



Score Big!

1. Game Plan I - Faith

You're a little nervous, though you shouldn't be. Your credentials are impeccable, and your resume polished to match. Reminding yourself that you're a graduate of the finest institutions, with a perfect GPA and the promise that you'll go far, your confidence suddenly soars. From the sleeve of the latest designer suit, your hand glides easily to greet the firm handshake of the interviewer. You're a shoo in. He knows it and so do you. He just has to make the offer, and victory will be yours. Dear friend, we all want to **score big** in life. It's human nature. But, do you know how to achieve real victory in life? Only with faith! When you have a simple faith in G-d,

firmly believing that He is everything, and there is nothing else, then you're the true winner in life. As Rabbi Nachman said, with faith, a person has the potential to grow and develop, and nothing can stop him (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol. 1, Chap. 155). Faith is like a seed planted in moist, fertile soil; eventually a shoot sprouts forth hearty enough to withstand the harshest conditions. In fact, so apt is the metaphor that faith is often compared to the earth itself, as it is written in *Tehillim* (Chap. 37, V. 3), "Dwell in the land and be nourished by faith." Meaning, when a person lives his life with faith, he is like a seed planted in fertile ground. Ripening tall and sturdy, it can weather any and all the winds and storms. In fact the challenge is even welcomed because, the more force that's applied the heartier it will grow. By believing in G-d, you are implanting confidence in yourself, so you fear nothing. Indeed, the whole concept of agriculture is grounded in faith. Think about it; towards what end does the farmer expend his time and energy plowing, seeding, watering etc...? At the core of his belief lies an abiding trust that in time, he will reap the fruits of his labor. Faith works the same way. At first nothing seems to be happening, but eventually your

output pays-off and yields results. Every moment devoted to thinking about G-d is another drop in the bucket, reinforcing His realness in your mind. As the pieces of the puzzle join together, it will become more apparent how much G-d is involved in your life. Life is not a string of random events. The more you sense G-d's impact on your life the more sense life makes. C'mon! Who's not having a hard time these days? Whether it's health, income, or family, who's not struggling with some issue? What's the answer? How do you survive it? Only with faith! If only you could fathom that everything is G-d, and that nothing is real besides Him, how comforted and reassured you would be. He is with you and besides you every step of the way – and, He won't let you down. All problems shift into perspective once it clicks in your mind that G-d is everything and everything is G-d. Underlying all human fears and suffering is the lack of awareness of G-d, as Rabbi Nachman said, "Exile is essentially a lack of awareness of G-d" (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol. 1, Chap. 7). Furthermore, the Sages said, "You find that the ingathering of exiles only occurred as a reward for [having] faith" (*Yalkut Hoshea*, Chap 519). It was in the

merit of faith that the shackles of the Egyptian bondage were broken. Looking further back, didn't our forefather, Abraham inherit this world, as well as the next, as a result of his staunch faith? Regarding the faithful it states, "Open the gates and allow the righteous Nation, Guardians of the Faith to enter" (*Yeshaya 26*). What prompted this joyful future outcome for the Jewish People, if not as a reward for the faith cultivated by our Forefathers in this world?

Every moment that we confront reality, we are faced with the choice of acceptance or denial. We can respond either with our spiritual selves and see the beyond the trappings, or we can fool our selves into thinking that it's only the outside that matters. That's the nature of the test. The world consists of a dizzying array of possibilities and choices for material gain. A person can lose himself in the quest for all the glitter and gold. How easily do we become captive to the spell of power and wealth! Enamored by our achievements, we buy into the philosophy of might makes right, stepping on anyone who dare get in our way. Instead of a collaborative effort, we let a spirit of competition reign, and tear each other down. The toll taken is the sum in human misery and suffering that characterizes our

current exile. But if your heart is pure with faith, you see the truth and you're not deceived. It becomes clear in your mind that only G-d is calling the shots, so there's no need to cave into social pressure and compromise values, in order to advance. That would be tantamount to denying the Creator! Firmly believing in G-d's control over even the minutest aspect of the Universe, and that He is the sole and supreme master over your fate, doesn't leave you guessing. It's only the word of G-d that you must follow, and nothing else. So, even though you're having a hard time and life seems impossible, don't surrender yet! Seize the moment by grabbing on to faith. Of course it's a struggle; you're hurting all over and from the sheer pain of it all, you have no head for thinking about faith. And somewhere in the back of your head, you're probably remembering a not so pleasant past. Memories of many unchaste moments and instances of fooling around – even though you knew it was wrong – feed your guilt-ridden conscious. So how can you possibly face G-d now? This is what causes your faith to dissolve and for you to give up hope, as Rabbi Nachman said, "Faith and chastity go hand in hand" (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol. 1, Chap. 31), as stated in

