



Wait a Second

Patience the key to success! Solid advice on how to become accustomed to being patient and how this virtue is the key to success in both material and spiritual matters.

BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY REBBE **RABBI NACHMAN FROM BRESLOV** AND HIS DISCIPLE THE HOLY TZADDIK **RABBI NOSSON FROM BRESLOV** AND ON THE TEACHINGS OF

HARAV HATZADDIK MAHAROSH ZY"U

The pillar of Emunah, who spread the light of Emunah to the entire world, and gave us the guidance how to live life connected to Hashem.

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I Want It NOW!

The baby's wails, arms and legs flailing frantically. "Shhhh," soothes the mother, "Your bottle will be ready in a few minutes." But the baby has no concept of time; he's hungry and wants to eat NOW! Toddlers also throw fits when their mommies say, "Candies are for later," and older children don't want to wait for their birthdays to get that exciting train set. But adults also find waiting difficult, as we are hardwired for immediate gratification. So many advances in technology are centered around minimizing our waiting time to almost nothing. Hungry? Microwave! Music? Tap your iPod. Information? Type a word or two into Google. Need to socialize? Join a chat room. Order the latest gadget and have it ASAP, free delivery. Send documents across the globe in seconds.

These advances in technology are great in so many ways, except if we mistakenly believe that immediate results are the norm in all areas of life. Life will teach us very quickly that the things that matter most don't happen so fast. In fact, most things require that we wait. Wait A Second

And wait.

And wait.

Wait, wait, wait.

Sometimes days. Sometimes weeks. Sometimes many, many years.

Financial stability, peace, friendship, happy marriages, proficiency in a skill or area of knowledge, and, most importantly, being close to G-d; these are what matter in life. They are never achieved without a lot of effort and patience.

The World of Waiting

In heaven, events occur instantaneously. Angels dart across infinite distances quick as lightening. The soul grasps knowledge instantly. The sustenance of all spiritual creatures is automatic. There are no struggles in heaven!

But this world is where we grow. Here we are given the opportunity to change ourselves and make a difference. That is why nothing of import happens instantly, immediately or automatically. In order to achieve real growth, we need to take it step-by-step, brick-by-brick. We will reach our goals, but only through steady persistence.

What frustration the soul, a true native of heaven, experiences in this exasperatingly slow world! We want to force reality to conform to our will, but whenever we try, we fail again and again. In all aspects of life, both materially and spiritually, we have to wait out the process. Otherwise, we will only become disillusioned by all the difficulties and setbacks of life.

It's so hard to slow down and let things proceed at the pace G-d sets for us, but we really have no choice. Attempting to rush the natural process of development only ends in heartbreak. There are so many goals, both large and small, that we seek to accomplish, but to jump ahead is to miss them. Slow and steady, from one stage to another is the only way to go.

We may want something now that is not yet ours for the taking. If we grab prematurely, we will lose it forever. However, if we wait patiently until it is given to us, we will discover that we lost nothing by waiting.¹

¹ Berachos 64.

There are so many traps waiting for the one who rushes heedlessly. The person who has not developed the discipline required to press the brakes when necessary, will face calamity after aggravation after frustration. He suffers unnecessary pain, finds himself embroiled in pointless disputes, and is needlessly encumbered with avoidable problems. His life is a misery in this world as well as the next.

In this essay, we will cover four areas in where patience reaps abundant reward: financial stability, peace between neighbors and in marriage, returning to G-d in *teshuvah*, and spiritual growth.

Financial Stability

We eye the rich man with envy. Why does he have such an easy life and I struggle every day?

What we tend to forget is that most financially comfortable people did not become rich in one day. Prosperity is usually achieved through hard work, and takes many long years to acquire. A person fails a thousand times before he finally sees success! There are so many hardships and hurdles to overcome; so many exciting leads end up being disappointments, and so many promising endeavors fail. A successful person was forced to develop infinite patience as he built up his financial empire.

A new business venture does not succeed immediately. There are many days when the owner stands in his store, all alone, waiting for a customer to walk in. This takes so much patience! The store-owner has to work on not becoming depressed when his store is empty or when a competitor tries to ruin him. He has to try to improve his business, engage in proper marketing and then just trust G-d as he waits for business to pick up. In the beginning, before the owner starts making a profit, most business investments seem to be a waste of time and money.

Once financially established, the businessman finds himself facing many customers, competitors and associates, who each come with their own brand of exasperating behavior. Imagine if he doesn't know how to step on those inner brakes and take a step back before resorting to confrontation. He will yell at them and damage his reputation in the process, and a good name is everything in business. If the owner explodes at others, his business is as good as gone. He has to learn how to pause and collect himself and set limits by communicating calmly and assertively.

When you find yourself stressed by those who you deal with in business, close your eyes for a moment and concentrate on G-d's love. See the nuisance standing before you as an emissary of G-d, who has been sent to help you develop your character. When you open your eyes, you will find that your former enemy has been transformed into a friend! Once you have mastered this important skill, you will be liked and respected by others, which will lead to success in business. Everyone wants to do business with a calm, friendly, patient person. All this, from just waiting a few seconds before responding!

