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Vacation – Why, Where, and How?

Each summer, many people try to relax physically and mentally by vacationing in places of natural beauty. There is a Torah basis for this practice. We have accounts and photographs of *gedolim* and *tzaddikim* who traveled to beautiful locations in the summer months.

On the other hand, it's no secret that many people experience a *yeridah* in their *ruchniyus* during vacation. Like so many aspects of our world, it seems to reflect the *pasuk* בָּם וּפְשָׁעִים יִכָּשְׁלוּ בָּם – *the righteous walk (progress) in them, and sinners stumble in them*. The more we can understand the purpose of vacation, the more prepared we'll be to make it a positive experience.

Many people, perhaps even most people, travel not for any clear positive purpose but because 'everyone does it.' They often return more exhausted than they were pre-vacation. Sometimes it takes them weeks to recover from what was meant to be rest and relaxation.

How can we distinguish between a positive vacation that will enable our bodies and souls to relax, and one that will have the opposite effect?

Enjoyable, Useful, and Good

In *Parshas Va'eschanan* (on the *pasuk* וְאֶהְיֶה אִתְּךָ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ), the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh writes that a person is drawn to three types of experiences: טוב (good), עֵרֶב (enjoyable), and מוֹעִיל (useful).

We will explore these concepts, beginning with the idea of עֵרֶב.

Enjoyable -

There are many forms of pleasure and enjoyment. We choose foods we find tasty, and we return to our favorite foods, wanting to

experience that pleasure again and again. We enjoy reading books that are exciting or entertaining. We enjoy discussing our favorite topics; connecting with friends through shared experiences and conversations; receiving compliments and feeling appreciated. We enjoy music.

Not all pleasures are experienced directly by the senses. But all of them depend on our ability to utilize the senses Hashem gave us to enjoy the myriad pleasures of the world.

Of course, our interaction with the ערב, 'the enjoyable,' needs to be controlled. Chazal (*Gittin* 70a) teach us to refrain from eating our fill of a meal that we really enjoy. Too much pursuit of 'the enjoyable' can divert attention from our more important pursuits in life.

Useful -

We are drawn to things that benefit us and improve our lives. We don't eat and drink exclusively to please our taste buds; we also want our food to keep us healthy and energetic.

We may choose to read books that teach us how to succeed in areas that interest us. Some people use every spare minute reading books of financial advice or books about their particular trade.

L'havdil, many people like learning Gemara or other *sifrei kodesh* because they know that these works will teach them how to live meaningful lives in this world and the next. (Even if the main motivation for learning Torah is because it is טוב, there is a practical level where Torah learning appeals on the 'useful' [מועיל] level.)

Similarly, many people pursue *segulos* for their practical usefulness. They go to *ktivrei tzaddikim* in the hope that davening in those places will help their *tefillos* be answered. (The same trip may satisfy all three categories if they enjoy traveling.)

Good -

We are drawn to anything that is essentially good. Even eating (which is enjoyable as well as useful) is also rooted in our desire to do

good. The body is an amazing creation; it is a gift that we are meant to utilize for Hashem's purposes. When we take care of that gift, we are doing a good thing.

We are drawn to give to others because we know intuitively that giving is good. A self-centered, materialistic person may have no conscious desire to give, but deep inside, his *neshamah* wants to give. And when his *neshamah* manages to overcome his outer selfishness, he will love the experience of giving to others.

The Body, the Nefesh, and the Neshamah

The human being includes three basic elements: the body (*guf*); the *nefesh*, which is the life-force, higher than the *guf* but lower than the *neshamah*; and the *neshamah*, our pure spiritual essence. Each of these three aspects is drawn to the enjoyable, the useful, and the good.

Of course, just as different people find different types of music appealing, the *guf*, *nefesh*, and *neshamah* each find different things to be enjoyable, useful, or good.

The body desires tangible items and experiences. It wants food that can be chewed, tasted and swallowed. The body doesn't mind that the pleasure of taste lasts only for a moment. Sometimes people will even transgress the laws of *kashrus* for just a few minutes of pleasure. Obviously, food is just one example of the pleasures the body craves.

The desires of the *guf* aren't necessarily negative. As mentioned above, the body appreciates healthy and nutritious food. It does not like fasting. On Yom Kippur or Tishah B'Av, we can almost hear it chastising us, "Why are you fasting and torturing me?" Its healthy appetite for food, and thirst for water, helps it receive the nourishment it needs.

