

Temptation Island and the Untouched Soul

BY DON JARASHOW

As seen in The Lakewood Shopper

This past week got pretty cold, especially at night, as we began to see freezing temperatures. The clock shifted an hour back. It's winter. The days are short; the nights are long. Darkness. It's often now that the Tishrei buzz fades. With that come the challenges, the *nisyonos*, the daily grind.

Personally, this past week, there was one particular thing that happened. Someone had committed to do something for me and completely didn't show up. No contact, no apology. I was left dejected and hurt. That night, Hashem prepared the *refuah* before the *makkah*, and He orchestrated that I should bump into an old, *chashuveh* friend of mine, Reb Tzvi, whom I rarely see after Maariv. Almost able to touch my frustration and heavy heart, I let it all out. He patiently listened and said: "It's all so you shouldn't become needy. You should realize, you don't need him, you don't need his email, his call, you just need the Eibishter. Look up to the heavens and just say: Hashem. I. Need. Nothing. But. You."

The next morning, I learned that the whole thing had been a mistake. The person had done what he had committed to. I was dumbfounded. As I discussed it with my wife, I wondered: Why did I need that extra dose? It was all a mistake anyway, so why did Hashem need to make it happen? Then I realized it was simple. It wasn't a mistake. It was, just as Reb Tzvi said, to help me completely submit, and to declare: I am needy. Only of You. Eibishter.

IT'S ALL HIM

We all have these things. They're not new. They're called life. And we must always remember, in this place, in this game of life, it's all the Eibishter. He wants us to realize *ein od milvado*. There is nothing but Him. We can't always make sense of it. We have questions and challenges, "why this, why that," but it's all packaged in divinity, in the Yad Hashem, in Hashem pulling the strings. And all of it is so that we come running back to Him, which makes us greater, and makes the world greater.

Life isn't meant to be just dodging the *nisyonos* and suffering through them, hoping they pass, but rather, embracing them. Realizing that each one is somehow God-given, divinely ordained, and ultimately for our best. Everything is from the Eibishter, given to us to grow, to become better, to reach our *shleimus*. It's for our *tikkun haneshamah*, to bring more light and *kedushah* into the world.

One who doesn't realize this, we can cry for. Because for them, everything is confusing; nothing makes sense; everything feels random. But for us, *bnei aliyah*, works in progress, when we realize we're the son of the King, and that there's a big picture, a huge picture we can't yet see, that's our *shtoltz*, our dignity and pride. That's what keeps us from getting bogged down and instead empowers and elevates us, specifically when we don't understand. Because there's one answer. Eibishter.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE PRINCE?

In the late 1700s, King Louis XVI, the last king of France before the French Revolution, was highly unpopular. The citizens revolted, imprisoned him and his wife, and found him guilty of treason. The verdict: execution. But the people faced a moral dilemma. The king and queen had left behind their eight-year-old son. He was innocent, why harm him? Yet if they let him live, he might grow strong, rise to power, and they'd face the same tyranny again. So they decided not to kill him. Instead, they would send him to a remote island and give him everything. Every pleasure imaginable, food, toys, luxury, distraction. Give him all the *gashmiyus*, every indulgence, so he'd become lazy, numb, too lost in comfort to ever rise to power.

**"Look up to
the heavens
and just say:
Hashem. I.
Need. Nothing.
But. You."**

לעילוי נשמת MY GRANDPARENTS

שמאל צבי בן בנימין הכהן ירשוב ע"ה
ואשתו
חיה בת אברהם יצחק ע"ה



Dedicated by Yossi and Malki Rub (Toms River, NJ) *I'zechus refuah shelaimah* to Simcha ben Shifra

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Six months later, they checked on him and were shocked. He hadn't touched the food, the games, the comforts. They asked, "Are you depressed? Mourning your parents?" He said, "No." "So why didn't you eat, play, enjoy?" He answered: "Because I'm the son of the king. I was born the son of the king, I am the son of the king, and I will always be the son of the king."

