



# SPARKS OF EMUNAH

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BASED ON THE SEFARIM OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLEV ZT"L  
AS TAUGHT BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

לזכות רפואה שלמה  
אלעזר ניסן בן פריידא  
בתוך שאר חולי ישראל

CHIZUK  
FROM THE  
PARSHA

## ALONE — WITH HASHEM

בָּדָד יָשֵׁב מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה מוֹשְׁבּוֹ

*He (the metzora) must sit alone outside the camp.*

What could be better than a life of peace? No arguments, no resentment, never any hard feelings... Is such an existence even possible, here on this world?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:14*) that the only way one can live in peace with others is when he has *emunah*. When a person internalizes the fact that Hashem is in control and that nothing can happen without His consent, he never has a reason to get upset at others. Hence, ***emunah* allows one to live in harmony with all those around him.**

### Cause and Effect

The problems begin when a person's *emunah* is weak and he forgets that Hashem is the One behind everything that occurs. As soon as things go wrong (as they inevitably will), instead of turning his focus upward — to Hashem — he turns it outward, to other people. Anger, blame and *lashon hara* are quick to follow, causing quarrels and strife.

In the times of the *mishkan* and the *Beis Hamikdash*, Hashem didn't allow conflict to rip his People apart. Anyone who spoke *lashon hara* and caused *machlokes* became a *metzora* — a leper — and had to go sit alone.



### All Alone... Or Maybe Not

Seclusion is agonizing for a person who is lacking in his *emunah*. Since his sole focus is other people, he feels unbearably lonely when he's on his own. Yet it is precisely then that he has the opportunity to cure himself from his spiritual malady.

Alone outside the camp and cut off from everyone else, the *metzora* can do only one thing: think. After a lot of soul-searching, he can come to the realization that Hashem is the One in control — not people. Alone, with no people to talk to, he begins to turn to Hashem instead. Slowly, he rebuilds his *emunah*. Bit by bit, word by word, he repairs his connection with Hashem.

After this intense spiritual workout, if his belief in Hashem is as it should be, the goal of his isolation has been accomplished and his *tzora'as* disappears.

### Here and Now

Today we have no *Beis Hamikdash*, no *tzora'as* and no *chutz lamachaneh*. If only we could say that about the sin of *lashon hara*, too... but no, negative speech is rampant and easier to spread than ever. How can we rid ourselves of the temptation to speak *lashon hara* about others?

In order to eliminate this problem, we must get to the root of it — which is a lack of *emunah*. We need to stop blaming others when things go wrong and instead realize that Hashem is the One Who makes it all happen and is therefore the only One to talk to. By strengthening our belief in Hashem, we can attain true *shalom*.

Toch Hanachal, Tazria-Metzora 5761

MOHOROSH  
SPEAKS

## WHAT DID YOU SAY?

*Rufus sprawled luxuriously outside, enjoying the glorious weather. The sun shone brightly, the trees swayed gently in the breeze and the scent of spring filled the air... Rufus was at peace.*

*A rustle sounded nearby, and Rufus was immediately on the alert. Before the offending squirrel even entered his line of vision, Rufus was up on all fours, barking vigorously. Startled, the squirrel scampered away.*

*A bird flew by and the canine vocals began again, loud and strong. Every sound, every movement, every creature that dared to pass by was treated to a round of belligerent barking.*

Is there anything wrong with this dog's behavior? No. A dog — the slightest provocation, real or imagined, sends it into a frenzy of barking.

But what about us? How often do we react with this same knee-jerk, angry reaction when we are provoked? A person who speaks *lashon hara* every time he is wronged (or thinks he is) is no better than Rufus the dog. In this vein, *Chazal* teach us (*Pesachim 118a*) that one who speaks

(Continued on page 2)



## STOP COUNTING

Dear ...

I received your letter.

