

# SPARKS OF EMUNAH



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

PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN  
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ISSUE #21

## CHIZUK from the PARSHA

## THE MIDDLE WAY

לא תוסיפו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו ממנו... אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם

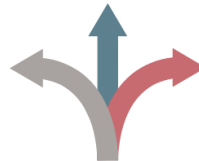
*Do not add to the mitzvos that I commanded you and don't subtract from them.*

The words in the *passuk* sound quite repetitive. Why did Moshe Rabbeinu have to say "... that I commanded you" twice? Wouldn't it be enough to just say אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם once?

The Rambam teaches (*Hilchos De'os 1:4*) that a person should live with balance and always choose the *דרך הממוצע* – the middle path. He must avoid extreme mindsets or behaviors and ensure that he never veers too much to the right or to the left.

Balance can be very difficult to achieve – especially in *avodas Hashem* – because human nature is inclined to extremes. At times, a person can be stirred by powerful inspiration and be totally taken over by it, going all-out to do Hashem's will. Ignited with fervor, he is liable to detach from the world and completely devote himself to serving Hashem. This approach may seem exalted and holy, but it isn't sustainable – driven primarily by emotion, a zealot is in danger of losing everything if he just loses his momentum.

At the same time, one must beware of the opposite extreme, as well. A person who allows hopelessness to set in loses his inner drive, and then his entire *avodas Hashem* is placed in jeopardy. Unenthusiastic and unmotivated, he is likely to drop everything: davening, learning and self-improvement.



The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:61*) that the only way to keep oneself on the middle path is by having *emunas chachamim* and heeding the words of *tzaddikim*. With the command to obey Torah authorities, Hashem said (*Devarim 17:11*), לא תסור מן הדבר אשר, יגידו לך ימין ושמאל – do not budge from the words that they tell you, neither to the left nor to the right. The Rebbe explains this to mean that the *tzaddikim* protect us from the danger of both extremes – the "far right" (ימין) of doing way too much, and the "far left" (שמאל) of losing interest and giving up.

This is the lesson in this week's *parsha*. לא תוסיפו על הדבר – Don't add to the Torah with your passion; don't be so overzealous because you may end up going against Hashem's will. This is only possible to achieve with the next words in the *passuk*: אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם – by listening to Moshe, the *tzaddik*. The opposite attitude is also detrimental; ולא תגרעו ממנו – don't give up on yourself and stop trying to achieve your spiritual goals, thus "subtracting" from the *mitzvos* of the Torah. To keep going, we also need the *tzaddik*; therefore, the *passuk* repeats the words אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם. The repetition teaches us that *tzaddikim* protect us from both the extreme and the שמאל extreme.

May we be *zoche* to submit to the guidance of *tzaddikim*, and in this way we will become truly *erliche Yidden*.

Zos Hatorah, Va'eschanan 4

## MOHOROSH SPEAKS

## EMOTION-LESS



People are very good at talking. The power of speech is what distinguishes us from the animal kingdom, and we embody this ability exceptionally well.

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 2:25*) that the same way one speaks to a good friend – naturally, easily and frequently – so, too should one talk to Hashem. This practice is called *hisbodedus* and is a fundamental concept in Breslev.

As anyone who really tried it can attest, sometimes *hisbodedus* is gratifying. When a person is overcome with yearning or overflowing with emotion, talking to Hashem is easy and feels good. The challenge begins when one's heart is dry and cold, and saying even one word to Hashem takes immense effort. Yet the Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:99*) that a person should push himself to keep doing *hisbodedus*, regardless of the presence or absence of emotion.

In this week's *haftarah*, the Navi says (*Yeshaya 40:1*), נחמו נחמו, עמי – Be consoled, be consoled, My nation." The dou-



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Dear ...

I received your letter.

There is one thing I ask of you: never speak disrespectfully to your parents. *Chutzpah* toward parents is a terrible *aveira* and brings great punishment. It makes no difference who is right and who is wrong; even if you are one hundred percent right, you may never talk back to them.

Regarding your father's frequent outbursts – they are only painful because you take his words to heart and begin to believe that there is something wrong with you. Don't take it personally. Remember that it's not about you; it's about him and his stress levels. With this attitude, you'll be able to take his anger in stride and it will not bother you anymore.

I know a Breslevar *chassid* who is respected by some but ridiculed by countless others. He constantly says, "I don't get excited when people praise me so that I shouldn't fall apart when people insult me. A person who yells at or insults others shows his own bad *middos*, whereas one who speaks kindly displays his own good character."

