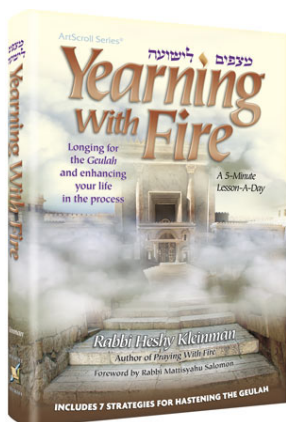
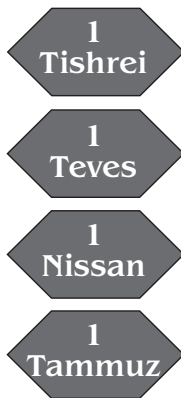




DAY 1



ACHIEVING THE ULTIMATE

Throughout the world, thousands of men spend hours each day and night, poring over the sacred words of the Talmud. Every Shabbos, Yom Tov, and even during the week, thousands of individuals have opened their hearts and homes to anyone in need: in need of a warm nutritious meal; a warm, caring word; and a warm, welcoming heart. During the week, from the wee hours of the morning till long after midnight, thousands of Jews learn the daily daf (folio of Talmud) in the many shuls that dot the landscape. Tehillim groups are proliferating in every neighborhood.

In the morning and the afternoon, streets are clogged with traffic as an army of buses transport thousands of Jewish children to and from Jewish schools. The broad spectrum of religious Jews strives to enhance their day-to-day existence with a myriad of good deeds and stellar behavior. Jews of all ages are engaged in bikur cholim, seeking shidduchim for others, kiruv, harbatzas Torah, tzedakah, and in sharing their God-given bounty with others in all areas. There is more Torah learned, more chesed performed, more charity dispensed, and more emphasis on growth in Yiddishkeit than at any other time in our long and difficult exile.

If there were a "Torah-meter" that could measure all the learning, *shiurim*, yeshivos, shuls, and mitzvah observance occurring around the globe during the past seventy years, it would surely soar right over the top. The rebirth of Torah Judaism that began after World War II has been nurtured by the explosion of new technology and media,

enabling Torah learning and inspiration to reach every corner of the globe.

Several hundred new *sefarim* each year add to this vigorous flow of Torah learning. Organizations seeking elevated levels of mitzvah performance abound. Shabbos, *tzenius*, *tefillah*, *shemiras halashon*, *shaatnez*, *shemitah*, and more have taken root and blossomed. Talented, charismatic speakers carry the Torah's message to the masses of Jews in communities around the world.

Yet, we still find ourselves in exile, longing for the Ultimate Redemption. With each passing day we perceive that we still have a way to go. It's time to examine why; what stands between our hearts and the purifying power of the Torah we embrace?

As we prepare to examine this question and strive to remedy the situation by removing the final roadblocks to the *Geulah*, let us revitalize ourselves to the task by attempting to comprehend the world of *Geulah* in all its material and spiritual splendor.

Take It With You

► *Torah learning and inspiration have proliferated in the past seventy years as never before.*

► *We must strive to remove the final roadblocks to the Geulah.*

1 Tishrei — For continued strength and good health for
חיה מרים בת רחל

our dear mother-in-law and grandmother
Pam Leitman and Melanie Leitman

1 Teves — לע"נ הרב בצלאל מרדכי ב"ר אהרן זצ"ל

1 Nissan — לזכות הגאולה השלמה ובנין בית המקדש במהרה בימנו

1 Tammuz — In memory of our friend, teacher and
inspiration Reb. Zlata Geisinsky

Dedicated by Bob & Nancy Weissman



DAY 2

2
Tishrei

2
Teves

2
Nissan

2
Tammuz

UTOPIA

Let's look for the good in what happened," Zev's wife encouraged him when he lost his job. "You'll have a little time for yourself and the grandkids, now. You can spend more time learning Torah while you look for another job. Think of it as an opportunity!"

"If I knew I'd have another job a month from now, I'd see it that way. But right now, I'm just scared. How will I support our family if nothing comes through soon? I'll be sunk!"

In the world we inhabit now, where God's presence is hidden, Zev faces a tremendous challenge. The mitzvah of *emunah*, belief in God, requires that Zev instill in himself a conviction that even if the situation looks bad, it has been planned by God for his ultimate good.