Tehillim “My covenant will be steadfast with him” (Chap. 89, V. 29). Unfortunately, popular thinking is not aligned with the Torah, on this matter, but it’s our fundamental belief that promiscuity damages a person’s faith. Similarly, consumption of non-kosher meat dulls the heart so that it is no longer moved by spirituality. Your attitude towards anything to do with religion becomes one of annoyance and disdain. This was the tragic fate of so many of our post World War II brethren in the Holy Land who were deliberately fed non-kosher meat in an effort to wean them off religion, as Rabbi Nachman stated, “The sin of a person instills denial in a person” (*Sefer Hamidos*, Chap. Heading: Faith, Par. 22). Sin clogs the spiritual arteries, blocking the absorption of awareness of G-d, into the soul. Tired of tackling your problems yourself? Are you fed up with feeling stranded and alone? Then open yourself up to G-d by pushing faith, and **score big** time! There is simply no other way, as the Sages said, “Which is the straight path that a person should choose? [Let him] grab on to even more faith” (*Tamid*, 28a). Yes, you’ve read every self-help book on the market, searched hours on-line for advice on how to improve your life, and worn-out more positive-

thinking techniques, faster than they can be produced – but, have you gained any mastery over your situation? So much ado about nothing, no wonder you're more confused than ever! Is it any surprise that in Judaism we are instructed to go against the odds – even defy logic – and rely on faith? Pump yourself up with strong, invincible faith, and you can overcome anything. See for yourself. Those that have faith seem to breeze more easily through problems. The skeptics on the other hand, fall apart – once the going gets rough – and, there's no reasoning with them. Without faith a person is so lost in life. Observe how unstable and confused his behavior becomes. His mind begins to race with wild schemes and ideas of “maybe this will help, or maybe that will help?” One minute he's chasing this get-rich quick scam, the next he's convinced that he must try the ultimate seven-day, miracle diet, and when that fails he'll fly off to the Far East to find some guru to meditate with on a mountain. But the wise King David has already declared centuries earlier, “Futile is the salvation of man” (*Tehillim*, Chap. 146, V. 3). The bottom line is that no one can help you nor, do they want to help you – in fact, most of the time they'll just deceive you! Therefore King

David warned, “Do not place your trust in noble men, in a man who has no [power of] deliverance” (*Tehillim*, Chap. 146, V. 3) – meaning, that if a person can’t even save himself, how is he going to save you? Trusting in others is naive. When will you ever learn? How many of us place our hopes and heart in the hands of another person, only to discover later that they disappeared – along with his promises. The wisest investment is to place your trust in G-d, because you can only rely on Him to deliver in this world, as well as in the next, as we read, “Whoever places his trust in the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He has a refuge in this world and in the next” (*Menachos*, 29b). In these precarious times, when the threat of global terrorism is rising, the economy is shaky, and the incidences of disease are climbing to epidemic proportions, what more stabilizing factor is there than faith? What remains of us and this transitory world after all is said and done? Only G-d. So work on it! Work on having simple, simple faith and your life will take on new meaning completely. Tomorrow won’t be such a frightening prospect for you anymore. Day to day worrying will cease, as is written, “It was taught (in a Beraisa) by Rabbi Eliezer the Great: Whoever has bread in

his basket and says, 'What will I eat tomorrow?' has little faith". Face it; we are all worried about the future. Some have what to eat today, but worry about tomorrow. Some have for tomorrow, but are concerned about next week. And some have even for next week, but fret about the following month; living in the clutches of constant fear is no life. But, if you can firmly implant in your mind that all you need is G-d, then you won't need anything else. What will be the point of worrying anymore? It's common knowledge that stress and worry are the number one underlying causes of all illness and disease; it's the single-most destabilizing factor in a person's life that can throw his functioning level off the charts, as the Sages said, "Do not let fear enter your heart, for many a mighty man has worry destroyed" (*Sanhedrin*, 100b). So how can you stop worrying? If you think about it, worry stems from a fundamental lack of faith. So, build-up your faith and your worries will vanish. Come to your senses! What's there to lose in your brief sojourn in this world? Don't make it so complicated, when the formula is so straightforward: I live with G-d, I need G-d and I will return to G-d. So what's all the fuss? Why are you getting sidetracked? Why are you letting

