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SHIUR PRESENTED IN 5779

A TORAH BOND IS FOREVER

This is going to be the last shiur in this venue for 5779. The next shiur will be in 5780. As this is the last shiur of 5779, I would like to express my *hoda'ah* to Hashem Yisborach for giving me this opportunity to transmit His Torah and *divrei chizuk*, to clarify some *yesodos*, which I was *mekabel* from my *rabbeim*. I am very grateful for this unique opportunity. I don't know most of you who participate in the shiur virtually. I haven't spoken to most of you directly. You are located in many different cities, states, and even countries. Now, ordinarily, a person wouldn't have an opportunity to connect and assist and build people who are at a distance. But thanks to Hakodosh Boruch Hu who inspired two brothers - Reuven ben Yakov and Shimon ben Yakov - this venue (Torah Anytime) was opened up. They have a tremendous *zechus*. Hakodosh Boruch brought it all together. So, while we may not meet again in this lifetime, we will meet in the next lifetime. You have to know one thing is for certain. When two people eat or drink together, it doesn't create a lasting bond. If they play together, it's not a lasting bond. But when people learn Torah together, that creates a *keshet shel kayamah*, an eternal *keshet*.

My rebbi (Rav Meir Halevi Soloveichik) once told me from his father, the Brisker Rav (Rav Yitzchok Zev HaLevi Soloveitchik), that there was somebody who did a big *avlah* to the Brisker Rav. He stole something from him and he made it public. The Brisker Rav was upset. This fellow considered himself the Brisker Rav's talmid. My rebbi told me, "My father, the Brisker Rav, sent him a message: 'I won't have a *shaychus* to you from now on, not in this world and not in the next world.'" When I heard that, somehow, for some reason, it struck a chord, and I realized that what I have with my rebbi is not just while I'm with him in his house or sitting by his shiurim and then you move on. It's not like that. You're with them in the next world. The gemara tells us of people who came to the next world, and they weren't allowed into yeshiva *shel ma'alah*. There's no question about it that rebbi'im in this world come to the next world, and they continue teaching Torah, enlightening others, and bringing awareness of Hakadosh Baruch Hu's Torah in *olam haba*.

I appreciate very much the fact that you listen because every time a person creates another *keshet* with another Yid, one of the Am Yisrael, that creates a *k'vod shamayim*. People who have business together also create a bond, but it's not a bond that you take to the next world with you. Torah creates an *emese* bond. Therefore, I want to wish all of you a *gut gebentched yar*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu should look out and assist every one of you in all of your *inyanim* of *ruchniyus*, and in all of your *inyanim* of *gashmiyus*. Hashem should enable you to pass the tests before they come. And when they come, to be able to stand up to the tests and utilize those tests and create building blocks and opportunities for yourself and for your family to enjoy in this world and the next; in this world *leorech yamim veshanim tovim*, and in the next world *lanetzach*.

Hashem should give you all the *koach* to know how to be *mispallel* and make the right *bakashos*. You have to be *zocheh* to everything through tefillah. Some people don't know how to ask, or what to ask for. And because they never asked, they never received.

Hopefully, after Rosh Hashanah, we will meet again and continue our climb together. All of you who listen to these *shiurim* - and I have a great debt of gratitude to every one of you - give me a lot of strength to continue. I greatly appreciate it.

DAVEN FOR THE RIGHT KIND OF LIFE

We're now holding a few days before Rosh Hashanah. Most people think about it in the following way: They make lists of what they want. People know they want to have *parnasah*. People want health. People want good children, *erliche tzaddikim*. They want their parents to be healthy, and their brothers and sisters to be healthy, and other such wonderful requests.

Chazal put in the tefilah זכרנו לחיים מלך חפץ בחיים, we should be *zocheh*, וכתבנו בספר החיים למענך אלקים חיים. This is one of the few *bakashos* that was inserted into our tefillah very remarkably - and it's a very big *chiddush* because in the first three *brachos* of the Shemoneh Esrei, we don't make requests.

Now the emes is, the most important request that a person needs to ask for is *chaim*, life, because if you don't ask for *chaim*, everything else is worthless. But when most people ask for *chaim*, כתבנו בספר החיים, they don't begin to understand what that means. They don't think about what type of quality of life they want.

When a person asks for life, he's not asking for the life of a *beheimah* or a *chayah*. We want to have a life of a human being. And Hashem says, what do you mean when you say 'life'? So you think of somebody who you heard drowned this past year or died in an accident, and you think, "Hashem, keep me alive. No accidents." You're thinking of somebody who had a heart attack, and is on life support. He's in a coma in a hospital connected to machines. You say, "Hashem, no. That I don't want."

A LIFE WITH A TA'ANUG FOR RUCHNIUS

You have to know exactly what you're being *mevakesh*. It's very, very important. Now, you have to realize that every human being in this world, besides for 'life,' the person needs 'chiyus.' He has to have *ta'anug hachaim*. He has to have joy in life. Two things that give a person a reason to live are the fact that his heart is beating and his mind is working, and the second thing is that he looks forward to some joyous moments. If a person's life was joyless, he would have no interest or value in life. Think about it. Do you think you could live without breakfast? Without lunch? Just taking a tasteless pill for breakfast, lunch, and supper. Are you really living if you do that? It's keeping you alive, for sure. But a person has to have some joy in life. Every single person who is conscious looks for places to draw joy from. There are people that look forward to their breakfast. They like pieces of toast with butter. They like to have some cheese on the side. If you ever went to Eretz Yisrael, they're very famous for their Israeli breakfasts. In hotels, you see what breakfast is *shayach* to be like. They don't serve lunch in hotels over there. It's not necessary. They give you breakfast and supper. How many types of breads are there, how many types of cheeses are there, how many types of cereals are there, how many types of eggs are there? A person looks forward to the *ta'anug*. There's no table with just vitamins; take one in a gulp. You don't come to the world for that.

