



SPARKS OF EMUNAH

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AS TAUGHT BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

לזכות רפואה שלמה
יוכבד בת חסי' רחל רבקה
בתוך שער חולי ישראל

CHIZUK
FROM THE
PARSHA

IN YOUR HANDS

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה

See, I present before you today a blessing and a curse.

Two painters sit side by side, each with a paintbrush poised over a blank canvas. The first painter surveys the palette before him and carefully begins dipping, mixing and painting. Layer by layer of vibrant color, he savors every moment until he finally completes his breathtaking magnum opus.

The other painter sits before the same set of paraphernalia: canvas, brushes, paint. However, his painting turns out drastically different. With his mind full of dismal thoughts, he chooses colors that match his mood; instead of creating a work of beauty, he fills the canvas with bleak, morbid strokes.

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:36*) that each day is a gift from Hashem, to be used however we choose. The *passuk* says, **ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם היום** – Hashem grants us the day itself, **ברכה וקללה** – whether it will be a blessed or a cursed day is up to each person alone. Like a blank canvas before us, **we** decide what to make of each day. The *passuk* continues, **את הברכה אשר תשמעו אל מצות**... **ה'...** – it all depends on our choices. Will we create a masterpiece or a disaster? The decision is in our hands.



The last letters of the words **את הברכה אשר תשמעו** spell out **תורה**, alluding to the fact that learning and keeping the Torah gives a person access to all of Hashem's blessings. The Torah is called **אור** – light (*Mishlei 6:23*); *Chazal* teach us that just like light dispels darkness, so it is with the Torah (*Bamidbar Rabba 14:10*). In our physical world, the truth is obscured by many distractions and temptations. There is so much that muddles our minds, shrouding every decision in uncertainty. However, Hashem has entrusted us with the key to combat the darkness and clear up the confusion: the Torah. Learning Torah guides a person through every moment, every choice and every challenge, granting him a life of blessing and happiness.

Learning Torah is not just the source of *bracha*; it is actually the source of our very existence. Just like Torah is compared to light, so too, the *neshama* – the life force of each person – is compared to light (*Mishlei 20:27*). *Chazal* say (*Devarim Rabba 4:4*) that Hashem tells us, *"My candle (the Torah) is in your hands and your candle (the neshama) is in My hands. See to watch over My candle and I will watch over yours."* When one learns Torah, he gives himself life and he gives his life meaning.

Let's make the most of each day by filling our lives with Torah, and may we be *zoche* to the fulfillment of the Rebbe's promise (*Sichos Haran 17*): *"When the Torah reveals her face to a person, he will no longer desire any reward; he will want nothing but the Torah itself."*

Zos Hatorah Parshas Re'eh, Kuntres Seder Derech Halimud

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

OPTICAL ILLUSION

Masks. The world is full of masks. Every single creation – inanimate or live – is just a mask, a cover-up for Hashem's Presence.

The untrained (or unbelieving) eye sees a world that seems to run on its own. Stars twinkle, planets revolve, plants blossom, animals crawl and climb, all in the same way they were programmed to do since creation. The laws of nature operate so seamlessly that it is difficult – if not nearly impossible – to remain with a constant awareness of Hashem's involvement in every last detail of the world.

This was done intentionally. If we were to see Hashem clearly at every turn, the world would not be able to exist. Hashem therefore concealed Himself behind the laws of nature and gave a crucial task to every Jew: to pull back the curtain and reveal that Hashem is the One behind all that we see. The purpose of our lives is for us to purify our spiritual vision and accustom ourselves to look past the superficiality, to recognize the spark of Hashem hidden in all

(Continued on page 2)



TALK TO HASHEM

Dear ...

I received your letter.

True, it is hard to talk to Hashem initially, and much *chizuk* and encouragement is needed to be able to persist. However, once a person is *zoche* to do true *hisbodedus* and discusses everything in his life with Hashem, he no longer needs anyone or anything else.

A person's entire focus should be to have a connection with Hashem and to speak to Him constantly. This was David Hamelech's plea (*Tehillim* 27:4), "אחת שאלתי מאת ה' אותה אבקש שבתי בבית ה' כל ימי חיי לחיות" – All I ask of You, Hashem, is that I should always be with You, always sit in Your home and live with You forever. When a person realizes that he has no one but Hashem and begins turning to Hashem for whatever he needs, he is the luckiest man in the world.

Daven for This!