others break you? On the contrary, place your bets only on faith, and you'll **score big**. It's the only way. Of course it's easier said than done; you have to work months and years on refining your faith. One minute you feel so secure and trusting, and then unexpectedly, a setback occurs and you run scared. All your fears and insecurities come rushing in on you and topple you down; now you have to start all over again. In your mind, you say, "Who needs this – all the hardship and struggle? I want the easy life like others". How conveniently do you forget that outside appearances are deceiving? More than you will admit, you enjoy fantasizing about the glamorous lifestyles of the rich and famous – even though in your head you know they are empty. But it's far from being harmless, innocent fun. The steady stream of subliminal messages does the trick and, incredibly you start believing in the power of luck in determining fate. Now, with the arrival of the internet, the beast has been let out of the cage and there is no safe ground. Unsure of the enemy, we wonder whether the lightning advances in technology and media are helping, or harming us. Hungry for attention, the media constantly innovates ways to distract the public

mind from thinking about G-d. Public focus has been hypnotically directed towards glossy magazines ads, newly-released DVDs, instant messages, e-mails, blogs, and facebook entries. Any topic of interest, no matter how outrageous or provocative, is indiscriminately fed online to people of all ages, around the globe. With all that at our fingertips and more, we have become information addicts that know so much about everything – and so little about G-d. And how can you? With a Bluetooth carved around your ear, wired to an Ipod, and your eyes peeled to a flatscreen, how can you ever expect to hear the voice of G-d? You're in-touch with the latest everything – yet so out of touch with yourself! But, G-d doesn't give up on us! From the medley of chirping cell-tones, to the grinding churn of the fax machines, from the lively banter of text messages to the steady flow of voice streaming, the muted message of G-d – pleading for our return – struggles to be heard. As Rabbi Nachman said, "From everything screams the glory of G-d" (*Sichos Haran*, #52). G-d beckons us every day, as Rabbi Nachman continues, "The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He, constricts His Infinite Self to no end to summon us with 'Dear sons and daughters! Come, Return to Me'" (*Likutei*

Moharan, Vol. 1, Chap. 54). You just have to hear it. You have to get the hints. And if you're willing enough, you will! Then you will have **scored big** time!

2. Game Plan II – Prayer

Have you wanted to include G-d in your life, but don't know how? Do you have so much in life but still sense that something is missing? Are you afraid of making the sacrifices that it takes to commit to G-d? You're not alone! Every day, amidst the incessant pursuit of needs and pleasures, our inner selves long for meaning and purpose. Some of us hear the message, most of us ignore it. Why? The answer is simple. We don't know how to respond! But, in reality, you do – the answer is simple: To connect to G-d you have to talk to Him. This is what is meant by prayer. You're loved one is sick and needs to get well – ask G-d for help; You're starting a new business or changing careers and you're terrified of failure – tell it to G-d; You've gone out on a million dates and you're still alone – ask G-d for guidance; clothing, food, good grades, well-adjusted children, direction in life, whatever – we all have needs, and G-d can provide. We just

have to ask. This is how you build your faith, as Rabbi Nachman said, (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol. 1, Chap. 62) “If a person thoroughly believes that the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He is found [right] here with him, by him, and next to him – he would always talk to Him.” This is the litmus test; if you are able to maintain a dialogue with G-d – praying to Him and turning to Him in time of need – then it must mean that you believe in Him. You may not see it or feel it, but your fund of faith is steadily growing. Furthermore, this is what is meant by the term returning to G-d, as the Prophet said (*Hoshea*, Chap. 14, V. 1) “Return, O Israel, unto Hashem your G-d, because your sins have caused you to stumble” on which the Sages explained, “Even if a person stands in the market and curses and swears at Heaven, yet, because he repents – G-d accepts Him back” (See *Pesikta Rabasi*, Chap. 7). Now that’s encouraging! A person can stoop so low as to raise an accusing finger at Heaven – and yet, if he retracts and repents he’s granted forgiveness. Furthermore, the Prophet even provides the method of repair as is written, “Take with you words, and return to G-d”. Amazing! For those of us who have strayed so far from G-d, who for years have felt spiritually

