



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

לעלוי נשמת האשה החשובה
מרים חנה בת ר' דוד צבי הלוי
נפטרה י' אייר תשפ"ה

CHIZUK
FROM THE
PARSHA

SPECIAL FOR ME

Have you ever heard a lecture which was so on-target... for your neighbor to hear? Did you ever read an inspiring *dvar Torah* and think, "My brother should read this"?

When we hear or read a piece of *mussar*, our knee-jerk reaction is to deflect it. Let's face it — hearing about our shortcomings is uncomfortable and self-improvement is difficult. As a result, instead of taking *mussar* to heart, we mentally "transfer" it to others, completely forgetting that **we are the ones who need to hear it most of all**.

The truth is that whatever a person sees or hears was intended for him. A person who is genuinely self-aware recognizes his weaknesses and knows that he is imperfect, so when he hears sharp words of rebuke or reads a powerful piece of *mussar*, he allows it to penetrate his heart. He doesn't get defensive or shut it out, and his mind doesn't immediately jump to all the others who should be hearing it — rather he accepts the reproach as a wake-up call for **himself**. Unafraid to take an honest look at himself, he is ready to acknowledge his flaws and try to correct them.

For My Ears and My Heart

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:121*) that **a person who truly wishes to grow takes a lesson from whatever he reads or hears**. This is as David Hamelech says (*Tehillim 40:8-9*), *אִזְ אֶמְרָתִי הִנֵּה בְּאֵזְרִי בְּמַגִּלַּת, סֵפֶר כְּתוּב עָלַי* — When I learn a *sefer* and feel that it's written for me, *לְעֵשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ אֱלֹקֵי חַפְצָתִי* — it's a sign that I truly want to do Hashem's will.



This is the lesson that the *parsha* teaches us. The *passuk* says,

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אָמַר אֶל הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם, לִנְפֹשׁ לֹא יִטְמָא בְּעַמִּי

Hashem told Moshe, "Say to the kohanim the sons of Aharon, and say to them..."

Why the repetition?

Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to give over a command to the *kohanim*, but simply saying it was not enough. He had to make it clear to them that **וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם** — he was speaking specifically to them. They had to **take his words to heart and not think about all the other people that his words might be applicable to**. This is how **לִנְפֹשׁ לֹא יִטְמָא בְּעַמִּי** — they learned not to disdain others — by realizing that the *tzaddik* was talking specifically to **them** and allowing his words to penetrate their hearts.

Blind Spot

As self-aware as one might claim to be, it's impossible for a person to truly see his own flaws. Conveniently located in our spiritual "blind spot," our deficiencies are mostly invisible to us — which is why hearing others point out our flaws is infinitely valuable.

Let's make a point of **really** listening to what we hear (as uncomfortable as it may be!) and in this way we will be *zoche* to perfect ourselves and truly serve Hashem in the best way possible.

Toch Hanachal, Emor 5765

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

ל"ג בעומר

"Bar Yochai nimshachta ashrecha..."

With Lag Ba'omer just around the corner, talk of traveling to Meron is on everyone's lips. It's a place that holds a mystical magnetic force, attracting hundreds of thousands of people throughout the entire year, but especially on this day known as the "Yoma D'hilula of R' Shimon." Lag Ba'omer is like R' Shimon bar Yochai's personal *simcha*, and just like a wealthy *ba'al simcha* bestows gifts upon all those who join in his celebration, so does R' Shimon.

The *Gemara* says (*Brachos 9a*), **כְּדַאי הוּא ר' שמעון לסמוך עליו בשעת הדחק** — Anyone in a difficult situation can be helped in the *zechus* of R' Shimon, whose greatness is beyond the scope of our understanding. Throughout the long years of *galus*, Jews have come to Meron to plead for salvation and incredible *nissim* have resulted on this awesomely powerful day.

For One and All

Joining in the dancing at the *me'arah* is an experience like no other. The joy, the

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STARTING OVER

Dear ...,

There is no such thing as a “free ride” in this world — every single person goes through challenges in his life. Our job is to strengthen ourselves and remain *b’simcha* despite our difficulties.

Don’t Lose the Others!

The agony of a parent who sees how his children have strayed from the Torah way is impossible to grasp, but still I beg you — **stay strong!** Try to be happy and make your wife happy. You must try with all your might to keep going so that your other children should stay on the Torah way.

The Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Hamtakas Hadin 65*) when a person hears about a friend’s *tzara*, he must be wise and think, “*What can I do so that this difficulty should not come upon me?*” This also applies to the person himself — when he finds himself in a *tzara*, he must think, “*How can I ensure that this doesn’t happen again?*” When parents see that their child has fallen away from *Yiddishkeit*, they must be extra-careful that their other children don’t fall away together with him.