Now you have to realize - and this is a very important point - you are a *ba'al bechirah*. You have the ability to choose what is going to give you *chiyus*. There are some people who are on such a low level of *chiyus*, that a piece of pizza is their *chiyus*. Listening to a ball game or watching a ball game is *mamash* their *chiyus*. If you take away that *chiyus* from them, they feel *mamash* empty. If you go around the world, you'll notice that very few people have any *chiyus* from Torah and mitzvos - but that is the source of real *chaim*. The main source of *chiyus* for someone who carries a *neshamah* that is a *חלק מאלוק ממעל* is from Torah and mitzvos.

You want to know how much *chiyus* you have from Torah and mitzvos? I'll give you an example. You're a bachur, and a guy stops you and says, "Could you drive? My wife needs the hospital right now!" "Drive? What about *shacharis*?" "You're *patur* from *shacharis* 100%." The guy jumps into the car and drives to the hospital. It's a trip. He's all pumped. A little excitement over here. But he didn't realize that he is not only going to miss *shacharis*, he's going to miss breakfast also. Now, what does the guy feel bad about? When it comes lunchtime, is the guy going to say, "Boy, I missed *shacharis*?" "Baruch Hashem," he'll say. "I was *patur*. I had an *oness*." But he'll say, "I'm starving." If he's a *shtickel mentsch*, he won't say it, but he'll think it. "Do you know of any place to get something to eat around here?" he'll ask the guy. The guy says, "We're dealing with an emergency. Would you forget about your eating?!" "No. It's my *chiyus*. I live for that."

A person has to know that when you come to Rosh Hashanah and you ask for '*chaim*,' you have to ask for '*chiyus*' because if you look around, you could see how many people last Rosh Hashanah didn't ask for any *chiyus* whatsoever. They never made a request. Every one of you requested life, so Hashem wrote down, 'Breathing.' To one degree or another, you're alive. You're walking. But in the *chiyus* aspect, most people don't even have *chiyus* from the physical world. The proof is that you don't see people walking around happy and enjoying life. How many times do I go places, and everyone looks like they are in a morgue? Then, I figure I'll walk into the *beis medrash*. That's the place to see live people.

I always tell a story. Many years ago, maybe thirty or forty years ago, I was in a *beis medrash*, and I watched a guy learn with *gevaldige hasmadah* for three hours straight. I was impressed. I was moved. I was happy for the guy. At the end of the *seder*, I slid into the bench next to the guy. I said, "Could I ask you a question? When's the last time you did a mitzvah with some substance that made you feel like 'I did something?'" He started to think and think. He was thinking and thinking and thinking. He said, "I can't remember." I said, "Isn't that sad?" I said, "You just learned. I sat across the aisle from you, and I watched you. You learned for three hours *b'retzifus*. Could you show me what you learned?" He showed me, "I learned this gemara." I counted the words in the gemara. I said, "Rashi has at least as many words, if not more. And the Tosfos." I said, "Thousands upon thousands of the biggest mitzvah in the whole Torah, *talmud Torah keneged kulam*, and you got nothing from it?" You're looking for what you did, some big mitzvah you did but you couldn't find it.

TA'ANUG FROM OUR MITZVOS

You know, davening is enjoyable. You're actually communicating with Hashem. You're actually requesting of Hashem. You're making a difference. You're standing in your corner. You're standing in your little *daled amos'l*, and you are impacting the world. You are reaching out to the Creator and the Master of the universe, who is

listening to you, and wants to hear from you! And you're saying, "Hashem, I would like to beseech You on behalf of all the Jews in every city, every state, every country, all over the world. I want to make a request on their behalf. Give them *da'as!*" Do you know how amazing that is?

If you had a chance, if you saw a person choking or having some difficulty breathing, and you were able to assist that person, you know you would never forget that for the rest of your life. Imagine you're walking to the yeshivah, and you see an old person sitting on a chair, and he's not breathing right. You walk up to him, "Is everything all right?" You look at the guy. "Open your mouth." You see he has a cucumber stuck in there or a piece of celery, and you reach in, and you pull it out. The guy gives a sigh of relief. "Baruch Hashem! I was dying. I couldn't breathe." You ask him, "Why didn't you take it out?" He says, "I have arthritis. My fingers don't work." You saved the guy's life! You'd be pumped for the next month. You'd tell your father. You'd call your mother. You'd call your uncle. "I *mamash* had an opportunity this week." And that is one little Jew.

And here, you have a chance to reach out to Hashem and communicate with Hashem on behalf of Klal Yisroel. That's a mind-boggling event. You have a chance to express your gratitude to Hashem, to make requests, to make a whole laundry list of requests, to say thank You to Hashem, to ask Hashem for shalom. Who doesn't need shalom in his life? Everybody is fighting with somebody else. You ask Hashem for shalom. That's amazing!

If you had a chance to go to Rav Chaim Kanievsky wouldn't you be excited? Of course you would. Hashem is a little bigger than Rav Chaim Kanievsky. I'm not trying to put him down. But Hashem is still bigger.

A person has to realize not appreciating these opportunities in life is called being dead. It's called 'you're in the morgue.' Maybe last Rosh Hashanah, you weren't *zocheh* to *chiyus*. Hashem pronounced that your heart would beat x amount of times a minute. Twenty four hours a day, hopefully without jumping or stopping in the middle of your sleep or some other time, and it beats just like Hashem programmed it. But in terms of quality of life, you got nothing. Of course you need to ask Hashem for superficial life, physical life, but this year on Rosh Hashanah, you want to tell Hashem: "Hashem, give me a *ta'anug* in my *chaim*. Give me enjoyment in my life. I want to enjoy *limud haTorah*. I want to enjoy my davening. I want to enjoy doing chessed for people."

You know, a person who learns Torah and doesn't enjoy it, do you know what kind of tragedy that is? That's like a guy who is allergic to eating. There are people who have allergies to food. Whatever they eat, they end up sick. It's terrible. It's a tragic situation. They can't eat this. They can't eat that. Some people are allergic to peanuts. Some people are allergic to milk. Some people are allergic to milk, peanuts and gluten. Don't ask what people are allergic to. I look at them and think, "Shrek! What kind of life is that? What does he enjoy? Bland mashed vegetables? Baby food?"

