

# **This Too Shall Pass!**



**ENCOURAGING WORDS ON HOW TO  
DEAL WITH LIFE'S TRYING MOMENTS,  
REMINDING YOU  
THIS TOO SHALL PASS!**



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## ***This To Shall Pass!***

**I**s life getting you down? Are you finding the pressures of daily functioning too stressful on your nerves, lately? Do you worry that somehow you've lost your sense of youthful optimism that pulled you through times of crisis or need? What happened to the soothing inner voice that would chant upbeat slogans, during the hard times, such as "we can work it out"? The tragedies and calamities that have rocked the community recently has left our self-confidence shaken, while clutching more desperately on to our essential belief in G-d's goodness. Reluctant to question His ways, you just settle for downcast eyes and a saddened look to express what you feel, but underneath it all you silently wonder "why is G-d doing this to me?" Under these circumstances, it seems logical to feel forsaken, nonetheless, you should know that all the trials and tribulations are merely G-d's way of testing us to determine who we turn to in time of need. Furthermore, despite your feeling to the contrary, G-d does not abandon you,

rather He, Himself participates in your suffering as it's written (*Tanna D' vei Eliyahu Rabba, Chap. 18*), "Thus says the Holy One Blessed-Be-He, "In each and every affliction of Israel, I am with them", as it's written (*Yeshaya, Chap. 63, V. 9*), "In all their afflictions I am afflicted." Remember, no matter how much it hurts, you are not alone. There is no denying that your pain, emotional distress, mental anguish, confusion, and anxiety are genuine, but don't automatically assume that G-d is out to get you. This is not the time to lose your faith; on the contrary, take comfort and relief in knowing that G-d is by your side suffering along with you. Take advantage of this opportunity to reach out to G-d and draw closer to Him. The sole purpose of suffering and pain is to prompt us into an increased awareness of the reality of G-d in our lives, and to cleanse us of our sins. If only you understood the favorable impact created in Heaven by your acceptance of suffering, you wouldn't feel so victimized or personally offended by your lot. In fact the true litmus test of faith in life, is the measure of joyful acceptance and complete trust with which you greet the suffering that is apportioned to you. But truth to tell, suffering involves physical and emotional pain, and as human beings with feeling and emotions, we still need coping mechanisms. Therefore, when the

going gets rough, be tough and train yourself to repeat this phrase, "**This too shall pass!**" It is common knowledge that the most psychologically torturous aspect of pain and suffering lies in the "not knowing" when the relief will come. Once you realize that the pain will not last interminably, and that relief will definitely follow, the agony is easier to bear. Life is typically full of ups and downs, and salvation comes only after a trial period of suffering, as a reward for those who accept and endure the pain without losing themselves. Truthfully, this is easier said than done! Oftentimes, the pain and anguish becomes so bitterly intense and persistent, that you actually believe that the suffering is endless and the situation inescapable. Therefore, to avoid falling prey to negative thinking and harmful pessimism, always remember these words, "**This too shall pass!**" Garner the power of positive thinking by taking it a step further, and telling yourself, not only will this pass, but once it does, G-d will ultimately grant you unimaginable salvation and untold deliverance, as it's written (*Tanchuma, Eikev Chap. 3*), "Whoever suffers initially, will be comfortable at the end." Take for example the Patriarch, Abraham; who suffered more in his early years as much as he did and with as many trials? And didn't the Patriarch, Isaac, endure the

machinations of a wickedly deceptive son, Esav. And let's not forget the Patriarch, Jacob, who underwent intensely bitter ordeals, one after the other. Nonetheless, as a reward for their perseverance, their agony was transformed into ecstasy, as they merited to become the channels for the Divine Presence. Additionally, it is in their merit that Jews throughout the generations have prayed; their names being invoked daily in the prayer liturgy, as it is formulated: "The G-d of Abraham, the G-d of Isaac, and the G-d of Jacob." Although as a rule, G-d does not permit His name to be associated with any living person, He is so moved by the plight of human suffering, that He makes a lone exception with the afflicted individual, as is evident by the Patriarchs (*Bereishis Rabba*, Chap. 94, V. 5). In fact, a prerequisite to earning the status of one who is a channel for the Divine Presence, is the ability to accept a fate of suffering willingly and unquestioningly. Admittedly this requires work, but doing nothing is worse. You don't have to suffer; you *can* get relief. Get to work and train yourself to work through your pain by implementing this simple mind over matter technique, by repeating this phrase regularly, "**This too shall pass!**" – and the pain and suffering will eventually subside.

