

If you've ever gone to visit an attraction, adventure park or Zoo, there will be a gift shop somewhere near the exit. There, you will find stuffed animals, pens, or keyrings, all with the attraction's logo. A stuffed giraffe for £19.99. A pencil for £4.90. A keyring for £5. Even though they sell for ridiculously high prices, visitors buy them. Why? You can buy the same thing for 50p elsewhere?

Visitors have just had a smashing day out. They've enjoyed themselves – and want to keep those warm feelings and memories inside them. They aren't paying for the stuffed giraffe – **they are paying for the feelings and memories condensed in it.** Whenever they look at this giraffe, those warm feelings will come up again.

When you live through something and experience it, **you can create a reminder that will bring you back there.**

When we're inspired by a speech or inspirational experience, if we create even a small Kabbala in relation to that experience, we can carry the Chizuk with us.

I was once stuck taking a taxi from London to Manchester on Friday afternoon, because of station closures. Time was ticking on, and it was getting uncomfortably close to Shabbos. Then, like an unfolding nightmare, traffic slowed to a halt. There had been an accident. Waze now said we would arrive *10 minutes after the Zman*. I was in touch with my Dayan on how to proceed, and then spoke to a boy about a Melaveh Malka that was meant to happen that Motzai Shabbos. I told him what was going on, and he said to me "Why don't you take on a Kabbala, and turn this into a Vayimoen video!"

"Will you do it for me?" I countered back. We decided to each take on a small Kabbala. I spent about 15 minutes thinking about a good Kabbala to take on. Although this sounds unreal, *the road immediately opened up.*

I ended up arriving 15 minutes before Shabbos.

Every time I keep the Kabbala I took on in that tight spot, I once again feel gratitude to Hashem for getting me home on time. The Kabbala became sweet – another thanks to Hashem for saving me from that tight spot.

If we can take on a Kabbala now, when we are feeling the Chizuk of these Shiurim we've been through together, this Kabbala will serve as a constant reminder of the Chizuk we felt. Of the power we felt. And this will make it easier to overcome.

Here's the key to successful Kabbalos: Make it SMALL and CONSISTENT.

Imagine you are at a fundraising dinner that really touches your heart. You want to donate. You can either promise £50,000, swept high on the emotions of the moment, or promise £5 a month for a year. The difference between the two? The first one sounds huge and impactful, but when you get home, you will fall to reality with a thud: *You don't have £50,000 to give.* The second one sounds more modest. Almost like it won't make a difference. **But you will actually keep to it!**

Create a Kabbala that you know you can keep! Off course, we need Gedarim in big things as well, but when we are trying to create a Kabbala that will help us keep strong going forward, it has to be small and consistent.

Bein Hazmanim is coming. With all the fun, Bein Hazmanim can be the hardest time in Ruchnius.

A Mashgiach called me recently, and as we were talking, bemoaned the fact that Bein Hazmanim was always a fall for Bachurim.

“I want to tell you a trick” I said. I then told him the following Mashal.

There was a prison that had a breakout – all the prisoners escaped. After chasing them wildly, the guards managed to get them back. The head guard was furious – and also worried. He hadn’t managed to do his job. That very day, they secured all exits, ensuring that this would never happen again.

But it did. This time, the prisoners escaped through the pipework.

The guards realised that security needed to be even tighter. The head guard’s nerves exploded. How were they going to keep the prisoners inside? They worked on traps and electric gates, on alarms and systems.

Still, the head guard couldn’t calm himself. *‘What if they get out?’* He kept thinking. *‘What if they manage?’*

Then, the day arrived. There was a breakout attempt. But this one ended very differently. The head guard came speeding towards the scene – only to see four prisoners hanging off the electric gate.

For the first time, the head guard was calm. **Now that they had tried to escape – and failed – he knew he had succeeded.**

For many, Zman is an easier time in Ruchnius. They are sailing along with their friends, doing well. But then comes the real test – the ‘breakout’: Bein Hazmanim.

You might have a Nisyonos last Bein Hazmanim. You might have fallen. But now, a few months stronger, you have another opportunity. And when IY”H you do pass the test, *that’s* when you know you have succeeded!

Sometimes we think that it's a fact: Bein Hazmanim, we fall. But we can change our mindset. The prisoners don’t have to escape this Bein Hazmanim. We can be strong.

And I want to give you a key to help you succeed:

When you are in a Nisoyon, it's very hard to see clearly. The key is to **plan before**. Yosef HaTzadik taught us this.

When Yosef HaTzadik interpreted Pharoh’s dreams, he gave him an idea: Prepare in the years of plenty, for the years of famine. Pharoh was amazed.

We can ask a question here – wouldn’t we have thought of this plan? What was the novelty of this idea?

There is something very deep here.