### Wrong Way

Many people make this same mistake of counting the days that they were “clean” and did not succumb to temptation. This is their source of strength to continue — they calculate in their minds, “*It’s been ten weeks that I have not sinned.*” Or, “*It’s already three months that I have been shomer habris.*”

However, this is not the Torah approach and it causes tremendous damage. We are not angels — when a person does fall and breaks the chain of “good days”, he becomes so broken that he gives up and stops trying to improve.

The method of counting days is something that has seeped in from the non-Jews, from programs that supposedly help people emerge from the mire of sin. However, this approach is futile. Only the Torah’s way, only the path that *tzaddikim* paved for us, is what can extract a person from the clutches of his *yetzer hara*.

### Right Way

The Rebbe teaches us to constantly strengthen ourselves and begin anew. **Even after falling, a person must immediately lift himself up and again start serving Hashem.** The Rebbe once said (*Chayei Moharan 453*), “*If I would chas v’shalom commit the greatest aveira, it would not discourage me even one bit. I would do teshuva and continue to be the same erliche Yid as before.*”

A person must not let anything break him — even if he does find himself succumbing to *aveiros*, he must nevertheless continue to serve Hashem.

Learn the beginning of the *sefer Shivchei Haran* and you’ll get a glimpse into the manner in which the Rebbe conducted himself. R’ Nossan writes (*Shivchei Haran 5:6*), “*The Rebbe always started anew. Whenever he fell from one of his madreigos, he did not give up. Instead, he said, ‘I am starting anew’ as if he had never even attempted to attain that madreiga in the first place. Each time this happened, he began all over again. He would often begin anew, many times in a single day.*”

This is the Torah approach, the way a person can be *zoche* to become a *tzaddik*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

*Adapted from The Light of Emunah #3, page 202*

*lashon hara* deserves to be thrown to the dogs.

Words wield tremendous power. One word carelessly spoken can wreak terrible damage for generations. *Lashon hara* is so terrible, to the point that *Chazal* say (*Eruchin 15a*) that it’s worse than the three cardinal sins: idolatry, immorality and bloodshed.

### In Pursuit of Pleasure

The Torah tells us (*Vayikra 19:16*), “לא תלך רכיל בעמך” — Don’t peddle gossip. Some people are real gossip-mongers and take great pleasure in spreading *lashon hara* about others. The smallest error, the slightest misstep, the most innocuous faux pas, gets placed in the glaring limelight as *ba’alei lashon hara* pitilessly share the negative information with everyone — those that already know, those that didn’t hear yet, and those that would never have heard otherwise.

Most of us are not so malicious as to speak *lashon hara* purely for enjoyment, yet *Chazal* say (*Bava Basra 166a*) that everybody is guilty of this sin, in some form or another. Why do we do this? What do we get out of speaking *lashon hara*?



*Chazal* teach us (*Kesubos 59b*) that idleness leads to sin. When a person is not productively occupied, he doesn’t feel the pleasure of accomplishment. Lacking a sense of fulfillment, he turns to foolish pursuits instead in the hope that it’ll provide the inner satisfaction that he craves. *Lashon hara* provides instant gratification — malicious and fleeting, but gratification nonetheless — and therefore, those who can’t find anything better to do with their time often revert to peddling gossip.

As everyone really knows, the truth is that speaking or listening to *lashon hara* doesn’t provide true satisfaction. **Lasting pleasure comes only spiritual pursuits** — davening, learning, performing acts of *chessed*, busying oneself with other *mitzvos*, etc. We must invest ourselves in spiritual pursuits, and the sense of achievement we will get from that will prevent us from jumping to the wrong kinds of pleasure.

### Poisonous Speech

Speaking slanderously is not the only thing included in the *issur* of *lashon hara*. Listening to negative speech is also forbidden, yet it is something we engage in too often.

Somehow, *lashon hara* is so quickly accepted. Even when a person may be good friends with the subject of the *lashon hara* and knows that he is genuinely a good person, as soon as he hears one negative word about his friend, he immediately accepts it as fact. And even if the person holds firm and refuses to believe what was said, the damage has unfortunately been done. Once a seed of doubt about a person’s character has been planted, it’s nearly impossible to remove it.



