



Get Going!

1.

“Get up! It’s late!” – comes the voice roaring through the covers. After repeated attempts at prodding and shaking, you still can’t manage to rouse yourself from your sweet slumber. Finally, you stagger from bed and staring at the clock hazily, you realize that you’re an hour late to work. You’re not fazed; you proceed to get dressed sluggishly and deliberately as if in a trance, all while deciding in your mind which excuse to give your boss this time.

This is not the first time, and probably it won't be the last – but dear friend, if you want to get anywhere in life and succeed, it should be. The secret behind accomplishing any goal and endeavor in life, whether material or spiritual, is to be a go-getter. The difference between a go-getter and a lazy person is that when presented in life with a challenge or opportunity, the go-getter says, “I can”, but the sloth says, “I can't!” Go getters, give everything a try, but the lazy person shrinks in fear, perceiving every small task as a huge mountain to climb. Because, what underlies the avoidant behavior of the lazy person is in reality a form of self-surrender; he has given-up on himself and therefore he gives-up on life itself. This is why laziness is such an insidious trait that must be avoided at all cost. Alacrity, on the other hand, is a life-affirming trait that is precious and should be always be sought after,

because it's synonymous with success; laziness, as we all know, only breeds failure. The choice is yours. Are you going to pull the covers over your head and give up on life, or will you jump out of bed and **get going** on the road to success!

2.

Are you tired of just going through the motions in life? Are you fed-up with your habit of dragging your feet when it comes to making any change in life? Haven't you had enough of making excuses such as "this is not for me, and that is not for me" to justify your lack of progress in life? Although you seem to give others the strong impression that you are lazy, inside you know you're not. So why do you feel so left out in the cold, unable to achieve your aspirations in

life? You should know that laziness and chronic excuse-making masks underlying fear based on a deep-seated belief that, things will never work-out for you, as King Solomon said, “A lazy person says, ‘There is a young lion on the path, a lion between the streets’; the door turns on its hinges and a lazy person on his bed” (*Mishlei, Chap. 26, V. 14-16*). The only way to combat the pervasive sense of pessimism that’s making you such a reluctant participant in life is to jump into things and to **get going**. Don’t think so long and hard into your fears. Don’t give them a chance to mushroom into hang-ups. Just keep moving in life from one task to the next with energy, verve and enthusiasm, without getting bogged down by irrational fears and unnecessary self doubts, which sabotage momentum. We cannot even begin to appreciate how vital to our emotional health and well-

being it is to embrace life with liveliness and exhilaration. The sheer energy and enthusiasm of a quick pace and activity level boosts your mood and infuses you with joy, hope and optimism. Like a sudden splash of brisk, cool water, you will feel this refreshing burst of emotional energy and mental alertness. Buoyantly optimistic and on a spiritual high, the dullness you heretofore felt regarding matters of faith will erupt into passionate excitement about G-d. Your mind will also expand to accommodate more knowledge and new ideas, and you will grasp more easily novel insights and abstract concepts. Materialistically and socially your status will become also enhanced. Those who operate at a higher energy level, with alacrity and eagerness, feel confident about taking risks; people are also naturally attracted to them because of their optimism, open mindedness, and enthusiasm which

makes them fun to be around; the doors of success surely swing wide open for them. Again the choice is yours: You can either **get going** and finally get your life moving, or remain left out in the cold.

3.

Most of us have been raised with the misconception that religion is serious business and that we can only relate to G-d with pious solemnity and in somber tones. To many, the concept of G-d is rooted in childhood memories of formal religious training consisting of tediously dull services and boring classroom study. Nothing can be further from the truth. In order to really know G-d and develop an intimate connection with Him, you have to be able to sense His presence and involvement in your life. To go beyond the mere ordinary, and experience this higher awareness you

must arouse yourself through alacrity and passionate joy, as the Sages said, “The Divine Presence does not rest [on a person] by means of sadness or laziness” (*Shabbos, 31b*). When speaking in terms of the resting of the Divine Presence on a person it refers to the deep and almost palpable sense you feel that G-d is present and intimately involved in your everyday affairs. The more a person is able to step outside of himself and his ego concerns and recognize decidedly and thoroughly that there is nothing other than G-d; that only He is there and without Him there is nothing else, and that He is behind every event and phenomenon that occurs – the more do you allow for the part of G-d that you are, to be revealed. The two go hand in hand; the less you perceive of reality in terms of yourself, the more correctly will you perceive reality in terms of G-d, because G-d is reality! But, how many of

