח, י): "ישראל עם קרובו",
ממש קרבה יש לו עמקם ובניו הם, והינו "לשארת
נחלתו", לשון שאר בשר, וסוף סוף הם נחלתו. ומה
אומר, אם אענישם הרי הקאב עלי, כדקתיב (ישעיה
ס"ג, ט): "בכל צרתם לו צר", קתיב באל"ף ...
וקרינו בנאו"ו - "לו צר", וקתיב (שופטים י', ט"ז):
"נתקצר נפשו בעמל ישראל", לפי שאינו סובל
צערם וקלונם, מפני שהם שארת נחלתו.

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

- 3) During the Egyptian enslavement of the Jewish people, the Torah states that the cries of the Jewish people ascended to Hashem, He heard their groaning, He remembered His covenant with our forefathers, and then, “*G-d saw the Children of Israel; and G-d knew,*” (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 Hashem’s intimate attention to the pain of the Jewish people which evoked His mercy and aroused Him to come to our aid (see Section VII-A, pp. 61-63, 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;">שמות ב', כ"ג-כ"ה:</p> <p>(כג) ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה ויזעקו ויעל שועתם אל האלקים מן העבודה.</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;">פסוק כה': רש"י ד"ה וידע אלקים: 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 align="right">שמות ג', ז': וַיֹּאמֶר ה' רָאֵה רָאִיתִי אֶת עֲנֵי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֵת צַעֲקָתָם שְׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נִגְשָׁיו כִּי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת מַכְאוֹבָיו.</p>
<p>Rashi – For I am mindful of their sufferings: 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 align="right">רש"י ד"ה כי ידעתי את מכאביו: כְּלוּמַר כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי לֵב לְהִתְבּוֹנֵן וְלִדְעוֹת אֶת מַכְאוֹבָיו וְלֹא הִעֲלַמְתִּי עֵינָי וְלֹא אֶאֱטֹם אָזְנִי מִצַּעֲקָתָם:</p>

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

4) This theme is beautifully portrayed in the Midrashim regarding the aforementioned burning bush encounter. The Midrash Tanchuma explains that Hashem's revelation from the thorn bush was a manifestation of the theme of "עמו אנכי בצרה" – "I am with him in [his] distress," i.e., Hashem's identification with the suffering of *Klal Yisrael* (Source II-4a). The Midrash Rabbah paints this theme even more descriptively, whereby HKB"H 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) Midrash 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 align="right">מדרש תנחומא שמות סימן יד': וְלִמָּה מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה, וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ אֵילָן גָּדוֹל, וְלֹא מִתּוֹךְ תְּמָרָה? אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: כְּתִבְתִּי בַתּוֹרָה, עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בַצָּרָה (תהלים צ"א, ט"ו). הֵם נִתְּוֵנִים בְּשִׁעְבּוֹד, וְאֵף אֲנִי בְּסִנֵּה מִמְקוֹם צָר. לְפִיכֹךְ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה 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 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 align="right">מדרש שמות רבה ב': ה': וַיֵּרָא מִלֶּאפֶּה ה' אֵלָיו. הֲדָא הוּא דְכָתִיב (שיר השירים ה', ב'), תְּמִתִּי בְּסִינֵי ... אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָה, מַה הִתְּאֻמִּים הִלְלוּ, אִם תִּשַׁשׁ אֶחָד בְּרֵאשׁוֹ חִבְרוּ מְרֻגֵשׁ, כֵּן אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא כְּבִנְכוֹל "עִמּוֹ אֲנֹכִי בַצָּרָה" (תהלים צ"א, ט"ו). וְאֹמַר "בְּכֹל צָרָתָם לוֹ צָר". אָמַר לוֹ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמִשְׁחָה, "אֵי אַתָּה מְרֻגֵשׁ שְׂאֲנִי שְׂרוּי בְּצַעַר כְּשֵׁם שְׂיִשְׁרָאֵל שְׂרוּיִם בְּצַעַר, הֲגַי יוֹדַע מִמְקוֹם שְׂאֲנִי מְדַבֵּר עִמָּךְ מִתּוֹךְ הַקּוֹצִים כְּבִנְכוֹל אֲנִי שְׂתַף בְּצַעְרִי."</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

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

“under Hashem’s feet” during our Egyptian bondage, served to constantly “remind” HKB”H of the Jewish people’s enslavement in Egypt (Source II-5b). The Sabba of Kelm (Ref. 9) and Rav Yeruchem (Ref. 10) caution that: (1) this should not be understood as if they saw an image of HKB”H, Heaven forbid, since Hashem is incorporeal; and (2) HKB”H 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, just as a human being who has a glowing brick under his feet to serve as a constant reminder of his friend’s peril. Moreover, HKB”H 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 level of *Nesiah B’ol*, is an indication of the enormous importance of this *ma’alah*.

- 6) The fact that HKB”H showed the image of the sapphire brick immediately before *Matan Torah*, further underscores the importance of *Nesiah B’ol*. Rav Wolbe (Ref. 5) and *Yibadel L’Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 2), note the apparent strange timing of this prophecy. This was the moment of *Klal Yisrael*’s highest spiritual elevation in history. A pedestrian image of a lowly brick at “Hashem’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* (see Section VI). Moreover, our *Nesiah B’ol* with fellow Jews was also a prerequisite for our redemption from Egypt (Section VIII-B, pp. 72-74). To come to fruition, both the redemption of *Klal Yisrael* and Hashem’s revelation at *Har Sinai* required the *ma’alah* 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. 7, 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.	שמות פרק כ"ד פסוק י': ויראו את אלקי ישראל ותחת רגליו כמעשה לבנת הספיר וכעצם השמים לטהר.
Rashi – the form of a sapphire brick: It was in front of Him at the time of enslavement in order to remember the pain of Israel who were enslaved in work of bricks.	רש"י ד"ה כמעשה לבנת הספיר: היא היתה לפניו בשעת השעבוד, לזכר צרתן של ישראל שהיו משעבדים במעשה לבנים.
Rashi – like the appearance of the heavens in purity: Once they were redeemed, there was light and gladness before Him.	רש"י ד"ה וכעצם השמים לטהר: משנגאלו היה אור וחדוה לפניו.

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). Thus, the same prophetic vision which portrayed Hashem’s sharing in *Klal Yisrael*’s suffering, also showed a tangible symbol of Hashem rejoicing with them in their redemption. HKB”H demonstrated to us through vivid imagery, the importance of not only sharing another’s pain, but also sharing their joy at their times of

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

happiness. Clearly, if sharing another's joy was a natural reaction, there would be no need for a special vision to encourage us to emulate Hashem'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 share in another's good fortune as if it he was personally experiencing it, has transcended human limitations to become angelic! (Rav Mordechai Pogromasky, quoted by Rav Matisyahu, Ref. 2). Thus, it was for good reason that HKB"H taught us this lesson through a special 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 HKB"H had "*light and gladness before Him*," He still retained the sapphire brick as a "reminder" of our suffering when we were slaves (Ref. 2). What value does this "reminder" serve after the slavery period ended? The Sabba explains that Hashem demonstrated to *Klal Yisrael* 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 trying journey to arrive there from the antecedent hard times and the contrast between them. Therefore, when HKB"H 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 *NEZIAH B'OL* - "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלְתּוֹ"

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ **The 4th Divine *middah*:** "לְשִׂאֵרֵית נְחֻלְתּוֹ" - 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 thus, He saves us as if He is "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* (attribute of empathy) was a prerequisite for both the Exodus from the Egyptian exile and for *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.

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

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 to become the leader of the Jewish people because he emulated Hashem's *Nesiah B'ol* – sharing the distress of his brethren who were enslaved.
- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu demonstrated for the ages how to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, by exiting Pharaoh's palace to join his brethren, abandoning his privileged position 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 his encounter at the burning bush, a period of 80 years which is chronicled in a mere 21 verses! (Ref. 11). Rav Matisyahu cites the Sabba of Kelm who explains 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 worthiness for leading the Jewish people:

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

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

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 garments 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 moved 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 letting them "have at each other". Yet, Moshe Rabbeinu could not bear seeing his brethren engaging in such behavior and/or becoming victimized (even by their own poor choices), 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 on foreign soil among strange people, a fugitive without provisions or shelter, with no one to protect him in a standoff 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 if he intervened in a local quarrel. Nonetheless,

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

his identification with other people's suffering moved Moshe to defend Yisro's daughters from the local ruffians and even to water 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 burning bush was an expression of "עמו אנכי בצרה" – "I am with him in distress," i.e., Hashem's identification with *Klal Yisrael's* distress. Moshe Rabbeinu's *zechus* (merit), by which he merited to receive Hashem's revelation, was his own identification with the suffering of *Klal Yisrael* 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 HKB"H talked to him, not due to his wisdom or lofty spiritual level, but rather, because he emulated Hashem's *middos*, by virtue of his *Nesiah B'ol* with *Klal Yisrael* (Rav Chatzkel, Ref. 12).

Source II-6: (a) Shemos 3:4; (b) Midrash 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 מִשָּׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲנִי.</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 such an extent that he] would cry and say, "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. R' Eliezer the son of R' Yose HaGelili says: Moshe observed a large load on a child, and a small load on an adult; a load fit for a man on a woman, and a load fit for a woman on a man, a load fit for an elderly man on a young person, and a load fit for a young man on an elderly person. What did Moshe do? He would set aside his noble status and go to rearrange the Israelites' burdens [in accordance with each one's capacity]; and pretend that he was thereby assisting Pharaoh. 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, 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" (Exodus 3:4). 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 and called 'Moshe, Moshe'."</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>מדרש שמות רבה א', כד':</u> וַיִּרְאֵהוּ בְּסִבְלֹתָם. מֵהוּ וִירָא, שֶׁהִיָּה רוֹאֶה בְּסִבְלֹתָם וּבִבּוֹכָה וְאוֹמֵר, חֲבַל לִי עֲלֵיכֶם מִי יִתֵּן מוֹתִי עֲלֵיכֶם, שֶׁאֵין לָהּ מְלֶאכֶה קְשָׁה מִמְּלֶאכֶת הַטֵּיט, וְהִיָּה נוֹתֵן כְּתַפְיוֹ וּמְסִיעַ לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מֵהֶן. רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגְּלִילִי אוֹמֵר רָאֵה מִשְׁוֵי גְדוֹל עַל קֶטָן וּמִשְׁוֵי קֶטָן עַל גְּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁוֵי אִישׁ עַל אִשָּׁה וּמִשְׁוֵי אִשָּׁה עַל אִישׁ, וּמִשְׁוֵי זָקֵן עַל בַּחוּר וּמִשְׁוֵי בַּחוּר עַל זָקֵן. וְהִיָּה מַנִּיחַ דְּרָגוֹן שְׁלוֹ וְהוֹלֵךְ וּמִיִּשֵׁב לָהֶם סִבְלוֹתֵיהֶם, וְעוֹשֶׂה כְּאֵלוֹ מְסִיעַ לַפְרֵעָה. אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֲתָה הַנּוֹחֵת עֲסָקִיָּה וְהַלְכָתָ לְרֵאוֹת בְּצַעֲרֵךְ שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִהְיֶה בְּהֶן מְנַהֵג אַחִים, אֲנִי מַנִּיחַ אֶת הָעֲלִיוֹנִים וְאֶת הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים, וְנֹאדָבֵר עִמָּךְ, הֲדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב (שְׁמוֹת ג', ד'): וַיִּרְאֵהוּ ה' כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת, רָאֵה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּמִשָּׁה שֶׁסָּר מֵעֲסָקְיוֹ לְרֵאוֹת בְּסִבְלֹתָם, לְפִיכָךְ (שְׁמוֹת ג', ד'): וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹקִים מֵתוֹךְ הַסֵּבֶה.</p>

Translation from: ¹Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition; ²Artscroll Midrash Rabbah, Kleinman edition, Mesorah Publishers.

- 4) The Midrash Rabbah states that Hashem 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

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

that 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 ("שסר מעסקיו") to see the burdens of Israel.*" Rav Friedlander 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 emotional space. We must shed our own biases and put our own perspectives aside, to see the situation through the lens of the person who is struggling (Ref. 13). To say to another, "*why can't you handle this, no one else has any problem dealing with this!*," is completely invalidating and foolhardy. Not only does it fail to provide a solution to the person's difficulty, it magnifies their sense of isolation through the implicit message that we consider them too weak or coddled to deal with life. Likewise, little, if any good, can come from telling someone, "other people have much more serious problems." At its core, the message of this remark is, "*I am unwilling to share your burdens so just get over it.*" It's a far cry from Moshe Rabbeinu "turning aside to see" what troubles another.

- 5) This identical theme is reflected in Rashi's characterization of Moshe Rabbeinu's behavior, which describes the essential elements of a person who is a *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 explains (ibid), the words, "ויצא" and "וירא", denote exiting ("ויצא") our emotional space to see ("וירא") and feel the struggles – i.e., in the manner in which it affects the other person.

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

<p>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>שמות ב' י"א: ויהי בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אָחָיו וַיִּרְא בְּסַבְלֹתָם וַיֵּרָא אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם מַכֵּה אִישׁ עִבְרִי מֵאֶחָיו.</p>
<p>Rashi – And Moshe grew up: Has [the Torah] not already written, (Exodus 2:10) "<i>The boy grew up</i>"? Rabbi Judah the son of 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.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה ויגדל משה: והלא כבר פתב ויגדל הילד ? אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹנָתָן בְּרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר, הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְקוּמָה וְהַשֵּׁנִי לְגִדּוּלָה, שְׁמֹנְהוּ פְרָעָה עַל בֵּיתוֹ.</p>
<p>Rashi – And he saw their burdens: He focused [literally, "he gave"] his eyes and his heart to be distressed over them.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה וירא בסבלתם: נָתַן עֵינָיו וְלִבּוֹ לְהִיּוֹת מִצְרַר עֲלֵיהֶם (שמות רבה א).</p>

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

- 6) Rav Azarya Berzon explains the above Rashi based on the words of Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz (Source I-4, pp. 6-7). Rav Chaim points out even when we are unable to offer tangible assistance to one who is suffering, we can be *Nosei B'ol* by "inclining our heart to him" which takes a portion of the pain from him. Accordingly, Rav Berzon suggests we can divide Rashi's words as follows: The words, "נתן עיניו" (focusing his eyes), refer to Moshe seeking to do whatever possible to participate in the physical burdens of his brethren, whereas the words "נתן ... לבו" (focusing his heart), refer to Moshe dedicating his heart to identify with the suffering of *Klal Yisrael*, which took away a portion of their pain and reduced their emotional suffering (Ref. 64).

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

- 7) Moshe Rabbeinu's purpose in physically carrying the burdens of his brethren (per the Midrash, Source II-6b, p. 16) was not to tangibly lighten their workload (Rav Yeruchem, Rav Wolbe and Rav Friedlander, Ref. 3, Source X-5 [p.94], and Ref. 13, respectively). Millions of Jewish people were enslaved; hence, Moshe's physical assistance would not accomplish "as much as a drop in the ocean" to alleviate their workload! Rather, Moshe Rabbeinu's purpose was two-fold: (1) To implant in his heart a keen understanding of the depths of their distress, "to enable him to sense and feel their suffering;" and (2) To show his solidarity with his fellow Jews, to let them know they were not alone and their suffering did not go unnoticed, which offered them great consolation.

To accomplish these goals, however, it was necessary for Moshe to channel his empathy with his brethren, from an inner passive state into an external physical action, even if the result of such action would have no practical effect of lessening their burdens. This is another example of Moshe Rabbeinu emulating Hashem's *Nesiah B'ol* with *Klal Yisrael's* suffering. Just as HKBH, with the sapphire brick "under His feet" (Source II-5a, p. 13), demonstrated the importance of performing an action to manifest His *middah* of "לשאריית נחלתו", Moshe also carried out concrete actions to advance his *Nesiah B'ol* from a passive state to active manifestation. We learn from Moshe Rabbeinu that developing the *ma'alah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* requires that we exert ourselves with concrete acts of benevolence which foster within us the inner emotional capacity to feel another person's suffering, even if those actions do not tangibly improve the person's situation.

- 8) Prior to his comments on the Torah's words: "וירא בסבלותם", Rashi interprets "ויגדל משה" – "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," - "ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם" – take on a far greater significance. Despite his high position in the government, Moshe Rabbeinu did not hesitate to shed his royal stature, leave the palace and his entourage behind, don commoner's clothing and help his brethren in their forced labor. The sense of emotional support that the laboring Jews gained from seeing the princely Moshe abandon his rank to be with them and physically assist them in their moment of suffering, was immeasurable (Rav Friedlander; Ref. 13).
- 9) Rabbi A Leib Scheinbaum comments that Moshe's sharing in the pain of his people is manifest in the names he gave his two sons. In the beginning of Parshas 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 his brethren's suffering and captivity and he longed to return to join 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 – sojourner – to ensure he would remember that he did not belong here, away from his brothers, and that he would dedicate his energies to return to them at the first available opportunity (Ref. 46).

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

- 10) The Gemara in Mesechta Taanis (Source II-8) while stating the imperative of sharing in the distress of the community, heralds Moshe Rabbeinu as the model for sharing the community's suffering. During the war against Amalek, when Moshe needed to sit, he insisted on sitting on an uncomfortable stone, reasoning: "Since the Children of Israel are steeped in distress, I also 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" - "I am with him in distress."

Source II-8: Gemara Taanit 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 also shall be with them in distress." He therefore elected to sit on a rock. 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*

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu is the paradigm for sharing in the suffering of the community, deeply reflecting upon their distress, leaving his own position of comfort to experience their pain in any way he could.
- ❖ From Moshe Rabbeinu, we learn that to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we should:
 - Leave our own comfort zone (physically or mentally) to endeavor to view the situation through the lens of the person who is in pain.
 - Take a few moments to deeply contemplate upon the details of someone's difficulties and imagine ourselves going through the same situation.
 - Conduct concrete acts of benevolence which demonstrate sharing in another person's hardship, even if the actions do not tangibly improve the person's situation.

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

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). Although this is not a Halachic discussion, it is of interest that *Tosfos* (ibid) understands that Yosef's abstention from marital relations during the famine was a *middas chassidus* (pious practice, but not obligatory). The Sabba of Kelm (Ref. 14) and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 15), explain that Yosef's *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* was so finely tuned and ingrained in his personality, a product of his diligent character refinement, that he intuited this pious conduct of abstention during a public calamity. Although Yosef and his immediate family were shielded from the ravages of hunger by their privileged position in the royal palace, his identification with the suffering of the people governed his personal life 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-phera, Chief of On, bore to him.</p>	<p><u>בראשית מ"א, נ':</u> וליוסף ילד שני בנים בטָרם תבוא שנת הרעב אשר יקלדה לו אָסנת בת פוטי פֶרע פֶהן 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): "And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came."</p>	<p><u>גמרא מסכת תענית דף י"א ע"א:</u> אמר ריש לקיש אסור לאדם לשמש מטתו בשני רעבון שנאמר (בראשית מ"א, נ') וליוסף ילד שני בנים בטָרם תבוא שנת הרעב.</p>

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- 2) This reference to Yosef's piety is part of the Gemara's larger discussion pertaining to sharing in the suffering of the community which references Moseh Rabbeinu sitting on the stone as an example of such sharing (Source II-8, p. 19). Clearly, both Yosef HaTzaddik and Moseh Rabbeinu shared 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 pleasantries 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, HKB"H 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 his rise to prominence. Where do we see evidence of Yosef HaTzaddik's *Nesiah B'ol* before he became the viceroy?

