

The Maple Syrup Mikve

Chizuk and Inspiration on Shavuos

The excitement and anticipation of the "Fiftieth Gate Mikve."

Imagine: Just before Shavuos, a new mikve opens up. It's called "The Fiftieth Gate." Millions of dollars were raised in order to build it, and it's mamash a beauty. Its walls are decorated with the most intricate mosaic designs. Its heated floors are made from the softest and smoothest tiles. As you walk it almost feels like you're getting a luxurious foot message.

The shower heads are as big as volley balls with adjustable settings for whatever type of stream that you want. Fresh, warm towels are neatly stacked up next to the entrance. There are three self-filtered mikva'os — each one the size of a swimming pool — filled with pristinely pure water.

Needless to say, you are very eager and excited to see it and tovel in its ecstasy. In fact, you've been dreaming for months of your opportunity to go to the new mikve on Shavuos morning. You can almost feel the exquisite sense of purity that you will have coming out of the water — clean, refreshed, and renewed. After such a mikve, this is going to be a Kabalas HaTorah to remember.

Finally, Shavuos arrives. You eat your seuda and go to learn. Usually, it's hard for you to stay up all night, but not this time. This time you couldn't possibly sleep. You're counting down the minutes before alos hashachar when it will be time to go tovel.

A half an hour before dawn, you get up from shul and start heading over to the mikve. You want to have plenty of time to truly enjoy "The Fiftieth Gate."

When you arrive, you see the large, elaborate, mosaic sign outside the door "Welcome to the Fiftieth Gate." You can't even imagine how this mikve experience is going to completely purify your soul and change your life forever.

Dreams of purity dissolve into mud.

However, there was one thing that you forgot. There are another two thousand men in your surrounding area who have all been having the exact same dreams as you. They too, have been anticipating and chafing for the moment when they can enter into the pure waters of "The Fiftieth Gate." They too came early on Shavuos morning to relish in their mikve experience. In fact, many of them came even earlier than you.

By the time you get inside, the neatly stacked pile of towels is almost gone. The ones that are left look like they were accidentally knocked on the floor, so you can't possibly take one. Speaking of the floor, the soft and smooth tiles are

now covered with a thick, brown layer of mud and who knows what else. The fact that they are heated only makes the slushy mud feel even more disgusting on your bare feet.

The mikve is so busy that it takes you a while to find a place to hang up your clothes. You hold your breath as you make the excruciatingly painful walk over to the showers. After bumping into no less than twenty sweaty and smelly men, you finally get there. But what's the point in taking a shower anymore? The moment you leave your going to be just as dirty as you were before. So you skip the shower and head straight for the mikve. Let's just get this over with and move on.

Of course, even the size of the pool and the quality of the filter can't manage to keep the water clean. Therefore, you're faced with three spectacular options: a cold mikve with murky green water, an extremely hot mikve which is light brown and has a "unique" odor, and a warm mikve which could be mistaken



for an extra-large chocolate milkshake. Amazing!

For the first time in your entire life you actually dip in the cold mikve. After three seconds you run out and go as fast as humanly possible back to your clothes, bumping into another twenty men along the way. You cringe as you get dressed while your body is still soaking wet, especially when it comes to putting on your socks and shoes. Finally, you push your way out of "The Fiftieth Gate" feeling and smelling like you just rolled around in a horse's stall.

On your way out, you look back at the big elaborate sign, and you wonder if perhaps it wasn't the Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha, rather the Fiftieth Gate of Tuma.

We imagine that we must be super-clean to receive the Torah from the Fiftieth Gate.

But this was not the case, rather we just don't understand what the Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha

really is. In our mind, the Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha is in Shamayim. It is a place which is so pure and pristine that it cannot exist in the darkness and contamination of this world. It's a place which we can only reach when we're extraordinarily inspired to daven and serve Hashem like angels. We think that only when we're able to completely clean our soul of all sin and attach ourselves with the utmost deveikus to Master of the Universe — only then can we truly receive the light Torah which comes down from the Fiftieth Gate on Shavuos morning.

