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The New Vaccine for Coronavirus!

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The Illness: Coronavirus is in the air and I'm afraid to breathe.

The entire planet earth is having a huge, collective panic attack. The apocalypse is finally here. We can't go outside. It's too dangerous. We must stock up on our essential items, board up our windows, and wait it out. Maybe it will pass, and we will be among the few survivors.

Perhaps this is all just a great thriller movie? What an incredible plot. We couldn't have come up with a better one if we tried. We're constantly on edge. . . what's going to happen next? After all, when we go to those jumbo-tron 3d theaters with massive speakers all around us, it feels pretty darn real.

The Rebbe's Prescription: By coming together as one, we can create a perfect immunity from Coronavirus and our anxiety.

Although our natural instinct during this time of danger is to completely isolate ourselves from the outside world in order to protect ourselves, this is exactly the wrong thing to do. Isolation and separation are precisely the things which give fuel to the Coronavirus. Rather, specifically at these times we must come together and create an even greater achdus. We must do everything we can to increase our connection and appreciation for all of our fellow Jews, both in our immediate neighborhoods and communities, as well as the Jewish people at large.

Separation and isolation are the main fuel for disease and death.

Rebbi Nachman explains it like this (LM I 51): In the beginning, before Hashem had created anything, all that existed was the perfect Eternal Light. This Light was completely One entity. It was completely good, completely true and completely holy, without any blemishes.

However, in order to create the Jewish people who could serve Hashem and recognize Him, Hashem moved the Eternal Light to the sides, so to speak, and made a space in which He could form all of the spiritual and physical worlds. Through this, there was now, so to speak, a differentiation between the multiple worlds in the empty space, and the Eternal Light which was completely One.

Even though these

We have to pinch ourselves really hard until we realize that it's actually happening. People are getting sick and dying. Oh no! What do we do?

The first and most obvious thing to do is to worry incessantly about it. By greatly increasing our anxiety we will almost certainly die of a heart attack before we contract the terrible, terrible sickness. Thus, we will be saved from Corona!

Therefore, in order to make ourselves absolutely insane with fright, we must constantly follow the news. Every time we hear about another outbreak we get so nervous that we have to go to the bathroom.

What a success!

The second thing we must do is to twitter and facebook about it day and night. We would also like to talk about it with our friends, but since no one answers their phone anymore, that would mean going outside. No way! Plus, maybe our friends already have it, and they don't know yet. Oy vey!

In the midst of such danger, it is a given that we're completely exempt from avodas Hashem. Our life is mamash on the line, this is not a time to be learning Torah or davening to Hashem!

worlds were also completely pure without any blemishes, nonetheless, since they were multiple entities it was possible for falsehood and contamination to exist. This is because the truth can only be one thing. A stone is a stone, and a tree is a tree. However, the nature of falsehood is that it can be "multiple." We could lie and say that a stone is a piece of gold, a piece of silver, or a rocket ship, etc.

Thus, the existence of multiple creations was the source for the existence of all falsehood and contamination in the world. Because of this, the snake was able to lie to Adam and Chava and cause them to sin, which in turn created the curse of death upon mankind. Death was the appropriate punishment for their sin, since it is also a form of separation. While we're alive, our body and our soul are bound together in complete unity. The process of death is the separation of our soul from our body. Therefore, the more separation there is in the world, the more the forces of evil and death can create destruction.

By creating oneness amongst the Jewish people, we can eradicate all forces of evil.

However, the more that the separate entities of this world come together to recognize and attach themselves to their Source — The Eternal Light of Hashem — which is completely One, the more that the forces of death and separation are destroyed, since in a place of Oneness it is not possible to have differentiation and separation. Thus, it is an age old tradition (which is well discussed in meseches Taines), that whenever there is suffering amongst the Jewish people, G-d forbid, the first thing we do is to come together as one and attach ourselves to Hashem in prayer.

Through the unification of the Jews in building the Mishkan, we were immune to all diseases.

Reb Noson explains this concept (L.H. Hilchos Taina U'prika, 4:36) through the counting of the Jews in the Sinai desert in Parshas Ki Sisa. Whenever there is a census, it is an incredible time of danger. The process of counting individual people creates a playground for disease and sickness. This is because a census singles out each and every person on their own, which increases the forces of "mul-

tiplicity" in the world. By counting each person by his own specific name, we are recognizing that each and every one of us has his own unique personality and opinions. This is a breeding ground for machlokes and dissension, which is the main fuel for the forces of evil.

