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IN MEMORY OF CLARA CHOPP A"H

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

CHODESH KISLEV

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EVIL OF CONFUSION

CONTENTS:

Part I. Don't Panic - 3

Part II. Don't Move - 8

Part III. Don't Worry - 15

Part I. Don't Panic

The Meshumad in Brighton

There was once a young man who used to come here to the lectures; he listened to the tapes sometimes too. And now he's a *meshumad*. He's baptized and he goes to a church in Brighton now instead of coming here.

How did such a thing happen? Well, he was working for a certain yeshiva—I'm not going to mention the name—and there was an argument over money. Now he was an American boy; he was very straight. The *rosh yeshiva* was also straight but there was a difference of opinion on how much was owed to him and he was arguing for what he thought was

right. But the yeshiva couldn't pay—the yeshiva was in the red already and there was no money to placate him, to make *shalom*.

And he was so upset by this incident, he became so angry that he was knocked over. Not only did he become hostile to the *rosh yeshiva*, but he became an enemy of the Jewish people. He became an *oved avodah zarah* who hates the Jewish people.

Now, if you would have told him beforehand the end of the story, that one day he'd be in a church praying to a *mamzer*, he would swear on his mother's life that it couldn't happen. In his wildest nightmares he never dreamed that he could travel so far. But it happened. A true story.

Eisav Escapes

Now that story illustrates for us an episode in this week's *sedrah*. וַיִּקַּח עֵשָׂו אֶת כָּל קִנְיָנוֹ אֲשֶׁר רָכַשׁ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן – *Eisav took all of his possessions that he had acquired in Eretz Canaan*, וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם – *and he went to another land because of his brother Yaakov* (Bereishis 36:6). It means he packed up his whole life and ran away to what is now Trans-Jordan. And he did it וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם – *because he wanted to get away from his brother, Yaakov*.

Now Eisav claimed that it was כִּי הָיָה רִכּוּשָׁם רַב מִשְׁכַּת יַחְדָּו – *because their property was too much they should dwell together*; וְלֹא יָכְלָה אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם – *that the land couldn't maintain both of them* (ibid. 7), but that certainly was not the real reason. Because we know that there was plenty of room. If you go from Dan down to Beer Sheva, it's plenty large to support both families. Even if their livestock would increase another tenfold, there would still be enough land for them.

The Real Reason

No, that's not why Eisav left. Eisav went away because he was thrown off balance. His plan to get even with his brother wasn't going as planned. Yaakov was back—with a big family too—and he knew that וַיִּהְיֶה בְרִיךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל – *Yaakov is the one who is going to be blessed*. Yaakov was going to be the leader of the family now. And so Eisav became flustered. "I can't look at him! I don't want to see his face!" That's what the *possuk* means that he left *mipnei Yaakov achiv*. He gave a *terutz* to himself, to his parents, "I'm sorry but I must leave because it's too crowded here." But the real reason was that he panicked; he became flustered and he left.

Now, there's a certain *possuk* that our Chachamim, *zichronom l'vrachah*, applied to Eisav when they were discussing this story. נָסוּ וְאֵין

רוֹדֵף רָשָׁע – *The wicked one flees when there's no one pursuing him* (Mishlei 28:1). And they said like this: “Who is the ‘rasha that flees with no one in pursuit’? It’s Eisav” (Bereishis Rabba 84:2). No one is chasing you away. Yaakov is not complaining. Why didn’t you think you could remain with your brother? You could get along with him.

Now Eisav wouldn’t have done that under normal circumstances. He had too much sense for that. Even if he suffered a blow, a setback, so what? Remain with your family! It’s a blessed family, and the *Shechinah* rests on them. And if it’s true that Yaakov is the *bechor* and גֵּם בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה, so what? Life is not over. Wouldn’t it be good enough to be even secondary in the family? You have to be the leader?

And so if Eisav would not have lost control, he could have remained. Yaakov would have treated him well. He could have been an auxiliary to the Jewish people. But because Eisav became confused, he made the biggest mistake of his life. He ran away.

When Eisav lost his equilibrium, his *menuchas hanefesh*, he became so upset that he thought that it didn’t pay to remain. Eisav pulled up his stakes and left for someplace else. It was for no reason, but עָרַק רָשִׁיעָא וְלֹא יָרִיפִין לִיה – *the wicked one runs away from a situation even though it’s not really chasing him (ibid.)*.