us are secure enough with ourselves to let go of self-interest and give ourselves over to G-d. That is why we need the twin emotions of joy and exhilaration which have the potential to powerfully inspire us to overcome fear that is masquerading as laziness. This method harks back to the days of the prophets of old, who were accustomed to arouse themselves with instruments and song so that the Divine Presence would rest on them. So, put the passion back into your relationship with G-d, by eschewing laziness and depression. **Get going!** Keep moving and be too busy to notice any dark clouds looming in the horizon. Maintain that sunny disposition and be good-natured. Of course it's a struggle! Life can be very frustrating and you won't always be in the mood to push joy. Don't give up and abandon G-d! On the contrary, it is at times like these that you must pour your heart out to G-d, as

you would to a good friend, relating to him all your hardship and toil in advancing both in the spiritual and material realms. This will bring you closer to G-d and you will automatically feel better and heartened. Whereas in the beginning, it was a sheer struggle to utter just one word to G-d – because you felt so down – now, the words of prayer will just flow animatedly and passionately from your lips – because you feel so relieved and hopeful. There's no doubt about it, liveliness and joy breathes new life into prayer making it passionate and heartfelt, as the Sages said, “A person does not rise to prayer through sadness and through laziness” (*Berachos, 31b*). So rise to the occasion and get close to G-d. Do it by getting as far away as you can from sadness and laziness, and as close as you can to true joy!

4.

A person's energy level can almost predict whether he'll succeed in life or not. The movers and the shakers take the bull by the horns and success becomes theirs; the lazy man, however, is doomed from the outset. Beneath his covers he moans that now, it's too cold to go out and study, later he laments, that it's too hot outside to work. Full of excuses, he lies motionless in bed growing more and more despondent and pessimistic about getting anywhere in life. Finally he says dejectedly, "what's the use" and just gives up on himself and his future. What a fool! He doesn't realize that it's all in his head. Laziness is a state of mind that comes from having a poor attitude towards yourself and life. Once you surrender your will it just carries you further down into a deep and inescapable depression, as King

Solomon exclaimed, “How long will you recline, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to recline”, (*Mishlei, Chap. 6, V. 10-11*). Be brave! Peel-off those covers, get-out of bed and **get going** already. To be sure, you’re weighed down by years of bitterness and disappointment and you can’t muster the will or strength to carry yourself out of bed. Nonetheless, you must take the first step. What hope will there ever be if you just languish in a state of torpor, never making any move to improve your situation? You’re not alone! G-d is by your side. So while you’re struggling to reach out of bed, why not reach out to Him and ask Him for help. Yes! It’s that simple! Remember, G-d’s glory fills the universe, and there is no reality except for Him; His spirit permeates everything around you. Yet, “who cares anyway?” you mutter, as you

reluctantly climb from between the covers; “who can ever understand what I’ve been through?” you gripe, as you force your body out of bed. The answer is, G-d cares and only He can understand fully your pain. True, you’ve borne the brunt of other peoples’ taunts and snide comments about your laziness and inertia. You feel utterly rejected by society, nonetheless, what does it matter? Run to G-d, seek refuge and support only from Him, because ultimately, He’s the only one that cares enough and loves you. It’s vital that you master the art of detachment from others by only clinging to G-d. Once your mind is freed from the neurotic need of approval from the outside world – because only G-d’s opinion matters – you will find yourself automatically leaping out of bed with enthusiasm, joy and alacrity to rejoin the outside world that now, seems less intimidating. What

are you waiting for? Begin now by opening your mouth and speaking to G-d, as you would to a friend or as a child before his father. Still not convinced, you hopelessly turn on your side and sink once again between the covers. In your mind, you cannot so easily shake-off the decades of a youth blackened by depression and deep despair that had you persuaded that G-d somehow forgot about you. How many silent hours did you lie in bed so very still, pondering your motionless fate wondering why G-d was angry at you; why did it seem He was rejecting you? "It must be", you concluded, "that G-d doesn't want me; He doesn't need me". Torn by inner conflict and psychological strife you just gave up and stopped trying. Not so fast! Others may hurt us and disappoint us, but not G-d. We owe our whole existence and survival to Him. If there is anyone that you should give-

up on it's other people; not G-d. Where were all the relatives and friends when you were languishing in your morbid state, unable to climb out of your pit? What encouragement and support did they supply in your desperately needy state, besides a sigh here and a shake of the head there? Your mistake is that you wasted so much of your life expecting others to have pity on you and rescue you from problems. Then recall, how in your bitter and resentful state, you thought it was cool to hang around with cynics who gave you that false sense of power by rejecting G-d and putting down religion. Now see where they have left you, as the wisest of all men, King Solomon said, "You have been trapped by the words of your mouth, snared by the words of your mouth. Do this, therefore, my child and be rescued; for you have come into your fellow's hand. Go humble yourself before Him and

placate Him. Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids; be rescued like the deer from the [hunter's] hand, and like the bird from the fowler" (*Mishlei, Chap. 6, V. 2-5*). My dear friend, it's not G-d who rejected you; you have turned your back on G-d. The moment you felt the slightest twinge of frustration and pain, you gave into your evil inclination and started a pattern of blaming G-d. You fell into the trap, and convinced that G-d is against you, you capitulated to despair and surrendered. My friend, it's all in your head; G-d is, and will always remain your compassionate Father in Heaven who waits at every moment for your return. He wants to help you, but you have to ask for it! **Get Going!** Give it a try; what do you have to lose?