dead and, out of frustration with all of life's problems – have turned our backs on Him, and even denied His existence – the Torah offers you hope for a way back in the form of a simple tip, “Take with you words” – talk to G-d, He wants to hear from you! As the Sages said, “In any language that Israel calls out to the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He, He answers them” (*Midrash Tehillim*, Chap 118, V. 9). Naturally you feel your faith is weak – it doesn't matter. Keep praying and talking to G-d and watch your faith grow. This message is so vital and fundamental that Rabbi Nachman made it his mission to spread it worldwide, as in his words, “The *Tzaddikim* – Righteous Ones, could not have achieved any [spiritual] level had they not accustomed themselves to speak [regularly] to the Blessed-One-Be-He” (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol. 2, Chap. 100). As we know, in every generation there are uniquely devout individuals whose intimate connection with G-d is only by means of their tenacious grip on the tethers of faith. They hear, see and understand what most of us don't, because every act they perform is with G-d in mind. They devote their lives to uncovering His concealed presence in the Universe in order to reveal hidden meanings to us. Their vision of

G-d is so immediate and real that they are not deceived by the temptations of the outside world and the incessant urge for material gain. Reaching beyond the superficial, they sense G-dliness in everything they see, hear or touch, as Rabbi Nachman said, “The Righteous Ones are called “*Melupum*” [which translated from the Hebrew means “full-mouthed”] because their mouths [so to speak] are filled with G-dliness” (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol. 1 Chapt. 24), or as the expression goes, the Name of G-d is always on the tip of their tongues! This is no easy feat! In every age, the devout are challenged to forgo the comfort of conformity and risk their popularity in order to uphold the tenets of faith, as the Sages said, “Avraham Avinu (Our forefather Abraham) was tried with ten tests and he withstood them all” (*Avos*, Chap 5). He was the first to promote to the world, the unpopular belief in one G-d – but not without having his sincerity tested in ten excruciating trials. And he triumphed! So much so that the Sages state that in his merit the world was created (*Bereishis Rabbah*, Chap 12, Par. 9). The secret to his success was his thorough conviction in G-d’s oneness, without leaving any room for doubt. If he needed anything, he went directly to G-d, as

the Sages said, “Avraham would pray [to G-d] on behalf of the barren [women] and they would conceive, for the sick and they would be healed” (*Bereishis Rabbah*, Chap. 1, Par. 39). Likewise, the miraculous power of the righteous ones in every generation lies in their diligent practice of speaking to G-d day and night. Now you heard it! Why not steal a few minutes a day – five, ten, or twenty – and closet yourself in a private room and pour your heart out to G-d. Tell G-d about all your problems and life issues. Feel the difference it will make in your life. If you prefer, select a more inspiring setting such as a field, forest or even a mountain and just sit on a rock and let your feelings flow. What can I say, there is no greater sense of relief and joy that a person can experience than opening up oneself to G-d. Go ahead, try it out for yourself. Experience the intimacy and sharing that develops between you and G-d. You’re never alone – G-d is always there for you in time of need, because you are armed with faith! You **scored big!** But remember, life is tough and at any moment you can backslide. It’s a constant battle, so use prayer to combat doubt and reduce tension. Pushing faith in a climate of non-belief takes work. When the eye only observes the actions of

men and not the hidden hand of G-d, it's easy to attribute everything to circumstance and luck. So, what goes through your mind?; the only way to earn is to hustle; to succeed you have to step on the other guy. Hence the motto "might is right." Wrong! You don't have any real power; it's all in your mind. Remember the expression? "Man tries and G-d laughs!" Today you're here and tomorrow you're gone, so what guarantee is there in life? But, how do you keep perspective and not delude yourself? Simple, only through prayer! If you consult with G-d on every matter until it becomes second nature, you will find your inner strength. You will **score big!** There is no greater triumph of the spirit than one born out of the conviction that I have no one, except G-d to rely on in the world. Etch this deeply in your heart, and you will be ahead of the game. As long as you continue to entertain in your mind that this one will help you, or that will save you – you're lost. No one will help you, and no one wants to help you. The only true resort in life is to turn to G-d, again and again. Remember, prayer nourishes the spirit; they work hand-in-hand. Recall how *Moshe* responded when the nation of *Amalek* arose to attack the Jews and weaken their resolve, as is