Relax: There’s a Future Here

Don’t we see some people, they feel some anxiety—maybe they listen too much to the radio and they get nervous. “What’s happening to Brooklyn?” they say. “It’s terrible! Let’s pull up our stakes and go someplace else.” Or, “Look what’s doing in America with these *meshugene* politicians! Let’s move to another country.”

All types of situations can cause panic. I knew a *rav* from out of town who was very important in his community. He was a *kana’i*—he was zealous for Judaism and he was doing many good things. But he once did something against the missionaries and he was being sued. It was nothing, but he panicked. He decided to give up and retire to Eretz Yisroel. I remember when he left, *rabbanim* wrote to him and they said he made a mistake by panicking. It was a nothing lawsuit and once he left things began deteriorating rapidly in his hometown *ruchniyus*-wise.

The Sin of Discomposure

And that’s what Eisav did. In the time of confusion he was overwhelmed and he made a misstep of panicking and running away.

And now he's called a *Yisroel meshumad*. It ruined him. And he's called a *rasha* for that. נָסוּ – When you lose your *menuchas hanefesh*, וְאֵין רֹדֵף – and nobody is chasing you, רָשָׁע – you are wicked.

So you'll say, "Wicked?! How can you blame him for that? He was rattled! Isn't that going too far to call him a *rasha*?"

No, it's not going far at all. Because to be rattled by the circumstances around you is a wickedness, a *rishus*. To lose one's composure is a sin. Now to us it doesn't seem so because we have other ideas of sin—we have technical ideas of sins. But now we're learning something new; that anytime the *seichel* is not in full control, a man should know that he is already displeasing Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The Dikduk of Wickedness

I'll tell you a little *chiddush*; that's what the word רָשָׁע means. The word *rasha*, *reish-shin-ayin*, is related to the word *ra'ash*, *reish-ayin-shin*. You have to know that in *lashon kodesh* words don't sound alike by accident. Whenever you see similar letters, you have to suspect that they're related. Sometimes it's hard to discover the connection but that's a *klal gadol*.

And so if *rasha* and *ra'ash* have the same letters it's because they are related words. And the relation is that *rasha* is somebody who is in *ra'ash*, in turmoil. He becomes excited and loses control.

That's what the *navi* said; he says that a *rasha* is like the waves of the sea being buffeted to and fro. Look at the water. The waves can't stand still. And the wicked are the same. וְהָרָשָׁעִים כִּי־נִגְרָשׁ – They are like a driven sea, הַשְׁקֵט לֹא יִכָּל – they're not able to remain settled (*Yeshayahu* 57:20).

Keep Your Hands on the Wheel

Now, with that preface, let's get down to the business of our subject. One of the great stratagems of the *yetzer hara* is to make a person mixed up, confused; to throw him off kilter. People don't know about this—they think it just happens that way. No; it's important to understand that confusion is one of the tricks of the evil inclination. It's one of the objectives of the *yetzer hara* against you.

How does it work? Why is 'confusion' such a *yetzer hara*? The answer is that a person expresses his greatness, his character, his free will, by means of his *seichel*. Your primary accomplishments are because of your

seichel. But it's only possible if your mind is in control—you must have your hands on the steering wheel of your mind.

Now, imagine a sniper wants to shoot a driver. So it's not necessary to shoot him through the head—he doesn't have to explode the man's brain altogether. If he can shoot him through his hands it's the same because now he can't steer. The driver, if he loses control of the wheel, so he's finished. He's headed straight to the morgue.

And so when a man loses control of his *seichel* then he has already lost the battle. He might do anything! Foolish things! A man can make very big mistakes when he's unmoored even for a moment. Even the best people!

Plimo's Guest

I'll give you an illustration from the Gemara (Kiddushin 81a) of such a frame-up. Plimo was a *talmid* of Rebbi; he was one of the *chachmei haTorah*. And he used to say words of scorn for the *yetzer hara*. גִּזְרָא בְּעֵינֵיהּ דְּשָׂטָן – “An arrow in the eyes of the *satan*” he said. “It's nothing.” He mocked it.

And so the *yetzer hara* decided to make a demonstration to show that Plimo doesn't know who the opponent is.

It was *erev Yom Kippur* and Plimo was full of holiness. He had prepared himself properly for *Yom Kippur* and now he was eating the *seudah mafsekes* with *kedusha*, with thoughts of repentance.

Suddenly there was a knock on the window. A beggar, an old man covered with boils and pus, was knocking; he wants something to eat. So Plimo handed him some food through the window.

