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במדבר - שבועות

PARSHAS BAMIDBAR: HOW TO REACT TO TRAGIC EVENTS
SHAVUOS: THE SECRET TO LASTING INSPIRATION



FROM THE SHIURIM OF

HARAV YISROEL BROG שליט"א

ROSH HAYESHIVA, YESHIVAS TIFERES AVIGDOR
GRANDSON OF HARAV HAGAON AVIGDOR MILLER, ZT"L

PARSHAS BAMIDBAR - SHAVUOS



HARAV YISROEL BROG, SHLITA | ROSH HAYESHIVA, YESHIVAS TIFERES AVIGDOR

In this week's *parshah*, the Torah mentions once again the death of Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aharon, that transpired specifically on the day that the *Mishkan* was established, when they were in the process of serving Hashem. It was a day of tremendous elevation for Klal Yisrael. It was a momentous time in history. And that was the day that they died. Now the truth of matter is we're very far away from understanding that *ma'aseh*, but in our lives, we also encounter such strange things that happen that we think, couldn't Hashem wait a day or another time? Why did Hashem have to pick *davka* this time?

THE BACHUR WHO WENT TO LEARN IN KFAR CHASSIDIM

There was a story about a *bachur* who grew up in a modern family, and he went to a Modern Orthodox school. It's called *yeshivah tichonis*. And he moved over from there, he became *neskarev* to Yiddishkeit, and he went to learn in the *yeshivah* in Kfar Chassidim, which was completely Charedi. A few months after the *bachur* was in the *yeshivah*, he went swimming with some other *bachurim* and he drowned. It was a terrible blow for the *yeshivah* that he was in now, and everybody was wondering, how could it be? A *bachur* is *mamash* in a *matzav* of *aliyah*. He's now stepping up, and suddenly this is what happens?!

At the *sheloshim* of this *bachur*, they invited the famous *maggid*, Rav Shalom Schwadron to say some words of *chizuk*. He decided to address this question. Now, listen closely because you probably will experience something similar to this. And when you hear everybody clucking their tongues and you're not sure what *divrei chachmah* should come out of your mouth, maybe now I will give you something so you'll be able to spout some *divrei chachmah*.

RAV SHALOM SCHWADRON'S WORDS OF COMFORT

Rav Shalom began and said, "I want to first share with you a story. In Chicago there lived a Yid whose name was Reb Yerachmiel Wexler. Reb Yerachmiel was a very wealthy Chicagoan. He loved Torah. He was a big *ba'al chessed*, and eventually he was *zocheh* to a very tremendous son-in-law, an outstanding *talmid chacham* in Eretz Yisrael known as Rav Betzalel Zolty. He was the Rav of

Yerushalayim. He was also a prolific writer, an amazing speaker, and a *lamdan*.

One day in the *shul* where he was, a Yid from Yerushalayim showed up, and this Yid's name was Rav Volk. Rav Volk was an absolute lover of Eretz Yisrael, and from time to time he would go to America and he would give speeches about the wonders of Eretz Yisrael and Yerushalayim. He would try to capture the hearts of some American Jews to decide to make *Aliyah*. This Rav Volk gave a fiery *drashah* in that *shul* and he told them, 'I'm trying to get you to grace Eretz Yisrael with your presence.'

Now, this Reb Yerachmiel Wexler was there at the time, and he was very moved by the *drashah* so he decided that he's going to go to Eretz Yisrael with his family. A short while later, he arrived in Eretz Yisrael with his family for a visit. Amongst the places where they visited, one of the places was the city of Chevron.

Now this story transpired in the second half of the 1920s and in that time there was a *yeshivah* in Chevron called Knesses Yisrael. It was the Slabodka Yeshivah. It was the *yeshivah* of Slabodka that was founded there by the Alter of Slabodka and some of his *talmidim*. Reb Wexler was blown away by the *yeshivah*. The father was about to conclude his trip and to go back to his house, but his son had a different mindset. He had a son named Yaakov and Yaakov was *farkoft*. He became sold on Eretz Yisrael and specifically the Slabodka Yeshivah in Chevron, and he was drawn to the magic. He asked his parents if he could stay. His parents were worried but in the end they said, "You know what? If you really want to learn here, we'll let you learn here."

Now, you have to realize, in Chicago at that time, there was no such an education similar to Slabodka. There were no secular studies in Slabodka. There were no diplomas that you got. So they went back to Chicago and they allowed their son to stay. They decided, you know what we're going to do? We're going to go back to Chicago and we're going to liquidate, sell everything we have, and we're going to also come back to Yerushalayim to live.

Meanwhile, they left their son Yaakov there, and he dove into the learning. He was far behind the other *talmidim* there. He didn't have a background, but he began to learn like he was on fire. The *rosh yeshivos* loved him dearly, and in quite a short time he *shteiged* and grew in Torah and he gained knowledge in many areas of Torah. He was known for his love of Torah. Also he had *gevaldige middos* so everybody liked him. Everybody appreciated it. He was the American *bachur* in Slabodka yeshivah. He was humble. He had *tznius*. He was a *gutte bachur*. He had money and whenever he heard about a *bachur* that needed support, he went out of his way to make sure that the *bachur* got their support.