There are many people who earn an adequate living while working for others, but this also has its challenges. Some workers find themselves toiling under a tough boss, who harasses and embarrasses them. Or, they are forced into the unpleasant company of a co-worker, who is out to get them. Imagine what would happen if you acted on your impulses. You will lose your job before you know it or, if you somehow manage to hold on to it, your co-worker will pursue you with a vengeance.

If you try your best, though, to please your boss and don't take his attitude and behavior to heart, he will soon come to value and respect you. If not, you can leave and find better employment without having damaged your reputation and self-esteem. As for that nasty coworker, if you just do your job well and ignore his antagonism, you will eventually succeed while he destroys himself by trying to destroy others.

Peace

There is no true peace in this world that is not the result of a lot of forbearance. Developing and maintaining positive relations with others requires the ability to swallow and look away, ignore provocation, and avoid becoming aggravated. Patience is the price to pay for peace, but it is a price worth paying!

Don't rush to defend your rights. Slow down and think through what the repercussions of doing so may be. If you rush out to fight with your nemesis, your relatives will rush to your side and his relatives will rush to his side. Your relatives' relatives will rush out to defend their relatives and his relatives will rush to defend their relatives. Can you see this dispute escalating ad infinitum?

Now, what comes next? Those on your side badmouth the businesses of those on the other side and vice versa. Enemies develop and each one will try to undermine the other's business. Why? All because you couldn't step on the brakes and say, "Wait a minute! Why answer back? Let it go!" or "Let me speak calmly and kindly to him, chances are we can work it out peacefully." It hurts to refrain from getting even with those who hurt us, but it's worth it! You are saving your livelihood as well as those of your family and friends. And you know what? In the end, you will be the real winner because G-d will grant you success in life.

Between Neighbors

Neighbors have an especially challenging time maintaining peace among themselves, and must comport themselves with an abundance of patience in order to be able to live together harmoniously. Visualize this common scene: Your little boy or girl comes in crying hysterically that the other kid hurt him. In a state of fury, you march out of the house and give the little bully a piece of your mind. The other kid's parents rush out to defend their precious innocent angel. Soon the two sets of parents are embroiled in conflict. The other neighbors start taking sides, and before you know it, all-out war has broken out.

Now, imagine you took the high road of patience and peace. You would hug your little

child and tell them to try to work it out nicely. "And you know what, if you can make peace, you will both get a candy!" It rarely takes children longer than five minutes to resolve their disputes (unlike some adults, who treasure their grudges for a lifetime) which are quickly forgotten. A little patience can have a powerful effect on these situations.

What about noise? How about renovations? Neighbors who let the heat of the moment get to them can inflict tremendous damage on each other.

Even a small disagreement can, with enough impetus, become violent. From there, it is a short road to embarrassment and tragedy when the dispute is inevitably made public.

Wait A Second

In Marriage

One who enjoys a happy and peaceful marriage knows that he needs to press the pause button quite often. It happens many times that the husband walks in and the wife explodes at him for whatever reason, justified or unjustified. If he remains quiet and doesn't react, she will run out of steam and the argument will blow over. Later, he can discuss his feelings and ask her to speak more respectfully in the future. However, if he counter-attacks to defend his wounded feelings, the fight will only escalate and become more entrenched. If this happens often, their home life will become bitter and their marriage will fall apart.

Our Sages say that just like no two people look alike, no two people think alike either,² referring to people of the same gender. How much more so is this true for a man and woman, who look completely different from each other and think in exactly opposite ways of each other? You should expect to disagree quite often, but the key to marital happiness is to disagree agreeably!

Take a deep breath. Wait a moment and either give in, think of ways to work it through, or ask advice from a third party whom you both respect. But if either of you go all out to defend your view as the only legitimate one, expect a big, big fight. You will start saying things that cannot be taken back once they are said, until

² Berachos 58.

one of you goes running from the house and this is the beginning of the end. What bitterness will ensue for the husband, wife and, especially, to the poor children? The entire community gets involved trying to save the marriage or arranging a divorce. Is it worth it? Let it go. It's rarely worth it to lash out at each other. A little forgiving, a little forgetting and you'll be rewarded with a great marriage!³

Returning to G-d

You realized how distant you are from G-d and now, you want to come close. You want to become holy right now! But it doesn't work that way. Returning to G-d is a process that takes

³ Of course, if there are serious problems, forgetting and forgiving aren't going to be enough, but most marriages are between two basically good people who just need to learn a little patience.

time; we need to develop patience if we are to remain faithful to the journey.

Why can't we return to G-d in one grand moment of inspiration? The answer is because when a person sins, he descends to places of impurity. While sinning there, he causes a lot of sparks of holiness to fall into the domain of the evil forces. As we return to G-d, we are forced to go back the way we came. Step by step, we improve ourselves slowly. As we grow past a certain level, we free all these sparks that we had imprisoned by our actions while we were there. These sparks are now free to fly up to heaven. If we would ascend to heaven in one moment, we would leave these sparks behind, so G-d makes it impossible to return to Him suddenly. In fact, those who try become so frustrated that they give up in the middle and fail

in their quest for G-d's nearness. Go slow, my dear friend, and you will reach your goal if you just hold on tight and keep at it!

