

The Torah Any Times

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Rabbi Chaim Rosenfeld

When You're Free

This past Tisha B'av, I experienced something which really struck me. We were sitting there, reciting Kinnos. From around 8:30 in the morning until 1:00 in the afternoon, you sit there on the floor, fasting, not working, and saying one sad paragraph after another.

While we were sitting there, an old Rebbi of one of my kids came around collecting tzedakah. I hadn't seen him in a long time, so I asked what he was up to. Thank G-d, he was making a wedding for his twelfth child! By the time you get to your sixth or seventh, you're probably running out of money. He's a hardworking man, but still, he needed help. So I gave him what I could.

A friend of mine, who also knew the Rebbi, gave him some money too, and the Rebbi moved on, continuing his rounds. About 45 minutes later, I saw my friend on his phone, typing away. "What are you doing?" I asked him. "Watching any other classes?"

"No," he said. "I felt bad for Rabbi Horowitz. He's trying so hard, but my \$20 isn't going to help him much. So I'm texting some of my old students and friends, seeing if they can chip in too."

I thought that was a nice idea. After all, we're sitting on the floor because of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, which happened because Jews couldn't get along. So why not take this time to bring

people together and help out a fellow Jew?

Two hours later, my friend was still texting away. In the afternoon, I asked, "So how much did you bring in?" He looked at me and said, "Close to \$8,000."

I was stunned. "What? The man thought he was getting \$20, and you raised \$8,000?"

"Wait until I give it to him," my friend replied.

A couple of days later, Rabbi Horowitz came around again, still collecting for his daughter's wedding. This time, I was there to witness it. My friend had gathered all the money, printed out the Zelle receipts, and put it all in a thick Chase envelope. When the Rebbi saw us, he smiled and greeted us, and my friend said, "Remember when you came to me on Tisha B'av? I reached out to some friends, and here's something to help out with the wedding."

Rabbi Horowitz thanked him sincerely, but he didn't know what was in the envelope. He probably thought it was a couple hundred dollars. He put it in his pocket and continued collecting.

About 45 minutes later, the Rebbi came running back, his big hat bouncing as he moved. He was out of breath, and he grabbed my friend, giving him a huge hug. "There's over \$7,000 in this envelope!" he said, almost in disbelief.

My friend, calm as ever, said, "Yeah, I know. I collected it for you

TheTorahAnyTimes is a publication of



Compiled and Edited by Elan Perchik

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while I was sitting on the floor."

The Rebbe was shocked. "You taught me an incredible lesson," he said. "You walk around knocking on the doors of wealthy people because you think they have the money. But Hashem is the one who decides where the money comes from. I thought I was getting \$20, and I ended up with thousands. You've shown me who's really in charge."

This taught me a huge lesson. We often think our money comes from

the work we do, the people we ask, or the connections we have. But it's really Hashem who decides how and where the money comes from. We just have to put in the effort.

And here's the second lesson: What do you do when Hashem gives you free time? Like on Tisha B'av, when you're sitting there with no food and no work. What are you going to do? My friend used that time to send out texts and raise money. He didn't just sit around.

This applies to all of us. If you're stuck in traffic or sitting and waiting, you have no excuse not to produce something. With technology today, you can send out a message, check in on someone, or even start a campaign for tzedakah. You can listen to a Torah class. There's no such thing as wasted time anymore.

So, the next time Hashem gives you some free time, don't fail the test. Make sure you produce something meaningful.

Mr. Charlie Harary

Time with Abba

We are now amidst a new chodesh—the month of Av has ended, and we are in Elul. Elul is a unique month, often described as the end of the year, but as our Sages teach us, it's actually the beginning. It's the precursor, the prerequisite, and the preparation for Tishrei, the month of the High Holidays.

But there's a question I've heard asked: Why do we need a preparatory month for the High Holidays? What other holidays get a full month of preparation? Pesach doesn't get a prep month. If you look at every holiday we have, we don't spend the month before preparing ourselves, so why is a whole month dedicated to getting ready for the High Holidays?

I want to share with you a conversation I had with a friend of mine during a few years ago during the Coronavirus quarantine. He's a colleague who'd been struggling with his oldest son. This man travels constantly for work—always on an airplane—and his son is basically him as a child. No rules, does whatever he wants, and his mother can't control him. At 17, he gets into arguments with his mother and does

his own thing. The relationship with his father was no different. It had become just as contentious.

