

# MEDITATIONS FOR ADAR

A long life is not good enough, but a good life is long enough.<sup>1</sup>



## ***Yakriv Mikem / Sacrifice “Of You”***

“Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: when one of you offers a sacrifice to the Lord, the sacrifice must be taken from the cattle, sheep or goats” (Lev. 1:2).

Or so the verse would read if it were constructed according to the normal rules of grammar. However, in Hebrew the word order of the sentence is strange and unexpected. We would expect to read: *adam mikem ki yakriv*, “when one of you offers a sacrifice”. Instead what it says is *adam ki yakriv mikem*, “when one offers a sacrifice of you”. The essence of sacrifice, said R. Shneur Zalman, is that we offer ourselves. We bring to G-d our faculties, our energies, our thoughts and emotions. The physical form of sacrifice -an animal offered on the altar – is only an external manifestation of an inner act. The real sacrifice is *mikem*, “of you”. We give G-d something of ourselves.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Meshulem Jungreis, z”l - of blessed memory

<sup>2</sup> Photo Credit: Israel Defense Forces, Facebook

<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Sacks, *Vaykira* (5770) - *Self and Sacrifice*

The power of *teshuva* [repentance] at the time of Purim was activated when Esther realized she must be ready to sacrifice her life if necessary in order to plead the case of the Jews before the king. That act of supreme self-sacrifice and *teshuva*, coupled with her call for all Jews in the capital city of Shushan to fast with her for three days and nights, aroused Divine compassion from Above, turning the plans of Haman upside down, till he was hung on the very same tree he hoped to hang Mordecai.

**From this we learn the incredible power of one person and one community to change a seemingly unchangeable judgment and alter the momentum of a chain of events.**

This total reversal of fortune is captured by one word – *nahafochu* – “to completely turn around;” meaning that the day of Purim was changed from a day of possible holocaust to that of unbounded joy and celebration.<sup>4</sup>

The following meditations are taken from *The Committed Life*<sup>5</sup> by Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis. In this twelfth Hebrew month of Adar may we be inspired to live a life of love of G-d and His Word and may we be challenged to live beyond ourselves and for others.

### ADAR - 1

We live in a world in which our priorities have become skewed. We indulge in excess where we should be disciplined, and we stint where we should be openhanded.

### ADAR - 2

The true test of commitment to Torah values can be judged not by the way we relate to the world but by the way we interact with the closest members of our family.

### ADAR - 3

My parents had an incredible ability to involve us in all their undertakings. Whatever they did was a team effort. We, their children, shared their hopes, their dreams, their aspirations, and that is what made us a family. That is what transmitting a heritage is all about.... This is the fabric from which families are woven. It is not about outings, ball games, and dinners that parents and children should share, but more importantly, they must be united by a higher goal, a commitment to serve G-d by reaching out and understanding that we are all responsible for one another.

### ADAR - 4

What is special about candles is that if you light just one, with that one, you can kindle many others without diminishing your own light. And as more and more candles are kindled, the light increases, the illumination expands, and that's how you light up the world with the Spirit of G-d.

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<sup>4</sup> Rabbi Avraham Arie Trugman

<sup>5</sup> If you enjoy these nuggets of wisdom from Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, we encourage you to purchase her book and enjoy the feast in its entirety as Rebbetzin Jungreis is a masterful teacher and storyteller.

## **ADAR - 5**

This is our challenge, a challenge for which we will be held accountable by G-d. Will we have brought tikkun olam, improvement to the world, healing to mankind - or will we allow the darkness to envelop us and create more darkness in the process? We each have a choice. It's up to us.

## **ADAR - 6**

To think that just through words you can make a person feel better about himself is awesome. It's such an easy way to help someone. And it's regrettable that so few take advantage of it. Think about it - just one kind word can make a difference in someone's life.

## **ADAR - 7**

If we look back on our lives and realize all the time we wasted worrying about what could be or what might be, we would feel devastated at the thought that we had squandered G-d's most precious gift to us - the days of our lives.

## **ADAR - 8**

To make the first move, to say, "Forgive me," is never a sign of weakness but one of honor and strength.