There is another very common phenomenon that affects many returnees. As soon as they return to G-d, they find themselves attacked from all sides by all sorts of difficulties, aggravations, tragedies and painful conditions. They wonder: "Is that fair, G-d? Here I am, trying my best to return to you, even though it is so very difficult, and instead of extending a helpful Hand, You slap me across the face!"

But nothing could be further than the truth! G-d is actually hugging you! The reason you are experiencing all of these hardships is not because G-d hates you, but just the opposite, He loves you! How can that be? What happens when a person decides to attend to the healing of his soul?

A sick man goes to the doctor. The doctor prescribes bitter medication and taxing treatments to help him heal. But if the person is too weak to endure the treatments, he will die from them. So, the doctor refrains from treating him and, eventually, the patient dies from the illness. The healing of the soul is very similar to the healing of the body. When a person sins, their soul becomes very, very ill. The treatment for the ailing soul is suffering, but it is impossible to bear the suffering your soul requires for its healing. So, what does G-d do? He removes most of the sins from the person and takes them upon himself. The person will only endure exactly what G-d determines he is capable of withstanding.

The person embarking on the path back to Gd will still suffer, experience all sorts of spiritual and emotional blockages, antagonism from others, and aggravations of every sort. But this is just a tiny percent of what his soul truly requires for its healing. Don't give up so quickly! Instead, turn to G-d and thank Him for taking the greater burden upon Himself and only giving you what you can handle. G-d loves you so much, as soon as you open yourself up to Him and thank Him for purifying you of your sins, He will lighten your burden even more.

Don't lose patience and throw off your new commitment to Torah and mitzvot! Instead, strengthen yourself because you will eventually be past this trying period in your life and you will experience the great pleasure and goodness of G-d's nearness.

Achieving Spiritual Greatness

Even those who have been relatively righteous in the past and now want to improve and reach higher levels of nearness to G-d, find the process very lengthy. Those who wish to raise themselves spiritually, will need to improve their actions, speech, and thoughts for many years until they begin experiencing a greater degree of nearness to G-d.

The great men and women of supreme righteousness that we know of did not reach their lofty levels quickly. Only through years and years of unstinting effort did they reach their awesome, wondrous levels of spiritual greatness. They waited, hoped and prayed to Gd for a very long time until they were allowed into the sanctuary of righteousness. Because of the physical nature of the body, it does not take quickly and easily to spirituality. For the mind to remained focused on thoughts of G-d without wavering requires enormous discipline. Only through constant refocusing, diminishing one's involvement with materialism, and sometimes with sacrifice, do the mind and heart become holy, pure and sanctified enough to serve as an abode for Gdliness.

All great people are tested again and again as they rise from one level of spirituality to the next. G-d wants those who seek Him to do so genuinely. Therefore, He tests those attempting to come near Him to see if they are real in their quest for G-d's nearness. Don't feel disheartened when you find yourself being setback again and again. If you don't lose patience, you are guaranteed to eventually become close to G-d.

What Should I Do While I Wait?

The key to surviving the wait is to act as if you are not waiting. Work on being happy in the situation you presently find yourself. The way you become happy is by acting as if you are happy. Smile, get going, do something worthwhile. Live a life of meaning and value *today*. Happiness is a treasure. When we are happy, our hearts open wide and we are naturally propelled to the next level of living.

At the same time, get used to talking to G-d, first for a few minutes, and then for a few more minutes. Speak in the language you are most comfortable in so you will be able to pour your heart out to G-d more naturally. Getting your problems off your chest cools the fire of impatience and calms you down. Sharing your problems with the Ultimate Therapist also lifts you out of depression like nothing else can.

The key to surviving the wait of life: Act happy on the outside, while sharing your innermost insecurities with G-d. This is how you will keep yourself going and in a good mood even when it is really hard.

Conclusion

Business, marriage, between neighbors and between man and G-d; these are some of the major areas of life where waiting is critical for success.

There are many storms that a person has to pass through in this world. We are knocked down again and again, by wave after wave. To yell and scream and fight the inevitable will only lead to heartbreak. We pass by this world unscathed by lying low and waiting out the storm. The storm is not as big as it seems and it will blow over much more quickly than we think because the wrath of G-d is over in but an instant.⁴ Hold on tight, strengthen your faith in G-d and soon you will find your troubles behind you.

See to it that you become accustomed to being patient and forbearing and wait for success in both the material and spiritual spheres. Then you will always be successful. We are not saying that this is easy work, but it

⁴ Berachos 7.

is worth it! Remember, no one in the history of the world ever became patient overnight!

הספר הקדוש הזה נדפס לטובת נשמת בעל מחבר של הספר הזה מאור עינינו, חיות נפשינו, עטרת ראשינו, כבוד קדושת מרן הגה״ק רבי אליעזר שלמה בן רבי מנחם זאב זצוקללה״ה נלב״ע י״ז שבט תשע״ה ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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