

## Association with Hashem

### "DON'T LET IT GO"

#### UNBREAKABLE

THERE WAS A PARTICULAR INDIVIDUAL who was falling off the *derech*. Many people who knew him tried to persuade him back to the right path, but he wasn't hearing any of them. His fall went so far that he decided to charter a yacht to sail off to the middle of the sea, and scheduled his departure for none other than Yom Kippur, *r"l*.



**R' Yaakov Meir Schechter** was asked to talk to him, hoping that he would be able to positively influence him, and he agreed. They spoke warmly, and at one point, R' Yaakov Meir directed the conversation to his yacht voyage. "Why'd you decide to go out on that boat on Yom Kippur of all days?"

The man responded: "Ever since I started my journey away from Yiddishkeit, I've felt my *neshamah* tugging at me, drawing me to return to Torah and *mitzvos*. This greatly disturbed my peace of mind; I had finished with observing mitzvos, and I didn't want them anymore, but my inner conscience was pulling me away from what I was doing, disturbing me from enjoying the 'fun.'

"So, after much thought, I decided to do something to disconnect me from everything, leaving no trace of Yiddishkeit. That's why I chartered a boat and ate on Yom Kippur, *r"l*. It would relinquish my final connection with Yiddishkeit, and I'd be 'liberated.'"

"And how do you feel now?" asked R' Yaakov Meir.

"The same as before! The pull, tug, agony, and guilt I always had is still there in full force, disturbing my life and preventing me from enjoying my new direction!"

Putting his hand on the boy's shoulder, with a warm tone of voice, R' Yaakov Meir responded: "Wow! I'm so impressed!"

"I have so many people crying at my desk, bemoaning how they're yearning to feel connected with Hashem and His mitzvos. They feel their bond with Hashem is so dry, lifeless, and dull, and they come to seek guidance to rebuild that connection. You, on the other hand, are telling me that you constantly have this feeling, and that your problem is how you can free yourself from it. Your inner *neshamah* has such a longing to Hashem and wants so badly to have that association. That is something so special, and that's why I'm so blown away."

Every Yid, in every situation and in every level that he finds himself, has that inner desire toward Hashem and His mitzvos. We might not be aware of it, and it might not be on the forefront of our minds, but it's there. The feeling that this young man had is something that us observant Yidden might take for granted, but we all have it. In every situation and level that we find ourselves in, our *neshamah* yearns for it. The *neshamah* of every Yid contains a desire and a yearning toward Torah and mitzvos.

These words deeply penetrated the young man's heart, and they reignited in him the spark to start observing Torah and mitzvos. Today, he is a respectable *jungerman*, learning and growing to great heights.



When we have problems, we seek the guidance of the *gedolei Torah* in how to deal with them. Someone wrote to the *Avnei Nezer*, *z"l*, asking guidance for the problem he was encountering. He was worrying because he wasn't feeling close to Hashem. What should he do to gain this feeling?

The *Avnei Nezer* replied, "I ask from you one thing: Don't tell anyone that you have this problem. Don't tell anyone that you feel distant from Hashem and that it bothers you, unlike what we find by other problems.

"By other problems, Chazal relate from a *pasuk* in *Mishlei* that if a person has a worry, he should tell other people about it (*Mishlei* 12:25). He should share his worries with a good friend. Often, that helps the person deal with the problem. The burden feels easier to bear after sharing it with others.

"This one, however, I request that you should not share your worry with anyone. I want the fact that you feel distant from Hashem to bother you for your entire life. Your will should be to seek Hashem. If you speak it over, you may cool off, and that's why you must avoid discussing this 'problem' with others." (Reprinted with permission from *Mechon Be'er Haparsha, Torah Wellsprings, V'a'eira*, p.10)



### "TAKE HASHEM WITH YOU!"

Our generation was privileged to have **R' Chaim Kanievsky**. Besides for his holy presence, we benefit greatly from the many *sefarim* that he wrote on a wide range of subjects. One of the more common *sefarim* of his is *Shoneh Halachos*, which was actually written by his devoted *chavrusa*, **R' Elazar Tzadok Turtzin**.



As a *bachur*, R' Elazar Tzadok learned in the Chevron Yeshiva, and he was very close to the **Chazon Ish**. Once when he was at the home of the Chazon Ish, the Chazon Ish told him, "Lazer, Lazer, do you really think that observant Yidden who, *r"l*, go off the *derech* all of a sudden take off their yarmulka? No! It happens gradually; it starts a little at a time, they stop this and then that, until eventually they take it off."

R' Elazar Tzadok was totally bewildered. He thought, "Did the Chazon Ish see in me something that is straying from the right path? Why is he speaking to me about this? The Chazon Ish doesn't say things for no reason!"

Broken and distraught, R' Elazar Tzadok left the Chazon Ish's home. For the entire four-hour return trip back to his yeshiva, he was in a complete daze. "What was the Chazon Ish's intent?"

When he finally arrived at the yeshiva, a close friend of his saw him unsettled, bothered, and disturbed. He asked R' Elazar Tzadok, "Lazer,

## זכרו תורת משה

what is bothering you? I see you're not yourself. It seems that something is distressing you. How can I help you?"

