

# Kislev – Waking Up

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The Chasam Sofer taught that the first day of the month of Kislev has great significance because it always falls out exactly forty days after the festival of Sukkot. It is a miniature Yom Kippur, and so it has the power to help us change our negative habits and patterns.

*Teshuvah*—genuine repentance that returns us to our Source—entails facing our frailties and reframing how we respond when they tend to get in our way. For that, we need workable strategies—we need to be warriors who wield the bow and arrow which is the *mazal* of the month. The bow is the weapon and tool of prayer. The Kabbalists explain that this state of grace, of heavenly assistance, includes the entire month of Kislev and into the month of Tevet, until the last day of Chanukah.

This also helps to explain the association of Kislev with sleep, as found in the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The deeper works indicate that sleep also means a lack of spiritual awareness, and the long sleepy nights of wintry Kislev are the perfect time for developing spiritual wakefulness. Rebbe Nachman reveals that sometimes a person can sleep away his entire life, living in a dream state. Kislev and especially Chanukah penetrates the veils of spiritual slumber and we begin to live life at a new level of vitality and connection.

*My G-d, I am deeply asleep! When will I see that what I really lack is awareness? Show me workable strategies to slowly wake up and begin to really live. Please help me return to You by taking advantage of the special grace period of Kislev and teach me to correct all negativity and thoughtlessness.*