We all know that the wife of Potiphar kept trying to get Yosef HaTzadik to sin. For an entire year, she kept coming, and she almost managed – but never quite got there. That night, when no one was home, she planned to finally succeed. But Yosef HaTzadik fought the Nisoyon and fled. **He knew the Nisoyon was coming, and prepared an exit plan.** In ‘good times’, when the Nisoyon wasn’t in front of him, he planned what to do in the hard times.

Let's link this back to Pharaoh's dreams. Pharaoh now knew that he would have seven amazing years. But Yosef taught him that good times are not just for now, they are for later also.

You can have an amazing Zman. But then you come home, out of the protection of Sem. How are you going to manage? **Through using the good times to prepare.**

The problem of hunger doesn't start in the years of famine. It starts in the years of plenty. Because that's when you prepare and put away food. **You have to work on overcoming your Bein Hazmanim when you are still in Sem.**

Take a piece of paper and write down what you struggled with last Bein Hazmanim. Choose the 4-5 areas you want to work on. Then, plan how you are going to work on them *now*.

You might want to delete stuff. Stop access to stuff. Have a talk with a friend, explaining how you've changed. You might want to have a talk with your parents.

There was a certain speaker giving a Drasha on Torah Anytime. Whilst he was talking, he was crying. He explained that he had just married off his first child, and when he was standing under the Chuppa with his child, *his* father, an elderly man, couldn't stop crying. He went over and asked if he was okay, if he wanted to sit down, but his father was in a different world. He carried on crying all the way through the Chasuna. By the Mitzvah Tanz, he was so emotional, he had to leave the hall.

The next day, he asked him "Why were you so emotional? What was the reason behind it? I know it was your first grandchild's Chasuna, but...?"

"I'll tell you," said the grandfather. And he proceeded to tell the following chilling story. He was a furniture producer: He owned forests of trees and the factories that turned the raw wood in to high end furniture. He was one of the richest Yidden in Poland. He was married before the war, and had one son - Naftali.

Then he read Mein Kampf, the book that Hitler wrote, detailing his plan for the final solution. He felt the antisemitism heating up all around. He saw what was coming, and realised his money was at stake.

He went up to the highest-ranking Goy in his company, and said "Here's a proposal. I am happy to sell **everything** I own to you – my house, my business, my contacts - for half its value. But with two conditions: One, I am still employed in the company, so still get money to live. And two, if in 10 years, the Nazis have not come, I get everything back, for full price."

This was an amazing deal for the Goy – for ten years, he would have all the money to do what he wanted with, and afterwards, he would get back double what he paid! They closed the deal, and with all money, the Yid bought a diamond, which he sewed into his shoe. He continued living this life for years – he had a job, and even though he wasn't a rich man, he had a roof over his head and food to eat.

This went on until the Nazis invaded Poland and put all Yidden into Ghetto's. Now, he had no job or food, but he still had a diamond in his shoe.

One day, his wife was shot dead when looking for food in the bins. After burying her, he realised that he needed to take care of his two-year-old child – Naftali - on his own.

So, he stayed up with the child every night, and when the child fell asleep, he went to his forced labour. One day, he walked into the house, and saw a chilling sight: An empty cot. His child had been taken by the Nazi's. He went straight to the Gestapo office, and told the Nazi "I have something worth millions – if you get me back my child, it's yours."

The Nazi refused. He said that he had a certain quota of Jews that he had to hand in daily, and he needed the baby to reach his quota. "But," he said, "If you bring me another child, I will swap the two and give you back your baby."

He was desperate with a father's love – he needed to save his Naftali! But, how could he take someone else's child? He went to his neighbour's house and lifted up the baby – but then dropped him, shaken. How would he face his neighbour every day? So, he started walking further away, maybe he could take a child from a family he didn't know...?

He was torn in conflict – *how could he, but how could he not?* His own child would be killed! Yes? No? Yes -

Suddenly, he ripped the diamond out of his shoe and hurled it away. Peace overtook him: He could no longer redeem his child. **His inner conflict – gone.**

He survived the war. He married again. And he had another son, whom he named Naftali.

Now, years later, this Naftali married off his first child. When he saw his first grandchild getting married, continuing on the family chain, it was too much for him. His emotions overtook him. He had lost his first Naftali, but Hashem had given him another one.

"I never regretted that moment when I hurled away the diamond." He said "I knew I had done the right thing. But as long as the diamond was in my shoe, I really felt that I must save my child! ***I had to throw away the diamond.***"

We have things in our lives that we think are diamonds. It could be our phone, or a USB filled with movies. Access to something. As long as you have it, you feel that the best thing to do is use it. You can't say that you don't want to use it – you do! *The right thing to do is to **get rid of it.*** Then – suddenly – things will change.