The same applies to the body's desire for sleep and rest. If a person decides to stay up for *mishmar* on *leil shishi* or the night of Shavuot, the

body objects. By two in the morning, its protest is almost audible. It does have a point! Sleep is good for us. It refreshes our brain, allows the digestive system to work properly, and helps us in countless ways. In the right balance, sleep can be enjoyable, useful, and good.

In *Hilchos Deios*, the Rambam provides many examples of physical needs that we must fulfill in a balanced way.

In summary, the ‘useful’ and the ‘good’ as defined by the body are valid and often positive. The ‘enjoyable’ isn’t necessarily negative, as we will see – if properly measured.

The World of the Nefesh

The *nefesh* has its own world of ‘enjoyable, useful, and good.’

The *nefesh* likes to experience beauty. Seeing the beauty of nature, or even beautiful man-made creations, gives it a sense of peace and relaxation. The *nefesh* also enjoys being happy. It loves to hear music that inspires *simchah*.

The ‘enjoyable, useful, and good’ that the *nefesh* desires are often intangible. While the physical senses are necessary for the *nefesh* to access the experiences it craves, the body is not part of the experience.

The *nefesh* loves whatever opens the heart and mind. For example, it desires close connections with friends. Even when we aren’t actively speaking with our friends, our *nefesh* thrives from the very fact that we *have* friends. If we do not have friends, we may physically be around others, but our *nefesh* will feel lonely and constricted.

Sometimes it’s easier to identify what the *nefesh* needs by observing what is detrimental to its wellbeing. When a person is jealous, angry, competitive or hateful, his *nefesh* is shattered. The *nefesh* wants to be at peace. It wants the tranquility that results from healthy relationships and from experiencing beauty. This kind of pleasure takes place in the *nefesh*, not in the physical body.

The *nefesh* derives no enjoyment from twelve hours of sleep. It simply needs the body it resides in to get the proper amount of rest so the *nefesh* can function properly.

We often confuse the desires of the body and the *nefesh*. For example, a person may say, "I really had a great davening today. I got up just in time to say *Krias Shema* before the end of the second *zman*. Then, without any pressure, I learned a bit while enjoying my morning coffee. Afterwards, I strolled over to shul, and my davening was amazing! That's the beauty of *bein hazmanim*."

This person has mixed up two important truths. Certainly, when the body is refreshed and rested, it can perform its tasks in an optimal manner. However, the *nefesh* doesn't need the body to oversleep till ten o'clock in the morning. It only needs the body to be healthy enough that it doesn't interfere with or hamper the functioning of the *nefesh*.

Vacation can certainly benefit the *nefesh*. The *nefesh* enjoys meeting new people, seeing different scenery, and even living in a different house. The very act of leaving the familiar world of day-to-day habits serves to broaden the mind and the soul. It can be enjoyable, useful, and good.

The Desire of the Neshamah

The *neshamah* loves *ruchniyus* and longs for *kirvas Elokim*. A person who is in a state of *kirvas Elokim* experiences incomparable pleasure and wishes to remain in that state forever. **That is how the *neshamah* defines 'enjoyable.'**

It also desires activities that it finds useful. The *neshamah* is drawn to Torah, *avodah*, and *gemilus chasadim* because it knows that those activities are the only ones that can bring it to *kirvas Elokim*.

The *neshamah* doesn't want merely to daven. It wants to daven properly, with a minyan and with *kavanah*. The *neshamah* never entertains the thought, "It's vacation; I can just grab a quick davening in my room before the day's activities."

Everything the *neshamah* is drawn to is good, because it has one desire: to be close to Hashem, the ultimate and only true Good.

All for One, One for All

Now that we have discovered that the *guf*, *nefesh* and *neshamah* each desire their own form of ‘the enjoyable, the useful, and the good,’ we need to understand Hakadosh Baruch Hu’s plan in creating man as a combination of all three. The *guf* serves as a *kli*, a containing vessel, a home for the *nefesh*, which in turn serves as a *kli* for the *neshamah*.

Ultimately, **we are charged to develop our *neshamah* into a dominant force within: a power that will move us to want more and more of what the *neshamah* defines as enjoyable, useful and good.** A person whose *neshamah* is dominant will experience a constant magnetic pull to Torah and mitzvos in any form, and will find incomparable pleasure in these experiences of *kedushah*.