## 2.

**S**o, you finally got the dreaded phone call asking you to pay-up. The school delivered the ultimatum that they're not admitting your children back in the fall without the money up-front. And, the grocer has stopped accepting your excuses as well as your food orders. Furthermore, you're having trouble making even the minimum payments on your vast credit card debts. Your eyes roll Heavenward, as they have so many times before, searching for miraculous relief, or a least a word of explanation or reassurance – but all you sense is G-d's silence. You can't take it anymore and in your heart of hearts you just want to give up. Contrary to the popular American proverb that, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen", a Jew never checks out of life, rather he remains forever hopeful in G-d's salvation. It is precisely at the lowest points in your life, when you're naturally inclined to give-up, that you must cling the tightest to Him. To be sure, the humiliation, hassles, and feelings of helplessness that poverty engenders, like any form of suffering, feels like one big slap in the face from G-d. Rejection is a hard pill to swallow, and so most of us naturally respond by reacting defensively and turning our backs on G-d. Don't do it! If you're facing a crisis in your life, don't push G-d away – you need Him too badly.

Include G-d in all the pain and distress you're experiencing, Remember, *your* pain is His pain! Human suffering and pain is never random, senseless or meaningless – although it may seem that way. For the purpose of growth and development, G-d tests our faith by challenging it with suffering. The hard knocks we receive throughout our lives, come from the hand of our Father in Heaven Who verifies our loyalty to Him by the nature of our response; do we receive the suffering with acceptance and love, or do we resist out of anger and protest? Imagine the impression made in Heaven when you've hit rock bottom, and you have no food on the table, and no relief in sight and still, you don't question G-d's ways; on the contrary all you utter is, "Righteous and fair is He [G-d]" (*Devarim, Chap. 32, V. 4*), or, "G-d is righteous, for I disobeyed His utterances" (*Eicha, Chap. 1, V. 18*), or, "Righteous is G-d in all his ways" (*Tehillim, Chap. 145, V. 17*). By virtue of the fact that you uphold the motion, by declaring the judgment rendered against you as fair and just, is sufficient cause for G-d to eventually perform wondrous acts to save you, as the Sages said (*Berachos, 63a*), "Whoever includes the name of G-d in his suffering, his income is doubled". Yes, the years have flown by, and you still find yourself without even two measly nickels in your pocket to



rub together. Admittedly, you scraped the bottom of the barrel so much to make ends meet, that only a large gaping hole is left. And, no one is denying that the family has grown larger, their needs having doubled and tripled, and you're sunk so deeply in debt that you're drowning. Considering all your pain and hardship, imagine what it means that, without even a beacon of light in the horizon, you hold yourself defiantly strong – using any means to keep your spirits buoyant – remaining steadfast in your belief that G-d is navigating your ship of troubles – so "what's the use of jumping ship?" Rest assured, your stubbornness will ultimately pay-off! As the tides of your fortune eventually shift, you will be pleasantly surprised that with G-d's help, you will have landed on the shores of plenty – with more than enough to cover the debts and even surplus to share with others. Remember, however, that the secret to triumphing over adversity, lies in your ability to display the stubborn tenacity – without wavering – that has so characterized Jewish heroism over the ages. Defying the natural instinct to flee, the Jew paradoxically clings to hope in the face of hopelessness and runs to G-d. It is precisely when he is pushed against the wall and feels most abandoned, that a Jew chooses to draw close to Him. Like a child before his father, or as if