written, “And when *Moshe* raised his hand Israel prevailed (*Shemos*, Chap. 17, V. 11). Upon which our Sages rhetorically remarked, “Do the hands of *Moshe* break wars or win wars? Rather, When Israel looked Heavenward – they prevailed” (*Rosh Hashana*, Chapt. 29). What a powerful message of hope! With a single sweep of the arm, *Moshe* paves the way towards salvation and delivery, to the confused heart of any Jew who can’t cope and doesn’t know what to do. If this is you, then heed the message; if you’re having a hard time, turn to G-d. Note how the wording of the Torah underscores this idea as is written, “And behold his (*Moshe*’s) hands were faith” (*Shemos*, Chap. 15, V. 12), upon which the *Targum* comments, “And his hands were spread out in prayer”; one serves to reinforce the other. Prayer is the only way to combat the widespread apathy plaguing the soul of the Jew today. Metaphorically speaking, the eternal struggle to keep a faith perspective and not passively surrender to the belief that outcomes are due to merely nature, coincidence and luck is referred to as the battle to “Subdue *Amalek*”. In fact, from the verse, “To you G-d, is the Kingdom” – the Sages infer that every Jew is obliged to resist the negative influence of “*Amalek*”. And since our agendas

are mutually exclusive, our victory can only signal their demise. So, by bringing more awareness of G-d into the world you're, in effect, casting out "Amalek", so to speak. Unfortunately, they seem to have the upper hand today. Taking full advantage of our desperation and neediness, they flood the media and markets with a barrage of advertisements for products and methods that promise to cure all. The only success you will ever witness with this kind of quackery is having your pockets emptied. When will you wake up already! They're not out to save you, they're only in it for the fame and fortune. You want to stop feeling so needy? Then need only G-d – because the need for G-d conquers all other needs; the buck stops with Him! Likewise the *Torah* states, "The rain only falls on behalf of those that possess faith" (*Taanis*, 8b). When a Jew is strong in his faith-income will rain down on him. Furthermore it states, "Whoever is faithful, the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He bestows blessing through him" (*Shemos Rabbah* Chap 51, V. 1). Did you ever wonder why people turn to *Tzaddikim* – the righteous ones – in time of need? Could it be that somehow we are drawn to the sturdy assurance of their solid faith? By having trust in

their faith we are certain that their prayers will be heard and salvation will come. But it's not enough; you have to follow their example and also pray your way to faith. Then watch how **big** you will **score**.

3. Game Plan III – Joy

You reluctantly walk through the door. The disappointing scene repeats itself like a stale rerun. The family is sitting glumly around the table with longing eyes peering out of their sad faces. Like all nights, the chorus of complaints will ensue and you will surrender to defeat once again. But no, with a push of the button on the CD player it could all change!

Let the music fill the room and hope will fill your hearts. It doesn't always have to be like this; things can change; your situation can improve. G-d is great; just don't be afraid! Kick up your heels and dance to the music. Your family thinks your crazy? That's O.K. Happiness and joy are contagious. Soon enough they will join in the merriment, and then you will understand the secret of survival that has sustained the Jewish Nation throughout the ages. As the Sages

said, “The Jews were only worthy of singing the “Song of the Sea” because of their faith” (*Shemos Rabbah*, Chap. 23, V. 6). Recall how the fearsome and mighty Egyptian battalions pursued them. Furiously galloping towards the hapless Jews, they were just about to overtake them. Yet, how did the panicking Jews respond? Suddenly, from depths of their souls they summoned the courage to defy fear, and trust in G-d’s miraculous power to save. Their faith combined with the joy of deliverance moved them to sing the renowned “Song of the Sea”, in praise of G-d. Now, how many of us feel like the Jews of old, standing by the seashore at the brink of disaster? Business partners stabbing you in the back, bill collectors hounding you daily, merciless tuition committees harassing you every month for payment, teachers picking on you and chipping away at your ever-shrinking self-esteem, seminaries and yeshivas so readily rejecting your kids, neighbors giving you the cold-shoulder, your chronically unhappy spouse incessantly nagging you and the constant whispers of your own inner voice reminding you of how you’ve failed – is there any shortage of enemies in hot pursuit of your battered soul? What’s the answer? How can you