5.

How many times have you caught yourself laughing sheepishly at off-color remarks and irreverent comments by a radio talk-show host or television comedian? In this great land of liberty of ours we have been swept-up by comic fever that holds nothing as too sacred to be the butt of a joke and a good laugh. The contagious snickering and cackling at every serious matter has cast a cynical pall over the innocence of a once sincere and believing society. Underlying all their mocking and sarcastic humor lies a well of bitter corruption and a fatalistic attitude about life that's lethal. To be sure, on the outside they seem to have it all; fame and fortune, but it's all a facade. How can they possibly experience any true satisfaction or meaning in a lifestyle that is so blatantly decadent and whose values are so

confused? The believer too, may be very far from G-d, but at least he doesn't fool himself. Because he knows where he stands, he remains objective about life and lives in reality. Although he sets his sights heavenward, he's acutely aware of his crude physicality and his lowly origins, humbly accepting that there is much he can never fathom about the mystery of G-d. Looking back at a promiscuous past where he wildly indulged in every conceivable pleasure without restraint or discipline, he reasons, "how can my contaminated mind sound-off opinions about issues so lofty as spiritual matters?" Rather, he realizes contritely that, his task is to suspend his own judgment and recover his lost innocence by adhering to a pure and simple faith in G-d. He must also cast his haughty self at the feet of the Sages who have tirelessly and wholly devoted themselves to sanctifying G-d's

name – serving as exemplary models of what spirituals levels can be attained by those who live in a disciplined and restrained manner, completely for the sake of Heaven. Penetrating the mystery of His concealment, the *Tzaddikim* behold a far greater vision of G-d that to us remains hidden behind the garb of earthly veneer. Living in the light of this vision, the lives of the faithful are more meaningful and completely satisfying because they see their existence as completely related to G-d. To be sure, to the rational mind, all this talk about faith seems unreasonable and to some, downright absurd and irrelevant. We prefer to follow the line of thinking found in the editorials of reputable daily papers couched in highly intellectual terms. Their arguments seem so rationally sound and convincing; besides they make a lot of sense! Or do they? Objectively speaking, have you observed

an iota of improvement in one of your character traits as a result of their polished articles with all its sophisticated jargon? Be honest and ask yourself, how much of a meaningful impact has their news, that is so fit to print had on any important area of your life? Have you ever wondered what kind of person is writing these articles? Do they have good values? Do they even believe in G-d? Do you feel spiritually elevated now that you've drank in their words for years, cover to cover? Are you any closer to G-d now, then when you first picked up the paper to read? How can you not be disturbed by the incongruity of a society that is at once so highly cultured and literate yet, as page after page of the newspaper reveals, is so insensitive, apathetic and downright cynical regarding matters of such gravity as faith and G-d? What the world needs now is inspiration! The time has come to

stop lending a deaf ear to the Torah Sages and start hearing their liberating message of hope and faith. Where reason and logic end, their message begins. Having worked on themselves and having refined their character, their minds are capable of going beyond normal human comprehension to apprehend intimate knowledge of the workings of the Divine. Countering the assault on the human spirit perpetrated daily by the media – that has left society hopelessly depressed and pessimistic about the future – the Sages happily remind the masses that G-d is in control and still cares. Their optimistic words ignite the spark of hope in the beleaguered soul so that it once again gets up and starts going. Dispelling all the doubts and fear, which make a person feel depressed and lazy, you feel invigorated and refreshed as if a burden

was lifted, so now you can move and **get going** on with your life.

6.