We imagine the Fiftieth Gate to be the most immaculately clean mikve, both physically and spiritually. We imagine that to connect to such a high revelation of Hashem there couldn't possibly be a speck of dirt on our body or any blemish on our neshama. We imagine that Torah and mitzvos are only for that really sunny day in our lives when we're flying high like a bird above all the shmutz of our yetzer hara.

Because of this, Shavuos comes and goes year after year and we never really receive the Torah. The Torah stays up there with Hashem in the perfect purity of the Heavens, and we continue living our life down here on earth with wet, soiled clothes, and muddy mikva feet.

The tzadikim teach us that the true revelation of the Torah is in the mud and dirt.

However, Moshe Rabbeinu and the tzadikim of every generation tell us over and over again "Lo bashamyim hi — the Torah is not in Heaven!" It's right here with us. No matter how low we've fallen, and how dirty and filthy we are, we still have the Torah. We can contaminate ourselves with the most disgusting images on our smart phones, G-d forbid, and the Torah is still with us. We can say the most foul words and eat hamburgers like a cow from its trough, and the Torah is still with us. We can stick our face into the excrement of the gods of money, and the Torah is still with us.

In the first of the Ten Commandments, Hashem tells each and every one of us, "I am Hashem Your G-d, Who took you out of Egypt and the House of Slavery." What does the Exodus from Egypt have to do with receiving the Torah? Hashem is teaching us that we shouldn't make this mistake. We shouldn't think that He and His Torah are only accessible at Har Sinai. We shouldn't think that the Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha only exists somewhere far beyond the feces of heretical thoughts that we have on a daily basis.

No! The same G-d Who gives us the Torah at Har Sinai is also the One Who is with us in our worst moments of physical temptation and idol worship in Egypt. The same Torah which comes

from highest of all places, is so so close to us even in the garbage dump of our lives. The Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha is davka revealed in the dirtiest, and most rancid chocolate-milkshake mikve.

Hashem gave the Torah many generations ago especially for us shleppers of today.

This is to say that the Kabalas Torah of 3,500 years ago when all of the Jews were on such

The Kabalas Torah of 3,500 years ago when all of the Jews were on such a high level that they received prophecy directly from Hashem, was only preparation for Shavuos, 2020. The entire purpose of receiving the Torah on Har Sinai was only for us shleppers who are covered in the feces of our sins and who can barely lift a pinky in avodas Hashem, to wake up for one moment in the middle of our four hour shacharis nap on Shavuos and hear the words, “Anochi Hashem Elokeicha!

in avodas Hashem to wake up for one moment in the middle of our four hour shacharis nap on Shavuos and hear the words, “Anochi Hashem Elokeicha! That’s it.

Hashem didn’t give the Torah to His exalted and holy angels. Hashem didn’t give the Torah only to the tzadikim like Moshe Rabbeinu who can go up Har Sinai and get it. Rather, Hashem gave the Torah primarily to us, like the verse says, “You wanted [to receive] praise from the clumps of dirt, from the formations of clay. From here we see that the greatest splendor for Hashem comes specifically from this low, physical world of contamination.

Hashem wanted to see how someone who acts more or less like pig most of the time, could be able to unify His holy name in krias shema.

Hashem wanted to see a sheep put on a talis. He wanted to see a bull place tefilin on his head. He wanted to see a ram blow a shofar. He wanted to see people like us who are indentured slaves to our body, break our bonds of sleep and stay up all night learning His Torah. He wanted to see us submerge ourselves in a pool of human filth, with the faith that this body of “water” is the holiest of all holies.

Why? Because He wanted to reveal the greatness of His compassion to the world. He wanted to show to all of the physical and spiritual creation His deepest loving-kindness. Therefore, He blessed us with His Torah and gave us a chance to attach ourselves to Him despite the foul stench of our spiritual body odor.

The most hidden place is the closest to greatest kedusha.

What is the real Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha? It is the revelation of Hashem’s Presence and deepest compassion even in the most absolutely hidden places. It is when we fall to such a place where Hashem is so hidden from us that we no longer even realize that He’s hidden, davka there we can reveal the Fiftieth Gate by remembering that Hashem is still with us, and His love for us is infinite and eternal.