ever hope to emerge triumphant and **score big**? To win this one – believe it or not – you have to defy sadness and defeat, and simply be mightily and utterly joyous. If you remain steadfast in joy you will witness outright miracles in your life. The logic is simple. Joy gives you the courage to stand up to your fears and face them. Once the fear factor is gone – and you no longer fear your fears – you can think straight and start living your life (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol 2, Chap. 10). Fear is what is holding you back from being close to G-d. You are so intimidated by life and all your problems, you lose sight of who is really in control. Stop and think for a moment; why be afraid of others? Why all this unnecessary pressure and anxiety? Tell yourself again and again: G-d is with me, I shall not fear! It's really less than you're making it out to be. Hold on firmly to your faith and tell G-d everything that's bothering you. You will feel relieved and even happy – You'll **score big** time! It makes sense, because when you turn to G-d, you're no longer beholden to others. No one can break you. You'll see difference in your functioning level. Neuroses develop when you allow the opinions of other to rule you. Fearful of what this one will say or that one will think makes you overly anxious, and

then you slip easily into sadness and depression. This is precisely why Rabbi Nachman urged that, for the sake of a person's well-being, "It's a big *Mitzvah* to be always happy" (*Likutei Moharan*, Vol 2, Chap 24). Medical professionals would agree that the underlying cause of most illnesses and disorders is depression. It's common knowledge that, melancholy and depression suppresses the immune system rendering the body susceptible to a variety of ailments. On the other hand, defiant optimism and a joy-no-matter-what attitude, boosts your immune system and wards off disease. Remember, every ounce of joy that you can muster adds another plank to that bridge that will get you across the troubling waters in life. You're drowning in sorrow?; doesn't matter, force a smile and raise your spirit right now. Try something different for a change! You're moved to pray to G-d for help? How about turning to Him with joy, instead of the usual puddle of tears? Haven't we learned that, "We shouldn't rise for prayer except out of joy derived from a *Mitzvah*", (*Berachos* 31a). What is this telling us? Simple, before you begin praying, take a moment to reflect on your positive points such as your pride in being born

a Jew. Think about how privileged you are to perform the sacred acts, the *Mitzvos*, which literally bind you to G-d. This is your quality time with G-d, so don't let thoughts about others intrude and bring you down. On the contrary, focusing exclusively on G-d will set you free and make you fearless. You will **score big!** But remember, the key to success is to work tirelessly on keeping your spirits up. This is no simple feat. Most people are prone towards depression and lead bitter lives. So, take this advice and avoid the trap. Keep yourself busy and involved in performing the *Mitzvos*. The joy derived from performing these meaningful acts will keep you buoyantly optimistic, as the Sages said, "The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He said, "If you guard the *Mitzvos* and rejoice in them, I will add to your joy" (*Tanchuma Tazria* 5). Some of you may have a hard time relating to all of this. But think about it, you have the great fortune of being born a Jew; you are a link in the continuous chain of a people with a shared mission of transmitting the Torah down the line, to every generation, stretching all the way back to Sinai. Performing the *Mitzvos* helps you to reach beyond yourself because, in actuality you're doing the will of G-d. Your life takes on a

higher purpose and is infused with more meaning. The joy you experience will be of a deeper kind and more genuine. The same thing goes for learning Torah; when a person learns Torah it generates enthusiasm by expanding the mind and the heart, as the Torah states, (*Tehillim*, Chap. 19) “The Commandments of G-d are upright, gladdening the heart,” and which Mitzvah is paramount, if not learning Torah? Therefore, it’s incumbent on women to urge their husbands to learn Torah daily. In this way, they serve as partners with their spouses in this endeavor. Furthermore, women ought to be encouraged to listen to Torah discourses which inspire passion and moves them to pray. Remember, our joy is G-d’s joy, as the Torah says, “When the Jews involve themselves in Torah, perform charity and pursue justice, The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He rejoices with them” (*Tanna D’ve Eliyahu Rabba*, Chap.18). When you please G-d, you are pleasing yourself, and your self-confidence will soar. You will become fearless. You won’t cower before anyone because you rely only on G-d. Nothing can sink your ship in life! Remember however, never to push joy off to the next day. Kick up your heels and get happy, now. Yes, of course life is hard; with so

many problems you're just not in the mood. The Sages warned, "Joy does not wait for a person. Not everyone who is happy today will be happy tomorrow" (*Tanchumah Shemini*, Chap.2). So don't wait! Celebrate today and you'll **score big!**

