

# BILVAVI

## HEALING

In the end of *Refoeinu*, we say *כי א-ל מלך רופא נאמן אתה* – “For You Are The Almighty King, the Trustworthy and Merciful Doctor.” Hashem is the only true Doctor Whom we can rely on. Hashem is *נאמן*, He is the Doctor Who is “trustworthy,” which hints to how we need to place our *emunah* (faith) in Him. If we don’t place our trust in Him that He is healing us, then we aren’t able to *daven* properly to Hashem to be healed. We need to first establish a firm *emunah* in Him, in order to properly turn to Him as our Doctor and get healed.

In addition to how Hashem is our “Trustworthy” Doctor, a *רופא נאמן*, He is also called a ‘Merciful’ Doctor, a *רחמן*. We see devastating sickness in the world today however. It does not seem to us that Hashem is being a Merciful Doctor. People wonder: What’s happening?? Where is Hashem’s mercy? There are millions of sick people in the world with terrible diseases. There is almost no one who completes the year without getting sick. Even if a person is the type to be very self-absorbed, he still knows of family members or close friends who are sick. There are yet people who were born with illnesses, or people who have been sick for many years already.

If a person doesn’t make sure to constantly work on his *emunah* and he hears that people are sick, he reacts to this with zero *emunah*. He only hears pain and suffering and it’s all too much too bear. If he hasn’t worked on his *emunah*, then he will definitely lose *emunah* every time he hears of something bad. In the lower elements of our soul, there is a *nefesh habehaimis* (animalistic soul) and also a rational mind that we are all born with, which does not react with *emunah* to all these situations. And that being the case, a person is apt to feel as if Hashem is acting so cruel, *chas v’shalom*. Without working on our *emunah*, our eyes will see all the suffering of the world, and our *nefesh hebehaimis* is thinking inside, “How cruel this is. What a senseless world this is, with so many sick people suffering with no end to this. Where is Hashem’s mercy?” Of course, many people will not say it openly, but that is how a person is naturally feeling deep down, when he hears of those who are sick or suffering.

PLEASE DAVEN L'REFUAH SHELAIMAH Yissocher ben Hinda Liba

בס"ד

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בְּלִבִּי מְשֻׁכָּן אֲבִינָה

TRANSLATED FROM DIVREI TORAH OF HARAV ISAMAR SHWARTZ, SHLIT" A

Reb Yisrael Salanter wrote about the depths of the subconscious. We believe, deep down, that everything Hashem does is for the best, and that is what we have been taught since we were children. But this belief is pushed away into our subconscious. However, In our consciousness, we are filled with questions when we hear of others who get sick, and our reaction is to question Hashem.

The word for sickness, *choli*, is from the word *chilul* (profanity), a hint to *chilul Hashem*. When we hear that others get sick, it can cause us to have a *chilul Hashem* in our own soul, a lack of *emunah*, when we question Hashem. When a person visits someone who is dangerously ill, there can be a danger of catching the illness, and in the same vein, if a person doesn’t work on himself to reveal *emunah*, he ‘catches’ the *choli*, the *chilul Hashem*, of denying Hashem’s kindness and mercy. He sees people suffering and he feels “I can’t take this anymore” - his *nefesh habehaimis* and his rational mind can’t handle it, meaning, that he has no *emunah*.

A person who sees a *sotah* (wayward wife) in her disgrace must become a *nazir*. One of the reasons for this is because if he doesn’t become a *nazir* after he sees the *sotah*, he becomes connected with what he has seen and he will want to imitate the deeds of the *sotah* also. In the same way, when a person doesn’t have *emunah*, there is a void in his soul, and he becomes connected to that void, to that *chilul Hashem* of not believing in Hashem, when he hears of someone else who has gotten sick. Another person’s *choli* (illness) becomes a *chilul Hashem* to him, because he did not develop *emunah* beforehand, and therefore hearing about another’s sickness causes him to lose belief that there is a Merciful Hashem. Without building one’s *emunah* beforehand, when a person hears that someone else is sick, he might [superficially] believe and even say that “It’s all from Hashem,” but although he attributes it to Hashem, he forgets that Hashem has *rachamim*. In his heart, he does not view Hashem as a Merciful G-d.