But then 1929 arrived. That year, there was an infamous pogrom that took place in Chevron, and Yaakov ran to the house of a family named Slonim, but the Arabs managed to lay their hands on him, like all the other people who hid there, and they split his head open with an ax. Now, in his last moments, as his life was ebbing out of him, he managed to make a request of the people who were in the area, and he said the *viduy* word for word. He told them to help him to say *viduy*. After the *viduy*, he burst out crying and he fell on the neck of Rav Sokolover. The last words that came out of his mouth that he whispered in the ears of the Rav was that he's happy that he died after he became part of the *yeshivah*, and he's *modeh* to Hashem that Hashem guided him to learn.

This terrible tragedy came to the ears of Rav Volk and besides for the deep shakeup that Rav Volk had, he felt awful. He felt guilty. He felt terrible. He blamed himself for the death of Yaakov Wexler because Rav Volk had gone to Chicago and had he fired up the *shul* and he had fired up the family and because of that the bachur was killed. Rav Volk decided, I'm not going back to Chicago again. I don't want to meet Yaakov Wexler's father.

One day, Rav Volk was in New York, and he saw a fellow coming toward him who looked familiar. He came close and he recognized it was Reb Yerachmiel Wexler! Reb Yerachmiel says to him, "*Shalom aleichem*. Rav Volk, I don't understand. How come I don't see you in Chicago anymore?" So Rav Volk looked at him and said, "I can't come to Chicago anymore. I heard about your holy son. I feel guilty. I feel responsible. It's only because of me that he went there to Israel." Reb Yerachmiel looked at him with big eyes, and he said to him, "Do you know how much *hakaras hatov* I have to you?! You know how much *hakaras hatov* I have to you?! All my days I'll never forget the great *chessed* that you did with me, a very strong *chessed*." Rav Volk was looking at him, "What kind of *chessed* did I do for you?" He said, "My son, Yaakov, it was decreed in *Shamayim* that he should die on the 18th of Av in 1929, at the age of 17. If he would have remained in Chicago, it's probable to assume he would have been killed in a car accident, maybe some serious illness. No. One thing I know for sure, had he remained in Chicago, he would have died an *Amerikane* boy, an American boy. But because of your *zechus*, he died at 17 years old as a *bachur* in the Slabodka Yeshivah. Because of you, he died *al kiddush Hashem*. He acquired an amazing *madreigah* - only because of you. You *mamash* saved him. How could I not be *makir tovah* to you?" You hear this?!

Rav Shalom Schwadron told this story. And these were the words he was trying to say, words of *chizuk* about the *bachur* - who left this modern *yeshivah* and went over to a real *yeshivah* in Kfar Chassidim and he *shteiged* serious *shteiging*, and then he died by

drowning. Rav Shalom was trying to bring out and say, “Do you understand? Do you understand?” He didn’t have to say anything else. This boy was *zocheh* to die *al kiddush Hashem* a *yeshivah bachur*, not an Israeli *tembel*, but somebody who was *taka* a *yeshivah bachur*. That was a tremendous *zechus*.

HASHEM WAITED FOR A YEAR

Another such story happened to a *bachur* who was *chozer b’teshuvah*, and he came to learn in a *yeshivah* called Nesivos Olam. This boy was already finished with the army, and that’s when he did *teshuvah*. One day, he was called up for *miluim*, reserves, and he was driving a jeep and the jeep went over a mine and this young *bachur* died. So the *rosh yeshivah*, his name was Rav Bruck, decided to go into Rav Chaim Kanievsky and ask Rav Chaim. He’s on the way to the house of *aveiluim* and he wanted to give them *chizuk*. What should he tell them? What should he tell them? He went together with Rav Mishkovsky, a famous *rosh yeshivah* in Eretz Yisrael, and he told Rav Chaim the whole story and then they said, “So what do we tell the *aveilim*?”

Rav Chaim said as follows. “Tell them that you should know your son was supposed to die a year ago, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu waited an entire year in order to be *mezakeh* him that he should die like a *ba’al teshuvah*.” So the *rabanim* didn’t feel so comfortable saying that. That wasn’t the *chizuk* they wanted to hear. Even so, the *rabanim* came to the *beis aveilim*, and at the first opportunity they had, they shared with the family what Rav Chaim Kanievsky said. The father looked at them with tears in his eyes and he said the following: “*Zeh nachon, kol kach nachon*. That’s right, very right. You should know,” he said, “a year ago my son was also called to the reserves and he had to drive in that same jeep and then that exact same thing happened. That exact same jeep went over a mine, in the same place, and all the people in the jeep died, but my son wasn’t there. At the last second, the officer in charge said, ‘Get off the jeep, take your rucksack,’ and he sent him somewhere else. What Rav Chaim said is *emes veyatziv*. He was supposed to die a year ago but Hashem gave him an extra year. He should have been in that jeep.”