The world redeemed, however, operates in perfect harmony. Pain and suffering no longer play a role, for the inherent good in all God does is no longer hidden. Yeshayah paints the Messianic era as a time of ultimate bliss:¹ "The eyes of the blind shall be clear-sighted, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened...the lame shall leap as a hart and the tongue of the mute shall sing..."²

The Gemara³ describes the Messianic era as a time of extraordinary fertility. Trees will grow ripe fruits every day, and Eretz Yisrael's wilderness will be "like Eden, and her desert like the garden of God."⁴ Even the burdens of earn-

1. 35:5-6.

2. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 95:1; *Tanchuma*, *Vayigash* 8 and *Metzora* 2.

3. *Shabbos* 30b; *Kesubos* 111b.

4. *Yeshayah* 51:3. See *Yechezkel* 36:29-30, also *Rambam*, *Hilchos Melachim* 12:5: "At that time there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor strife. All good things will be bestowed in abundance, and all delicacies will be accessible like dust." See, however, *Midrash Tehillim* 87:3.

ing a livelihood will be relieved, as “Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks and aliens shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.”⁵ As the Rambam states:⁶ “In those [Messianic] days it will be so much easier for people to earn a livelihood up to the point that one will work very little in a business and will achieve great profit.”⁷

In the Messianic era, anti-Semitic incidents, including attacks on individual Jews and on Jewish properties, will cease. The Jewish people will have the opportunity to rise to the status of sages,⁸ for they will come to know their Creator to the utmost capacity of human beings. As Yeshayah describes: “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.”⁹

This is not a fantasy world; it is *our* world — redeemed. Throughout that world, the overwhelming preoccupations with politics, wars, scandals, and headlines will simply vanish, to be replaced by one intense passion — to know God.¹⁰

At that time, our spiritual sensitivity will be so exquisitely refined that we will perform the Torah’s commandments motivated solely by the deep spiritual euphoria they engender. No one will have to compel us, nor will we have to compel ourselves to fend off laziness or distraction, for there will be no greater source of satisfaction than to do God’s will.¹¹

5. Yeshayah 61:5; see also *ibid.* 49:23 and 60:10-12.

6. *Peirush HaMishnah, Sanhedrin* 10:1.

7. However, see *Shabbos* 63a, where it states that there will be poor people, “For the poor shall not cease from the land” (*Devarim* 15:11). See *Ritva* on *Shabbos* 63a, s.v. *Ein bein*, which states that although there will be poor people they will not have a longing for material things. See *Meshech Chochmah, Devarim* 19:8; *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 3, pp. 353-354; *Sifra D’Tzniusa (Gra)*, Ch. 1, p. 10; *Gra* on *Berachos* 34b, for additional explanations. Also see *Kesef Mishneh* on *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 8:7.

8. See *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 5, p. 163, s.v. *V’yoseir mizeh*, which states that they will have *ruach hakodesh*.

9. 11:9. See *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 12:5. See also *Netzach Yisrael*, Ch. 42.

10. *Rambam, ibid.*

11. See *Rambam, Peirush HaMishnah*, Introduction to *Sanhedrin* Ch. 10, which states that the Divine blessings that will come with Mashiach’s arrival are not an end in themselves. Our longing for the

Take It With You

- ▶ *Several sources describe the Messianic era as a time free of illness, strife, and sorrow, filled with spiritual clarity and material abundance.*
- ▶ *The Rambam states that the main feature of Messianic times will be the Jewish people's freedom from foreign powers, which will enable us to devote ourselves totally to serving God.*
- ▶ *In either scenario, the primary trait of the Time to Come is the Jewish people's total attachment to God, and the vast euphoria that state will engender.*

In the Rambam's view,¹² the main difference between the present world and the Messianic days is "delivery from servitude to foreign powers."¹³ Yet, that one transformation will be enough to free us to become completely absorbed in Torah and mitzvos,¹⁴ opening an era ruled by goodness, kindness, wisdom, knowledge, and truth. Therefore, even though the world will continue to function in its normal manner, human society will be so exalted that "there will be neither war nor hunger, nor jealousy nor competition."¹⁵ The natural outcome of that state will be a perfect world, where one will bask in the glow of the *Shechinah's* presence, his every need fulfilled. Even the common man will have perfect faith that God provides for him, freeing him from his struggle for sustenance and his inner struggles with jealousy and hate.