EVERYTHING COMES FROM TEFILLAH

When I was a kid, I remember I liked baby food. I like certain ones more than others. I liked the pears. I liked the bananas. I remember when I started having kids, I tried to regain that joy. I couldn't regain the joy. I said, "I liked this stuff? How did I like this stuff? It's bland." But that's how it is. At the time, Hashem gave

me enjoyment from it. That was also a chessed from Hashem, that He gave me the palate to enjoy that food.

A person has to understand that what you have to do, and what you must do, and what is crucial to do is to beg Hashem for what you really need. Here's a guy - a *shuache* guy, not such a great tzaddik by any stretch of the imagination - who tells me that last year he had a Rosh Hashanah like nobody's business! He had a Rosh Hashanah! I said, "Yeah? What did you ask for?" I told him, "I don't know what you asked for, but you missed the boat because the only thing that gives you *chiyus* was everything but Torah and mitzvos. You missed the boat! What did you ask Hashem? To have a fun year? To have a nice year? What did you ask Hashem for?"

If you can't feel that the Torah gives you life, that means Hashem did not grant you any *chiyus* last year! If you can't feel pumped from doing a mitzvah, that means you didn't get any *chiyus*. The mishnah in Avos says, תורה שהיא נותנת חיים לעושיה, גדולה גדולה תורה שהיא נותנת חיים לעושיה, בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא כי חיים הם למוצאייהם. It's *chaim*. *Chaim* doesn't mean just breathing. *Chaim* means *chiyus*.

Do you understand that you don't know what '*chaim*' is? That's very sad. On Rosh Hashanah, you should think of nothing else when you say זכרו לחיים. Say, "Hashem, I want to live, but I want to live and feel quality." Not, "I feel excited about building a *shtender*." You have these guys who like to build things. They love building things. You see they do it with such zest and such joy. That's how people are. It's a *nebach*. That's what they want their *chiyus* in, to put a few nails in a board and build themselves a little lock box to keep in the dorm room? A great accomplishment. But from a gemara - nothing. You should cry for this. Because if (*chas v'shalom*) you knew that this year, your physical life was going to be living in a hospital, or you weren't going to be able to walk, or you would just be able to barely breathe with assistance of machines - would you daven for that? I sure hope so. Would you pray to Hashem to save you? I would surely hope that you would. You can't have success in anything in your life if you don't have *chiyus*. If you struggle when you come to the *beis medrash* or go to a shiur, you've got to know that's the problem. That should scare you. You shouldn't just say, "Well, it's a different time of my life. Now I'm older. I'm different. I'm busy with my business. I'm busy with this." Even if you're busy with your business, you still enjoy a good meal. You still enjoy some exercise. Why shouldn't you enjoy Torah? Why shouldn't you enjoy mitzvos? Why shouldn't you be *matzliach* in that?

Now, if you don't have that *bakashah* and you don't even ask Hashem, do you think Hashem is going to give it to you? Hashem gives you things without asking? Everything comes from *tefillah*. Why would Hashem give a guy *chiyus* from Torah when the guy never even asked for *chiyus* from Torah? Actually, all he wants is to get away from Torah.

DAVEN POSITIVELY NOT TO BE A RASHA

Many people think that this is their lot in life. People think they naturally enjoy *ta'avos* and other negative things. The Sefer Hatanya (פרק יד) talks about the *nefesh* of the *beinoni*, of the person that goes through struggles and the person is drawn to this side or that side. Now, he says, a *beinoni* is something that everybody could be at any time. A *beinoni* doesn't detest evil. He knows he enjoys *ra*, too. He enjoys negative things. He likes *bitul Torah*. He likes sports. He finds it very *geshmak*. I was speaking to somebody yesterday. I said, "What are you living for?"

He said, "Nothing." I said, "What do you live for? Tell me the truth. Everyone lives for something." He said, "I watch movies." A bright fellow. What a nebach!

The Sefer Hatanya says like this: The first thing you have do is to tell yourself, you have to say it to yourself, "Hashem, I don't want to be a *rasha* even *sha'ah achas*." That means I don't want my life to be one where I just seek to fulfill my *ta'avos* and do the opposite of *ratzon* of Hashem. Because if you do that, you're a *rasha*. You want to know why I don't want to do that? You might say, "Because I don't want to go to Gehinnom. I want to have a good year." No. The Sefer Hatanya writes: Say *כי איני רוצה*, I don't want, *אחד בשום מה*, one in any of, *להיות מובדל ונפרד חס ושלום מה*, I don't want to be separated, distanced, disassociated from my Tatte, from my *melech* even for one second. It says in the passuk, *avonoseichem*, your sins are what separates you.¹

So what should you do? He says, a person has the *bechirah* to reject and to disconnect himself from *ta'avos* and *ta'anugos hagashmiyim*. He says, he has to work on himself in his heart, in his mind, to develop a *sinah* to those *ta'avos* to the best of his ability. He says, if it's not the *tachlis hasinah*, at least he should know it's *pas nisht* such a *zach*.² It's not becoming of you.

A person has to tell himself that I'm going to accept upon myself to be a *tzaddik*. He says when a person is born they make him make a *shevuah*. It says *תהי צדיק ואל תהי רשע*. He asks a *gevaldige kasha*. What's the *pshat* in the gemara, to be a *tzaddik* and not to be a *rasha*. If you make a *shevuah*, "I'm going to be a *tzaddik*," of course I'm not going to be a *rasha*! What's the *pshat* *רשע ואל תהי רשע*. You know why, he says? Because a person could enjoy Hashem, enjoy mitzvos, but at the very same time he could enjoy garbage too. So we say *תהי צדיק ואל תהי רשע*. That second *shevuah* that they say don't be a *rasha* means: Choose to work on yourself to disassociate, detach yourself, from the *rishus*.³

The Sefer Hatanya continues, how do you do that? He says a person has to be *kovea* for himself times and look for *eitzos* in himself to be *mo'es b'ra*, detest evil.