LIFESPAN LENGTHENED BY TWENTY YEARS

There is a famous story of a major *ba’al tzedakah* in London, a massive *ba’al tzedakah*. The fellow, on Purim, gave out ridiculous sums of money, a million pounds, two million pounds, crazy sums. Right after Purim, he traveled to a destination to relax for a few days, and on the way he had a car accident and he died. Everybody was talking about it. The guy just gave such *tzedakah*. Where’s Hashem? Where’s Hashem? He couldn’t do *chessed* with the guy? They asked Rav Chaim Kanievsky. You know what Rav Chaim said? He said,

“He was supposed to die twenty years ago, and Hashem lengthened his days because of his *chessed*, because of the *tzedakah*, by twenty years.” They told it over to his family. They weren’t so comfortable saying it over. The family said, “Twenty years ago, exactly the same thing happened, and he was in a car accident, and his life was spared by the skin of his teeth. His life was spared at that time.”

NO MOURNING: IN DENIAL

I once went to a secular family who lost a daughter that became *frum*, a very special young lady. I figured that it would be tumultuous. I wasn’t close to that family, but a *rav* who was close to that family came over to me and said, “What should I tell them? I’m sure they’re going to have big *ta’anos* on Hashem.” I said, “No. I’m going to tell you what to say to them. If you’ll say this, they’ll accept it.” I told him this *zach*.

The guy called me up a few hours later. He says, “You’re not going to believe what happened. I went in there to the house, and they were partying.” Secular people, when they die, it’s a big *simchah* the *gemara* says. So the family, that’s the one *mitzvah* they’re *mekayem*. They party. They eat. They *mamash* live well. And the *rav* got the father to sit down and he said, “You know, you’re probably sad.” “Rabbi,” he said, “don’t bring up any sadness here. We don’t want to think of anything sad. Just happiness.” “Do you have any questions?” “No, we’re just focusing on moving ahead and being happy.” “Hashem saved you,” I told the *rav*. “You didn’t even have to give them a *nichum aveilim*.” They were *menachem* themselves. They live in denial. There are a lot of interesting people in this world.

A KIDDUSH HASHEM WHEN NADAV AND AVIHU DIED

But you have to think about what the Ribono Shel Olam does.

Nadav and Avihu died on the day of the *kiddush haMishkan*. It was a big thing to die on the day of the *kedushas haMishkan*. The *passuk* says בקרבי אקדש, they made a tremendous sanctification of Hashem’s name (Vayikra 10:3).¹ People became strengthened to take Hashem much more seriously and to take the *Beis Hashem* very seriously. That was the day the *Mishkan* was being established. People don’t realize that the *Beis Hamikdash* is a very serious place, and you have to treat it with respect.

A LACK OF RESPECT TOWARDS HASHEM’S ABODE

I know of a story where a fellow had a picture-perfect family. This family had all the *maalos*. Everybody looked at their family in awe. Some people might say it was *ayin hara*. They were, like, the family. Everybody went to them. They had an open home. They were

¹ ויאמר משה אל אהרן הוא אשר דבר ה' לאמר בקרבי אקדש ועל פני כלי־העם אקבד וידם אהרן

well to do. They were kind. They were nice. People enjoyed going to them. They were very welcoming, and they were the family that everybody looked up to and said, "I'd love to have a family like that." And then one day, the family fell apart and there was a divorce. I met a doctor who told me, "Isn't that sad?" I said, "It's very sad." I said, "Divorce is very sad." "So why would such a thing happen? That family to me was the picture of *shalom bayis*. It was the picture of kindness. It was the picture of understanding, of sensitivity." I didn't answer anything, but a week later, a *rav* called me up and asked me, "Did you ever take notice of the fact that that family who was the picture of the ultimate family got broken up? Did you ever think, 'Why would Hashem let such a thing happen?' It's a tragedy. Whatever the reason, it doesn't make a difference." I said, "I don't know." So the *rav* told me, "You know why? That person closed down a *shul*. That person closed down a *shul*. He destroyed a *shul*. Do you think it has a connection?" I said, "It's not a bad *sevara*. I don't know for sure. But it's not a bad *sevara*." For not very good reasons they closed down a *shul*. You destroyed the house of Hashem? You never know.

