

# SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER  
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLEV ZT"L  
GIVEN OVER BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

PARSHAS VAYIKRA  
7 NISSAN, 5785  
ISSUE #44

## CHIZUK from the PARSHA

## PAIN RELIEF

What wouldn't we do for a life that is free of pain? If given the choice, who wouldn't jump at the opportunity for a life devoid of suffering?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan* 1:250) that when a person lives with *emunah*, he experiences no *yissurim*. Sure, every person gets a hefty dose of the pain that's inherent to living in this world – ranging from discomfort as minor as a headache to the crushing agony of a heart attack – but when a person knows that Hashem is the One behind it all and that everything that occurs is for his benefit, the intensity of his pain lessens dramatically.

*Emunah* comes into play even more with pain that is not merely physical. Most of the suffering we experience on this world is of the emotional variety: blame, guilt, shame, envy, sadness, anger... The underlying cause of emotional pain is a lack of *emunah*, the mistaken belief that things happen by chance. When a person forgets that Hashem is running the show, even the smallest mishap can upset his equilibrium and throw him into a frenzy. The solution? *Emunah*. By realizing that Hashem is in control and nothing at all happens by chance, a person can succeed in not just minimizing his emotional pain, but actually preventing it altogether.

וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה – and He called to Moshe.

The letter א in this *passuk* is considerably smaller than the other letters, teaching us this important lesson. If one were to read the word as "ויקר" (without the א), it would mean, "And it happened." This is the attitude of those who forget about Hashem – every moment "happened"; every disappointment "happened"; every tragedy "happened" – and this outlook only leads to problems. However, when a person adds the small א – Hashem, the אלוף של עולם Who is concealed in everything, he can interpret every second in his life with the word "ויקרא – and He called"; he knows that even the smallest mishap is Hashem calling out to him, entreating him to do *teshuvah*. This is, in fact, the purpose of all hardships: to awaken the person to return to Hashem.

The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran* 52), "מכל הדברים צועק כבוד ה' יתברך" – Hashem's glory cries out from all things. Everything that happens is the voice of Hashem, calling out to the person to return to Him. Rashi says (*Vayikra* 1:1), "הקול הולך ומגיע לאזניו וכל ישראל לא שומעין" – the voice of Hashem traveled to Moshe Rabbeinu's ears, and no one else heard it. Hashem speaks to every person all the time; every occurrence is like *nevuah*, in a sense, yet we must be wise enough to hear and take a message from it.

When a person works on his *emunah* and internalizes that anything that occurs is only because Hashem willed it to be so, he can be like Moshe Rabbeinu, standing among thousands of people yet being the only one to hear the voice of Hashem calling out to him. *Emunah* is the key to a connected life, a pain-free life, a joyful life in *Olam Hazei* and in *Olam Haba*.

Zos Hatorah, Vayikra 2

## MOHOROSH SPEAKS

## KEEPING FOCUS



The race is on.

Anticipation is high as the clock ticks ever closer to the finish line. Jewish homes worldwide are a frenzy of cleaning, shopping and cooking in these last few days before Pesach, perhaps the most preparation-intensive *yom tov* on the Jewish calendar. With just one week left, there is still lots to do to ensure a *chametz*-free Pesach.

The *Arizal* teaches that a person who abstains from eating *chametz* the entire Pesach will be protected from doing *aveiros* all year. Each year, we invest superhuman energy in cleaning our houses of *chametz*, rubbing and scrubbing until we are absolutely positive that there is not a crumb to be found. Yet how many people can say with absolute certainty that they did not commit even a single *aveira* the entire year?

The truth is, the *yetzer hara* has a tough job. All Jews are inherently good and want to do the right thing; how is he supposed to get a *Yiddishe neshama* to succumb to sin?



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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Mohorosh used to constantly exhort those in *shidduchim* to beware of the enemy called "time." A person must be very careful not to squander his years, because before he knows it, life speeds right by. Time doesn't stop for anyone – not either for one who refuses to swallow his pride and lower his standards, and then it is too late to turn back the clock.

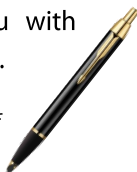
When it comes to *shidduchim*, one must remember what *Chazal* say (*Yevamos* 63), "Step down a level to take a wife." A person's nature is to be egotistic and turn down suggestions on the pretext that he is better/smarter/more attractive than she. He must know, however, that the *shidduch* he is dreaming of never existed and never will exist. It is merely an illusion, no more than a fantasy. He thinks that his fictitious *kallah* will appear on a white horse laden with gold, and his delusions hinder him from ever moving forward.