At one point, my friend asked me to talk to his son. I spoke with him, but things weren't looking great. You could tell that in a few years, he'd mature, but at 17, he was hard to reach.

A while later, I saw my friend again, and we were talking about when he'd get back to traveling. This guy was on airplanes so often—he was a Diamond Medallion member with Delta. I was surprised when he told me, "I'm nervous to get back in the air."

"Nervous? You used to love traveling," I said.

He responded, "I've got to tell you, quarantine has been an incredible experience. I absolutely loved it."

"Really?" I asked. "You loved quarantine?"

He explained, "When March hit, everything grounded. That first month of quarantine, I set up my home office, went straight onto Zoom, and kept working. My son wasn't thrilled I was home all the time, but we had dinner together, which hadn't happened in years. One day, after I finished a call, I saw him outside shooting hoops. I went out and joined him.

"Throughout the next few weeks and months—March, April—I started spending a lot of regular time with him. Backyard, pool, court—whatever we had. My son began to realize I'm a pretty good guy. Even for a 17-year-old, I was okay. He softened, and I softened. And now? He's my best friend. I don't want to leave. I don't want to go back. I want it to stay this way."

So why do we have Elul? Why do we need a prep month for Rosh Hashanah? The answer is that Rosh Hashanah, Yom HaDin, and the High Holidays are about something much deeper. At their core, these days are about G-d's presence in the world being more palpable, more available. Spirituality is cranked up. We connect with Him more. We celebrate Him more.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are like a spiritual quarantine where G-d is closer to us. But if we enter this period without knowing Him—if G-d is just the father who gets in the way, making us go to shul more, forcing us to say more prayers—it's going to feel difficult. However, if we spend Elul getting to know G-d, spending time with Him, learning more, studying, deepening our faith, and growing in our spirituality, we'll enter the High Holidays with a sense of connection.

After a month of preparation, when we walk into Rosh Hashanah and

Yom Kippur, we realize how wonderful it is to be close to G-d. We discover that He is our best friend, our beloved Father, and He loves us. What could be better than that?

Our Sages teach that you don't just

roll into the High Holidays. You prepare for them. That's our job in Elul—to do something to connect, to learn, to grow. The acronym for Elul, "Ani LeDodi VeDodi Li—I am for my beloved, and my beloved is for me"—re-

minds us to reach out and realize that Hashem is our beloved. When we do, the High Holidays will become the most meaningful and powerful time of the year.

Rabbi Yerachmiel Milstein

A Deal of a Lifetime

Rabbi Chaim Zaid had a driver named Amir Sharabi, a very nice fellow. Amir, like Rabbi Zaid, is from a Temani (Yemenite) family and has become Breslov, with big pe'ot behind his ears. A wonderful guy, he's been driving Rabbi Zaid for years and is dedicated to certain practices, such as never missing a day of going to the mikveh. Aside from volunteering as a driver for Rabbi Zaid, Amir is a businessman. He specializes in resolving complicated real estate cases with many conflicting parties, earning substantial fees for his work.

Amir, at 33 years old, had been urged by Rabbi Zaid to get married. However, Amir had strict conditions: he would only marry a young woman no older than 21, she had to be a cosmetician, and she had to earn at least 15,000 shekels a month. These conditions were non-negotiable, and despite Rabbi Zaid's advice, Amir was adamant.

One day, Amir was working on a real estate deal that had the potential to earn him 800,000 shekels. He had been working on it for a full year, and the closing was scheduled for a Sunday at 10:00 a.m. On that day, he woke up early, davened, and went to the mikveh. As he was leaving the mikveh around 9:00 a.m., a man named Yaakov entered with his son, who was a paraplegic. Yaakov asked Amir for help bringing his son into

the mikveh, explaining that his son rarely went due to his condition, but today was special because he was getting married that evening. Yaakov's son had received a blessing from a great tzaddik, and miraculously, the blessing had come true.

Amir, though moved, explained that he couldn't help because he had an important real estate closing at 10:00 a.m. and had no time to spare. He even offered to pay someone 10,000 shekels to assist them instead. However, Yaakov's son insisted that only Amir could help him, saying he saw a special holiness in Amir's face and that it had to be him.

Amir, torn, called Rabbi Zaid for guidance. Rabbi Zaid performed a personal version of the goral, opening a random book for divine guidance. It opened to the story of Rivka at the well, a story of chesed. Rabbi Zaid told Amir, "You don't have to listen to me, but it sounds like you need to help." Amir made the decision, called his lawyer, and told him he wouldn't make it to the closing. The lawyer warned that if he didn't show up, the entire deal would fall through, but Amir stood firm, saying, "The deal is off."