I was in Eretz Yisrael once. I used to *daven* in a certain *shul* all the time over there and then it became political. In Eretz Yisrael, there are two *frum* political parties, one party is called Gimmel and one party is called Eitz. One was under the auspices of one *rav* and one was under auspices of another *rav*, and the *machlokes* in Eretz Yisrael that happened was terrible. It was terrible. And there was one *shul* in which I loved to *daven*. I used to love to *daven* in that *shul*. A warm *shul*. It wasn't a large *shul*. It was a small *shul*. They *davened* seriously there. They *leined* good. It was a pleasure to be there. And during this *machlokes*, there was one fellow... Most of the people in the *shul* belonged to one party, but a few people in the *shul* belonged to the other party. The guy who donated all the *sefarim* in that *shul* belonged to the minority party. One day, the guy comes in with boxes. He's packing up the place. He's cleaning out all the *sefarim*. And from that, the *shul* folded. I was thinking, "Wow! What a 'nice' man. A 'nice' person." He was a *chashuve* person, but if you break up a *shul* for such a stupid reason, because you're going to vote for Eitz and I vote for Gimmel, or I'm Gimmel and you're Eitz, you're as dumb as *eitz*-wood. That's what you are. You're a *klutz*. A *klutz* means a piece of wood. That's what people do. It's very sad. People get angry, get upset. They take steps and do things that are not the wisest things to do. May Hashem save them all. May Hashem help us all and protect us from doing silly things.

SHAVUOS: THE SECRET TO LASTING INSPIRATION

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

We're going to speak about *inyanei deyoma*. A common phone call that I receive asks, "How do I take the lessons to heart? I listen to the *shiurim* and I become very inspired, and a few minutes later I feel like I'm back to where I was." That call doesn't amaze me. What amazes me is that they keep trying. They don't give up. Then I get a call from people who say to me, "You've changed my life." That really amazes me. How did hearing something and getting inspired change your life?

I began to ponder about what it is that makes some people change their lives and what makes it that some people do not change their lives. I was thinking of interviewing all of you but in your situation I don't have the question because you don't get inspired. You get perspired. As I used to say, my *shmoozen* make everybody happy. For some *bachurim*, it puts them to sleep. That's their happiness. For some people, it teaches them how to force themselves to stay up. For other people, it gives them a chance to have some snacks. So I decided that I'm not going to consider this *olam*. But what is it that makes some people change and some not change?

And then I started to think about what it is that makes a person feel inspired or not feel inspired? How is it that I could hear something from somebody and get very inspired or see something in a *sefer* and be very moved, and somebody else who sees it, as we like to call it, has only a 'morgue response.' If you put your finger on people in the morgue and you press them, you get no response. No inspiration. Why is it like that?

I thought about this many years ago. I remember when I was studying by my *rebbe'im*, sometimes the other *talmidim* were inspired and I wasn't. Many times I was inspired and they weren't. What is the *pshat*? I thought it has to do with whether a person wants to hear or does not want to hear. So I asked people, "Do you want to hear what the *rebbe* says?" They said, "Yes." "So why weren't you inspired?" "It didn't touch me." I asked many people, "Why did it touch you?" "I don't know." That's how it is. *Kachah*.

The *emes* is, people don't realize that this is the farthest thing from a *mikreh*. You have to realize that when a person gets inspired, the inspiration is not received by his fingers or by his shoulders. The inspiration he receives is a *penimiyusdike* inspiration. It's an inspiration of one's soul. Hashem decided on Rosh Hashanah that on this and this day, you will have the opportunity to open a *sefer*. You will open the *sefer* and you will get inspired and you'll feel a

chiyus. Another person wasn't *zocheh* to that inspiration. He's going to be blessed with a closed mind, what Rashi refers to as *לבהון לבב*, as the *passuk* says *parshas Ki Savo*, *לבהון לבב*.² And Rashi says that means *אוסטהלב*. That means your *neshamah* is shut down.

INSPIRATION COMES FROM THINKING ABOUT HASHEM

Now, I understand that this is not a question of whether I choose to get inspired or not. It's much, much deeper than that. It's Hashem saying, "Let Me give you inspiration via this *sefer*, this *shmooze*, this thought, this episode." You have to know it's not yourself. It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu *mamash* taking your *neshamah* and putting His thumb into it and giving it a wiggle and seeing if you're going to get inspired. Sometimes a person can't get inspired. He falls asleep. He can't stay up. That's also from Hashem. That's very sad.

At one point in my life I had a *rosh yeshivah* that I was very close to. I used to learn with him second and third *sefer*. I considered him my second father and he considered me like his son. He was a known speaker. I could repeat his Gemara *shiurim* to you verbatim. I could tell you at the end of a *zman* all the *shiurim* he said from the beginning of the *mesechta*. I remember he once asked me. In *Kesubos* he started testing me on *daf ches amud beis*. But if you would have asked me to tell you over his *mussar shmuesen*, I would not have been able to tell you one thing! He was known for his *shmoozen*. He wasn't known for his *shiurim*. A *pelah*. The *olam* would *tumul*. Sometimes I would sit up close and I would look at him during the *shmooze*. I would look at his face the whole time. I didn't fall asleep. Nothing he said went in! The funniest thing is that many years later, his son put out a *sefer* of his *sichos*. I read it and laughed at almost every page, because I remembered clearly that he said them. One of them was *tefillin* mirrors. He was very against those mirrors. He would rant about them. He had pet peeves, but they didn't inspire me or move me. His learning did. Being close to him moved me very much.