So the beggar said, “On a day like this everybody is eating at the table and I should eat outside?”

Well, he wasn't an appetizing sight to look at but he was right and so they sat him at the table. What did this beggar do? When he was given a cup of wine, you'll excuse me for saying it, but he allowed the contents of his nose to fall into the wine.

Plimo was nauseated. Such bad habits! So he rebuked him. “Please! Please behave properly at the table!”

So this beggar acted like he was shocked. He had a heart attack and he fell dead. He fell dead!

The Chase is On

And then Plimo heard from outside somebody said “Plimo killed a man.” Somebody had looked in and saw, and now the town was in an uproar. **פְּלִימוֹ קָטַל גִּבּוֹרָא**! Plimo is a murderer!

He forgot all about *erev Yom Kippur*. The fear of death was on him. He knew that if the authorities would find out they'd kill him—the Romans were looking for excuses like that. So he fled from his home and went to the forest outside the city to hide. He was hiding in an outhouse and he was trembling because he was imagining all types of things.

So here it was, *erev Yom Kippur*. All the Jews are eating the *seudah hamafsekes* and getting ready for the *Yom Hakadosh* and Plimo, a few minutes ago he was in a state of *teshuvah*, the heights of *kedusha*; and now he was in a delirium, a frenzy of fear, fear of death. It was a terrible experience that suddenly came like a storm upon him and who knows what he would do next.

The Big Reveal

And then that so-called beggar came to him in the outhouse and revealed himself. “Never again should you mock my power!” he said. “You should know who I am.” I’m adding these words as a commentary: “I’m a messenger of the Creator, a big force He set loose in the world and therefore don’t underestimate me to upend your settled life and cause you to make mistakes in haste and confusion.”

Because that’s exactly what the *yetzer hara* does with people, even good people. That’s a favorite trick of his, to make a confusion, to make people lose control. Because once your hands are off the steering wheel of *seichel*, anything can be.

Part II. Don’t Move

Crisis Control

Now, what do we learn from this? We learn the supreme importance of being calm at all times. Lack of peace of mind robs a person of the ability to serve Hashem. Of course if you never use your mind anyhow, if you’re just a robot Jew, then it might not matter so much. But for the Jew who wants to be an *eved Hashem* it’s very important never to get so excited about some problem, some difficulty, that you are buffeted and lose control of the steering wheel.

But let's face the truth; let's put all our cards on the table. The truth is it happens. Nobody is perfect and the yetzer doesn't let up—you might forget about him but he doesn't forget about you. And therefore although I'm sure everybody here lives a normal well-ordered life, sometimes in everybody's lives a crisis arises—little crises, bigger crises—and the truth is it happens to a certain extent constantly. And so it pays to plan a counter strategy.

Shlomo's Advice

And therefore we'll listen to what Shlomo Hamelech said on this subject, to the voice of wise experience. In Koheles (10:4) it states as follows: **אִם רוּחַ הַמוֹשֵׁל תִּעָלֶה עָלֶיךָ** – *When the spirit of the one who has power, it means the yetzer hara, will rise up against you, מְקוֹמְךָ אַל תִּנָּח* – *do not leave your place.*

Now we have to listen prayerfully to these words. But not only listen—if you'll remember these words at that time, they will be of inestimable benefit to you. Because it's rule number one, the first counter-strategy when the yetzer of confusion comes up against you: **מְקוֹמְךָ אַל תִּנָּח** – *Don't leave your place!* When something unexpected comes into your life, don't forsake your place. Because that's what he wants. His purpose is not merely to get you confused. That's a *tzarah* in itself but it's also what comes *after* the confusion that counts. He wants you to do something rash, something that will upend your accomplishments, your stability.

Chanukah Fireworks

Just for illustration, I'll say a story. It's out of the ordinary but it will illustrate the idea. Let's say you were at a family get together, a Chanukah party, and something happened—it should never happen but let's say your father-in-law said something untoward and you lost your head and you took a swing at your father-in-law. You gave him a wallop in the jaw in public. And your father-in-law obligingly dropped to the floor in a faint.

All of a sudden everything turns black before you. You lost yourself and it was in public! Had you done it in secrecy, you could have denied it, but there were twenty witnesses including your wife and your wife's mother. Ooh wah! Now what?!

So the first instinct is to scam, to disappear. And it suits the picture too. In righteous indignation you'll stamp out of your father-in-law's house and grab the first taxi. But you're lost now and you don't know what to do. How can you go back and face people? Also, maybe your

shver will get the police involved; he'll press charges. Your mind is already unmoored.