confiding in a close friend, the harried soul pours out his troubled heart out to G-d. Think about it – what more constructive and valuable advice can you offer a friend in time of extreme difficulty or need than to send him directly to G-d? Counsel him to select a private and secluded area where he can personally confide in G-d and unburden himself of all his troubles. Reassure him that you are not pushing him off with this advice. On the contrary, validate his pain by demonstrating empathy for his sorrow that he can't support his family and that, the weight of his debts is so crushing that he's nearly losing his sanity. Be supportive and coach him to turn to G-d for relief and not to move until he gets satisfaction, as the Sages stated (*Yerushalmi Berachos, Chap. 9, Par. 1*), "If a person is faced with distress, he should not cry out to [the angel] Michael, nor to [the angel] Gabriel, but rather to the Holy One Blessed-Be-He, Himself, and then he will ultimately be saved." Naturally the years of struggling has taken its toll, and your self-esteem, at being such a poor provider is at an all time low – and with the intimidating tactics of the bill collectors still ringing in your ears you have no will left to continue nor desire to hear words of faith – nonetheless, give it one more try. With all the energy you can muster, form these words with your tired lips: "**This too shall pass!**"

Affirmations have a very powerful reciprocal effect on reviving the spirit, so go ahead and tell yourself, "Even though I'm down in the dumps now, I have hope and firmly believe in G-d. He will not forsake me, and ultimately He will help me overcome all my problems." Don't stop there. Once the conversation with G-d begins to flow, go with it. Pray, pray and pray again, until you begin to feel the stirrings of hope and the rays of salvation begin to penetrate your defeated soul, once again. Oh! lost art of prayer, so neglected, undersold and unappreciated, yet you hold the key to our salvation! Who knows? – maybe all the hard falls we take in life are deliberately designed to elicit from us just even one mere word of supplication to G-d. When the message finally clicks that no matter what we are going through in life, help is only a prayer away – because G-d is only as far as the words of our mouth – then we don't feel so hurt and offended. In fact, we might even kick ourselves that we let the situation get so out of hand, when we could have offset it through the power of prayer. But what's the point of having regrets? Whatever problem you're having now and no matter how difficult the situation, you have the solution – tell it to G-d! Don't give up until you get satisfaction – and you will. That's a promise.

## 3.

**Y**ou never thought you would think like this. You had problems in the past and you're no stranger to sadness and depression, but to wish yourself gone or even to consider suicide? – impossible. Could things really have gotten that bad? Yes, after so many years of struggling with negative feelings and seeing no relief, your emotions begin spiraling and you feel that you're losing it – stop right there. The despair that you're experiencing, is only because you can't make sense of all the bitterness and depression that you've suffered until now – it just seems so pointless. But it's not! Your struggle in life is not in vain. All human pain and suffering has very deep and hidden Divine purpose and meaning – but you have to have the patience to "wait and see", without falling apart. Stop focusing on giving up, and start working on patience by repeating this phrase when you feel the despair creeping up on you, "**This too shall pass!**" Like everything in life, given time, your pain and sorrow will dissipate and subside. To be sure, the pain you're feeling is probably so acute that any notion of respite or relief seems remote and unrealistic. Furthermore, prolonged stress can trigger actual physical symptoms that can have you convinced that you're having a heart attack or stroke, G-d forbid. Get a grip! Put a stop immediately to the

spiralizing negative thinking that is whipping your emotions into a frenzy, by redirecting the focus off yourself and onto G-d. Like most people, however, the concept of G-d has grown stale in your mind. Out of habit and routine, you've been conditioned to pay lip service to G-d, and like background music, you consider His Presence as part of the furnishings. Honestly speaking, do you perceive G-d as having any relevance in your life? Up until now, while things were going well, you thought of G-d only in terms of theory and principle; now that you're in trouble and desperate, you need to feel G-d as real in your life. If there is to be any light at the end of your dark tunnel, it will only flicker once you recognize that only G-d has the power to turn on the switch. Forget the stuffy, stereotypical portrayals of G-d and the boringly dull and insipid religion lessons taught in bygone Hebrew school days. Once you stop regarding G-d as an incidental factor in your life, and you make Him the center of your existence, a newer image that is more real to life will emerge into sharp relief. Taken a step further, once you realize that G-d is the only reality that exists – so that He determines every event and every outcome – including *your* painful circumstance, then you can overcome anything. Simply put, trust in G-d's control over our lives, puts meaning back into our seemingly senseless

