

The Path Forward

Week #1

Nachamu-Nachamu- *Halo*-(I do not know) *Hove* (present)-The Path

We are living in a state of הלא, a state of “I do not know” – therefore this is not a good time to make important decisions.

However, we can get feedback that hints to us if we are on the right path. For example, each time you get even a small sense of direction, for example, someone sends you an email and says, “Oh, I said this Hallel and it really spoke to me”. That is literally “feedback” from Hashem! It is a Nachamu! It is a sign that “You did it!” You received *chizuk* (encouragement) from someone else and that constitutes a *nachamah*, a comfort.

Isaiah 40:3

קול קולא במדבר פנו דרך יהוה! שרו בערבבה מסלה לאלהינו .

A voice [calls] out: “Clear in the desert a [path] of [God]! [Create] in the wilderness [a direct] highway to our [Lord]!”

HaShem gave us a path. So that means we know that we can move forward. So, each feedback you get is an opportunity to respond now. Remember לשון הווה, the language of “hoveh”, the present tense. This means that we take what is happening to us now, or what is speaking to us now, and know that it is a real message for us. It is real and we need to make it more and more real. That is מסלה לאלהינו ... the path to our Father in Heaven, the Supernal Almighty

It doesn't matter who gets the credit. What matters is that you plant a seed and then it grows... then you move on to the next step. In other words, respond to each event that comes your way, each positive feedback that you receive which conveys something you're doing matters!

And then you pursue more.

So you might ask, “Am I permitted to get “ signs” from Hashem?” well, yes! You are allowed to get feedback from the *Ribono Shel Olam*, that your *Avodas Hakodesh* is making a difference. You are able to open up a path for yourself, and if you see a path opening up before you, take that path with the awareness of it being a pathway to Hashem, a מסלה לאלהינו

If these were not extraordinary times, I would say that “looking for signs from HaShem” is a risky approach because then there are going to be so many questions of doubt about yourself. You might wonder if you are worthy or deserving. You might question your true level of Bitachon. However, because these are extraordinary times, it is incumbent on us to take this approach, the guidance given to us from the Mahari Kara. We need to regard the present tense, what is happening to us, now.

Are you able to learn Torah? Are you able to learn Navi? Are you able to learn *Gmarrah*? More importantly, are you able to learn *Halacha B'lashon Hoveh*, (Present tense)? If you are able to learn the lesson of the “present tense”, then “Nechama” is coming your way! Living in the

present tense and responding to that is the correct response to living in a state of "אֲלֹא" "I do not know".

This response of *Halacha B'lashon Hoveh* (the language of the present tense) to a situation of "not knowing" (the state of אֲלֹא) is, in fact, an act of *Zehirus* and *Zerizus*.

The ability to **see the path open**, the seeing the path opening is *Zehirus* (heightened awareness).

And, the **acting now**, is an act of *Zerizus* (immediate action without hesitation)— this is the step of not just recognizing but also of grabbing onto an opportunity and maximizing that opening, that pathway.

You **can** do the steps of *Zehirus* and *Zerizus* before you achieve *Nikius* .

It is a fascinating time period in which we are living through. It is a time period in which everything is about *Nikius*. For example, it is seriously frightening for a doctor to examine patients, now. The doctor needs to examine patients; however, he must also protect himself as well as the patient. These days, everything is with double and triple safeguards.

***Nachamu Nachamu* This Nechama is something that you can use and reuse, again**

When I was in Germany, after a neck surgery, about three days later after the surgery, I had a huge painful episode with my neck. The doctor immediately rushed and did an MRI and a CAT scan and searched and examined me. And then the doctor explained to me what was happening. The pain I was experiencing was a phenomenon of the "memory" of my original pain. The fact of the matter was that I was so accustomed to extraordinary pain and dizziness that my brain hadn't yet accepted, so to speak, that everything was fine. My brain was still in a habit of experiencing pain.