Thus, the magnificent vision of the era of Mashiach's time is the ultimate prospering of a partnership between God and the Jewish people. Just as God "suffered" together with us as we were persecuted through the centuries, when the time comes for rejoicing, God will revel with us when we experience the glory of the *Geulah*.

Messianic era is *not* for the sake of dominating the world. Nor is it so that we "have much produce and wealth, ride horses, and indulge in wine and song, as is thought by some confused people."

12. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:1-2; see *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:2.

13. See *Berachos* 34b. See also *Ohr HaChaim* on *Shemos* 21:11.

14. *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:2.

15. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 12:5. See *Lechem Mishneh* on *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:2, which states that when the Rambam writes, "There will be no difference between the current age and the Messianic era except [the emancipation] from our subjugation to the [gentile] kingdoms," he did so only to support his point that the laws of nature will remain in effect.

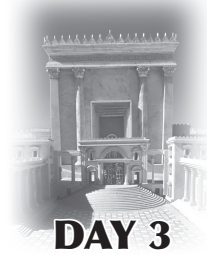
2 Tishrei — By Cory and Jonathan Glaubach in honor of their children, רחל דבורה, אברהם לייב, בתי פסיה, אברהם לייב, רחל דבורה

2 Teves — Dedicated to the Woolf And Fortinsky Families by Dr. David and Tovit Fortinsky and family

2 Nissan —

2 Tammuz — לע"נ הרה"ג ר' פלטיאל בן ר' דוד ישעיהו ז"ל
Dedicated by his family

EARNING REWARD



DAY 3

In our world today, good and evil, with the consequences of reward and punishment, are the operative systems of the world in which man finds himself. Throughout the Torah, reward and punishment encourage the Jewish people's adherence to the mitzvos.¹ God promises abundant sustenance, political sovereignty, honor and security among the nations of the world, clarity and purpose to those who adhere, and the opposite — war, famine, humiliation at the hands of enemies, confusion and despair — to those who do not.² From the time of Adam, man has been engaged in a struggle with his own evil inclination³ in order to earn reward for the right choice and to avoid punishment for the wrong one.⁴

Nevertheless, the rewards and punishments that play out in the physical world are not the ultimate consequences of our actions. The definitive reward is reserved for the spiritual realm, for our lives in the World to Come. Service to God in this world is the means to earn merit for that eternal reward; the material rewards and challenges of the physical world are given only as tools with which to earn that merit.⁵

The Messianic era, besides bringing us great blessings in this world, will provide us with a vastly heightened ability to earn eternal merit, since all the obstructions that stand between us and God will have vanished. It is for that rea-

3
Tishrei

3
Teves

3
Nissan

3
Tammuz

1. *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:1.

2. *Vayikra*, Ch. 26.

3. As the Torah (*Devarim* 30:6) states: "Hashem, your God, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, to love Hashem, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." The word "circumcise," usually referring to *bris milah*, here refers to the heart, for just as the foreskin is a barrier to holiness, so is the evil inclination a barrier between a Jew's heart and his pure soul.

4. *Ramban* on *Devarim* 30:6.

5. See *Rambam*, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:1; *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 1, p. 5.

Take It With You

- ▶ *The Torah promises reward for performing mitzvos and punishment for transgressing.*
- ▶ *The ultimate rewards are not in this world, but rather, in the World to Come.*
- ▶ *A person's struggle against the yetzer hara is a factor in earning his eternal reward.*
- ▶ *In Messianic times, there will no longer be a struggle to perform God's will. There will, however, be another means to merit one's eternal reward.*

son, says the Rambam,⁶ that "the Sages did not yearn for the Messianic age so [the Jews] can have dominion over the gentile kingdoms ... rather [they desired] to be free [to involve themselves] in Torah and its wisdom without any disturbances in order to merit the World to Come."

