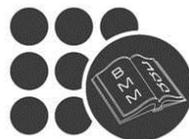


# Are We There Yet?

## A Third Journey to Kotzk



Beit Midrash Morasha  
@ Arthur's Road  
בית מדרש מורשה

1. Instead of adding stringency to the *Halacha*  
It is better to add reverence to the deed.
2. My desire is that you should not sin  
Not because it is forbidden to sin  
But because you have no free time to sin.
3. "Avraham was old, coming with days" (Bereishit 24:1)  
He came with his days, with all of them  
He did not leave even one day, even one hour  
Without filling it with deeds.
4. *And all of your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven*  
(Pirkei Avot 2:12)  
Even your deeds "for the sake of Heaven"  
Should be for the sake of Heaven.
5. There is nothing more whole than a broken heart.  
There is nothing more straight than a crooked ladder.
6. "And these words that I command you today must be on  
your heart." (Devarim 6:6)  
Surely these words should be placed in the depths of the  
heart?  
But a person does not always have an open heart  
As it says "Open my heart to your Torah", "He will open  
our hearts"  
And when we ask Hashem to open our hearts  
He fulfils our request  
However we are obligated to place these words always on  
our heart  
So that every moment that we merit an open heart  
Then will fall into the innermost recesses of our heart  
And from there spread throughout our entire being.
7. "And he will bless himself in his heart, saying  
'I will have *Shalom*, because I will go according to the  
arbitrary nature of my heart'" (Devarim 29:18)  
Someone who does good things because of his good heart  
and proper behaviour  
But these good deeds don't come from effort and inner  
courage  
This is an expression of 'I will go according to the  
arbitrary nature of my heart'  
Because the arbitrary nature of his heart here happens to  
bring him to good deeds  
To this also applies "And you shall not stray after your  
heart"  
Good deeds should be done from understanding and  
effort  
Not because that is the inclination of your heart.
8. *Words that come from the heart enter the heart* (*Shirat  
Yisrael*, Rabbi Moshe Ibn Ezra)  
Also the heart from which the words came.
9. "One day I will" is a bad trait.  
"I want to" is not really a trait.  
"Behold I am" is a good trait.
10. Do you know what pulls and pushes the locomotive?  
The steam that is stored and charged within it.
11. From poverty and hunger you need not fear  
They are given by the Creator.  
I fear the hardness and cruelty  
That are the lot of the hungry.
12. With money  
You can bribe even someone who "hates money".
13. "With joy you will go out" (Yishayahu 55:12)  
Joy is beautiful  
Because it has the power to release a person  
From all of the difficulties.
14. *Whoever eats from the meal of a Chattan and Kalla and  
does not bring him joy, transgresses 5 voices* (Gemora  
Brachot 6b)  
"Does not bring him joy" refers to the person himself  
That he does not feel the joy of the *seudat mitzva*  
And does not bring himself joy through this.

15. *There are those who acquire their world to come in one moment* (Gemora Avoda Zora 6b)

Something that can be acquired in one moment  
Can be lost in half a moment.

16. “In all of your ways you shall know Him” (Mishlei 3:6)

Even in an *aveira*  
And from this, he will separate from the *aveira*

17. I have never fasted properly

How so?  
On Yom Kippur, who wants to eat?  
And on Tisha B’Av, who can eat?

18. In the past, in generations of hot Jews

The Mikvaot were cold  
Today, in a generation of cold Jews  
You have hot Mikvaot

19. “This is none other than the house of God

And this is the gate of Heaven” (Bereishit 28:17)  
In every place you can reach Godliness  
The difference is just which gate you go through.  
If you go through the gate of Heaven – you find Him immediately  
If you go through other gates  
You will find on the road  
Other things also.

20. “**This** they will give... a half-shekel in the holy shekel”  
(Shmot 30:13)

*He showed him a coin made of fire and said, “Like this they will give” – Rashi*  
Moshe Rabbeinu was bewildered  
That a simple coin has the power to atone for a soul  
Hashem showed him a coin of fire: “Like this they will give”  
If the giving is not just money  
But done with fire and enthusiasm  
That is has within it the fire of the soul, a part of the *nesahama*  
Then it has the power to serve as atonement for the soul.

21. “And the mountain burned with fire, until the heart of Heaven” (Shmot 4:11)

Does Heaven indeed have a heart? And did the fires of Mount Sinai truly reach “the heart of Heaven”?

