

You shall not take the Name of Hashem, your G-d, in vain. (20:7)

Simply put, the *Torah* is teaching us that to utter Hashem's Name in vain shows contempt for Hashem's Name and disgraces It. In *HaEmunah u'HaBitachon*, the *Ramban* writes that one who has a spiritual awakening, a profound appreciation of the greatness and wonders of Hashem, must immediately concretize this inspiration and make it a part of his life. Otherwise, if he does not make use of this inspiration, he will continue on the same trajectory as before. With no upward swing, he transgresses the prohibitive commandment: *lo tisa es Shem Hashem lashav*.

Hashem says, *B'chol makom asher azkir es Shemi, A'vo eilecha u'Beirachticha*, "Wherever I permit My Name to be mentioned, I shall come to you and bless you" (*Shemos 20:21*). *Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl*, interprets this to mean that, whenever Hashem uplifts us and provides us with an opportunity to derive spiritual insight, we must reciprocate by elevating ourselves spiritually. Otherwise, the moment is a waste. We must seize the moment, capture its essence, and build on it. If one succeeds in achieving this goal, Hashem will bless him. If he ignores the opportunity, he transgresses the prohibitive nature of *lo tisa*.

Preserving moments of spiritual sanctity is an essential component of maintaining and deepening our connection with Hashem. If we act accordingly, we will have the opportunity to draw strength from these moments over time. Anchoring the inspiration with specific actions, such as a personal practice, serves as a reminder of the moment of inspiration. Spiritual sanctity is a gift that carries one forward. By taking conscious steps to preserve these moments, we transform fleeting experiences into lifelong sources of strength and connection.

During the time the *Chafetz Chaim* was drafting his *Hilchos Lashon Hora*, the sage visited a marketplace where one of the brokers was describing his product to rapt attentive audiences, hanging on his every word. This audience taught the *Chafetz Chaim* a powerful lesson: People are ready to believe in almost anything if they think it can buy them physical benefit. Yet, when it comes to embracing spiritual truths, people are hesitant. The sage was so inspired by what he saw that he wrote it down and committed himself to reviewing his experience and its message daily. He understood that Hashem had graced him with an incredible opportunity for spiritual growth. By embedding the lesson into his daily routine, he ensured that the lesson would uplift him long after the inspiration had passed.

Some people see the message or inspiration glaring at them, and they refuse to acknowledge it. A well-known vignette concerns *Horav Noach Weinberg, zl*, and a young college student who walked into the *yeshivah*. The young man sauntered into the *yeshivah* (*Aish HaTorah*) one day and made a beeline for the *Rosh Yeshivah's* office. "Are you the *Rosh Yeshivah*?" the fellow asked *Rav Weinberg*. "That is what they call me" was the *Rosh Yeshivas's* reply. "My name is Abe," the fellow began, "and I would like to know the purpose of the *yeshivah*."

The *Rosh Yeshivah* looked at the young man as questions coursed through his mind, "What are his origins? What is it he wants to hear? I figure that, if Hashem caused him to appear at my doorstep, it must be for a good reason. I should engage him in conversation and see where it would lead." "What do you think is the purpose of *yeshivah*?" "A *yeshivah* is a place dedicated to increasing one's *Torah* knowledge and bring one closer to G-d" was Abe's reply. He immediately continued, "Knowing that this is the purpose of a *yeshivah*, I know that it is not for me. You see, I have a strong intimate relationship with the Almighty. He really cares about me and looks out for my welfare."

When the *Rosh Yeshivah* heard this, he countered, "I am honored to have the privilege of being in the presence of one who has such a relationship with Hashem. Please share with me how you know that Hashem cares deeply for you."

"It is quite simple," said Abe. "I was traveling through the United States on my motorcycle. One day, I was traveling on a narrow road through the Rocky Mountains. It was especially tricky since one side was a mountain and the other side a sheer drop of a couple thousand feet. I had no room for error. I was traveling casually, soaking in the beauty of the view. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a car came charging toward me in the opposite lane. He was traveling much too fast to negotiate the curve and remain in his lane. I did not know what to do; swerving to the right meant crashing into the mountain; swerving to the left meant flying through the air with the remote chance that I would have a 'soft' landing.

"I figured that I had no choice and swerved left. Immediately, I had this euphoric feeling of gliding through the air. I screamed at the top of my lungs- certain that this was my 'good-bye' to life. The next thing I knew, my motorcycle was stuck between two rocks! Now if that is not a miracle-what is? This is why I am certain that G-d and I are close."

The *Rosh Yeshivah* had listened intently, while staring deeply into Abe's eyes. He waited for Abe to finish speaking, and then he spoke, "There is no question that you are the fortunate beneficiary of a miracle. I firmly believe that Hashem saved you that day—and, for that, you must be most thankful. I have only one question to ask you: Who do you think caused you to fall off the mountain?"

Abe stood still, stunned. He had to catch his breath. Indeed, Hashem saved him- but Hashem also set into motion the need for him to be saved. He was sent a Heavenly communication: "Change your life. Riding a motorcycle through the Rocky Mountains is not the way a nice Jewish boy should be spending the prime of his life. Go to *yeshivah*. LEARN. Change your life. Abe enrolled in *Aish HaTorah*—and stayed. He seized the moment."