Lost in Louisiana

And can you go home and face your wife when she shows up? So you go straight to Penn Station and you buy a ticket to anyplace; the first bus out. And you end up ten hours later somewhere let's say in Louisiana, in a small town.

Oh, now you're in trouble. It's not easy to go back home again from Louisiana. Had you listened to Shlomo's advice you would've stayed and apologized. Or second best, if you went home at least and let your wife come home later and berate you, that's also good. And don't answer back, by the way. Say, "I was a silly fool." And to show that you really mean it, bang your head against the wall a few times. Not too hard, but do it.

And so they'll criticize you. They'll talk about you and shake their heads and be angry at you, but they'll sleep it over that night and the next morning they'll get up with a strong grudge against you but you'll live it down. You'll live it down. You'll even live to say *l'chaim* with your father-in-law when the next child is born. You'll live it down. But if you picked up and left, that's the real problem. Then you dug yourself a hole—you and the *yetzer hara* together—that you might not be able to get out of.

The Mechitzah Meltdown

You think such a thing can't happen? I'll tell you a true story. Once a *chosson*, a yeshiva man, was at his wedding and his *shver* didn't want the *mechitzah*. The father-in-law wanted the women and men should be without a *mechitzah*. But this yeshiva man couldn't take it down; it was a shame for him, that all his *chaveirim* will see there's no *mechitzah*. But his father-in-law was pressing him, "We don't want a *mechitzah*. We're going to take it down." Back and forth, back and forth.

So finally the *chosson* gave a smack to his father-in-law! In public! **לפני כל עם ועדה**! It was a terrible thing.

But he remembered the advice. And he stayed. He fell down on his knees and he wept. That's included in **מְקוֹמָהּ אֶל תִּנּוּחַ**. It was an act; he fell down on the floor and wept to his father-in-law. "I'm so sorry, my *shver*." And he shed fake tears. The father-in-law was so touched he said, "I forgive you."

Otherwise, it would be a ruination! In the middle of the *chasuna* the father-in-law would say, “We want a *get*. I don't want my daughter to marry him.”

But this yeshiva man, he right away began to paste the pieces together. The pieces were broken already but he pasted them together.

That's a big *yeshuah* already. No matter how bad the situation is, it's never too bad that you're not able to mend it. That's included in **אַם רִוַח** **הַמוֹשֵׁל תַּעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ מִקוֹמְךָ אֶל תַּנַּח**, *don't leave your place*. The first thing is pick up your father-in-law and start sobbing that you're sorry. That's the best way. Pick up the pieces immediately and start mending them.

The Venezuelan Vacation

Otherwise... otherwise... *ay yah yay*. Here is a man who lives together with his father-in-law and his mother-in-law. A true story. The father-in-law was a big *lamdan*. This man was a yeshiva man but not a big *lamdan*. And whatever he did, his father-in-law put him down, showed he was wrong. A true story. He felt he was in a prison.

So one day he exploded. A certain incident happened; his father-in-law *paskened* something not like him and he became so angry he exploded. He went out of the house and he decided he's going to leave town. He won't come home anymore. “I'm going to get even with them!” And he took a plane out of the country.

Now the plane landed, let's say, in Venezuela. Now he's off the plane and a stranger in a foreign place. What should he do? The first thing is he should take a ticket back again, no question about it. He should come straight back. Your wife will say, “Where were you last night?”

“I had to be away someplace on business. A big money deal came up last minute so I had to go.”

But he didn't do it. He allowed that foolish decision that he made in a moment of panic to continue. Now, once he was away a couple of days then there's trouble already. Now he decided he made a mistake. Also he wanted to eat *yoshon*. He doesn't eat *chodosh* and there was no *yoshon* there. He wants to come back. He stayed there for some time, a couple of weeks. Then he called up.

“Where are you?!”

“Venezuela.”

“Venezuela?! What are you doing there, you *meshugene*? Stay there. Stay there.”

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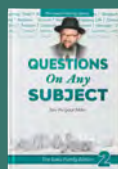
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Stop While You're Behind

And that's the end of the story. His wife wouldn't let him come back anymore. He lost his wife. He lost his children. He was a decent man but now he pulled loose from his moorings. Whatever he became, he became, but he's not the same man at all. He's lost. Maybe someday he'll come back to himself but look at what he ruined. His children are no longer his children. His wife in the meantime has driven him out of her heart. And many times not only his Judaism is destroyed but his status as a decent human being is destroyed. And that was the objective of the *yetzer hara*, to ruin this man. When a husband leaves his home, when a father leaves the home, that's what the *yetzer hara* wants. What's going to happen to the children? That's what he wants.

