

COURAGE TO CRY

The month of Tammuz leaves a trail of tears, beginning with the tragedies of *Shiva Asar B'Tammuz* and culminating on *Tisha B'Av*, the day of *Churban Beis HaMikdash*. Our wailing results from the senseless tears we shed upon receiving the *Meraglim's* distorted portrayal of Eretz Yisroel. Their description left us frightened and bewildered and caused us to cry. Hashem responded to those tears, saying, "You wept tears in vain. I will establish this date as a time of real weeping for all generations."

Chazal's choice of wording is intriguing. Why is our punishment characterized as 'real weeping'? Our millennia of tragedy and misfortune is our punishment, while the weeping is merely a result of that suffering. Shouldn't it read, 'I will establish *Tisha B'Av* a day of 'real tragedy'?

The answer is that Hashem's punishment for an *aveirah* is never merely to inflict pain; instead, it serves as a tailor-made *tikkun*, a precise reparation for the sin committed¹. The sinner endures a curative experience as the essential impurity of their sin is healed and transformed. *Chazal* teach us that the penance/*tikkun* for our initial unwarranted tears can only be our weeping, our generations of wailing over personal and collective misfortune.

How exactly do our tears amend our initial, misguided wailing? What is the essence of tears, and what is their power of remedy and *tikkun*?

בכי, crying, is generated by מְבוּכָה, confusion². When one experiences a complete loss of direction, having no way to



¹ ענין שהעונש יסודה בתיקון החטא הוא בחי' כי לא אחפוץ במות המת (יחזקא' יח, לב), וראה לדוגמא באד"א (ברא' ג, יז-יט) ובנפח"ח שער א פ"ו לענין תיקון חטא אדה"ר. וז"ל רוח חיים (אבות ג, ב): אחרי אשר ידענו כי העונשים לחוטאים אינם בתורת נקמיי כעונש בשר ודם, רק בהכרח, כי החטא בעצמו מלפנתו לאדם וצריך חבטה וניעור להפרידו וללבנו ולרחצו וכו', עי"ש עוד, ובבית הלוי עה"ת (ברא' יח, כ): רק דכל העונשים הכתובים בתורה אינם בגדר עונש ונקמה חלילה רק המה בגדר תיקון וכו', ועי' ס' הלשם (ס' הדע"ה ג, א).

² כ"ה בשם הגר"א עה"כ (שמות יד, ג) נבוכים הם בארץ, ועי"ש במזרחי, רש"י ישעי' ט, יז, רד"ק איוב כח, יא.
³ כל"ה הכתוב (שמות כב, כח) מלארך ודמעך לא תאחר. ר"ל, תרומה המעורבת בחולין נקראת 'דימוע'.

גליון זה מוקדש לזכות ולרפואתו השלימה של
יעקב בן מרים נ"י

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move forward, that utter confusion and helplessness makes them cry. דמְנוּת, tears, as well, are from the root³ דימוע – as tears express and mirror one's confusion, leaving eyes blurred, clouding vision and clarity.

The *Meraglim* provoked tears of confusion. As *Chazal* tell us, they confounded themselves by being לעינ' פה לעינ', placing their 'mouth before their eye,' reporting what they had not seen in Eretz Yisroel. Instead of using their 'eye' to see the authentic beauty and reality of Eretz Yisroel, they based their perception of the land upon pre-conceived notions and agendas, their 'mouth.' Their report left us feeling alone and adrift in the *Midbar*, aimless and confused, crying. Tears as such, borne of adamant delusion, convey anger and blame and only bring more confusion and destruction.

And then there are tears of courage. When we fearlessly admit our perceptions are false and our life's decisions have led us nowhere, our eyes also fill with tears. In great courage, we close our eyes and humbly weep as we confront our overwhelming confusion. We do not cower, resort to anger, blame, or move on in pleasant denial; instead, we daringly experience the abyss of our turmoil and mourn lost opportunities.

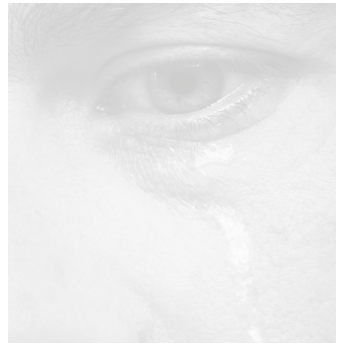
The tears of the *Meraglim* were of cowardice and confusion, while ours are of courage and clarity. They cried, insisting that their perception of reality was correct, while we cry knowing that our perception is wrong, profoundly longing to acquire a true sense of reality and discover our long-lost direction.