Do you ever hear of bachurim that talk about sports? To me, it's amazing. They talk about it like it's not *stam olam haba*. They gain nothing from it. No vested interest in it. Gornisht! He says, Chazal give us all kinds of *eitzos* for how a person

¹ והרשות נתונה לכל אדם לעשות ולדבר ולחשוב גם מה שהוא נגד תאות לבו והפכה ממש. כי גם בשעה שהלב חומד ומתאוה איזו תאוה גשמית, בהיתר או באיסור חס ושלום, יכול להתגבר ולהסיח דעתו ממנה לגמר, באומרו ללבו: "איני רוצה להיות רשע אפילו שעה אחת, כי איני רוצה להיות מובדל ונפרד חס ושלום מה' אחד בשום אופן, כדכתיב: (ישעיהו נט ב): "עונותיכם היו מבדילים וגו'"; רק אני רוצה לדבק בו נפשי רוחי ונשמת, להתלבשן בשלושה לבושי יתברך, שהם מעשה דיבור ומחשבה

² ולכן אמר איוב: (בבא בתרא טז א): "בראת צדיקים וכו'", וכדאיתא בתיקונים, שיש בנשמות ישראל כמה מיני מדרגות וביחוד: חסידים, גיבורים המתגברים על יצרם, מארי תורה, נביאים וכו', צדיקים וכו', עינין שם. ובה יבין כפל לשון השבועה, (נידה לב): "תהי צדיק ואל תהי רשע". דלכאורה תמוה, כי מאחר שמשביעים אותו "תהי צדיק", למה צריכים להשביעו עוד שלא יהיה רשע? אלא משום שאין כל אדם זוכה להיות צדיק, ואין יעשה הטוב בעיניו, וכו' [נועד, שההרגל על כל דבר שלטון ושיהיה הרע מאוס ממש באמת. ולכן משביעים שנית: "אל תהי רשע" על כל פנים, שבזה משפט הבחירה והרשות נתונה לכל אדם למשול ברוח תאוותו שבלבו ולכבוש יצרו שלא יהיה רשע אפילו שעה אחת כל ימיו, בין בבחינת "סור מרע" בין בבחינת "ועשה טוב". ואין טוב אלא תורה, דהיינו תלמוד תורה שכנגד כולו.]

³ אך אף על פי כן צריך לקבוע לו עיתים גם כן לשיית עצות בנפשו להיות מואס ברע, כגון בעצת חכמינו ז"ל: (שבת קנב א): "אשה חמת מלאה צואה כו'" וכהאי גוונא. וכן כל מיני מטעמים ומעדים נעשים כך חמת מלא כו'. וכן כל תענוגי עולם הזה, החכם רואה הנולד מהן, שסופן לרקוב ולהיות רימה ואשפה. וההפך, להתענג ולשמוח בה' על ידי התבוננות בגדולת אין סוף ברוך הוא כפי יכולתו, אף שיודע בנפשו שלא יגיע למדרגה זו באמת לאמיתו כי אם בדמיונות, אף על פי כן הוא יעשה את שלו, לקיים את השבועה שמשביעים "תהי צדיק", וה' יעשה הטוב בעיניו, וכו' [נועד, שההרגל על כל דבר שלטון ונעשה טבע שני. וכשירגיל למאס את הרע, יהיה נמאס קצת באמת. וכשירגיל לשמח נפשו בה' על ידי התבוננות בגדולת ה', הרי באתערותא דלתתא אתערותא דלעילא, וכו' והאי אולי ייערה עליו רוח ממרום, ויזכה לבחינת רוח משרוש איה צדיק שתתעבר בו לעבוד ה' בשמחה אמיתית, כדכתיב: (תהלים צז ב): "שמחו צדיקים בה'", ותקיים בו באמת השבועה שמשביעים, "תהי צדיק"]

could be *mo'es*, disconnect himself even from *ta'avos nashim* or from *ta'avos achilah*. A person has to think the thoughts that Chazal guide us with. Additionally, he has to say I'm going to undertake to try to be *mesaneg* and *lesmoach* in Hashem. I'm going to think about the amazing opportunity that I was presented with. And I know that I'm not going to get, maybe, to the *shpitz madreigah*, but I want to have something. I want to try to be *mekayem* my *shevuah* of *tehi tzaddik*. Then Hashem will do. Hashem will give him *matanos*.

BE PREPARED TO WORK ON BEING A TZADDIK

The second thing the Sefer Hatanya says is that apart from davening, you have to train yourself to be a tzaddik and not a *rasha*. I always say over a story about a fellow who came here for Shabbos many years ago. One of my dear *mechutanim* sent him here. He said, "I'd like you to give him a jolt for Shabbos." I said, "Okay." I said, "I want to know one thing. Is he off drugs?" I said, "When he's four weeks off of drugs, then I'll have him for Shabbos. Don't send him here when he's on drugs." The guy shows up here one Erev Shabbos. His brain is totally fried, not stam. Toast. He can't think. He's a *shtickel* zombie. I told him, "This is going to be a Shabbos you're going to remember like no other Shabbos." He said, "I hope so." Friday night, after the seudah, I said, "Now we're getting to work." We sat downstairs and opened up a mishnayos Bava Kama. I said, "You ever heard of mishnayos Bava Kama?" He said, "Sure. I learned in yeshivah." I said, "Okay." I said, "When's the last time you learned mishnayos?" "It's been a while." I said, "I am going to give you intravenous today. I'm going to get into your soul, into your blood steam, and I'm going to put something in there you're not going to forget." I said, "Do you have ability to retain Torah and remember things *ba'al peh*?" He said, "No. I was never good at that." I said, "Okay, tonight you'll become good at that." I said, "I'm going to teach you the first mishnah in Bava Kama, and we're going to learn it over and over and over. You're going to learn it tonight a hundred and one times. You're going to know it *ba'al peh*. If you drop dead tomorrow," I said, "you'll have lived for one night in your life."