So the wise person says “No, אַל תִּרְשַׁע הָרִבָּה. I don't have to be such a big *rasha*.” That's an important rule by the way. Let's say somebody is beating up another person in anger; he lost his temper. So one blow less, that's also something. You're smoking. So one less cigarette. And so a person should always be wise enough to say—even in the midst of confusion—“I won't go further with my wickedness. I won't continue with the evil of confusion. I'll come back to my senses right away.”

Like the boy in the yeshiva who had a fistfight with his own *rebbe*. It's a true story I'm telling you. He was a good boy. The *rebbe* was a hot-tempered man. The boy was a young boy, in his teens, and he had a fistfight with his *rebbe*. So he left. He walked out of the room. I know this story well. It was told to me.

Now for some people that could be the end of his career. But this boy stayed in the yeshiva building. He stood in the corridor. He didn't have to do it. He stood in the corridor and he waited hours until the *rebbe* was finished for the day and as the *rebbe* walked out, he walked over to him with tears and he apologized and it was all mended immediately. And the *rebbe* became good friends with him from then on.

The Secret of Tanach

And so the secret is *mekomcha al tanach*, don't leave your place because that's what the *yetzer hara* wants. If you yield, if you're confused and you do something irresponsible, it could be it's not your fault. The *yetzer hara* made you do it. But the question is what is going to happen from then on? From then on, the *chacham* says, *mekomcha al tanach*, don't leave your place.

I gave you one picture but it can happen in a thousand different ways. Some people listening here will be able to use it someday. Whatever it is, you have to know that this confusion was a frame up. *Mekomcha al tanach*, don't leave your place.

So the next time you have a big argument with your wife and you run out of the house “I'm never coming back,” walk around the block and walk in again. “Aha!” she says. “You're back again.” Take it. Take it. Take it. As long as you're back again. So she won't talk to you for three days. But you're back again.

If you're a teacher in the yeshiva and you have a fight with the principal, don't do anything rash. Come back the next day like regular. Your wife insulted you? Your *rebbe* yelled at you? You were embarrassed in public? All the things, all the situations, are frame-ups from the yetzer hara. All the good work that you're doing are like thorns in the eyes of the yetzer hara and his purpose is to bring confusion and to cause you to give up. And therefore these words *mekomcha al tanach*, do not leave your place are absolutely gold advice. Never make any wild changes, any sudden decisions. Sometimes a dish might fall down and break. Pick it up and paste it together.

Part III. Don't Worry

Full Control

Now, this important life advice from Koheles—that when you get excited and flustered about something, don't make a drastic move; and included also is if you were stupid enough to yes do something, then make sure to rectify it immediately—that's all very good. It's golden advice that we should never forget. But there's something even better. And that's not to get into a tizzy in the first place. A person should be so settled, so calm, that whatever comes his way, whatever bumps he'll pass over, they won't even shake him in the first place.

Now, it doesn't mean you won't do things, forceful things. Sometimes you must. But it's always with equanimity, with a mind that is in control. I remember a story. It was told to me and I'd like you to hear it. It was a case of an old *rav* in the town where I used to be, in Boston, in Chelsea. The *rav* was angry at a man and he was scolding him. He berated him! After he got through his scolding, the *rav* took out his watch to see the

time and he said to the one he just yelled at, “Are you going downtown? Take me along in your car please.”

Now, the one who repeated the story was saying it as a criticism of that old *rav*. But I was thinking, “What’s there to criticize? I admire that!” Somebody else, if he had to scold somebody he would become flustered and he would have walked off. Not this old man; he was too foxy for that. He berated him but because he was calm the whole time so as soon as he was finished he was able to pick up the pieces and paste them together. “Take me along with you please.”

Now that he’s riding with the man in the car it’s all pasted up already. He didn’t wait for a week later to apologize or to make a friend of this man. Because he was in full control. One of the hallmarks of a righteous man is that he maintains a tranquility of mind.

Eavesdropping on Dovid’s Intellect

No how to attain that we will learn from Dovid Hamelech; he’s an excellent teacher after all. And in Hallel he said, “שׁוּבִי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחַיָּךְ – *turn back my soul to your repose*” (Tehillim 116:7). Dovid is talking to himself here. We’re eavesdropping but actually it’s Dovid talking to his *nefesh*.