**Mind Your Own Business**

The problem is that we're too eager to hear everything. Why must we listen to every word that is said? We would all be better off if we wouldn't involve ourselves so much in others' business.

"Large ears are a sign of a fool," the Zohar Hakadosh says (*Yisro 75b*). This is referring to those who are always in the know.

**Being the one with the latest scoop and the maven on all the "hock" is not a sign of wisdom but of foolishness.** A wise person doesn't involve himself in every last scandal but rather keeps to himself, knowing that he'll hear whatever is necessary for him to know, and he's better off not hearing what is unnecessary.

The Baal Hatanya *zt"l* lost most of his hearing in his old age. He once said, "What's wrong with not being able to hear? What I want to say, I can say, and what others have to say doesn't interest me. Why then should I have to hear?"

**Did You Hear?**

*R' Nachman Hordenker zt"l, a talmid of the Baal Shem Tov zt"l, had refined his hearing so well that he was virtually "deaf" to anything that was not pertinent to his avodas Hashem. Anything that was not necessary for him to hear, his ears simply did not pick up.*

*The Baal Shem Tov was once expounding on R' Nachman Hordenker's greatness to his talmidim, when R' Nachman himself was among those listening — or at least seemed to be. To the other talmidim's surprise, they saw R' Nachman Hordenker leaning closer, as if to better hear his own praises!*

*The Baal Shem Tov understood what must have been going through their minds and explained, "R' Nachman is not listening to one word I am saying. In fact, he doesn't even hear me! He has purified his hearing so much that he can't hear things that are not necessary for him to hear.*

*"Are you wondering why he leaned closer? He saw my lips moving, and he wanted to hear the words of Torah that he is sure I am saying."*

**Self Defense**

The only way we can protect ourselves from the sin of *lashon hara* is by davening for Hashem to help us in this area. Each day, let us take a minute to turn to Hashem and ask Him to help us stay far away from *lashon hara* — not to speak it, hear it, or accept it. In this way we will be *zoche* to guard our tongues, fulfilling the *passuk* (*Tehillim 34:13*), "מיִּהַאִישׁ הַחֲפֹץ חַיִּים... נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹןךָ מֵרַע וּשְׂפִתְךָ מִדְּבַר מִרְמָה."



As the Jew was about to disembark from the ship to restock his supply of food in

town, the non-Jews came running to him and pleaded, "Please take our money and buy us food, for we haven't eaten in a long time.

The Jew looked at them in wonder and asked, "Am I not a guest just like you? I don't either know where to go — I'm a stranger here just as you are."

The non-Jews replied, "Is a Jew ever a stranger? Wherever you go, Hashem is with you."

A Jew is never a stranger. Wherever he might find himself, Hashem is with him. The *passuk* says (*Devarim 4:7*), "כִּי מִי גוֹי גָדוֹל, אֲשֶׁר לֹא אֱלֹקִים קִרְבָּיִם אֵלָיו כֹּה" — For which other nation has a G-d like ours, Who is close to us whenever we call out to Him? *Chazal* teach us that the words "בכל קראנו אליו" teach us that **no matter which language we use to daven to Hashem, He listens to us and answers our tefillos.**

**Whose Tefilla is Heard?**

When a person is in a *tzara*, of course he should go to *tzaddikim* for a *bracha* and ask them to daven for him. *Chazal* teach us (*Bava Basra 116a*) that when a person has a family member who is sick, he should go to a *tzaddik* and ask him to daven on his behalf.

However, this doesn't mean that a person can't daven for himself. On the contrary, a sick person's *tefilla* is greater and more precious to Hashem than any other (*Bereishes Rabba 53:14*).