**If a *shidduch* is suggested for you do not turn it down.** Agree and allow the *shidduch* to move forward so that you can fulfill *ratzon Hashem*. It is written clearly in *halacha* (*Shulchan Aruch Even Ha'ezer* 1) that a person must get married so that he can bear children. One who does not do so is considered as if he has committed murder, and he causes the *shechina* to depart from our midst.

The Rema adds that a person who is not married forfeits many blessings: *וכל מי שאין לו אשה שריי בלא ברכה בלא תורה כו', ולא נקרא אדם, וכיון שנשא אשה עונותיו מפקפקים שנאמר מצא אשה מצא טוב ויפק רצון מאת ה'.*

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1 page 282



One of his tried-and-true methods is by magnifying our flaws and making us feel badly about ourselves. By persistently whispering discouraging messages into our ears, he breaks our resolve and accomplishes his goal: we sin even more because, "I'm a failure anyway; look at how many *aveiros* I've done."

*Chazal* tell us (*Brachos* 57) that even the lowliest Jew is filled with *mitzvos* like the seeds of a pomegranate. We have all done innumerable *mitzvos* in our lives. This knowledge alone should bring us tremendous joy, but the *yetzer hara* does not allow it. He downplays our *mitzvos* and highlights our *aveiros*, blowing them up to mammoth proportions so that in comparison, our good deeds seem to be few and insignificant.

The Rebbe teaches us (*Likutei Moharan* 1:242) to be aware of this tactic and constantly counter this force of negativity by focusing on the good in ourselves. We must realize that even the "smallest" *mitzvos* we do carry tremendous weight and bring much *nachas* to Hashem. How can we be included in the *Arizal's* promise and be protected from *aveiros* all year? The secret is not so much in **what** we do, but rather in **how** we do it. If we would feel happy all year that we ate *matzah* on Pesach, we would be protected from the *yetzer hara* and his wily tactics and thereby be spared from sin.

### Loser, Loser, Loser

The Noda B'yehudah zt"l had a *talmid* who had strayed far from *Yiddishkeit*, to the point that he had become a priest and then a bishop. In tremendous pain from this tragedy, the *tzaddik* tried to find his wayward student to discover the cause of his downfall and to bring him back to the Torah path. The Noda B'yehudah finally succeeded in tracking down his former student, and the *talmid*-turned-bishop relayed the following story:

"It all started when I was a young *bachur* learning in a yeshiva far from home.



"One Erev Pesach, a kind family invited me for a meal. (The yeshivos in those days didn't provide meals for their students, leaving the budding *talmidei chachamim* to fend for themselves. They worked out a system called "teg" – days; every day, each *bachur* ate his only meal of the day at a different family in town.) There wasn't much to eat since *chametz* was already off-limits, but I was glad not to go hungry.

"The aroma of fresh potato kugel filled the house and I couldn't wait to quiet my grumbling stomach. Then, a cry of dismay was heard. A kernel of wheat was spotted in the kugel! Unsure of the status of the kugel after *sof zman achilas chametz*, they sent me to my rebbi (the Noda B'yehuda) to ask a *sheila*.

"The *tzaddik* listened to the question and deliberated, quoting the sources who ruled the kugel to be permissible, as well as those who ruled it to be forbidden. Eventually, he concluded with his opinion: the kugel was *assur* and needed to be discarded immediately.

"I was so hungry. I hadn't eaten a thing all day, and to wait



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until the seder to put a bite into my mouth was impossible. The tantalizing aroma of the kugel tickled my nose and teased my empty stomach, and so I began to rationalize.

“Really, there are many poskim who say it’s okay,” I told myself. ‘My rebbi was just being machmir. It isn’t such a big problem...’ And I sat down and polished off the entire kugel. When I returned to my hosts, I told them that the Noda B’yehudah ruled the kugel to be assur and that I had burned it on my way back.

“I immediately regretted my actions. ‘What a sinner you are,’ a voice in my head told me, “transgressing an issur kareis by eating chametz on Pesach!’ These thoughts bombarded me, replaying over and over in my head until I became depressed and withdrawn.

“That was just the beginning,” the bishop continued. “That night, I couldn’t bring myself to say krias shema. ‘Sinner, sinner, sinner,’ my yetzer hara taunted me. ‘Who needs your mitzvos? You’re cut off from klal Yisrael anyway after what you’ve done!’”

“After an entire night of self-recrimination, I couldn’t bring myself to daven or sing hallel along with all the other bachurim in shul. I couldn’t eat matzah at the seder with the others. One thing led to another until I rejected the Torah completely, and here I am today.

