

This publication is a weekly dose of chizuk inspired by the Torah of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l

# The Rebbe's Pharmacy

## Pills of Chizuk for Today's Spiritual Illnesses—Part 25

*The Illness: I've made such incredible mistakes, that I feel like my avodas Hashem is worthless.*

Sometimes, we make big mistakes. We do things that seem so destructive, that we think that there's no way we could really fix them. Maybe we slept all day and missed krias shema and shacharis. Maybe we got very arrogant and spoke lashon harah about another Jew. Maybe we watched something inappropriate on our smartphone. Maybe we didn't feel like going to yeshiva, and we went to a bar instead. Maybe we became addicted to drugs,

or alcohol. Maybe we succumbed to our physical desires and transgressed the Torah, may Hashem save us.

Whatever it was, it seems to us like that's it. We've fallen so far that it's simply not possible to get back up. We think that from such a low place, how could our avodas Hashem be worth anything? We've messed up so badly that we feel like even the Torah and mitzvos that we're still able to do

are meaningless.

So we continue on with our life like everything is OK on the outside, but deep inside we've completely given up. We're lost. We're stuck and depressed. Then one sin leads to another, and we find ourselves falling further and further down a dark path of despair and hopelessness, until we feel certain that there's no way out.

**The Rebbe's Prescription: The further you fall away from Hashem, the more important your mitzvos are. (Based on Likutei Halachos, Birkas HaReyach 3)**

**Through his sin, Adam HaRishon shattered the glass ball of kedusha.**

The most important thing we must know when we're falling into despair is that our sins are, in fact, incredible opportunities. Although we should never purposely transgress the Torah, when it happens, G-d forbid, we have to recognize that now we have a chance to do something truly remarkable. Now we have a chance to do something that even the greatest tzadikim could never do. We have a chance to bring Mashiach.

Reb Noson zt"l explains, according to the Ari zt"l, that before the sin of Adam HaRishon, all the spiritual and physical worlds that Hashem created were whole and complete. There was no brokenness, darkness or suffering. Everything was "Gan Eden," so to speak. If Adam had listened to Hashem and not eaten from the Tree of Knowledge, this would have achieved the purpose of creation and the world would have never tasted the bitterness of exile from HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

However, when Adam sinned, not only did he break the perfection of the physical world, he damaged the higher spiritual worlds as well. The result of his sin was that countless sparks of kedusha from all the worlds became distanced from their source and fell amongst the contamination of the physical world. Therefore, Adam was expelled from Gan Eden in order to go through the world finding these sparks and lifting them back up to their source.

was as if Adam had taken a large glass bowl and smashed it on the ground, and caused millions of shards of glass to disperse in all directions. Then, he had to clean up his mess by going around and picking up each and every piece, one by one, until he could rebuild the bowl.

**The rectification of all sin is through finding the sparks of holiness that are concealed in the physical world.**

But since Adam's sin caused such incredible brokenness and destruction, it was not possible for him to finish the job himself. Rather, the responsibility was passed down to his offspring throughout all the generations until Mashiach to continue picking up these sparks of kedusha and returning them to the world which they came from.

The Ari z"l explains that every object of this world contains these sparks of kedusha, just that we cannot see them since they are covered over by physical matter. It is because of the concealment of these holy sparks, that we have freedom of choice. By using the physical world for our own desires, we perpetuate the sin of Adam and cause more brokenness and dispersion of the sparks. However, by attaching ourselves to the kedusha that is in the physical world and extracting it from the physical matter, we rectify the sin of Adam and all the generations since. This is the purpose of our existence: to take these sparks out of their contamination, and return them to their source.

**Through every single mitzva and word of kedusha, we fix the brokenness of this world.**

We do this by following the laws of the Torah. When we wash our hands in the morning, we purify sparks of kedusha in the world of Asiya from their covering of tuma. When we put on our talis and tefillin, we rectify sparks from the realms of Yetzira, Beriah, and Atzilus. With each section of davening — brachos, korbanos, etc — we rectify sparks correlating to specific spiritual worlds.

Every bracha that we make on our food, rectifies the sparks in that food. Every word of Torah which we say lifts up countless sparks. By being honest in our business, we fix the sparks of kedusha in whatever objects we're handling. When we give tzedakah, we rectify the sparks of kedusha in the money we make. In short,

through every mitzva we do, we are bringing the world closer to completion by lifting up the sparks of kedusha in the world all around us. Even if we don't understand the teachings of Kabbalah at all, just by simply looking at the countless pages of kavanos of the Ari z"l for one bracha or one mitzva in the Torah, we begin to fathom the depth of rectification we create by doing Hashem's will.