## **ADAR - 9**

If someone you know is hurting, just remember you may not be able to remove their suffering, but you can help them shoulder their burden by being there for them, by feeling their pain, by extending your hand. That's the meaning of compassion.

## **ADAR - 10**

You can either look at one wretched man, see evil, and justify your own cynicism and bitterness, or you can search for the spark of G-d within the soul of man, choose the path of blessing, and build on it.

## **ADAR - 11**

The two most important words to remember, "Thank you."

## **ADAR- 12**

No act of kindness is ever lost.

## **ADAR - 13**

Life is short. It sounds trite, but we have yet to grasp that full meaning of this truth. We are all here on temporary visas.

## ADAR - 14

Think about your own if-onlys. “If only things would calm down at work, I’d visit my mother more often,” “If only I didn’t have such a heavy load to carry, I’d spend more time with my children,” “If only I didn’t have so many obligations, I would take some time for prayer and Torah study,”

If-only does not work. It is *today* that we have to seize the moment. Therefore our sages in the Mishna taught, “If not *now*, when?”

## ADAR - 15

The serpent in the Garden of Eden did not coerce, beat, or badger Eve into submission. He just seduced her with his evil tongue. Speech is the most powerful instrument with which G-d has endowed us. With it, we can bring blessing or destruction to mankind.

## ADAR - 16

Most things that cause us to fly off the handle are just not worth getting angry about... So the next time you are provoked, ask yourself, will this have significance with the passage of time? What possible benefit will I derive from screaming and carrying on? On the other hand, what damage will I do to myself and to the person upon whom I vent my anger? Is this worth losing my temper over?

## ADAR - 17

Torah is not just a study but a way of life.

## ADAR - 18

Our sages teach that “a love that is contingent on something does not last,” for once that something is lost, the love will also disappear.

## ADAR - 19

The Hebrew for love is *ahavah*, which is derived from the root *hav* (to give), teaching us that to love is to give.

## ADAR - 20

*Fair* is a limited, personal, and very biased way of looking at things. G-d wants us to measure the challenges of life by the standards of goodness, justice, truth, and responsibility, and that’s an entirely different way of focusing.

## ADAR - 21

Marriage cannot be just the physical union of two people. Rather, it is a fusion of souls. It’s easy enough to be lovers, but husband and wife must have a more exalted relationship than that. In the blessing recited under the marriage canopy, bride and groom are referred to as *loving, kind friends* who walk together on the road of life united by something bigger than they are.

## ADAR - 22

How do I describe *Shabbos* [*Shabbat*]? How do I put the awesome sanctity of *Shabbos* on paper? The more I think about it, the more I realize that *Shabbos* cannot be written about - it must be lived. It must be experienced.

## ADAR - 23

The Rabbi's (Rabbi Aryeh Levin) wife was having difficulty walking, so he took her to a physician and said, "Doctor, my wife's foot is hurting us."

That is probably the best interpretation of loving your wife as yourself. It's never me, it's never my, it's we, it's us, it's a feeling of total oneness. Perhaps it was Adam who best expressed this love. Upon seeing Eve for the first time, he proclaimed, "This is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23).

## ADAR - 24

Prayer is the "labor of the heart."

## ADAR - 25

Time is the most precious gift that G-d gave us, yet we abuse it the most. If we were to see a person throwing his money away, we would regard him as insane, but strangely enough, we think nothing of throwing our hours, our days, our years away. Moreover, monetary loss can be retrieved, but time that is wasted is gone forever.

## ADAR - 26

If you study Torah your entire focus in life shifts.

## ADAR - 27

From the beginning of time, those who have anchored their lives to G-d have found the strength to respond to life's challenges.

## ADAR - 28

If you try to think of your home as a temple, and yourselves as servants of G-d, you will conduct yourself differently, your marriage will be solidified, and G-d's presence will dwell in your midst.

## ADAR - 29

Snow is symbolic of this world. It may seem permanent, but it melts so quickly....don't put all your efforts into this life. It's over in a moment. Put your energies into that which is everlasting.