On the other hand, however, the count was absolutely necessary. The Jews had just committed the most grievous sin of the Golden Calf. Idol worship itself is the epitome of separation, since it is giving power to a specific entity amongst the "multiple," and not connecting the multiple back to its Source — the Oneness of Hashem. This tears that entity away from Hashem, along with all those who worship it.

The tikun for this was that in the process of counting, we each gave a half a shekel towards building the Mishkan, a place for us to come together in complete unity to serve Hashem. It was only in the Mishkan that the Presence of Hashem — the Oneness of the Eternal Light — was revealed. This was the greatest kiddush Hashem and unification of His name, since the more separate entities which come together and recognize the Oneness of their Source, the greater the Oneness which is revealed in the world. Thus, when the Jews from all different tribes and affiliations recognized their unique individuality, while at the same time came together to build a Mishkan, this glorified Hashem's Oneness all the worlds and rectified the separation of the sin of the Golden Calf.

By giving only half shekel, we achieved true humility and realized our codependency.

All of this only

was



possible, however, through the mitzva of giving half a shekel. By only giving half a shekel, each one of us must recognize that we are insufficient on our own. When we isolate ourselves from the community, we are broken and incomplete. We have no strength to connect to Hashem, and we are extremely vulnerable to the forces of evil, since we are a separate entity which is not connected to its Source through the oneness with others. However, by coming together with all of our “other halves” to serve Hashem, we can achieve the ultimate wholeness and completion. We can collectively combine our strengths and become invincible to the forces of separation: contamination and disease.

When speak with each other we should remind one another to strengthen our faith. Even though the whole world around us is freaking out, we don't have to do the same. As Jews we know that it is only Hashem Who gives life, and only He can take it away. The only fear we must have is the fear of Heaven.

In addition, Moshe Rabbeinu told us that “the wealthy shall not increase, and the poor shall not decrease.” Rather, each one of us must give the exact same amount — half a shekel. This teaches us that the key to unity is humility. Some of us may have millions of dollars in the bank, while others are deep into debt. Nevertheless, each one of us must give precisely a half a shekel. Those who are wealthy are not allowed to give more and thereby distinguish themselves and show their esteemed status. This would not create any oneness at all, only more dissension. They must realize that it is completely in Hashem's hands to make them rich or poor, and not have any arrogance over others. Also, a poor man must strengthen himself to give his portion and see his self worth. Although he has hardly anything to contribute, his half a shekel is absolutely crucial to the oneness of the whole.

This is true regarding spiritual wealth as well. Some of us are very rich in Torah and mitzvos. We're able to learn for hours a day, daven with kavana, and do many acts of chesed. Nonetheless, we must have the utmost humility and not put ourselves above any other Jew. Our “half a shekel” in avodas Hashem is utterly incomplete without the others.

On the other hand, many of us feel extremely poor and destitute when it comes to serving Hashem. We hardly learn any Torah on a daily basis. We struggle greatly just to get ourselves to come to shul and daven a few words from our siddur. We have no strength whatsoever to do mitzvos. Nonetheless, we must recognize that the little bit that we can do is extremely important. Our “half a shekel” in avodas Hashem is absolutely necessary for the completion and unity of the Jewish people.

Thus, through the mitzva of giving half a shekel, we can learn how to come together as one. When the rich amongst us are humble and the poor don't despair, then we can overcome all of our petty differences and create the ultimate achdus.

It was the unity of the Jews, which gave us the strength to overcome Haman.

We see this idea in the story of Megillas Ester as well. The Sages ask, “Where is ‘Haman’ in the Torah?” They answer: “Hamin ha'etz . . .” From here we see that Haman was trying to bring back the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, which is what caused all sickness and death to exist.

Thus, Haman came to the King to request his permission to destroy the Jews, he described the Jews as a “nation which is spread out and separated.” This was because his entire power over us was that we were all isolated and distant from one another, because of the perpetuation of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge.

On the other hand, the beginning of the salvation came when only when Queen Ester said, “Go out and gather the Jews together.” Collectively we fasted and davened until we were able to overturn the decree.

It is pertinent that we follow in the footsteps of our ancestors and unite!

Therefore, precious Jews from all different backgrounds, cultures, and sects, now is a time we must come together to create achdus amongst us! We cannot fight Coronavirus alone. It is only our imagination which makes us think that we are safe by ourselves. However, without our fellow Jews we are like fish out of water. We cannot survive!

Therefore, we shouldn't hesitate to shake someone's hands or give them a hug. These expressions of affinity and connection are absolutely crucial to maintaining and fostering our relationships with others. They create a bond between us which holds us together during difficult times.