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

- 4) Rav Nochum Zev Dessler, ZT"l, 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 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*" (Bereishis 40:6). "והנם זועפים", 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. 16).
- 5) A similar insight is offered by Rav Sholom Schwadron, ZT"l, 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. 17).
- 6) Rav Wolbe descriptively portrays the ordeal of a 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,*" (Source II-10a). Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* unfetters him from of 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 ... He 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 pain and difficulties. If you reach out to join him in his prison, to bear his burden together with him, i.e., to feel his pain and to give over your heart to understand his distress [in depth] – you have broken the chains of his

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 בדד, 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

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

<p>isolation and removed one-sixtieth of his illness. Is there any limit to magnitude of the salvation that one who is <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i> delivers to this person who is suffering!?</p>	<p>בדידותו, ונטל ממנו אחד ממששים מחליו. היש קץ לגודל הישועה שהנושא בעול עם חברו מושיט לסובל זה?!?</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! That's all it may take – 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 Mitzvah of reviving his life. By merely receiving him with a pleasant countenance, which takes all of one-and-a-half 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 style="text-align: right;">ספר טובך יביעו ח"א עמוד קפ"א:</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 ממששים 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 שתאריך 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 הלזה, כדי "לפדות שבויים" מבין סורגיהם ואסירים מכלאם?</p>

- 7) Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, commenting on Rav Wolbe's thoughts, adds practical advice how to reach out to a person "imprisoned" in loneliness. *"All it may take [to transform his mood] is saying "good morning" with a smile, showing respect to someone on the sidewalk, not ignoring him ... which takes all of one-and-a-half seconds ... all the anguish, anger and agitation which enveloped him one second ago, has now vanished as if it never existed,"* (Source II-10b). 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, exhibiting genuine concern and he did whatever he could to liberate them from their prison of loneliness. 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) Thus, 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.15), based on the Sabba of Kelm and the *Sefer Hegyonei Mussar*, explains that the appellation, "shepherd," denotes devoted attention to all the

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

needs and wellbeing of those in one's care. One who shepherds animals spends all his time in the heat and cold 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 *Nesiah B'ol* 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 Hashem's special attention to His "flock's" feelings, whereby He feels the pain of each of His "sheep" and tends to all our needs. Despite Hashem's exalted status, He, *kavayachol*, lowers Himself to experience the feelings of His flock, which is the essence of His *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו". Yosef HaTzaddik excelled in this *middah*, emulating Hashem's "position" as a shepherd, by worrying about the feelings and needs of all his subjects, despite his own privileged and protected 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 they 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':
בְּתִיב (משלי י"א, כ"ו): "וּבְרָכָה לְרֹאשׁ מִשְׁבִּיר", זֶה
יוֹסֵף ... זֶן אֶת הָעוֹלָם בְּשָׁנֵי רַעְבוֹן פְּרוּעָה הַזֶּה
שְׁמַנְהִיג אֶת צֹאנוֹ, עָלְיוֹ אָמַר דָּוִד (תהלים פ', ב'):
"רַעֲיָה יִשְׂרָאֵל הַאֲזִינָה נְהַג בְּצֹאן יוֹסֵף". כְּשֶׁהָיָה רַעֲב
בַּיָּמִי דָּוִד בִּקֵּשׁ עָלֵיהֶם רַחֲמִים מִלִּפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא וְאָמַר "רַבּוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים נְהַג אֶת צֹאנְךָ כְּיוֹסֵף
שֶׁזֶן אֶת הָעוֹלָם בְּשָׁנֵי רַעְבוֹן".

Translation from: Artscroll Midrash Rabbah, Wasserman edition, Mesorah Publishers

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 community'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!

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

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 people in their distress.

1) During the encounter of the burning bush, when HKB"H 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). HKB"H 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) Midrash 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><u>שמות ד': י"ג – י"ד:</u> (י"ג) ויאמר בי אד-י שלח נא ביד תשלח. (י"ד) ויסר אף ה' במשה ויאמר הלא אהרן אחיך הלוי ידעתי כי ידבר וידבר הוא וגם הנה הוא יצא לקראתך ויראה ושמה 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 80 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 Urim and the Tumim, as it says, "And they shall be on Aharon's heart."</p>	<p><u>מדרש שמות רבה ג', ט"ז-י"ז:</u> 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): "ויראה ושמה בלבבו". אמר רבי שמעון בן רבי יוסי הלב ששמח בגדלת אחיו ילבש אורים ותמים, שנגאמר (שמות כ"ח, ל'): "ויהיו על לב אהרן".</p>

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

<p><i>“Like the precious oil upon the head running down upon the beard, the beard of Aharon”</i> (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': <i>“כְּשֶׁמֶן הַטּוֹב עַל הָרֹאשׁ יוֹרֵד עַל הַזָּקֵן וְזָקֵן אַהֲרֹן”</i> (תהלים קל"ג, ב'): וְכִי שָׁנִי זָקֵנִים הָיוּ לְאַהֲרֹן וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ הַזָּקֵן זָקֵן, אֲלֵא כִּינּוּ שְׂרָאָה מִשָּׂה אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶן יוֹרֵד עַל זָקֵן אַהֲרֹן הָיָה שְׂמֵחַ כְּאִלוֹ עַל זָקֵנוּ יָרַד.</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 understands and identifies with the feelings of a person seeking Divine guidance 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 being designated 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. 18).

- 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. 19).

- 4) The Midrash Vayikra (Source II-12c), notes that Moshe reciprocated the *Nesiah B’ol* of shared joy which Aharon extended to him. 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 the verse of Tehillim 133:2. The previous verse states: *“Behold, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers, moreover in unity,”* - *“הנהגה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד”*. Rabbi Dovid Rifkind (Ref. 60) 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, Dovid HaMelech’s words, *“הנהגה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים גם יחד”*, 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 appointment as redeemer

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

of Israel as an infringement on his personal “career” as the leader of the Jews, the very position Aharon held for eighty years 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 person’s happiness as if it was his own, is an angel! (Ref. 2). Aharon HaKohen truly emulated the ways of HKB”H who rejoices in the good tidings of *Klal Yisrael*, as described in the verse, “*like the appearance of the heavens in purity*,” (Source II-5a, p. 13).

LESSONS FROM AHARON HAKOHEN – HOW TO BE *NOSEI B’OL IM CHAVEIRO*

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ One who rejoices in another’s good fortune as if it was his own, is like an angel! (Rav Pogromansky)
- ❖ The effectiveness of our prayers on behalf of others, is directly proportional to the degree we experience their pain as our own.

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

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 be willing 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. 63), 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 to live 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 in the land, 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. 11). HKB"H 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. 13), and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu and Rav Kahn explain that the *ma'alah* which HKB"H 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 *Nesiah B'ol* that was evident to her as he tended the flock. As described above (paragraph 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 *Nesiah 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: Midrash Rabbah 2:2: Hashem tests the righteous through their tending to the sheep

... And whom does G-d 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. G-d 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

מדרש שמות רבה ב', ב':
... ולמי בוסן, לצדיק, שְׁנֵאָמַר (תהלים י"א, ה'):
"ה' צדיק יבְּחֵן". ובמה הוא בוסנו? במרעה צאן.
בְּדַק לְדוֹד בְּצֵאן וּמִצֵּאָו רֹעֵה יָפֵה ... הִיָּה מוֹנֵעַ
הַגְּדוֹלִים מִפְּנֵי הַקְּטַנִּים, וְהִיָּה מוֹצִיא הַקְּטַנִּים לְרֵעוֹת,

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

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.*”

כְּדִי שְׂיָרְעוּ עֵשֶׂב הַרֶדֶף, וְאַחַר כֵּן מוֹצִיא הַזְּקֵנִים כְּדִי שְׂיָרְעוּ עֵשֶׂב הַבִּינוֹנִית, וְאַחַר כֵּן מוֹצִיא הַבְּחוּרִים שְׂיִהְיוּ אוֹכְלֵי עֵשֶׂב הַקָּשָׁה. אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, “מִי שֶׁהוּא יוֹדֵעַ לְרַעוֹת הַצֹּאן אִישׁ לְפִי כחוֹ, יבֹא וְיִרְעֶה בְּעַמִּי.” וְאַף מֹשֶׁה לֹא בָחַנוּ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶלָּא בְּצֹאן, אָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, כְּשֶׁהָיָה מֹשֶׁה רִבִּינוּ עָלָיו הַשְּׁלוֹם רוֹעֵה צֹאנוֹ שֶׁל יִתְרוֹ בְּמִדְבָּר, בָּרַח מִמֶּנּוּ גְדִי, וְרָץ אַחֲרָיו עַד שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְחֶסֶת. בֵּינוֹ שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְחֶסֶת נִדְמָנָה לוֹ בְּרִכָּה שֶׁל מַיִם, וְעַמַּד הַגְּדִי לְשִׁתּוֹת, בֵּינוֹ שֶׁהִגִּיעַ מֹשֶׁה אֶצְלוֹ, אָמַר “אֲנִי לֹא הֵייתִי יוֹדֵעַ שְׂרָץ הֵייתִי מִפְּנֵי צָמָא, עֲנֵף אִתָּה”, הִרְכִּיבוֹ עַל כְּתָפוֹ וְהָיָה מְהֵלָּה. אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, “יֵשׁ לָךְ רַחֲמִים לְנֶהֱג צֹאנוֹ שֶׁל בְּשָׂר וְדָם כֵּן חֲזִיק אִתָּה תְּרַעֶה צֹאנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל”, הָיוּ: “וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רוֹעֵה”.

*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 *Nesiah B’ol*, do we have any evidence that Rebbi Akiva became a great *Nosei B’ol*?
- 4) Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 38) 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

ראשית חכמה, פרק “גידול בנים”:
 מעשה ברי עקיבא שהיה בבית הקברות ופגע באדם אחד שחור כפחם שהיה טוען עצים על כתיפו ומרהיט בהן כסוס. גזר עליו רבי עקיבא והעמידו. אמר לו (א”ל): “בני מה לך בעבודה קשה כזאת, אם עבד אתה ואדונך נתן עליך עול כבד, אני אפדאך ממנו ואוציאך

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

Akiva asked him, "Are you from human folk or from the demons?"
The man replied, "I am already deceased and every day they force me to chop wood after which they burn me with it." Rabbi 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."
Rabbi 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 likes me]?' ... At that moment, Rabbi 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 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 Birchas HaMazon, Keriya 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.*"

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 [שאינו לאותו האיש אהוב בעולם]..."
באותה שעה נצטער עליו ר' עקיבא והיה הולך מעיר לעיר עד שהגיע לעירו ושאל: "היכן הוא ביתו". אמרו: "ישחקו עצמותיו בגיהנם". שאל על אשתו, אמרו: "ימחה שמה וזכרה מן העולם". שאל על בנו. 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 ב"ת והוליקו לביתו ולמדו ברכת המזון וקריאת שמע ותפילה, והעמידו והתפלל בצבור ואמר "ברכו את ה' המבורך". באותה שעה הסירוהו מן הפרענות ובא לו 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.

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

Rochel saw the inner qualities in a lowly shepherd – i.e., his *middah* of *Nesiah B'ol* – 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 person's descendants to change their spiritual destiny and redeem the man's soul. In Section VI-C (pp. 57-58), we will see that one who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, has trained himself or herself to look into another person's essence, to imagine what the other is feeling, and picture himself going through the same experience. Moreover, a *Nosei B'ol* looks beyond apparent differences between himself and another, to find commonalities and relate to his fellow's situation. 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 unflinching resolve to always seek the good, to be able to comfort his fellow Rabbis who witnessed the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, by finding the embers of the future salvation buried within the rubble of the destroyed Beis HaMikdash (Source II-15).

Source II-15: *Eichah Rabbah 5:18: Rabbi Akiva comforts his colleagues through his vision of the promise of redemption

Another time [Rabban Gamliel, R' Elazar ben Azaryah, R' Yehoshua and R' Akiva] were going up to Jerusalem. They reached Tzofim (where the Temple site is visible) and they rent their clothes. They reached the Temple Mount and saw a fox emerging from the [former site of the] Holy of Holies. They started weeping, but R' Akiva smiled. They said to him, "Akiva, you always astonish us! We are weeping and you are smiling." [R' Akiva] replied to them, "Why do you weep?" They said to him, "And should we not weep? The place (i.e., the Holy of Holies) about which it is written: *'And the non-Kohen who approaches shall die,'* and behold, a fox emerges from it! The verse, *'For Mount Zion which lies desolate, foxes prowled over it!'*" has been fulfilled on that place." [R' Akiva] said to them, "For this very reason I am smiling. Behold [Isaiah] states: *'I appointed trusty witnesses for Myself, Uriah the Kohen and Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah.'* What is the relation of Uriah, during the first Temple era, to Zechariah, during the second Temple era? Rather, explain as follows: What prophecy did Uriah say? *'Thus said Hashem, Master of Legions, Zion will be plowed over like a field; Jerusalem will become ruins.'* And what prophecy did Zechariah say? *'Old men and old women will once again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with his staff in his hand from advanced age,'* and

איכה רבה ה': י"ח:

פעם אחרת היו עולין לירושלים הגיעו לצופים וקרעו בגדיהם, הגיעו להר הבית וראו שועל יוצא אהד יוצא מבית קדשי הקדשים, התחילו הם בוכים ורבי עקיבא משחק, אמרו לו: "עקיבא לעולם אתה מתמה עלינו, אנו בוכים ואתה משחק", אמר להם: "אתם למה אתם בוכים". אמרו לו: "ולא נבכה מקום שכתוב בו (במדבר א, נא): "והזר הקרב יומת", ונהרי שועל יוצא מתוכו, ועליו נתקנם הפסוק (איכה ה': י"ח): "על הר ציון ששם שועלים הלכו בו!" אמר להם: "אף אני לכה אני משחק, הרי הוא אומר (ישעיה ה, ב): "וְאָעִידָה לִי עֲדָיִם וְאֲמָנִים אֶת אֹרֶזְהָן הַפֶּהן וְאֶת זַכְרֵיהֶן בֶּן יְבָרְכָהּוּ". וכי מה ענין אוריה אצל זכריה, אוריה במקדש ראשון וזכריה במקדש שני, אלא מה אמר אוריה (ירמיה כו, יח): "פה אמר ה' צבאות ציון שדה תחרש וירושלים עיים תהיה", ומה אמר זכריה (זכריה ה, ד): "עד ישובו זקנים וזקנות ברחבות ירושלים ואיש משענתו בידו מרב ימים". וכתב בתריה (זכריה ה, ה):

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

immediately after, it is written: 'And the streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in the streets.' Thus, HKB"Y stated: 'Behold I have two witnesses, Uriah and Zachariah. If Uriah's words will be fulfilled, Zachariah's words will be fulfilled.' I rejoiced about the fulfillment of Uriah's words because this [heralds] the ultimate fulfillment of Zechariah's words." [R' Akiva's colleagues] responded to him, "Akiva, you have comforted us! May you be comforted by the footsteps of the herald of redemption."

" ורחבות העיר ימלאו ילדים וילדות משחקים
ברחבתיה". אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא הרי לי שני עדים
אלו, ואם קימים דברי אוריה יהיו קימים דברי זכריה,
ואם יבטלו דברי אוריה יבטלו דברי זכריה, ושמתתי
שנתקמו דברי אוריה ולבסוף דברי זכריה צתידין
להתקיים. ובלשון הזה אמרו לו עקיבא נחמתנו תתנחם
ברגלי מבשר.

*From: Midrash Rabbah, Kleinman edition, Artscroll-Mesorah Publishers. This event is also recorded in Talmud Bavli, Makkos, 24b.

REBBI AKIVA'S *NEZIAH B'OL*:

THE PROMISE OF GREATNESS SEEN BY HIS WIFE, ROCHEL

- ❖ Rebbi 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*.
- ❖ Rebbi 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 Hashem’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 from “ואנוהו” or “והלכת בדרכיו”.
- ❖ How does this Mitzvah mandate that we be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

1) In Section II-A (pp. 10-14), we saw multiple sources describing how Hashem expresses His solidarity with the Jewish nation’s suffering and He shares in our pain. Therefore, the Mitzvah of emulating Hashem’s ways would obligate us to emulate Hashem’s *Nesiah B'ol*, i.e., the Divine *middah*, “לשארית נחלתו” (Rav Wolbe, Ref. 5). 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: (a) Gemara Shabbos 133b; (b) Rashi: Emulating HKB”H: “Just as He is gracious and compassionate, you too, should be gracious and compassionate.”

<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 [Hashem] is gracious and compassionate, you too, should be gracious and compassionate.</p>	<p><u>גמרא מסכת שבת דף קל”ג ע”ב:</u> 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 “אנוהו” denotes, “me and Him,” i.e., I will work on myself to be like Him, to cleave to His ways.</p>	<p><u>רש”י ד”ה הוי דומה לו:</u> 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 Hashem’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-10, p. 70). A similar derivation is found in Gemara Mesechta Sotah 14a.

Source III-2: Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos): The Mitzvah of emulating HKB”H, 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</i></p>	<p><u>ספר המצוות לרמב”ם: עשה ח’:</u> והמצוה השמינית היא שצונו להדמות בו יתעלה כפי היכולת, והוא אמרו (דברים כ”ח, ט’) “והלכת בדרכיו”. וכבר נכפל זה</p>
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Section III: What is the reason for the imperative to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*?

ways.” This is explained (in the *Sifri*): “Just as HKB”H is called *gracious, you too, should be gracious. Just as HKB”H is called 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.

הצווי ואמר (דברים י"א, כ"ב) "ללכת בכל דרכיו", ובא בפירושו (ספרי) "מה הקב"ה נקרא חנון, אף אתה היה חנון; מה הקב"ה נקרא רחום, אף אתה היה רחום ... ובא בפירושו 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 “לְשִׂאֵרִית נַחֲלָתוֹ” (Source III-3). Hashem experiences our pain and cannot bear to see us suffer because of His “שְׂאֵר” – intimate familial relationship with us (Source II-1b, p. 11). Similarly, the close familial bonds within *Klal Yisrael*, which the Ramak describes as the “שְׂאֵר בְּשֵׁר”-bond between fellow Jews, dictate that a fellow Jew’s suffering would pain each of us, just as all members of a close family are pained when anyone of them is in distress. Likewise, our common bond should dictate that another person’s good fortune would bring us joy.

