

PART 1: PREPARING FOR R"H: STANDING IN HIS PRESENCE

ARE YOU AWARE YOU ARE IN FRONT OF HASHEM?

Our parshah begins (Devarim 29:9) with the following words:

אתם נצבים היום בלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם ראשיכם שבטיכם וקנייכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל

"You stand this day, all of you, before Hashem - your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel."

A few *pesukim* later (verse 12), Rashi brings a *Midrash Tanchuma* which explains the connection between Parshas Nitzavim and KiSavo, which had the *klalos* (curses).¹ What is the connection between the curses that Moshe foretold, in the name of Hashem, that will befall Klal Yisroel if they misbehave and the statement of אתם נצבים? So the Chazal tell us: לפי ששמעו ישראל מאה קללות חסר שתיים - Klal Yisroel heard 98 curses - that's a lot of curses, a lot of evil that could befall them. And this is besides the 49 curses recorded in Parshas Bechukosai. So it says that they were overwhelmed, הוריקו פניהם, their faces turned colors - the blood drained from their faces, and they said, מי יוכל לעמוד באלו

So Moshe Rabbeinu calmed them down. He told them, "Despite everything you have done, you are all still alive, standing here before Hashem." But we must note that Moshe Rabbeinu didn't just simply say, "Look, you're still alive and well." He said, "You are standing here before Hashem." What he was saying was: "Let me explain to you the secret of how a person could face even the greatest of fears. How person can face 98 *klalos* plus 49 *klalos*. What hope is there to overcome them?" So Moshe told said to them: אתם נצבים היום בלכם לפני ה' אלקיכם. The secret to a person's success in life in overcoming the most overwhelming and the most frightening situations is to be aware that he is לפני ה' אלקיכם. Let me explain what that means. The nature of a person is that when he gets scared - and people get scared by many things - like going to a doctor and finding out that they are carrying a stillborn and they are only in the second or third month of pregnancy and they have to carry a not alive child for the next 6-7 months - this makes most people scared. Or people get scared when they go to a doctor and they get the worst news of their lives. See, most doctors don't preface their diagnosis by saying, "My dear son or my dear daughter," as many of them are cold - טוב שברופאים לניהם (Kiddushin 82a). They tell you, "You've got the 'dreaded disease' and you are going down, prepare yourself. These are your options. How slow do you want to die?" These doctors scare you and they frighten you. And people call me up with this news. I can't imagine what they feel like! People get fired from their jobs, people lose their homes, a person may lose a child, r"l. People face many challenges throughout their lives.

THE FEAR FACTOR

Now, we need to understand that fear is an indication that a person is not together with Hashem. Let me give you an example. Let's say that your father was your doctor who had to operate on you. You wouldn't be afraid. Maybe you wouldn't be excited, but you would not be afraid or overwhelmed. If your father told you: "We are going through a dangerous stretch of road but don't worry, because I brought security along with us, so you have nothing to be afraid of." So a person would be at ease in this situation. The biggest difficulty that most people have in this world is that they live in a vacuum without Hashem. For most people, Hashem is somewhere "out there." Hashem is like the government. Do people live with the government? There were some governments that people were more afraid of like communist governments who had their eyes and ears in everybody's house listening in on you, so you felt that the government was intruding on your life. But most people have a tremendous craving for independence and they convince themselves that they are living in a bubble, and when they go into their house and they close their door they are in their own world. But this is utter silliness, and at worst, it's arrogance or simple stupidity. The reality is not like that. Hashem is with you at all times. Whatever room you go to, Hashem is with you even in the innermost chambers. But people don't want to hear that. They want to go into their bedrooms or in their house, dress like they want, and act like they want, because "I'm in my own home and I am a king. Every man is a king in their own home." But when the person gets scared that's frightening. So Moshe Rabbeinu told Klal Yisrael that as long as you are aware that you are לפני ה' אלקיכם, you don't have to be afraid, and the more the person is aware that Hashem is with him, meaning the closer you are to Hashem - the safer you are!

¹ למה נסמכה פרשת אתם נצבים לקללות? לפי ששמעו ישראל מאה קללות חסר שתיים חוץ ממ"ט שבתורת כהנים, הוריקו פניהם ואמרו מי יוכל לעמוד באלו? התחיל משה לפסוקים - אתם נצבים היום, הרבה הכעסותם למקום ולא עשה אתכם קלילה ותרי אתם קומים לפניו