When I originally woke up from the surgery I didn't have the pain. It was wonderful. But then there was the "habit" of the experience of pain. I still had to get rid of the pattern of pain. This was a double *נְחָמוּ נְחָמוּ* process... the cure of source of the pain, which was the surgery; and then the cure of the brain pattern that was accustomed to the pain.

Rav Shlomo HaLevi, writes in *Licha dodi*, about the love between husband and wife and he uses his text primarily within the framework of *Nechama*. The process of:

סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה (Last made but first in thought. Which is the completion of the circle.

can be understood as the unfolding of the dual *נְחָמוּ נְחָמוּ* , the double "comfort, comfort"

Licha Dodi shares the double staged *נְחָמוּ נְחָמוּ* experience when we chant the words "*Licha Dodi*" (" My beloved, let us move forward....") twice in the beginning:

לכה דודי לקראת כלה

Furthermore, *Lichah Dodi* then concludes with the double words of “*Boee Kallah, Boee Kallah* בואי כלה בואי כלה (Enter bride who completes and crowns her spouse)

The Torah says:

“ על כן יעזב איש את אביו ואת אמו וידבק באשתו והיו לבשר אחד”
- Beraisheet 2:24

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and attach to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

There's a sense of loss (in leaving one's parents) and therefore, you need *Nechama*. First, there is the leaving, and then there's the learning to live without the constant support of one's parents.

For example, there was the immediate loss of my father *zatza* when he was *niftar*. It was, Ah ... choking, ... terrible, ... disastrous. But, then, after the immediate trauma, then there was this other sense of the long-term loss. I still want to pick up the phone and call him.

However, when I simply reconnect to **who my father was**, when I connect to my father and also to his *talmidim*, then, I simply repeat these words to myself, basically, “לכה דודי לקראת כלה” --- פני שבת נקבלה --- “Come, come my beloved, welcome the Shechinah, and the presence of Shabbos we will greet.” My father, Ztl” taught “ Hashem empowered me to go and greet the *shechina* on my own!. Because my beloved father taught me how to do that, how to greet the Presence of HaShem, on my own, now, therefore, I can “live without him”, so to speak, because I have that ability from him to connect to who and he was instantly and apply in my life , I then get some type of *nechama*.

So, if I am able to understand the process of this immediate connection that is possible as I learned how use my father Ztl” as a support that both allowed me to take me out of my previous life and yet comfort me at the same time even after he was niftar; giving me the comfort of having a relationship, to hug and to be safe in someone's arms, despite what life may present to us . As Shlomo HaMelech writes in *Shir Hashirim*, 2:6 שְׁמַאלוֹ תַחַת לְרַאשִׁי וְיְמִינִו תַּחְבֵּקֵנִי (His left hand was under my head, and his right hand would embrace me),

This ability to connect to the relationship and use to actually deal with life despite changes in the relationship even as difficult as death is a *Nechama*. And this *Nechama* is something that you can use and reuse. And the more you learn to use your relationship, whether it's a relationship with a parent, a spouse, with Torah, a friend, the more you connect with the relationship this is a tool and something that can center you at times when you're really troubled. You'll find that eventually the relationship develops until you reach a point where you no longer feel that "*L'cha Dodee*" (My Beloved, Let us move forward together) where you have to

go out and seek your beloved, Rather, you can stand where you are and say, "*Boee Kallah*", *Boee Kallah*" (Enter Bride who completes and Crowns Her Spouse).

When I kiss my *Sefarim*(books) of the *Ramchal*, or the *Sefarim* of *Rav Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz*, or my *Gmarra*, or my *Chumash* it is almost if I want to connect to everything in the *Sefer* as the *Pasuk* in *Shir Hashirim* right at the opening of *Shir Hashirim 1:2*) that says *יִשְׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּי־טוֹבִים דְּדִרְךָ מִיַּיִן*, (Oh give me of the kisses of your mouth, For your love is more delightful than wine.) that I need my whole relationship with Hashem, I don't want just what's written, I want something all-encompassing, that I absorb the whole essence of Torah, and that I can be granted the ability to access its secrets.