What was the *pshat*? I wasn't *zocheh*. I wasn't a *keli* enough. That's what a person has to know. One person opens up a Brisker Rav's *sefer* and he dances. He looks at the Brisker Rav and he sees the way his mind processes something. He says wow! This is like bam! Right to the point. So *klohr*. Another guy looks at it and says *mei heicha teisi*. What does he want? I don't understand what everybody gets excited about. This is a *fashtupte kup* and this is a *offener kup*.

Now where does this come from? How do I know this? How do I know it comes from *shamayim*? Hashem was *mezakeh* me years ago with a *moradige* Ramban in his *sefer HaEmunah veHaBitachon*,

² יקרה ה' בשגעון ובעורון ובתמהון לבב

where he talks about the *Aseres Hadibros*.³ The Ramban is speaking about the *Dibrah* that says *לא תשא את שם ה' אלקיך לשוא*, don't swear falsely by Hashem's Name. What's the *pashtus* of this *passuk*? The *Sefer Hachinuch* and other *sefarim* say that a person should not swear in the name of Hashem for nothing, for no reason.⁴ It's interesting. It bothered me for many years, why doesn't it say *ללא תשמי*? Why does it say *לא תשא*? *לא תשא* means don't bear Hashem's name. What's the *pshat* לשוא?

The Ramban in his *sefer* reveals the secret.⁵ He doesn't write this question clearly but he says *vos shtait* in this *passuk*. Ramban reveals what it says in this *passuk* and now the *לא תשא* is illuminated. He says like this: *ודע*, you should know, *כי כל זמן*, anytime, *שמו*, שואדם מחשב בתוך לבו שמו, שאלהם, that someone thinks in his mind of the name of Hashem, you picture in your mind *yud hei vav* and then another *hei*. You think about that. *או אחד מפלאותיו*, or you think about one of the wonders of Hashem. Wonders of Hashem encompasses from *briyas haolam* until today everything and anything Hashem has done in the world. *יש לפניו*, the person has now just done something to develop and create a *hisorerus* for himself. How much of a *hisorerus*? How much of an inspiration? *כפי מחשבת מעלת החושב*, according to the level of the thinker. In the *sefer Hatanya* there is one *perek* where he discusses how a person could become happy when he's not happy. He says picture in your mind the *yichud* of Hashem. Think about it deeply and you'll become overcome with *simchah*.⁶

You know what the Ramban is telling me over here? I've looked at this Ramban many times and said *vos shtait der Ramban*. What's the Ramban telling me? The Ramban is telling me that this is called bearing of Hashem. That's called carrying Hashem in your heart. That's what *לא תשא* means. You're not swearing. It has nothing to do with *shevuah*. You're taking Hashem's name and you're putting it into your heart and now you are carrying Hashem's name. You are carrying one of the *niflaos* of Hashem.

Now he says you have a *hisorerus*. How much? *מחשבת מעלת החושב*. It depends on the concentration, the level of thought of the one who is thinking the thought. No two hearts are the same and one person's heart is not always the same at any given time. He says the

³ האמונה והבטחון, כתבי הרמב"ן, ח"ב, עמ' ת"ט
⁴ ספר החינוך מצוה ל'

⁵ ודע כי כל זמן שאדם מחשב בתוך לבו שמו של הקב"ה, או אחד מתפלאותיו. יש לפניו התעוררות כפי מחשבת מעלת החושבזש"ה (שמות כא) בכל מקום אשר אזכיר את שמי וגו'. וכשהתעוררות היא מתעורר על דבר ריק במה יברכהו והוא ראוי אל ההפך. וקרוב לענין זה מש"ה (שה"ש ב) אם תעירו ואם תעוררו את האהבה עד שתחפץ. ואם לא היה כח באדם לעורר הדברים לא היה משיבעם שלא לעשות. ופי' עד שתחפץ עד שתשא חן הכח אל הפועל. כלומר לא תעירו עצמכם שכן מציינו לשון עוררות בדוד אע"פ שהוא מבין הפעיל כמו (תהלים לה) העירה והקיצה למשפטי. לא התעוררות האהבה עד שיהיה שם הדבר הראוי שיהי התעוררות בזה על ידו. זהו עד שתחפץ שתעשה חפץ על ידי הסבה ההיא. מלשון ר"ל לאנקוטי חפצא בידיה כלומר כלי. והרבה כמו זה בלשון גמרא.