Source III-3: Sefer Tomer Devorah: Middah 4: “לְשִׂאֵרִית נַחֲלָתוֹ” – “To the remnant of His heritage”

[Hashem’s *middah* of “לְשִׂאֵרִית נַחֲלָתוֹ” serves] as the template how each person [should treat] his fellow. All Jews are close familial relations (“שְׂאֵר בְּשֵׁר”) 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 for us to seek the benefit of our fellow, we should be pleased with our fellow’s success, and let our fellow’s honor be as dear to us as our own since we are in fact one and the same. For this reason, we are commanded, “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*” It is proper to seek the well-being of our fellow and never speak against him nor desire his disparagement, just as HKB”H does not want us to be disgraced or harmed since we are His close relatives ... Our fellow’s pain or failure should cause us anguish as if we were to suffer the same pain ourselves. Conversely, our fellow’s honor and success should gladden us as if we were to enjoy the same good fortune ourselves.

ספר תומר דבורה א', ד':
 כָּד הָאָדָם עִם חֲבֵרוֹ, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵם שְׂאֵר בְּשֵׁר אֱלוֹ עִם אֱלוֹ, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמוֹת כְּלוּלוֹת יַחַד, יֵשׁ בְּזֶה חֵלֶק זֶה וּבְזֶה חֵלֶק זֶה, וְלִכְךָ אֵינוֹ דוֹמָה מְרַבִּים הַעוֹשִׂים אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת וְכָל זֶה מִפְּנֵי כְּלוּתָם ... וְכֵן מִטַּעַם זֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרָבִים זֶה לְזֶה מִפְּנֵי שֶׁמִּמֶּשׁ יֵשׁ בְּכָל אֶחָד חֵלֶק אֶחָד מִחֲבֵרוֹ וּכְשִׁחֻטָּא הָאֶחָד פּוֹגֵם אֶת עַצְמוֹ וּפּוֹגֵם חֵלֶק אֲשֶׁר לְחֲבֵרוֹ בּוֹ. נִמְצָא מִצַּד הַחֵלֶק הַהוּא חֲבֵרוֹ עֲרָב עֲלָיו, אִם כֵּן הֵם שְׂאֵר זֶה עִם זֶה. וְלִכְךָ רְאוּי לְאָדָם לְהִיּוֹת חֲפִיץ בְּטוֹבָתוֹ שֶׁל חֲבֵרוֹ, וְעֵינּוֹ טוֹבָה עַל טוֹבַת חֲבֵרוֹ, וְכַבּוּדוֹ יִהְיֶה חֲבִיב עֲלָיו כְּשֵׁלוֹ, שְׁהָרִי הוּא – הוּא מִמֶּשׁ. וּמִטַּעַם זֶה נִצְטַוְנוּ: “וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ”. וְרְאוּי שִׁירְצָה בְּכַשְׁרוֹת חֲבֵרוֹ וְלֹא יְדַבֵּר בְּגִנּוּתוֹ כְּלָל וְלֹא יִרְצָה בּוֹ, כְּדָרְךָ שְׂאֵין הַקְּב"ה רוֹצֵה בְּגִנּוּתוֹ וְלֹא בְּצַעֲרָנוֹ, מִטַּעַם הַקְּרָבָה, אִף הוּא לֹא יִרְצָה בְּגִנּוּת חֲבֵרוֹ וְלֹא בְּצַעֲרוֹ וְלֹא בְּקַלְקוּלוֹ, וְיִרְעֵ לוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ כְּאֱלוֹ הוּא מִמֶּשׁ הִנֵּה שְׂרוּי בְּאוֹתוֹ צַעַר, אוּ 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. 8). Previously (Section II-B, pp. 15-19), we

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

noted that Moshe Rabbeinu abandoned his regal abode and exchanged 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 who constantly "leaves" His Heavenly abode to tend to all the minute details of our daily lives, like a mother for her infant child (Rav Chatzkel, Ref. 12). In Section VII-C-4-6 (pp. 68-69), 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 in the *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 *Nesiah B'ol* is within our reach if we endeavor to attain it.

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 בְּעָרֵךְ" (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.

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

B) Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* promotes unity (*achdus*) within *Klal Yisrael*

NOSEI B'OL IM CHAVEIRO AND UNIFICATION OF JEWISH SOULS - "איחוד הנפשות"

- ❖ When *Klal Yisrael* is "אגדה אחת" – one unified group (literally: "one bundle") – we create a welcome abode for the Shechinah and we affirm Hashem's throne (His majesty).
- ❖ 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 Hashem's 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-7, p. 68), when we are "אגדה אחת", we affirm (or strengthen) Hashem's throne, so to speak.

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, "*Hashem 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 Hashem – 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 פעמים ומאפיל פעמים, אף אתם פשעפלה לכם, עתיד להאיר לכם אור עולם, שנאמר (ישעיה ס: יט): "והיה לך ה' לאור עולם". אימתי, בזמן שתהיו בלכם אגדה אחת, שנאמר (דברים ד: ד): "חיים בלכם היום". בנהג שבעולם, אם נוטל אדם אגדה של קנים, שמא יכל לשברם בבת אחת? ואלו נוטל אחת אחת, אפלו תינוק משברן. וכן את מוצא שאין ישראל נגאלין עד שיהיו בלן אגדה אחת, שנאמר (ירמיה נ: ד): "בפמים ההמה ובעת שהיא נאם ה' יבאו בני ישראל ובני יהודה יחדו". כשהן אגודים, מקבלין פני שכינה.

2) Rabbi Judah Mischel (Ref. 20) 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 the sharing of 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.

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

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

<p>Chezkiya taught: “Israel are scattered sheep” – [why] is Israel likened to a sheep? Just as – if a sheep is hurt on its head or another body part, all of its body parts feel it – so too, Israel, if one of them sins, everyone feels it. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai taught this with a parable to people on a ship. One of them took a drill and started drilling underneath himself. The others said to him: “What are you sitting and doing?!” He replied: “What do you care? Is this not underneath my own space that I am drilling?!” They said to him: “But the water will rise and drown us all on the ship!” ... For Yaakov, there were seventy souls, and [yet] the Torah writes “soul” in the singular: “<i>And all of the people (נפש) that were of Jacob’s issue, etc.</i>” ... [The reason is]: Yaakov worshipped one G-d, [therefore] it states, “one soul” – “נפש אחת”.</p>	<p>מדרש ויקרא רבה ד', ו': תני חזקיה (ירמיה נ: יז): “שה פזורה ישראל”, נמשלו ישראל לשה, מה שה הזזה לוקה על ראשו או באחד מאבריו וכל אבריו מרגישין, כך הן ישראל, אחד מהן חוטא וכלן מרגישין. תני רבי שמעון בר יוחאי, משל לבני אדם שהיו יושבין בספינה נטל אחד מהן מקדש והתחיל קודם תחתי, אמרו לו חבירי מה אתה יושב ועושה, אמר להם מה אכפת לכם לא תחתי אני קודם, אמרו לו לשהמים עולין ומציפין עלינו את הספינה ... ובניעקב שבעים נפש וכתוב ביה נפש אחת, דכתיב (שמות א: ה): “ויהי כל נפש יצאי ירד יעקב שבעים נפש”, ... יעקב שהוא עובד לאלוק אחד כתיב בו נפש אחת, “ויהי כל נפש וגו”.</p>
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- 3) What are the Halachic and spiritual ramifications of our existence as one 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 for the other; thus, they are like one flesh,*” (Source III-3, p. 33). 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 sailing on high seas (Source III-5). It would be foolish for him to say to his fellow passengers, “*What do you care? Is this not underneath my own space that I am drilling?!*”

- 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, due to our existence as *Kenesses Yisrael*, all Jews are like multiple organs of one body, whereby all the organs of the body “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. Consequently, my fellow Jew’s pain should cause me anguish and his or her good fortune should cause me to rejoice.

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

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

<p>The entire <i>Adas Yisrael</i> (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 <i>Kenesses Yisrael</i>, 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 limb, whereby his entire body also senses distress. Likewise, if one individual experiences joy, his fellow Jew will also feel his happiness.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><u>קדושת לוי, פי' אגדות, כז':</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">... שהלא כל עדת ישראל מאמינים שקל אחד בראנו וכל ישראל כאחד נקרא כנסת ישראל וזאת נקראת שכינה. ונמצא כשאנחנו באנו ממצב אחד, כשיש לאחד צער מרגיש גם חבירו, כמו אדם אחד כשכואב לו אבר אחד מרגיש כל הגוף צער. וכיון שקל אחד בראנו ונשמט ישראל באין ממצב אחד, כשיש לאחד צער גם חבירו מרגיש וכשיש לאחד מישראל שמחה גם חבירו מרגיש בשמחה.</p>
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- 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 become strengthened, transforming us into a more unified 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 with the extent that we exist as a unified entity (which is clearly supported by the Midrash, Source III-4, p. 35). Therefore, Rav Mintz says, when our *Nesiah B'ol* with each other is increased, the *achdus* within *Klal Yisrael* is proportionally enhanced, thereby preparing a more hospitable dwelling place for the Shechinah among us (Ref. 21). 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, our *Nesiah B'ol* has a potent beneficial effect of alleviating 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 goal of the entire Torah, i.e., all Torah learning and Mitzvah performance, is the unification of Jewish souls and sharing each other’s feelings 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. 101-102). We have seen that the virtues of *achdus* and *Nesiah B'ol* are interrelated, whereby enhancement in any one of the two, in turn, leads to growth in the other. An increase in our *achdus* leads to heightened *Nesiah B'ol* since, as a united entity, we can more readily feel each other’s happiness and pain. Conversely, our increased *Nesiah B'ol* motivates us to provide greater support for each other, strengthening our interconnectivity, i.e., our existence as “נפש אחת” – “one soul.” It is, therefore, easy to understand why the great masters of Mussar, such as the Sabba of Kelm, Rav Yeruchem, Rav Chatzkel and many others, were so effusive in describing the importance of being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* !

- 7) Rav Dovid Goldberg states in the name of Rav Aharon Kotler (Ref. 22): Our existence as “נפש אחת” (i.e., due to “איחוד הנפשות”), affords *Klal Yisrael* 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 who form the collective “נפש אחת”, as the Midrash states that the merits of a single righteous person reverberate globally to preserve the entire generation and the entire world (Source III-8). 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.

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

Source III-7: Rav Yeruchem: The goal of the entire Torah is to unify the Jewish souls and being *Nosei B'ol*

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. [The transformation of nature so that 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 love and bond of kinship between them. Thus, [the *middah* of] *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* has such great importance because the common 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, 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 כשלש 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.

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':
"רְאִישֵׁיכֶם שְׁבֻטֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל" (דברים כט: ט):
כָּלְכֶם עֲרָבִים זֶה בְּזֵה. אֶפִּילוֹ צָדִיק אֶחָד בֵּינֵיכֶם, כָּלְכֶם עוֹמְדִים בְּזִכְוֹתוֹ. וְלֹא אַתֶּם בְּלִבְד, אֶלָּא אֶפִּילוֹ צָדִיק אֶחָד בֵּינֵיכֶם, כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ בְּזִכְוֹתוֹ עוֹמֵד, שְׁנֹאמֵר (משלי ו': כה): "וְצָדִיק יִסּוֹד עוֹלָם". וְכִשְׁאֶחָד מִכֶּם חוֹטֵא, כָּל הַדוֹר לֹוֹקָה. וְכֵן אַתֶּם מוֹצֵא בְּעֵקֶן (יהושע כב: כ): "הֲלֹא עֵקֶן בֶּן זִרְחָ מְעַל מְעַל בְּחֶרֶם וְגו'". מִדַּת פְּרַעֲנוּיֹת מוֹעֲטָת, וְהַדוֹר נִתְפָּס בָּהּ, מִדָּה טוֹבָה מְרַבָּה, עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה. לְכֹף נֹאמֵר: כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

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

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

(SUMMARY)

- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we strengthen our existence as one unified entity ("נפש אחת"), 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*) alleviates suffering in the world.
 - As a consequence of our "נפש אחת" existence, the good deeds of one Jew positively affect and accrues merit for fellow Jews.
- ❖ Because of *Klal Yisrael's* existence as a unified entity, we are like multiple organs of one body, and therefore, "spiritually wired" to share the feelings of our fellow Jew (Rebbe Levi Yitzchak).
- ❖ Rav Yeruchem states that the foundation of the entire Torah is "איחוד הנפשות" (unification of Jewish souls) and being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*.

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

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

- 1) Rav Wolbe (Ref. 5) declares that *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is the fundamental *middah* that defines all the interpersonal (בין אדם לחבירו) Mitzvos we perform: "מדה זו היא מדה שרשית העמוק לכל המצוות שבין אדם לחבירו". One might ask: Why must we become partners in our friend's pain, to feel it as if it were our own? Why won't it suffice to simply deliver acts of kindness (*chesed*) to those in need? True, we take our *chesed* responsibilities seriously, lending money to those in need, feeding the hungry, visiting the ill (*Bikur Cholim*), assisting in wedding arrangements (*Hachnasas Kallah*), etc. However, the manner in which we perform these acts of *chesed*, can range across a wide spectrum – from "apathetic and disengaged" on 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.
- 2) 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-7). 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. Rav Yeruchem's assertion illustrates that the *ma'alah* of *Nesiah B'ol* breaths a "living spirit" into mechanical acts of kindness so that they are transformed into the true "צורה" (form) of the Mitzvah as commanded by HKB"H. Similarly, Rav Wolbe (Source X-5, p. 94) 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. 14). When we incorporate *Nesiah B'ol* into our interpersonal interactions, our acts of kindness will reach the "empathic and loving" end of the spectrum. Being *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* qualitatively converts our acts of "giving" from mechanical delivery of service or goods to a service of the heart – truly caring, as Rav Friedlander's states, "we are giving someone a piece of our very being" (Source I-3, p. 6)..

Source III-7: 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 חיובו":

ולפי זה נבין מצות ביקור חולים, כי הנכנס לבקר חולה מבלי שישתתף בצערו, 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 בצערו, שלכאורה מה ירויח זה אם גם העובר יצטער, ולפי דברינו יוצא שרק זה הוא האמצעי היחידי שבו נוכל להקל את יסוריו.

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

3) Rav Yeruchem's theme is supported by a Midrash. The Midrash Rabbah 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. Thus, "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,'" (Source III-8). 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 *Shaim MiShmuel* (Ref. 23) can be understood based on the definition of a *Ba'al Chesed* by Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 24-26). 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 HKB"H, 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, HKB"H created the world purely to do *chesed* despite the absence of any preexisting entity that needed His kindness. The kind deeds performed by Avrohom Avinu emanated from his core identity of *chesed* and thus, resembled Hashem's *middah* of loving kindness. Even though he was obligated to bury his wife, Avrohom nevertheless carried out this Mitzvah because of his core love for *chesed*, rather than merely his obligation. Therefore, Hashem'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 HKB"H 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 obligations. Therefore, in order to emulate HKB"H when we visit the sick (as well as other acts of *chesed*), our actions should be driven by our identification with their pain and desire to ease their suffering, and not merely to discharge our obligation. 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.

Source III-8: Midrash (Berishis) Rabbah: Avrohom Avinu adopted Hashem's "profession" of *Chesed*

<p>"Afterwards, Avrohom buried Sarah his wife": This is what it says: "One who pursues righteousness (צדקה) and kindness will find life, righteousness, and honor." "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 Hashem, doing righteousness and justice." "And kindness" – which Avrohom did for Sarah (when 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>מדרש בראשית רבה נ"ח, ט': 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 וחמשה 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 Yisroel* on *Har Sinai*, "כזקן מלא רחמים" – "as an elderly One filled with mercy" (Mechilta, Shemos 20:2).

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

- 4) Rav Matisyahu (Source III-9), based on Rav Eliyahu Lopian, describes *chesed* performed with a spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, as “*chesed which emanates 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 from His *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו”, i.e., He feels our pain and rises to save us, as if He is saving Himself from pain (Sefer Halkarim, Source VII-1c, p. 62). 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*,” is referring to *chesed* inspired the spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, i.e., our “שאר בשר” kinship. 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 that we perform, enabling us to emulate our Creator.

Source III-9: 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 emanates 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 I cannot bear my friend’s pain and thus, I feel that I am saving myself. When we do *chesed* with this spirit, it is obvious we will merit to arouse Hashem’s *middah* [of “לשארית נחלתו”], 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 (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 BREATHES A “LIVING SPIRIT” INTO ACTS OF CHESED

- ❖ *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* is the fundamental *middah* that defines all the interpersonal Mitzvos - transforming them from mechanical acts to a service of the heart (Rav Wolbe).
- ❖ Rav Matisyahu describes *chesed* performed with *Nesiah B'ol*, as “*chesed* which emanates from the source of the Jewish soul.”
- ❖ Through our *Nesiah B'ol*, our performance of *chesed* will emulate Hashem’s loving kindness, i.e., an integral part of our personality.
- ❖ *Nesiah B'ol* is integral to the Mitzvos of *Bikur Cholim* (visiting the ill) and *Neichum Aveilim* (comforting mourners).

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. 27) asks, we know that the tribe of Levi (*Shevet Levi*) were 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 חֲתָנוּ 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], “<i>Moshe sent his father-in-law,</i>” prior to [the Israelites’ arrival at the Wilderness of Sinai], “<i>In the third month.</i>” [What does this come to teach us?] Shlomo HaMelech said, “<i>The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger will share in its joy.</i>” HKB”H said: “<i>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!</i>” Therefore, the Torah first says, “<i>Moshe sent his father-in-law,</i>” followed by “<i>In the third month.</i>”</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. 28), regarding the reason Pharaoh exempted *Shevet Levi* from servitude. Rebbi Yonason Eybeschutz (Ref. 29) explains that Pharaoh saw through magic powers or astrology that the savior of the Jewish people 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 the slave labor, no one from their 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 suffering of the Jewish people, even leaving the

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

royal palace to join his laboring brethren to enable him to feel and share in their pain. Because of 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 was 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 keihos*, teeth that were blunted as a result of the exile; *Merrari* referred to the bitterness (Ref. 46).

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 states that one who visits an ill person ("*choleh*") alleviates one-sixtieth of his suffering (Source IV-2). 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, i.e., 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 for a sin). Therefore, the *choleh* is viewed as the "debtor" and the *middas Hadin*, 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 was 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!

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

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 גילו".

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 גילו" either means the visitor is in same age bracket as the *choleh*,

per the "*Mefarsh*," 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. 30) 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". Rather than merely a "nice *middah*", *Nesiah B'ol* is a practical solution to remove the *middas Hadin* from my friend in the same manner as paying up his loan obligation. 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 שבממונות 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.

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

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 *Klal Yisrael*, and *Shevet Levi* to participate in the joy of *Mattan Torah*.
- ❖ 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” his “debt” to the *middas Hadin*, thus removing the Heavenly sentence of suffering.
- ❖ The degree of alleviation from suffering afforded to my friend, is proportional to the degree I feel his pain (as if it was my own suffering).