EXERCISE OF ACQUIRING BITACHON

We find this concept in the famous war incident between Yaakov and Eisav's angel, as the verse says (Bereishis 32:26), וַיִּרְאֵהוּ אֱלֹהֵי עִשָׂו כִּי לֹא יָכַל לוֹ - "And he the angel of Eisav saw that he couldn't overcome him Yaakov." When I was a little kid and used to read this *pasuk*, I wondered what "moves" Yaakov used on the angel to keep him at bay. Was it karate, krav maga, MMA, or judo? But

the Seforno explains the words, לֹא יָכַל לוֹ, as follows: לְרֹב דְּבִקּוּתוֹ תְּמִיד בְּקֶלֶת יָת' בְּמַחֲשֵׁבָה וּבְדִיבּוּר - *he was extremely attached to Hashem in his thoughts and in his speech.*

Yaakov was extremely attached to Hashem וּבְדִיבּוּר בְּמַחֲשֵׁבָה. Talking to Hashem and thinking about Hashem makes a person דְּבִיק to Hashem - that was the reason the Satan could not overcome Yaakov. The fight was about whether the angel could scare Yaakov and get him, for a moment, to forget about Hashem and not to think and talk to Hashem. And Eisav's angel saw that he couldn't accomplish that.

We know that every one of us faces the Satan, the Yetzer Hora, on a daily basis - it's the same fight. And people want to know, "How can I fight him?" The answer is: that same way! The more you are aware וּבְדִיבּוּר בְּמַחֲשֵׁבָה, that Hashem is with you, that will make you safe and the Yetzer Hora won't be able to scare, overcome or move you. You have to exercise this, Rabbosai. There is a *pasuk* in Tehillim (91:2):

אֶמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי מְצוּדָתִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אֶלְקֵי אֲבֹטָח בּוֹ - "I say Hashem, You are my refuge and stronghold, G-d in whom I trust." The *zeide* (Rav Avigdor Miller) used to say: "What is the purpose of saying to Hashem, 'You are my fortress and my safety net?' Because saying that is an exercise in acquiring bitachon. That's what this exercise is." You want to have bitachon in Hashem, you want to feel secure? Practice this. I will give you an example. Let's say you walk out of your house at 3 am to walk down the block alone. The natural thing is that your ears are perked up, and you are always thinking maybe someone or something will pop out of the woods - maybe a skunk, a racoon, a wolf, or some unsavory character will quickly approach you and try to rob you. You look around and your mind begins to play all kinds of games with you, imagining they are looking for you. That's how people are. That's called fear. And if you read such stories, then you are certainly afraid. So what do you do in such a case? The answer is, before you leave you say, "Hashem, I am going to walk down the block with you." When you were a little child, you said, "Mommy, could you take me across the street?" When you got a little older, maybe you said, "Mommy, could you stand by the door while I walk down the block?" When you are an adult, you do the same thing! What you do is you train yourself to say, "Hashem, I am walking down the block with you," which means, "I know you are walking with me." And your fears will dissipate. I practiced that many times. I used to walk very early in the morning around here, hearing all kinds of noises coming from the woods. After a few weeks of doing this, I had no fear anymore. I was never walking alone. And then I imagined that someone would come rushing at me from the back, but I am still not going to be afraid - I know Hashem is with me. And these are the exercises that you need to do. So every time you walk down the block, you train yourself.

FACING AND OVERCOMING OUR FEARS

I knew a fellow who was petrified of raccoons. They would come around the back of his house when he would turn into his driveway, and they would hiss, and this guy would get very nervous. I told him, "Try to test this, because Hashem is with you. It's not a place of שְׂכִיחַ הַזִּיקָה, where 'damage is common' - raccoons usually don't attack people. They are more scared of you than you are scared of them. So a person has to train himself to think this way. Here is someone who has to go to a doctor to potentially hear some bad news, here is what he should do. He has to say before he goes to the doctor, 'Hashem, you are going with me to the doctor. You are going to accompany me, and You will hold my hand, and You will sit with me, and You will help me hear the news the doctor has to say - Hakodosh Boruch Hu, I am לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל הַיּוֹם, I am always in front of you.' And if you do that, all your fears will dissipate." That's what a person has to know.

Dovid HaMelech said, וְגַם כִּי אֶלְךָ בְּגִיַּא צְלֻמּוֹת לֹא אֵירָא רָע כִּי אִתָּה עִמָּדִי - "Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness, I fear no harm, for You are with me" (Tehillim 23:4). You have these guys who put up bumper stickers on the back of their trucks, *I'havdil*, that say: "No fear." My *zeide* used to say that this is usually the sign of a guy who's petrified. They put "no fear" to try to get themselves not to be afraid. I remember, as a kid, seeing a bumper sticker, "Single and Loving It." My *zeide* used to say, "This person, you should know, cries himself to sleep every other night, and they soak their bed in tears over their loneliness." What a silly thing to say! They are trying to convince themselves that they are single and loving it against the backdrop of being depressed over their single status. A person has to know that the only way you are going to overcome any fear is if you will train yourself, and you must train yourself! Try to imagine yourself in a fight with someone, or try to imagine a criminal is coming over to you and asking you for your money and all of a sudden you say to yourself, "Hakodosh Buruch Hu, you are with me. Hakodosh Buruch Hu, you are with me." But people cannot do that because their fear becomes so overpowering that the last thing they want to hear about is Hashem. They don't think of Hashem as a reality in their life. But Hashem is the reality, it's the only reality in your life!