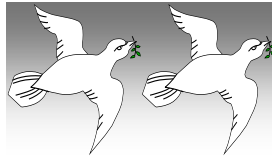
4. Game Plan IV – Love Thy Fellow Jew Through Acts of Kindness

Did you ever notice that when you're happy and in a great mood your heart fills with love and goodwill towards others? Brimming with joy, you can't help but do good for those around you? Joy is contagious and the best antidote against despair. So **score big**, by doing acts of kindness for others. Remember, G-d loves when we love our fellow Jew, and the best way to show it is through acts of kindness, as the Sages said, "The Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He said, the acts of kindness that you bestow on each other is more dear to me than all the sacrifices that were offered to me by [King] Solomon (*Yalkut Hoshea*, Chap. 522). King Solomon offered a thousand sacrifices daily, but the goodwill displayed between one Jew to the next ranks higher in G-d's eyes. Do you know that by helping your fellow Jew and acting kindly, it's as if you were

doing an act of kindness for G-d Himself? That's because every Jew is a part of G-d. Furthermore, the Sages said, "Whoever performs acts of kindness, it's as if he acknowledges all the miracles that G-d performed, and [conversely] anyone who refrains from acting kindly – it's as if he denies [G-d]" (*Yalkut Tehillim*, Chap 702). In other words, the eagerness to help a fellow Jew in need, reflects the strength of your inner conviction. Particularly in these perilous times, it's critical that we work on ourselves to remove any trace of prejudice that divides us, and just plainly love every Jew. We must remove all the walls and barriers built on false pride and deceit that pits one group of Jews against the other. Otherwise, Jewish society will continue splintering into rival factions reminiscent of the Generation of Dispersal. In such a climate of strife, it's not hard to imagine how *Ponzi* schemes can be invented to scam others out of billions, all while having a good laugh at their expense. Jews, it is time to unite! Why not bend over backwards and do something good for each other. Start now, start today! How many senior citizens are languishing in nursing homes waiting for anybody to stop by and give them some attention. Scores of patients are lying in

the hospital alone and afraid, hoping for someone to care enough to visit them. Grieving mourners sit longing for a modicum of comfort and consolation. Is there a shortage of opportunities for acts of compassion? And the merit is inestimable, as is written, "Great is the power of those that perform [acts of] kindness. They are not sheltered by the shadow of the earth, nor by the shadow of the dawn, nor by the shadow of the sun, nor by the shadows of the wings of the Cherubs, but [rather] by the shadow of the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He" (*Yalkut Rus*, Chap 602). Loving your fellow Jew is the pathway to loving G-d. Remember, you're not only doing good for your fellow Jew, you're also doing good for yourself. Taken under the wing of G-d, you'll feel like a different person with more meaning and purpose to your existence. But don't think this is such an easy task. For centuries, the Jewish people have been plagued by schism and strife. Corrupt leadership that incites the masses against each other, in the name of religion, has always abounded. Steer clear of those that reject other Jews outside their sect and discourage goodwill and unity. On the other hand, look for leadership who work to unite us as a people, by spreading goodwill

through acts of kindness and love. They are the true and genuine leaders of the Jewish People. Bear in mind that in the game called life, it's not all about competition. This game is won through faith, prayer, joy and cooperation. In this spirit you will truly **score big!**



לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת
דְּבוּרָה לָאָה בַת ר' שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁלֵמָה ע"ה
נִפְטָרָה ה' תְּמוּז תַּשְׁס"ח

לְעִילּוֹי נִשְׁמַת
יַעֲקֹב מֹשֶׁה מֵרַדְכֵי בֶן ר' יוֹאֵל ע"ה
נִפְטָר י"ד כֶּסֶלִיו תַּשְׁס"ט