You know, there are two parts to every person. One part is his mind, his intellect and the other part is his emotions, the *nefesh*. Now, the *nefesh* becomes a permanent part of us—that’s who we are; it’s our personality—and the purpose of the mind is to shape the personality. It’s the duty of the intellect constantly to work upon the *nefesh*, to direct and shape the emotions of the *nefesh* and make it perfect. The emotional personality is being taught by the reason how to adjust to the events of the world, to problems of the world.

And therefore Dovid’s intellect is talking to his *nefesh*. “שׁוּבִי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחַיָּךְ – *Turn back, my nefesh, to your composure*. Even when you’ll be confronted by winds that are blowing from all sides, don’t ever lose your head. כִּי ה’ גָּמַל עָלֶיךָ – *Because Hashem is already bestowed upon you*. There’s nothing to worry about because it’s all arranged already.” Not that it’s *going* to be taken care of—Hashem is in charge and therefore it’s already taken care of. גָּמַל not יִגְמַל. It’s already arranged.

The High Road

That’s the real way to come to peace of mind! When you’re convinced that Hashem Melech, that nothing happens in the world unless Hakodosh Boruch Hu does it, so you’re always composed. Because if He does it, כָּל

וְחָסִיד בְּכָל – whatever He does, He does for good. מֵאֵי דְעֵבִיר רַחֲמָנָא לָטֵב עֵבִיר – He's kindly in all of His deeds.

That's the way to talk to yourself. "Return! Return to your tranquility! Why should you suffer for nothing? בִּי ה' גָּמַל עָלַיְכִי – Hashem has already prepared all the benefits for you. It's all under control. This world is not a world of accident, not a *hefker* world, everything is managed. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is behind the scenes and every detail is manipulated solely by Him and it's all for good."

And so, you can rely on Him and lean back and enjoy the ride of life. Like it says in the taxi, "Lean back and enjoy the ride." You'll have to ride anyhow, so you might as well enjoy it with *menuchas hanefesh*.

And so when you contemplate these great truths of life and talk to yourself constantly about them, so naturally, your personality becomes more and more perfect and you'll eventually come to the *madreigah* of *menuchas hanefesh*.

The Low Road

But the question is are we going to wait until we arrive at that *madreigah*, until we become deep thinkers and an *ish menucha* like Dovid was? No, we can't wait. Who knows what might happen in the meanwhile? And so, we say, let's come to *menuchas hanefesh* any way we can. Even if it's not the high road, we'll take the low road too if it will help us live successfully.

Now there's a story, I can't tell you if it's true or not, but I heard it in the name of somebody who said Shlomo Hamelech once had a ring made for him. And on the ring he had inscribed *gimmel zayin yud*.

And he gave this ring to somebody and said, "This is the biggest gift I can give you."

So the person said, "What does the *gimmel zayin yud* stand for?"

So Shlomo said "גִּם זֶה יַעֲבוֹר – this too will pass by." You don't have to get excited. Nothing is that terrible that you should lose your head. It will pass by. Once I said this in public, so a man who heard the tape, he made a golden ring with *gimmel zayin yud* on it and he sent it to me.

Losing It In Canada

Now, I'm not recommending a ring *davka* but the truth is that it's a sensible way of looking at many of the troubles that the *yetzer hara* disrupts you with. Whatever it is, it's going to pass. Even if you're not yet a big *baal bitachon*, you didn't yet mold your *nefesh* into a personality of כִּי

גַּם זֶה יַעֲבוֹר – sooner or later the trouble will pass. And so you should always have that imaginary ring on your finger and use it to encourage yourself in *menuchas hanefesh*. And don't disdain that. Don't scorn that method. Why shouldn't we utilize any method to arrive at *menuchas hanefesh*?

Like the man who called me from Canada again and again. He wanted to commit suicide. He's in the middle of a big mess with the authorities and he wants to end it.

"What's the hurry?" I said. "You can commit suicide next year too." I was thinking that it'll pass. Whatever it is, whatever the results are, it's not as bad as the confusion makes it appear. *Gam zeh yaavor*.

Losing It In Queens

I remember once the borough president of Queens; he was a Jew, a *shomer mitzvos*. I liked him. He was a decent man. And he was being indicted because of a scandal in parking tickets. Maybe he took bribes for parking tickets, something illegal he did.

So I wrote him a letter. "Don't be too discouraged," I said, "Whatever happens to you, even if it's prison you will get out. You have plenty of money put away someplace. You can go to Eretz Yisroel and live *b'menuchah* for the rest of your life. They can't give you such a long prison term. It's not serious. It'll pass."