R' CHAIM VOLOZHINER'S AMAZING SEGULAH

This is the amazing *segulah* brought down by Rav Chaim Volozhiner (Nefesh Chaim, Sha'ar 3, 12:8). This is an

amazing principle of *Yiddishkeit* and an amazing *segulah*. He was not a "Chassid" - he doesn't bring *segulos*, but if he does, you can take this one to the bank! This is not like sticking your fingers into Havdalah wine and getting your eyes wet with it, or waxing your pockets or stains in your jackets, etc. No, this is not what it's about. This is a truly amazing *segulah*! What is it about? He says the following:

ובאמת הוא ענין גדול וסגולה נפלאה להסיר ולבטל מעליו כל דינין ורצונות אחרים שלא יוכלו לשלוט בו ולא יעשו שום רושם כלל. כשהאדם קובע בלבו לאמר הלא ה' הוא האלקים האמתי ואין עוד מלבדו יתברך שום כח בעולם וכל העולמות כלל והכל מלא רק אחדותו הפשוט ית"ש. ומבטל בלבו ביטול גמור ואינו משגיח כלל על שום כח ורצון בעולם. ומשעבד ומדבק טוהר מחשבתו רק לאדון יחיד ב"ה. כן יספיק הוא יתב' בידו שממילא יתבטלו מעליו כל הכוחות והרצונות שבעולם שלא יוכלו לפעול לו שום דבר כלל

"And truthfully, this is a great matter and a wondrous *segulah* that takes a person out of the realm of any other judgments and the desires of others, so that they can not control him, nor make any impression at all. When a person fixes it in his heart to state, that after all: G-d is the true Elokim and there is no other power in the universe, nor in all the worlds at all other than Him, and everything is filled only with His (blessed be His name) simple unity. And in his heart, he completely nullifies all others, and does not attend (or pay attention) to any power or will in the universe, and harnesses and adheres the purity of his thoughts only to the One and Only Lord (blessed is He), and then He will make it happen for him, that all of the powers and desires that are in the universe will be nullified from upon him, so that they will not be able to affect him in any way at all."

FALLING DOWN THE STAIRS

And I will tell you even a bigger *chiddush* I will share a story with you. One day I came home from the Yeshiva. We lived in a basement apartment at the time. There were about eight steps going down to the basement and I took those steps too quickly. There was a banister on one side; on the other side, there wasn't. And all of a sudden, I went flying head first. My foot got stuck on one of the steps and it bent underneath me when I went flying. When I saw the bottom of the steps and I saw my face was headed toward the tiles, I knew that I was heading for a disaster. So the first thing I did was with Hashem's help, I took my two hands and plastered them to the two walls. I was hanging in mid-air and I "glued" my hands to those walls and I prayed that they would become like one of those suction cups. I was suspended like this, and then I slowly got myself up. I sat down on one of the steps and then I took a look at my foot and realized that my foot was snapped. One of the strongest tendons in a person's body is the tendon that goes from the hip to your knee (i.e., iliotibial band); it's a thick tendon that controls everything, and it's very unusual for it to snap - that's what the doctor told me. Now my knee bone was sticking out and was pressing very hard against my pants. My knee went out and I was looking at it, and I knew it wasn't good. On the spot, Hakodosh Boruch Hu was with me. I closed my eyes and with all my strength I thought, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu you are with me and I am with you, ואין עוד מלבדו - there is no other koach in the world other than you." I got into such a zone, into such a deep meditation - *hodu l'Hashem ki tov* - that the next thing I knew my wife came to the steps to see what was going on, and she saw my knee sticking out and she called 911 right away. When the paramedics came, they said that I was in a very serious shock and not cognizant. I wasn't interested in any of their questions, like "how old are you, and how much do you weigh, etc." What difference does it make? I heard them say, "That's some serious shock." They somehow managed to stick a sheet under my body, and three guys took me out of the basement, put me on the stretcher, and drove me straight to the emergency room.

In the emergency room, the doctor said, "We need to take an X-ray." I said, "Take whatever you need." I was totally with Hashem, אין עוד מלבדו. They took an X-ray and came back a little while later and asked me, "On a scale of 1 to 10 what is your pain level?" I said, "Zero. It's uncomfortable, but I have zero pain." They said, "You are hemorrhaging profusely - that's what the X-ray showed, and you should be experiencing the worst pain possible." I said I had no pain. They asked, "Do you have a high tolerance for pain?" I said, "I dislike pain just like you do. I don't have a high pain threshold, and I don't like pain." They called another doctor to look at an X-ray and he asked, "Do you mind if I touch it?" I said, "If it would make you feel better, go right ahead." They started touching and pushing my bone down and they couldn't believe that I wasn't screaming from pain. And I told them that I truly didn't feel any pain. They said that's not possible and that I needed emergency surgery.