suffering; this in turn gives us the strength to bear it, by virtue of our new-found conviction that, **"This too shall pass!"** The mechanics of faith, however, require more than just a revision in our thinking; they need to be reinforced with action. To make G-d the center of your life, you have to – as the expression goes – "put your money where your mouth is" by making prayer a valuably integral part of your life. If trouble strikes, don't reach for the phone to call your pal, the doctor, or your therapist; almost as if by reflex, you should turn solely to G-d. Ideally, you should choose a secluded and private area, far from the madding crowd, to conduct your conversation with G-d. Jewish tradition has it that, a most propitious place for prayer is at the gravesite of a righteous person – or *tzaddik*, (see *Taanis*, 16a and *Sotah*, 34b). In the merit of the illustrious *tzaddik* that is buried there, the heartfelt prayers and petitions uttered by his gravesite are deemed more acceptable in Heaven. In fact, the prayers are so satisfyingly tender and sweet, that the spirit of the *tzaddik*, so to speak, lifts them Heavenward and ensconces them deep in the upper realm (see *Zohar Terumah*, 141b). The feelings that are aroused at a *tzaddik's* gravesite are, indeed, special, but at the same time indescribable – so, why not try it out for yourself and feel the difference! If this is

impossible, however, don't get broken. Select an alternate spot that's quiet, to share private time with G-d, and unburden your heavy heart. Remember, G-d's ubiquitous Presence can be found everywhere, as it's written, "The whole world is filled with His Glory" (*Yeshaya, Chap. 6, V. 3*). Furthermore, the Sages said, (*Midrash Shocher Tov, Tehillim, 20*), "Thus said the Holy One Blessed-Be-He: 'When a tragedy strikes the Jews, and they include My Honor (in their suffering), then My Honor is with them, and at that moment I answer them.'" Yet, in a generation such as ours that is so besieged by tragedy, we must make a special effort not to be skeptical. The Jewish Nation as a whole, and each of us in particular, are assaulted by enemies from within and without. Bus bombs wipe out families, including children, in an instant, while striking lasting terror in the hearts of the survivors who remain. We hear of cases almost daily, of friends, family or fellow Jews who have contracted dreadful diseases. New organizations, task forces, and social movements are frantically galvanizing into action to save our youth who are falling precipitously and by the droves, into delinquency. The houses of Israel have become battlegrounds, and almost too frequently they come tumbling down in divorce. Most alarming of all, is that with the situation so far gone, how is it

that we don't react with more shock? Perhaps, even more shocking is how indifferent we remain knowing how far we've strayed from G-d. Yet, the two in reality are really one and the same; we only feel locked into despair and hopelessness, when we lock G-d out of our suffering. Missing the meaning that only faith in G-d can impart, our despair turns into a numbing form of apathy. Stunned and confused, we stand by and do nothing. If our generation is to save itself from surrendering to despair, it must cling to hope by finding G-d – even in the unlikeliest of moments, during the darkest periods, when He seems least there. And He is there, as the Sages said (*Ibid.*), "Thus said the Holy One Blessed-Be-He: If you see that the troubles are overwhelming you, at that moment [precisely] you will be redeemed." Ironically, from the most hopeless situations are born the most magnificent salvations, as is alluded in the verse (*Ibid.*), "From narrowness [tragedy] comes wideness [salvation]." Furthermore, it's stated (*Yirmiya, Chap. 30, V. 7*), "It is a tragic time for Jacob, and from it he will be saved." Sounding too fantastical, you're probably waving your hand dismissingly, at these words. The seemingly hollow promises of hope and faith bounce off your weary soul, stung too much from all the hurt. Just recall, however, what the Prophet declared so many centuries ago (*Yalkut Tehillim, V.*



680), "If you see that the crises seem too overwhelming, immediately you will be redeemed." So, just get through it. Salvation is around the corner. If you feel that you're not going to make it, that's O.K. Just repeat this phrase, "**This too shall pass!**" and you will make it.

4.