⁶ (א) עוד זאת תהיה שמסת הגפס האמיתית, ובפרט קשרוזה בנפשו בעתים מזומנים שצריך לזכרה ולהאירה בשמחת לבב, אזי יעמיק מחשבתו ויצייר בשכלו ובינתו ענין יחודי יתברך האמיתי, ... (ג) וכנה ממש, דרך משל, הוא ביטול העולם ומלואו במציאות לגבי מקורו שהוא אור-אין-סוף ברוך-הוא, וכמו שנתבאר שם (פרקים כ' וכ"א) באריות (חלק ראשון, ליקוטי אמרים, ל"ג)

passuk means this when it says the following. וכל מקום אשר אזכיר את שמי, any place My name shall be mentioned, אבוא אליך, I will come to you and give you a *brachah* (Shemos 20:21).⁷ He says that coming to you and giving you a *brachah* is the inspiration. What you do on your own is you put Hashem in your heart. You think about the *niflaos haBorei*. And Hashem comes and says you carried My name. I'm now going to give you a *brachah* and that *brachah* means you'll have an inspiration.

Now we know the source of inspiration. If somebody wants to know why he's not inspired, I'm going to tell you why. Because you never thought about Hashem. You know how many people I've asked when's the last time you thought about the name of Hashem? Never. It's a *pelah* to me how so few people actually sat and thought about uniting, communicating with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Very few people do that. Even when they're saying over *niflaos haBorei* they're usually saying it over because they had a tremendous *hashgachah pratis* and they're trying to bring out their own *kavod*. You want to know what Hashem did for me? Hashem finally gave me *kavod*. Hashem finally got it. I was in a pickle and Hashem saved me. That is not called *hisorerus*. That's called being tickled. Somebody took a feather and tickled your armpit. That's also you're *meorer*, but that is far from *hisorerus* of Hashem. You have to mention the *niflaos haBorei* because you're bringing *kavod* to Hashem. I was *zocheh* to feel the warmth of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Wow! Hakadosh Baruch Hu is great. He brought me that *kavod*. Two people could say over a *ma'aseh*. "You want to hear a *noradike ma'aseh* that I had?" And one guy is being *mechabed* Hashem while the other guy is being *mechabed* himself.

Now you have the *hisorerus*. What do you do with that? What is it for? You know when you tickle a kid, a baby, a cousin or nephew or someone, what's the purpose of that? You're trying to play. You want to bring a smile to his face and you want to engage him. You know why Hashem tickles me? You know why Hashem tickles you? He's trying to engage you. Not just He's trying to bring a smile to your face. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is trying to tell you as follows: "I'm granting you an opportunity to change and enhance your life."

The Ramban goes on and says a person has that *hisorerus*, but the *hisorerus* falls על דבר ריק, all it does is bring a smile to your face. It falls on an empty *kli*. במה יברכהו, how could Hashem bless you? *Farkhert*, you know what he says? If Hashem gives you a *hisorerus* and you feel inspired and all you do is say: "Wow, that feels good. That was *geshmak*," and he does nothing with it, it's a wasted opportunity. והוא ראויו אל הקללה, he deserves the opposite.

A number of years ago I had a fellow who wasn't *frum*. He used to travel fifty miles to come to a *shiur* of mine. He didn't know one thing I

⁷ מנצח אדם תעשה לי ונבחת עליו את עליתך ואת שלמיתך את צאנך ואת בקרך בכל המקום אשר אזכיר את שמי אבוא אליך וברכתך.

said in the *shiur* at the end of the *shiur*. I said to the guy, “Why do you come?” I thought he was going to tell me I want to learn a little Torah. I want to get inspired. He says, “Rabbi, as far as I’m concerned, you are the funniest man around.” I said, “You drive fifty miles each way for a couple of jokes?!” He said, “Rabbi, people travel a lot further for jokes.” That was called דבר ריק *kli*, an empty *kli*.

BRING THE INSPIRATION TO L’MAASEH

He says if you have an inspiration from Hashem and you don’t do anything with it, not only are you missing out on a *brachah*, you’re deserving *lehefech*, he says. Then he quotes a *passuk* from *Shir Hashirim*:

אם תעירו ואם תעוררו את האהבה, if in your love, the inspiration, the closeness to Hashem, you feel inspired, עד שתחפץ then do something about it. He says like this: עד שתצא מן הכח אל הפועל, a person has to take that inspiration and bring it out from the potential to actualization. He has to bring it אל הפועל. That’s what it says.

What does that mean? שתעשה חפץ על ידי הסיבה, you should do something על ידי that *hisorerus*. We find in *Chazal* that when you make a *shevuah* לאנקוטא חפצא בידיה, take a *kli* in your hand and do something with it. תעשה משהו.

We see from here *devarim neflaim*. This Ramban is so revealing! That whenever a person gets a *hisorerus* he should immediately put it into a *cheifetz*. Hashem says, “I’m giving you a gift. I’m giving you the power now to take a step up.” Put it into something. Two people hear a *shiur*. They’re both inspired. One person says, “It changed my life.” One person says, “Five minutes later it’s gone. I’m waiting for the next one.” What’s the *chiluk*? The person who changed his life says, “I’m going to immediately put this into play. I’m going to put it into something. I am going to do something about it. I am going to implement one small idea that I heard in one area of my life.”