I learned from this story a *peledike zach*. A person can get into that zone of אין עוד מלבדו - even on the physical level. You see, I always thought that this concept worked only for הכוחות והרצונות אחרים - when someone else wants to hurt you. You could be מתדבק בה' and that diminishes the *koach* of others. But, no, it even works for natural things in the world. And if a person gets into that zone, he can rise above pain, and he can nullify all things because now he is with Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

THE THOUGHT PROCESS ON ROSH HASHANAH

We are standing before Rosh Hashana. The period before Rosh Hashana is a frightening time, but to us, it's not frightening because we are all zombies and bobbleheads, we don't believe in Rosh Hashana, we don't believe in the *yom hadin*. We all think, "Nah, it's not going to happen to me. It didn't happen last year, it won't happen this year." Ay, the last guy said the same thing and look what happened to him? There was a fellow riding a bicycle last week who was run over and went to the next world. Do you think he thought it was possible to happen to him? No. When you ride a bike, you think you are riding "for life." Last Rosh Hashana that person got a *din*. Look how many houses were flooded this year, and how many were damaged by fire or wind, in Texas, and in Los Angeles.

It didn't happen last hurricane season, Rabbosai. It all happened last Rosh Hashanah! When the chazan said, "Mi ba'mayim," in his *tefillos*, that's when Hashem stamped the city of Miami for flooding, and each individual house that flooded as well! Hashem meant business, He gave them chances. You have to know this is a very serious time! It all happened last Rosh Hashanah!

What if this person has someone sick in the family or is himself sick, *lo aleichem, lo aleinu* - how do you deal with it?

What should be your thought process on Rosh Hashanah? The *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah is to proclaim Hashem as the King, to coronate Him, to elevate Him. But since we are on such a low level, it is hard to tap into this. If I were to ask you to be *mamlich* Hashem, you'd probably burst out laughing from now until Rosh Hashanah. This means nothing to most of us. "I want to go to sleep right now and I don't want to be bothered by Hashem. What's this coronating Hashem?! I don't see Hashem, I don't feel Hashem." So what's the *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah for us then? Yes, we all sing "Hashem *melech*, Hashem *malach*, Hashem *yimloch leolam voed*," with all kinds of *nigunim*. But what's the *avodah* of the day? When you are sitting and you are tired, and you are not sure what to fill your mind with, don't fill it with nonsense. The *avodah* of this day is one thing: throughout Rosh Hashanah, in every one of your *tefillos* you should be thinking as many times as possible - 100, 200, 300 times a day the following thought: "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, I am with you, You are the One to whom I turn." Say this passuk: אמר לה' מִיִּמִּי וּמִצִּדִּי (ibid). "You are my refuge," and think about every single part of your body; think about your life, your parents' lives, your wife's life, your children's lives, think about *yesurim* and suffering that others have had and think, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, you are with me, everything is from You."

TWO IMPORTANT STEPS

See, in order to make Hashem a Melech, you first need to acknowledge that there's a Hashem in your life! If you don't acknowledge there's Hashem in your life, you can't make Hashem a Melech! It doesn't work. So the first thing you do is acknowledge that there is Hashem in your life. Then you say to Hashem, "I acknowledge you are the Melech. Maybe I can't get to a high *madreiga* when I am *mamlich* You, but I can get to a level where I acknowledge that everything I have is from You, Hashem, and there is no other power in the world." Here is a guy who's standing and thinking, I hope this rich guy gives me a job. I hope this rich guy gives me money. I hope I win the sweepstakes." That is stupidity. A person should think, "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, You are the only One who is with me." And if a person wants to know how he can be אֱלֹהִים לְפָנָי ה' - even in the face of 98 *klalos* - remember that you are אֱלֹהִים לְפָנָי ה'! That's what you have to remember. You have to remember two things: 1) there is Hashem in the world 2) Hashem is אֱלֹהִים לְפָנָי ה' - He's your personal Hashem. And even if a person gets *yesurim* from Hashem, he has to know one thing - that *yesurim* are not a *clap*, they are a "*mussar*" - Hashem is waking us up to come back to Him, and if we come back to Hashem then we won't need *yesurim*. So do that and you will be able to have a *kesiva v'chasima tova*. Take Hashem seriously. Acknowledge that Hashem is in your life, He is with you and you are with Him, and you will be safe from all terrible things.