**We go to tzaddikim — not so that we shouldn't daven, but because they us chizuk to keep davening.**

**Of Course It Helps!**

You write that "We see for ourselves that we can't really achieve major *yeshuos* or change the laws of nature through our *tefillos*" — forgive me, but I don't know how a Jew can even write such words. Quite the opposite is true — we see clearly that our simple *tefillos* are answered. At every turn, we have stories of how Hashem helped us when we davened to Him.

If you're saying this because of your own experience of davening for something and your request was not granted — this doesn't mean that *tefilla* is ineffective. *Chas v'shalom* to even think such a thing! *Tefilla* is a foundation of *emunah*, as we say every day, "אני מאמין באמונה שלמה שהבורא יתברך, שמו לו לבדו ראוי להתפלל ואין ראוי להתפלל לזולתו."

If you davened but didn't receive your request, do as *Chazal* instruct us (*Brachos 32b*): "If a person sees that his *tefilla* was not answered, he should daven again, as the *passuk* says (*Tehillim 27:14*), "קוּהַ אֱלֹהֵי חֶזֶק וַיִּאֲמָץ לִבְךָ וַקוּהַ אֱלֹהֵי ה'."

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

# Q & A

## IS TEFILLA ONLY FOR TZADDIKIM?



### QUESTION:

*To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,*

*Thank you for the shiurim and chizuk. I am forever grateful to the Rosh Yeshiva, because through the shiurim and chizuk, I began learning Torah once again. I find myself reunited with my "old friends," Abaye and Rava, whom I hadn't looked at for many years.*

*In the shiurim, I often hear the Rosh Yeshiva speak about talking to Hashem in one's own language, just as a person speaks to a close friend. I was wondering — isn't this a level only for tzaddikim? We see that throughout the generations, when a person needed a yeshuah, he did not pray for it alone but rather went to a tzaddik to daven on his behalf.*

*Here in galus, we are in a state of spiritual distance from Hashem due to our sins. Additionally, Chazal say that since the churban Beis Hamikdash, the gates of tefilla are locked. We see for ourselves that we can't really achieve major yeshuos or change the laws of nature through our tefillos, like the tzaddikim of previous generations were able to do.*

*I would be very grateful if the Rosh Yeshiva could clarify this for me. Thank you again.*

washes him clean, and dresses him in beautiful, fresh garments, until he himself forgets what he looked like before he found the Rebbe.

You're making a fundamental mistake regarding *tefilla* and *hisbodedus*, thinking it's a new concept. The Rambam teaches (*Hilchos Tefilla, 1:1-2*) that *tefilla* is an obligation for everyone — even women and slaves. First a person should praise Hashem, then he should ask for whatever he needs, and then he should thank Hashem for all the good He has given him. The Rambam states clearly that **the essence of this mitzva is for a person to ask Hashem for whatever he needs, in whichever language he speaks.**

### **Tefilla Today**

How did formal *tefilla* come to be?

At the start of *Galus Bavel*, when the *Anshei Knesses Hagdolah* foresaw how long the *galus* would be and how *Klal Yisrael* would become dispersed among the nations, they established the *nusach hatefilla* of *shacharis*, *mincha* and *maariv* that we daven every day.

The Rebbe teaches (*Sichos Haran 229*) that even today, after formal *tefilla* has been established, a person should also speak to Hashem in his native tongue and ask Him for whatever he needs. This has been and still remains the essence of *tefilla*.

### **Never Alone**

**When a person accustoms himself to speaking to the Hashem, he is never alone.** Wherever he goes, wherever he may find himself, he knows that Hashem is with him.

*Chazal* relate the following story (*Yalkut Devarim, 825*):

*There was once a ship with many non-Jews on board and only one Jew. During the voyage, the ship lost its way and arrived at a foreign land.*

*(Continued on page 3)*

### THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I'm glad that you gain *chizuk* from the teachings of the Rebbe and that you have begun learning Torah with the Rebbe's *seder derech halimud* (as explained in *Sichos Haran 76*).

One cannot even imagine the lofty levels which the Rebbe can bring him to. The Rebbe takes a person out of the mud,

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