The fire of Mount Sinai so inspired and so enthused  
Until the heart of flesh of each of those present  
Become “a heart of Heaven”

22. The ladder by which the souls came from Heaven to earth has now been removed

And from Heaven they call the souls to ascend  
There are people who do not try to heed the call  
Saying, “The ladder is gone, how will we go up?”  
There are people who try to jump upwards  
And after they have fallen a few times, they give up hope from their efforts  
And there are people who says: “The ladder is gone  
But if we are nevertheless called  
It is a sign that we must try endlessly”  
To this last group  
Hashem helps them and pulls them up.

23. Every person needs to have two pockets

In the one, *The entire world was created for me* (Gemora Sanhedrin 37a)  
In the other “I am just dust and ashes” (Bereishit 18:27)

24. A shoemaker hangs a shoe in his window

To show what is to be found inside  
A holy person does not need to hang good deeds and traits in the window  
To show people “Here is a holy person”.

25. A poor person comes and asks a favour

This one responds:  
“Who am I that I can help you?  
I am lowly and dishonoured  
My opinion is not heard.”  
But nevertheless  
If you will damage the honour of this “humble man” in any way  
He will destroy you.

26. “Hashem is a Mikveh to the Jewish people” (Yirmiyahu 17:13)

The Mikveh purifies  
At the time that a person lowers his head into it completely  
And not even one hair remains outside.  
Such is the purification of the Jewish people.

27. Parnassa is the hands of Hashem, may He be blessed  
 But every person runs after his parnassa  
 And prepares strategies within himself to do this or that  
 And he does not rely on the Holy One, blessed is He  
 but works for his parnassa day and night.  
 However, in service of the Creator which is placed in the  
 hands of flesh and blood  
 Since, *Everything is in the hands of Heaven, besides for  
 reverence for Heaven* (Gemora Brachot 33b)  
 It is enough for a person to simply pray:  
 “Place in our hearts to serve You with reverence”  
 And does not toil for it at all.
28. *Your nation’s needs are many, and their understanding is  
 limited* (Gemora Brachot 29b)  
 Because their understanding is limited  
 Their needs are many
29. Someone who learns Torah and does not labour over it  
 Someone who sins and forgives himself  
 Someone who prays today because he prayed yesterday  
 An evil person is better than he.
30. “Let the wicked man forsake his path” (Yishayahu 55:7)  
 Does the wicked man truly have a path? He has mud!  
 Rather, let the wicked man forsake his illusion  
 That he has a path.
31. “People of holiness you must be to Me” (Shmot 22:30)  
 The Holy One, blessed is He, does not lack angels above  
 He wants holy people  
 That your holiness will be human  
 And acceptable to people
32. “Tie the *chag* with ropes” (Tehillim 118:27)  
 Just as a tailor sews one knot at the end of the thread  
 And if he didn’t do this, the sewing would not last  
 So too a person needs to tie all of the days of the *chag*  
 that passed  
 In order to strengthen and keep them, so that they do not  
 fall away from him.
33. Some say words of Torah  
 In order to reach the Heavens above  
 I say: You must say Torah  
 To reach the *pupik* of the person you’re speaking to.
34. Why do we say on Shavuot  
 “The time of the giving of our Torah”  
 And not “The time of the receiving of our Torah”?  
 Because the giving was on Mount Sinai  
 Whilst the receiving of the Torah is constant  
 Every moment that a person studies Torah  
 That is the time it is received.
35. The learning of a page of Gemora  
 Purifies like immersion in the Mikveh
36. *If a person sees suffering coming upon him  
 He should examine his actions.  
 If he examined, but did not find  
 He should attribute it to laxity in Torah* (Gemora Brachot  
 5a)  
 He has already “examined and not found”  
 This implies that he didn’t even find the sin of laxity in  
 Torah study!  
 So how can he attribute it to this?  
 The fact that he didn’t find any reason for his suffering  
 “he should attribute it to laxity in Torah” that he did not  
 study Torah  
 And therefore his eyes are closed  
 That he sees no flaw in himself.
37. The real sin is not the sin itself.  
 Because a person is a human being, and was unable to  
 withstand a test.  
 The real sin that is a person can do Teshuva every single  
 moment, and does not.  
 And this is greater than the sin itself.
38. *Hashem says to the Jewish people: “My son, open me an  
 opening of Teshuva like the prick of a needle, and I will  
 open for you entrances that you can take wagons  
 through.”* (Midrash Shir Hashirim)  
 It is enough for a person to open a small opening of  
 Teshuva and fear of Heaven, “like the prick of a needle”  
 and *one who comes to be purified, they help him*  
 and *from Heaven they lead a person on the road that he  
 wants to walk*  
 as long as that opening will come from the depths of the  
 heart  
 and will be completely open from one side to the other  
 without any twisting or blockage.