PART 2: FEELING THE SHABBOS (5770)

THE BODY CAN FEEL KEDUSHAS SHABBOS

Let's begin with a *vort* from the Avnei Nezer (R' Avraham Borenstein, 1838-1910), the famous Sochatchov Rebbe, an *adam gadol* with many *teshuvos*.² He left over a *kesav yad* called *Neos Hadesha*, where he writes there a short *vort* that was very insightful to me. For a while I've been thinking and asking myself: *How do you feel and sense kedushas Shabbos? How does the kedushah of Shabbos manifest itself in my life?*

So the Sochatchover says there's a concept of *ner Shabbos* which the *gemara* says is משום שלום בית. He explains the deeper meaning behind *shalom bayis*. He says that every person's body is a *bayis* for his soul. Your *guf* is the house of your *neshamah*. But there's no *shalom* in this *bayis*. That is, there is no *shalom* between the *neshamah* and the *bayis*, the *guf*, because the *neshamah's* whole desire is to serve Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the *guf's* is drawn toward *cheftzei haguf* (bodily desires). This, in turn, creates a tremendous lack of *shalom bayis*. The *neshamah* wants to accept *malchus shamayim*, while the *guf* views *malchus shamayim* as an *ol*, as a yoke. The superiority of the *neshamah* over the *guf*, he says, is כיתרון האור מן החושך - like the superiority of light over darkness. And our job is to subdue our *guf* to the will of the *neshamah* and be *mekabel* upon our *guf* the *ol malchus shamayim*.

However, he explains that it is only during the weekdays. On Shabbos, on the other hand, whatever was considered to be an *ol* (burden) on the *guf*, is transformed to become an *oneg* (pleasure). When the pasuk (Yeshayahu 58:13) says: וקראת לשבת עונג, it teaches us that the *shem ha'etzem*, the essence of Shabbos is called an *oneg*. And it is *shayach* for the *guf* to actually express that and feel it. *Oneg* is a physical perception. It's not in the mind. You feel *oneg*. The *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbos* is to eat a *shtickel chulent*, or a good piece of *gefилte* fish. That's called *oneg Shabbos*. The *oneg Shabbos* is *mesbateh* (expressed) in the *guf*, where it enables the *guf* to

² ענין נר שבת משום שלום בית. כי הגוף בית הנשמה, ואין שלום בין איש הזה וביתו. כי הנשמה כל הפצה לעבוד את בוראה, והגוף - להבלי העולם, ומלכות שמים לעול עלי. ויש יתרון להנשמה מן הגוף כיתרון האור מן החושך, והנשמה מכריחה את הגוף בעל כרחו לקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים. וכל זה בחול, אבל בשבת כל מה שהיה על הגוף בבחי' עול מתהפך בשבת לעונג, וגם הגוף מתרצה בעצמו למלכות שמים. וזה ע"י הנשמה היתירה שמאירה חשכת החומר, ומתגלה בשבת העונג שבמצוות, כי הוא מעין עולם הבא. וזה: נר שבת משום שלום ביתו, כי נעשה שלום בין איש וביתו, כנ"ל. וראיה מוזהר, שבשבת האדם פטור מעול מלכות שמים דאיהו תפילין, וח"ו לומר שפטור ממלכות שמים, רק מעול, והיינו שבשבת אין מלכות שמים לעול. (כת"א סי' נ"ח, וכן כת"ג פ' חיי שרה) (נאות הדשא - א)

do *mitzvos* on Shabbos without an *ol*. He says that the *guf* itself is מתרצה למלכות שמים. An incredible idea. But how does it work?

HOW IT ALL HAPPENS

What happens is Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives you a *neshamah yeseirah*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives you an additional *neshamah*. A whole week you have such a *neshamah* and such a *guf*. On Shabbos, what Hakadosh Baruch Hu does is He gives the *guf* an injection of an extra *neshamah* and this lightens the darkness of the materialism, whereby on Shabbos, it is *nesgaleh*, it becomes revealed to the *guf* the *oneg* that exists in *mitzvos* because it's *me'ein olam haba*. This is the secret of how *ner Shabbos* represents *shalom bayis*. When you see the *ner* of Shabbos, it represents the *neshamah* of Shabbos. That is *shalom bayis* because now it becomes בין איש ובין ביתו, which creates *shalom bayis* between איש ביתו - between the *guf* and *neshama*.

Then he says, there's a proof for this idea from the *Zohar*. The *Zohar* says on Shabbos a person is *patur* from עול מלכות שמים. And what represent the עול מלכות שמים? *Tefillin*. But *chas veshalom* to say on Shabbos you're exempt from עול מלכות שמים - that can't be! So then what are you exempt from on Shabbos?! The answer is, on Shabbos you are exempt from the *ol* aspect, meaning to say, that on Shabbos *mitzvos* are not an *ol* - it's not a yoke for the body to do *mitzvos*, as it is during the week.