In order for the *neshamah* to guide us to this way of life, **we must have a healthy *nefesh*** that is nurtured with everything it needs. So too, **the *nefesh* needs us to have a healthy *guf*** that is properly nurtured.

This is why the halachah warns teachers to make sure they get enough sleep. They are supposed to give their *nefesh* to their *talmidim*, and that isn’t possible if the body is weak.

(It is possible for tzaddikim, or even others at specific times, to purify themselves to the extent that the *nefesh* can function with barely any assistance from the body. For example, on Yom Kippur, the *nefesh* has to work very hard even if the body is weak. For most people, even on such special days, it takes great effort for the *nefesh* to function as it should, and not everyone succeeds.)

In general, if the body is well rested and isn’t especially hungry, it can do its job as a good environment for the flourishing of the *nefesh*. Likewise, if the *nefesh* is healthy, our *neshamah* will be able to thrive.

It is our responsibility to give our *guf* exactly the proper amount of 'enjoyable, useful and good' so that the *nefesh* can access its own 'enjoyable, useful and good.' **This requires balance.** If we are too indulgent of the body's cravings, the result will be negative.

We need to be very careful with the desires of the *guf*. It is capable of overdoing things even to the extent of damaging itself. In contrast, the 'enjoyable, useful and good' that the *nefesh* desires will more often be positive.

When our *nefesh* is happy and at peace, the *neshamah* has the vessel it needs to assume its role in our lives. If a person's *nefesh* isn't happy and healthy, you can give him a two-hour *mussar shmuess* and it won't accomplish anything positive. You can't interact with his *neshamah* if his *nefesh* isn't functioning properly as a healthy vessel.

Learn from Shabbos

The mitzvos of *oneg Shabbos* and *simchas Yom Tov* are based on the interaction of our *guf*, *nefesh*, and *neshamah*.

The *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* brings us the teaching of his Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov, that in order for the *neshamah* to experience *simchah*, the body must also get what it needs. The Baal Shem Tov illustrated this concept with a *mashal*.

The king's son was taken captive, and lived for years in captivity far away from home. One day he learned that his father was working to free him. He wanted to sing and dance, rejoicing in his father's love. However, his fellow prisoners were coarse peasants who knew nothing of the king and wouldn't be able to understand his happiness, much less rejoice with him.

The prince wisely decided to buy the peasants several rounds of whiskey. As they got drunk, they began dancing together with him.

A casual observer would see only a group of people dancing together. However, the peasants were celebrating the whiskey, while the prince was dancing to express his love for his father, the King.

So too, we celebrate Shabbos with food and drink so that the body can be happy. **Once the body is happy, the *nefesh* and *neshamah* can rejoice with the King.**

If we don't take the time to study this process, we won't understand how it works. From a superficial perspective, a person might describe his Shabbos as a day of good food, wine and relaxation. He is unaware that deep inside, when Shabbos arrives, his *neshamah* wants to rejoice with Hashem. This person may get so involved in food and drink that his *neshamah* is overwhelmed by the onslaught of *gashmiyus*.

Before the Shabbos meal, his *neshamah* was able to express itself. He davened with passion; he made *Kiddush* with *simchah* – but after the *seudah*, he fell asleep. Whether he is literally asleep or not, he sleeps figuratively. **He has become so swamped in *gashmiyus* that nothing can reach his *neshamah*; his *neshamah* is stuck, unable to express itself.**

The well-meaning Jew who is familiar with this Shabbos experience can't understand the Baal Shem Tov's lesson. In his experience, eating and drinking seem to block him from enjoying *ruchniyus*. He recalls that before Shacharis he is able to enjoy a two-hour learning *seder* and daven with energy when all he's had is a cup of coffee. *Why does the Torah instruct us to enjoy delicacies on Shabbos when that seems to impede our ability to access the spiritual potential of Shabbos?* he wonders.

A Tzaddik Eats to Satisfy His Soul

How can we answer this person's sincere question? What did the Baal Shem Tov mean?

The *guf* has a frightening tendency to sink so deeply into materialism that it can't serve as a vessel for the *nefesh*. Overindulging in herring,

cholent, cakes and kugels, or wine and liquor, won't bring a person to *kirvas Elokim*. Of course, each community's special Shabbos foods are based on longstanding *minhagim*, but if someone overindulges in those traditional foods, he will descend rather than ascend. **Instead of elevating him to a state of *kirvas Elokim*, the Shabbos *seudah* can distance him from Hashem.**

The message of the Baal Shem Tov's *mashal* is that a person has to have peace of mind and *simchah*, including on the *guf* level, in order for his *nefesh* and *neshamah* to thrive.