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 a loan

- 1) The Torah, when presenting the Mitzvah of lending money to a poor person, 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 בעצמו כאלו אתה עני.</p>

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

- 2) Rav Friedlander (Ref. 13) and *Yibadel L'Chaim*, Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 31) 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, wouldn’t we feel like dying from shame, wanting to crawl under the ground, feeling so degraded to need someone else’s help? We would be silently pleading that we be treated with understanding, that the lender would talk to us in a compassionate manner, and we would not be 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. 13), 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 matters of helping people. To properly fulfill all interpersonal (בין אדם לחבירו) Mitzvos, we must leave behind our own perspectives to view the situation through the lens of the other person. 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 in which he lived and exchanging his clothes of privilege with those of the common 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) A story that illustrates this theme was published in *The Philadelphia Lawyer* (Ref. 32): 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>שמות כ"ג. ט': וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת 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>רש"י ד"ה את נפש הגר: כְּמָה קָשָׁה לוֹ כְּשֶׁלּוֹחֲצִים 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. 33) shares the

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

following powerful thought: *If there is one command above all others that speaks of the power and significance of 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" ... Fear of the one-not-like-us is capable of disabling the empathy response. 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. It is as if G-d had said, your sufferings have taught you something of immense importance ... I made you into the world's archetypal strangers so that you would fight for the rights of strangers ... 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 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 sufficiently search inward, we can usually find a commonality and connection with the experience of a person who is struggling, to help us identify with his or her hardship. Although our personal experience may seem distant from that of the person in pain, the Torah is telling us we have the ability to extrapolate from our life experiences, to connect and relate to others in the compassionate manner that characterizes *Am Yisroel*. Being empathic and connecting to others is inherent to *Am Yisroel*; we just need to look past the external differences between us that prevent us from accessing this innate ability. Thus, the Torah's formula to be *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, which is stated in reference to interaction 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 Yom Tov, the Torah states: *"You shall rejoice before Hashem, your G-d – you, your son, daughter, slave, maidservant, the Levite, the convert, the orphan and the widow,"* (Source V-3a). Rashi 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., Hashem's). The first set – your son, daughter, slave and maidservant – are yours. Hashem's message in this verse is: *"If you gladden the hearts of those who are Mine, I will gladden the hearts of those who are yours,"* (Source V-3b).

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: וּשְׂמַחְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אַתָּה וּבְנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְהַלְוִי אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ וְהַגֵּר וְהַיְתוּם וְהָאֵלֶּמְנָה אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבְּךָ בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׂכּוֹן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם.</p>
<p>Rashi - the Levite, the convert, the orphan and the widow: These are My four, corresponding to your four – <i>"your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant."</i> If you will make Mine happy, I will make yours happy.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה לוי גר יתום ואלמנה: אַרְבַּעַה שְׁלִי כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבַּעַה שְׁלֶךָ – בְּנֶךָ וּבִתְּךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ - אִם אַתָּה מְשַׂמֵּחַ אֶת שְׁלִי אֲנִי מְשַׂמֵּחַ אֶת שְׁלֶךָ.</p>

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

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

- 2) Why does HKB”H call the convert, orphan and widow, “*Mine*”? In the laws pertaining to Purim, the Rambam, states: “*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,*” (Source V-4a). The Rambam then cites a verse in Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 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,*” (Source V-5a). Rashi explains that Hashem, notwithstanding His exalted abode, “lowers” His Divine Presence to dwell with the downtrodden (Source V-5b).

Source V-4: 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 Isaiah 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 ומפוארה 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 and downtrodden. 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 שביתת יום טוב, פרק ו' הלכה יח:</u> וכשהוא אוכל ושותה חייב להאכיל לגר ליתום ואלמנה עם שאר העניים האמללים. אבל מי שנועל דלתות חצרו ואוכל ושותה הוא ובניו ואשתו ואינו מאכיל ומשקה לעניים ולמרי נפש אין זו שמחת מצוה אלא שמחת כריסו.</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 אָמַר יְהוָה וְנִשְׂאָא רִגְלֵי עַד וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׂמוֹ מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֲשַׁכֵּן וְאֶת דַּכָּא וְשַׁפְלֵי רוּחַ לְהַחְיֹת רוּחַ שְׁפָלִים וּלְהַחְיֹת לֵב נְדָכָאִים.</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 ומשם אני עם דכא ושפל רוח שאני מרכין שכינתי עליו.</p>

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

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

- 3) It is the way of Hashem, *kavayachol*, to “lower” Himself and “squeeze” into the narrow straits of people who are suffering and share in their burdens. Since Hashem is, “with the despondent and lowly of spirit”, we can understand Rashi’s statement that Hashem calls the convert, orphan and widows, “*Mine*” (Source V-3b, p. 49). Therefore, says the Rambam, a person who, at the time of personal happiness and celebration, opens his heart to tend to the needs of downtrodden to bring happiness into their hearts, emulates Hashem’s ways and thus, resembles the Divine Presence. Similarly, the Rambam (Source V-4b), when discussing the Mitzvah of rejoicing with one’s family on Yom Tov, writes if one fails to provide festive holiday meals to the impoverished, the widows, the orphans and the converts to gladden their hearts, his family’s festivities are devoid of any Mitzvah, and instead, are festivities of gluttony. Since Hashem’s lowers His Divine Presence 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 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: “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 (Source V-6a). *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 “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*, the attribute of the evil Sodomites, since he can’t bear someone else benefitting from his possessions). Accordingly, the servant must be given the sole pillow and therefore, 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

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

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. 31), 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 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 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 our 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 the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

VI Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

A) A person who is *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* views situations from another's person 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*. In response, Rava refuted this proof, explaining the *Braisa* in a way that is consistent with Abaye's view. Rather than feeling satisfied 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 חברו, להראות פנים לסברתו, כמו תרגמא רבא
אליבא דאביי וכדומה בש"ס, וחושב שמא הדין עם חברו.

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

- 2) Rav Friedlander further elaborates: One who is a *Nosei B'ol* has freed himself from the limitations of viewing life exclusively from a personal perspective. Instead, he endeavors to look at 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 because he is unconstrained by personal biases and is receptive to other people's approaches in Torah learning (Source VI-2). Similarly, Rav Matisyahu comments that a person who is a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, will endeavor to 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. 2). As a result, his horizons will become broadened 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 [i.e., appreciate] 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 and unwilling to understand [i.e., to hear] another person's approach. I will not merit to grasp the truth in

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, שבו 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

Section VI: Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

Torah because 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 *Klal Yisrael*, which is expressed 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. 56). 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. 2). 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 *Klal Yisrael* as a united community to develop keen insight and depth in our Torah study. As discussed in Section III-B (pp. 35-39), 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-3c). Rashi's famous words, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "as one man and with one heart," (Source VI-3b; 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 מִרְפִּידִים וַיָּבֹאוּ מִדְבַּר סִינַי וַיִּחַנו בְּמִדְבַּר וַיַּחַן נֹחַם
יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגְדַת הַהָר.

Section VI: Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

<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><u>רש"י ד"ה ויחן שם ישראל:</u> כָּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד, אֶבֶל נְשָׂאָר כָּל הַחֲנִיּוֹת בְּתַרְעוּמֹת וּבְמַחְלֻקָּת.</p>
<p>Chizkiyah said: How great is peace! In all the travels [of the Jews in the wilderness], Scripture states, <i>“they sojourned”, “they encamped”</i> – they traveled in strife and encamped in strife. However, when they arrived at Sinai, they formed a single encampment as Scripture states: <i>“And Israel encamped there”</i> (in the singular: <i>“ויחן”</i>). The Holy One, blessed is He said: <i>“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.”</i></p>	<p><u>תנא דבי אליהו זוטא, פרק השלום ה':</u> חזקיה אמר גדול הוא השלום, שבכל המסעות כתיב <i>“ויסעו”, “ויחנו”, נוסעין במחלוקת וחונין במחלוקת.</i> בזמן שבאו לסיני חנו חנייה אחת, (שמות י"ט): <i>“ויחן שם ישראל”.</i> אמר הקב"ה הואיל ושנאו ישראל את המחלוקת ואהבו את השלום ונעשו חנייה אחת, הרי השעה שאתן להם את תורתך. (גם נמצא במכילתא על הלך רעיון זו)</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>? ... <i>“Grace is false”</i> – this is a reference to the generation of Moshe and Yehoshua. <i>“Beauty is vain”</i> – this is a reference to the generation of King Chizkiyah. <i>“It is a G-d-fearing [woman] that should be praised”</i> – this is a reference to the generation of Rabbi Yehuda the son of Rabbi Elai (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><u>גמרא סנהדרין דף כ' ע"א:</u> אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן אמר רבי יונתן מאי דכתיב (משלי ל"א, ל'): <i>“שקר החן והבל היופי [אשה] יראת ה' היא תתהלל”</i>? ... <i>“שקר החן”</i> – זה דורו של משה ויהושע; <i>“והבל היופי”</i> – זה דורו של חזקיה; <i>“יראת ה' היא תתהלל”</i> – 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 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 cloak, the

Section VI: Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

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-5b).

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

<p>The Torah was not given to 600,000 individuals, but rather, to <i>Klal Yisrael</i> – a single entity. When they needed shelter (encampment), each person was primarily preoccupied with the concern of attending to the shelter needs of his friend. Since <i>Klal Yisrael</i>, thereby, attained total unity (<i>achdus</i>) – "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."</p>	<p><u>שיחות מוסר תשל"ב, מאמר "אהבת הבריות":</u> ... 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.</p>
<p>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. <i>Since each person pulls the cloak toward himself, it will not cover anyone.</i> 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 "as one person, with one heart," which had no equal in any previous generation. Therefore, their <i>Kaballas HaTorah</i> was of a much greater stature.</p>	<p><u>שיחות מוסר תשל"א, מאמר לר':</u> 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.</p>

- 4) In Section III-B (pp. 35-39), we discussed the relationship between *Nesiah B'ol* and *achdus* (unity), i.e., the virtue of *Nesiah B'ol* fosters the spirit of *achdus* within *Klal Yisrael*. 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, "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "as one man and with one heart," enables us to merit Hashem's Divine assistance to learn and understand Torah. Rav Matisyahu explains that 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 more worthy of receiving Torah from Hashem, because his essence is bound to the communal existence of *Klal Yisrael*. He represents the ideal of "נפש אחת", and therefore, he will merit success in learning, understanding and teaching Torah.

Section VI: Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

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, which is also an essential requirement to be a *Nosei B'ol*.

Rav Matisyahu explains as follows: 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. I mentally "picture" the various aspects of my fellow's situation, all the myriad ways it challenges and stresses 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.

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 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. 53) 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*. "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.

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

ספר מתנת חיים, מאמר "נושא בעול מקניני התורה":
נביא עוד מהלך *מהרש"ז אשר אליביה המדה של נושא
בעול עם חבירו מועילה לעצם הבנת עומקן של דברי
תורה ... "כי כאשר נתבונן בחכמת התלמוד הוא הפשוט

Section VI: Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

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] that is visible to 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.

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 חבירו עכ"ל". ולכאורה ביאור בהפשטות הצורות בנוגע להבנת התורה הוא להפשיט הענין וצורתו החיצונית עד שיגיע לעצם היסוד והתוכן שבו ע"י התדבקו 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 חבירו, ר"ל להרגיש העול שעל כתפו של חבירו כאילו הוא נושא אותו בעצמו.

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

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. 34). 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 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 Avinu,*" (Source VI-7).

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

"And Moshe ascended to G-d": ... 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], "Are you not embarrassed before him? Is this not the one to whom you descended and in whose home you ate?" The Holy One, blessed is He, said to Moshe, "The Torah was given to you only in the merit of Avrohom," as is stated, "[*You ascended on high, having taken captives*]. *You took gifts for man* (אדם)." The man ("אדם") mentioned here refers to Avrohom, as is stated, "*the greatest man among the Anakim.*"

שמות רבה כ"ח, א':
 "וּמַשֶּׁה עָלָה אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים" (שמות י"ט, ג'): ... בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה בְּקִשּׁוֹ מִלְּאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרָת לִפְגַּע בְּמַשֶּׁה, עָשָׂה בּוֹ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא קְלִסְטִירִין שֶׁל פְּנֵיו שֶׁל מַשֶּׁה דּוֹמָה לְאַבְרָהָם. אָמַר לָהֶם הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: אֵי אַתֶּם מִתְבַּיְשִׁין הֵימָנוּ ? לֹא זֶהוּ שְׂיִרְדָּתְם אֲצִלּוֹ וְאֲכַלְתֶּם בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ ? אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמַשֶּׁה: לֹא נִתְּנָה לָךְ תּוֹרָה אֲלֵא בְּזִכּוֹת אַבְרָהָם, שְׁנֵאמַר (תהלים ס"ח, י"ט):
 "[עָלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שְׁבִיתָ שְׁבִי לְקַחַת מִתְּנוּת בְּאָדָם], וְאִין אָדָם הָאָמֹר פֶּאֶן אֲלֵא אַבְרָהָם, שְׁנֵאמַר (יהושע י"ד, ט"ו): הָאָדָם הַגָּדוֹל בְּעֵנְקֵימִים."

Translation adapted from: *Avrohom's Yom Tov*, by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner, Yeshiva University – Shavuot To-Go, Sivan 5770.

Section VI: Why is the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* one of the 48 qualities for Torah acquisition?

- 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 we need 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* (Hashem’s glory). The angels’ ability is finite – what they see is what they get. However, human beings 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 *Kavod Shomayim* 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 are looking 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, anxiety and worries, 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 Hashem’s emissary to utilize His Torah to unveil the hidden Divine spark in the world, thereby increasing *Kavod Shomayim*. Therefore, when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we receive *Seyata Dishmaya* (Heavenly assistance) to acquire Torah.

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. He, therefore, will merit to reach the truth in Torah since he is receptive to all approaches.
- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we strengthen Jewish unity (*achdus*), i.e., our existence "as one man and with one heart," - "כִּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֶב אֶחָד", 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.

VII The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* and its role in Kiddush Hashem

A) The Divine *middah*, “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ” – “The remnant of His heritage” - Hashem’s *Nesiah B'ol* for the Jewish people’s suffering

- 1) The *middah*, “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ”, is the fourth of the thirteen attributes (*middos*) in the book of Michah. In Sefer Tomer Devorah, the Ramak interprets this *middah* as an expression of G-d’s empathy for the Jewish people, i.e., our pain is His own pain (see Source II-1b, p. 11). The term, “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ”, is explained by Rav Yaacov Haber using a neurophysiology analogy. When a person’s foot is injured by a sharp object, the central nervous system, i.e., the brain, immediately receives the pain sensation via communication of neurons (nerve cells) from the affected sensory receptors in the foot, up to the brain. In an analogous manner, G-d, *kavayachol* (so to speak), is the central nervous system of *Klal Yisrael* and as such, any pain we experience, is His own pain (Ref. 35). Thus, “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ”, refers to the notion that we are extensions (i.e., the “sensory receptors”, in Rav Haber’s analogy), of HKB”H. Moreover, the root of “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית” is “שָׂאָר”, which, in Parshas Emor (“לְשֹׂאֲרוֹ הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו”; Vaykra 21:2) refers to a person’s nearest kin (i.e., his wife, per Rashi, *ibid*), indicating that HKB”H considers *Klal Yisrael* as His closest kin, and therefore, our pain is His pain.
- 2) The Ramak cites a verse from Shoftim: “וּתְקַצֵּר נַפְשׁוֹ בַּעֲמַל יִשְׂרָאֵל” – “and [Hashem’s] spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel,” regarding the suffering that the Jews endured at the hands of their oppressors (Source VII-1a). The Hebrew word “וּתְקַצֵּר” denotes a “narrow” state, as if one was “cornered in” due to unbearable suffering, akin to the colloquial expression, “in narrow straits”. Accordingly, Rashi explains: “*kavayachol*, [Hashem] did not have the expanse to endure and contain the anguish caused Him by the toil of Israel,” (Source VII-1b), illustrating that HKB”H feels unbearable distress when the Jewish people suffer; therefore, He champions our cause to relieve His own suffering. *Sefer Halkarim* similarly understands the analogy portrayed by “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. HKB”H is deeply affected and anguished by the distress of the Jewish people which impels Him to rise up to save us, as if He was saving Himself. *Sefer Halkarim* states that it was such Divine *Nesiah B'ol* that brought about the redemption of Israel from the Egyptian enslavement even though our merits were lacking (Source VII-1c).

Source VII-1: (a) Shoftim 10: 16; (b) Rashi; (c) *Sefer Halkarim*: Hashem’s anguish over *Klal Yisrael*’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>שׁוֹפְטִים י', ט"ז: וַיִּסְרוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַגֹּזֵר מִקִּרְבָּם וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֶת ה' וַתִּקְצֹר נַפְשׁוֹ בַּעֲמַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>
<p>Rashi – His spirit could not tolerate: So to speak, He (Hashem) did not have the expanse to endure and contain the anguish caused Him by the toil of Israel.</p>	<p>רש"י ד"ה וַתִּקְצֹר נַפְשׁוֹ בַּעֲמַל: כּבִּיכּוֹל לֹא הִיָּה רַחֲבַת מְקוֹם לְסַבּוֹל וּלְכַנּוּס שֵׁם צָרָה שֶׁהִיָּה לוֹ בַּעֲמַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.</p>

Section VII: The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* and its role in Kiddush Hashem

<p>The verse, “and His spirit could not tolerate the travail of Israel,” depicts HKB”H 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, HKB”H 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 have indeed seen the affliction of My people ... I shall descend to rescue it from the hand of Egypt,” [whereby HKB”H declared He will save <i>Klal Yisrael</i> on account of His anguish for their suffering].</p>	<p>ספר העקרים. מאמר שני, פרק יד: ועל זה הדרך הוא מה שאמר הכתוב, “ותקצר נפשו בעמל ישראל”, 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 עמי אשר וגו’ וארד להצילו מיד מצרים וגו’”.</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 *Klal Yisrael* 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

<p>You find that whenever 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 Yisroel) 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.</p>	<p>מכילתא דבי רבי ישמעאל מסכתא דפסחא, בא י”ד: וכן את מוצא, בכל מקום שגלו ישראל, כבכל גלתה שכינה עמהם: גלו למצרים, שכינה עמהם ... גלו לבבל, שכינה עמהם ... גלו לעילם, שכינה עמהם ... גלו לאדום, שכינה עמהם ... וכשעתידין לחזור, כבכל שכינה חזרת עמהו, שנאמר (דברים ל, ג): “ושב ה’ אלקיך את שבותך”. אינו אומר “והשיב”, אלא “ושב”, ואומר (שה”ש ד, ח): “אתי מלבנון פלה אתי מלבנון תבואי” ... ומה תלמד לומר “אתי מלבנון פלה?” כבכל אני ואת מלבנון גלינו, אני ואת ללבנון עולים ... וכשהגיע הקץ, לא עכפון הקדש ברוך הוא פהרף עין.</p>
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Translation adapted from: Sefaria.org; (a similar version appears in *Sifrei Bamidbar* 4:4)

- 4) During the Egyptian enslavement, the Torah expresses Hashem’s intimate attention to the Jewish people’s suffering with the terms, “וידע אלקים” – “and G-d knew,” and “כי ידעתי את מכאביו” – “for I know [the Jewish people’s] pains,” (Sources II-2a and II-3a, pp. 11 & 12, respectively). *Sefer Halkarim* interprets these verses to understand that Hashem experienced our suffering to such an extent that He, *kavayachol*, could not endure our anguish and therefore, He rose up to rescue us, as if to save Himself from the pain He suffers with us.
- 5) Rav Yeruchem Levovitz (Ref. 3) explains that HKB”H 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: “וידע אלקים” – “G-d knew”

Section VII: The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* and its role in Kiddush Hashem

(Shemos 2:25; Source II-2, 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, Hashem was unaware of their pain. Although HKB”H always sees and knows everything, at times He remains in a state of *Hester Panim* (literally, “a 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 explains the words, וידע אלקים: “*He focused His heart upon them and did not hide His eyes [from them].*” From this Rashi, Rav Friedlander (Source 66) deduces that until this moment, HKB”H was in a state of *Hester Panim*, during which it appeared to us that, *kavayachol*, His “eyes” were closed and misfortunes occurred by happenstance as if, Heaven forbid, no one was guiding the world.