WINNING THE REAL WAR

Now we're going to try to get some clarification in our understanding of this struggle, namely, the lack of *shalom bayis* within

ourselves and the inner turmoil that exists within us against our will. You have to know that during the week, a person is in a state of *milchamah*, in a state of war. There's a famous *Chovos Halevavos* that says in *Sha'ar Yichud Hama'aseh* that there was a *chassid* that saw some warriors come back from a battle and they had taken a lot of spoils and felt overwhelmed. The *chassid* told them that what they returned from was a small *milchamah*. That's what he said. "I wish you well in the big *milchamah*." They asked him, "What *milchamah* are you talking about? The *milchamah* is over. We won." He said, "*Milchemes hayetzer vechayalav*, the *milchamah* of the *yetzer* and his soldiers."³

A *mentsch* has to know that the essence of this *milchamah* is that each side strives to get the other one to be *machnia* (subjugate) itself. The *guf* tries to get the *neshamah* to *machnia* itself to the *guf* and the *neshamah* tries to get the *guf* to *machnia* itself to the *neshamah*. But, as *Chazal* have told us, there is something unique about this *milchamah*. In a regular *milchamah* how do you win? You surround the enemy and try to destroy them. You have to go to the enemy and you have to *mamash* beat them up. That's what you have to do. Over here, though, the job is not to go and beat up the *yetzer hara*. What is the *milchamah* of the *yetzer*? How is this *milchamah* fought?

The Rambam in his preface to *mishnayos* in *Zerayim* famously writes about the חורבן הנפש, the destruction of the *neshamah*.⁴ Do you know what destroys the *neshamah*? תיקון הגוף, when one is *mesaken* his *guf*. The *tikun haguf* is the *churban* of the *nefesh*. ותיקון הנפש, you want to know what's *mesaken* the *nefesh*? בחורבן הגוף. If a person strengthens his *koach haseichel* and his connection with his *neshamah*, that will automatically weaken the *koach haguf*. So it comes out that the war with the *yetzer hara* is not that you have to go attack the *yetzer hara*. You have to strengthen your relationship with your spirituality. You have to be *mechazek* your connection to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You have to be *ma'aleh* yourself, elevate yourself. Once you have strengthened the *koach* of your *neshamah*, the result is your *guf* becomes weak. A person who is *mekabel ol Torah*, תורה מתשת כחו של אדם, the physical *koach* of a *mentsch* becomes weak. And it works *fakhert* too. If a person is *osek* in *inyanei haguf* more than is necessary - not just to be *mechazek* the body, but *leshem tikun haguf* - that is going to be *machriv* his *neshamah*.

Now the *emes* is that in this war you want to make *shalom* between two enemies. What do you usually do to make *shalom*? You try to find a compromise. So in this *milchamah* many people also tend to compromise. But what comes out from this *yesod* is that the compromise is the *churban*. Let me explain what I mean. Let's say a person says, "You know what? I'm going to compromise. That means there are going to be times when I'm going to fulfill the will of my *guf*. I'm going to dedicate this time, whether it's *bein hasedarim*, *bein hazmanim*, weekends, evenings, whatever I decide is the time, הנני מוכן ומוזמן למלא רצון הגוף, and during the day I'm going to learn *shtark*. During the *zman*, I'll learn *shtark* and that will be the compromise." That's not going to work. Do you know why? Because any time you're *draw* after the *chumriyus*, anytime you're *mesaken* the *guf* you create a terrible turmoil between yourself and the *neshamah* and that's its own *churban*.

So what is the way a person can have *shalom*? *Shalom* could only be achieved if a person makes the *neshamah*, or his spirituality, dominate his *guf*. He needs his *guf* to become *batel* (subservient) to his *neshamah*.

³ אמרו על חסיד שפגע אנשים שבים ממלחמת אויבים ושללו שלל אחר מלחמה חזקה אמר להם שבתם מן המלחמה הקטנה שוללים שלל התעתדו למלחמה הגדולה אמרו לו ומה היא המלחמה הגדולה אמר להם מלחמת היצר והיילוי (חובות הלבבות, שער חמישי - שער ייחוד המעשה ה')