One of the *middos* of Hashem is that He is called *Rachum*, the Merciful One. We can see compassion of Hashem all the time, if we take a look at the world and we reflect into all of the kindnesses that Hashem does throughout all of Creation. Hashem supports and feeds the whole world, including every animal and every plant, all the time. Any person knows that the world is full of Hashem’s awesome and unfathomable compassion. But even if we are aware of Hashem’s great compassion that He bestows upon the world, still, we also see so much suffering in the world. We see suffering in their health, with their children, all kinds of physical suffering, as well as emotional and spiritual suffering. How should we view this?

It is written in the possuk, להגיד בבוקר חסדך ואמונתך בלילות, “To speak of Your kindnesses in the morning, and of your faith at nights.” We speak of Hashem’s kindnesses in the “morning” – in other words, when all is clear and bright like the morning, times in which we can

clearly recognize Hashem's great compassion that He has upon Creation. But there is also a kind of faith which we can reveal "at nights," in a time of darkness, in a time of suffering. It is during a time of darkness in which we are meant to reveal *emunah*. The real "reason" for all of the suffering that we see is because it is so that we can work on our *emunah* in Hashem!

Of course, there are many other reasons for suffering. A person may be suffering because he needs a *kaparah* (atonement) for *aveiros* (sins) of a previous lifetime, or because he needs to take part in the *tikkun* (repair) of repairing the *cheit* of Adam or the *cheit ha'eigel* (golden calf), or, because it's part of the suffering of the final exile. There are many reasons for suffering, and they can all be true. But one of the major reasons of why people suffer is because it is precisely through suffering that a person can reveal *emunah* בלילות . It is precisely in "night," in the darkness of suffering and hardships, in which a person can reveal *emunah* in Hashem.

Our rational mind and our *nefesh habehaimis* cannot handle all the suffering that is in Creation. Our logic cannot make sense of it and our emotions aren't at peace with it. How, then, can a person be able to handle all the suffering he hears about? Only through regularly contemplating Hashem's *chesed* (His kindnesses) and *rachamim* (His compassion) where it's easy to see it, when it's "morning." And also during the "nighttime," a time of darkness where we see suffering, which is the time to strengthen *emunah* in Hashem.

We ask Hashem in *Refoeinu* to awaken His trait of *rachamim*, His compassion. First we say that Hashem is our Trustworthy Doctor, רופא נאמן, and then we say that He is the רחמן, Merciful Doctor. We say it specifically in this order, because first we need to strengthen our *emunah* in Hashem, and only then can we understand how Hashem is Merciful. Our regular logic and the emotions of our *nefesh habehaimis* cannot accept how Hashem is Merciful, as long as we haven't yet worked on *emunah* and ingrained it into our *kishkes*. After we reaffirm our *emunah* in Hashem, as implied in the words רופא נאמן, since our *nefesh habehaimis* is calmed, can we then understand that Hashem is a רחמן. We need to take the natural negative feelings of our *nefesh habehaimis* and attach it to *emunah*, whereupon our *nefesh habehaimis* will be calmed, by the light of *emunah*.

Without working on *emunah*, a person might be *davening* by *Refoeinu* that others should have a recovery, but he's really upset at Hashem as he's *davening* and in his mind, he feels like accusing Hashem for acting so cruel. He is *davening* to Hashem from the perspective of his *nefesh habehaimis*, which perceives all suffering of this world as senseless and nothing but 'cruelty' allowed by Hashem. If a person hears that others are suffering and he doesn't awaken his *emunah*, even if he immediately *davens* to Hashem to take away the other's suffering, he is not aware that Hashem is a רופא נאמן ורחמן, and deep down he's really full of complaints to Hashem. He's really feeling "Hashem, why are You acting so cruel?!"

Of course, he won't say this straight out, but deep down he is thinking unfair it all is. That is the reality for a person who doesn't try to awaken his *emunah* before *davening* to Hashem to put an end to another's suffering. If someone has never thought about this, the words here will seem strange to him and he won't agree. But if someone is at least a little bit in touch with his inner world, he understands that if he doesn't awaken his *emunah* when he hears of suffering, that he can't *daven* to Hashem properly and truthfully.

When a person hears about the illnesses of others and he makes sure to first awaken his *emunah* that Hashem is the Trustworthy Doctor Who can heal them, that is the root of getting healed.