Rav Friedlander cites the Ramban (on Shemos 2:25) who also expresses this notion: “*Initially, Hashem concealed His face from them, and they became prey. However, now Hashem heard their moaning and saw them, which means, He did not conceal His face from them any longer, so that He knew all their suffering, all that was done to them and all that they needed.*” 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, every minute sensation of their suffering came before His 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 *Klal Yisrael*, whereby their distress became the “personal” suffering of HKB”H when the *Hester Panim* period was over. Hashem would not allow the Jews to endure even one more second of pain, as if He simply could no longer bear it. This thought is conveyed by the *Mechilta D’bai Rabbi Yishmael*: “*When the end [of their exile period] arrived, HKB”H did not delay [their redemption] even for the blink of an eye,*” (Source VII-2).

- 6) Rav Ezra Bick (Ref. 67) explains that the explanation of, “וירא אלקים את בני ישראל וידע אלקים” - “*G-d saw the Children of Israel and G-d knew,*” is not limited to Hashem looking at a tangible, observable hardship such as the Jewish people’s physical servitude. Beyond observing their physical hardship, HKB”H turned to see and feel the inner pain of one who feels helpless with no avenue of hope, identifying with the sighs that arose from their sense of helplessness. The knowledge (“וידע”) which arises from seeing (“וירא”), refers to a special level of intimacy, identification and connection with the object of Hashem’s *Nesiah B’ol*. When HKB”H saves *Klal Yisrael*, He does so with the spirit of partnership and intimate identification with all our suffering.

HASHEM’S NESIAH B’OL FOR KLAL YISROEL -

THE DIVINE MIDDAH OF “לשארית נחלתו”

- ❖ Hashem’s empathy for the Jewish people is an expression of His intimate kinship with us. As a result, our distress deeply affects and anguishes Him.
- ❖ When Hashem 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 was exiled with us throughout our many exiles and will return to *Eretz Yisrael* with us upon our redemption.

B) Our *Nesiah B'ol* for Hashem's pain and the responsibility to pray for relief of His pain

- 1) The Mishna Sanhedrin, which discusses the Torah's requirement for prompt burial of executed convicts, states that the Shechinah (the Divine Presence) 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 (I feel heavy) by My head, I am burdened by My arm,'" (Source VII-3).*

Source VII-3: Mishna Sanhedrin 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>"I am burdened (I feel heavy) by My head, I am burdened by My arm."</i> 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.

- 2) Since Hashem feels great pain on account of the suffering of any individual, Rav Wolbe advises, 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 (Source VII-4). 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-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, <i>"Not for our sake, Hashem, not for our sake, but for Your Name's sake give glory, for Your kindness and for Your truth."</i> 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 our ill friend to be healed, we should focus primarily on the anguish of the Shechinah Who suffers along with the <i>choleh</i>. Our underlying intent should be that the Shechinah be spared further anguish [when the person is healed], and that, once recovered, he will be able to serve his Creator with greater strength, thereby elevating the Heavenly Glory in the world.</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 הסדך ועל אמיתך" (תהלים קטו: א)! כי בעצם זהו כל ענין התפילה, לבקש על גילוי כבוד שמים בעולם. ומובא בספרים כי גם המתפלל על חבירו שיעמוד מחליו, אין לו להתכוון אלא על צער השכינה הסובלת עם כל חולה, ויכוון שהשכינה לא תסבול עוד, ועוד כי הלה יבריא ממחלתו ויכול לעבוד את בוראו ביתר שאת, ויתרבה על ידו כבוד שמים בעולם.</p>
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- 3) Rebbi Chaim of Volozhin states in *Nefesh HaChaim* (Source VII-5): *"[When a person suffers], he should pray for relief of the Shechinah's pain, for every human pain produces a corresponding anguish in the Shechinah."* Thus, an entirely new dimension of *Nesiah B'ol*, is that we should be *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem's pain, i.e., His pain on account of any individual's suffering and on account of the Jewish community's suffering especially while we are in exile.

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

When praying for relief of suffering, one should focus on the anguish of the Shechinah. 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]. The same applies for an individual who suffers pain. Although his suffering does not involve desecration of Hashem's Name, he should pray for relief of the Shechinah's pain, for every human pain produces a corresponding anguish in the Shechinah, as the Mishna states: "R' Meir said: *When man suffers, what does the Shechinah say? 'My head feels heavy, My arm feels heavy!'*"

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

- 4) How immense is Hashem's pain as long as the Jewish people remain in exile! The Gemara Berachos says when HKB"H hears us praise His Name, He shakes His head and says: "Fortunate is the King who is praised this way in His house. What is there for the Father who exiled His children! Woe to the children who were exiled from their Father's table," (Source VII-6). It is a source of great anguish to Hashem that His children no longer praise Him in the Beis HaMikdash. Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky explains since the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, we only praise Hashem with, "May His (G-d's) great Name be blessed," whereas while the Beis HaMikdash was extant, our words of praise also included, "His glorious kingdom," (Ref. 36). Hashem desires greatly to return us to the Temple and hear us once again praise and glorify His Name properly. How great is the pain of our Heavenly Father!

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,' HKB"H shakes His head and says: 'Fortunate is the King who is praised this way in His house. What is there for the Father who has exiled His

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 וחי 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

Section VII: The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* and its role in Kiddush Hashem

children! Woe to the children who have been exiled from their Father's table.”

כך, מה לו לאב שהגלה את בניו, ואוי להם לבנים שגלו מעל שולחן אביהם.”

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

- 5) Hashem shares all the ignominy that we suffer in exile as the *Mechilta* says, “*whenever Israel was exiled, the Shechinah went into exile along with us,*” (Source VII-2, p. 62). Because of our exile, Hashem’s Name is desecrated as the prophet Yechezkel states (36:20), “*It (the House of Israel) came among the nations where they came (i.e., were exiled), and they desecrated My holy Name when it was said of them, ‘These are the people of Hashem, but they departed His land.’*” Therefore, we have the amazing opportunity to be *Nosei B'ol* with HKB”H Himself, to empathize, so to speak, with His pain and pray for the relief of His anguish. Accordingly, 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,*” (Source VII-5, p. 64).
- 6) A practical application of our *Nesiah B'ol* with Hashem’s pain is to plead for the restoration of His glory (*Kavod Shomayim*) through our 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.*” In the *Shemonah Esrei*, we have an awesome opportunity to express our yearning that the *Kavod Shomayim* be restored, when reciting the *Berachos* of “ולירושלים עירך”, “את צמח דוד” and when we request, “*May our eyes witness Your return to Zion in compassion,*” in the *Berocha* of “רצה”.
- 7) Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D. writes (Ref. 37): 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 the Davening 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. The ideal prayer, then, is to relieve the Shechinah of its suffering.

FEELING HASHEM’S PAIN AND PRAYING FOR RELIEF OF HIS PAIN

- ❖ When praying on behalf of someone in distress, we should plead for the relief of the Shechinah’s anguish since Hashem suffers along with anyone in pain.
- ❖ The underlying theme of all prayer is to plead that Heavenly Glory will be revealed in the world, especially at the time of redemption.
- ❖ Hashem’s Name suffers desecration while we are in exile. We are *Nosei B'ol* with Hashem 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, one who develops his character to feel another person's pain, will also feel the pain of the Shechinah (Ref. 9). 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 declares (Ref. 38), 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.
- 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? The Shechinah dwells upon the downtrodden, feeling their pain as if Hashem Himself is suffering from their distress (Yeshayahu 57:15; Source V-5a, p. 50). If we empathize with people in need, by extension, we also empathize with Hashem's suffering since He suffers along with them. Moreover, during our prayers for people in need, if we remember that "*every human pain produces a corresponding anguish in the Shechinah,*" we will come to "*pray for relief of the Shechinah's pain,*" (*Nefesh HaChaim*; Source VII-5, p. 65). Once our thoughts are focused on Hashem's pain and the desire to relieve His pain, we will also feel pain for the desecration of Hashem's Name in exile, arousing us to pray in a heartfelt manner for the restoration of His glory through our final redemption. Thus, it is a very small leap from empathizing with our fellow Jews to becoming filled with the desire to ensure Kiddush Hashem in the world.
- 3) Rav Chatzkel (Ref. 39) 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?'*" This indicates that it is equally incumbent upon us to coronate our friend as to coronate HKB"H. What is the meaning of this passage? Rav Chatzkel explains that coronating my friend expresses the altruistic outlook that my existence is tied in with the wellbeing and success of *Klal Yisrael*. I have no independent needs or purpose outside the flourishing of the Jewish nation – as they go, so do I. In other words, my existence is part and parcel of our existence as "*נפש אחת*" (one collective soul). This very *avodah* (spiritual work) is also the essence of coronating HKB"H, proclaiming that "*אין עוד מלבדו*" - there is no force or will in the world governing my existence other than HKB"H. My choices, my behavior and my breaths are charged with the mission of declaring His sovereignty. Thus, to the extent we coronate our friend by perfecting our "*נפש אחת*" existence, our coronation of HKB"H is correspondingly (that much) more complete. We mentioned above (Section III-B-6, p. 37), when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, we strengthen our existence as "*נפש אחת*". Therefore, it follows, that an additional positive effect of our *Nesiah B'ol* is to strengthen our coronation of HKB"H. This is supported by the Midrash (Source VII-7): "*When is His throne, so to speak, established above? When Israel becomes 'אגדה אחת' (one bundle).*" How powerful this message is: The extent to which we care and feel for another person, directly affects Hashem's majesty! Just as we affirm Hashem's kingship when we go to Shul and recite "*יהא שמייה רבה מברך*" ("May Hashem's great Name be blessed"), we also help establish Hashem's kingship when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* – since this behavior strengthens our "*נפש אחת*" existence!

Source VII-7: Midrash Rabbah: 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> This verse is understood via a parable of 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 (<i>"אגדה אחת"</i>). 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> Similarly, it states (Devarim 33:5): <i>"He became King over Jeshurun [when the numbers of the nation gathered – the tribes of Israel in unity]."</i> (Translation from: Sefaria.org)</p>	<p><u>במדבר רבה ט"ו, י"ח:</u> אֶסְפָּה לִי, זֶה שְׁאָמַר הַכְּתוּב (עמוס ט: ו): "הַבּוֹנֵה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעֲלֹתָו וְנֹאגְדָתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ יִסְדָּה [הַקָּרָא לְמִי הַיָּם וַיִּשְׁפְּכֶם עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ ה' שָׁמוֹ]". לָמָּה הַדְּבָר דּוֹמֵה לְפִלְטִין שֶׁהֵיטָה בְּנוּיָהּ עַל גְּבֵי הַסְּפִינּוֹת, כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַסְּפִינּוֹת מְחַבְּרוֹת פְּלִטִין שֶׁעַל גְּבִיָּהּ עוֹמְדָת, כִּף הַבּוֹנֵה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעֲלֹתָו, כִּכְנִיכּוֹל כְּסֹאף מְבוֹסֵס לְמַעַלָּה בְּזִמְן שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל עֲשׂוּיִן אֶגְדָּה אַחַת, לְכַף נֹאמַר: "הַבּוֹנֵה בַשָּׁמַיִם מַעֲלֹתָו", אֵימָתִי? "וְנֹאגְדָתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ יִסְדָּה". וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר (דְּבָרִים ל'ג: ה): "וַיְהִי בִישְׂרוּן מְלֶךְ [בְּהִתְאַסָּף רְאִשֵׁי עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל]".</p>
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4) After the sin of the golden calf, Hashem expressed to Moshe Rabbeinu His desire to destroy *Klal Yisroel* and make Moshe into a great new nation. Moshe prayed for the forgiveness and survival of *Klal Yisroel*, (Source VII-8, 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 (verse 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 Yisroel* from annihilation. Yet, in the very next verse, 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."*

Source VII-8: Shemos 32: 31-34: Moshe Rabbeinu wants to forfeit his life to save *Klal Yisroel* 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. (32) And now, if You would but bear their sin! – but if not, erase me from Your book that You have written." (33) Hashem said to Moshe, "Whoever has sinned against Me, I shall erase him from My book. (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><u>שמות פרק ל"ב:</u> פְּסוּק ל"א: וַיִּשָּׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי חָטָא הָעָם הַזֶּה חָטָאָה גְדוֹלָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהִי זָהָב. פְּסוּק ל"ב: וַעֲתָה אִם תִּשָּׂא חַטָּאתָם וְאִם אֵין מַחְנִי נָא מִסִּפְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ. פְּסוּק ל"ג: וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מִי אֲשֶׁר חָטָא לִי אֶמְחִנוּ מִסִּפְרִי. פְּסוּק ל"ד: וַעֲתָה לֵךְ נָחֵה אֶת הָעָם אֶל אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי לְךָ הַנֵּה מִלְּאֲכִי יֵלֶךְ לְפָנֶיךָ וּבַיּוֹם פְּקַדֵי וּפְקַדוֹתַי עֲלֵיהֶם חַטָּאתָם.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

5) Rav Friedlander (Ref. 50) asks, since Moshe's plea, *"but if not, erase me from your book,"* was ineffective from the perspective of Hashem's justice, how then, did his prayer succeed to save *Klal Yisroel*? Rav Friedlander cites Rav Eliyahu Dessler's explanation, based on the Gemara Berachos which states that Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to

Section VII: The reciprocal *Nesiah B'ol* relationship between Hashem and *Klal Yisrael* and its role in Kiddush Hashem

sacrifice his life to suffer the very fate of annihilation decreed upon *Klal Yisrael*, in order to save them (Source VII-9). 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 *Klal Yisrael*. Moshe's total identification with the lot of his brethren whereby he felt his entire existence tied to their survival, provided the *zechus* (merit) to annul the decree for their destruction and granted them a reprieve.

Source VII-9: Gemara Berachos 32a: Moshe wants to forfeit his life to save *Klal Yisrael* from destruction

<p><i>"And Moshe pleaded before Hashem"</i>: Shmuel said, [the term, <i>"ויחל"</i>] teaches that Moshe gave (i.e., he wanted to give) his life for Israel, as it is stated: <i>"And now if You would forgive their sin – but if not, erase me from Your book [of life]."</i></p>	<p style="text-align: right;">גמרא ברכות דף ל"ב ע"א: "ויחל משה את פני ה'" (שמות ל"ב: י"א) ... ושמואל אמר: מלמד שמסר עצמו למיתה עליהם. שנאמר (שמות ל"ב: ל"ב): "ואם אין מחני נא מספרך."</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 Hashem'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 *Klal Yisrael*. 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 *Klal Yisrael*, i.e., 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. 40), comments that when we emulate Hashem's ways, in addition to fulfilling the Mitzvah of *"והלכת בדרכיו"*, our behavior creates Kiddush Hashem in the world. 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-10) 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* through which Hashem 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-10: *Sifri Devarim 49:1: The Mitzvah of emulating HKB”H, derived from “ללכת בכל דרכיו”*:

“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: *“Everyone who calls in the Name of Hashem will escape.”* 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: *“Everyone who is called by My Name and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have fashioned, even perfected.”*

ספרי דברים מ”ט: א’: (דברים יא: כב):

“ללכת בכל דרכיו”: אלו דרכי הקב”ה שנאמר (שמות לד: ו-ז): “ה’ ה’ אל רחום וחנון ארץ אפים ורב חסד ואמת נוצר חסד לאלפים נושא עון ופושע וחסאה ונקה”. ואומר (ויאל 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”.

**Sifri* interprets this verse homiletically: *“Everyone who will be called by the Name of Hashem, will escape.”*

- 8) The *Sefer HaChinuch* (Source VII-11), while discussing the Mitzvah of loving our fellow Jew, lists several practical applications: *“If one recounts information about his fellow, he should recount them [in a way that brings] praise [onto the fellow], 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” (Isaiah 49:3).”*

Source VII-11: *Sefer HaChinuch: Mitzvah 243: The Mitzvah of “אהבת ישראל”*: Loving a fellow Jew

The Mitzvah of *Ahavas Yisroel*: To love every Jew with the love of one’s soul – meaning to say that we should take pity on a Jew and his money, just like a person has pity on himself and his own money; as it stated, *“You shall love your fellow as yourself”* ... The general principle is that a person should behave with his fellow in the way that he behaves with himself – to guard his fellow’s money and to distance all injury from him. If one recounts information about his fellow, he should recount them [in a way that brings] praise [onto the fellow], 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.”*

ספר החינוך – מצוה רמג:

מצות אהבת ישראל – לאהב כל אחד מישראל אהבת נפש, כלומר שנחמל על ישראל ועל ממונו כמו שאדם חומל על עצמו וממונו, שנאמר (ויקרא י”ט, י”ח) – “ואהבת לרעך כמוך” ... 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 ושלוה ורעות ומבקש תועלתם ושמה בטובם עליו הכתוב אומר (ישעיהו מ”ט, ג’): “עבדי אתה ישראל אשר בך אתפאר”.

Translation adapted from: Sefaria.org.

- 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* describes one who displays such *Nesiah B’ol* as, *“My servant Israel, through whom I am glorified”* (Isaiah 49:3), the same verse that the *Gemara Yoma* (Daf 86a) associates with a person whose noble personal conduct brings about Kiddush Hashem.

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 honor 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 *Klal Yisrael* exists as "אגדה אחת" (one united bundle).
- ❖ Moshe Rabbeinu's great level of *Nesiah B'ol* with the Jewish people created a great Kiddush Hashem, which reversed the Chillul Hashem caused by the sin of the golden calf. In the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu's *Nesiah B'ol* alone, *Klal Yisrael* was saved from destruction.
- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, our behavior resembles Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נהלתו", thereby proclaiming the greatness of our Creator Who created us in His Divine image.

VIII How *Nesiah B'ol* activates Heavenly salvation for *Klal Yisrael*

A) Our *Nesiah B'ol* with each other activates Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" to flow toward us.

