

## STORY

## Quarantined With Joy!

In the era of 18th century in Poland there lived two tzadikim, the brothers Reb Zusha and Reb Elimelech. They wandered for years disguised as beggars, seeking to refine their characters and encourage their deprived brethren.

In one city, the two brothers, who later became mentors to many thousands of Jews, earned the wrath of a "real" beggar who informed the local police and had them cast into prison for the night. As they awoke in their prison cell, Reb Zusha noticed his brother weeping silently.

"Why do you cry?" asked Reb Zusha. Reb Elimelech pointed to the pail situated in the corner of the room that inmates used for a toilet. "Jewish law forbids one to pray in a room inundated with such a repulsive odor," he told his brother. "This will be the first day in my life in which I will not have the opportunity to pray."

"And why are you upset about this?" asked Reb Zusha. "What do you mean?" responded his brother. "How can I begin my day without connecting to Hashem?" "But you are connecting to Hashem," insisted Reb Zusha. "The same Hashem who commanded you to pray each morning, also commanded you to abstain from prayer under such circumstances."

His brother's viewpoint related Reb Elimelech's heart. The awareness that the waste-filled pail in the corner of the room allowed him the opportunity to enjoy a different type of relationship with Hashem inspired him so deeply that they began to dance.

The non-Jewish inmates imprisoned in

the same cell were so moved by the sight, that they soon joined the dance. When the prison warden heard the commotion coming from the cell, he burst open the gate, only to be stunned by the inmates enjoying such a liberating dance. In his fury, the warden pulled aside one of the inmates, demanding from him an explanation for what was going on.

The frightened prisoner related that the outburst was not his fault, nor was it the fault of the other inmates. It was rather the two Jews dancing in the center of the circle who triggered the trouble. "And what inspired the two Jews to go into such a dance?" thundered the warden.

The prisoner pointed to the pail in the corner of the room. "It is the pail, they claim, that brought about the joy in their heart." "How can this smelly pail make them happy?" "Well... they explained, that the pail allowed them to experience a new type of relationship with Hashem. "If that's the case, I will teach them a lesson," shouted the angry warden. He took the pail and threw it out of the cell.

Reb Zusha turned to his brother and said: "And now, my brother, you can begin your prayers!"

One of the lessons we can derive from this story is that we need to find joy in every situation. Sometimes Hashem wants me to pray in shul; sometimes He wants me to pray at my home, with my heart, with my inner self, with my family.

**If this were I am meant to be, I will be here with my heart, soul, and all my vitality and joy.**

## SMILE! IT'S CONTAGIOUS

No Movies. No Concerts. No Sporting events. No Restaurants. No Social Gatherings. **Now that I've cleared your schedule, can we talk now?** - G-D



Yankel is quarantined. He's busy learning and doing homework with his kids. Finally he decides it's time to go out for some fresh air. A passerby notices him talking to himself so he asks "hey, what's going on?" Yankel replies, I'm having PTA!



I told my kids today they can't go out on the porch, we will leave it for a chol hamoed trip



Thoughts and prayers going out for all the men who've kept on telling their wives "I'll do that when I got time"



Dear G-D, could we please uninstall 2020 and reinstall it? It has a virus!



The Corona virus will not last long, it's MADE IN CHINA

### The small Aleph

*Sefer Vayikrah* teaches the laws of sacrifices. Interestingly, the last letter of the first word in this book—Vayikra, Hashem's call to Moshe—is written with an unusually small aleph. What does it tell us?

When things are going well and we feel “big” and positive, it can be easier to feel connected to Hashem. But what about the times when we struggle, when we are feeling “small”, unfulfilled and uninspired?

*Avodas Hashem* in times of hardship and *nisyonos* is our **greatest Korban** (Offering). And perhaps that's when we most need to remember: Vayikra - Hashem is calling out to us. He calls to us **even** in those moments of smallness and loneliness, inviting us to bring Him an offering of our will and come close to Him.

### Self Sacrifice

*Adam Ki Yakriv Mikem*, “When one offers a sacrifice of you” The reason that the offerings brought forgiveness to sin is, the person bringing the offering had to imagine that these acts were supposed to be done to him and in essence the person came to sacrifice part of himself to Hashem by doing teshuvah and nullifying himself to Hashem's will.

*The Nesivas Shalom* gives a deeper insight that when a person commits a sin it's his *Nefesh Habehami* (animalistic being) which is committing the sin. Therefore the person needs to bring an animal to come to the realization that he needs to work on giving up the *Nefesh Habehami* to Hashem's will.

That's why the Torah says *Adam Ki Yakriv Mikem* which literally means that the person will bring an offering from his own self by giving up his own will for the will of Hashem.