⁴ והחכמה היא אשר תוסיף על כחו הפנימי ותעתיק אותו ממעלת בוח למעלת כבוד שיהי היה האדם בכח וחזר אדם בפועל והאדם קודם שישכיל וידע הוא נחשב כבהמה לא נבדל משאר מין החיות אלא בהגיון שהוא חי בעל הגיון רוצה לומר בהגיון שהוא מצייר לנפשו המושכלות. והנכבד שבמושכלות לצייר לנפשו אחדות הקב"ה וכל הנלוה לענין ההוא מהאלהיים ששאר החכמות אינם אלא להרגיל בהם עד שיגיע לדעת האלהי והדיבור בוח הענין עד כלותו יאריך מאד. אבל עם ציור המושכלות יתחייב להרחיק רוב התענוגים הגופניים כי תחלת השכל יצייר שחרבן הנפש בתקון הגוף ותקון הנפש בחרבן הגוף. שהאדם כשיהיה רווח תאוות ומגביר המורגשות על המושכלות ומעביר שכלו לתאוותיו עד יחזור כבהמה אשר לא תצייר לנפשה אלא האכילה והשתיה והתשיש. אז לא יתודע הכח האלהי רוצה לומר השכל. וישוב אז כאלו הוא בריה גזורה שוחה בתוך ים ההיולי ופירש ים היולי תהו. ונתברר מאלו המוקדמות כי תכלית העולם וכל אשר בו הוא איש חכם וטוב. וכאשר יתברר לאיש שהוא ממוני האדם הדעת והמעשה. ר"ל בדעת לצייר בשכלו אמתות הדברים על פי מה שהם עליו ולהשיג כל מה שאפשר לאדם להשיג. והמעשה. הוא תקון ויושר הדברים הטבעיים ושלא יהיה שטוף בתענוגים ושלא יקח מהם אלא מה שיהיה בו תקון גופו ותקון המדות כלם, וכו'. (הקדמת הרמב"ם למשנה י"ז)

The whole *tachlis* of Hashem creating *ra*, the whole *tachlis* of the *yetzer hara* within us is in order for that *ra* to become *batel* to the *tov*. You have to understand this because it's a tremendous *yeshod*. That means the *ratzon hatemidi* (constant desire) of every *mentsch* should be to want to do the *ratzon Hashem* and for his *guf* to want to do the *ratzon Hashem*. But he has to train himself how his *guf* should work for his *neshamah*.

THE YEITZER IS ROOTING FOR YOU!

There's a famous *Zohar* that the *Ba'al Hatanya* quotes. The *Zohar* says that the *yetzer hara* really has tremendous pleasure when you beat it. As opposed to other battles that a person has, there is nothing more humiliating than an enemy getting beaten. When an enemy becomes *batel*, he hates the guy who won. But the *yetzer hara* is different because the *yetzer hara* is really working for Hakadosh Baruch Hu and the *yetzer hara* really wants that a person should not concede to him, not give in to him. A *yid* is supposed to be *mevatel* the *ra* and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu has tremendous *nachas ruach* from the him. But if the *yetzer hara* is able to pull a *yid* down and break him, the *yetzer hara* ends up being on Hashem's bad list. He knows that's not the purpose of the *ra*. That's not the purpose of his creation. His purpose of creation is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu's children should be *mesgaber* over the *yetzer hara* and be *matzliach*.

Rav Yerucham writes this and he says that in this *milchamah* the *yetzer* becomes your best friend. Where do we find that? By Moshe Rabeinu, he says. When Moshe Rabeinu went up to get the Torah, the *gemara* says he had to have a *vikuach* (argument) with all the *malachim*. And at the end, even the *Malach Hamaves* became his friend. The *Malach Hamaves* gave him the secret of the *ketores* which is the secret of life, how to be saved from the *yetzer hara*, from the *Satan*. That's because the *Satan* wants the *ra* to become *batel* to the *tov*.

DESIRING THE REAL ONEG SHABBOS!

So it comes out that on Shabbos, טוב להודות לה', we have to *mamash* be *modeh* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu that He gives us -

His *banim ahuvim* - an opportunity in this dark world, where the *ra* is overpowering and so many people are failing, a chance to *pashut* have a *shtickel menuchah*. He gives us a chance to taste what *menuchah sheleimah* is. *Menuchah sheleimah* means you're at rest. There's no battle - there's no inner struggle between the *guf* and the *neshamah*. That's *menuchah sheleimah*. And Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives us that, as we say in the *zemiros* יְשָׁם יְנוּחוּ - "there exhausted ones rest." Over there in *olam haba* you're going to have יְנוּחוּ, those who have toiled, the weary ones, will rest. Therefore, Shabbos is *taka* that day. Shabbos is a day when Hakadosh Baruch Hu teaches us, "I'm going to imbue you with the *neshamah yeseirah*. I'm going to give you a chance to taste what the *guf* should want and find *oneg* in doing the *ratzon Hashem*."

So the first thing you have to do is you have to want that. That's the first step. Sometimes a person is in such *choshech*, such darkness - where he is so downtrodden and beaten already - that he doesn't even understand that this is what he really wants! But *baruch Hashem* we want that. We want to aspire to that. We want that our *guf* should want to feel the מלכותו ברצון קבלו עליהם. On Shabbos, a person should attempt to see if he can get away from his *guf*, get away from strengthening his *guf* and attempt to taste the *neshamah yeseirah*, attempt to taste the benefit of that *kedushah yeseirah* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu presents us with. This is done by sleeping less - which is one of the strongest physical drives, having shorter meals, and maximizing learning of the Torah, halacha, etc. This *koach ruchni* that Hashem gives us through our *neshamah yeseirah*, which strengthens *neshamah* actually creates a *churban haguf*. The direct result is בנין הנשמה חורבן הגוף, as the Rambam explained. That's what happens.

