

## GIDUL BANIM

- The purpose of a human being's sojourn in this world is to rightfully earn the ultimate pleasure and perfection of cleaving to *Hashem* in the next world<sup>1</sup>.
- It is impossible for a person to cleave and connect to *Hashem* in the next world if his being and persona are not G-d like<sup>2</sup>.
- The only way to develop a G-d like personality in this world is by actively emulating *Hashem* at every opportunity<sup>3</sup>.
- The primary traits of *Hashem* that we need to emulate and internalize<sup>4</sup> are: boundless benevolence<sup>5</sup>, compassion, and exalted character perfection<sup>6</sup>.
- The entire institution of child rearing is designed to provide a person with a myriad of daily opportunities to emulate *Hashem*.
- Homemaking is essentially a lofty career in emulating *Hashem*<sup>7</sup>!
- The following are examples of seemingly mundane daily activities in which we are actually mirroring the actions of *Hashem* and following in His ways<sup>8</sup>:
  - Feeding each member of the family according to his or her needs<sup>9</sup>.
  - Bathing and cleaning infants and toddlers<sup>10</sup>.
  - Dressing children<sup>11</sup>.
  - Greeting children with a beaming countenance<sup>12</sup>.

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1. See *Mesillas Yescharim* (Perek 1).

2. See *Chofetz Chaim* (*Ahavas Chesed Chelek 2, Perek 2*).

3. See *Rambam* (*Dayos 1:6-7*) where he explains that only ongoing repetitious behavior can effectively mold and transform a person's psyche. This idea is also elaborated upon by the *Rambam* in his commentary on *Avos* (3,15).

4. According to the *Shla"h* (preface to *Toldos Ha'adam*) the very name of man - "*adam*" is rooted in the term "*adameh*" which means to emulate and copy, for his primary objective in this world is to emulate *Hashem* as it says: "*Adameh l'elyon*" (*Yeshaya 14:4*).

5. See *Sotah* (14a), *Shabbos* (133b), *Toras Kohanim* (beginning of *Kedoshim*), *Sifrei* (on *Parshas Eikev*), and *Tanna D'Bai Eliyahu* (Perek 26), for explicit Biblical sources and examples of traits of *Hashem* that we are obligated to imitate.

6. The *sefer Tomer Devorah* by Rav Moshe Cordovero z"l is dedicated to clarifying in detail what exactly are the exalted character traits exhibited by *Hashem* which we need to emulate.

7. It was the opinion of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l that women should actually think about this as they go about their various homemaking activities. (Even if one were to contemplate this at least once a day, preferably in the morning, it would be a tremendous achievement).

8. We see the supreme importance the *Torah* attaches to the idea of following in *Hashem's* ways from the fact that this obligation is mentioned in the *Torah* eight times. (It is counted as a *mitzvah* by the *Rambam* (*Assei 8*) and *Sefer HaChinuch* (611).

9. See *Tehillim* (145:16) "*Posaiach es yadecha umasbia kol chai ratzon*", *Hashem* satiates each being according to their individual desire.

10. See *Yeshaya* (4:4) "*Rachatz Hashem es tzoas bnos tzion*", *Hashem* cleanses *Klal Yisrael* of their impurities.

11. See *Sotah* (14a) *Hashem* is "*malbish arumim*", He clothes the unclothed.

12. *Toras Avigdor* (Vol. 1 p. 93) states that radiating a pleasant demeanor is G-d like since we find that *Hashem* deals with

- Comforting crying children<sup>13</sup>.
  - Resolving arguments between children<sup>14</sup>.
  - Providing the tolerance and forgiveness necessary to run a home smoothly<sup>15</sup>.
  - Using moral instruction<sup>16</sup>.
  - Participating in the financial support of the family<sup>17</sup>.
  - Nurturing and uplifting the spirits of the children<sup>18</sup>.
  - Having compassion for the helpless<sup>19</sup>.
  - Attending to family and guests<sup>20</sup>.
- *Hashem's* motive in creating the human race from nothingness was solely to have recipients for his endless compassion and benevolence<sup>21</sup>.
  - By having children, we are also creating beings out of nothingness, to bestow upon them the care and compassion they constantly need to survive. Thus procreation is perhaps the most powerful form of us mirroring *Hashem's* actions.
  - The more children<sup>22</sup> we have the more G-d like we become.




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*Klal Yisroel* with a shining countenance. See *Bamidbar* (6:25) “*Yair Hashem panov eilecha*”, and in *Mishlei* (16:15) “*B’or pnai melech chaim*”. See also *Tomer Devorah* (*Perek* 2).

13. Rav Yechezkel Abramsky z”l points out that by removing a child’s tears we are emulating *Hashem*. We see that *Hashem* will wipe the tears off every face in *Klal Yisrael* as it says in *Yeshaya* (25:8) “*Umachah Hashem dimah mai al kol panim*”.
14. As it says in *Iyov* (25:2) “*Oseh Shalom Bimromav*”, *Hashem* makes peace on high. See also *Tanna D’ Bai Eliyahu* (*Perek* 31).
15. *Hashem* forgives the sins of *Klal Yisrael* and is constantly extra tolerant towards us, as it says “*over al pesha*”. See *Rosh Hashana* (17a) and *Tomer Devorah* at length on this point.
16. Being involved in spiritual benevolence is perhaps the highest form of emulating *Hashem*. See *Mishnas Rav Aharon* (Vol.1 p. 143) for an elaboration on this point.
17. See *Medrash Tehillim* (136) and *Tanna D’ Bai Eliyahu* (*Perek* 13) that, metaphorically, *Hashem* spends part of his day being “*zan umefarnes es breosav*”, sustaining and supporting his creatures.
18. See *Rambam* (*Megilah* 2:17) that one who gladdens the spirit of the downtrodden is acting like G-d.
19. Based on *Tomer Devorah* (*Perek* 3). See also *Rambam* (*Avodim* 9:8) where he states that it is G-d like to treat one’s own slaves with gentle compassionate care, how much more so regarding one’s own children.
20. See *Kidushin* (32b) “*Matzeenu gadul sheshmesh orchim*”, *Hashem* does not find it beneath His dignity to serve and attend to the needs of his guests (i.e. all his creations).
21. Both in this world and the next, see *Ramchal* at the beginning of *Daas Tevunos* and *Derech Hashem*.
22. The Steipler conveyed the following in a letter to a couple who were concerned about having a large family: It is predetermined how much stress and difficulty a person is destined to endure in his life time. The stress and difficulty inherent in the upbringing of children is the most productive and beneficial method to pay off that cosmic debt.