R' Elazar Tzadok went on to explain what was bothering him and the strange words of the Chazon Ish. "So why did you leave without asking the Chazon Ish?" his friend asked. "You should have asked the Chazon Ish what he was intending. Head right back to the Chazon Ish's home and ask him what he meant by what he said."



R' Elazar Tzadok took to his advice and made the four-hour return trip to B'nei Brak. When the Chazon Ish saw him, his face lit up. "Why did you run away so quickly? I was talking to you, and you left in the middle of our conversation."

"I wasn't sure what Rebbe saw in me that made him say that," Lazer replied sobbingly. "I was so degraded that I just dashed to the door."

"Chalilah," said the Chazon Ish consolably. "That was not my intention. Don't suspect that for a moment. I know that you're a *tzaddik*, and that was not my intention at all. All I wanted to tell you was one thing:

"How does the day of a modest person look? He wakes up, he davens, then he says some *Tebillim*, and he asks Hashem that he should have a successful day in business. And then he leaves shul until *Minchab*. When he leaves shul, he also leaves Hashem in shul, and this repeats itself the next time he leaves. He davens, and then forgets about Hashem in the interim. And this repeats day in and day out.

"This is not the right way to live. We must take Hashem into our day-to-day living, thinking about Hashem, talking with Hashem, and that's the way to live.

"Suppose someone needs a pair of shoes. There's a lot of *siyata d'shmaya* needed to get the right pair. One can talk to Hashem, asking that the right pair should come his way and that it should come easily. He should also daven that it should be of good quality and have a long life. Hashem wants us to turn to Him at any and every time of day." (*V'higadeta*)



## FRIENDSHIP



One of the most valuable items to **R' Yankel Galinsky** was a letter that he had received. What's the story behind this letter? And what made it so treasured?

There were many tasks that the **Chazon Ish** needed to be done on behalf of Klal Yisrael. He many times approached R' Yankel for the task, since he was a Novardoker, and the students of the Novardok Yeshiva were known for their brazenness in serving Hashem. So, when he had tasks that required great boldness, R' Yankel was the man. On some occasions, the Chazon Ish sent him to pull people out of the Arab Quarter or the like, and R' Yankel devotedly did these seemingly impossible tasks.

In one of these such letters, when the Chazon Ish requested him do such a mission, he called R' Yankel "*Yedidi*" — my friend. R' Yankel cherished this letter greatly. He saved this treasured letter for a staggering

twenty-five-years among his personal possessions. He even requested in his *tzavaab*, will, that it should accompany him in his grave. That is how much he adored that letter.

He explained the reason for attachment to the letter as follows: When he'll come to *Shamayim*, he is not sure what type of *Olam Haba* they'll grant him. But if he comes with that letter, they'll see that he's the "friend" of the Chazon Ish, and they'll grant him special reward.

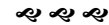
Many years later, when he returned one day from *Shacharis*, he took the letter, ripped it up, and threw it out. This bothered his *talmidim*. "Why is he ripping that precious letter of his? It was so treasured by him. Why would he throw it in the wastebasket?"

He turned to them and said: "While I was davening, something caught my attention. Toward the end of the *birchos k'rias Shema*, we discuss the various *nissim*, miracles, that Hashem performed when we were leaving Mitzrayim. We start by mentioning how Hashem killed the *bechorim*, and redeemed His firstborn, referring to the Yidden, "*v'zeidim tibata*," that the empty ones drowned, and "*v'yedidim he'evarta*," and the beloved He crossed through the Yam Suf.



"As soon as I read this last one, I was overtaken with joy and happiness. I saw that I'm called the 'beloved of Hashem.' When I thought about it, it dawned on me: how can I treasure that letter that declares that I'm the friend of the Chazon Ish when I have a letter stating that I'm the friend of Hashem? That brings my association to a new level.

"It filled me with such joy that I simply do not need the letter of the Chazon Ish to ensure me of this comfort in being the *yedid* of the Chazon Ish. All that I could have, I get from being the *yedid* of 'Hashem.'"



## "WHERE IS ZAIDY?"

The **Ba'al Hatanya** was once playing hide-and-go-seek with his grandchild. So, he covered his face, asking his grandchild: "Where is Zaidy? Where is Zaidy?"

The grandson immediately pointed to his Zaidy's beard: "Here is Zaidy! I found him!"

"What?" asked the Ba'al Hatanya. "This is Zaidy?! This is Zaidy's beard. But where is Zaidy?"

Pointing to the Ba'al Hatanya's head, the grandson thought that he surely got it, and he said: "Here is Zaidy!"

"This is Zaidy?" asked the Ba'al Hatanya. "This is Zaidy's face, but where is Zaidy?"

The confused grandson fell to the floor and burst into tears. "Where is Zaidy? I can't find him."

The Ba'al Hatanya right then consoled his grandson, saying, "Don't worry, I'm here. Zaidy is here; there's no need to worry."

This story shows us that by truly seeking Zaidy, we will merit to see him. By seeking Hashem, he will surely be there for us, and we will have that inner connection.