In *parshat Shemot*, 4:27 *וַיִּשַׁק לוֹ אֶת אֶהָרֹן לְךָ לְקִרְאֵת מֹשֶׁה הַמִּדְבָּרָה וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ בְּהַר הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּשַׁק לוֹ*, (Hashem said to Aaron, "Go to greet Moshe in the wilderness." Aaron went and met Moshe at the mountain of *Elokim*,

" *וַיִּשַׁק לוֹ*" (and he kissed him).

What was the secret of this kiss of Moshe and Aharon? It meant that they shared such a deep spiritual connection at this moment that they were able to share their spiritual powers. Also, when Aaron – so to speak "made" the golden calf, he was also connected to Moshe at that time.

Aaron was not alone. He was connected to Moshe

Aaron knew what he was doing over there at the incident of the golden calf. Aaron had empathy not only for the people, he also had empathy for the *Ribono Shel Olam*, too.

Nachamu Nachamu- A Different perspective

You know, whenever there was an issue that no one could understand what's going on, the students of *Ner Yisroel* would go to my father *Zatzal*, and they knew that they would be given a perspective that was totally different from anyone else.

For example, my father would say, How do you know Aaron did the wrong thing?

For those of you who have heard enough stories of us growing up at the Shabbos table, picture this scene. One of us saying, " Pa, how could Aaron do such an *Aveira* and make the golden calf"? So, what do you think my father *Ztzl* would say?

"Why are you so sure it was an *Aveira*, a sin? Maybe this was exactly what Hashem wanted him to do."

We tend to read a story and to process the story the way we have been learning it our whole life. What would happen if we could stop learning Torah the way we have been learning it all our lives and look at a *Pasuk* as if we never read the *Pasuk* before?

What would happen if we could look at a story and see something in the story that we never noticed before *every single time* we read the story?

What would happen if we could *daven Shmone Esray* the way that the Holy Ari says to *daven* the *Shmone Esray*? What if we would daven as if every single *Shmone Esray* is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity? So, that means I'm not going to daven *maariv* right now the same way I davened this morning, or the way I davened *Mincha*. That is not the way I am going to daven *Maariv*.

We need to have the ability to look at something entirely new. So what happens when we look at the incident of the golden calf and we understand that G-d says the Jewish people did a big sin? We can accept that on good authority that it's a sin. HaShem wants to wipe the Jewish people out, He is really very angry. That's authoritative. The people were doing a sin.

However, what does Hashem do? HaShem does not say anything about Aaron. He does not. In fact, HaShem makes Aron the Cohen Gadol!!

When the Mishkan was being dedicated, the final animal brought is a calf. Aaron had to bring a calf in order to make this incident perfect.

Aaron asks Moshe, "A calf? Are you embarrassing me? I am so embarrassed." And Moshe replies, "No, Aaron, no, ..." Moshe says to Aaron, "Hashem said, Bring the calf." Aaron responds, "But I am so embarrassed". Moshe says, "Why are you embarrassed? Hashem said to do it."

Leviticus 9:7 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן קִרְב אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־חַטָּאתְךָ וְאֶת־עֹלֹתְךָ וְכַפֵּר בְּעֵדָךְ וּבְעֵד הָעָם (וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־קִרְבָּן הָעָם וְכַפֵּר בְּעֵדָם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה)

And Moshe said to Aaron: Come close to the altar and make your sin offering and your burnt offering, making atonement for yourself and for the nation; and make the sacrifice for the nation and make atonement on their behalf as Hashem commanded.