Try to reach the level where your sense of fulfillment and self-confidence are not dependent on others; rather, you receive gratification through doing *ratzon Hashem*. With this attitude, you can always remain confident and cheerful, and you will not become discouraged from anyone or anything.

Strengthen your *emunah* by constantly reviewing the following:

ממלא כל עלמין, וסובב כל עלמין, אין שום  
מציאות בלעדיו יתברך כלל, ובכל תנועה ותנועה  
שם אלופו של עולם

*Hashem is everything and everything is Hashem. There is no teva, mikreh or mazel; everything comes from Him. No person has any power whatsoever and nothing can happen without Hashem decreeing so.*

Think it, say it, sing it; this awareness will make your life so much easier. Remember, never speak disrespectfully to your parents, even if they are wrong.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of  
Emunah #1, page 27*



ble consolation in this *passuk* teaches an important lesson about *tefilla* and *hisbodedus*.

All the pain we experience in *galus* is rooted in our perceived distance from Hashem. In reality, Hashem has never left us – He is with us at every moment. We begin to suffer when we forget this fundamental truth, and then our hardships become arduously difficult. The solution for this *galus* of mind is *hisbodedus*. By talking to Hashem, we draw close to Him and renew our belief in His never-ending love and kindness. Since our relationship with Hashem is so important, it cannot wait for a time when we feel inspired. We must talk to Hashem constantly, whether our minds are at peace or in turmoil and whether our hearts are impassioned or impassive.

This is the meaning of the double “נחמו” in the *haftorah*. Our solace is having a connection with Hashem, which is developed by talking to Him all the time. Although dry, disconnected *tefillos* may seem worthless to us, the time will come when we will have a **two-fold** consolation, when we will see the value of **both** the fervent and the forced *tefillos*.

Furthermore, the Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:99*) that when a person persists in his *hisbodedus* even when his heart is he feels nothing, his emotions will eventually follow. Additionally, all his past *tefillos* will automatically be elevated.

*Parshas Va'eschanan* begins with Moshe Rabbeinu's pleas to enter Eretz Yisrael. The Rebbe explains the first *passuk* of the *parsha* as follows: ואתחן אל ה' – one must talk to Hashem constantly, regardless of what he does or doesn't feel. Ultimately, בעת ההוא – the time will come when לאמר – the words will be easy for him to say because his heart will have opened up to feel the connection to Hashem.

This is true in all areas of *avodas Hashem*. As we try to fulfill Hashem's *mitzvos* in the most ideal manner, we forget that even *mitzvos* done halfheartedly have value – perhaps **even more** than those done with passion and excitement, because Hashem looks at the effort we invest. It's much harder for a person to daven, learn and do *mitzvos* when his heart isn't in it; therefore, when one exerts himself to keep up his *avodas Hashem* despite his lack of passion, his actions are even more cherished by Hashem.

### Seeing or Believing?

*Chazal* tell us (*Megilla 6b*) תאמין – אם יאמר לך אדם יגעתי ומצאתי, תאמין – if a person tells you that he tried and succeeded, believe him. This gives rise to a question: Wouldn't success be quite evident? That which can be seen does not require belief – why must we believe when a person says that his efforts bore fruit?

R' Nosson explains (*Likutei Halachos Birchos Hapeiros 5*) that in spiritual matters, success isn't readily apparent. No matter how much effort we invest in our *avodas Hashem*, it doesn't always seem that we accomplished our goals.



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- Still fighting to daven each *tefilla*.
- Still struggling to keep learning.
- Still battling the same *taavos*.
- Still grappling with the same bad *middos*.

We must remember that **investing effort in avodas Hashem is in itself a success**. Although the results may not be visible to the eye, we must believe that we have succeeded. No good deed is ever lost; every attempt to improve and even just the desire to improve is added to our spiritual bank account. We must only have patience and stamina to keep going, and ultimately, we won't just have to **believe** in our success – we'll be able to **see** it, too.

**Add A "One"**

A *yungerman* once came to seek the counsel of R' Dovid Moshe of Tchortkov. He confided that his father-in-law had recently stopped going to *shul* and had dropped davening altogether. Knowing that his father-in-law deeply respected the *tzaddik*, he asked if R' Dovid Moshe could perhaps intervene.



R' Dovid Moshe called the father-in-law to his home and gently inquired about the veracity of this report. Shamefacedly, the father-in-law admitted that it was true, *tefilla* was a thing of the past. "For months, each time I prepared to daven, my mind wandered to improper thoughts and unfiltered territory," he defended himself. "No matter how I battled these thoughts and tried to refocus, I was unsuccessful. I figured I'd skip davening rather than sending such unbefitting *tefillas* to Hashem."