1) At the end of chapter one of Sefer Tomer Devorah (Source VIII-1), the Ramak explains that emulating Hashem's ways (i.e., His *middos* of mercy) provides a special benefit (beyond the reward earned for fulfillment of all Mitzvos). By expressing one of these *middos* in our behavior toward our fellow Jews, we open the channels for that same *middah* above, activating the Heavenly flow of this *middah* toward us, on a level proportional with our efforts. Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 30) applies this to "לשארית נחלתו", the Divine *middah* that we emulate when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* (see Section III-A, pp. 32-24). When we are *Nosei B'ol* with each other, Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" is activated. Because of this *middah*, Hashem cannot bear to see us suffer as Tomer Devorah states (Source II-1b, p. 11): "He cannot bear their pain and their disgrace, because they are the remnant of His inheritance." Consequently, when we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*, the Jewish nation is protected from suffering because our behavior arouses the corresponding Divine *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו".

Source VIII-1: Tomer Devorah – Conclusion of Chapter 1: The flow of Hashem's *middos* of mercy toward us from above, is activated when we utilize 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 (i.e., power) is such that in the way a person acts here [in the earthly world] below, he merits to open [the Heavenly channels, inducing the flow of] that same supernal attribute from above. 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.

ספר תומר דבורה - סיכום של פרק א':
 עד כאן הגיע שלש עשרה מדות שבהן יהיה האדם דומה
 אל קונו שהן מדות של רחמים עליונות וסגלותו 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) At the end of Parshas Shemos, after Hashem deputized Moshe Rabbeinu to request Pharaoh to let His people go, the Torah (Shemos 5: 1-5) describes Moshe Rabbeinu's initial overture to Pharaoh. Pharaoh responded by increasing the difficulty of the Israelite's labor, forcing them to collect their own straw to produce bricks. Consequently, when the oppressed laborers could not fill the quota, the Jewish officers were beaten by their Egyptian taskmasters. Rashi (Shemos 5:14) explains that the Jewish officers were appointed by the Egyptians to force their fellow Israelites to fill the draconian quota, but because of their pity for their brethren, they chose to get beaten rather than increase their brethren's suffering, a display of great *Nesiah B'ol*. After his apparently disastrous foray into "negotiations" with Pharaoh, Moshe Rabbeinu said to Hashem in dismay (verses 23; Source VIII-2): "From the time I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he harmed this people, but You did not rescue Your people." In other words, not only did my intervention fail to help the Jews, it even made things worse. Rav Eliyahu Lopian (quoted by Rav Matisyahu; Ref. 41) explains that HKB"H engineered this series of events specifically to facilitate the display of *Nesiah B'ol* between fellow Jews, in order to open the Heavenly gates of

Section VIII: How *Nesiah B'ol* activates Heavenly salvation for *Klal Yisrael*

Divine empathy toward the Jewish people. Hashem knew that the redemption of *Klal Yisrael* required His *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” because their merits were lacking. In order to activate this Divine *middah* above, Hashem arranged for Moshe to request Pharaoh for *Bnei Yisroel's* release, prompting a chain of events which led to the Jewish officers displaying great *Nesiah B'ol* toward their brethren.

Source VIII-2: Shemos 5:22 – 6:1: HKB”H 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 style="text-align: right;">פרק ה', כ"ב: וַיָּשָׁב מֹשֶׁה אֶל ה' וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל-י לָמָּה הִרְעַמְתָּה לְעַם הַזֶּה לָמָּה זֶה שְׁלַחְתָּנִי.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">פרק ה', כ"ג: וּמֵאִזְ בָּאתִי אֶל פַּרְעֹה לְדַבֵּר בְּשֵׁמֶךָ הֲרַע לְעַם הַזֶּה וְהִצַּל לֹא הִצַּלְתָּ אֶת עַמֶּךָ.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">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.

- 2) Rav Lopian’s explanation accords perfectly 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.*” Rav Matisyahu interprets Hashem’s response to Moshe (Source VIII-2), “**Now** you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh ... through a strong hand he will drive them from his land,” as follows: It is not as you believe, that your actions made things worse. On the contrary, your intervention precipitated a chain reaction, resulting in *Klal Yisroel* displaying *Nesiah B'ol* for each other. **Now** that My *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו” has been activated through *Klal Yisroel's Nesiah B'ol*, I will mobilize My might to set them free.
- 3) 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 activating Hashem’s *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו”, through which He will redeem us.
- 4) Rav Avrohom Yaffon (Ref. 42) offers an illuminating insight regarding the incident in Parshas Shemos when Moshe Rabbeinu killed the Egyptian who was beating an Israelite 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-vs.-benefit ratio, the cost of saving a single Jew does not appear to justify the lost opportunity of helping an entire nation?

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

<p>11: 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 style="text-align: right;">שמות ב', י"א - י"ב:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">י"א: וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הֵהֵם וַיִּגְדַּל מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּצֵא אֶל אָחָיו וַיִּרְא בֹסֵבֶלֶתָם וִירָא אִישׁ מִצְרַיִם מַכֶּה אִישׁ עִבְרִי מֵאָחָיו.</p>
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Section VIII: How *Nesiah B'ol* activates Heavenly salvation for *Klal Yisrael*

<p>12: 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>י"ב: וַיִּפֶן כֹּה וְכֹה וַיִּרְא כִּי אֵין אִישׁ וַיַּךְ אֶת הַמִּצְרִי וַיִּטְמְנֵהוּ בַחֹל.</p>
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Translation from: Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition, Mesorah Publishers.

5) Rav Yaffon answers based on the Zohar, when the Torah states (Source VIII-3): “וַיִּפֶן כֹּה וְכֹה וַיִּרְא 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; the feeling of *achdus* that impels one to stand up for his brother, was sadly gone. Moshe realized that without this spirit of *Nesiah B'ol*, there was no hope of *Klal Yisroel* meriting Hashem’s redemption. When Moshe saw that *Klal Yisroel* lacked this critical quality of *Nesiah B'ol* to merit redemption, any consideration of risk-vs.-benefit ratio, i.e., saving one individual versus millions, was immaterial since without this merit, all his influence and good standing in Pharaoh’s palace could 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 “לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נַחֲלָתוֹ” 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 Tefillah 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* below, Hashem’s *Nesiah B'ol* above will be aroused to save *Klal Yisroel*.

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

Previously we saw the Gemara Nedarim which states that one who visits a *choleh* takes away a portion of the illness (Source IV-2, p. 45). Rav Yeruchem explains the mechanism: When I am *Nosei B'ol* with my ill friend (*choleh*), I effectively “pay up” the “debt” that *middas HaDin* is demanding from him, just as third party can settle a debtor’s monetary obligations by paying the creditor on his behalf (Source IV-3, p. 45). 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 Im Chaveiro* and feel his pain as if I was stricken by his illness, how does this repay the debt created by his actions? Rav Matisyahu (Ref. 30) presents three approaches to explain Rav Yeruchem’s profound thoughts (below):

1) “מִשְׁפָּטֵי ה' אֱמֶת צְדָקוֹ יַחֲדִיּוֹ” – *The judgments of Hashem are true, altogether righteous* (Tehillim 19:10):

*Rav Yisrael Salanter explains this verse as follows: When HKB”H 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

Section VIII: How *Nesiah B'ol* activates Heavenly salvation for *Klal Yisrael*

his sentence. Thus, the above verse can be explained: “משפטי ה'” – all the ramifications that would arise from Hashem’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 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 alleviated.

**Rav Matsiyahu 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. 33): “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 (Source III-7, p. 38), enables the merits of my good deeds to benefit my friend (Rav Dovid Goldberg in the name of Rav Aharon Kotler; Ref. 22). When we are *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro* with each other, we fortify our state of “איחוד הנפשות”. Therefore, if I feel my friend’s pain as if I was stricken with his illness, my *Nesiah B'ol* reinforces the “איחוד הנפשות”; 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 “איחוד הנפשות” 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. 72), the Ramak declares when we improve ourselves in one of the thirteen *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 alleviated.

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 of Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו" (Divine empathy) to flow toward us in a proportional level to our *Nesiah B'ol*.
- ❖ The supreme *Nesiah B'ol* of the Jewish officers, who chose to get beaten to protect their brethren in Egypt, opened the channels of Hashem's *middah* of "לשארית נחלתו", arousing Him to redeem us.
- ❖ 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.
- ❖ When we are *Nosei B'ol* with a friend in distress (e.g., a *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" partnership, 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.

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

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 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 even make himself ill on his behalf.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">גמרא ברכות דף י"ב ע"ב:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">וְאָמַר רַבָּה בַּר חֵינִינָא סָבָא מִשְׁמִיָּה דְרַב: כּל שְׁאַפְּשֵׁר לוֹ לְבַקֵּשׁ רַחֲמִים עַל חֲבִירוֹ וְאִינוּ מְבַקֵּשׁ גִּבְרָא "חֹטֵא". שְׁנַאֲמַר (שמואל א י"ב, כ"ג): "גַּם אֲנֹכִי חָלִילָה לִי מִחֹטֵא לֵה' מִחֲדָל לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדְכֶם". אָמַר רַבָּא: אִם תִּלְמִיד חֹכֵם 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 *Selichah* called "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. 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 *Selichah*?
- 3) The Chasam Sofer answers that the two situations are quite different (Source IX-2). In the case of the *Selichah*, "מכניסי רחמים", it appears that we are, indeed, channeling prayers through angels. Since HKB"H cherishes His special relationship with us, He eagerly awaits our Tefillos – 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 Talmid Chachom prays on our behalf, he does not approach Hashem 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 clear that the Chasam Sofer's words are not limited to a Talmid Chachom. Any Jew praying on behalf of another, 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). The Chasam Sofer's thoughts align with Rebbe Levi Yitzchak's words in Source III-6 (p. 37). 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

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

salvation, we do so, not as a third-party intermediary, but rather, as a first-party supplicant for our own needs, much 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: Prayers 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 Hashem 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 Hashem's help), therefore, it is preferable for the "head" to approach Hashem. 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"ח = 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 Berachos (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: In the case of a Talmid Chachom who is ill, we should view ourselves as if we are stricken with his illness. Rav Friedlander states that this directive is not limited to praying on behalf of a Talmid Chachom (Ref. 50). 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 Tefillos; 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 prayers on behalf of our friend, so that they 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 (i.e., Canaanite'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 (or undesirable) 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.

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

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.

- 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 “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 take another person’s hardship and view it as if it was their own personal misfortune or loss, arousing them to prayer (Ref. 50).

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 this observation based on the following 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 thereby, become so deeply immersed in his pain that they would

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

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

pray for 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 plaint 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 שיח 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 plaint 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.*" Thus, we see from this Gemara that the intensity of distress, which the anonymous passerby felt for orchard owner's misfortune, was so uncontainable 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 while 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 either had the personal means to help him or we had a wealthy friend who happily offers help to such people. Certainly, we would seize that opportunity 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 need (Rav Pincus, Ref. 43).

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

- 1) Rav Chatzkel Levenstein opens our eyes to an entirely new dimension of *Nesiah B'ol*. Avrohom Avinu exemplified the *middah* of *Nesiah B'ol* when he prayed to avert the destruction of the Sodomites (Source IX-5a). Avrohom's readiness to be a *Nosei B'ol* was unaffected by the unworthiness of the evil Sodomites. To bolster this point, Rav Chatzkel quotes the Ramban (Source IX-5b) commenting on the verse (Bereishis 18: 18) which describes Hashem's decision to inform Avrohom of His plans to destroy Sodom: "*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 toward his neighbors who dwelt at his side, not having mercy on them and not praying for them at all?'*"

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

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

<p>¹17: And Hashem said, “Shall I conceal from Avrohom what I will do? ¹⁸: For Avraham is surely to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through him. 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>בראשית פרק י"ח: פסוקים י"ז – י"ט: י"ז: וְהָאֵם הַמְכֹסֶה אֲנִי מֵאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה. י"ח: וְאַבְרָהָם הָיוּ יְהִיָּה לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְעֲצוּם וְנִבְרָכוּ בוֹ כָּל גֹּיֵי הָאָרֶץ. י"ט: כִּי יָדַעְתִּיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה אֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת בֵּיתוֹ אַחֲרָיו וְשָׁמְרוּ דְרָוֶךְ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט לְמַעַן הָבִיא ה' עַל אַבְרָהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלָיו.</p>
<p>²The soundest interpretation is that G-d, blessed is He, spoke these words for Avrohom’s honor. He said: Now, he 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 G-d conceal it from him? Or, if He did in fact tell him about it, how could the righteous Avrohom be so cruel toward his neighbors who dwelt at his side, not having mercy on them and not praying for them at all?” It is good to reveal My plan to him, for I know that he recognizes and knows that I am Hashem, Who loves righteousness, i.e., compassion and because of this he will command his sons and household after him to adhere to My ways of righteousness and justness. Thus, if according to the ways of righteousness and justness, the Sodomites should be exonerated, Avrohom will pray before Me to spare them, and it will be good. And, if they are found deserving to be condemned, he will also wish for their judgment to be carried out. Therefore, it is fitting that he enter the counsel of Hashem.</p>	<p>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 החוננים 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 והנה אם בדרך צדקה ומשפט יפטר יתפלל לפני להניחם וטוב הדבר ואם הייבין הם לגמרי גם הוא יחפוץ במשפטם ולכן ראוי שיבא בסוד ה'.</p>

Translation from: ¹Artscroll Torah Series, Sapirstein edition;

²Artscroll Ramban, Mesorah Publishers

- 2) We see from the Ramban that one who fails to pray on behalf of another in need, exhibits the *middah* of “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 (Rav Chatzkel, Ref. 12). Therefore, 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 after him that they keep the way of Hashem, acting with righteousness and justness ...,” required that he display *Nesiah B’ol* with the Sodomites. If Avrohom Avinu had failed to pray on the Sodomite’s behalf, he would have displayed the *middah* of “אכזריות”, which would have jeopardized his transmission of righteousness and justness to future generations. Perhaps the most amazing aspect of Rav Chatzkel’s discourse, is his statement: Just as Moshe Rabbeinu merited Hashem’s revelation to him at the burning bush because of his *Nesiah B’ol* with *Klal Yisroel*, similarly Avrohom Avinu merited that Hashem spoke with him because he was *Nosei B’ol* with the Sodomites (per the Midrash, Source IX-7, p. 83).

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

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. 81), 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 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 prayed for the Sodomites, offering multiple arguments to spare them. From his example, we learn that one is obligated to look after another's needs and endeavor to help him 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 place upon himself the burden and hardships of his fellow 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 scorching heat to prevent people from traveling, to avoid "troubling" Avrohom after his *Bris Milah*].

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. ... ומובא 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 גדלותו 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 הבווערת בעצמותיו להיטיב לזולתו, וכדחזינן גבי אאע"ה שהצטער על שאין ביכולתו לגמול חסד.

- 3) The Ramban (Source IX-5b, p. 81) continues: "Thus, if according to the ways of righteousness and justness, the Sodomites should be exonerated, Avrohom will pray before Me to spare them. And, if they are found deserving to be condemned, he will also wish for their judgment to be carried out. Therefore, it is fitting that he enter the counsel of Hashem." From these words, it appears that Hashem made Avrohom His "partner" to ensure the process of righteousness and justness be adhered to. Only after Avrohom Avinu utilized the *middah* of *Nesiah B'ol* to advocate on the Sodomite's behalf, could Hashem mete out their punishment in a righteous and just manner. The fact that the Sodomites did not merit any mercy, 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. Although the Sodomites did not deserve his sympathy,

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

Avrohom's internal love for *chesed* propelled him to be *Nosei B'ol* with them. 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. 24-26, for a more comprehensive explanation of the *ma'alah* of *chesed* by Rav Chatzkel).

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

R' Ada said, [Avrohom said to Hashem]: "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 Hashem]: "**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 Abraham: "**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.'**"

בראשית רבה מ"ט, ט':

אמר רב אדא נשבעת שאין אפה מביא מבול לעולם, מה אף מערים על השבועה, מבול של מים אין אפה מביא, מבול של אש אף מביא, אם כן לא יצאת ידי שבועה. אמר רבי לוי, "השפט כל הארץ לא יעשה משפט" (בראשית י"ח, כ"ה): אם עולם אפה מבקש אין דין, ואם דין אפה מבקש לית עולם, אף תפס חבלא בתרין ראשין, בעי עלמא ובעי דינא, אם לית אף מותר צבחר, לית עלמא יכיל קאים. אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: אברקהם, "אסהבת צדק ונתשנא רשע" (תהלים מ"ה, ח): אסהבת לצדק את בריותי; "נתשנא רשע": מאנת לחייבו; "על כן משחה אלקים אלקיך שמון ששון מתברך" (תהלים מ"ה, ח). מהו מתברך? מנח ועד אצלך עשרה דורות ומקלם לא דברתי עם אחד מהם אלא עמך, "ניאמר 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 their sin of the golden calf, Moshe Rabbeinu prayed for the Jewish people's survival. The Gemara Berachos states that he asked that his life be taken rather than see their destruction (Source VII-8, p. 68). Moshe's intense identification with the Jewish people made it unbearable for him to go on living without them. In the merit of his *Nesiah B'ol*, Hashem annulled the decree for their destruction (Rav Dessler and Rav Friedlander, see Section VII-C-5, pp. 68-69).
- 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. 7, 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**

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

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 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. 44) 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). Thus, praying for the *choleh's* recovery is a critical aspect of *Bikur Cholim*. Why must the visitor's prayer be offered during the visit? Why would it be inadequate to pray in Shul? Rav Avraham Weinroth explains one of the essential purposes of *Bikur Cholim* is to create a feeling of identification with the *choleh's* plight that enables the visitor's prayer to emerge from the depths of his heart (Ref. 45). 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. The Gemara Nedarim 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 be not be saved (Source IX-8a). The *Rosh* (Rabbeinu Asher) 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-8b).

Source IX-8: (a) Gemara Nedarim; (b) Rosh (Rabbeinu Asher ben Yechiel): Praying for an ill person is an integral part of visiting the sick (*Bikur Cholim*).

<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:</i> Whoever visits a sick person will supplicate G-d for mercy that he will live ... But one who does not visit the sick will not pray for G-d's mercy [that he should live].</p>	<p><u>גמרא מס' נדרים דף מ' ע"א:</u> 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><u>רא"ש גמרא מס' נדרים דף מ' ע"א:</u> 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.

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

- 2) Rav Weinroth explains the *Rosh* as follows: During my visit with the *choleh*, my total identification with his plight will evoke heartfelt prayer. Such heartfelt prayer, arising from an emotional identification with the *choleh's* plight, will create an "עַת רְצוֹן", enabling my prayers to be accepted. However, one who fails to visit has neglected the opportunity to create an "עַת רְצוֹן" 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 "נִפְשׁ אֶחָת".
- 3) We see from here that Tefilla which emerges from an anguished heart that identifies with another person in distress, can create an "עַת רְצוֹן" 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. 46).
- 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. 47). 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.

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

- ❖ What is the proper mindset when praying on behalf our 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.
 - Our mindset should be to beseech Hashem for delivery from **personal suffering** because our friend's pain is our suffering as well. Imagine how we would feel if our friend's distress would, וְהָיָה, befall us and how we would plead for Divine mercy.
- Avraham 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 *Klal Yisrael* was the sole factor that enabled his prayers to save the Jewish nation.
 - From Moshe Rabbeinu, we learn it is within the power of any person – the personality whose soul is filled with the suffering of *Klal Yisrael* – 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 distress (*Rosh*; Rabbienu Asher).

X Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

A) “Picture” the details of someone’s struggle in our mind and imagine ourselves experiencing it

- 1) The Sabba of Kelm offers fundamental advice for developing the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol*: *Nesiah B'ol* 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 totally inconsequential. We must also use our cognitive processes, i.e., mental imagery, to “picture” the details of our friend’s suffering. This, in turn, leads to sharing the other person’s feelings in a more authentic and sustained manner. In a letter, the Sabba writes: “*it is impossible to reach the level of feeling another’s pain, unless we imagine ourselves experiencing the pain, hardship or illness that another person is suffering,*” (Source X-1). In a similar vein, Rav Reuven Leuchter explains that one who is *Nosei B'ol*, “enters into the world” of the other person’s feelings and thoughts, by vividly imagining oneself being in his situation, and thereby he is literally together with the person who is affected – “נמצא יחד עמו ממש” (Ref. 1).

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

<p>Chazal taught us a fundamental understanding in a person’s <i>chinuch</i> (development), that it is impossible to reach the level of feeling another’s pain and to be <i>Nosei B'ol</i> with another, unless we utilize mental imagery – imagining ourselves, Heaven forbid, experiencing the pain, hardship or illness that another person is suffering. Whatever we would want someone to do to help us, or, at the minimum, whatever <i>Nesiah B'ol</i> we would want someone to exhibit for us, we must demand of ourselves to do for another person.</p>	<p>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.</p>
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- 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). For dramatic effect, the Sabba’s example is modified as follows: While praying in Shul, we see a nine-year old orphan (whom we will arbitrarily name “Chaim”) reciting the Kaddish for his departed father. Our compassion would certainly be elicited, we “feel bad” for him, we do anything to help him, e.g., showing him the correct pages in the Siddur, telling him when to recite Kaddish etc. However, after prayer services, Chaim walks home with his mother, we return to our homes and families, and then, our feelings of compassion begin to fade away. The reason our initial compassion has waned is because it was merely a visceral reaction which requires immediate input from our sensory organs (e.g., our eyes, which see Chaim). Once our physical senses are no longer engaged by these stimuli, this *middah* is no longer active. However, if we process the images of Chaim with our cognitive brain, they will become imprinted on our mind. Our *middah* of compassion will thereby “graduate” from a visceral reaction to a *middah* of our intellect. Even after Chaim has left our line of sight, the imprint of his suffering will remain alive in our mind with full force. We can “promote” the visceral compassion to a *middah* of our intellect using our cognitive faculties, by thinking about the details of Chaim’s life, the various aspects of the hardships that he faces. For example, imagine Chaim sitting down to the Shabbos meal, consider his thoughts when he has no father to recite Kiddush, what pangs of pain permeate his heart as he remembers happier times when he had a father to lead the Pesach Seder? Imagine Chaim’s thoughts when many of his classmates go to Shul to learn with their fathers on Shabbos: “*Who will learn*

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

with me? Will everyone look at me, what will they think?" Once we process these "images" with our cognitive brain, they will remain imprinted on our mind long after Chaim has left our presence. The next time we recite *Shemoneh Esrei*, we will request Hashem to help Chaim, sharing his feelings of pain with the same poignancy as if he was standing before our eyes. Thus, utilizing detailed mental imagery to imprint someone's struggles on our mind, is a vital element of *Nesiah B'ol*.

Source X-2: 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 or toil; 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 [visceral] *middah* of 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.

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, 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.

- 3) The following amazing story so clearly illustrates how Rav Chatzkel (who is referred to as "the Mashgiach") employed the Sabba's advice magnificently: *"Rav Michel Yehuda Lefkowitz was once present when the Mashgiach 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 Michel Yehuda commented, 'We then saw what it means to bear the suffering of another,'" (Ref. 7, p. 312).*
- 4) I would like to suggest a practical example for implementing the Sabba's advice in our lives: The following example pertains to praying for couples struggling with infertility, but it is equally applicable to praying for 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 this. 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,

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

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, asking 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 Tefillos 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.

- 5) 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,”* (Ref. 7, pp. 201-203).

Clearly, 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 *avodah* (work) incumbent upon us, not merely to “feel bad” about someone’s troubles and 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, e.g., what it feels like try to get out of bed after a surgery, even a “happy” surgery such as a Cesarean section.

- 6) Rav Yeruchem was told about an individual, who, due to his illness, was unable to turn from side to side in bed (Ref. 10). 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.”*

B) *Nesiah B'ol* communicates the message: “You are not alone, I am with you in your struggles,” even if we have no tangible solution for their problem

- 1) In Source II-10 (pp. 21-22), we mentioned Rav Wolbe’s portrayal of an ill person locked in a “prison” of loneliness. Being *Nosei B'ol* with him denotes, reaching 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* unfetters his chains of loneliness by joining him in his prison, trying to understand his distress and share in his burden. In the same vein, Rav Friedlander explains, when people go through a crisis, a significant aspect of their difficulty is their sense of isolation, *“There is no one who understands what I am going through,”* (Ref. 13).

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

Therefore, by merely showing them that we identify with their suffering, i.e., that we value their feelings and recognize their troubles as worthy of our concern and support, we help ease their pain significantly even if we cannot tangibly solve their difficulties. Consequently, they are no longer alone in their struggles.

- 2) Psychotherapist Kate Thieda (Ref. 59) offers the following advice when a loved one is struggling: “Fixing your loved one’s problems is not often what is needed, nor is it necessarily your job or even your ability to do so. Sharing a listening, caring ear *is* something most people can do. When we feel heard, cared about, and understood, we also feel loved, accepted, and as if we belong.” This theme is artfully synopsisized by Rabbi Eytan Kobre (Ref. 48): “So many of life’s problems cannot be fixed or eased. Kindness is about providing assistance to others; sharing the pain of others is so much more – ***it is about giving to others a piece of your very being*** (Rav Friedlander, *ibid*). It is about joining in their suffering even when you can’t improve their plight. It is about creating a bond of shared pain. And yet, somehow, that always seems to help. Because as anyone who has suffered knows, a burden shared truly is a burden halved.”

C) Leaving the boundaries of “self” to see life situations from the other person’s perspective

In Section VI-A (pp. 53-54), 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. 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. 49). A Jewish religious couple in Israel who experienced fertility difficulties, adopted a non-Jewish baby girl. If a non-Jewish child is put through conversion (*Geirus*) by Jewish parents, he/she must accept Torah and Mitzvos before reaching Bar/Bas Mitzvah to complete the conversion; otherwise, the conversion is retroactively invalid. 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 devoutly religious school valiantly tried to persuade her of the immense privilege to be a Bas Yisroel, a member of the *Am Segulah* (treasured nation), and the eternal reward of *Olam Habboh* that awaits us, 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 and desperation! A couple of days before her twelfth birthday, someone advised the mother to take her daughter to Rav Shlomo Zalman, which of course she did. Upon hearing the mother’s description of the situation, the Rav asked to speak in private 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 Yisroel, 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, “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*, etc. One month ago, she learned that her biological mother abandoned her as a little baby and she

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

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

One could sum up this entire theme with **two verbs** which the Torah states regarding the *Nesiah B'ol* of Moshe Rabbeinu: “ויצא” – “he went out”; and “וירא” - “he saw”, (from the verse: “ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלותם”;
Source II-7a, p. 17). As Rav Friedlander explains, we learn from “ויצא” and “וירא” that we must leave our comfort zone and put our own perspectives aside to see the situation from the perspective of the other person, i.e., the one who is suffering. Without these two verbs, the young girl in Rav Shlomo Zalman’s story would have been lost to the Jewish people forever. In the depths of her heart, she really wanted to grow up as a Jewish woman, but without the amazing ability of Rav Shlomo Zalman to “go out” into another person’s world and “see” the situation from her perspective – to see the anguish in her soul, it never would have happened. All because of two verbs, “ויצא” and “וירא”, her parents were spared such unimaginable heartbreak and instead their lives were turned from unbearable sorrow to joy and jubilation – in a manner of three minutes!

D) 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 X-3). Rav Friedlander explains that praying for an ill person is not merely a highly pious practice; it fulfills the Mitzvah of following the ways of Hashem, Who is with us in our times of distress (Ref. 50). Two of the outstanding models of *Nesiah B'ol* in the Torah, Avrohom Avinu and Moshe Rabbeinu, displayed this *middah* especially during their Tefillos (see Sections IX-C and IX-D, pp. 80-84).

Source X-3: 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 can reach the level of being a *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. [This will also help to] gradually decrease our innate *middah* of 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 then, beseech Hashem [that He heal the *choleh*]. 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 שמתגיגע 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 להשייט, ובמשך זמן כאשר יחשוב
על כך, יורש בקרבו מעלת נושא בעול עם חבירו.

- 2) As Rav Chatzkel advises, since our Tefillos were formulated in the plural form, it is virtually effortless to pause for one moment before a blessing of *Shemoneh Esrei* (i.e., the middle *Berachos* containing the supplicant’s requests) to think, “May this help my fellow Jews who are in need.” For example, before the *Beracha*, “אתה חונן לאדם דעת,” (the request for wisdom), we can think, “May this help Jews who are struggling to understand Torah.” Before the *Beracha*, “השבינו אבינו לתורתך” (the request for assistance to repent), we can think, “May this help all Jews who

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

are spiritually adrift." Implementing this suggestion will add a total of 1-2 seconds per *Beracha*! What a simple solution that is formulated for us in a routine manner, for developing the *middah* of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*. It is advisable to implement this strategy in a gradual stepwise manner. For example, in the first week, add the above thought before two *Berachos* in the *Shemoneh Esrei*. In the following week, add this thought before two more *Berachos*, and in the third week, before a total of six *Berachos*, etc. Rabbi Dovid Rosman mentioned that Rav Noach Weinberg, the founder of Yeshiva Aish HaTorah, would exclaim: "*How much pain Hashem is in when His children are not on the right spiritual path – they are not gaining from all the blessings He has given them,*" (Ref. 27). Therefore, when we think of Hashem's children who are struggling spiritually during the blessing of "השבינו אבינו לתורתך", not only are we *Nosei B'ol* with them, but we also are *Nosei B'ol* with HKB"ח, since we are pleading that His children return to Him so that His pain will be eased! Who can begin to imagine the great effect of expressing our *Nesiah B'ol* for both our fellow Jews and HaKadosh Boruch Hu, Himself, at the very moment we have a personal audience with Him!

- 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. 7, p. 41).
- 4) Lastly, we should never underestimate the value of our Tefillos on behalf of people in need. We saw earlier from Rav Matisyahu (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. Therefore, if we pause to contemplate the struggles of fellow Jews and "picture" their pain before offering prayers for them, our Tefillos can accomplish wonders for them.

E) Listening and empathizing in an attentive and non-judgmental manner

- 1) 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. 79). 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. 50) asks: How can the Gemara compare the two situations? The *Metzora* is afflicted with a serious spiritual malady, for which he is 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 producing 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* – if my friend is in pain, my responsibility is to share that pain and pray on his or her behalf.
- 2) 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 "play judge" over other people's distress – whether the magnitude of their problem is "worthy" of their emotional reaction or not.

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

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 response. The fact that their perception of suffering may sometimes seem exaggerated or melodramatic, in no way minimizes our responsibility to empathize with them and validate their feelings. 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. That is the time for showing them *Nesiah B'ol* and supporting them. Advising them to adjust their perspective, can wait for a more auspicious moment.

F) 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. But fear not, Rav Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz (the Chazon Ish; Source X-4) reassures us. Our emotions are molded by our actions. Taking concrete action to help someone who is suffering or lacking something, fosters authentic feelings of *Nesiah B'ol*. In time, we will reach the level of sharing in another person’s feelings, as a consequence of our actions. In fact, the Chazon Ish advises us not to be discouraged if our Tefillos for another do not feel heartfelt. The feelings will synchronize with our actions over time. It has been reported that 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, he would help count the collected Tzedaka money so the Gabbai could make it home on time for his Seudah. If such an esteemed Gadol HaDor (leader of the generation), whose rulings on the most complex Halachic dilemmas were sought from across the globe, was happy to bear on his shoulders the burdens of the Gabbai, 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, we can 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 a fixture 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 and easy way to create a daily Kiddush Hashem!

Source X-4: Rav Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz (the Chazon Ish, personal communication): Developing true feelings of *Nesiah B'ol* is a product of taking concrete actions to help another in need.

Are you lacking the feeling of sharing in another person’s pain?
The solution for this is by endeavoring to [take concrete actions] to help another and spare him from pain. Your actions will affect your heart (i.e., your emotions). Similarly, prayer on behalf of another in distress, even if it does not [feel truly] heartfelt (will help to mold authentic feelings of *Nesiah B'ol*). Do these actions even if the person in distress is simple or undistinguished.

קובץ אגרות (חזון איש) חלק א', סימן 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.

- 2) We mentioned several times, the purpose of being *Nosei B'ol* with a person is not to solve his or her problem, but rather, just to be together with the person who is hurting and to share his or her experience and feelings. Our

Section X: Strategies for developing and expressing the virtue of *Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*

actions just need to demonstrate our desire to share their burden, not necessarily to eliminate it. 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 X-5). Rabbi Dovid Rosman mentioned that Rav Noach Weinberg explained the reason for the Halacha that we may not initiate speech when comforting a mourner (Ref. 27). 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 in their pain and share in their burden. If the mourner is not up to initiating conversation, merely sitting with him is itself a source of comfort because 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 X-5: Rav Wolbe: How to be a "*Nosei B'ol-in-training*": Do concrete actions of sharing in people's suffering.

Being *Nosei B'ol* 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 alleviated 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':

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"י יהיה ממש נושא בעול עמו. הז"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.

*Rav Wolbe also states that the purpose of *Aveilus* (mourning) itself is to be *Nosei B'ol* with the departed soul, which is also discussed by the Sabba MiKelm, Rav Yeruchem and Rav Chatzkel. This is beyond the scope of this work.

- 3) The Chofetz Chaim, in his work, *Nidchei Yisroel*, 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* (World to Come). Rav Chaim Mintz cites the Chofetz Chaim's words as an example of being *Nosei B'ol* – feeling for the spiritual hunger and deprivation of people who were not fortunate enough to have a proper Torah education (Ref. 21). If we truly believe in the unity of one collective Jewish soul, the spiritual pain of another Jew who hungers for Torah should cause each of us pain, just as multiple organs in one body sense each other's pain. This should motivate us to do everything in our power to facilitate their Torah learning.

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

- ❖ “Enter the world” of the other person’s feelings and thoughts, by mentally “picturing” the details of the person’s distress and imagining ourselves being in his or her situation.
- ❖ *Nesiah B'ol* is about creating a bond of shared pain even when you can’t improve someone’s plight. Sharing a listening, caring ear, helps people feel understood and less alone. It carries the message: “I value your feelings and troubles as worthy of my concern.”
- ❖ Viewing the situation through the lens of the person who is struggling can make all the difference to bring someone back from the brink of despair.
- ❖ In the *Shomeh Esrei*, pause for a moment before some of the middle *Berachos* to think: “*may this help fellow Jews who need help for ... wisdom, health, livelihood etc.*”
- ❖ When lighting candles on Erev Shabbos, think about people whose pain feels more poignant on Shabbos, such as childless couples, singles, widows, divorcees and their children, and plead for Hashem’s mercy to take away their sadness and their Shabbos experience will soon become joyous.
- ❖ *Nesiah B'ol* requires listening in an attentive, non-judgmental manner. Resist the urge to “judge” people’s distress – whether the problem is “worthy” of their emotional response.
- ❖ 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 (Chazon Ish).

Section XI: *Klal Yisrael's* responsibility to be *Nosei B'ol* with all mankind

XI *Klal Yisrael'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 Hashem 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 Noach to you; yet, from of all of them, I spoke to you alone,"* (Source IX-7, p. 83). Despite the fact that the wicked Sodomites were completely unworthy of any sympathy, Rav Chatzkel states: *"HKB"H 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. 82).
- 2) In May 22, 1960, Chile was struck by the most powerful earthquake ever recorded (the "1960 Valdivia earthquake"). This catastrophe left approximately 2 million people homeless and untold thousands injured and dead across three continents. During a *mussar* address following the earthquake, Rav Chatzkel chastised 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. 105-106, 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 (Tzar Ba'alei Chaim), how much more so must we feel pain for people, who all are created in the Divine image (B'tzelem Elokim). The reason we fail to feel their pain is the same is the reason that we walk into a hospital, see hundreds of patients suffering from horrific illnesses and anguish, and then we return home in complete tranquility and serenity, failing to be Nosei B'ol with them. The cause of our failure is 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) 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 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 Yisroel* (love of Jews) or *Ahavas Hashem* (love of Hashem), because negative *middos* are "equal opportunity employers," eroding our

Section XI: *Klal Yisrael's* responsibility to be *Nosei B'ol* with all mankind

entire moral character including our behavior toward fellow Jews and our relationship with HKB"H. 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 acts of genocide. 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, why does the earthquake, which killed many thousands, have no effect upon us and 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 the affected places ... 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 earthquake, since all the world's events are directed by Heaven for us to take heed, as it states, "Is the Shofar ever sounded in the city and the people not tremble? Can there be misfortune in the city if Hashem has not brought it?" If only our hearts were imbued with the love of mankind, we would be alarmed and aroused by this catastrophe – we would perceive and feel Heaven's punishment [i.e., warning to us to repent]. Thus, endeavoring to perfect our middos leads 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. 51). When the Ponovezher Rov, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, returned from a visit 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 XII: Stories of awesome *Nesiah B'ol* demonstrated by great Torah scholars

XII 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 being *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. 52). 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, escaped the horrors of Europe while he was engaged to be married, staying with Rav and Rebbitzin Meltzer in Israel (Palestine) during World War II, while 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. 20 & 52).

During Israel's Six Day War in 1967, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein demanded that his students "visualize" the suffering of the Chayalim through vivid imagery (Ref. 7, pp. 343-344): "*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.*" 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*

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

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.”

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 gratitude and *Hakaras Hatov* to the IDF soldiers (Ref. 53). When told of the loss of an IDF soldier's life, Rabbi Chaim 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.”