**A**lthough life seems to move in a familiar pattern of highs and lows, there can be unexpected moments of exceeding darkness that can suddenly erupt, shattering the calm and throwing your life into chaos. Spinning out of control, all the strains, stresses, innermost fears, and worst nightmares seem to crescendo at once, leaving devastation in its wake and your confidence completely shaken. On the home-front, you're locked in a battle of wills with rebellious teens who've mounted an insurrection, or you're practicing riot control on the mayhem created by hyperactive children – not to mention, a combative spouse who displays no sympathy for your wallet. Outside the home, your job is on the line with a pink-slip whose ink is about to dry, or once again, you're passed over for promotion, after years of service, well beyond the point of job burn-out. The unpaid bills steadily mount, with inflation following in their footsteps, and that loaf of bread seems harder and harder to

get on the table. You don't sleep well at night, and the chronic stress and worry is taking its predictable toll on your cholesterol level. As life becomes increasingly more unmanageable, depression invades your psyche. Despite all your cries for help – because you can't take it anymore – you sense yourself inching towards a nervous breakdown. Hold on! Don't give up! Take a moment to step outside of your obsessive focus on your problems and remind yourself who you are, and what you stand for. Recognize that, first and foremost, you are a Jew! As part of the Jewish People, you possess a unique legacy of survival against all odds, even in the most impossible and unimaginable circumstances. At this critical moment, you must draw strength from the resilient quality of your People, who had the courage to withstand destructive forces throughout their long and bitter exile, finding the will, somehow, to rebuild and start anew. Following their example, don't dwell on your problems so much, as the adage goes, "Whoever is drawn to problems, problems will be drawn to them." Start rebuilding your self-confidence by judging yourself favorably (see *Likutei Moharan I, Chap. 282*). Repair your self-esteem by not getting so much into guilt trips. Cure yourself from your neurotic focus on just problems, by widening your point of view to

include the acts of kindness that G-d displayed towards you over the years. Reviving the relationship to your Father in Heaven, will prompt you to pray, once again, for His aid and assistance. It is fundamental to Jewish belief and tradition, that when faced with crisis or tragedy the only sure means of escape is via prayer and supplication. Simply put, when it hurts you gotta scream "ouch – it hurts (me) – help me G-d" and likewise, in whatever language you speak. Beware the sabotaging effects of the feelings of inferiority or even a "persecution complex" that can block your efforts to pray. People hit by problems in life often feel worthless and deserving of punishment, as if G-d hates them. As a result, their tongues become silenced, just at the critical moment when they need most to appeal to G-d for help. So, ignore the put downs, and remind yourself of G-d's love – even for you. Don't get angry at G-d – and thereby, distance yourself further from Him, rather, get even with those negative voices, by returning to G-d completely – without questioning His ways. Gratuitous speculation about G-d's ways – such as, "why did six million have to die?" will only make you resentful and drive you further from Him. Follow the advice of the Talmudic dictum (*Berachos, 10a*), "Why probe into what G-d has [chosen] to conceal?" You are not G-d, so do not

trespass into territory that is far beyond your spiritual ken. Don't be presumptuous! Know your place, by suspending all judgment and opinions. The only true knowledge we, as finite beings, can fathom about G-d is that we know nothing – except that He desires our prayers, and listens to the words of our mouths. Really now, in the midst of all your problems, personal crises, or tragedies, is it the time or place to start waxing philosophical about the nature of good and evil, and start questioning G-d's ways? Be practical and work on strategies to overcome your predicament. Begin by mentally immunizing yourself against pessimistic thoughts, by affirming that, **"This too shall pass!"** This declaration alone has the evocative power to elicit the inner strength necessary to withstand adversity. Secondly, don't be embarrassed to reach out to G-d and admit that you were wrong; this is not an indication of weakness; on the contrary, it proves that you possess true grit and courage. Thirdly, be stubborn! Don't move from your stance with G-d, until you achieve full satisfaction and witness miracles in your lifetime. The affirmative power of the declaration, **"This too shall pass!"** is only as effective, however, as the strength of the conviction with which it is uttered. Therefore, train yourself to respond automatically to all your life's challenges with the simple phrase, **"This too shall**

**pass!"** Say it enough times, and you will ultimately believe it! Then you will see how, indeed, you have the power to overcome the most unbelievable obstacles in your life!

5.