**The biggest sparks are lost in the lowest physical places.**

However, not all sparks were distributed equally. When the glass bowl was dropped, some pieces fell further from their source than others. In addition, some pieces were bigger, while others were tiny shards. This means that some of the sparks in the physical world are closer to the kedusha and do not need such a profound rectification, while there are others which have fallen mamash to the bottom of the dark pit of the physical world. In fact, it is the biggest, highest and most exalted sparks that are lost in the lowest places. Since their light is so great, they must be concealed in the deepest darkness in order that we won't be able to see them and we will retain our freedom of choice, as explained above.

Thus, it is primarily the sparks which are hidden in the places which seem to be completely void of kedusha that Mashiach is waiting for. It is primarily the sparks which are lost in places in which it seems almost impossible to serve Hashem, that are the most important in bringing the ultimate redemption. So when is Mashiach going to come? When some Jew who finds himself in a desolate place, far, far away from Hashem, does a mitzva.

When we contemplate these words of the Ari, we see that there is truly never a

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reason to despair. No matter what disgusting and contaminated physical places we may find ourselves in, it is possible to attach ourselves to Hashem. In fact, it is specifically in those places that it is important for us to keep Torah and mitzvos, through which we can lift up the greatest sparks of kedusha.

For example, when we're completely surrounded by goyim with the tempting smell of non-kosher food wafting through the air, and massive immod-

*When we're completely surrounded by goyim with the tempting smell of non-kosher food wafting through the air, and massive immodest advertisements stretching until the sky, we have to know that no matter what the reason was that brought us there, right now we have a chance to lift up wondrous sparks of kedusha. How? Simply by saying a bracha and taking a drink of a kosher soda. In fact, even just wearing a kipa and tzitzis in such a place can make a huge tikun, since we're*

advertisements stretching until the sky, we have to know that no matter what the reason was that brought us there, right now we have a chance to lift up wondrous sparks of kedusha. How? Simply by saying a bracha and taking a drink of a kosher soda. In fact, even just wearing a kipa and tzitzis in such a place can make a huge tikun, since we're revealing our

faith that even there it is possible to connect to Hashem and lift up holy sparks.

Another example is when we find ourselves in place which is completely removed from the frum world, like a small town in the middle of nowhere, or a place far out in nature. Even though such places seem completely void of any connection to the Torah since there's not a single shul within 100 miles and perhaps no one has ever davened there before, just by standing for a few minutes to daven mincha, we're able to bring the redemption that much closer. Perhaps the entire purpose of the existence of that place, was just for us to pray that one shmona esre.

**When we fall into dark spiritual places, we have the greatest opportunity to reveal Hashem's kedusha.**

In addition, Reb Noson explains that, generally speaking, a Jew living in such desolate places like Idaho or Alaska, is usually not so religious. He's so removed from a Torah society that he hardly knows anything about keeping mitzvos. He's completely surrounded by goyim and assimilated to their ways. In other words, he's fallen almost completely off the map of kedusha.

However, because of his distance, every little thing that he does is that much more important, since specifically in his location, are the highest sparks of kedusha. They are waiting there since the first sin of Adam, just for him to do a mitzva for Hashem, and through that he can return them to their source and bring Mashiach.

Although the simple understanding of the Ari is that he's referring to distant physical places, from this explanation of Reb Noson we see that the same is true about distant spiritual places as well. Therefore, the lower that we fall into sin and destruction, the more of an opportunity we have to do something incredible. The further we stray away from Hashem, the more important it is that

we strengthen ourselves to serve Him.

It could be that on the outside it seems as though we're connected to places of kedusha. We're living, working and learning in a completely frum setting. However, on the inside we find ourselves very far from Hashem. Our neighbors and friends don't realize that anything is wrong. Even our family members often don't know. But we know what we've done and we feel completely broken and helpless inside.

At these moments it is critical for us not to give up, and to remember that, on the contrary, since we've made such serious mistakes, now we have the opportunity to reveal Hashem in the lowest places and rectify some of the holiest sparks of kedusha. We must strengthen ourselves that every little thing that we do for Hashem in such contaminated spiritual places—such as putting on tefillin, saying even a few words of prayer, learning one mishna, or even having just a thought of teshuvah—is able to make a much bigger tikun than even the greatest tzadik could ever make.

Of course, Hashem loves the tzadikim, and their deveikus in Him through their avoda is what inspired Hashem to create the world. Nonetheless, since they're on such exalted levels of kedusha, they simply cannot fix the sparks that have fallen to the lowest places, since they're not in those places. Thus, the main purpose of the true tzadikim—the shepherds of each generation—is to inspire those of us who find ourselves very far from Hashem to strengthen our faith that every tiny thing that we do is of the most importance for Hashem and all of creation. We are, so to speak, their messengers to lift up the sparks from all the distant physical and, more importantly, spiritual places.