Without any doubt, the time has come. Through our countless sins and contamination, we’ve successfully fulfilled the prophecy of “Anochi hafter asfir — I (Hashem) will completely conceal myself.” We’ve become so accustomed to transgressing the Torah — especially in the areas of kedushas habris, baseless hatred, and money idolatry — that we no longer think it’s forbidden. Everybody does it. It’s a way of life. Everything’s fine.

We’ve fallen to such depths of complete hiddenness that right now we are actually closer to revealing the Fiftieth Gate of Kedusha more than ever before. Right now, this Shavuos, we have an unbelievable opportunity: we can plant a beautiful flower in a pot of dirty diapers. We can put the greatest and most exalted crown on Hashem’s head by saying a bracha and eating a big, fat piece of cheesecake, knowing that Hashem and His Torah are right here with us with each and every bite.

Hashem likes animals more than angels.

We can sing the sweet poem of Akdamus and show all of Hashem’s wondrous, ministering angels that we’re so much better than them. Why? Because we’re animals. Because we have

a yetzer hara that’s exponentially stronger than us, and yet we’re still able to say “Keser yitnu Lecha!”

An angel could never go into a greenish-brown mikve on Shavuos, but an animal could. Not only that, but we can really enjoy it. When we know that every single strand of hair and every band-aid that are floating on top of the water are coming from another Jew who practically sacrificed his life to dip in this pool of man-made Coca Cola in order to purify himself and come closer to Hashem, what could be more geshmak?

We must have faith in the tzadikim that Hashem truly loves our mikve of maple syrup.

However, all of this is 100% dependent on our faith in Moshe Rabbeinu and the tzadikim of all the generations up until today who tell us, “Hashem is Your G-d in the Heavens above and on the earth, there is no other!” Only they can show us that the highest revelation of Hashem — the name Havaya which represents His compassion, is mamash right here with us in this lowest world, in our place of din — Elokim. Only the tzadikim that have reached such exalted levels in avodas Hashem and achieved the Fiftieth Gate, have the ability to help us find Hashem amidst of the unprecedented hiddenness of our lives.

Therefore, in order to receive the Torah we must strengthen our faith in the tzadikim. We must engrave their teachings into our heart and truly believe in the power of our own mitzvos. We must trust the tzadikim who tell us that our Yom Tov and Shabos seudos give Hashem the greatest splendor. We must trust the tzadikim who tell us that with every word of our half-asleep davening we place another diamond on the crown of the King of all Kings.

We must trust the tzadikim who tell us that the highest Torah is concealed in the lowest of all places. We must trust the tzadikim who tell us that Hashem’s compassion for us is so endless that we can always pick ourselves back up and start over, no matter what we’ve done. We must trust the tzadikim who tell us that there is nothing more precious to Hashem than Jew in a mikve of maple syrup. Yum— mm! It’s so sweet.

Be’ezer Hashem Yisborach

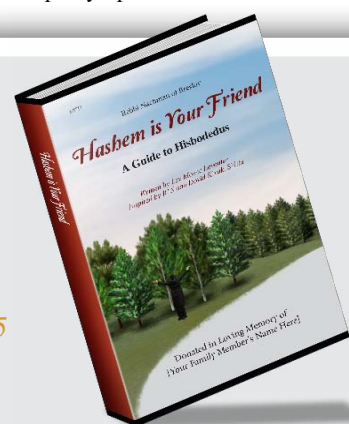
You are cordially invited to join . . .

Chaburas “Hashem Is Your Friend”

lead by Lev Moshe Leventer, the author of “The Rebbe’s Pharmacy” and “Hashem Is Your Friend — A Guide to Hisbodedus.”

The chabura will have its first meeting on Tuesday night, June 2/10th of Sivan, at 9:15 (Maariv at 9) in the shul “Heichal HaBesht” — 2 Rechov Shemaria, Jerusalem.

For more details you may email leventermusic@gmail.com or call 058 320 5562



Based on the Torah of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt”l and his primary talmid R’ Noson zt”l, as given over by R’ Nisan Dovid Kivak, Shlita. For further comments and questions, or to sign up to receive the articles by email, you may contact: leventermusic@gmail.com