Rashi explains on the words קִרְב אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ - why does Moshe need to persuade Aaron to come close to the altar? (ספרא) לָכֵן נִבְחַרְתָּ (ספרא) רַשִׁי שָׁהִי אַהֲרֹן בּוֹשׁ וַיֵּרָא לְגִשְׁתָּ, אָמַר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה, לָמָּה אַתָּה בּוֹשׁ? לָכֵן נִבְחַרְתָּ (ספרא) Rashi says Aaron was embarrassed and was afraid to approach, and Moshe said why are you embarrassed? It is for this purpose that you were selected and chosen. (Sifra, Shemini, Mechilta d'Miluum 2 8)

Rashi provides the following definition of וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת־חַטָּאתְךָ (make your sin offering) as referring to a calf.

We take it for granted and assume that Aaron committed "the sin" of the Egel (Golden Calf). But, where does Hashem say this?

Moshe is upset with Aaron, but he gives Aaron the opportunity to stand up for himself. So, let's see if we can find different layers in this incident. We know that Aaron is connected to Moshe. We know that Aaron has already absorbed some of the capacity of Moshe, Aaron's *Nevuah* is absorbed from Moshe, and we know that also Aaron has shared his spiritual energy with Moshe.

We also know that Aaron was a Master of Dance because when Miriam dances at the Song in the Red Sea, how is she introduced? It is written:

Then Miriam the prophetess, **Aaron's sister**, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her in dance with timbrels. (Shemot 15:20) ותקח מרים הנביאה ארות אהרן את התוף . בידה ותצאן כל הנשים אחריה בתפים ובמחלות

The Rishonim say that Miriam is introduced as a sister of Aaron. But, wait ...why is she introduced as a sister at this moment? If you look at a *Rabeinu B'chaya* and the *Kli Yakar* they say it is simple. It says that they made "מחלת" *micholot*, that they were dancing. "מחלת" *micholot*, according to some *Rishonim* is related to a "*Michol*", a circle.

In other words, If we have the capacity to look at something in our past, and we can understand that we may have done wrong in the past, even a lot of bad things in the past, ... but still we have the capacity, this moment in the present, we indeed have reason to sing and dance.

If we see that at this moment, despite all the mistakes we made in our lives, that we do have a reason to celebrate and to be happy... and, we express it you are forgiven for all of your sins!

"*Mechilah*" the ability to come full circle and reconnect ... That's the "מחלת" *micholot* made by Miriam. Where did Miriam get this ability? So the *Mikubalim* say that Miriam absorbed this spirit of Nevuah from her brother Aaron.

The ability to take something that appears to be not good and then totally transform it into something good comes from Aaron Hakohen. And, obviously this ability to totally change something is related to Aaron Hakohen's capacity to look at something with an entirely new perspective, with fresh eyes.

We learned this when Aaron's children die with a fire pan. Korach's followers die with a fire pan. Then you have the Jewish people yelling at Moshe, "Everyone's all dying!", and Moshe replies, "You want to stop the death? Use the fire pan."

Who has that capacity to do use the very firepans that his children die with and then have the capacity to be the one that uses the firepans for transformation?

Remember everyone's reaction when people were saying, "Oh, you know what? We can use botulinum" But, botulinum is a poison! We wanted to use a poison to stop the *Magefa* of Covid 19. Hello, do you remember this? "We can use this poison to help people and heal people". Remember when it first came out? People said, "I'm not gonna let them put poison in me". Do you know what the poison is made out of? Do you remember how difficult it was? So imagine Moshe says to Aaron, he says, "Aaron, listen, you know, I was once talking with the angel of death, and I learned something, I was speaking to the Melech ha mavais and said that this is a moment of emergency, and the angel of death said, oh, by the way, you can always use the fire pan to stop a *magefa*, to stop a plague of death." So, Moshe, he says, "Oh, really? Okay! I'll take the fire pan, and then I'll run with it."

So, so **how** does somebody have the capacity to look at something from a totally opposite view, a complete 180-degree switch, in perspective?

That *koach*, that power, that ability is Aaron.

That, by the way, is why Aaron was therefore a great marriage counselor, because he had this capacity to simply adjust people's thinking about a situation. He had the ability to take a different perspective. Therefore, Miriam understood it wasn't enough to "just sing", that she also understood and absorbed this capacity of *micholot*, complete transformation or full circle is from Aaron. *Rabeinu B'chaye Zatzal* speaks about this.