A boy came to me recently; he had a Timku full of movies. "R' Klein", he said "I want to get rid of this. Can we talk?" I stopped him. "You've just watched movies for weeks. It's hard to discuss it when your head is in the Schmutz. Give it to me for a week, and then we'll talk, when you have a clear head. I won't touch it or do anything to it" When you still have the device and are in the Schmutz, you can't make the right decisions.

As long as you are in possession of the 'diamond', you can't think about what's really the right thing to do. **As soon as you get rid of it, conflict with disappear and be replaced with clarity.** Get rid of the diamond, and start living.

Before Bein Hazmanim, identify what your 'diamond' is. Get rid of it. I know it might be super hard, but that's the way you will be able to regain clarity. You *want* to be good – but you can't be when your diamond is still in your shoe!

Your diamond could be a device. It could be a relationship. You have to identify it before you go home for Bein Hazmanim.

Every girl wants to grow. And growth is not too far away for anyone. Remember – you don't need to do it all at once. You can start small.

Let's go practical:

Google chats: Google chats are a problem. Those who know, know. But there are people who don't know. We're going to talk about it to gain awareness, not to open anyone up to more stuff.

You all understand that snapchat is bad. You'd all agree that Instagram is bad. You all know that unfiltered Internet is bad.

Google chats, and google photos, if not filtered properly, have the real 'sharing' aspects of social media. Just like you can upload photos of yourself, so can anyone else. Just like you can upload a video of your niece, so can anyone else upload – *any video*. There's no filter.

For all those huge public chats and movie groups, I don't have to tell you what goes on. If you know, you know. The barriers between boys and girls are completely gone. Stuff that boys and girls would never say to each other if they meet on the street is suddenly acceptable.

You might not understand this, but for a boy, even just to see your name as your email address is enough. They will try private message. It may not be you; it may be your friend. It may be not now; but in a year. Then, it's a crazy slippery slope. You have to know the dangers that are out there.

If you ever get a message from an email address you don't recognise – overcome your curiosity and don't get involved. Even if it's been sent by a girl.

(You might not believe this, but here's a true story: There were two people messaging each other under girl's names. They made up to meet in the park... and two boys showed up.)

In these chats and groups, behind many girls' names are boys. You have your Nisyonos, they have theirs.

If you don't know who it is, don't react back. Don't get pulled in. Don't answer messages.

Obviously, if you really want to stay strong, you have to get off these groups and chats. But if your level is not there yet, put boundaries there. **Never** answer anonymous messages. Just don't.

I know that the curiosity can be super strong. I know it can feel fun to have someone be interested in you. But if you don't know who they are, let it stay that way. If it's just an email address with no name, don't answer.

Google chats and google photos are really bad places. You could tell me that there are other bad ways to share – why should we get hung up on google chats...

It could be. But let me tell you this:

Recently they made a new rule in Switzerland: No sparklers in hotels. Why? Because a sparkler had been lit in a hotel and had killed 40-50 people on January 1st.

'Seriously', you might think, 'There are so many other ways to kill 50 people! And sparklers are usually so safe!'

I'll give you another example:

When you fly - they drive you mad about any liquid you have. They will throw away water you have brought with you. Then, once you have gone through security, you can happily buy any water you want – for about 15 times the price...

Now, water isn't dangerous. Neither is Fanta Orange. So why are they so crazy about you bringing in water?

Because even though your water is totally fine, **water has been used to blow up planes**. Someone might find a way to blow up a plane using chocolate cake, so from then on, *chocolate cake* will be banned on planes.

You might not understand the danger. You might think there are a million other ways to do bad stuff, so why make a big deal out of this?

But the fact is: Google chats have been used for bad. You might feel safe. You might feel that it will never happen to you. But the fact is that Google chats is ruining Neshamos.

People don't believe it. They hear this and they refuse to believe it. But I tell them to come to the Yeshivah's and Sems. I tell them to listen to the girl's questions. I tell them to come read my emails. I am not making this up.

Movies: It's very hard to talk about this to a big group – everyone is on a different level. Kosher movies, it's not for me to say if it's right or wrong, it depends where you are holding. Is it healthy for your Neshama? No, but it very much depends on your level. If you can hold yourself back, good for you.

If you aren't watching any non-Jewish movies, good for you. Keep it that way. I want to explain a bit of a deep point here:

Hashem created us with feelings. Girls have more feelings than boys (or they are just more ready to admit it!) We are meant to turn all our feeling to Avodas Hashem: Our fear, our love.

How do we know what feelings are? How do we develop them so that we can turn them to Hashem? Hashem created relationships: Friends, spouses, children, parents. In these relationships, we express love. Now that we know what love is and feels like, we can turn it towards Hashem.

When we watch a romance movie (if you don't know what that is, good for you), our feelings go sky-high. (Even though the people on the screen are literally doing it for money and fame. They are often just drugged up.) It's completely fake. Real life doesn't go like that. Those feelings don't happen. But when you watch it, your hormones go crazy.