The Tchortkover *tzaddik* listened but disagreed. "If you'll continue to daven despite your struggles, the obstacles will eventually disappear and your *tefillas* will be completely pure. However, if you give up, there will be nothing left of your *Yiddishkeit* at all."

He explained this with the *passuk* (*Tehillim 87:7*), ה' יספר בכתוב עמים – Hashem counts the same way the non-Jew write. In *Lashon Hakodesh*, numbers are written out in words: אחד, עשרה, מאה ... In Yiddish, too, they are written in words: איינס, צען, הונדרעט ... In the languages of the non-Jews, however, numbers are usually written in digits: 1, 10, 100... Hashem counts like that, too.

The Tchortkover *tzaddik* expounded further, "You may rate your davening as a total zero. Day after day, you see yourself as a complete failure, adding numerous zeroes to your spiritual bank account. However, the day will come that your heart will be awakened and you will begin to feel a closeness to Hashem. Then, the אחד אחד will join with all those "useless" zeroes and where you previously had 000000000, you will have 1,000,000,000!"

Every good deed has significance, no matter how poorly it was performed. It may seem like a zero, but as long as you have Hashem with you the value of your zeroes increases more and more.

May Hashem give us the strength to persevere even when we are devoid of emotion, and grant us the ability to keep going even in the face of apparent failure, and with this we will merit immeasurable benefit in this world and in *Olam Haba*.



and (*Bereishis Rabba 17:2*), "He who is not married has no good, no assistance, no joy, no

blessing, no atonement, no peace, no life. He is not complete."

R' Nosson had a grandson R' Mechele who was very straightforward and accepted every word of R' Nosson with simplicity. To any *bachur* who refused to consider marriage for reasons like yours, R' Mechele would remark, "You're not good." When asked for an explanation, he'd respond, "The Torah says לא טוב היות אדם לבדו – it's not good for a person to be alone, unmarried." The opposite of טוב is רע, which is caused by the *aveira* of *p'gam habris*. We learn this from the story of Er and Onan, on whom the *passuk* says (*Bereishis 38:7*), ויהי ער בכור יהודה רע בעיני ה'.

Don't consider yourself wiser than the Torah – follow Hashem's command with *temimus*. Ask your parents not to turn down any *shidduchim* and get married as soon as possible. You write that you can only enjoy life before you get married; R' Nosson says the opposite (*Likutei Halachos, Yom Hakippurim 1*), מי שאינו נשוי, הוא פגום בברית. Life without a wife is not worth living, because one is vulnerable to sin when single.

May Hashem have mercy on us and redeem us from this long and bitter *galus*. How unfortunate it is that we live among the non-Jews, who are the source of these insidious ideas of delaying marriage and not bearing children. As Jews, we must follow the Torah – we must marry young and bear children who will serve Hashem.

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## I'M NOT READY TO GET MARRIED YET.

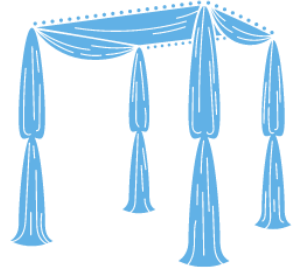


### Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,

My parents would like for me to start *shidduchim*, but I'm not ready yet. These few years as a *bachur* are so valuable to me; I feel like they are a special gift from Hashem, a

time to be able to *shteig* and enjoy. Getting married comes along with many responsibilities which make it much harder to grow in learning – I want to push it off a bit and enjoy life in the meantime. Can the Rosh Yeshiva clarify the right approach in this matter?



Thank you, and may you have much strength to continue with your holy work.

### The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

I received your letter.

The Rebbe was very insistent that one get married as soon as possible. To single *bachurim* who came to him, he said, "Come back with a *tallis*."

Similarly, *Chazal* tell us the following story (*Kiddushin 29b*):

*Rav Huna had heard of the greatness of Rav Hamnuna and asked to see him. When Rav Hamnuna was brought to*

*meet him he noticed that this great talmid chacham was not wearing a tallis and he asked why. Rav Hamnuna responded that he was not married. Rav Huna turned his face away and declared, "Then don't come to me; I don't want to see you before you are wed."*

You think that your life is good now? **Now** you can *shteig* and achieve? *Chazal* say the opposite (*Ye'vamos 62b*), "A man without a wife has no happiness, no blessing and no good,"

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