**T**here is no doubt about it, the vicissitudes of life can literally drive a person mad. With the wrong attitude, a person can get all hurt and fall apart. With a positive attitude, on the other hand, a person can mentally fortify himself and meet the challenge head-on. The power of mind over matter, only underscores the importance of training yourself to respond to crisis by affirming that "**This too shall pass!**" There is simply no other way to get over the hump, because no one is exempt from experiencing painful ordeals in life, as is written (Berachos, 5a), "He that the Blessed-One-Be-He desires, is afflicted with suffering – if he accepts it with love he will '[merit to] see offspring that will live long lives' (*Yeshaya, Chap. 53, V. 10*).\" Although affliction involves pain and it hurts, try not to lose the opportunity to garner its rewards. Recognizing that all pain stems from G-d, interpret it as an affectionate "wake-up call" from Him arousing you to repent. Get through the particularly painful moments by repeating to

yourself over and over, "**This too shall pass!**" After all, no one suffers interminably and eventually all pain subsides. No one likes to admit it, but even pain and suffering has a positive purpose in this world. Out of redemptive concern for our sullied souls, G-d formulated the varieties of pain, anguish, aggravation and minor annoyances we experience as antidotes for sinful behaviors and misdeeds. Through pain and suffering, our animalistic and baser instincts become harnessed, allowing the soul to exercise executive power. As a receptacle for the G-dliness within each one of us, our liberated souls can now direct our wills, unfettered, in service of G-d, as is written (*Berachos 5a*), "If a [mere injured] eye or tooth [can win] freedom for the slave, then certainly, suffering which cleanses the entire body of a person, should on their account [secure] freedom [for that person]." Therefore, when the whip of the lash stings you, don't curse your fate and automatically give-up on life. Condition yourself to respond to pain with the same script over and over, "**This too shall pass!**" And it will! Don't concern yourself with what the neighbors are whispering about you. No doubt, suffering makes you feel very vulnerable and ashamed – not to mention victimized. If your aim is to surmount the pain and suffering, then cast your gaze on to G-d Who is the source of your

pain, and not on to your neighbors and friends. Pain and hardship is ultimately for your own benefit, but the challenge is to discover how to respond properly to its dare, and bring yourself closer to G-d. Initially the pain is excruciating, but with the right attitude and acceptance you can turn the whole hurtful situation around for the good, as the Sages said (*Sanhedrin, 101b*), "With all the effort that he made, and with all the diligent toil he performed, nothing elevated him to good, except suffering; meaning, that Menashe, the [Biblical] King [of Israel], who committed numerous transgressions, [and] denied G-d, – was reformed by nothing, except suffering." Therefore don't take your predicament so personally or insultingly. Trust that G-d has deliberately targeted you with a specific set of tribulations as a means of self-correction and reform. This does not mean you should just fold your arms and receive the blows. You can mitigate the pain by fleeing to a secluded area and pouring out your heart to G-d in sorrow over your plight, let's say, with your rebellious children, who are challenging your authority, and making your home into a living hell. Or, relate to G-d your distress over the heavy burden of debts that is literally causing your financial collapse. Admit to G-d, your shame over being poor and inability to provide adequately for your family's

needs. Is there a greater curse than poverty, the anguish and desperation of which can lead a person to insanity, and to dispute G-d's ways? Remember, the aim of all suffering, is to transcend the pain and bitterness, and come closer to G-d, not further. But to cross that bridge of heartache and hurt, to the side of relief, you have to believe there is another side to suffering that's good – once it's over. And it will be over, sooner than you think, if only you train yourself to repeat over and over again, "**This too shall pass!**"