Yaakov *Avinu* was the symbol of *emes* (truth), Torah, *Tiferes*, and *rachamim*. He was also the first person that the Torah records as being sick, to indicate that when a person becomes sick he can reveal and awaken the *rachamim* of Hashem. How does a person derive the inner strength to believe in Hashem's mercy, when he asks Hashem in *Refoeinu* to heal the sick and to be a Merciful Doctor, a רחמן? When he realizes that Hashem is the רופא נאמן, a Trustworthy Doctor to be relied upon, a person can awaken the *rachamim* of Hashem upon the one who is sick.

But without awakening this *emunah* in the *rachamim* of Hashem, *chas v'shalom*, then *davening* in *Refoeinu* is not a *tefillah* to Hashem, and it will just be a complaint on Hashem and on His ways.

Having *emunah* in Hashem is not just to believe that Hashem can send the recovery. It is more than that! We must begin to feel Hashem's mercy more in the world and become aware of His kindnesses. If we don't try to awaken our *emunah* more, all we see and hear about is how more and more people become ill and are suffering, and this causes us to have an internal *chilul Hashem*, a void in our souls that comes from not having *emunah* in Hashem. We must certainly not ignore all the sickness and suffering that we hear about, but we must awaken ourselves to feel *emunah* in Hashem, precisely when we feel a time of darkness that Hashem is the Trustworthy and Merciful Doctor, the רופא נאמן. And because He is the רופא נאמן which enables us to understand that He is the רחמן. May we be *zocheh* to understand Hashem's mercy upon all His creations.

## SUFFERING, ILLNESS & TIKKUNIM

**QUESTION** What is the purpose of physical suffering? **ANSWER** One needs a *tikkun* (soul repair) for sins of his current lifetime, as well as from a previous lifetime. One also needs a *tikkun* for some of the evils that have been committed since the beginning of history, and each soul has a specific role in this universal *tikkun*. In addition to this factor, there is also the suffering of *tzaddikim* (the righteous), the higher and more elevated souls who suffer from simply being on This World and enduring all that it entails, which contains both external and internal suffering. These higher souls are a “spark of the *Shechinah*” and their pain is part of the “pain of the *Shechinah*.” An example of this is when Rabbi Akiva had to endure torture.

**QUESTION** Chazal say that when a person encounters suffering, he should make a self-accounting (*cheshbon hanefesh*). However, each person is able to be blinded by various factors which prevent him from identifying the areas that he personally needs to fix. How can a person make a purposeful kind of self-accounting, so that he can be directed towards the proper direction which will lead him to seek Hashem? **ANSWER** (1) He should seek advice from a person who understands him, who has no personal gain from him. (2) He should reflect if his suffering has anything to do with a personal weakness that he has that he hasn't yet fixed. (3) He should go about fixing the greatest weakness in himself that he discovers. (4) He should accept his suffering with love, and with *emunah*. (5) He should *daven* to Hashem that he should be *zocheh* to find the inner meaning behind his suffering.

**QUESTION** What is the *tikkun* (soul-remedy) for the ‘dreaded disease’? **ANSWER** As is well-known, the root of this illness comes from disrespecting a *Talmid Chochom* (Torah scholar). Chazal said that “A person who shames a Torah scholar, there is no remedy for his wound.” The root of the *tikkun* (repair) for this is, on an external level, to increase respect and honor for a Torah scholar, and on

an inner level, by making oneself into *ayin* (nothing, no ego). The Baal Shem Tov said that אין מזל לישראל (The Jewish people are not dictated by *mazal*) is a hint that the *mazal* for the Jewish people is אין, *ayin*, to make oneself into nothing, meaning that one minimizes his own honor. This repairs the sin of not showing proper honor to a *Talmid Chochom*, and this will give the ill person a new lease on life, because new life comes from *ayin* (negating one's sense of self), as it is written, מרהין תמצא, “From *ayin*, it is found.”