After helping Yaakov's son with his tevila, Amir was feeling dejected, knowing he had given up 800,000 shekels. Yaakov noticed his sadness and asked if there was any way he could repay him. Amir replied,

half-jokingly, "You can find me a shidduch."

Yaakov was surprised, but took Amir's number and left. When Yaakov returned home, he told his daughter Shira about the kind man who helped her brother. Shira was 21 years old, made 17,000 shekels a month working for a company called Intel, and had studied to be a cosmetician. When Yaakov suggested Shira meet Amir, she was reluctant, shocked by the idea of dating a 33-year-old. However, out of respect for her father, she agreed to meet him for five minutes, just to satisfy him.

When Amir came to pick her up, the five-minute meeting turned into three and a half hours. By the end, Shira told her father, "If this guy doesn't marry me, I'll commit suicide." Amir, equally smitten, called Rabbi Zaid saying, "If this girl doesn't marry me, I'll die."

Baruch Hashem, they got married. The story was so significant that Rabbi Zaid even held up their ketubah in a video, showing their marriage date as the 12th of Av, two years prior.

But the story didn't end there. While they were dating, Shira shared a secret with Amir. Before she was born, an elderly woman in her parents' town, who had no children, told Shira's parents that if they named a daughter after her, she would leave them an apartment. Shira was named after this woman and now owned an apartment worth 3.8 million shekels.

When we make sacrifices for others, especially in acts of kindness, G-d



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provides in ways we could never expect. Amir gave up a substantial financial opportunity to perform an act of chesed, and in return, he was

blessed with a wife who met all of his criteria and more.

The message is clear: when we align our desires with G-d's will,

He delivers blessings far beyond what we could imagine.

Rabbi Yehuda Zev Klein

Truly Best for You

The first statement in Pirkei Avos is Havu Metunim Badin, which translates to, "Be deliberate in judgment." At first glance, this seems directed only at judges, advising them to carefully weigh all evidence before delivering a verdict. But how relevant is this to the average person? Less than 1% of the Jewish population serves as judges, so does this teaching apply only to them?

A profound homiletical interpretation reveals that this message is for everyone, not just judges. Havu Metunim Badin can be understood as advice for all Jews who go through periods of Din—times of hardship, judgment, and challenges. When life is difficult, the instinct is often to question Hashem: "Why is this happening to me? I'm a good person. Why is my business failing? Why am I facing a health crisis? Why, when I've put so much effort into raising my children, am I struggling with one of them?"

In these moments of hardship, the tendency is to doubt Hashem, to ask why things aren't going the way we expect. But the Mishnah offers guidance: Havu Metunim Badin—be deliberate, be patient, don't rush to judge Hashem's decrees.

This advice ties into the deeper understanding of Emunah and Bitachon (faith and trust in G-d). As explained by the Chazon Ish in Emunah U'Bitachon, many people misunderstand the concept of Bitachon. They assume that having faith means believing that everything will turn out exactly as they hope—that the surgery will be successful,

that they'll land the job, that their prayers will be answered in the way they want.

But the Chazon Ish clarifies: true Bitachon means having full confidence that whatever happens is ultimately for the best, even if it's not what we expected or hoped for. It's the belief that Hashem's plan, even if painful or confusing, is for our ultimate good. We may not understand it in the moment, or even in our lifetime, but we trust that Hashem knows what is best for us. This is the true essence of Bitachon.

This perspective brings inner peace and tranquility, allowing us to stop questioning Hashem's ways. The Mishnah, then, teaches us to apply this principle when facing hardships. Havu Metunim Badin—be patient and deliberate when judging Hashem's decrees. Trust that what you're going through, no matter how painful or difficult, is part of a larger, ultimately good plan.

A remarkable story illustrates this lesson.

The Spinker Rebbe of Williamsburg, known affectionately as Reb Hershele Spinker, had a wealthy chassid from London who promised to cover all expenses for the Rebbe's family simchas (celebrations). True to his word, when the Rebbe's son had a Bar Mitzvah, this chassid sent a generous check covering all costs, from the Kiddush to the tefillin bag. However, after the Bar Mitzvah, the chassid waited for a thank you note from the Rebbe. Days passed, then weeks, months, and even years. No letter came. The chassid, feeling unappreciated, decided to cut off his

financial support to the Rebbe. He was hurt, believing the Rebbe didn't care enough to send even a simple acknowledgment.