He didn't pay attention to my letter and he committed suicide, *nebach*. For nothing at all. No need. He could have lived. He'd be living today. He'd be happily retired somewhere. He cut his wrists and killed himself.

Looking Into the Future

Therefore it's good common sense advice that you should never become so discouraged and think all is lost. Because someday you'll look back and you'll laugh at your experience. *Gam zeh ya'avor*! It's not so terrible; this too will pass.

Like the couple who wanted to break up—there was an argument and foolish words were exchanged and now they want a *gett*. "There's no rush," I told him. "You can give a *gett* next month too."

By next month it will pass. They'll make up. So *gam zeh ya'avor*, it all passes by. That's what we're learning.

Sometimes you might be embarrassed in public. Or maybe you suffered a loss. Maybe your plans, even your most important plans, fell

apart. *Gam zeh ya'avur* – it'll pass by. You'll continue to function. Don't worry about it. Soon you'll regain your normalcy and equilibrium. It doesn't take long to forget something that happened. It could be that even by tomorrow things will be different already. You'll sleep it off and forget it by tomorrow. And even if not, then a few tomorrows later things will change.

The Magic Ring

Now, these things happen to everybody. Because the *yetzer hora* won't give up. And therefore never forget the golden rule: *מְקוֹמָךְ אַל תִּנָּח* – Don't get excited! Don't change your routine! *גַּם זֶה יַעֲבוֹר* – Look at the ring. In your mind you have a picture of the ring: *Gimmel, Zayin, Yud*. It will pass by.

Of course if you can have *bitachon* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu that's the best thing. If you can live with the words of Dovid Hamelech and remain calm because of *emunah*, that's the best way. *בִּטָּח בְּה' וְרַעְיָה אֱמוּנָה* – *Pasture yourself with emunah*. That's the right way but if not then at least you should rely on the common sense advice of Dovid's son, Shlomo. In most cases it will pass by and therefore *מְקוֹמָךְ אַל תִּנָּח*. Otherwise you'll react and run and who knows what will happen.

Yaakov and Eisav

That's why Eisav got lost. He became upset when he saw that Yaakov was being *matzliach*, so he threw it all away. Nothing was chasing him but he ran. *רוֹדֵף רָשָׁע* – *The wicked one flees when there's no one pursuing him*. That's Eisav.

וְצַדִּיקִים כְּכַפֵּיר יִבְטָח – *But the righteous have confidence like a young lion* (Mishlei 28:1). *זֶה יַעֲקֹב* – That's Yaakov. That's what the Chachomim say in the Medrash. *שָׁנְאֵמֶר וַיֵּשֶׁב יַעֲקֹב* – *Yaakov remained sitting, in the land where his father dwelled* (Breishis 37:1). Yaakov could have fled too. He could have thought "Oy vey. Here's Eisav. Eisav is a tough guy. He has a lot of soldiers and he has a history of vengeance, of anger against me. He might even take it out on me some day." And so Yaakov could have panicked and fled too.

But he didn't because he was not a *rasha*. Yaakov was not in *ra'ash*. He had calmness. He had composure of mind. *שׁוּבֵי נֶפֶשׁ לְמִנוּחָיָה* – He was trained in *emunah*, in *menuchas hanefesh*. He was a *tzaddik* who had developed the strength of character to be able to go through all the storms and weather them with *bitachon*.

And even if you're not a *tzaddik*—maybe you're not yet a *tzaddik*—but if you're a *chacham* you'll also weather the storm. You won't panic because you'll take the good advice of Shlomo Hamelech, מְקוֹמָךְ אֶל תִּנַּח, You won't do anything rash. And the end will be גַּם זֶה יַעֲבוֹר and you'll see better days after that.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

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Let's Get Practical

Keep Your Composure

A Tzaddik is someone who keeps his composure and is not thrown into the confusion of *raash* which throws a *rasha* off course. This week I will *bli neder* take one minute per day to quiet my mind and stop the daily grind. I will concentrate on attaining calm, and remembering that Hashem is in control of my day and of crises big and small. If I am going through something, I will remember that *Gam zeh yaavor, this too, shall pass*. And Tzaddik *b'emunaso yichyeh, a righteous man lives by his trust in Hashem*.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

6 – Evil of Confusion | **99** – Peace of Mind | **301** – Serene Mind
692 – Keeping Calm | **794** – Bitachon and the Calm Mind | **850** – Errors of Eisav