After *chazering* with him for sixty-nine times – sixty-nine times! – I mamash felt like Rav Preida. I said, I hope this doesn't have to go to four hundred. I said, a hundred and one is the key. At sixty-nine, I told him, "I'm going to sleep now." It was really late. I said, "When I wake up in the morning, if you're still here, you'd better know this mishnah by heart, and you'd better learn it a hundred and one times. If you don't learn it a hundred and one times, you'd better not be here when I wake up in the morning." The guy said, "Rebbi, I'm going to do it." The guy did it! The next morning the guy was all charged up. I woke him up. "I know the mishnah!" I said, "Are you sure? Let me hear it." He did a pretty decent job. I said to the guy, "Do you feel it?" He said, "I never had such an experience in my life." I said, "You were *zocheh*. You tasted it. You know why? Let's say you would have said to me, - 'Nah, I don't want to do that. I can't do it,' - you would not have tasted it." And I have tried this on other people. They get *shleppy* on me, they get mamash such *rifyon yadayim*, it's like I'm pulling teeth. It's like no one is home. But the guy did it! I said, "Now you tasted it." That Shabbos turned him around.

I sent him back to New York. I said, "Now you go back to New York. You start learning." I told him to go to Chaim Berlin. I gave him a whole program. I told him, "Stay in the program. If you make it, I'm going to find you a yeshivah."

He lasted for a few weeks, and then one night, he called me at 3 o'clock. He said, "Rebbi, this is great. Wow! This is unbelievable! I love the Torah!" I said,

“That doesn’t sound like you.” I said, “What are you on?” He said, “No, I’m not on anything.” I said, “What are you on, buddy? I know you’re on something. What is it?” Finally, he spits it out. He said, “Rebbi, I can’t fool you. You can tell from there I’m on something.” I said, “You call me 3 o’clock in the morning and tell me you’re high on Torah?! Ey yah!” He was on Quaaludes. I said, “*Oy nebach refuah sheleimah.*” I said, “*Tzeischem leshalom.* Goodbye.” I hung the phone up. *Zei gezunt!* He dropped the ball.

A person has to realize that you have to train yourself. You have to work on yourself. You can’t do it in one night. In one night, you get a feeling. You rarely see a guy even trying to *shteig*, trying to get a *sticker* of one sugya into his kishkes. Everything is half hearted and haphazard. You don’t even give yourself a chance to try to get *chiyus*.

Have you ever seen a guy start playing basketball for the first time? I remember the first time I played basketball. I was in a yeshivah in Scranton, Pennsylvania. I had never played basketball in my life. Over there, everybody was into basketball. If everyone is doing it, you’ve got to do it too. So I took the ball the first time, and I tried to hit the backboard. The ball went over the side of the backboard. I said, “What’s this? They should make bigger backboards. What’s going on over here? How do you get the ball up so high over there?” I didn’t give up. I said, if all these *shlumps* here could do it, I surely could. They look like they’re having a good time. I’m going to have a good time too. I learned how to do it. I had to work on it. It doesn’t happen just by looking at the thing. You have to actually do some work.

That’s your choice. The first thing you do on this Rosh Hashanah is beg Hashem to have some *chiyus*. You don’t want to walk around like you’re looking for the morgue. You want to have *chiyus*. “Please, Hashem, when I daven, I should have *ta’anug*. When I do mitzvos, I should have *ta’anug*. When I learn, I should have *ta’anug*.” Not when I tell you to come to learn Shabbos afternoon, and you think I’m *pashut* torturing you, like I’m asking you to go into the Spanish Inquisition. How do I think of such a terrible *klalah*? What kind of yeshivah does that? They’re supposed to let the guys sleep forever on Shabbos afternoon like a *meis*, *misah beShabbos ta’anug*. A person has to understand *misah* is the worst thing you can do for yourself.

CHIYUS LEADS TO OTHER HATZLACHOS TOO

Rabosai, ask Hashem זכרו ליים. Not only for yourself. For others. Because if you have *chiyus*, you’re going to have *hatzlachah*. You’re going to be ambitious. There are tzaddikim who can sit and learn for hours and hours and hours a day. I remember as a child, I used to think, how do they do that? That must be torture for them. How come their hair doesn’t fall out? They must have such boring lives that they find this interesting. I mean, their lives must be so empty. They have no joy. They don’t understand cars. They don’t understand baseball. They don’t understand the goodness of the world. They missed the boat! I thought maybe they were lucky they missed the boat because they’re not aware. Sometimes, you lack awareness, so you end up with your head in the books. But that’s not the *pshat*. They have a *ta’am* in it. They feel it. It touches them. They look at you, and they think, you *nebach* what you are. You sick puppy. The only thing that he has is some pretzels. You only like pretzels. The only food you eat is pretzels. What’s wrong with you? What kind of life do you have? That’s a tragedy.

There was a *gvir* that Rav Aharon once went to. Rav Aharon got a big check from the guy. Rav Aharon said, "Oy, I feel terrible for you." He said, "Rebbi, why do you feel terrible for me? I have a wonderful life. A great life!" He started enumerating all the wonderful things he had. Rav Aharon said, "I'm not thinking about your *olam haba*. I'm thinking about your *olam hazeh*." You have no *olam hazeh*. You don't know what *olam hazeh* is. You don't know what it means to enjoy a blatt gemara. That's sad. That's terribly sad."

Ask Hashem for help. Not for nice ties. Not for nice shirts. Not for nice clothes. Not for nice toys. Ask Hashem for some *chiyus*, Rabosai. And think about what you want *chiyus* from. Maybe you'll be *zocheh*. A little *chiyus* will change your entire life. In order for Hashem to give you *chiyus*, a lot of other stuff need to be taken care of. You need a lot of other conveniences and things in life that will come along 'free of charge'. Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help you, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us all be *zocheh to chaim amiti'im* and a *chaim* with *chiyus* and a *chaim* of connecting with Hashem and feeling that *keshet* and not being left on the outside.

PART 2: THE SECRET TO EFFECTIVE TEFILLAH (5783)

CONDITIONS FOR TEFILAH

The passuk says ונצעק אל ה' אלקי אבותינו "and we cried out to Hashem, the Hashem of our fathers," וישמע ה' את קולינו "and Hashem heard our voices," He heard our cries (Devarim 26:7). The great Rav Chaim Palagi (1788-1868), in his *Haggadah shel Pesach* says a beautiful *peshat* in this passuk, based on a *yesod* from the famous Rav Saadya Gaon (882-942).