We are taught that when we valiantly close our eyes, tears washing over them to cloud vision and experience confusion, these tears rinse away uncertainty and recalibrate our perception. Our eyes 'shut' to their former vision, and a

fresh perspective and clear view lie before them when they open again.

In times of uncertainty and pain, my bubby, Rebbitzen Gifter, 'שתתדי', would tell me, 'Ir darfst nor ein gutta gevein.' 'You simply need one healthy cry.' Find the courage and allow yourself to shed some tears, not of anger or despair, but of cleansing and restoration. You'll find clarity and direction for your desired path when they dry.

Our culture is not one of crying. How often do we let ourselves cry, close our eyes to experience the abysmal void of our confusion, and humbly acknowledge how lost we feel? For a *Yid*, this is the task and very purpose of our painful *Galus* and the particular *avodah* of the Three Weeks. Now, we attain the *siyata dishmaya* to garner courage and perform this profound work, crying the tears of cleansing and salvation. Our deliverance lies in sensing the very sting of our blurred tears, in the dreadful darkness of our devastating confusion; only from therein, clarity and the redemption of *Moshiach* are borne.



'YOU SIMPLY NEED ONE HEALTHY CRY.'

Our eyes, our very souls, ache to weep these tears of *tikkun*, to finish the *avodah* of לדורות בכייה, ending the torrent of tears shed for generations. May we find the courage to shed just a few more tears, and then our eyes will soon witness ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים.

כי עין בעין ידאו בשוב ה' ציון.

במהרה בימינו, אמן.

Rabbi Tzvi Feuer



DISCOVER THE 6 VERSATILE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF PLANTS

DID YOU KNOW?

Flowers can improve anxiety, even in very stressful situations. Studies have shown that hospital patients with flowers in their rooms feel less anxious, are more optimistic about their recovery, and need less post-operative care than patients without plants.

Flowers can help you sleep. Of particular note is lavender. The smell of lavender is proven to lower your heart rate and blood pressure, which enables you to relax and is more likely to help you drift off into a restful sleep.

Flowers can improve your memory. The flower that wins out for this one is rosemary!

Flowers' colors can change your emotions. Yellow is usually associated with happiness and sunshine. Blue can help you feel calm and can encourage creativity. Red is connected to concentration and attention to detail, and green is linked to safety; therefore, many leafy plants can provide a comfortable environment.

Flowers can make you more productive. Studies have shown that offices, classrooms, and lecture halls all benefit from plants! Those with plants show increased attendance, brain performance, creativity, and productivity!

Gardening can be good for your mental health, so there is no need to wait for someone to give you flowers – plant some of your own! All that digging, planting, and pruning provides fresh air and a sense of achievement.

So why not take a step towards better mental health? Consider buying some potted plants for your room at home, in your office, or even a small one for your car!



MEDICAL MOVEMENT

LOW-DOSE LITHIUM IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

'Cure Parkinson's' and 'Van Andel Institute' (VAI) in England have set aside funding for a clinical trial to investigate whether lithium, a drug currently used to treat mood disorders, could be repurposed to slow the progression of Parkinson's. The U.S. has been using it to treat bipolar disorder since 1970, but lithium seems to hold some possibilities as a treatment for Parkinson's Disease (PD). Using a drug that has been around for years can rapidly bring new treatments to the public.

The U.S. National Institutes for Health (NIH) has already said they will fund 15 patients with PD, and Cure Parkinson's and VAI will fund an additional 20 participants. This will be a phase 1b international trial and will hopefully be an essential step in evaluating lithium's potential use as a treatment to slow or stop the progression of the illness. As Parkinson's is an immensely complex disorder,



many researchers are looking forward to the results of this study, which may support using a simple and inexpensive therapy to slow, stop, or reverse Parkinson's progression.

Two biomarkers of Parkinson's may be significantly affected by low-dose lithium. The first is Nuclear receptor-related 1 protein (Nurr1). This protein plays a vital role in creating new dopamine neurons, cells that are progressively and rapidly lost in Parkinson's. In a 2019 pilot study of lithium for Parkinson's, low-dose lithium was found to increase Nurr1 levels, which may promote dopamine neuron survival in people with

Parkinson's, therefore potentially slowing disease progression. The second biomarker would be 'free water' levels in the brain. Free Water refers to fluid in the brain that is not bound in cells and is a marker of dopamine neuron loss. Its increase is one of the leading disease progression biomarkers in PD. The 2019 pilot study suggested that low-dose lithium may be able to reduce this free water increase in the brain, which in turn would slow the loss of dopamine neurons.