On the other hand, if we stop these forms of interaction, not only are we separating ourselves from one another, rather we're publicly showing our lack of faith in Hashem to protect us. This greatly weakens the entire community and causes us to fall prey to the hands of our worries, fears and anxiety. It is well medically documented that stress is the main cause of countless illnesses. Our anxiety completely destroys us, not only spiritually but physically as well. Thus, by isolating ourselves we are essentially making ourselves sick even without Coronavirus.

It may seem that if we stay home and remove ourselves from any physical contact with others that we are less likely to get sick. But as explained above, this is simply not true. Hashem can do anything! He can protect us if we come together as one, and afflict us if we're alone, G-d forbid.

Therefore, now is the time we must strengthen our connection with our community members. It is a time to be even more vigilant to daven three times a day with a minyan. It is a time when we must make peace with all those we disagree with and let go of our petty grievances. It is a time when we must remove all of our bitter jealousy from our heart and sincerely compliment those we formerly despised. It is a time for us to deflate our balloon of arrogance and give in to others. It is a time when we must disregard all of our differences and come together as one to serve Hashem.

We must help each other to be strong in our faith, and not let our fears destroy us.

When we speak with each other we should remind one another to strengthen our faith. Even though the whole world around us is freaking out, we don't have to do the same. For a non-Jew who has little or no faith in the Creator and his entire existence is only for this world, then an epidemic like this is very frightening. However, as Jews we know that it is only Hashem Who gives life, and only He can take it away. The only fear we must have is the fear of Heaven! There are no forces in the universe which can hurt us without Hashem's permission, and if we attach ourselves to Him, we are invincible.

On the other hand, when we are afraid of specific entities such as Coronavirus, this only increases our chance of actually contracting it, G-d forbid. (See LMI 15)

Now is the time for teshuva and avodas Hashem.

In addition, we must remember what the Sages say that when there is catastrophe in the world it is only to remind us to do teshuva. Therefore, this is a time for us to strengthen ourselves in our learning. We must encourage our friends and chevrusas not to let our precious time in this world slip away through pointless conversations about Coronavirus. Rather, we must throw ourselves even more deeply into our Torah studies, and remember that learning Torah provides the ultimate protection for us.

This is also a time to give money to tzedaka. Just like the shekalim that Jews gave towards the Mishkan were an atonement for their souls, so too we can atone for our sins and receive Divine protection by giving tzedaka, like the Sages say, “Tzedaka saves from death.”

Most importantly, this is a time for tefilah. It is an opportunity for us to awaken our sleeping shacharis and pour our heart out to Hashem. It is a chance for us to work even harder on davening with kavana and blocking out all of our irrational fears. It is a time for us to start reciting tehilim on a daily basis, both individually and in groups.

It is a time for us to begin talking to Hashem in our own words. We can express to Hashem our worries and anxiety and plead for His help. We can cry out to Him with all of our soul to save us from our real sickness: Our torrential flood of negative thoughts which completely destroy our life.

To truly escape the panic, we must do our best to break away from the news and social media.

In addition, this is an incredible opportunity for us to break-free of our addiction to technology. Our obsession with following news updates and discussing Coronavirus on social media is completely ruining our lives. It is the biggest perpetrator of fear and anxiety. Also, it takes us away from connecting to other people in any real way, and prevents us from strengthening each other in our faith and avodas Hashem.

Thus, the more we can disconnect from our smart phones, the more we can connect to Hashem and other Jews and live a good life, even in today's circumstances. If we feel it is absolutely necessary for our safety to know what is going, then we can watch the news for five or ten minutes a day. And when our faith is stronger, we can realize that even this is not at all necessary.

Through this, we can live in Gan Eden, even in today's circumstances.

Rebbi Nachman says that this world really doesn't exist. Rather, while we're in this physical form we can choose to live in Gan Eden or Gehinom. It's completely up to us. If we choose to live in seclusion out of the fear of Corona, we will suffer immensely. We will be filled with dark thoughts and feelings, and fall into utter depression, loneliness and almost certain spiritual and physical illnesses.

On the other hand, if we reach out to other people and come together to attach ourselves to Hashem in prayer and faith, we will be totally fine. Not only that, life will be great!

We will be able to purify ourselves of all of our aspects of spiritual death and despair, and begin to be truly happy and joyful. We will feel completely relaxed and calm. We will be able to hear the birds chirping and the pleasant wind blowing in the trees. We will get out of our exiled state of mind and begin to experience the expanded consciousness of redemption. We will be able to truly prepare for Pesach and the exodus from Egypt.

Based on the Torah of Rebbi 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