## 6.

**R**emember that song, "Smile, though your heart is breaking!?" What a philosophy for life! Imagine, if a loved one or family member was diagnosed with a terrible illness, G-d forbid; or you just became unemployed, with no means of support; think of what it's like to be going through separation or divorce from a spouse of twenty two years, and you're locked in a nasty custody battle. What must the heartache and anguish be for a desperate forty seven year old single with no marriage prospects in sight; picture yourself feeling chronically depressed, lonely, and let down by life for years on end. Most people, following their natural instincts, would just sit down and cry. No! That's giving up and surrendering. Exorcise the demons of



depression from your soul by breaking-out in laughter and all smiles! Greeting suffering with acceptance and a positive attitude is reminiscent of what the Sages said (*Shabbos*, 88b), "Those who perform out of love, and rejoice in [their] suffering - regarding them it is written (*Shoftim*, Chap. 5, V. 31), 'Those that love Him [G-d], are like the sun appearing in all its strength'." The unconditional love that is displayed by that individual who willingly embraces affliction, is indicative of such a thorough acceptance of G-d and his ways that he can enter the meaning of G-d. The truth shines for him as clear as day, because he thinks of life in terms of G-d, rather than of himself. Furthermore, the Sages remarked (*Taanis*, 8a), "Whomsoever rejoices in the suffering that's visited on him, brings salvation to the world"; their actions serve as a living example of the inner strength that is demanded in trusting G-d and accepting fate. As a paradigm of the proper approach to suffering, they inspire and give impetus to those that are wavering in faith, to display their very same fortitude and sacrifice for G-d, so that salvation is brought to the world. Undoubtedly, the underlying power to withstand the agony and suffering they endure rests in their belief that, "**This too shall pass!**" Suffering is not eternal, as the Sages said (*Avoda Zara*, 55a), "afflictions – the moment they are sent

to a person, they are sworn by oath not to depart except on so-and-so day, and not to exit except on an appointed day at a designated hour, etc..." Take comfort in this fact the next time you're faced with a problem or you find yourself in a tight spot. It doesn't last forever and you will get through it and survive. Just remember this simple phrase, "**This too shall pass!**" Don't get bogged down in the "whys" of the situation; focus on just getting passed it by telling yourself, "**This too shall pass!**" Eventually the good underlying the bad will reveal itself to you, and then all the agony will be transformed in to ecstasy.

## 7.

**I**f you are ready to pull the trigger or swallow those pills, and draw the curtain on your life, it is because you feel that all your suffering is worthless. Be rational! Can this short, fleeting, mostly frustrating existence of ours be all there is to life? There has to be something beyond this world, in our afterlives. Are you willing to risk earning your share in the Next World by snuffing out this one so prematurely. If you were meant to suffer, accept it as your ticket to the Next World, as the Sages commented (*Bereshis Rabba*, Chap. 9, V. 8), "'And behold it was very good' (*Bereshis*, Chap.1, V. 31) – this [refers to] the concept of

suffering, which is the means whereby people are brought into the Next World." Furthermore, the Sages said (*Kiddushin, 40b*), "The Holy One Blessed-Be-He brings suffering on the righteous ones in this world, in order that they inherit the Next World." As long as a person does not complain and challenge G-d's ways, every ounce of pain and suffering in this world, is credit towards the World to Come. Therefore, work on taking the blows as it comes, and minimize the impact by training yourself to respond, "**This too shall pass!**" Try to find meaning in your suffering – by redefining the pain as friendly fire, instead of enemy fire – and watch how much closer you will feel to G-d, the source of all our suffering, as the Sages said (*Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tetze, Chap. 2*), "A person must ascribe good [intentions] to G-d, when suffering is visited on him. Why? – because suffering draws a person closer to the Holy One Blessed-Be-He." Remember the adage, "No pain, no gain!". After all is said and done, and your ordeal is over, you will have gained a profound understanding of the words, "**This too shall pass!**" You will be struck on a deep level by the impermanence of this world – after all everything passes away, including yourself – and then, all that will really matter is the World to Come. In fact the truly righteous welcome suffering lovingly, with

total surrender – as a G-d given opportunity to quell the clamor of earthly desires and worldly concern, in order to bend their will before the will of G-d. If they can do it, so can you – if you really want! Work on accepting all the challenges that G-d brings your way – even if they are painful. Muffle your complaints and stop asking "why?" To ease yourself through the pain of the ordeal use this technique: Repeat the phrase, "**This too shall pass!**", until it begins to click and you don't feel so bad, anymore. Life is so short; nothing lasts forever, but the rewards are great, if you can grin and bear it. And you can, if just remind yourself that, "**This too shall pass!**"