A NEW BLOOD TEST FOR PARKINSON'S COULD DETECT IT YEARS BEFORE SYMPTOMS APPEAR.

In another exciting, unrelated development, researchers have developed an AI-assisted blood test for Parkinson's Disease (PD), which could predict the condition for up to seven years before symptoms begin. Researchers from the UK and Sweden screened blood samples from 99 people with PD and 36 people without the condition. They used a form of AI (artificial intelligence) to identify eight essential proteins or biomarkers common to those with Parkinson's. They then analyzed blood samples taken a decade ago from 72 people with a sleep condition called Rapid Eye Movement Disorder, who are known to be at higher risk of developing PD. The AI tool identified these eight proteins in their blood and correctly predicted which people would go on to develop Parkinson's.

Crucial to treating PD is diagnosing patients before they develop symptoms, as once the neurons have died out, we are unable to 're-grow' them. However, a diagnosis that can identify potential PD patients years in advance using a simple blood test means that drug therapies can potentially be given at an earlier stage, which could slow down disease progression or even prevent it from occurring.

A Good Night's Sleep

Overcoming Parkinson's Sleep-Related Challenges

On June 6th, 2024, we had the privilege of hosting Dr. Jose Cabassa, MD, a distinguished neurologist with specialized training in Parkinson's and movement disorders. Dr. Cabassa, the founder of the 'Moving Brains Foundation,' which offers the first physician-monitored, skill-based, moderate to high-intensity Parkinson's Disease fitness program in NYC, shared his wealth of knowledge in a presentation that we are excited to summarize for you.

Given the breadth of Dr. Cabassa's insights, our summary can only scratch the surface of the many

points he discussed. We urge you to watch the full video of the event on the LifeSpark website (under the 'Education' tab) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this crucial topic.

Dr. Cabassa began with the basics, saying that a good night's sleep correlates with good health and that we must understand how sleep works. To do this, we need to discuss what happens with our nighttime vitals, blood pressure, heart rate, and temperature, which are all supposed to go down during sleep. If they do not, we must evaluate what is interfering to discover a

Harvesting Health

How Gardening can help you live well with Parkinson's



Gardening can be an enjoyable and beneficial pastime for people with Parkinson's. It's not just physical but also mental. Mental exercises are involved, and yard work can relieve stress and opportunities for social connections. This cognitive stimulation can be a great way to keep your mind active and engaged.

Deciding to garden would require your brain to focus and concentrate! You will need to think about where you will be gardening. Will it be indoors or outdoors? Where specifically will it be? To answer that you need to think about what you will be planting and what its sunlight needs are. You must check out the spots in your yard or windowsills to see how much sunlight that area gets and how much of the day it is.

After making these decisions, the physical part begins. You must use your hands and fingers to perform many tasks. This will strengthen fine motor skills and build strength and flexibility. You must also stand, reach, sit, squat, bend, and twist. These are wonderful ways of stretching and strengthening muscle groups in your upper body, neck, arms, shoulders, and hips, in addition to strengthening your body's muscular framework – your core. That, in turn, can assist in better bowel and bladder control and reduce heart rate and blood pressure.

Exposure to the sun and natural green spaces is calming and stress-relieving. As the landscape takes shape, you will feel great satisfaction and accomplishment. Your oasis can become a peaceful refuge from the daily

difficulties you encounter as a person with Parkinson's. You can also use gardening for personal reflection, one-on-one time with your spouse or a good friend, or as a special bonding activity with your entire family!

To live well with Parkinson's, staying engaged with others and socializing frequently is essential. Horticultural activities provide the perfect opportunity. They are rewarding recreation for friends, grandchildren, or other family members and give you special memories of the time spent with them. They are a way to share ideas or favorites with other gardeners and cultivate friendships with people who share your interests. This sense of connection can be a powerful tool in your journey with Parkinson's.

Try your hand at botanical care as the weather turns warmer, with or without a green thumb! You will be thrilled to notice how it can help you live well!



Remember to discuss with your care team before engaging in any new exercise program, including gardening. Also, remember to wear sunscreen when out in the sun, stay hydrated, and use caution when lifting or moving heavy items.