We know that *tefillah* has a tremendous *koach*, but you should know there are conditions required for your *tefillah* to be accepted.¹ Most of us struggle with meeting all those conditions. I once saw in a sefer that there are six conditions. When I saw that, I became demoralized because if there are six conditions then you have to satisfy them. But Rav Saadya Gaon says there's a way to get around those conditions.² There's a way for a person to *daven*, and even if the person is not where he supposed to be - he's אדם שאינו הגון, he's not fit that Hashem should hear his *tefillah* - there is a way for him to get answered.

Rav Saadya Gaon says as follows. There are two ways for a person to *daven*. When most people *daven*, they're asking for mercy. We all have our needs, a

¹ כתוב בס' בנין עולם (ר' דוד אברהמי): "וזה לשון ספר דברי הושע (מ"ב פרק ט') לענין תפילה על הצלחת למודו: דע בשמחתי האדם אל הש"ת שיצילוהו מ'צרה הרע ויזכהו לעשות רצונו יתעלה תמיד, תפילה קזאת היא חשובה מאד ומועלת. וטוב לו שי'קדים ששה תנאים ועל יד' זה תהיה התועלת היוצאת מן התפילה גדולה מאד בעזה"ת. א. יבוש ויכלם על עוונותיו וי'צטרע מזוה עשר חזק. ב. יכאב לבבו על אשר קצרה ידו מהושיע את עצמו מיד יצרו, וקשה לו לעמוד כנגדו, ומחייב הוא לזעק לפני המלך ה' צבאות שי'חוננוהו וי'פדוהו מרדת שחת. ג. יותר רצוי שתהיה התפילה בלילה שאז היא מעוררת את האדם ביותר. ד. יכתוב לבו בתפלתו עד אשר תביאנהו אל הבכי, כי הבכי הוא תועלת גדולה להשיג סיוע מהש"ת אל התשובה. ה. לא יסמך לבו על תפלתו, ומחמת זה יתראש ח"א בעבודתו לבל יעשה בה אף כפי יקלתו. ו. יותר רצוי שי'צמצם זמן תפלתו בשעה שמרגיש בנפשו היותה אז קרובה לקדשתו וי'תברך, כגון שלמד תורה הרבה, אשר על יד' זה זוכה לקרבתו וי'תברך, או עשה מצוה המשמחתו כי אז תפלתו יותר רצויה להתקבל, עכ"ל. ואין לו לעכב תפלתו עד שי'צדמנו לו כל התנאים הנ"ל, אלא יתפלל בכל זמן שנצרך והקב"ה שומע תפילה בכל עת, אלא שיש לו לנצל את התנאים הנ"ל באופן מיוחד."
² ז"ל: ראה לע"ד לפרש עמ"ש הרב מוהרן שפירא ז"ל דכל תפילה שמזכירים בה זכות אבות אברהם יצחק ויעקב ע"ה מיד הם נענים וכתב הרב סעדיה גאון ז"ל דאפי" אדם שאינו הגון לשמוע ה' בקול תפילתו אם הוא מתפלל לצורך גבוה בעבור כבודו יתברך מיד הוא נענה כע"ש וזה רמז הכא באומר ונצעק אל ה' דצעקתו היא בעבור כבוד ה' לא לנו ה' לא לנו כי לשמך תן כבוד ועוד הן בה דבתפילתינו אמרנו אלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב ועיי"ז וישמע את קולנו, וכי."

boatload of needs, and the only one who can satisfy our needs is Hashem. So we come, and we beseech Hashem. Says Rav Saadya Gaon, that's when you require all the conditions; you're asking Hashem for *rachmanus*, and that takes a high level of conditions to be met.

DAVENING FOR THE HONOR OF HASHEM

But there's another way to *daven*, he says. You don't *daven* for yourself. You *daven* for the honor of Hashem. He says if you *daven* for the honor of Hashem, then, immediately, your *tefillah* is answered. Rav Chaim Palagi says that's the *peshat* in the *passuk* here. The *passuk* says 'ונצעק אל ה'. In some places, it says they cried out to Hashem *min ha'avodah*, from the work. But here, they cried out, 'אל ה', we cried out to Hashem for His honor - and when we finally did that, then וישמע ה' את קולנו, then Hashem heard our cries.

This is a very important *yesod*. Rav Chaim Volozhiner, in his famous *sefer Nefesh Hachaim* in *Sha'ar Beis*, discusses this at length.³ He says, *be'emes*, in truth, if you think about it, it's amazing that a person could beseech Hashem. How can I ask Hashem to help me and plead to Hashem to remove the difficulties and the *tzaros* that I have in my life?

AVOID YESURIM - FOR HASHEM'S SAKE

He says, imagine a guy needs to be healed, and he goes to a doctor. The doctor gives him these bitter medicine to take. He gives him shots. He needs to do all these invasive treatments that are not pleasant. Have you ever heard of someone like that pleading to the doctor, "Please don't give me the shots. Please don't give me this medicine. Please don't cut off my finger." The doctor says, "If your finger has gangrene, if it's messed up, I have no choice but to cut it. By doing that, I'm saving you."

The patient who's paying the doctor top dollar to give him shots and bitter medicine, trusts the doctor that he's doing what's best for him. A common thing is, a guy dislocates his hand. It's killing you like who knows what. You go to the doctor. What does the doctor say? "Okay, this won't be for long." And all of a sudden you hear a *kich*. He grabs your hand on both sides and, "Arhhhhh!" You start to scream. You're paying for this. You don't say, "No, no, I don't want that. If it has to hurt, I don't want it." You understand it's for your best.

Hashem doesn't do anything to us for no reason. If Hashem does it, it's the best thing for me. It can't be any better. It's what is absolutely required for my health. The *gemara* says אין יסורים בלא עון, if you have *yesurim*, it means there was some sin. Something needs correction. If not for the *yesurim*, how are you going to get your *kapparah*? So Rav Chaim Volozhiner asks how is it possible for a person to ask Hashem not to give it to him? That's such a strong question. It's a great question.