Therefore, even by just washing our hands and saying a bracha in the morning we are doing something truly remarkable. Even simple halachos—such as putting on the right shoe before the left and not dressing completely like a goy—make enormous tikunim in the world. Even just the sincere attempt to break ourselves away from doing a sin, is a monumental achievement.

**Hashem loves a baal teshuva precisely because he's so far away.**

This idea is clearly represented by what the Sages say: "In the place where a baal teshuva stands, even a complete tzadik cannot stand." The simple understanding is that a baal teshuva is somehow able to reach a higher level than a complete tzadik. However, this doesn't really make so much sense, since how could the tzadik be complete if the baal teshuva is even higher than him?

Rather, according to the literal wording of the statement of the Sages, we can understand what they are telling us. The incredible value of the baal teshuva over a pure tzadik is the fact that he's *not* on such a high level. On the contrary, he's on such a low level that the tzadik can't even go down and stand in his place. Nonetheless, it is specifically for this reason that the baal teshuva is so praiseworthy. Because from such darkness, every mitzvah he does reveals such an incredible light, which is hidden so far away from Hashem, that even the greatest tzadik cannot reveal it.

The proof that this is indeed the intention of the Sages, is from the verse they bring to show this point: "Peace, peace, to the one who is far away and to the one who is close, said Hashem." From the fact that the verse mentions the "one who is far away" — i.e. the baal teshuva — first, the Sages show that the baal teshuva takes precedence over the tzadik. However, at the end of the day, the

verse still calls the baal teshuva "far away." This is because it is precisely because he is far away and yet he's trying to serve Hashem, that Hashem calls out to him first and gives him precedence over the tzadik. Specifically when we're very far away from Hashem do we have the opportunity to give Him the greatest nachas.

So if we find our yetzer hara telling us that we've already messed up beyond repair and we might as well just throw in the towel, we should never give in. Rather, we tell him back that, on the contrary, now is the most important time for us to do whatever we can in avodas Hashem. Now is our moment to shine. Now we can really make a difference.

And if we still fall further and further, and once again our yetzer is coming at us with thoughts of complete and utter despair, then we must stay strong and tell him that our chance to bring Mashiach is even greater now than it was before.

**Yisro paved the way for all of us to leave behind our avoda zara and make the greatest kiddush Hashem!**

Perhaps the greatest example of this idea in the Torah comes from Yisro. The Sages explain that before Yisro met Moshe Rabbeinu, not only had he tried every form of idol worship in the world, he had even become a priest in his devout service of avoda zara. He was considered one of the leaders of his generation — along with Amalek and Bilam — in heretical beliefs and practices.

However, when he saw the incredible miracles that Hashem did for the Nation of Yisroel at the splitting of the Yam Suf, and the Divine Assistance that the Jews received in the battle with Amalek, he decided to leave it all behind and convert to Judaism.

The Zohar HaKadosh explains that at that moment when Yisro recognized the true existence of Hashem and the greatness of His people, Hashem's name was glorified in all the higher and lower worlds. It was precisely because Yisro came from such a low place of devout idol worship, that he was able to give Hashem the greatest splendour by doing teshuva.

From the story of Yisro, we can take incredible chizuk. Even if we've committed the most atrocious sins and rebelled against Hashem, G-d forbid. Even if we've fallen deep into the pit of today's idol worship for money. Even if we've become devoutly addicted to pills, drugs, or alcohol, may Hashem save us. Nonetheless, we must recognize that now more than ever, can we give Hashem the greatest kavod and rectify the entire creation. Now more than ever can we transform the world and help to bring Mashiach.

By simply not giving up and trying to do whatever mitzva is before us, we can turn everything around. By awakening ourselves to open a Sefer Tehillim and daven, or to learn even one mishna, we can lift up the greatest sparks of kedusha and reveal to the entire universe that all of our forms of avoda zara are completely empty and meaningless. Through this we can accomplish the entire purpose of creation: to bring the awareness of Hashem to the world.

When we strengthen ourselves with this idea, we see that we really can fix our mistakes. We really can start over and lift ourselves up. From this teaching we can find the faith to believe that just like we have the ability to mess up, so too, we have the ability to fix, and after a while we will be able to pull ourselves completely out of our sins and come very close to Hashem.

*Based on the Torah of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l and his primary talmid R' Noson zt"l, as given over by R' Nisan Dovid Kivak, Shlita. For further comments and questions, or to sign up to receive the articles by email, you may contact: [leventermusic@gmail.com](mailto:leventermusic@gmail.com)*