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ע"ה דוד חנניה פינטו

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## Return to Your Heart

The verse says, *"You are to know this day and take to your heart that Hashem is the only G-d – in heaven above and on the earth below – there is none other."* This verse stresses that knowing the truth is not enough; man must implant the truth in his heart so as to act accordingly. Intellectual knowledge not taken to heart is ineffective.

The Gaon Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer zt"l stated that all the Yetzer Hara's efforts center around disconnecting the heart and the head. This is where the service of mussar is essential; to connect one's heart with one's intellect.

When Maran the Gaon Rabbi Yisrael Salanter zy" a wished to teach his generation how to study mussar, he explained in a letter that mussar study must be "with lips ablaze," meaning it should be studied aloud and with great emotion, because the heart is aroused through external acts. If a person learns mussar silently while remaining completely still, the words might enter his head but will not have an effect on his actions. This is also the reason we rock back and forth when we pray to Hashem, unlike the gentiles who 'pray' silently and without moving. For external motions awaken the person to connect to his Creator and cleave to His ways.

Every person intellectually has faith in the Sages and is aware of the great power of tzadikim to affect salvation. But one who implants this faith deep in his heart and believes in it as reality, merits salvation above the laws of nature.

A woman once came to me and asked that I pray for her to be blessed with children, in the merit of my esteemed father zy" a. Of course, I agreed to her request just as I pray for all those who turn to me in the merit of my holy ancestors zy" a. But the woman added a request: She wanted to be blessed with a baby boy, born on the day of my father's hilula, and then she would name the baby after my father.

I told her I can pray that she be blessed but one can't make such an exact 'order'. However, she insisted and was certain that in the merit of my father zy" a she will be blessed exactly as she desires.

Seeing her exceptional faith in the tzadik, a faith that was not just knowledge but something she actually lived with her entire being, I understood that Heaven was causing her to insist. So I told her in the merit of her strong faith in the tzadik she will merit her prayers being accepted exactly as she wishes.

Indeed, this is what happened! One year later, exactly on the day of my esteemed father's hilula, she gave birth to a baby boy! She invited me to be sandak and named the baby after my father, Moshe Aharon.

**David Chananya Pinto**