Here is a person who hears a *shiur* on *emunah* and *bitachon*. He’s very inspired, wow. That’s *moradig*. I wish I could have some of that. He takes a big yawn and goes *vaiter*. Another person says, “I’m going to put that into play right now.” Now, like the *rishonim* say, he says, “Hashem I’m going to start working on *emunah* and *bitachon* this second. I’m going to get out of my chair after listening to the *shiur*. I’m *boteach* in You. The place I want to go now I will arrive at. I’m going to arrive there because I’m *boteach* in You. I’m *boteach* I’m going to get home tonight because if I’m driving my car and I’m *boteach* in You Hashem that I will arrive home safely.” That’s called putting it into a *cheifetz* right there.

THE AKEIDA WAS THE BIGGEST INSPIRATION

Now with this we'll be able to understand a tremendous *Chazal* and Rashi. What is the famous episode that transpired with our *avos* that we live off and we're nourished from? *Akeidas Yitzchak*. That was the greatest, most challenging event that Avraham Avinu was challenged with. It was the pinnacle of his challenges. And while he was in middle of *shechting* his child Yitzchak, he suddenly heard אל הנער ותשלח ידך אל הנער and then the *malach* added ואל תעש לו מאומה. If it says אל הנער ותשלח ידך אל הנער why does the *passuk* have to add ואל תעש לו מאומה. If you say don't lay a hand on the kid, what do you think I am going to do? Smack him around? Beat him up? What do you mean ואל תעש לו מאומה? If I tell you don't put a hand on him, what don't you understand about it?

If you take a look in Rashi,⁸ Rashi says when Avraham heard אל הנער ותשלח ידך את הנער, you know what Avraham said? אם כן לחינם באתי לכאן, if so, I came here for nothing. The whole thing was for an exercise in futility. Reb Yid, take it easy. You just passed the biggest test in the world! You've got nothing to be ashamed of. What do you mean for nothing?! You came for nothing?! Avraham Avinu says ובעשה בו חבלה, let me at least make a little *chavalah* and draw a little blood, ואוציא ממנו מעט דם, and I'm going to take out from him a little blood. אמר לו, the *malach* said, אל תעש לו מאומה. Don't make him a *mum*. Don't make him a little blemish.

Now you understand the *passuk* in *Chumash*. Rashi tells us. We have to understand: where was Avraham coming from? What was bothering Avraham?

The *teretz* is *pashut* now. Could you imagine the *hisorerus*? Could you imagine the inspiration? Could you imagine the opportunity? The once in the history of the world opportunity that Avraham Avinu got? I can't imagine a greater arousal, a greater *shpitz* pinnacle. It makes Mount Everest look like a puny little mountain. And the *malach* tells him, "Don't touch the boy." Avraham Avinu said what is going to be with this *hisorerus*? That means this whole *hisorerus* won't be *chal* on anything. It won't take effect. And Avraham cries out from his heart because it has to be *chal* on a *cheifetz*. If nothing will remain from all the *hisorerus*, at least let me take a little blood. Where is the *birchas shamayim*, where is the *zechus* going to be? So he wanted *reshus* to take out a little *dam*. And what does Hashem say to him? Don't touch him. אל תעש לו מאומה.

Now what would we have said? I've thought many times about what I would have said if I'd been put in the same situation. Suddenly the *malach* said אל תשלח ידך את הנער. I would have said, "Whew. Wow!

⁸ אל תשלח. לשחט; אמר לו אם כן לחינם באתי לכאן, אעשה בו חבלה ואוציא ממנו מעט דם, אמר לו אל תעש לו מאומה – אל תעש בו מום.

That was close. That was close. *Baruch Hashem!* Hashem, You frightened me. You had me. You had me going there, Hashem. Please Hashem don't scare me like that next time." That's what we would have said.

WHAT AVRAHAM AVINU DID WITH THE INSPIRATION

But Avraham Avinu understood that it was very possible this itself was part of the test. If Avraham would have said, "*Baruch Hashem,*" Hashem would have said, "You missed it." Hashem wanted to know if you realize what you are now engaged in. Avraham was on top of his game. Avraham understood what he did was *לא יאומן כי יסופר* and now he was being tested. He's going to lose this whole *hisorerus*. So he says to Hashem a little blood *epes*?