³ כי באמת יפלא איך שייך לבקש להתחנן כלל לפניו ית"ש להסיר מעליו צערו ויסוריו. כמו בענין רפואות הגוף. הרופא משקה סמנים חריפים או אם הרופא מוכרח אף גם לחתוך אבר אחד לגמרי שלא יתפשט ארס החולי יותר. האם יתחנן אליו החולה שלא ישקו הסמנים או שלא יחתוך האבר. הלא החולה עצמו שוכרו לכך. כן איך ישפוך שיח לפניו ית"ש להסיר מעליו היסורים. הלא המה רטיה וסמא דחיי לכפר עונותיו. כמאמרם ז"ל (שבת נ"ה א') אין יסורין בלא עון. ואם לא אפוא. נפש החטאת במה תתכפר. אמנם תכלית הכוונה. צריכה שתהיה רק צורך גבוה. כי במקום שיש חילול שמו ית' כגון צרת כלל ישראל. באומר עם ה' אלה והמה מוכים ומעונים. מחוייבים לבקש ולשפוך שיח לפניו ית"ש על חילול שמו ית'. ואך למען שמו יעשה. וגם היחיד על צערו אף אם אין חילול השם בדבר. יש מקום ג"כ לבקש לפניו יתברך על גודל הצער של מעלה בזמן שהאדם שרוי בצער למטה. כמאמרם ז"ל במשנה פ"ו דסנהדרין אר"מ בזמן שהאדם מצטער שכינה מה הלשון אומרת קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי, וכו'. (נפש החיים, שער ב י"א)

TZAROS OF KLAL YISRAEL BRINGS CHILLUL HASHEM

Rav Chaim Volozhiner says an amazing *yesod*. He says, the purpose of the whole *davening*, of having *kavanah* and pleading with Hashem, is not to save me. It's not to alleviate my pain for me. But it's to alleviate my pain for Hashem's sake.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner says that whenever Klal Yisrael is suffering from a *tzarah*, that *tzarah* brings a *chillul Hashem yisborach*. It's a tremendous desecration for Hashem's name when Klal Yisrael undergoes such suffering. When Klal Yisrael goes through such suffering it makes Hashem look bad. We *daven* to Hashem all the time: Do it for Your name, for Your sake.

Now what does that do? You know what that does? What happens if Klal Yisrael falls and they misbehave? Hashem is forced to give us reminders, to wake us up, to bring us back. But then, when He does that, it causes a *chillul Hashem*. When you *daven* to Hashem, you know what you say? You say, "Hashem, I'm sorry for whatever Klal Yisrael did to deserve this suffering but the suffering is bringing about a *chillul Hashem*. Save us so that Your Name should not be desecrated." So when Klal Yisrael fell and did the *aveirah*, that was an act of *chillul Hashem*. Now Hashem brings the suffering upon Klal Yisroel - it's also a *chillul Hashem*. So you *daven* to Hashem, saying that you're sorry for causing the *chillul Hashem* to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

TZAROS OF AN INDIVIDUAL HURT HASHEM

Now, what about if it's an individual who has *yesurim*? Let's say a person is going through personal *tzaros*. It's not a *chillul Hashem*. Rav Chaim Volozhiner says, over there, you have to *daven* for the great pain you're causing Hashem. How are you causing pain to Hashem? He says in the *gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (46a) it says that אמר רב מאיר, Rav Meir says, when a person is suffering *tza'ar*, מה השכינה אומרת, what does the *Shechinah* say? קלני מראשי קלני מזרועי, Hashem says, My head hurts Me and My hand hurts Me. If your head hurts you, you've got a migraine headache, Hashem has a migraine headache. If you have a pain in your arm, Hashem has a pain in the arm. We are bonded with Hashem. It says in the *midrash* that Hashem considers us His twin, and by twins there's a phenomenon that *Chazal* say, that if one has a headache, the other one has a headache. So too, Hashem says, עמו אנכי בצרה (Tehillim 91). When you're suffering, I'm suffering. It says any *yeshuah*, any salvation that comes to Klal Yisrael is considered a salvation for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, like it says בצרה אנכי בצרה, I'm with you in the *tzarah*, and the end of the *passuk* says וראוהו בישועתי, I will see My salvation (ibid). When you have a salvation, Hashem has a salvation. Your *yeshuah* is Hashem's *yeshuah*. It says: יגיל ליבי בישועתיך, my heart will exult in Your deliverance (Tehillim 13:6). Rav Avahu says, this is one of the most difficult *pessukim* - to say that the *yeshuah* of Hashem is the *yeshuah* of Klal Yisrael. But that's how it is.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains it with a good *mashal*. In modern terms, imagine a father sees his kid driving a car wildly down the hill. The father could see that big sign, "Road Ends." And the father is watching his son speeding down the road, and he starts to scream. "Don't do it! Don't do it! Don't do it!" The kid is like, "Ahh!" He's joyriding. He's having fun. Or you have a kid running on a roof, and the kid doesn't realize - he's running off the roof. Now, what happens? Is the father in pain when that kid falls down and breaks himself into *pitzelach*? Absolutely. His father is in a lot of pain. So what you're supposed to realize is that our pain is Hashem's pain. Hashem told us not to do certain things, and we don't listen. We do

what we want. And now you know what happens? Hashem says, "I'm in pain from your pain. So your *yeshuah* is My *yeshuah*."

A kid should feel bad and say he's sorry. He should say to his father, "Dad, I'm so sorry for causing you to go through this, for putting you through this." That's what we're supposed to say to Hashem. "I'm sorry, Hashem, for putting You through this." And then when a person does that, the effect that it has is that his *yesurim* depart. The *yesurim* go away. That is an amazing key to how to *daven*.

Let's say a person *davened* to Hashem, "Hashem, I'm very sorry that Your *malchus* is not recognized." I remember going to the Kosel one time. And I'm walking down the hill, on the road. Suddenly, in front of me, I could see the beginning of the Kosel. And I see this big golden dome. I had a whole paper, a list of things I was planning to *daven* to Hashem for. I'm looking at this Kosel, and I see the golden dome, and I say to myself, "How could you think about your needs now? This is the *Beis Hamikdash*. This is the place where Hashem desires to dwell in this world together with His *kinderlach*. This is the headquarters for all *avodas Hashem*. Hashem, I'm so sorry. You must feel terrible to watch this big golden dome going up on Your *makom hamikdash*, not by Your chosen seed, but by a rejected brother." Yishmael was rejected. Yitzchak was the chosen son.