In view of the above, the Rambam's assertion leaves a question. If the basis of one's reward is choosing good over evil, and "according to the struggle is the reward,"⁷ what reward can one earn when there is no longer a struggle? What choice can one make other than the joyous performance of the mitzvos when God's presence is manifest to all? Rav Chaim Friedlander⁸ asks this question, pointing out that the Talmud advises us to pursue merit while it is still available:⁹

Shlomo HaMelech advises:¹⁰ "So remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and those years arrive of which you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them'"; these are the days of Mashiach, when there will be no opportunity to acquire merit or liability.¹¹

Does the perfection of the redeemed world, then, impinge upon that which we will experience of the eternal world? This obviously cannot be the case, for if it were, no one would wish to forfeit a glorious eternity for 70, 80, or 120 sublime years on earth. The answer to this conundrum is rooted in a better understanding of the purpose the Messianic era serves for the Jewish people and for mankind, for as we will see, there can be no "down side" to the revelation of God's glory in our world.

6. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:4.

7. See *Avos* 5:23: "Ben Hai Hai said: According to the struggle is the reward." See also *Tzlach* on *Berachos* 5a, s.v. *Rashi*, s.v. *Yissurin shel ahavah*.

8. *Sifsei Chaim, Pirkei Emunah U'Bechirah*, Vol. 2, p. 137, s.v. *Amnam*.

9. *Shabbos* 151b.

10. *Koheles* 12:1.

11. However, see *Rashi, Shabbos* 151b, s.v. *Lo zechus*.

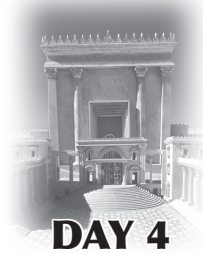
3 Tishrei —

3 Teves —

3 Nissan —

3 Tammuz — In memory of Trudi and Irwin Kabak
Dedicated by their loving children and grandchildren

ANOTHER ROAD TO REWARD



DAY 4

Every Torah Jew is familiar with the concept of struggle — struggling to learn Torah, working hard every day to raise a family, dealing with setbacks and obstacles in performing mitzvot. As we gather our strength to meet each challenge, we are reassured by Chazal's words: "According to the struggle is the reward."¹ What, then, will pave our path to our great reward when Mashiach arrives and struggle ceases to exist?²

Rav Friedlander³ asserts that even when Mashiach arrives, challenges to our spirituality will not disappear, but rather, the *yetzer hara* will gradually release its hold on man's heart. Eventually, the *yetzer hara* will exist outside of man's nature,⁴ and "Man will return to the state that

4
Tishrei

4
Teves

4
Nissan

4
Tammuz

1. See Avos 5:23.

2. See *ibid.* 2:1: "Be careful to perform a minor mitzvah in the same manner as a major one, for you do not know the reward for each mitzvah." It seems, therefore, that a mitzvah's reward might be measured with two separate yardsticks — one that measures the effort expended and the other the value of the mitzvah itself. Which is the true measure? According to *Derech Hashem* (*Cheilek* 1, 4:7), each mitzvah has a twofold purpose: first, to fulfill Hashem's desire that man perform His will, and second, to achieve the degree of perfection in the individual and in the world inherent in the performance of the mitzvah itself. This is the effect known only to Hashem.

When one considers the first purpose of a mitzvah — fulfilling Hashem's will — it is clear that if one has difficulty he is richly rewarded for his great effort in overcoming obstacles to fulfill Hashem's desire. The reward for the mitzvah itself, which is the effect of the actual mitzvah on the person and on the world, may be large or small, and it is regarding that aspect that the Mishnah states, "We do not know the reward for each mitzvah." Thus, his reward will be great because of the great effect of the mitzvah on himself and on the world.

3. *Sifsei Chaim*, *Pirkei Emunah U'Bechirah*, Vol. 2, p. 137, s.v. *Amnam*.

4. See *Tzipisa L'Yeshuah*, end of Ch. 1, where the Chofetz Chaim exhorts the Jewish people to strengthen themselves in their perfor-

existed during the time of Adam before he sinned.”⁵

In the Garden of Eden, God’s presence was apparent. Man had no inclination to defy His will. Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, not out of defiance, but in an erroneous attempt to serve God better. However, by doing so he brought the evil inclination into man’s being, where it could influence him internally.⁶ Man was banished from the Garden into the natural world, where Hashem’s presence was no longer obvious to perceive.⁷ The spiritual struggle that ensued will end with Mashiach’s arrival, because God’s presence will then be apparent to all.

