

## Lag Ba'Omer - Playing with Fire

Lag Ba'Omer serves as a day of respite in the midst of weeks of grief, wherein we commemorate the deaths of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. Chaza"l tell us that they died because "שלא נהגו כבוד זה בזה", they did not show respect onto one another. This punishment seems to be disproportionate. We do not find elsewhere that the sin of not showing respect is deserving of the death penalty.

While all of Torah is 'light', כי נר מצוה ותורה אור, nonetheless, Chaza"l teach us that the most potent light of all is the light hidden in תורה שבעל פה. When one travels along the courageous, dark and difficult road to understand תורה שבע"פ, they discover the most powerful energy of all. Perhaps the light of תורה שבכתב can be compared to the energy generated by regular electricity, while the energy revealed when 'cracking open' an idea in the deep wisdom of תורה שבעל פה, is similar to the energy unleashed when splitting an atom. This latter, concealed light is exponentially powerful and intense.

However, the flipside of the benefits of extreme, 'nuclear' power is the inherent hazard involved in handling it. Although a potentially wonderful tool, it is combustible and prone to explosion. As they say "beware, you're playing with fire"!

Rebbi Akiva was the chief proponent of Torah Sh'Baal Peh. He led the way, guiding us to plumb the depths of the seeming darkness, and to find the hidden light therein. His תלמיד מובהק, Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai<sup>1</sup>, went even further, revealing the wholly concealed secrets of the Torah, its all its great splendor ("זוהר") and sheer energy<sup>2</sup>.

The students of Rebbi Akiva did many great things with their newfound enlightenment; however, they were "dealing with fire". In their delicate situation, even the slightest infraction brought devastating consequences. Their rules of engagement were different; wherein a slight deviation in their middos warranted fatality<sup>3</sup>.

Sometimes, regarding our collective experience as the הנבחר, as well as our personal life experiences, things seem random; the divine response to our actions seem disproportionate. Why the extreme difficulty, the overwhelming suffering?

We were chosen to experience an intimate relationship with Hashem, to be privy and enjoy the inner light of His Torah. Our being בני מלכים, dwelling in the royal court in close proximity of Hashem, is deeply meaningful and priceless. Yet, with this intimacy comes the peril of being singed by this highly potent energy. Our behavior and attitudes must be of a higher standard; extra refined and befitting of those who walk in the corridors of the king, the מלך מלכי המלכים.

The ימי הספירה, and לעג בעומר, in particular, are days meant for us to reflect and experience our privilege of being exposed to the inner light and energy of the Torah, while concurrently attaining the wisdom and tools to behave accordingly. Thereby, we will harness this brilliant light for our benefit, and the benefit of תיקון עולם, speedily meriting the promise of עולם במלכות שדי.

במהרה בימינו. אמן.

*Rabbi Tzvi Fener*



<sup>1</sup>ראה גיטין סז,א: וכן אמר רבי שמעון לתלמידיו, בניי, שנו מדותי, שמדותי תרומות מתרומות מידותיו של רבי עקיבא.

<sup>2</sup>ובזה נבין גם מנהג ישראל בהדלקת אורות המדורות ביום ל"ג בעומר.

<sup>3</sup>ובזה נבין מה שמצינו גם ברשב"י ובנו ר"א כשיצאו מן המערה (שבת לג, ב) שהחמירו לשרוף בעיניהם נכסי אלו שעסקו ב"חיי עולם", ע"ש, וא"ש.

והשוה עוד הא דמס' אבות (ב, י): והוי מתחמם כנגד אורן של חכמים,

והוי זהיר בגחלתן שלא תכוה וכו' וכל דבריהם כגחלי אש.

# Low Blood Pressure and PD

Callers to the Parkinson's Foundation Helpline frequently ask us for tips about coping with a condition known as neurogenic orthostatic hypotension (nOH), or low blood pressure. If you have experienced it, you may already know that this symptom is common in mid- and late-stage Parkinson's disease (PD) and can be quite alarming.

Neurogenic orthostatic hypotension is a sharp drop in blood pressure that happens when a person gets up from bed or from a chair, causing dizziness or even loss of consciousness. Doctors define it as a blood pressure drop of 20 millimeters of

## Diagnosis of nOH

Your doctor can test for nOH by measuring your blood pressure. If you feel a little dizzy when you first stand up — but the feeling passes quickly — you probably do not have the condition. If instead your blood pressure continues to drop after a minute or more of standing, this may suggest a problem.

It is important that your physician measure your blood pressure while you are lying down, sitting and standing. Sometimes, nOH is only revealed when the blood pressure is measured in these three positions.

The symptoms of nOH include the following:

- lightheadedness
- dizziness
- weakness

mercury (20 mm Hg) in systolic blood pressure (the top number in a blood pressure reading), or a drop of 10 millimeters in diastolic blood pressure (the bottom number), within three minutes after standing up. The condition can put people with Parkinson's at risk of fainting, losing balance, falling and being injured. What can you do? Learn strategies to predict when blood pressure is most likely to fall and also take steps to avoid feeling dizzy in the first place.