FEELING HASHEM'S PAIN

I thought of a *mashal* at that time. Imagine you grew up in a certain house, and then one day somebody comes into the house with a bat. Maybe a couple of guys come in with a bat. They start to break the windows, and they break the house apart. They beat your father up and put him in a hospital. They do the same thing to your mother. It's *geferlach*. And they never heal from it. Ten years later, you come back to that city, and somebody says, "Would you like to drive by the house where you grew up?" You say, "Okay, let's go there." You go to the house. You look at the house and you see it was never fixed up. It never was put back together. There are some *goyim* living in that house. You know what you would do? You burst out crying. The memories that you had, and how it ended up being so *geferlach*.

I thought about the little that I know about the *churban Beis Hamikdash*, and I said, "Hashem, the *sonim* came, Your enemies came and they rebuilt their whole *tiflah* on Your *makom hamikdash*." That's how you *daven* to Hashem. I took my piece of paper and said, "Forget about me. My needs are unimportant. I've got to *daven* for the *kavod* of Hashem." It's a *makom* of *tefilah*. When you go to the *Kosel Hama'aravi*, and you *daven* there, you're telling Hashem, "I acknowledge this is Your *makom hamikdash*. This is the last remnant of Your home. This is still Your place." The *shechinah* doesn't go away from that place just because this other thing went up there. A person has to think about that. Give that consideration. That's how you beseech Hashem.

When you say to Hashem, "Please, Hashem, להשיבו אבינו לתורתך," you know what you're saying to Hashem? "Help me do *teshuvah* because as long as I don't do *teshuvah*, the problem is I'm going to be causing You pain all the time, and I don't want to cause You pain. Hashem, forgive me because I don't want to cause You pain."

Hashem should redeem us - so it shouldn't be a *chillul Hashem*. And so on and so forth for every *bakashah*. And if you *daven* to Hashem in that fashion, you will then, without a doubt, be *matzliach* to get answered.

If you're not going to think about this before you start to *daven*, your *tefillos* will struggle to get up to Hashem. But if you will think about talking to Hashem and you'll think about the desecration of Hashem's name, and you will express your feelings and how much you care about Hashem's honor, it's a different type of tefillah.

HOW TO DAVEN FOR A SHIDDUCH

I tell people who are *davening* for a *shidduch*, "How do you *daven* for a *shidduch*?" What are most people *davening* for when they *daven* for a *shidduch*? They beg Hashem, "I'm lonely. My cousin is married. My brothers are married. My younger sister is married. I'm so lonely. I'm so bitter. My parents are just in so much pain for me. Everybody who sees me looks at me like I'm a *nebach*. I'm not a *nebach*. Hashem, give me a break. Send me the *shidduch*!"

Where do we learn about how to daven to Hashem? The great *tzadeikis* Chana. And do you know what it says? ותתפלל עליה. She *davened al Hashem*. You know what she said to Hashem? "Hashem, You created me a woman and You built into me a functionality, 'machines' that could produce children, feed children, and raise children. Hashem, if You don't give me a child, Your whole creation that You created is going to be for naught. It's going to be for waste. And Your intended *kavanah* will not be reached. Please, Hashem, give me a child so that I can raise that child for Your honor, Hashem." Amazing! And Hashem said, "Bingo! That's how you *daven*. You're going to have a child."

Here is a young lady or a young man who is looking for a *shidduch* and the *shidduch* always seems to be just a little beyond his or her reach. I asked him, "How do you *daven*?" They all tell me the same thing. "I feel bad. I feel depressed. I feel lonely. I'm unhappy. I'm bored. I'm losing my friends." Whatever the *nuschaos* are. They're all true. But don't *daven* that way. Say to Hashem, "Hashem, You created me a woman. In the *gemara* it says that when a girl is born You say בת פלוני לפלוני. You gave me a *zivug*. You paired me up with somebody. You even identified that *ploni*. You gave him a name and You created him. Hashem, for Your *kavod* make it happen. I want to raise a family. It was Your intention that I should be married and have a family. If that's Your intention, Hashem, I'm *davening* for Your intention to be realized." If a person does that and he reaches out to Hashem, that person will be *matzliach*, and his *tefillos* will be answered.

And you've got to cry out. You've got to cry, and you've got to mean it. You've got to think about it. If I was a parent and I had a child, if I brought this child into the world, I would love to see *nachas* from that child. I would love to see the child functioning, developing, growing. That's what parents want. You think Hashem wants any less? There are some people who feel terrible for their parents when they don't get married. I think most feel bad for themselves, but also for their parents. You have to transfer that feeling to Hashem. And when you do that, and you're *davening 'al Hashem'* then you will have *brachah vehatzlachah* in all areas that you require.

✧ IN SUMMARY ✧

Most of us don't realize that there are certain conditions that have to be fulfilled for Hashem to answer our tefillos. However, when the reason for our request is to sanctify and increase the honor of Hashem, Hashem will answer our tefillos without any special conditions. Rav Chaim Volozhiner's yesod teaches us that the purpose of davening is to alleviate my pain – for Hashem. This is demonstrated with Klal Yisrael receiving the yeshuah when they cried out to Hashem for His honor 'ונצעק אל ה'. The same system still works for us today when we daven for the honor of Hashem: Tzaros on a national scale reflect back on Hashem, causing a chillul Hashem; therefore, our tefillos should begin by us saying we are sorry for causing a chillul Hashem through doing aveiros. Tzaros on an individual scale, cause Hashem pain, as the pasuk says עמו אנכי בצרה; therefore, our tefillos should begin by davening for Hashem's yeshuah. When we recognize Hashem's pain over the desecration of His Name, which is part of any lack or pain we feel, Hashem will answer our tefillos. This week, when I daven, I will (bli neder) make a point of davening for the completion of malchus Hashem and increasing the honor of Hashem as the reason that Hashem should answer my request.

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