The Chofetz Chaim concedes that the familiar form of spiritual currency — perseverance in the face of difficulty — will become vastly devalued in the era of Mashiach, since obstacles will no longer exist. Nevertheless, he explains⁸ that the Jewish people will not lose anything, for the great *kiddush Hashem* permeating the world will infinitely increase the purity of our mitzvot.

Once Mashiach arrives, mitzvah observance will soar high above anything a person can attain now. Rav Dessler⁹ elucidates how this will not only preserve, but decidedly enhance the eternal reward earned by performing a mitzvah, even without the element of self-sacrifice.

First, he explains that all motivations for fulfilling a mitzvah fall under one of two categories:

mance of mitzvot and study of Torah since when Mashiach arrives the *yetzer hara* will eventually leave us.

5. *Devarim* 30:6. See *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 3, p. 210, s.v. *terem*, which states that from the beginning of time until the end of days man is intended to rectify the sin of Adam. This rectification fell on the Jewish nation. When the Jewish people return [in the Messianic age] to the state that existed during the time of Adam before he sinned, then the whole world will have achieved its completed mission.

6. *Nefesh HaChaim*, *Shaar* 1, Ch. 6, *hagah*, s.v. *V’ha’inyan*, cited in *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 2, p. 138.

7. See *Sifsei Chaim*, *Pirkei Emunah U’Bechirah*, Vol. 2, p. 35, s.v. *HaRamchal*, citing the Ramchal in *Derech Hashem*, *Shaar* 1, Ch. 3, Column 6, which states that whereas before Adam sinned the *yetzer hara* existed external to man, after Adam sinned the deficiencies (potential for evil) existed within mankind. See also *Ohr Gedalyahu*, *Bereishis*, p. 21, s.v. *V’ha’beur*, citing the *Nefesh HaChaim*.

8. Cited in *Ohr Yechezkel*, *Elul*, p. 47.

9. *Michtav MeEliyahu*, Vol. 1, p. 16; *Strive for Truth*, Vol. 1, Part 1, p. 70.

(a) *Lishmah*, “for the sake of heaven,” in which one’s only intention is to serve Hashem and follow in His ways;

(b) *She’lo lishmah*, “not for the sake of heaven,” in which one performs a mitzvah for his own reasons, even if the reasons are altruistic.¹⁰

Rav Dessler continues:¹¹

Only lishmah can fully prepare one’s soul to enjoy the rarified delight of the World to Come. As the Gemara describes:¹² “The righteous sit...and enjoy the splendor of the Shechinah.” This is a picture of righteous souls reveling in a sublime attachment to God, experiencing a great in-pouring of His glory. One who serves God lishmah will find that very holiness infusing his soul with redoubled vigor... His awareness will be heightened...a million-fold, until his consciousness expands to the uttermost limits possible... In short, the reward must be precisely equivalent to the quality of the deed.

Because every Jew will serve God *lishmah* in the times of Mashiach, every Jew’s soul will be primed for this sublime reward in the World to Come. By performing the mitzvos to the utmost during the Messianic age, man will become elevated to a level at which his soul is capable of receiving the ultimate pleasure of the World to Come — not at the price of struggle and suffering, but rather, as the inevitable outgrowth of his pure, unobstructed attachment to God, through which he becomes a partner with Him in fulfilling the mandate of Creation.¹³

10. See *Rosh Hashanah* 28a, s.v. *Lo lei’hanos nitnu*; *Beis Yosef, Orach Chaim, Siman* 586, *Os* 3. See also *Eglei Tal*, Introduction.

11. *Michtav MeEliyahu* loc. cit.; *Strive For Truth* loc. cit.

12. *Berachos* 17a.