After hearing his talmid’s unfortunate saga, the Noda B’yehudah sat with him for hours, comforting him and working to reverse the negative thought patterns that had caused his downfall. Eventually, the bishop left his bad ways and returned to Yiddishkeit.

### **WARNING: Trap Ahead**

The yetzer hara is shrewd and cunning. He knows that we so badly want to be good and knows exactly how to get us down. By magnifying our shortcomings and reminding us of all the “terrible” things we’ve done, he makes us feel so hopeless that we just give up. However, when we focus on our mitzvos instead and allow ourselves to rejoice in them, we can achieve tremendous spiritual growth.

It’s not too late to inject simcha into your preparations! In this last week before Pesach and during all the eight days of yom tov, remember to look at your good deeds and feel the joy in doing the mitzvos of Pesach. In this way, you will have the tools to battle the yetzer hara and be zoche to be successful and happy all year.

Kuntres A Kosheren Pesach



I have heard stories first-hand from people who struggled tremendously with *parnassa*, yet they davened each day for a *yeshua*, speaking to Hashem in their own words again and again, and they ultimately became very wealthy. On a smaller scale, too – people have shared stories of how they wished for fancy, comfortable cars, so they davened for it and soon got what they wanted. There are thousands of stories like these, stories about all kinds of people with all kinds of requests that were fulfilled by davening to Hashem.

Accustom yourself to talking to Hashem at every opportunity. For example, if you and your friends are playing a game and you want your team to win, whisper a simple tefilla: “**Hashem, I really want to win the game. Please help my team win,**” and you will see that you’ll win. Or if you want to go play somewhere and you don’t have a ride or if your parents don’t let you go there, turn to Hashem! Say, “**Hashem, help me find a ride; help my parents change their minds and allow me to go,**” and you’ll see how tefilla helps – you’ll find a ride and your parents will even help you get there. Through tefilla, everything becomes possible.

Turn to Hashem with all your personal struggles, too. The Rebbe said (*Shivchei Haran* 22) that in his youth, he used to get angry quickly. He didn’t let this *middah* get him down; rather, he constantly davened to be able to conquer his anger, until Hashem helped him uproot his difficult nature.

Finally, always honor and respect your parents. The Torah blesses a person who does so with *schar both* on This World and in *Olam Haba* (*Shemos* 20:12).

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 184

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## MY SON IS ONLY INTERESTED IN ACTION AND FUN

### Question:

*To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,*

*Thank you for the chizuk that I constantly get from the shiurim and letters. It is in your merit that my life has transformed in so many areas – especially in being mechanech my children.*



*I wanted to ask if the Rosh Yeshiva can advise me regarding my fourteen-year-old son. He has no interest in any ruchniyus at all – he isn't serious about learning, he does whatever he can to avoid davening, and all he is interested in is action and fun. How am I supposed to deal with him?*

*Thank you.*

### The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

Don't be concerned – the fact that your son just wants to play around and enjoy himself is normal. By nature, children don't want to sit and learn. It is up to us, parents, to use wisdom and understanding to help our children develop a meaningful connection to Hashem and the Torah. The key is to make it enticing, to make it enjoyable. By rewarding your son for davening and learning diligently, praising him for proper behavior and making him feel worthy, you will encourage more and more good deeds.

Only if you view your children positively will they want to listen to you. Mohorosh used to relate that when the Ahavas Yisroel zt"l relocated to Marmorosh, there were many Jews in the town who didn't keep Torah and mitzvos properly. When asked how he would influence the people living there to do *teshuva*, the Ahavas Yisroel replied, "I will love them with such a passion until they'll return to Torah and *mitzvos*." Through love one can break through all barriers.

*Chazal teach (Sanhedrin 107b), שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת – one's left hand must be the one that pushes away*

while the right hand draws close. Whenever a person must rebuke his children/students, it has to be with love. We must always remember to give more encouragement than *mussar*, which holds the risk of driving them away.

I have included a letter that I wrote for your son to encourage him in areas of *ruchniyus*.

Dear ...

Your father says that you are a bright and active child who makes the most out of every moment. I enjoyed hearing that you know how to make things happen; I see that you are a real doer who will go far in life.

Know that the key to success is turning to Hashem and asking Him for whatever you want or need. *Tefilla* brings results – sometimes after davening once, sometimes after davening twice, and at times it takes longer. The key is not to despair; a person who is persistent in his *tefilla* will ultimately be *zoche* to see wonders.

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