- difficulty thinking
- headache
- feeling faint
- fainting
- trembling
- nausea
- cold hands and feet
- chest pain



## Causes

Normally, when a person rises from lying down or sitting, the blood vessels constrict and send blood from the legs and trunk up to the head. In addition, the heart beats slightly faster and more forcefully. In people living with PD, the heart rate may not increase upon standing, and the blood pressure may drop as a result.

Both PD itself and the medications that are used to treat it can contribute to nOH. People with PD may be on other medications that affect blood pressure. In addition to some PD medications, drugs for high blood pressure — including calcium channel blockers — certain antidepressants, drugs to treat urinary

problems and drugs for erectile dysfunction can cause nOH.

Additional causes include diuretics, cardiac disease, dehydration, fever and anemia.

## How to Avoid Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension

If you can recognize your symptoms and are aware of what makes them worse, you can take steps to reduce and avoid them. Most importantly, avoid being dehydrated, especially during the months of hot weather. Ask your doctor to identify the medications you

are taking that may lower your blood pressure and see if a change in dose is indicated. Avoid abrupt changes in position.



## Drug Therapies

Ask your doctor about medications that can help you manage nOH and its effects. Be aware that medications that raise low blood pressure to normal levels when a person is standing may cause high blood pressure when a person

is lying down. Check with your doctor about potential side effects when considering medical treatment for nOH.

## Tips: Avoiding Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension

- Drink lots of water and other fluids, at least one cup (eight ounces) with meals and two more at other times of the day.
- Regularly practice gentle exercise and avoid long periods of inactivity.
- Eat small, frequent meals. Reduce alcohol intake and avoid hot drinks and hot foods.
- After consulting your doctor, increase your salt intake by eating prepared soups or pretzels. Note: for people with heart disease, this should be avoided.
- Do isometric exercises, like marching your legs slowly in place, before getting up.

- Try wearing compression garments such as anti-gravity stockings.
- If you expect to be standing for a long period of time, quickly drinking two eight-ounce glasses of cold water will increase blood volume and causes blood pressure to go up for several hours.
- Shift slowly from lying to sitting and then standing.



# Meet the Staff

**Rabbi Moshe Y. Gruskin**  
Founder



An incredibly motivated individual, Rabbi Gruskin captures the hearts of all those he comes in contact with. After being diagnosed with PD he founded our organization and continues to run it with wisdom and passion. His one-on-one patient and family consultations, constant contact with doctors and therapists, research into medical personnel and new treatment options, as well as his persistent fundraising for the organization are particularly inspiring.

Prior to his PD diagnosis and subsequent founding of the organization, Rabbi Gruskin was an outstanding Rebbe in a local Lakewood Cheder.

He is especially proud of each of his wonderful children and grandchildren, and loves spending time with his family when he does have a few moments of down time.

**Rabbi Kaila R. Gruskin**  
Co-Founder



The silent powerhouse behind the organization, many day-to-day tasks are run by Mrs. Gruskin for both advice and approval. While staying in the background, Mrs. Gruskin assists Rabbi Gruskin with all daily tasks and joins most initial patient consultations. She gives Chizuk to many PD Patients or Spouses, and is constantly on the phone for the organization. She also gives of her time to review our content for editing prior to publication.

A renowned Lakewood babysitter, Mrs. Gruskin is in great demand for her kind and patient care with young children. She somehow fits all this into her daily schedule, with a constant smile and nary a word of complaint.

**Riki Feuer**  
Executive Director



The powerhouse behind all of the amazing work we do here at LifeSpark, Riki is our HR director and Rabbi Gruskin's right-hand 'man'. Constantly working on the expansion of our services provided, and improving on its quality, Riki makes certain that when it comes to any project, all I's are dotted and all T's are crossed.

Although she holds down multiple full-time jobs, Riki is surprisingly always available to both the LifeSpark staff and our patients and their families. On the side, Riki is of immeasurable assistance to her immediate and extended family, while cultivating her passions of hosting guests, exquisite cooking and exotic table design.

**Rabbi Tzviki Feuer**  
Hashkafik advisor, Editor in Chief



Writing our leading editorial articles, and serving as general editor of our monthly newsletter, Rabbi Feuer transforms his years of teaching and inspiration into a tool of great benefit for the PD community. Together with his wife Riki (executive director), they serve as an in-house power-couple bringing exceptional benefits to the LifeSpark family.

## Rabbi Meir T. Gruskin Technical Manager



As our organization began to grow, the need for a technical manager became a necessity. The son of our esteemed founder Rabbi Gruskin, Meir Gruskin, has made this job out to be effortless.

While running a successful business of his own, Meir is always available for LifeSpark. His attention to every detail, be it in the creation of our Lakewood Center, as well as many other open projects, makes him an invaluable asset to our team! In his spare time, Meir is an avid RoadTripper.

## Nechama Patient Liaison/ Event



When looking to re-enter the work force, Nechama's main requirement was that of a fulfilling job! LifeSpark was just what she was looking for. Nechama joined our team and jumped on the bandwagon, carving out a niche for herself in making sure the patients and caregivers each get what they need.

Nechama coordinates events and is the interim patient liaison. She gets a natural sense of fulfillment from watching people help others. She also enjoys reading and discovering parts of the beautiful world we live in!