This has a tremendous *hashpa'ah*. This is the *musag* of Shabbos. If a person will now go and look into the words of davening, they'll see many indications of this. Many of us miss this beauty of Shabbos and we think that Shabbos, *rachmana litzlan*, is a time for *tikun haguf*. There are many, many people who think about Shabbos this way, especially if they are a learning person! You learned during the week a little bit, so Shabbos is the time for you to have *tikun haguf*. The Arizal says that the purpose of sleeping on Shabbos for a *talmid chacham* is to be able to be *masig hasagos* that he couldn't get during the weekday. On Shabbos he could get it through his sleep and comprehend certain *inyanim*! That's the purpose of sleeping on Shabbos not to cover yourself under the blankets and forget about the world for 3 hours. So the *tikun haguf* is never the purpose of Shabbos. That brings the *churban haneshamah*.

THE MASHAL THAT ONLY RAV MILLER COULD GIVE!

Let us hope we can key a little bit into this idea of *tikun hanefesh*, the *binyan haneshamah* and experience the *churban haguf* and not allow our *guf* to be *machriv* our *neshamah*. If we'll do this, we'll make a *kinyan* on this, Rabbosai! It will be a *kinyan olamis* for ourselves. It will be an everlasting *kinyan*. We'll be able to sense it. My grandfather *mamash* explained this in a very simple way. When you come to the next world if you have not struggled in this world to attain *tikun haneshamah* and *churban haguf* and you spend your life on *tikun haguf*, you're going to come to the next world and they're going to sit you in a room with a big clock and they're going to give you a big *gemara* and they're going to say you can sit and learn for the rest of your life, for the rest of time! And you're going to go bananas! You're going to go berserk because your whole *avodah* in this world was *tikun haguf*. You're going to say, "Where are the snacks? Where's the nosh? When do you get recess here? How

long do we have to sit here? Can't I go see so and so?" There's nothing else to do! Nothing else is going on here, my friend. So you've got to prepare yourself. And that's what happens, unfortunately, when a person is *machriv* his *neshamah* and *mesaken* his *guf*, instead. The result of this *churban* is the lack of *shalom bayis*, which creates a tremendous pressure, a tremendous force that a person feels when somebody is forcing him to be *mekabel ol malchus shamayim*. Our entire purpose here is to get in touch with *olam haba* because *olam haba* is *lenetzach netzachim*. That's for real. If you're not going to be ready for it, you won't get it. Every Shabbos is a practice of this tremendous *yesod*, Rabbosai.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should be *mezakeh* us that we should be able to get in touch with this on Shabbos and we should be able to be *oleh ma'aleh ma'aleh*.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Moshe Rabbeinu taught Klal Yisroel that the secret to overcoming the most overwhelming and frightening situations in our lives - such as standing before the *din* of Rosh Hashanah - is to become acutely aware that we constantly "stand" in the presence of Hakadosh Boruch Hu, אֱתֵם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. Our drive for independence and the resulting desire for self-reliance, however, make us live in a vacuum, without Hashem, which is the biggest danger and *klalah*. The more we become aware that we are אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי ה', both in our thoughts and speech, the safer we'll be. Repeatedly saying various *pesukim* of *bitachon* to help us realize that Hashem is constantly with us will help us to begin to acquire *bitachon*, which is the only way to overcome the challenge of fear, pain, and other dangers that may surround us. This Rosh Hashanah, to properly be *mamlich* Hashem over the world, in a most meaningful and sincere way, I will first be *mamlich* Hashem over myself, by reminding myself that I am in the presence of Hashem and by thinking, as much as possible: "Hashem, You are with me, You are my refuge. You are in charge of every aspect of my life, health, etc. Everything that I have is from You!" Finally, since Rosh Hashanah this year also falls on Shabbos, I will, *bli neder*, think about the amazing *vort* of Avnei Nezer, of how the *neshama yeseira* enables my body to feel the pleasure, a *menuchah*, on Shabbos, to perform mitzvos without any burden since the *guf* and *neshama* are in a state of *shalom bayis*, whereby the *oneg* of mitzvos becomes revealed to the *guf*! This is really the deeper meaning of the *shalom bayis* concept that *ner shel* Shabbos represents. And if I can remind myself of this idea and even practice some aspects of תִּיקוּן הַנֶּפֶשׁ by slowly increasing my Torah learning (and gradually minimizing my sleep, etc), I will begin to train my body to actually enjoy mitzvos and be *zoiche* to feel a *schtickle olam haba* in the process!