I want to bring out two points here that come from watching these movies:

1. Your expectations of pleasure become huge. And simply speaking, that makes for bad Shalom Bayis. Which is really Nebach. Believe me, you prefer to have good Shalom Bayis for 60 years than have 5 years of fun watching movies.
2. The feelings that Hashem has gifted you with, with which you are meant to serve Him, are being used in the wrong way. It's now going to be harder for you to use your love towards Hashem. By using your love in the wrong way, you have created a distance. Off course, nothing is impossible. You can always do Teshuvah. But you have to know what is happening as you watch these movies. You might think it's 'just one movie.' But it puts ideology into your mind without you realising it. Very subtly.

It's for your own good to hold back from watching. And I get that it's super tempting. When a temptation comes, remember one thing: ***Whatever pleasure you are having now is taking way from pleasure after you get married.*** And I mean that 100%.

I want to bring up something else. Movies have done something crazy – you could be super tired, more asleep than awake. Somehow, you will still have the energy to continue watching the movie, even if you don't have the energy to put the screen off. It pulls you and pulls you and pulls you – endlessly. It doesn't allow you to put the screen off.

You have to remain in control. You have to retain the ability to put the screen off if something happens on there that is really not okay.

It is humanly possible to turn the screen off in the middle of a movie. I've spoken to enough boys who have. It's excruciating – but it's possible. And the Schar you will get is incredible.

Music: There was a Tzaddik who lived decades ago, whose young son was taken and baptized by the Church. The Tzaddik extended powerful effort in trying to find him, but only succeeded when he was already older and developed. By that time, he was indoctrinated by Christianity. The father went to his Rav, who told him to arrange a conversation between the himself, the father, the priest, and the child. The priest agreed, but wanted only one person to do the talking. The Rav agreed, and said that he would do the talking.

They arrived at the meeting, the Rav decked in his Tallis. The son was not interested. He was set in his ways.

The father stayed quiet, and suddenly, the Rav began singing Kol Nidrei. He went louder and louder... until suddenly, the son looked at his father and says "I want to come home!"

On the way home, the Rav explained: Years before had been the Spanish Inquisition. It was the Marrano's, the secret Yidden, who had composed this Kol Nidrei tune that is now used around the world each Yom Kippur. Embedded in this tune was the message the Marrano's were trying to say "Hashem, even though we look like Goyim on the outside, we are fully loyal to you on the inside..."

And it was these feelings and thoughts, embedded in the Kol Nidrei tune, that had the power to reach this boy's Jewish heart and bring him back. It penetrated into his heart even when his brain refused to hear the message.

Nigun – music, comes from a very deep place in a Yid's heart. A place where a Goy can never reach. Music has an incredibly deep power.

But this poses a deep problem when you listen to a Goyshe song. When a Goy sings a song, the thoughts and feelings embedded in that song go straight to a deep place in your heart. It happens without you even being aware of it. It impacts you.

Then, when you need to make a decision in life, you suddenly find that you can't think straight. Do you know why? Because you've been affected by the music you've heard. The feelings and messages embedded in that music have penetrated the deepest part of you.

Let's wrap up:

We all know of the famous fight Yaakov Avinu had with the Malach. We are called Klal **Yisroel**, Bnei **Yisroel**, after the name Yaakov Avinu got at this fight.

I want to ask you something: Imagine you would witness a fight. You would see one man emerge strong, unaffected, uninjured. You would see the other man emerge injured, with a black eye. Who won?

Yaakov Avinu walked out of the fight with the Malach limping. So, it would seem like the Malach won! How can we say that Yaakov won?

And if we look closely in the Psukim, we will see that the Malach said to Yaakov Avinu “I fought with you the whole night, and I didn’t manage. Let me at least do something...” And he struck Yaakov Avinu in the Gid Hanasher. Why did he not do this earlier? If he was going to manage to do something to Yaakov Avinu, why not do it at the beginning of the fight?

The answer is very simple: Our aim with the Yetzer Hara’s is not to win the fight. **It's to continue fighting.** The Malach can win if it wants to. *But your job is to continue fighting.*

If the Malach would not have hit Yaakov Avinu’s hip, we would not have known that the Malach could have done this all along. We would not have gotten this message – that all we need to do is continue fighting, not worry about winning.

The name Yisroel is representative not of victory, but of the fight. ‘Ki **Sarisa** Im Elokim’ – ‘you **fought** with the Malach.’ **We are not winners – we are warriors.**

It's a fight. You will win some, you will lose some. If you can’t accept your lows, you won’t have highs. If you catch yourself in a low, remember – you aren’t dead. You’ve fallen, but now get up and continue fighting. **Then you’ve won.**