DISTRACTIONS

The prince is us. The prince was surrounded by endless food, comfort, and distraction, everything designed to make him forget who he was. We're no different. The Satan constantly tries to distract us with the allure of the world, to numb us, to make us forget. Just relax. Just enjoy. Don't think too deeply. Don't rise. And when that doesn't work, he distracts us in another way, with what he calls "challenges." The *sfeikos*, the uncertainty, the lack of clarity. The constant struggles of *bitachon*, big and small. He tries to push us down, to make us lose our sense of direction, our sense of mission, to make us forget Who's really in control.

But in those moments, we must remember, we can't get bogged down. We're the prince. Sons and daughters of majesty. We are *bnei melech*, children of the King. We don't give in to the distractions or the temptations of this island. And when we remember that, when we live like the son of the King, then nothing in this world can break us. Not cold nights. Not disappointment. Not confusion. Just the quiet, unshakable truth: Eibishter, I need nothing but You.

SARAH'S LAUGHTER

This week we learn about the *besurah* to Avraham and Sarah about their future son.

ותצחק שרה בקרבה לאמר אחרי בלתי היתה לי עדנה ואדני זקן. *And Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "Now that I've lost the ability, am I to reproduce, with my husband so old?"* ויאמר ה' אל אברהם למה זה צחקה שרה לאמר האף אמנם אלד ואני זקנתי. *Then Hashem said to Avraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?'"*

The Baal Shem Tov offers a deeper understanding of the dialogue based on the Zohar haKadosh who teaches that Avraham represents the *neshamah*, and Sarah represents the *guf*. With this in mind, the story doesn't merely convey the dialogue between Hashem and Avraham and Sara, rather with our *guf* and *neshamah*. He explains as follows:

"ותצחק שרה בקרבה — *Sarah laughed within herself*": The *guf* looks inward and laughs in anguish. It cries, "After all I've done, after I've failed so many times, can there still be hope for me?"

"אחרי בלתי היתה לי עדנה — *Now that I've lost my vitality*": The *guf*

laments, "I've lost my spiritual strength. My innocence, my purity, my youth are gone. I've sinned. How can I ever change? How can I merit resurrection — *techiyas hameisim* — when my record is filled with failure?"

And when Sarah adds, "ואדני זקן — *And my master is old*," the *guf* is saying: "My master, the Satan, is old, skilled, experienced. He's been at this from the beginning of time. He's destroyed me. I'm hopeless."

At this point, Avraham, the *neshamah*, responds, and through him, Hashem speaks: "אל אברהם למה זה צחקה שרה לאמר האף אמנם — *Hashem said to Avraham, 'Why is Sarah laughing, saying: 'Shall I truly give birth, when I am old?'"*

Hashem is answering the *guf* through the *neshamah*: "למה זה צחקה שרה — *Why are you laughing?*" Why are you despairing? Why give up before the story is over? "האף אמנם אלד — *Can I truly give birth?*" Hashem responds: "Do I not constantly create? Do I not bring life from nothing? Renewal is My essence." "ואני זקנתי — *When I am old?*" Hashem says: "I am the One who is truly ancient. I am older than the *yetzer hara*. I created him. I created your challenges. And I am greater than them all."

Hashem continues: "If you have Me, you have everything. Don't think the package is too heavy; I never give you something you can't handle. Every struggle is tailor-made for your *tikkun*."

NOT ALONE

As we enter the season of *hester*, of darkness, we begin to realize that even in the routine of daily life, we're not alone. The distractions and temptations that surround us aren't meant to make us stumble; they're meant to be overcome. That's the test of life.

When the *guf* cries, "I'm broken, I'm done, I've lost my spark," the *neshamah* answers softly, "No, you are still Mine. You are still the child of the King." And Hashem backs that whisper with His eternal voice: "I created the struggle. I shaped the challenge. And I am with you inside it."

That's when we stand tall like the prince on his island, surrounded by comforts, distractions, and voices that say, "Forget who you are." But we are strong enough to respond "I am the son of the King. I was born His, I remain His, and I will always be His."

And with that simple truth, through cold nights, confusion, and silence, we lift our eyes and say: Eibishter, I need nothing but You.

We won't touch what the Satan has to offer. It's rubbish, it's fake, and we're better.

And then we too will declare:

I will be the untouched soul on the island of temptations. •

Dedicated by The Jaffa Family (Brooklyn, NY) *Pillui nishmas* Moshe Leib ben Shneur Zalman



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