The following special story about Rav Moshe Feinstein was written by Rabbi Chaim Walder (Ref. 54). As a Rav 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 the first Chuppah ceremony at which he officiated, Rav Moshe and his assistant who was assigned to 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 happily surprised guest, “And, how are you?!” and so on 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 asking the Rav what was his urgent business for which he had to return to the hall after they had already left. “I assume the Rav was close to this gentleman and he had to go back to see him,” reasoned the driver. “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?!” To properly analyze this story, one must “break down” the many layers of difficulty that Rav Moshe labored under. First, one must consider the utter sacrifice Rav Moshe made to officiate at so many weddings, when he had so many pressing communal matters, worldwide Jewish problems, complex Halachic inquiries as well his own yeshiva's needs, all of which awaited his return from the last wedding of the night several hours later. In addition, consider how much time for his beloved Torah study he had to forego just to bring joy to thousands of brides and grooms who would never forget that most special evening, when this Torah giant led them through their nuptials. And, of course, a second (and perhaps, a third) wedding ceremony was waiting for him at his next stop. 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. And what does the good Rav do? “We are going back upstairs, because I can't bear the thought of one Jew who I never met before, suffering disappointment!” And, if this person would be disappointed, *Nu*, so what? He looks well, thank G-d, not suffering from any dire stress or maladies that need any urgent attention. Nonetheless, Rav Moshe was willing to

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

put aside all the layers of pressure on his shoulders, just to give his undivided attention with a shining, smiling countenance, to the *Tzelem Elokim* that resided in a Jew he never met before. The *middah of Nosei B'ol Im Chaviro* was exemplified by Rav Moshe that night on an amazingly high level. The seemingly minimal disappointment this wedding guest would have suffered, in no way, minimizes the height of Rav Moshe's *Nesiah B'ol*.

The following story regarding Rav Elazar Shach, zt"l, the Rosh HaYeshiva of the Ponovez Yeshiva, was written by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen (Ref. 55). 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, and incredibly, he even invoked their painful plight during his poignant eulogy for his own son, Rabbi Shalom Refoel Yehuda Stein, zt"l, who tragically passed away as a relatively young man. Rabbi Avrohom Birnbaum captured this heartrending moment during the funeral of Rav Chaim's son: "Then he (Rav Chaim) said something that made a profound impression on those who heard him, 'Don't forget *alleh Yiddishe techter* – all of the Jewish daughters – who need to find their *zivugim* (marriage match). Go to the *Kisei Hakavod* (Hashem's Throne of Glory) and say '*k'ra roah gezar dineinu* – rip up the terrible decree.' Rav Chaim repeated this last thing three times before he stepped down from his *hesped* (eulogy)," (Ref. 56).

The following story about the sterling character of Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, zt"l, was told by Rabbi Michael Taubes (Ref. 57). 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 Yisroel* and in the *middah of Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro*.

Conclusion: Creating an “עת רצון” (time of favor) on behalf of our distressed brethren

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Note: Refer to the table on pp. 103-104, 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* in Sefer Tomer Devorah, “לשאריית נחלתו,” is *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, which is defined by Rav Yeruchem as sharing in our friend’s pain, being together with him or her in a time of need, feeling the friend’s burden and pain as if it were our own. Rav Wolbe states that *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro* is the underlying fundamental *middah* which promotes fulfillment of all interpersonal Mitzvos, i.e., I am inspired to help my fellow Jew because I identify with his or her distress (Ref. 5). Since his pain or unmet need feels as my own, I feel moved to help him in the same manner as I would for myself. *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, “וואהבת לרעך כמוך” – “love your fellow as yourself,” is the “כלל גדול בתורה” which encompasses many interpersonal Mitzvos (Sefer HaChinuch, Source VII-11, p. 70).

Perhaps this can help us understand Rav Yeruchem’s declaration that the common goal of the entire Torah, both its study and performance of its Mitzvos, is “איהוד הנפשות” – uniting all Jewish souls into a single collective entity, to the extent that we can feel each other’s joy and pain (Source III-7, p. 38). Why is this goal of the entire Torah? Indeed, when *chesed* is performed with a spirit of *Nesiah B’ol*, i.e., I am doing this kind deed because seeing you happy gladdens me and relieving your pain eases my pain, it elevates the Mitzvah of *chesed* to a spectacularly high level. The recipient of such *chesed* 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. Furthermore, our *Nesiah B’ol* strengthens the interconnectivity of Jewish souls to coalesce into the entity referred to by the Midrash as “נפש אחת” (one soul) and “אגדה אחת” (one bundle), welcoming the Shechinah to dwell among us. Indeed, the greatest gift from Hashem, *Mattan Torah*, could only occur when the Jewish people became “חנייה אחת” – a single encampment. Because of our “איהוד הנפשות”, i.e., our coalescence into one collective soul, the merit from the Mitzvos of each Jew combines with the merit from his fellow Jews’ Mitzvos, affording *Klal Yisrael* a protective force that is far greater than the sum of each individual’s merit, as Sefer Tomer Devorah states (Source III-3, p. 33), “*the merit of a large group who perform Mitzvos is incomparable to the merit of a small group, because their souls are combined.*” Our “איהוד הנפשות” is also the mechanism whereby one Jew is influenced by the spiritual elevation of another Jew, so that one person’s devotion in any aspect of *Avodas Hashem* inspires and propels another to follow suit (Rav Dovid Goldberg). All of these blessings come to fruition because of the *Nesiah B’ol* of one Jew for another which fosters great unity (*achdus*) among us. In addition to actualizing our own *Tzelem Elokim*, by being *Nosei B’ol*, we also actualize the *Tzelem Elokim* of the person who is the object of our *Nesiah B’ol*. When we are *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, we look beyond the surface of other people’s presenting difficulties to validate their pain, anxiety and worries, according their feelings the dignity they deserve and restoring their lost self-respect. Their restored dignity, in turn, allows them to access the *Tzelem Elokim* that was hidden within them – to express the Divine spark within themselves. Thus, when we are *Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro*, we are worthy of acquiring the Torah, i.e., acting as Hashem’s emissaries to utilize the Torah to unveil the hidden Divine spark in the

Conclusion: Creating an “עת רצון” (time of favor) on behalf of our distressed brethren

world, thereby increasing *Kavod Shomayim* (see Section VI-D, pp. 58-60). Perhaps this provides an explanation for 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. 72). Accordingly, Rav Matisyahu writes (based on Rav Lopian) that HKB”H is waiting for us take the first step of being *Nosei B’ol* with each other, in order to activate the flow of His Divine *middah*, “לשארית נחלתו” toward us, with which He will redeem us from our exile (Section VIII-B-3, p. 73). What practical *Nosei B’ol* “first steps” can we take to activate Hashem’s *middah* of “לשארית נחלתו”? Rav Chatzkel tells us that, *“By toiling in Tefillah which was formulated in the plural form, we can reach the level of being a Nosei B’ol Im Chaveiro.”* Rav Yeruchem exclaimed that *“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. 79-80).

In Section IX-E (pp. 84-85), we saw, based on the *Rosh*, that Tefilla which emerges from an anguished heart that identifies with another person in distress, can create an “עת רצון” (time of favor) for our Tefillos to be accepted, and thereby, brings salvation to the people whose plight touches our heart. By projecting *Nesiah B’ol* into our Tefillos, feeling the pain of those we pray for, we can create a window in the gates of Heaven for the prayers to penetrate and change Hashem’s decree for salvation on behalf of people whose lives are mired in darkness and uncertainty.

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. 58). 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.

Lastly, let us remember the Chazon Ish’s assurance (Source X-4, p. 93): If we perform acts of kindness, including prayer, that demonstrate a desire to share in another’s hardships, even if it feels forced at first, in time this will lead to developing authentic feelings of *Nesiah B’ol*. May it be Hashem’s will that we will merit to truly be *Nosei B’ol* with each other, to emulate the ways of Hashem 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: Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro: Definition, importance, and applications

Summary: The virtue of Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro: Definition, importance, and applications	
Being Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro, means ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being 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. • Putting ourselves into the person's world, giving him or her "a piece of our very being" to feel what he or she is going through, even if we are unable to tangibly help them.
Being Nosei B'ol carries the message ...	<i>"I am with you in your distress or joy, living through it with you. I hear (get) you, I value your feelings and troubles - you matter. You are not alone in this journey."</i>
Hashem's middah of "לשארית נחלתו" is ...	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.
When we are Nosei B'ol, we emulate ...	Hashem's middah of "לשארית נחלתו", thereby proclaiming the greatness of our Creator Who created us in His Divine image (<i>B'tzelem Elokim</i>).
The basis for our ability to be Nosei B'ol, is ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hashem created us <i>B'tzelem Elokim</i>, endowing us with the ability to emulate His middah of "לשארית נחלתו", 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.
From R' Akiva's wife, Rochel, we learn ...	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.
3 reasons why being Nosei B'ol helps us acquire Torah: Because the virtue of Nesiah B'ol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens our existence as "כאיש אחד בלב אחד" – "as one person with one heart" - thereby earning us Divine assistance to learn and understand Torah. • Develops our aptitude to view situations through another's perspective. We are, therefore, 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.
Some positive effects of Nesiah B'ol: By developing this virtue	<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 לחבירו) 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 middah of "לשארית נחלתו" toward us on a level proportional to our <i>Nesiah B'ol</i>. • We activate 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 <i>Nosei B'ol Im Chaveiro</i>: Definition, importance and applications	
<p><i>Nesiah B'ol</i> 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 because our friend's pain is our suffering as well. Imagine if our friend's distress would, כד"ו, befall us, how would we pray to Hashem? Pray with the same sincerity 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.
<p><i>Nesiah B'ol</i> in Tefillah (2):</p> <p>Praying to end the pain of the Shechinah (Divine Presence):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How immense is Hashem's pain while the Beis HaMikdash lies in ruins! The Divine Presence is exiled with us and Hashem's Name is desecrated while we remain in exile. • We are <i>Nosei B'ol</i> with Hashem when we express our yearning for His Name to be sanctified (especially the great Kiddush Hashem that will occur at the ultimate redemption). The underlying theme of all prayer is to plead that Heavenly Glory be revealed in the world.
<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 the other person's feelings and thoughts, by mentally "picturing" the details of the person's distress and imagining ourselves being in his or her situation. • Reaching 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 "judge" people's distress – whether the problem is "worthy" of their emotional response. • Concrete actions to help someone in need, even if they feel forced initially, will foster authentic feelings of <i>Nesiah B'ol</i>. Our emotions are molded by our actions. • In the <i>Shomeh Esrei</i>, pause for a moment before some of the middle <i>Berachos</i> to think: "may this help fellow Jews who need help for ... wisdom, health, livelihood etc." • When lighting candles on Erev Shabbos, take a moment to think about people whose pain of loneliness is especially poignant on Shabbos. Then, plead for Hashem's mercy that their pain will be removed, and their Shabbos experiences will be filled with joy.

Rav Chatzkel Levenstein: A Jew's obligation to respond empathically and to share in the suffering of all mankind.

It is incumbent upon us to feel the misfortunes and pain in the world. The (Chilean) earthquake has left thousands killed and injured and homeless with no roof overhead. Yet, we remain apathetic to this – I don't see anyone talking about this. Why are we not thinking about the tremendous calamity that has occurred to 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 all the great suffering and calamities in the world has no effect on us is because of our innate *middah* of rejoicing at another's misfortune; thus, we remain unmoved. This *middah* can bring us to such insensitivity that we can even respond with joy and pleasure when hearing another's misfortune, without concern for the pain of another. Even this terrible earthquake has no effect on us – we are too busy rejoicing at another's misfortune to be bothered when suffering comes to the world.

Let's look at what has captured our attention, versus what we are apathetic to. Now, they captured the murderer, may his name be blotted out (Eichmann) – everyone talks incessantly about it, we hear the community saying words such as *"We have merited to see 'Executing vengeance ...' (Tehillim 149:7) against the murderer."* In truth, these are absurdities; how far we are from the Torah's understanding. If murder was so terrible in our eyes, why does the earthquake, which killed many thousands, have no effect upon us and occupies no room in our thoughts?

Moreover, our entire approach to this (i.e., gloating over the capture of Eichmann) is far from the Torah's outlook. According to the Torah's approach, even when confronted with a totally wicked person, our response, even to his most severe transgressions such as murder, should not be absolute hatred. Our emotions should be dictated by defending the glory of Heaven, i.e., since this person committed murder and he is a *Rodef* (a threat to life), 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. The entire concept of *Tzelem Elokim* (man is created in the Divine image) has been lost from us.

אור יחזקאל, חלק מדות, מאמר "לעשות נקמה בגויים":

... היה עלינו להרגיש שיש רע ועונש וצער בעולם ... 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 לט) "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. הנה 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. ונשתכח מאתנו כל ענין צלם אלוקים וכן איננו מבינים כי תכלית האדם להיות "מדיני" דהיינו השואף ודואג

We fail to understand that a person's purpose is to be utilitarian, i.e., to worry 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 utilitarian. The Midrash states, "*What the difference is 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."* 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 places.

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 Heaven's punishment. The reason we remain unmoved by this, is because our vision is clouded by [the negative *middah* of] rejoicing in other'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 on the world [to arouse us to repent]. This is the antithesis of the truth. 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 must we feel pain for people, who all are created in the *Tzelem Elokim*. The reason we fail to feel their pain is the same is the reason that we walk into a hospital, see hundreds of patients suffering from horrific illnesses and anguish, and then we return home in complete tranquility and serenity, failing to be *Nosei B'ol* with them. The cause of our failure is our rejoicing in other people's misfortune and thus, we do not share in their pain.

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 roused by the earthquake, since all the world's events are directed by Heaven for us to take heed, as it 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 [i.e., warning to us to repent]. Thus, endeavoring to perfect our *middos* leads to awakening and strengthening ourselves in *Emunah* (faith in Hashem).

לְטוֹבַת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלוֹ וְכָל בְּרוּאָיו, "אָמְרוּ עֲלֵיו עַל ר' יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זְכַאִי, שֶׁלֹּא הִקְדִּימוּ אָדָם שְׁלוֹם מֵעוֹלָם וְאִפִּי לְנִכְרֵי בִשְׁוֹק" מִחֲמַת שֶׁהָאָדָם צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת "מְדִינִי". וְאֵיטָא בְּחֻז"ל (בְּמִדְבַר רַבָּה כ' א') "מָה בֵּין נְבִיאֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְנְבִיאֵי אוּמוֹת הָעוֹלָם וְכוּ' שֶׁכָּל הַנְּבִיאִים הָיוּ בְּמִדַּת רַחֲמִים עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל עוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים, שֶׁכֵּן מְצִינּוּ יִרְמְיָה אוֹמֵר (יִרְמְיָה מַח, לו'): 'לְבִי לְמוֹאָב כַּחֲלִילִים יִהְיֶה'". וְזוֹ תְּבִיעַת הַקֶּב"ה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל לְהַרְגִּישׁ וּלְרַחֵם אֶף עַל הַגּוֹיִים. וּמַעַתָּה אֶף בְּעִנְיַן הָרַעֲיֶדֶת אֲדַמָּה חַיִּיבִים אֲנוּ לְחוּשׁ בְּצַעֲרָם שֶׁל הַתּוֹשָׁבִים הַנִּסְפָּים בְּאֶסּוֹן, וְכֵן בְּכָל הַפְּחָד שֶׁיֵּשׁ לְכָל הַתּוֹשָׁבִים בְּאוֹתוֹ מִקּוֹם ...

לוֹ הִיָּה בֹא נְבִיא וּמַעֲיֵד מֵרֵאשׁ שֶׁכָּל הָעוֹנְשִׁים שִׁיבּוּאוּ הֵם כְּעוֹנֵשׁ עַל חֻטְאֵינוּ, הֲלֹא וְדָאֵי הֵיִינוּ מְזַדְעָזְעִים מֵעֲנֹשֵׁי שָׁמַיִם ... הַסִּיבָה לֹאֵי הַתְּעוֹרְרוֹת בְּאִמוּנָה מִכֵּךְ, הִיא אֲשֶׁר הִקְדַּמְנוּ שֶׁכִּיּוֹן שְׁקֻרוּבִים אֲנוּ לְהַרְגִּשׁוֹת שִׁמְחָה לְאִיד, וּבִיּוֹתֵר כִּלְפֵי אוּמוֹת הָעוֹלָם שֶׁאֲנוּ מְזַלְזָלִים בָּהֶם וְשׂוֹאֲפִים רַעַתָּם, וְצָרוֹתָם מִשִּׁמְחָה אֶת לְבַבֵּנוּ, וְלִכֵּן אֵינְנוּ מְרַגִּישִׁים כָּלֵל שֶׁמִּשְׁפֵּט וְעוֹנֵשֵׁי שָׁמַיִם יֵשׁ בְּכֵךְ. וְאִין זֶה דֶּרֶךְ הָאִמָּת, חַיִּיבִים אֲנוּ לְהַרְגִּישׁ בְּצַעֲרָם שֶׁל אוּמוֹת הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵיא אֶף צַעַר בְּעֲלֵי חַיִּים דְּאוֹרֵיִיתָא עֲאֲכוּ"כ צַעֲרָם שֶׁל הַנְּבִרָאִים בְּצַלָּם. וְזוֹ הַסִּיבָה כְּאֲשֶׁר אַחַד נִכְנַס לְבִקּוּר בְּבֵית חוֹלִים וְרוֹאֵה מְאוֹת אֲנָשִׁים הַסּוֹבְלִים מִחֲלוֹת וְיִסוּרִים קָשִׁים, וְשֶׁב לְמִקְוָמוֹ בִּשְׁקֵט וְשִׁלוּה וְאֵינּוּ נוֹשֵׂא בְעוֹל עִם הַסּוֹבְלִים, כִּי הַשִּׁמְחָה לְאִיד סוֹבֶבֶת אוֹתוֹ וְלִכֵּן אֵינּוּ מִשְׁתַּתְּף בְּצַעֲרָם וְאֵינּוּ רוֹאֵה עוֹנֵשֵׁי שָׁמַיִם וּמִשְׁפֵּט ד'.

לוֹ הָיוּ יִסּוּדוֹת אֱלוֹ מַחְוּוֹרִים לָנוּ, וְדָאֵי שֶׁלֹּא הֵיִינוּ לְהוֹטִים כִּי"כ אַחֵר עִנְיַן תְּפִיסַת הַרוּצָה, וְהֵיִינוּ מְתַרְכְּזִים וּמִתְפַּעְלִים יוֹתֵר מֵרַעֲיֶדֶת הָאֲדָמָה שֶׁהִיטָה לְאַחֲרוֹנָה, וְהֵיִינוּ רוֹאִים ... כִּי אֵין כָּל דָּבָר בְּבִרְיָאָה שֶׁנַּעֲשֶׂה בְּסִתְמָא וְהַכֵּל כְּדֵי שֶׁנִּלְמַד וְנִבְיָן דְּרַכִּי שָׁמַיִם. הַנְּבִיא אוֹמֵר (עֲמוֹס ג' ו'): "הִיתַקַּע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר וְהֵם לֹא יִחַרְדוּ, אִם תִּהְיֶה רַעָה בְּעִיר וְד' לֹא עֲשֶׂה", כִּי זֶו כָּל הַנִּקּוּדָה לְלַמַּד אֶת עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל. לוֹ הִיָּה אֶהְבֵּת הַבְּרִיּוֹת בְּלִבְנוּ הֵיִינוּ מִתְעוֹרְרִים וּמִתְפַּעְלִים מְכָל הַנַּעֲשָׂה, וְהֵיִינוּ רוֹאִים וּמְרַגִּישִׁים עוֹנֵשֵׁי שָׁמַיִם, נִמְצָא שֶׁעֲבוּדַת הַמְּדוּת הִיא דֶּרֶךְ לְהַתְּעוֹרְרוֹת וְהַתְּחַזְּקוֹת בְּאִמוּנָה.

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