## Rachel Adler General Manager



Rochel is always available to assist with anything necessary to help the organization run smoothly.

When she isn't working for LifeSpark, Rochel is a freelance bookkeeper and financial advisor for private clients. As a busy mother, Rochel finds little time to spare for improving on her hobbies; Painting, Music, Writing & World Travel.

The longest current member of our team, Rochel has evolved into the overall general manager of the organization. While taking care of the books, speaking with doctors, taking patient phone calls, arranging and running events,

## The Butterfly

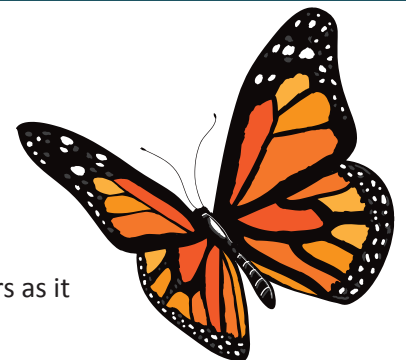
A man found a cocoon of a butterfly.

One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Until it suddenly stopped making any progress and looked like it was stuck.

So the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily, although it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings.

The man didn't think anything of it and sat there waiting for the wings to enlarge to support the butterfly. But that didn't happen. The butterfly spent the rest of its life unable to fly, crawling around with tiny wings and a swollen body.



# HEALING FLAMES

By: Tzopheh

Years of toil,  
Spiritually grown,  
Rebbe Shimon emerged,  
From his cavernous home,

His eyes were soft,  
Yet as flickering flames,  
Consumed the 'stuff',  
Of people playing 'games'

His gaze was of love,  
Not of destruction,  
A lesson crystal clear,  
Gentle instruction

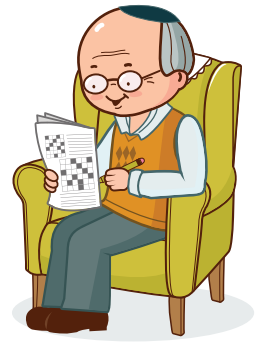
Rebbe Shimon revealed the 'Zohar',  
Inner meaning and light,  
All externals paled,  
Dissipated, insignificant and trite

Rashb"i's look was healing,  
Far from incineration,  
His insight and strength,  
Wholesome, liberation

The message of La"g Ba'Omer,  
Is of values and identity,  
Peripheral to crumble,  
While hearts ignite,  
In fiery integrity

# PUZZLE TIME

## IMPOSSIBLE BRAIN TEASER



This brain teaser is really not impossible, but it is tricky! Carefully read the directions in each line to make changes in the previous set of letters. Write the new letters in the blank after each instruction. The first two are completed for you.

1. Start with IMPOSSIBLE.

IMPOSSIBLE

2. Change the second vowel from the left to E.

IMPESSIBLE

3. If *occurrence* is spelled correctly, change the 2<sup>nd</sup> consonant to H. If it is not spelled correctly, change the last consonant to T.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Omit the letters, in order, that spell MESS.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Insert CABBAGE after the 1<sup>st</sup> vowel.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Change the 2<sup>nd</sup> I to A.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Move the first vowel so that is directly to the right of the 4<sup>th</sup> consonant.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. If *mischievous* is spelled correctly, omit the first two letters. If it is spelled incorrectly, omit the double consonants.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Change the G to V.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Switch the places of the 2<sup>nd</sup> consonant and the 3<sup>rd</sup> consonant.

\_\_\_\_\_

11. If *occasionally* is spelled correctly, omit the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter. If is spelled incorrectly, add IN after the first letter.

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Switch the order of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> letters.

\_\_\_\_\_

13. If your letters now form a correctly-spelled word, write them in the blank below. If not, review the directions to find any possible errors.

Solving this brain teaser is not IMPOSSIBLE. It is \_\_\_\_\_ !

Answers! Don't Peak!

3. IMPESSIBLE  
4. IHIBLE  
5. ICABBAGEHIBLE  
6. ICABBAGEHABLE  
7. CABBAGIEHABLE  
8. CAAGIEHABLE  
9. CAVIEHABLE  
10. CAHIEVABLE  
11. CAHIEVABLE  
12. ACHIEVABLE

Despite the man's kind heart, he was of disservice to the butterfly. He did not understand the mechanics and process of an emerging butterfly; how the restrictions of the cocoon and the ensuing struggle serve to force bodily fluids of the butterfly into its wings, preparing it to fly when leaving the cocoon.

The message of the butterfly is simple. Many times, our struggles in life bring 'wind' to our 'wings', develop our strengths to help us 'fly' in the future. This positive and realistic attitude on our development makes the journey that much easier, and perhaps even gratifying.

## Center Updates

Our center is coming along.  
Look out for our grand opening!



**LIFESPARK**  
igniting victories for parkinsons

107 7<sup>th</sup> street  
Lakewood, NJ 08701  
732.534.6388  
info@lifesparkpd.com

**SPARK**  
*Smarts*

It can take 15 minutes  
to roll from one side  
to the other in bed  
for a PD patient?