The Nefesh as Intermediary

Many a Shabbos *seudah* suffers not from lack of food but from the lack of anyone with whom to sing *zemiros*, share thoughts about the *parshah*, or enjoy stories of tzaddikim.

Each of those activities awakens the *nefesh*, which in turn brings the *neshamah* to the forefront. The body can't interact directly with the *neshamah*; the *nefesh* is needed to connect them.

However, in order to bridge the gap between *guf* and *neshamah*, **our *nefesh* needs to join with other *nefashos***. Some people have the good fortune to be surrounded by family members who enjoy singing and learning together with them. Not everyone is blessed in that way.

If a person does not have that environment at home, he must connect with other *nefashos* in some other way. After the *seudah*, he should go to a shul where he can sing *zemiros* and share *divrei Torah* and stories of tzaddikim with others. The *neshamah* certainly loves that environment, and the *nefesh* too comes to life when it joins other *nefashos* in singing and learning.

When the *nefesh* receives the nourishment it was supposed to get from a Shabbos *seudah*, the *neshamah* can unite with the *guf* and *nefesh* in a state of *kirvas Elokim*.

Learning from Yitzchak Avinu

When Yitzchak Avinu wanted to bless Eisav, he asked him to bring him delicacies first.

– וַעֲשֵׂה לִי מִטְעָמִים כְּאֲשֶׁר אֶהְבֵּתִי וְהָבִיָּאָה לִי וְאָכְלָה בְּעִבּוֹר תְּבָרְכֶךָ נַפְשִׁי בְּטָרֵם אָמוֹת –
Prepare for me delicacies that I love and bring them to me, so that my nefesh can bless you before I die.

Rabbeinu Bachya explains:

Yitzchak's intention in requesting delicacies was not for the pleasure of the palate. He wanted his *nefesh* to be happy and in a state of enjoyment. **For when the physical powers of the body are strengthened, the powers of the *nefesh* are awakened.** When the *nefesh* is in a state of *simchah*, it is possible to receive *ruach hakodesh*.

Chazal state in *Maseches Shabbos* (30b) that the *Shechinah* doesn't rest upon a person when he is in a state of laziness or sadness, but rather when he is in a state of *simchah*. As it says (Melachim II 3:15), וְהָיָה כִּנְגִן הַמְּנִיגִן וַתְּהִי עָלָיו יַד ה' – *And when the musician played, the hand of Hashem was upon him.*

This is why we find the term *nefesh* associated with *brachah*, as in בְּעִבּוֹר תְּבָרְכֶךָ נַפְשִׁי.

Rabbeinu Bachya's words can be understood on many deep levels, but let's try to understand them on the most basic level. His lesson is particularly relevant to Jewish mothers who spend so much time and effort trying to nurture the *nefashos* of their children, which will then be the vessel of their *neshamos*.

As we said, without a healthy, awakened *nefesh*, the *neshamah* can't assume its leadership role in our lives. We have to shed tears for thousands upon thousands of young Jews whose *nefashos* are undernourished and dormant, and who therefore feel no connection to their *neshamos*. Often the *nefesh* was wounded in one way or another at

some stage in their lives. **This caused the *nefesh* to retreat and close itself off to any interaction.** Hakadosh Baruch Hu provides the means to heal the *nefesh*, but that healing must follow the progression of *guf*, *nefesh*, *neshamah*.

Vessels for Torah

Let's apply this concept to mothers and children. If a woman lacks physical strength, she won't have the *kochos hanefesh* needed to give her children what they need. If she must hurry off to work the next morning after staying up late with the baby, how can we expect her to have the *kochos hanefesh* to nurture the *nefashos* of the children?

Even though we aspire to teach children Torah, we must realize that the first step of *chinuch* is to nurture a healthy *nefesh*. **A child with a healthy *nefesh* who is happy and settled will be able to be a vessel for Torah and *tefillah*.**

The *Chachamim* emphasized this connection when they defined our requirement to enjoy food and drink on Yom Tov. The Gemara states that on Shavuot, the day of *Mattan Torah*, *הכל מודים בעצרת דבעינן נמי לכם*, everyone agrees that it is a requirement to devote time and resources to *לכם*, enjoying food and drink that will make you happy.