My father Zatzal, was a really complex combination of different, different approaches. So there was the Slonimer approach, which was very much the role of a Rebbie and nurturing the specific growth of each *talmid*, (student) and not just being someone to pasken *Shaylos* (questions), but to literally pay attention to nurturing the *neshama* so on and so forth, and the understanding of the father, we would see at *Aish Hatorah*. When he was there, it was just incredible. He was a totally different father we would see in *Ner Yisroel*. The father we would see teaching at *Aish L.A* was totally different. we would see all these different personalities and they would come out, but he absorbed different things from his different *Rabbeim* in the different worlds. And so he had so much that he was able to share with his children and he was able to share with his Talmidim, beautifully for each one and knowing what was appropriate for them. He was never locked into any one way of looking at something, never even a human being. He shared this demand to look at something and see something he has never seen before.

ישלגני מנשקיות פיהו כִּי־טוֹבִים דְּדָרְךָ מֵיָן

I still have the capacity to absorb some of that kiss basically from him, and to be able to look at things and see them not the way he did, obviously, but to be able to look at it and see it from a different perspective.

That type of gift is especially important when the whole world is being turned topsy turvy. And we're going to need to look at the way we daven and the way we learn and when we do *mitzvos* from an entirely different perspective. So I hope that in the merit of his *neshama*, and the kiss that he gave all of those who learn Torah from him and with him, and those who learn Torah from his students, that we will be granted the clarity to look at everything we do in halacha, in Torah, in mitzvahs and davening, and see with an entirely fresh perspective so that we can handle the situation with greatness, and a little jig, Miriam dancing.

Moshe and Aharon greet each other and they greet each other with a kiss; and the kiss is one in which they share their spiritual quest together and connect *Messilat Elokeinu*.

When I kiss my Ramchal when I kiss my Rav Shlomo Halevi, when I kiss my *G'marrah* when I kiss my Chumash I want to make sure it is the kiss of *ישלגני מנשקיות פיהו כִּי־טוֹבִים דְּדָרְךָ מֵיָן*. I want to connect to everything in the sefer is an act of *Nachamu*, *Nachamu*

Nachamu Nachamu as described by the Mahari Kara is when we hear *ויאמר אלהיכם*; as in *לשון הוה*, and this provides us the *Nechama* to allow us to release the limited, state of *הלא* and instead to make space for truths, of *Messilat Elokeinu* "real" now. The *Nechama* is when we allow for the state of *הלא* of unknown, only in the infinite possibilities of *Messilat Elokeinu* true. (student)

The Path Forward beginning on *Eschanan* the Shabbos immediately after *Tisha B'av* until *Rosh Hashana* is the *Messilah L'elokeinu*, to Rosh Hashana as the *Mochelot* full circle of *Nachamu Nachamu*.

By: Rabbi Simcha Weinberg

אלה Is a tool of *Anivus* (objectivity). It is how Hashem deals with Kayin in his most vulnerable moments of the reality of having killed his brother. Yet Hashem gives him this gift of Nechama letting him know even he can transform from one of the darkest shadows man can face. We can emulate Hashem and ask ourselves אלה no matter what situation we find ourselves in. This allows us to place a question mark on the limitations we might have accepted as our reality. It allows us to ponder and think outside of ourselves. It is the ability for me to ask questions and therefore seek Hashem. It is the gift to restore space and Kavod for Hashem's Hashgacha, role in absolutely every situation we are facing. The word allows room for another thought and opinion without preaching. It seems to connect to all that we have we have been training ourselves in the most practical ways during Covid 19 by the wearing of masks, social distancing, disinfecting, quarantining, and wearing our gloves as all means to learn how to really listen, to act with Kavod for a result of *Messilat Elokeinu* (Student of Rabbi Weinberg's comments)