Breaking Down Barriers Parkinson's, Mental Health & Stigma

On Sunday July 7th, LifeSpark had the honor of hosting Gloria Lebeaux, LCSW, to speak about mental health challenges and how they relate to Parkinson's disease. Gloria explained why many individuals with Parkinson's experience anxiety, depression, or even apathy and shared concrete and practical advice to help combat these struggles. She educated the audience on the stigma attached to these challenges and how to eliminate them. It was indeed a riveting event and a must-watch for all of us!

You can watch the full video of the event on the LifeSpark website (under the 'Education' tab).

Contact Lifespark for information about Gloria's practice and support groups.

BREAKING

NEWS

The 'National Plan to End Parkinson's Act' has made history. It passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in the US House of Representatives in December 2023. Then, on May 23, 2024, Congress unanimously passed it, and on July 2, 2024, President Joe Biden signed it into law. This is a historic step forward, a moment that will be remembered in the search for improved treatments and, ultimately, a cure for every patient impacted by Parkinson's.

A cross-country strategy to end Parkinson's and Atypical Parkinsonism has the potential to:

- ◆ Dramatically increase federal research funding
- ◆ Develop more effective pathways for treatments and cures
- ◆ Improve early diagnosis
- ◆ Spark new and improved models for patient care
- ◆ Create standards and measures to prevent Parkinson's disease
- ◆ Address health disparities in diagnosis, treatment, and clinical trial participation
- ◆ Enhance public awareness of the disease.

To accomplish this incredible feat, policy advocates, Parkinson's patients, and partner organizations all rallied together for years to help policymakers understand just how critical this legislation is. They used every means possible – petitions, calling and writing to representatives and senators, pitching op-eds, using social media, writing articles, blogs, mass emails, and many more.

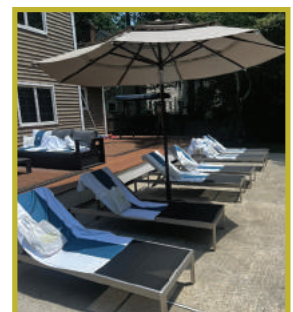
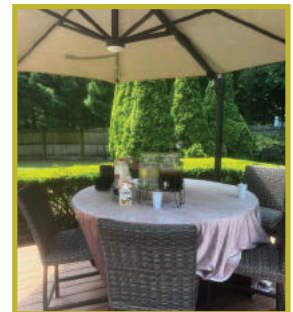
Swim n' Sun

Caregivers Event

We knew that with sun, water, and food, this was an event that no one would want to miss, and we're thrilled to say that it far exceeded everyone's expectations, thanks to your participation and dedication!

On Wednesday, June 26th, several of our very dedicated caregivers got together for our annual Swim 'N Sun at the home of Riki Feuer in Toms River. On that hot, 95-degree day, the pool's cool waters were inviting, but the shmoozing and camaraderie in the air-conditioned dining room were even more tempting. Caregivers relaxed and connected, shmoozed, and could be themselves with other women who cared and 'got them.' The sumptuous dishes graced the table, and ladies sampled salads, salmon, pasta, and more. Smoothies, iced coffee, and delectable desserts rounded out the light lunch. Everyone went home feeling rejuvenated, understood, and with a stronger feeling that they are not alone. The lovely beach towel and water bottles in our signature LifeSpark bag will be a pleasant reminder of this delightful event, a testament to the care and support we provide to each other.

We can't wait to see you at our next event! Get ready for more fun, connection, and memorable experiences. Stay tuned for more details and get ready to be part of something special!



solution and manage these symptoms. For example, if someone is in pain, their blood pressure rate goes up, and they will likely not be able to fall asleep, so their pain would need to be managed. Regarding all the above symptoms, we must always determine if they are being triggered by a specific medical condition or if they are merely a part of the natural aging process.

We go through various non-REM (Rapid Eye Movement) and REM sleep stages throughout the night. REM sleep is when we dream and have the deepest sleep. For a healthy sleep, 20-25% of it should be REM sleep. Deep sleep is also crucial for memory, so cognitive and even motor symptoms will all be affected if REM sleep is affected. During REM sleep, the lymphatic system eliminates 'waste' in the brain, so without that maintenance, proteins can build up and exacerbate all Parkinson's symptoms as well. Furthermore, lack of REM sleep will affect the blood pressure the next day, and prolonged lack of REM sleep can lead to cardiac arrhythmia. Prescribed medications wouldn't work as well either.