## 8.

**I**t is easy to feel victimized and singled-out by G-d when you suffer. As the suffering lingers and your guilt intensifies, so does your self-doubts about G-d's love, until ultimately you become convinced that He hates you. Nothing can be further from the truth. Not only does your pain originate from G-d's love, but the Sages add that, "The Holy One Blessed-Be-He, does not associate His name with any living creature, except with the afflicted." In our ego-driven society that is so pampered, how can we expect to feel G-d in our lives? Silence all your protests and complaints; consider yourself

fortunate that G-d was concerned enough for your spiritual welfare to shake you out of your complacency by introducing pain and suffering into your life. Without this "wake-up" call, you could spend your entire lifetime in a deep spiritual slumber. So use your pain and suffering as a grand opportunity to move from self-involvement to self-surrender to G-d. Only by sweeping out the interests of our ego from our hearts, to the point that we sense our "nothingness", do we make room for feeling the meaning of G-d in our lives, as the Sages said (*Shocher Tov, Tehillim, 94*), "Affliction is [so] beloved before the Holy One Blessed-Be-He, that His Name ... rests on [that person] who is afflicted." Let's face it; for the man that has it all – youthfulness, intelligence, energy, good-looks, an attractive spouse, a good career, a fancy house, an elegant car, and lots of money – how much can he, in all his smugness, feel the need for G-d? Now, take the poor man or the sick person; he spends his fretful days in desperation, consumed by worries of mere survival and haunted by pinching need. He must turn to others for help, but they never turn to him. As a broken man, stripped of all his former pride and ego, and having lost faith in mankind, he feels the need for G-d like never before. Ironically, it's in our most broken state, that we can experience the biggest breakthrough in

our relationship with G-d, and perceive Him most. The smaller we are in our own eyes, the greater we become in G-d's eyes, and the more we sense Him in our lives. The key, however, is not to provoke G-d by questioning His ways when we suffer, as the Sages said (*Pesikta Rabasi*, Chap. 47), "Fortunate is the man that has the attribute of strict justice." Remember this fundamental lesson in life: most of the suffering we experience in life is a result of our doubting the fairness of G-d's ways, as the Sages commented (*Yalkut Iyov*, Chap. 908), "Had Iyov not questioned [G-d's ways] when suffering was visited on him, then just as we now recite [in the prayer liturgy]: The G-d of Abraham, The G-d of Isaac, The G-d of Jacob, we would have [also] recited: The G-d of Iyov." Yet, because he provoked, he lost it all! Imagine, the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not merit to have the Name of G-d associated with theirs in the prayers, except for the fact that they never questioned G-d's ways. Sure it hurts! And of course, you can't stand the pain any longer. But, look what you can achieve, by stilling your tongue and withholding your critical remarks! Make peace with your circumstance, and resign yourself to your suffering, and don't question G-d's ways. Let the storm pass, without a fuss, by uttering these simple words, "**This too shall pass!**" Know that the path of suffering and pain that you

now tread, has been traveled by many righteous men before you whom have been tested by trials of ordeals, prior to gaining entry to the courtyard of G-d. Complete submission to the will of G-d and subsequent attainment of Divine Inspiration, achieved by the righteous *tzaddikim*, were not realized without first tasting the bitterness of the bite of affliction that you felt. They too bore the yoke of hardship, torment, tragedy, misery, humiliation, and harassment, similar to yours – if not more. And how did they succeed? Simple, they never questioned, as they understood that eventually, **"This too shall pass!"** With patience and time, their pain and suffering eventually subsided, and in the process, all the barriers separating them from G-d were eliminated. Through pain and privation, they gained the power to subdue their own ego needs by realizing that the need for G-d is above all their needs. With the eviction from their hearts and minds of the former occupants of self-interest and needs, total surrender to the will of G-d becomes possible, because only the desire for G-d remains. So, wipe that tear from your eye, and chase despair and hopelessness out of your heart. You're not alone in your pain, because after all it all comes from G-d. Like a spoonful of sugar that makes the bitter medicine go down, keep repeating, **"This too shall**

**pass!"** And when it does, not only will you feel refreshed, cleansed, and relieved, but you'll also feel that much closer to G-d!

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### **Yavne'el Breslov City in the Galilee**

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