Remember in your idealistic youth how you dreamed of being a policeman, fireman or even a rocket scientist? Now, merely getting out of bed is the biggest effort. What's missing now? The answer is that you're no longer energetic and enthusiastic about life. You see, merely acting lively, energetic and enthusiastic has the power to get you motivated and moving in life. A person who is always busy and in motion – never letting the grass grow under them – always discovers new ways and innovative ideas in life. They invent inventions, design improvement programs to advance society and they are always expanding their own horizons both materialistically and spiritually. Regarding laziness, on

the other hand, says the wisest of all men, King Solomon, “[it] casts one into slumber” (*Mishlei, Chap. 19, V. 15*). “The lazy one buries his hand in the dish; he [is too lazy] even to return it to his mouth” (*Ibid. V. 24*). Laziness is such an insidious state of mind, because it deludes you into thinking that your life is finished, so you grow more careless and self-destructive in your behavior. So disgusted with life do you become that out of bitterness and anger, you begin to behave recklessly. Yet, every person has hidden talents and so much potential – yes, even you. If you would only believe in yourself, you can revolutionize the world and bring every Jew back to G-d. Because locked into the unique spiritual makeup of every Jew is enormous potential to achieve extraordinary accomplishments. You may not think so, because you cannot imagine that housed in your crude physical form, with all its

primitive urges, is a wondrously noble soul that is a reflection of G-d. Yet it's true, and if only you would believe and act on it, not only would the light of G-d shine forth from you, but you would inspire the whole world to return to G-d. You alone would be responsible for opening up the eyes of the masses to the reality of G-d's presence in their lives. This depends however, on how willing you are to get up and **get going** to achieve your goals. Charged with the mission of fulfilling the will of G-d, you will find yourself running to help others.

7.

You're having problems in life? Why waste so much time analyzing your problems when simple arithmetic will do. Simply put: laziness plus sadness equals despair. The main reason your life is not

moving is because *you're* not moving! The typically depressed person is sluggish and slow-moving. It takes every ounce of effort for him to merely get out of bed and get dressed. He sits there motionless, dawdling, and staring blankly into space oblivious to the passage of time. He's in no rush to pull up his pants or button his shirt because he's convinced that he'll never get anywhere in life anyway. He's got it all wrong. The secret to climbing out of depression and from his pit of despair is not to lie there and give up. On the contrary, the solution is to get up and **get going**. Like the art of walking on hot coals, you have to learn to hop, skip and jump through problems in life – not dwelling on them too long or else they'll carry you down into the irretrievable depths. Life is just too hard and full of problems. Either you overcome the problems or they overcome you. It

depends on you; if you move, and **get going**, you win, but if you lay down, get lazy and give-in to despair, you lose! Laziness born out of despair breeds failure, while energy and enthusiasm yields success; it's as simple as that. So, next time you come across a huge mountain blocking your path, don't just sit there and give-up. Climb it; scale it; go around it; do something – anything; just keep moving and keep at it, and let G-d do the rest. If you don't give-up, G-d will not give-up on you and miracles will happen.

8.

Confronted by problems and difficulties in life most prefer the path of least resistance and give in to sadness, depression and laziness – despite the discomfort and pain it entails. To face your problems and deal with them

requires strength and sustained effort, which many are unwilling to expend. It's easier to just throw up your hands and declare "I, give-up!" – but this is self destructive and leads to dysfunction. Like it or not, there are two paths that lie before each man in life: The path leading towards satisfaction and success that is tread by the "go-getters", who are always on the move, and whose bubbly and lively personalities reflects their positive attitude towards life; or the path leading down to loss and failure traveled by the sloth who sabotages every opportunity to grow and gain, by his poor attitude and self-surrender. Now, which path will you choose?

9.

There is another side of the coin to being swift and fast in life, and that is not being too fast. Although Rabbi

Nachman recommended that in order to serve G-d successfully you have to do and accomplish – meaning to learn diligently, perform as many ‘*mitzvos*’ as you can, devote many hours to formal and informal prayer, including conversations with G-d, and to seize every and all opportunities that present themselves – nonetheless, you need the wisdom and good sense to know how to pace yourself properly and not act rashly. In a rush to accomplish, its typical to get frustrated and exclaim, “How is it possible for me to achieve even one of these vast and mighty goals, that require so much discipline, self-refinement, and self-control?” It’s a tricky thing, because while the demand is great, you mustn't think that you're expected to wildly grab at everything and achieve all at once. Progress is measured in steady movement, step by step, otherwise, in the mad rush to save

everything from the fire, you come out with the wrong thing or even with nothing at all. The idea is to keep moving in an organized fashion, inch by inch – not frantically or in a haphazard style. Sometimes, you may be astonished to find that no matter how much you try you can't move at all; you're stuck! So what? Remember, "From circumstances beyond your control the Torah exempts" (*Baba Kamma, 28b*). The same philosophy applies to worldly matters as well. Although you may have the best intentions – and you developed an efficient style, so that you never let a moment to accomplish go to waste, still things may not always work out the way you planned or expected. Achieving your goals takes time and patience. The secret is not to get broken by the waiting or the disappointment. If you master these ideas by internalizing them – and you just hold on and wait it out, eventually

you will succeed and triumph. So my dear friend, remember, be fast, but go steady – the main thing, however, is never give-up and never stop growing. Life is ahead of you so, why not **“get going”**?