Be *mechazek* your wife so that she should be able to be a happy mother for the rest of your children — and if she will be happy, she’ll be *mechazek* you. Most importantly, **strengthen yourselves with *emunah peshuta* so that you shouldn’t question Hashem’s ways**, and try with all your might to raise the rest of your children with *simcha*.

Just Like Rabbi Akiva

Shlomo Hamelech says (*Koheles 11:6*), “בבקר זרע את זרעך ולערב אל תנח ידך” — One must not fall apart when seeing years of labor go to waste.

Look at Rabbi Akiva and how he persevered! He had twenty-four thousand *talmidim* over whom he toiled — anyone in a position of *chinuch* knows how difficult it is to work with *talmidim*, how it requires endless time, energy and patience — and all these students passed away. What did Rabbi Akiva do? He started over! He opened his *yeshiva* once again and took five students who later illuminated the world.

What did our grandparents do when the Germans *ym”sh* murdered six million innocent Jews? Entire families were incinerated, leaving only “ אחד ” ממספרהם (*Yirmiyahu 3:14*), and they rebuilt an entire generation from scratch! My grandparents all went through Auschwitz; they all had numbers on their arms. They used to tell us stories of how they lost everything — everything! — yet they strengthened themselves and started over. These are the greatest heroes and heroines the world has ever known.

The same applies when a person sees his children falling away one after another — **he must not give up! He must follow the example of Rabbi Akiva and start anew.** I hope you will strengthen yourself and continue to serve Hashem with joy, and by being *mechazek* your wife and making her happy, you will be *zoche* to *nachas* from your children.

Adapted from *Atzaso Emunah Volume 2, Letter #150*

exultation,
the spiritual
“high”... The

air is loaded with tremendous potential just waiting to be tapped into... and the area is packed with enormous crowds.

With just one look around, even the most oblivious bystander will notice a fascinating sight — the utter diversity of the crowd. White shirt, striped *kaftan* and fluorescent orange t-shirt blend as the people stand hand in hand, dancing with fervor and joy. *Chassidish, litvish, ashkenazi, sefardi*... Every Jew, no matter who he may be, finds his place at R’ Shimon Bar Yochai’s *kever*.

The *sefer Bais Aharon* explains this as follows: “Just as Hashem is for all of *Klal Yisroel*, so is R’ Shimon Bar Yochai for all of *Klal Yisroel* — even for the lowliest amongst them.” *Tzaddikim* speak the one language we all have in common: that of the *neshama*. This is why every Jew feels a connection to R’ Shimon.

In Your Own Corner

For those that make it to Meron for Lag Ba’omer, it’s important to know that making it into the *me’arah* itself is a nice bonus, but is not absolutely necessary. The *kedusha* of R’ Shimon is not limited to the actual *me’arah* — the entire mountain and surrounding areas of Meron are saturated with holiness.

Whether you find yourself with hundreds of people ahead of you in line or you simply don’t have the stamina to walk up the mountain, remember that the actual location is insignificant since you can connect to R’ Shimon from wherever you are. Find a quiet corner where you can actually hear your own thoughts and daven to Hashem in your own words. Ask for your *tefillos* to be answered in the *zechus* of all the *tzaddikim* buried there, and you’ll surely receive the *yeshuos* you are davening for.

To Merit Children

The *Medrash* tells the following story:

There was once a childless couple that came to R’ Shimon bar Yochai for advice. “We are married for ten years and still have no children,” they told him. “Are we supposed to get divorced now so that we should each remarry and have a chance at having

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children with a different spouse?”

R' Shimon agreed to arrange the get, on condition that their divorce be celebrated as a joyous event. "Just like you celebrated your marriage with a seuda, so too should your divorce be celebrated with a seuda."

The couple prepared a festive meal in their home and invited many guests to join, in gratitude to Hashem for the connection, love and understanding they had shared in their marriage. After drinking a bit too much wine, the husband stood up before the crowd and addressed his wife. "You have been so good to me all these years," he declared. "You were the light of my life and the joy of my days. Before you leave, I would like to give you a gift. Choose one thing from my house — anything your heart desires — to take along with you to your father's home."

He finished his drunken speech and promptly fell into a deep sleep. His wife then instructed the servants, "Lift the bed on which my husband is sleeping and carry it to my father's home."

When her husband awoke, he was astonished to find himself in his father-in-law's home with his almost-ex-wife sitting across him! "Where am I? What is going on!?" He exclaimed.



"You said I can choose anything from your house before I leave," she said softly. "I chose you. Nothing is as important to me as you."

The couple then went back to R' Shimon Bar Yochai and asked the tzaddik what to do. "If you love and value each other so much, don't get divorced," he advised. "May you be zoche to healthy, erliche children."

And so it was. The couple soon had children and built a beautiful family.

Time and again, childless couples have been zoche to children in the merit of R' Shimon. The day of Lag Ba'omer holds this special power, too — the power of being granted children in the zechus of R' Shimon.