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5 TOWNS:**

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Wednesday,
December 31st

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Shabbos Inspired

לע"נ שרה נטשה בת דבורה שהין · דינה ברכה בת שרה נטשה · דבורה מזל בת שרה נטשה

Bitachon Brings Deliverance

If a person has *bitachon* in Hashem, he's connected to Him and lacks nothing. As it says, "Even a wicked person who repents and trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by *chesed*" (Vayikra Rabbah 15:3) Shabbos is a flowing fountain of *bitachon*. If we utilize this fountain and draw from it a generous supply of *bitachon* for the coming week, then the whole week will be like Shabbos, and we'll lack nothing.

I (Rav Pincus) once heard a wonderful explanation of a story in *Tanach* from R' Chaim Shmuelevitz, zt"l:

The king of Aram battled against Yisrael. He discussed with his ministers, saying, "My camps will be in such and such a place." (II Melachim 6:8)

This passage recounts how the king of Aram sent his warriors to a certain location to ambush the Israelites. It then relates how Elisha HaNavi warned the king of Israel not to pass by that place, as the warriors of Aram were lying in wait for him there. The king avoided that location and was saved from trouble. This happened several times, and the king of Aram became very upset. He wanted to know who the spy was, who was revealing all his military secrets to the enemy!

His ministers explained to him that there was no spy. Elisha had *ruach ha-kodesh* and knew even what the king said in private—and he revealed it to the king of Israel. Upon hearing this, the king of Aram wanted Elisha taken alive. He ascertained Elisha's whereabouts and at night, he surrounded the town with a large brigade.

The next morning, Elisha's attendant was shocked to discover they were in dire straights. Elisha told him: "*Do not fear, for those on our side are more numerous than they are.*" Hashem opened the attendant's eyes, and he saw the brigade of Aram surrounded by a vast army of angels standing on the hills, equipped with fiery horses and chariots capable of quickly obliterating the enemy.

Then Aram attacked. Elisha prayed they should be struck by blindness, and he thereby escaped capture. Asked R' Chaim Shmuelevitz: Why did Hashem send the army of angels if in the end they didn't do anything and played no role in the miracle? He answered that from here we learn a very important lesson. As long as Elisha's attendant was afraid, no miracle could take place. *Bitachon* was lacking. When he said in fear, "*Alas, my master, what shall we do?*" the forces of Divine deliverance were paralyzed.

The first thing Elisha had to do was calm his assistant and show him the truth: Hashem was protecting them—the enemy couldn't touch them! When Hashem saw that the assistant trusted in Him and no longer feared the enemy warriors, then Hashem could act on his behalf and save him.

This is what Shabbos is all about. It is a day that fills us with *bitachon*, and we realize Hashem is here with us right now and has only the best in store for us. In other words, *Shabbos Kodesh* reveals to us the way we should view this world, and in that light we proceed to live the rest of the week!

Le'iluy Nishmat
Mrs. Esther Dancour, **Esther Bat Chaviva A"H**
By The Israel Family

לזכות רפואה שלמה
ליתמר גיתה בת חמישה

Adapted by R' Y. Levy from Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim
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QUESTION

Should a man try natural methods of healing before he goes to professional healers like doctors?

ANSWER

I don't know what it means by 'natural methods of healing'. If a person is using preventative methods, certainly. Prevention is always the best thing; to live normally beforehand as much as possible. But when a man sees *chalilah* something is wrong then there's no other method except going to professionals.

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu puts His stamp of approval on that: **יִרְפָּא יִרְפָּא מִכָּאן שְׁנִיתָהּ רְשׁוּת לְרֹפֵא לְרִפְאוֹת** (Bava Kama 85a).

Now, the language of *reshus* is a queer thing. *Permission*. You need permission to go to a doctor. Because how can a doctor have the boldness to tamper with a human body? The human body is so wonderful. What does the doctor know? He doesn't know anything. And even today the doctors don't know much about the body. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "Go anyhow. I'm going to help that they should not be too harmful for you."

Many doctors of course help people go quickly to the grave. Many doctors have facilitated people's passage into the grave. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "I'll help out. You do your duty and I'll help out."

We look back today to the medicines of a hundred years ago and we're horrified at the things they used to prescribe for patients. And still those who went in those days did a mitzvah of **רִפְּא יִרְפָּא**. So don't rely on yourself but it's a *chiyuv* of the Torah to heal yourself by those who are supposed to be capable of healing.

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