We can now understand this emphatic statement. A person needs a happy, healthy *nefesh* in order to receive the Torah.

It isn't simple to maintain a healthy *nefesh*. We all need *siyata d'Shmaya* to achieve that goal, and we have to daven for it.

The Need for Vacation

Over time, people become worn out from the many material and spiritual challenges that face them every day. They realize that their *nefesh* is stressed, and they want to rest and recharge. How can we plan a vacation that will provide the *nefesh* with its needed rejuvenation, and avoid the notorious pitfalls that can leave the *nefesh* in a worse state after vacation instead of a better state?

There is one basic rule that applies to everyone. Those who follow this rule will be able to succeed, and those who ignore it will almost certainly fail: **Stop looking at all the “frum” advertisements touting one vacation or another.** The messages they carry should frighten us rather than attract us. They promise a vacation that will shower you with so much *gashmiyus* that you will forget that you even have a *neshamah*. They offer every type of cuisine imaginable, in quantities that will fill you to the brim and beyond. You will be able to sleep, enjoy, and spend your day and night experiencing one hedonistic pleasure after another.

A vacation like that can transform a person into a creature who is lower than any member of the animal kingdom. If you indulge the body with too much ‘enjoyable, useful, and good,’ the results are tragic.

The proper dosage for the *guf* is whatever it needs to be a healthy home for the *nefesh*. Overdosing will only drive the *nefesh* away.

Chazal described the proper way to care for the body’s desires with the phrase *משיביו רעב מרעיבו שבע* – *to [seek to] satisfy it is to starve; to starve it is to be satisfied*. If you constantly cater to the body’s desires, it won’t be healthy or content. It will only become addicted to physical pleasures and crave more and more. On the other hand, if you provide the body with what it **needs**, as opposed to everything it hungers for, it will actually be satisfied and able to host the *nefesh*.

When it comes to physical desires, a person should get in the habit of telling himself, **“I just need a little.** More than that doesn’t interest me.”

Not Deprivation

Don’t misunderstand and think that the Torah wants us to give the body nothing but a minimal amount of bland health food. We don’t have to banish sweet desserts from our tables. **For many people, food presented in an aesthetically pleasing manner actually nourishes the *nefesh*.** We are not discussing the practices of great tzaddikim whose

ascetic diet was part of their *avodas Hashem b'simchah*. We are portraying the general parameters that Chazal recommend throughout their writings.

For example, Eretz Yisrael is praised for its delicious fruits that have a positive influence on those who enjoy them. As we say in the *brachah acharonah*, *לאכול מפריה ולשובע מטובה* – *to eat from its fruits and to satisfy ourselves with its goodness*. We learned Rabbeinu Bachya's explanation of Yitzchak Avinu's request for delicacies. Chazal do recommend that we give the body a balanced amount of what it desires, especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov and at *seudos mitzvah*.

Unfortunately, some people respond to their body's request for a little meat by feeding it an entire cow. They don't realize that overeating in that way turns them into *beheimos*. They also suffer physically; it might take them two days to recover from their excesses. This overindulgence certainly adds nothing to the body's ability to support the *nefesh*. **The general rule is that only controlled, measured physical gratification benefits the *nefesh*.** Excessive physicality only creates an unhealthy environment for the *nefesh*.

The Power of Kavanah

Let's return to the question of positive versus negative vacation experiences.

The success of a vacation also depends on our intention. Tzaddikim utilized this time of year to compose *niggunim* for the upcoming *Yamim Noraim*. **They would take time to set aside the weight of their responsibilities and go out into nature.** In that setting, they would experience *kirvas Elokim*, and yearn for the upcoming *Yamim Tovim*. Their *nefesh* and *neshamah* would sing, and they would bring those *niggunim* back to inspire their communities.

A person who is locked into a demanding daily schedule doesn't get to discover his latent talents and abilities. He doesn't realize what he

can achieve. *Cheshbon hanefesh* is virtually impossible when racing from one task to another. If you give him a bit of *menuchas hanefesh*, he can rediscover himself. He's able to learn before Shacharis, and take his time davening. He doesn't have to hurry anywhere. Suddenly he is able to appreciate the wonders of Hashem's world.

Even someone who devotes most of his day to learning benefits from this type of vacation. If during the regular *zman* he spends most of his day learning Gemara and halachah, he can take some time to learn *aggadah* and stories of tzaddikim.