**QUESTION** What can be done as a *zechus* for one who has the “dreaded disease”? **ANSWER** The “dreaded disease” [cancer] is called *sartan* in Hebrew. A *sartan* is a crab. The *sartan* (crab, also called “cancer”) is the *mazal* (constellation) of the month Tamuz. The *Sforno* (*Vayikra* 13:2), when describing certain kinds of *tzaraas* (leprosy), describes a kind of leprosy which is “*sartan*,” cancerous, to the entire body. The word *sartan* also hints to the remedy for this disease, because it is a hint to the words *sar Satan*, “remove the Satan.” There is a connection between the crab and cancer, which shows us what the *tikkun* (remedy) for it is. The month of Tamuz has the *mazal* of the *sartan*/crab. The sin with the Golden Calf happened on the 17th of Tamuz. The *Kli Yakar* (*Devarim* 1:1) explains that ever since that day, when the Jewish people turned away from Hashem, they turned away from facing Hashem (*panim*) and instead they are turned around from Hashem (*achor*). There is a *sefer* called *Ohr HaChaim Geulah V'Yeshuah* which explains that ever since the 17th of Tamuz when the sin with the golden calf was committed, anything connected with the *mazal* of Tamuz has become “turned away” from facing Hashem [becoming subject to *hester panim*, when Hashem conceals His light]. The *Gra* explains (in *Aderes Eliyahu to Melachim I: 7:85*) that the 12 *mazalos* correspond to the 7 main celestial bodies which affect our earth (the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Saturn and Jupiter). The constellation of the *sartan* (crab) corresponds to the moon, which receives its entire light from the sun and which has no light of its own. The moon

has no *pnim* (inside), it has no content of its own. That shows us the spiritual meaning behind the illness of *sartan*/cancer. It is an illness that symbolizes the *hester panim* (concealment of G-d's radiance towards us), a kind of darkness, when Hashem acts toward a person in the mode of *achor*, “turned away” from a person. The *Malbim* says that when the sun passes the constellation of *sartan* (crab/cancer), the light of the sun hits the northern part of the world, and the southern part of the world becomes dark. The word for “northern” is *tzafon*, from word *tzafun*, “hidden,” which is a hint to the concept of *hester panim*, the “concealment of Hashem's radiance,” when Hashem conducts Himself in a mode in which He conceals His light from the person. Chazal said in *Pesikta Rabbasi* (20:3) that the *Beis HaMikdash* could not be destroyed on a Wednesday, because it is the fourth day of the week, which corresponds to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, and Moshe requested that in his merit, the *Beis HaMikdash* should not be destroyed on this day. Moshe said, “Master of the world, the crab (the *sartan*) survives only because of the water, and it was I who was saved from the water.” Moshe was rewarded in this world with *keren ohr* (beams of light) that shone from his face. Therefore, if one wants to be saved from this illness, he should become connected with the trait of Moshe, who was “saved from the water.” In a commentary attributed to the authorship of *Rav Saadya Gaon*, it is explained that a crab is a creature which lives from the water and comes on to dry land for sustenance, and it is “created for healing,” among other things. [Hence, the *sartan*/crab/cancer is associated with healing.] Thus the *sartan*/crab/cancer represents the root of illness, for it represents *hester panim*, but it also contains the opposite: the root for healing. This is because there is a rule that “two opposites bear one root.” [So while crab/cancer is associated with illness and *hester*/concealment of Hashem's light, it is also the root of healing.] The *tikkun* for this illness is to contemplate the *he'aras panim*, the “illumination of Hashem's (G-d's) countenance,” by reflecting on the concept of *hashgacha pratis*, G-d's Divine Providence. “*The eyes of G-d skim though everything*” - Hashem oversees ev-

everything. [This connects a person to the trait of Moshe, who merited the *keranos*, the “horns of light” which shone from his face, a form of *he'aras panim* of Hashem.]

Besides for the above, one should also repair the soul's element of water, the trait of *taavah* (desires). The *sefer Igra D'Pirka* (217) writes that a person should not ravenously eat his food like a glutton, and instead, one should eat in the way that a *sartan*/crab eats, which takes its food with its ‘two fingers’ [its claws], eating slowly. And finally, on a more specific level, a person should discover his greatest weakness and fix it, in the external and internal sense.

**QUESTION** If a person has the ‘dreaded disease’, can they be healed by doing any specific kind of inner work (*avodah*) which improve the “health” of the soul, and a healthy soul will improve the body because there is a connection between the soul and the body? **ANSWER** In some cases, yes. But sometimes, the inner work [which improves the health of the soul] won't be strong enough to penetrate to the body, and the body will still need to be treated separately.

**QUESTION** Is there a source that learning *sefer Tomer Devorah* can cure a person from the “dreaded disease”? **ANSWER** I do not know of a source, but perhaps it is because this *sefer* discusses the 13 traits of Hashem's compassion, which arouses a recovery for the person.