Fifty years later, in 2023, a man named R' Moshe Hershkowitz purchased an antique sefer (Imrei Yosef) at an auction. Inside the sefer, an old envelope fell out, addressed to that very chassid in London. It was a beautifully written thank you letter from Reb Hershele Spinker, expressing his deep gratitude for the chassid's generosity. The letter had been misplaced for decades, never making it to its intended recipient.

When the Rebbe's family found the chassid's son, they showed him the letter. Overcome with emotion, the son shared that his father had gone to his grave feeling hurt and forgotten, never knowing that the Rebbe had written him a heartfelt letter of thanks. Had his father known about the letter, he would have continued to support the Rebbe's simchas.

The takeaway from this story is clear: sometimes, we do everything right—we daven, we do acts of kindness, we give charity—and yet we don't see the results we expect. We wonder, "Where is my reward? Where is Hashem's response?" But just like that thank you letter, sometimes the reward is delayed. Hashem doesn't forget our good deeds or our prayers. He holds onto them, waiting for the most opportune time to deliver our reward, whether it's 20 years later, 50 years later, or even in another lifetime.

So, Havu Metunim Badin—be patient, trust Hashem's plan, and know that no prayer, no act of kindness, no good deed goes unnoticed. Your reward will come at the perfect time, when it is truly best for you.

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 2 Elul)

שגב בן גלית (כלפון)	טל בן ניצה (שוהם) קורנגולד)	אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)	יאיר בן רות אידית (הורן)	אביתר בן גליה (דוד)
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)	יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)	אגם בת מירב (ברגר)
שלמה בן מרסל (מנצור)	יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)	אוהד בן אסתר (בן) עמי)
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)	יצחק בן דבורה (עידן)	אוהד בן קרן (יהלומי)
	ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)	אור בן גאולה (לוי) איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)
	כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)	איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)
	לירי בת שירה (אלבג)	אלון בן עידית (אהל)
	מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)	אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)
	מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)	אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)
	מתן בן ירדנה עינב (צנגאוקר)	אלכסנדר סשה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)
	נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן)	אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)
	נעמה בת איילת (לוי)	אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)
	עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)	ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)
	עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)	אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
	עומר בן שלי (שם) טוב)	אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)
	עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)	בר אברהם בן ג'וליה (קופרשטיין)
	עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)	גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)
	עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)	גיא בן מירב (גלבע דלאל)
	עידן בן דלית (שתיו)	גלי בן טליה (ברמן)
	עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)	דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)
	קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)	דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)
	קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב)	דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבע)
	רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)	זיו בן טליה (ברמן)
	רומי בת מירב (גונן)	

Bring Them Home!

Names of Hostages in Gaza

(Updated: 2 Elul)

Idan ben Dalit (Shtivi)	David ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)	Avinatan Avinatan ben Ditza Tirtza (Ohr)
Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran)	Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher)	Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Yitzchak ben Devorah (Idan)	Daniella bat Orli (Gilboa)	Agam bat Meirav (Berger)
Kieth Shmuel ben Gladis	Ziv ben Talya (Berman)	Ohad ben Esther (Ben- Ami)
Chava (Segal) Karina bat Irena (Ariav)	Tal ben Nitza (Shoham- Corngold)	Ohad ben Keren (Yahalomi)
Rom ben Tamar Noa (Brasalevsky)	Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)	Ohr ben Geula (Levi)
Romi bat Meirav (Gonen)	Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana)	Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen)
Segev ben Galit (Chalfon)	Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat)	Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)
Sagi ben Naamit (Chen- Dekel)	Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)	Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)	Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)	Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen)
Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour)	Liri bat Shira (Elbag)	Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)	Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin)	Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah (Tropanov)
	Matan ben Anat (Angrest)	Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut)
	Matan ben Yardena Einav (Tzangauker)	Emily Tehilla bat Amanda Francis (Damari)
	Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)	Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)
	Naama bat Ayelet (Levi)	Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)
	Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz)	Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)
	Omer ben Niva (Venkrat)	Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)
	Omer ben Shelly (Shemtov)	Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Mozes)
	Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra)	Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal)
	Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon)	Gali ben Talya (Berman)
	Idan ben Yael (Alexander)	