The first step of planning a vacation is to identify what you hope to accomplish. Do you want to identify some impediment to your spiritual progress so that you can work on it and move ahead? Do you yearn for more *simchah*? If your vacation enables you to heal your *nefesh*, identify your *kochos*, and appreciate what it means to be a child of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, you will build up the strength needed to succeed in the upcoming year.

On the other hand, if you simply spend your time eating and drinking, what will you gain from your vacation? You will need two weeks to recover from the experience. We aren't even addressing *aveiros* (such as challenges of *shemiras einayim*), just the dangers of too much materialism.

Construction, Not Destruction!

We should remember that the *guf* likes pleasant sensations, the *nefesh* likes to experience things that are beautiful, and the *neshamah* loves that which is truly good.

Sometimes, we do something that the *guf* loves but the *neshamah* knows is not good. An example would be going somewhere questionable because "everyone goes there" and we need to relax on vacation. **Not only will that experience give nothing to our *neshamah*, it will shatter our *nefesh*.** That's the way Hakadosh Baruch Hu designed us. If the *neshamah* knows that something isn't good, the *nefesh* doesn't

want to get involved with it. To fool ourselves into thinking it's fine is to forcibly pollute our *nefesh*.

Worst of all, we create the conflict that results from doing something that we know deep inside is wrong. We are living a lie. We tell ourselves it's okay even though we know it isn't. We really do want to be good, and we are also very aware of our wrongdoing. **It's impossible to experience *menuchas hanefesh* under these conditions.** Someone who vacations that way approaches the month of Elul without knowing who, where or what he is.

Give to Your Family

Vacation provides an opportunity to give to one's family members by carefully and honestly contemplating which activities will be good for them. Unfortunately, there are parents taking their families to all sorts of places because "we have to do it for the children" when in reality, they themselves want to go there. Before their parents took them there, these children often didn't even know that such places existed.

When we face a decision like this, we are being tested. **Understanding our internal world can help us pass the test.** Experience and introspection show that when we do something we know isn't right for ourselves and our families, we don't gain; we only lose. In the aftermath of those poor decisions, our *nefesh* feels broken and tortured because our *neshamah* knows the truth.

On the other hand, if we choose a vacation that gives the *nefesh* a balanced amount of what it needs in the form of a change in schedule or surroundings, the *neshamah* is able to find its place in our internal world.

Not a Requirement

We should also remember that we aren't required to travel in order to benefit from vacation. Many people discover that by remaining

home, but changing their daily schedule and activities, they can approach Elul refreshed and rested.

Many people treat the need to travel during *bein hazmanim* as if it were a commandment in the Torah. They go to great expense and trouble to get away, just because “everyone does it.” If it’s not right for their budget and family situation, *shalom bayis* may suffer and it can take a long time to repair the damage. A family in that situation should focus on ways to achieve the goals of vacation while perhaps remaining at the same address.

The Bottom Line

Our only goal in taking a vacation should be to strengthen and nurture the *nefesh* in order to enable the *neshamah* to step into its role as the dominant force in our lives. If the vacation we choose won’t accomplish that, it will have a negative impact on our *guf*, *nefesh*, and *neshamah*.

A person who learns how to vacation successfully will be able to use that knowledge to elevate Shabbos, Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh, *bein hazmanim*, and any day that varies from his usual routine. He knows what he hopes to achieve. If he senses that his *nefesh* is constricted, he will have discovered ways to relieve its stress. He may take some time to go to a *makom kadosh* and say Tehillim. He may take advantage of the change in schedule to go outside and speak with Hashem before dawn. These are real experiences that enable him to feel *kirvas Elokim*. They heal the *nefesh* just as if they were medications prescribed by a doctor who specializes in *nefashos*.

The right kind of vacation can be a source of health and *brachah* for the entire family. Parents will be able to explain to their children why they are traveling to the ocean or a beautiful lake. They can state with confidence that it’s not something they do just because “everyone does it” but because it’s part of their *avodas Hashem*. They make clear that this time off is certainly not a vacation from Torah and mitzvos.

They will be able to transmit to their children that Hashem has created many things that are enjoyable, useful, and good for the *nefesh* and can be enjoyed *al pi Torah*. Taking time to experience those aspects of Hashem's creation helps prepare our *nefesh* to be a receptacle for the *neshamah*. We want to harness the powers of our *guf* and *nefesh* to serve Hashem *b'simchah* with every aspect of our being.

May Hashem help us take advantage of this time in the best way possible.



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