By giving up our will for His will, we bring a true satisfaction to Hashem.

### Our true will is what really counts

In this week's Parsha, one of the lessons in the subject of *Korbanos* is that Hashem knows what our real desires are and He judges us based on that. By *Korban Mincha* the Pasuk says *ve'Nefesh Ki Sakriv Korban Minchah*, because this is a sacrifice brought by the poor person who does not own more than a bit of flower and water, as such, Hashem considers it as if he sacrificed his soul.

The same concept applies when it comes to our ongoing tests and falls. The Pasuk by Bilam says “*Lo hibit aven b'yaakov*”,

which means that Hashem does not look at the sins of the Jewish people. The reason is “*Hashem Elokav imo*” which means that there is always a true inner goodwill, a piece of Hashem in each yid that only wants to do what's right and not to sin.

When a Yid falls to temptations, he does not have full pleasure, as deep down he knows that it's wrong and he does not really want to do it.

It might seem sometimes that staying strong in our struggles is just a minor accomplishment, but in these trying times Hashem knows how hard it is for us and He judges us based on that.

Let us remember to celebrate every time we don't give in to our temptations and recognize that great *nachas ruach* that Hashem has from us, because ultimately it's our very soul that we are sacrificing.

### Alluding to our generation's challenge

In this week's parsha it says:

**ואם כל עדת ישראל ישגו ונעלם דבר מעיני הקהל ועשו אחת מכל מצות ה' אשר לא תעשינה ואשמו. ונודעה החטאת אשר חטאו עליה והקריבו הקהל**

*And if all the nation of Yisroel sin, for a thing (halacha) was hidden from the eyes of the nation, and they did one of the commandments of Hashem which should not be done, and then they discover their guilt on the sin that they have sinned, and the nation should bring...*

Perhaps we can darshen the pasuk as alluding to our struggle as follows:

**ואם כל עדת ישראל ישגו** - If a whole generation of k'lal yisroel may stumble [due to the accessibility of the internet],

**ונעלם דבר מעיני הקהל** - And due to the anonymity (because nobody sees what I am doing online),

**ועשו אחת מכל מצות ה' אשר לא תעשינה** - It brings the person to “the one” aveiro which we should not be doing [the known aveira].

**ואשמו, ונודעה החטאת אשר חטאו עליה** - When when we realize how low we have fallen,

**והקריבו הקהל** - Bring close the Kahal, i.e. that davka through the power of the Kahal he will find his salvation!

This is perhaps an allusion to the group support of the GYE community on the forums, chat-rooms and phone conferences.

# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM CORONA ABOUT THIS STRUGGLE?

## 1) Outward Focus:

The core of our struggle with the Yetzer Hara is the focus on ourselves and our needs. In the current situation, where we are not able to mix as much with people, perhaps Hashem is hinting to us that we are too inward focused.

This situation is an opportunity for us all to strengthen ourselves in thinking-outwards, thinking of others, for example, calling friends and family just to hear how they are doing, being there for people who are stuck at home, alone, or unable to get the proper care that they normally get. By training ourselves in this area, we strengthen our "outward focus" muscles and this will help us learn to ignore our own illusionary needs and wants.

## 2) Yiras Shmayim:

When Hashem brings disease and fear to millions of people around the world, He is reminding us of what it says countless times in the Torah, **Choose life!** You see, we get to choose our pleasures and our suffering in this world. When we accept upon ourselves the discomfort of saying "no" to the Yetzer Hara, we save ourselves so much unnecessary suffering and anguish in other areas in life.

By giving up pleasures that we're **not** supposed to take, Hashem gives us far greater pleasures areas that are truly important like health, parnassa and nachas, and of-course, the World to Come. Let us pray that Hashem helps us internalize this today so we don't have to suffer unnecessarily, and so that we can enjoy the true pleasures that life-- and our beautiful Torah--have to offer.

## 3) Using technology properly:

Today's technology has made the entire world interconnected. Coronavirus is a clear message that we are misusing the power of interconnectedness. A tiny virus from Wuhan China has caused a world-wide epidemic making tens of thousands of people physically sick in the same way that the *shmutz* on the internet is millions of people spiritually and morally sick. And just as we can't see the virus spreading, we can't see the bytes and data zipping around the world and causing untold damage to millions of souls. Let us make sure to use the immense power of technology in the right way!

## 4) Your Amazing Power:

If one person infects two, and those two each infect another two, then by day 34 days you've infected the entire world's population! *Midah Tova Merubah!* If that's true of bad things, think about the amazing ripple effect you could have by inspiring just one or two Jews to try harder and be better. Join the GYE forums and chat-rooms to change the world for good!

