

Extracts from

"I Appreciate Your Struggle"

by Mr. Avi Shulman

With thanks to Mrs. Zeesie Berkowitz for calling it to my attention.

To my star pupil,

I am writing this letter to let you know what I think of you. Up here in heaven things are not like they are down on Earth. Down there, people only know what they can see. If they see a person who is "successful", they think that he is the greatest guy. When they see somebody struggling, they think he might be one of the weaker element.

Let me tell you something. Hashem gives every person certain abilities that nobody knows about down where you live. Some people are capable of tremendous things... the problem is that in your world people sometimes get so comfortable with their small successes that they don't try hard enough to reach the greatness that Hashem knows they were created to reach.

That's where I come in. My job is to make sure that they succeed in reaching their true potential.

I am very misunderstood. Most people hate me, and I don't really blame them. Most people think that my job is to make sure that they fail in all aspects of *mitzvos* and that I rejoice every time they sin. This is the furthest thing from the truth.

Did you ever watch a boxing coach train his student?... The coach will put on gloves and fight against a student. At first, he won't hit him so hard, or throw his best punches. But as the student gets better and better the coach will start to fight harder and harder. He does this so that the student will improve his skills and become the best boxer he can be.

This is where it gets strange: Every time the coach knocks down the student, the student gets yelled at! But when the coach finally throws

everything he has at his student, and not only does the student withstand the beating, he knocks the coach down, there is nobody in the world happier than the coach himself!

This is exactly how I feel. If you fall right away and don't even try to fight back ... I take it easy on you. But if you get back up swinging, I realize that I may have a real winner here, and so I start to intensify the beating. With every level that you go up, I increase the intensity of the fight. If you finally deal me a blow that knocks me out, I will get up and embrace you and rejoice in your success.

Sometimes ... I see a person with a lot of potential and I start right in on him. He fights back for a while, but when the fight gets tough, he quits... I feel like yelling at him, "Get up you fool! Do you have any idea how much more you could be accomplishing?!" ...

I am writing to you now because I have a very serious request to ask of you. Please don't stop fighting! Don't give up! I have been beating too many people lately and I am losing patience. Believe in yourself, because I would not be involved with you as much as I am, if I didn't think you could beat me.

Know what your strengths are! A great rabbi once said, "Oy for he who doesn't know his weaknesses, but Oy *VaAvoy* to he who doesn't know his strengths — for he will not have know what tools he has to fight with."...

I wish you the best of luck, and I hope that after 120 years... you will come up here to the world of Truth, where I will be waiting ...with open arms to congratulate you on your victory, and to personally escort you to your place next to the *Kisei HaKavod*.

Sincerely, and with great admiration, I remain,

Your *Yetzer Hara*