Now was Avraham wrong? Is the Ramban not applicable over here? It's applicable. You know what the Torah says (v. 13)? *וישא אברהם* and Avraham lifted up his eyes, *וירא*, and he suddenly saw, *והנה* and there's an *ayil* that's caught in the thicket by his horns, *וילך אברהם ויקח את האייל ויעלהו לעלה תחת בנו*. It was *tachtav*.⁹ And if you look in Rashi, he says an amazing idea. This is the answer to your *לחינם* *באתי לכאן*. Why does it say *תחת בנו*? Rashi says: *על כל עבודה*, every *avodah*, that Avraham did, *היה מתפלל*, he *davened*, *ואומר יהי רצון שתהא זו*, *כאלו בני שחוט*, this should be as if it was done on my son. *כאלו בני שחוט*.¹⁰ *כאלו דמו זרוק כאלו הוא מפשט כאלו הוא נקטר ונעשה דשן*

Avraham was *zocheh* to *tachtav* ("instead of"). Avraham's *akeidah* wasn't lost. It was *tachtav*. You know what the *gemara* says in *Zevachim*? That the *eifer* of Yitzchak is in the *Beis Hamikdash*, is *munach* by the *mizbeach*. What kind of *eifer* of Yitzchak? That was the *eifer* of Yitzchak! Hashem created a *temurah*. Hashem created an exchange. Avraham, I'm going to give you a *keli* where this *hisorerus* could be *chal* completely and it's going to be *ke'eilu* you were *shochet* your son *mamash*. But you have to have a *cheifetz*. You have to have a *cheifetz* for every single *avodah*. For every single action that Avraham did in the *korban* he said, *ke'eilu* it's my son. That became a *cheifetz* that serves us for *doros*.

We have to know that when we're *zocheh* to inspiration, step number one is to thank Hashem and start to dance. If you're not *zocheh* to inspiration you should feel sad and ask Hashem to give you another chance to be inspired, and understand that inspiration is coming completely from Hashem. You may have made the first move. Maybe you went to hear a *shmooze*. Maybe you decided to think about Hashem. Maybe you thought about *niflaos haBorei*. Maybe you thought about the name of Hashem. But you bore the *shem Hashem*

⁹ *וישא אברהם את עיניו וירא ונהנה איל אחר נאחז בסבך בקרניו וילך אברהם ויקח את האייל ויעלהו לעלה תחת בנו*
¹⁰ *תחת בנו*. מאחר שכתוב *ויעלהו לעלה*, לא חסר המקרא כלום, מהו תחת בנו? על כל עבודה שעשה ממנו היה מתפלל ואומר יהי רצון שתהא זו כאלו היא עשויה בבני, כאלו בני שחוט, כאלו דמו זרוק, כאלו הוא מפשט, כאלו הוא נקטר ונעשה דשן.

on your heart - that's the point! לא תשא את שם ה' אלקיך לשוא, the Torah says don't ever bear My name for nothing. Don't do that *larik*. If I give you *aza* inspiration, if I take your *neshamah* and I give it a *kvetch* and I give it a massage and Hashem says you take that *leshav*? You don't do anything with it? *Gornisht*. You throw that *brachah* away? You're *rauiy lehefech*. You deserve the opposite.

DON'T LOSE THE INSPIRATION

Rabosai, it's Erev Shavuos. You're going to hopefully have a lot of opportunities this week for *kabalas haTorah*. When Hashem gave us the Torah the first time, He started a week before. That's when the inspiration happened. *Bechodesh hashlishi*, when they arrived in Midbar Sinai. It was days later that the *kabalas haTorah* happened but the inspiration started from that day. Use that inspiration and invest it in something. Don't go from hearing a *shiur* and say, "Okay, let's have a smoothie." That's not the *cheifetz* that Hashem is talking about. The *cheifetz* that Hashem is talking about is put it to a חפצא של זכות. Take your smoothie later. Eat the *narishkeit* later. Right now take this inspiration and say, "Hashem I'm going to invest this in something," and then you'll be a *gebentched mentsch*. Be *mechazek* in a *tefilah*. Be *mechazek* yourself in Torah, in a *ma'aseh chessed*. If you hear about *chedsed* and you're inspired, say, "I'm *mekabel* right now that I'm going to go do a *ma'aseh chessed*. As soon as I can, I'm going to do it." The *kabalah bechedsed* is also a *chedsed*. The *kabalah* to do a *mitzvah* is also called putting it into something.

Then we'll be *zocheh* to go through life inspired. You understand if Hashem sees that when He gives you that *tovah* of inspiration and He arouses you and you appreciate it and say מודים אנחנו לך. But you look around at some people who can't stay up. They have no inspiration. When I see a person who can't be inspired, it's the greatest tragedy. It's the biggest *klalah* when I see that person and I see Hashem inspiring him, but it's a waste of time. That's heartbreaking. It's scary. To me it's frightening. If I don't feel inspired throughout the day at different times, I feel awful. You feel *meruchak*. You feel distant. You feel out of the loop. Have you ever seen guys talking and you want to know what they're talking about? What's going on? You don't feel part of it. You want a feeling you're with Hashem. Hashem will give you another message. Say, "Hashem thank You, thank You. I appreciate it, Hashem. I'm going to make it work. I'm going to put it to work. I'm not going to waste this one." You build your life. These are the stepping stones that Hashem grants us in our lives to keep climbing to reach the pinnacle of success. Take this week to prepare for Shavuos.

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