**QUESTION** Is there a cure for the corona? **ANSWER** The root of this disease [the corona] is spiritual, in the highest spiritual source. Its source is in the *kutzo shel yud*, the “apex of the letter *yud*,” which is above the four elements [fire, air, water and earth, which correspond to the four letters of the name of *havayah*]. Therefore, the remedy for it does not come from using any of the four elements [unlike all other diseases; see *Rambam Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah: perek 4* and *Sefer HaBris*]. This disease corresponds to the point known as *Keser* [the highest of the *Ten Sefiros*] which is also called

*ayin* [lit. “nothingness,” the spiritual dimension]. Therefore, the remedy for it lays in accessing the perspective of *ayin*, and even more so, in the perspective of *efes* [lit. “zero,” the negation of all reality due to the recognition of the one true Reality that exists: Hashem].

**QUESTION** What does it mean that the *refuah* for corona is “*ayin*” (to feel how one is nothing)? Does this mean negating one's ego and sense of self, or does it mean having *mesirus nefesh* (being self-sacrificing)? Or by having *emunah*? And what is the deeper and more complete *refuah* for corona through “*efes*”? Does this mean to think about *Ain Od Milvado* (there is nothing besides for Hashem)? And how can a person sick with corona practically use the above advice? **ANSWER** The meaning of *efes* (there is nothing besides for Hashem) is essentially to contemplate *Ain Od Milvado*. [In the terms of Kaballah], the highest of the 10 *Sefiros*, *Keser*, is also known as *ayin* (feeling a sense of nothingness). This divides into two spiritual dimensions (the *Partzufin*) called *Atik* and *Arich*. The lower aspect of *Keser* corresponds to *Arich*, or *ayin* (nothingness, no sense of self), and the higher aspect of *Keser* corresponds to *Atik*, or *efes* (absolute nothingness).

A temporary remedy [for corona] is through accessing *ayin* (feeling a sense of nothingness, by having *mesirus nefesh*, self-effacement, by giving up one's will for Hashem's will). However, the complete remedy [for corona] which will totally uproot the disease from the person, can only be through accessing the level of *efes* (contemplating “*Ain Od Milvado, efes Zulaso*,” literally. “There is nothing besides for Him.”

**QUESTION** What can be done for a person who developed all kinds of complications due to corona and he is still suffering from it? **ANSWER** There is a wondrous *segulah* described in *sefer Nefesh HaChaim Shaar III* which discusses *Ain Od Milvado*: that there is no power or force that has any control over a person other than Hashem.

**QUESTION** Does this mean that the *choleh* himself needs to contemplate *Ain Od Milvado*, or does it mean that by others contemplating *Ain Od Milvado* this can send a *yeshuah* for the *choleh*? And if it means that by me thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* I can cause a *yeshuah* for the *choleh*, why is thinking about *Ain Od Milvado* any different than all other *zechusim* one can do on a *choleh's* behalf? **ANSWER** (1) Either way. [Either the *choleh* can contemplate *Ain Od Milvado* and merit a *yeshuah* from his situation, or others can contemplate *Ain Od Milvado* on his behalf and arouse a *yeshuah* for him]. (2) It is because by contemplating *Ain Od Milvado*, we are connecting the illness with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* and not to the person who is sick. Through contemplating *Ain Od Milvado*, the soul of the ill person becomes connected to the level of *Ain Od Milvado*, and through this the *choleh* is able to receive *ohr* (spiritual illumination) from the level of *Ain Od Milvado*.

**QUESTION** I have terrible pain in my right eye. The doctors aren't sure of how to treat it. What is the advice and *tikkun* that I need to do for this? **ANSWER** The right eye is also called the “good eye” (*ayin tovah*), so the *tikkun* is to gain an *ayin tovah*, a positive view, of others. From now on, in anything you encounter, make sure to think of at least one positive thing to say about it.

**QUESTION** What should I do if I have terrible pain in my left knee? **ANSWER** In general, the foot corresponds to the *Sefirah* (spiritual area) of *Hod*, the *middah* of *hodaah*, which includes admitting to the truth and also being grateful to Hashem. It is written, “For every knee bows to you,” and that is why we bow by the blessing of *Modim* where we express gratitude to Hashem. Therefore the main remedy [for pain in the knees] is to be grateful to Hashem, to constantly thank Hashem from the depth of the heart, from a sense of *bittul* (self-nullification), which is considered like a spiritual act of bending the knees to Hashem.