It is interesting to note that although Parkinson's patients can typically be less mobile by day, during their REM sleep, they can be as active as before the disease began. They have even been known to leap out of bed, causing injury to themselves or their spouses.

The doctor shared one important insight, a 'tip,' to help with a good night's sleep. The tip is to use one's bed for sleep only, not for reading long books, watching the news, or playing games. Anything done before bed may be incorporated and affect one's dream/sleep stage, so keeping things calm, light, and devoid of stress is best.

Some medications treat REM Disorder from the Benzodiazepine family, such as Clonazepam. However, treatments can be tricky for the following reasons:

- Medications can help you fall asleep but don't induce a deep sleep.
- Violent behavior during sleep can be sporadic and occur very infrequently. Medicating would not be healthy if it weren't necessary most nights. The issue can be combated if a spouse realizes that the Parkinson's patient is now having a dangerously active REM stage, and they can wake up the patient and administer the medication on an as-needed basis.
- Other dopamine-producing medications begin to wear off by evening, so people with PD experience stiffness, making it harder for them to fall asleep and remain asleep. A lower dose, extended-release levodopa, can help alleviate stiffness through the night.
- Apnea is episodes of struggling to breathe in the middle of sleep. If sleep issues are determined to be due to Central Sleep Apnea (not due to obstruction such as obesity), then a CPAP device may need to be worn.
- Restless Leg Syndrome is the hardest to treat. Even if they fall asleep, they cannot stay asleep because they are so restless. One medication that can be used is Dopamine Agonist, but doctors hesitate to prescribe it due to side effects.

This is a small presentation sample; please see the video on our website to watch the whole talk.

Here are some of the ideas Dr. Cabassa added during the Q & A session following his talk:

- If sleeping pills don't work, the best thing to do is high-intensity, high-quality exercise. This is the #1 antidote! Exercise helps increase deep sleep, memory, and all physical functions.
- Melatonin can be used, but it is preferable to be taken a few hours before sleep when the body naturally produces it. Low doses, such as 2-3 mg, are usually sufficient.
- Room temperature can also affect sleep, but this depends on each individual, depending on how hot or cold is best for their sleep.



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We just finished listening to your webinar. WOW! There was so much information, it was hard to capture it all. I would be interested in Ms. Lebeaux's information and links to the webinar. Thanks again! Keep up the good work!
- L. P.

Please reach out to LifeSpark's office and we will be happy to give you her contact info.
- LifeSpark

Dr. Cabassa's speech on sleep-related challenges was very informative. I found it especially interesting to hear that melatonin should ideally be taken a few hours before sleep to mimic the body's natural melatonin production rather than right before going to bed.
- K. G.

Yesterday's event on Parkinson's and Stigma was incredible. I felt so validated, and I know that I now have ways to work through the challenges I am facing.
- M.H.

Thank you so much for a beautiful event. It's so very special how you have us wives in mind. I don't have to tell you how challenging our lives have become, and knowing someone cares makes a difference!!!
- A Grateful Caregiver

As someone who has been trying to fight Parkinson's stigma challenge for so long, Gloria's virtual event on mental health was clear, practical, and organized.
- Anonymous

Thank you so much for the caregivers' event. It was beautifully set up, the food was delicious, & the camaraderie was enjoyable. I learned a lot from everyone. The swim was extremely relaxing, and the soft music playing in the background added to the experience. Thank you again!
- C.G.

You thought of everything! The towel and water bottle were most appreciated!!! Believe it or not, I never wanted to "fargin" myself to buy a normal water bottle -- now I'm enjoying the one you gave us - immensely!!!
- M. M.

SUMMER WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:



Monday

ACTIVE MOVEMENT

AVIVA POLTER,
CPT, CFP, CBI, CTI



WOMEN 9:30

Wednesday

BALANCE & CORE STRENGTHENING

BATYA KASSOVER, CPT



WOMEN 9:40

Thursday

PARKINSONS SPECIFIC BOXING

NAFTOLI SCHNALL



MEN 2:30



Now inviting Caregivers to Join our Classes!

All classes have an option to join live virtually via zoom. 24 hour notice required. Call 732.806.1133 ext 301 text 732.443.0071 whatsapp 732.534.6388 paulette@lifesparkpd.com. Fee is \$15 per class.u

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