Corona has the root of the word **קר** like it says by Amalek, **אשר קר בדרך**. This root has multiple meanings, all of which the Yetzer Hara tries to make us feel

(see **ספר בית אהרן מר' אהרן מקרלין, פרשת כי שקלים**)

### 1) Difficulty (from on top):

**קורה** - A heavy beam: He tries to make our serving of Hashem heavy on us. Another root is

**יקר** - which means "difficult": The Yetzer Hara holds us back from avodas Hashem because it feels difficult.

(See Rashi **ויקרא פרק כו פסוק כא** on the pasuk **וְאִם-תֵּלְכוּ עִמִּי קָרִי וְלֹא תֵאָבוּ לִשְׁחַע לִי**).

### 2) Cold (in the middle - where our hearts are):

**קר** - Cold: He tries to make us COLD in our hearts.

### 3) Emission (from below):

**קרי** - He tries to get us to stumble in areas of Kedusha.

**From head to foot the Yetzer Hara wants us to stumble and be impure!**



## CHODESH NISAN CHIZUK

### Hashem's unconditional love

The Gemara (Megillah 10b) tells us that when the wicked Egyptians were drowning in the sea, the angels wanted to sing shira to Hashem. Hashem did not allow it, saying to them, "My creations are drowning in the sea and you want to sing shira?!" Hashem was saddened that He had to kill His creations.

It is difficult to fathom the decadence of the Egyptians. They were some of the most wicked people who ever lived. They tortured and killed Jews for no reason other than that they were Jewish. The Jews endured slavery at their hands for about one hundred and forty years.

The last eighty-six were so torturous that it was almost as bad as the Holocaust. The Egyptians did whatever they could to degrade every Jew. They beat them savagely for fun and derived sadistic pleasure from killing Jewish babies. They were some of the cruelest people to ever live.

When the Egyptians were afflicted with the ten plagues of open miracles that clearly showed Who the Boss really was, they still denied Him. Even when Hashem miraculously split the sea for the Jews in front of them, they chased after the Jews — right into the sea! Yet, wicked as they were, when they had to be killed, Hashem was saddened. He would not let the angels sing praise to Him, even though He had just saved His chosen nation!

If this is how much Hashem loved these wicked gentiles, we cannot fathom how much Hashem loves every member of His chosen nation. Hashem never rejects any of His creations or stops caring about them, no matter how far they have distanced themselves from Him. Rather, He longs for them to come back to Him.

By realizing Hashem's unconditional love for us, we can experience the most comforting feeling in existence. Regardless of how far we have fallen, Hashem still loves us and cares about us. No matter how horrible we may convince ourselves that we are, we must admit that we are not as wicked as the evil Egyptians.

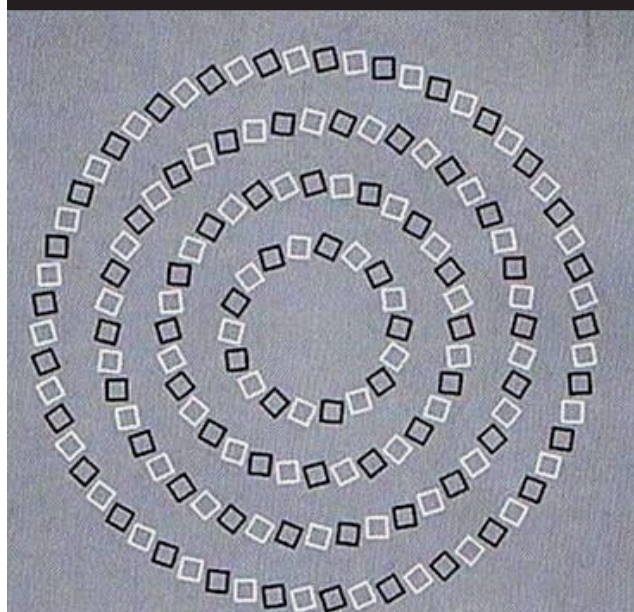
*(Source: The Battle of the Generation)*



**REGARDLESS  
OF HOW FAR WE  
HAVE FALLEN,  
HASHEM STILL  
LOVES US AND  
CARES ABOUT  
US**

## ILLUSION

Where do they cross?



Our eyes are a tremendous blessing that allow us to perceive the world around us. However our eyes can trick us as well, making us believe that we need things that in reality it may be very bad for us. Let's train ourselves to use our eyes for good and not let them trick us to turn after our hearts desires!

**FOR THOSE WHO  
STRUGGLE WITH  
SHMIRAS  
EINAYIM.  
NOW IS  
HARDER  
THAN EVER!**



Being confined to home without work, feeling anxious and stressed, as well as constantly checking our computers and phones, are breeding grounds for the Yetzer Hara.



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