13. See *Ahavah Chesed* II, Ch. 2, s.v. *Gam nuchal lomar*.

4 Tishrei — לע"נ מאשא בת ר' יעקב ע"ה

4 Teves —

4 Nissan —

4 Tammuz — As a z’chus for the Fogel, Freidman, Kahan and Hoffman Families.

Take It With You

► *In the time of Mashiach, the battle with the yetzer hara will not require great effort, since God’s presence will be apparent and the yetzer hara will exist outside of man.*

► *Holiness will be so pervasive in the world that our mitzvah observance will take on a vastly greater degree of purity and power.*

► *This will prime our souls to fully partake of the sublime spiritual pleasure the Talmud describes as the World to Come.*



DAY 5

5
Tishrei

5
Teves

5
Nissan

5
Tammuz

ALONG THE ROAD

Louis and his wife Linda discovered the beauty of Orthodox Judaism late in life. They were already well-established in their “dream house,” but as their dream changed, the house, located four miles from shul, became a test of their commitment. Undaunted, the couple passed the test week after week, walking the distance fueled by their desire for an authentic Shabbos atmosphere.

As their commitment grew, they decided to sell their home and move to a religious neighborhood. In their new home, the shul was across the street, visible from their living room window. They gained convenience, but did they lose the tremendous merit of their arduous weekly treks?

This question is at the essence of understanding how our spiritual achievements in the current world will influence the level of our spiritual standing in Messianic times. Right now, our merit comes from our struggles. After Mashiach, when there is no internal struggles, our merit will come from our exalted, all-pervasive relationship with God. However, as we will see, it is our struggles and exertions under the current circumstances that render us able to fully partake of the spiritual “feast” to come.

Will it be possible to wait until we see the menu at the feast, and then decide to earn our place at the table? The Maharal¹ replies in the negative, stating that spiritual growth in Messianic times will be reserved for “those who are already righteous.” This is because once Mashiach comes, sincere change will no longer be feasible; people will be swayed by their desire to partake of the indescrib-

1. Netzach Yisrael, Ch. 46.

able good that God will dispense to the world, rather than by a pure desire to come close to Him.

Once Mashiach arrives, Rav Mattisyahu Salomon explains,² there will indeed be a vastly heightened ability to earn merit in the World to Come.³ However, it will apply only to those whose lofty pursuit of spiritual excellence existed *before* Mashiach, when it entailed a daily struggle in a spiritually dark world.⁴ Their past struggles will stand as a “launch pad” for their merit under a new world redeemed.

Citing Rav Elyah Lopian, Rav Salomon explains⁵ that God bestows His reward in accordance with a person’s initial struggle. In *Parashas Lech Lecha* Avraham is told by God:⁶ “Count the stars if you are able to; so shall your offspring be.” The Torah then informs us⁷ that Avraham trusted in God, and “He [God] reckoned it to him as righteousness.” This prompts Ramban⁸ to wonder what in Avraham’s response warranted the label “righteousness.” He had exhibited his faith throughout many tests already; it would seem that his trust in God, by then, should have been regarded as unremarkable.

Nevertheless, says Rav Lopian, Avraham was given credit for the initial tests he had withstood. The fact that subsequently, his faith came without struggle, was only as a result of his surmounting those difficult initial tests. This analysis further explains how the merit for the World to Come will accrue to us after Mashiach comes and puts an end to our struggles. The triumphs we achieve now will remain in our account, providing the “seed money” for boundless, eternal dividends.

Like the couple in the opening story, we are called upon in these times to make the arduous trek, to sacrifice and struggle against the odds, all for the purpose of serving God. However, when the distance between us and God

2. *Matnas Chaim, Maamarim* 1, p. 223.

3. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:4.

4. *Machaneh Yisrael*, end of Ch. 25.

5. *Matnas Chaim, Maamarim* 1, p. 224, s.v. *V’shamati*.

6. *Bereishis* 15:5.

7. *Ibid.* v. 6.

8. *Ad loc.*

Take It With You

- *In the times of Mashiach, those who have been striving spiritually beforehand will continue to accrue merit for the World to Come.*
- *Spiritual growth after the coming of Mashiach will be motivated by the desire to partake of the good God is dispensing to the world.*
- *Even when there is no more struggle against the yetzer hara, God will apportion one's reward according to his efforts in the days when there was a struggle.*

becomes dramatically shorter, our previous struggles will still serve us well. Through them, our souls will be primed to engage God in a far more lofty way — as a close and constant presence, never far from our hearts.

5 Tishrei —

5 Teves —

5 Nissan —

5 Tammuz — In memory of Serach bat Eliezer
In memory of Shemtov ben Benyahu