Bringing Meron Home

Do you wish you can be in Meron but circumstances simply don't allow it? Are you wishing you could just hop onto the next plane and fly over?

Even if you will not get there this year, know that **you are where your mind is**. You can "be there" in the truest sense of the word — your *tefillos* can have the same potency as those said at the *me'arah*. All you need to do is stop for a few moments and focus; simply speak to Hashem and daven for whatever you may need, in the *zechus* of R' Shimon Bar Yochai.

Looking to give your *tefillos* an extra boost? The most powerful way to connect to a *tzaddik* is through learning his *sefarim*. By learning *Zohar Hakadosh* or *Tikunei Zohar* — even just a few words! — your *tefillos* will gain an awesome strength and be able to accomplish everything you can possibly imagine.

with infertility and telling him to dance for ten minutes every day to the words, "I'm so happy that I don't have children!" or "Thank You Hashem that I have no children!" This is nothing more than making a mockery of a brokenhearted person. Of course, one must dance every day and thank Hashem for all the good He gives us — for a lot more than ten minutes — but one must not engage in self-deception.

We must believe that everything Hashem does is for our good, because only He knows what's best for us. This is what we daven for when we say (*Tehillim 85:5*), "ה'ראנו ה' חסדך" — Show us, Hashem, that everything we endure is an act of kindness. However, when a person is in a *tzara*, there is only one solution — to plead with Hashem for a *yeshuah*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from Atzaso Emunah Volume 2, Letter # 138

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS...

This Shabbos, we will begin learning a new masechta — Maseches Chullin.

Learning a *daf Gemara* each day blesses a person with abundant *parnassa* and helps him to become an *erliche Yid*. Hold onto the *daf*; be sure to learn Torah every single day.

The Shelah HaKadosh had a son named R' Sheftil, who wrote in his *tzava'a*:

"Learning a *daf Gemara* each day should be as important to you as putting on *tefillin*.

Do it every day without compromise."

TO HEAR THE DAILY *DAF SHIUR* GIVEN BY THE ROSH YESHIVA,

CALL KOL BRESLEV: (212) 444-9191 1, 3, 1 and 31 for *Maseches Chullin*

Q & A

AM I SUPPOSED TO THANK HASHEM FOR MY HARDSHIPS?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you very much for all the shiurim and for all that you do for Klal Yisrael!

I recently heard from one of the mashpi'im in Breslev that when a person is in a tzara, he should spend ten minutes thanking Hashem for the tzara, and he will then see a yeshuah.

Is this the right approach?

Thank you.

that each of them had explicitly told him that they reached their spiritual levels only by speaking extensively to Hashem.

The Way Out of Tzaros

When a person goes through hardships, the only solution is to daven to Hashem for a yeshuah. Not only that, but it's even a *mitzvas aseï min haTorah* to cry out to Hashem when one is in a *tzara* (Rambam, *Hilchos Ta'anios* 1:1). This is what the Rebbe teaches us — that we should flee to Hashem and plead with Him to have mercy on us.

This idea that one must spend ten minutes thanking Hashem for his *tzara* is contrary to the Torah. Look into the *Chumash* and see how the *avos* reacted when they were in distress — What did Yitzchak do when he waited for children? He davened to Hashem. What did Yaakov do when he saw that Esav wanted to kill him? He davened to Hashem. What did *Klal Yisrael* do in *Mitzrayim* when Pharaoh tormented them? They cried out to Hashem. Open a *sefer Tehillim* and see what David Hamelech did when he was in a *tzara* — he cried out to Hashem, “*Help me, Hashem!*” and “*Save me, Hashem!*”

Thanking for the Good or for the Bad?

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan*, 1:195) that David Hamelech also constantly looked for good things to thank Hashem for. Even when Hashem brought hardship upon him, he looked for good within the bad, as he writes (*Tehillim* 4:2), “*בצר הרבת לי*” — Even within the suffering, You created a sense of expansion for me.

There is no such thing as telling a person, “*Thank Hashem for your tzara.*” Imagine going to a person who is struggling

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THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

The Rebbe gave us the gift of *hisbodedus*. Mohorosh says that if we would have come to Breslev only for this gift, it would have already been worthwhile.

What is *hisbodedus*? *Hisbodedus* means that a person should accustom himself to speaking to Hashem in his own language and tell Hashem everything that's on his mind. The Rebbe said that he reached his *madreigos* only through *hisbodedus* (*Shivchei Haran* 10), and that all *tzaddikim* reach their spiritual heights solely through *hisbodedus* (*Likutei Moharan*, 2:100) because **it's impossible to be an *erliche Yid* without *hisbodedus*** (*Likutei Moharan*, 2:25). When the Rebbe said this, some *chassidim* began questioning him, listing various *tzaddikim* who were surely considered *erliche Yidden*. For every name they mentioned, the Rebbe replied

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