If it is difficult for you to talk to Hashem, make this the subject of your *tefillos*! Daven, **"Hashem, help me be able to talk to You! It's so hard for me to do so. When it comes to other people, I have no problem speaking with them for hours on end, but when I try to talk to You, I get stuck and am unable to speak. Hashem, please help me feel Your Presence and sense that You are right here with me so that it will be easier for me to talk to You."**

"Hashem, help me have the clarity to always remember that it is You Who controls everything. Grant me a complete faith so that I should remember that the entire world is in Your control and that all creations – מַדְבֵּר, חַי, צוּמָה, דּוּמָם – are merely a façade for Your power and glory."

An Open Door

Being able to speak to Hashem freely is the most valuable tool a person can possess. The Degel Machane Efraim *zt"l* relates the following *mashal* (*Parshas Bechukosai*) in the name of his holy grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov:

There once was a king who proclaimed to his entire kingdom that he would grant an audience to all of his subjects who had anything to request of him. People came from far and wide to take advantage of this opportunity. Some asked for money, others asked for honor and fame, others asked for revenge on their enemies... each came with his unique appeal.

One wise man, however, approached the king with a brilliant request. Instead of asking for something fleeting, he asked for one thing: to be able to speak to the king every single day. With an open door to the palace, he knew that he would always be able to ask the king for all he would ever need.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 142



that we see
and experi-
ence.

See the rolling expanses of green grass? Recognize that it's Hashem. See birds flying, squirrels running up the trees, flies buzzing all around? Recognize that it's Hashem. See billions of stars twinkling in the inky sky? Recognize that it's Hashem.

Did you have a successful day at work? Recognize that it's Hashem. Is your struggling child showing progress? Recognize that it's Hashem. Did the doctor give you a good prognosis? Recognize that it's Hashem.

Did you miss an important phone call? Recognize that it's Hashem. Were you laid off from your job? Recognize that it's Hashem. Did a *shidduch* just fall through? Recognize that every occurrence – both the good and the seemingly bad – is from Hashem. When a person can look deeper than the physical world, beyond the natural order of things, to see the One Who is truly behind it all, he can reach the greatest spiritual heights.

All The Way Down...

Spiritual decline begins when a person forgets about Hashem, and instead of using his eyes to see אלקות all around him, he lets them wander and see things that he should not. Glimpse after glimpse, the inappropriate sights slowly eat away at his soul until he begins to fall to temptation and sins. *Chazal* teach us (*Sanhedrin* 45a) that the *yetzer hara* only has power over one who has looked at that which is forbidden. The battle for *shmiras einayim* is so, so difficult because this is the *yetzer hara's* best weapon; he invests all his energy into luring us into looking at impurity because he knows that one glance is all it takes for him to have a person trapped in his net.

Everything starts with the eyes. The *passuk* says (*Bamidbar* 15:39), "לא תתורו אחרי לבבכם ואחרי עיניכם" – Do not explore after your heart and after your eyes. *Chazal* teach us (*Brachos* 12b) that "אחרי עיניכם" refers to thoughts of *aveiros*, because that is where it all begins. First the eyes see, next the heart desires, and then the person sins in the worst ways possible (*Tur Orach Chaim* 1).

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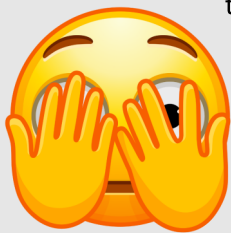


Similarly, the *passuk* says (Mishlei 23:26),
 תנה בני לבך לי ועיניך

“דרכי תצורנה” – My child, give your **heart** to Me, and your **eyes** will desire My ways. Why only these organs? What about the rest? Here too, *Chazal* say (Bamidbar Rabba 10:2) that all of a person’s *ruchniyus* is dependent on his eyes and his heart; once one’s eyes gaze at immorality, his heart is not too far behind, and that is the beginning of his end.

Just One Glance

All it takes is one glance. Seeing just one immodest image is all it takes to draw a person down the slippery slope of sin. *Chazal* praise one who avoids looking at women as they wash laundry in the river, in the case that they might lift their clothes while doing so (Bava Basra 57b) – setting the line **before** what may become problematic is the key to *shmiras einayim*.



If that was the case back in the times of *Chazal*, when the world was not as depraved as it is now, how much more careful must we be today to keep our eyes pure and holy! With the street so full of immodesty and immorality, allowing our eyes to stray for a moment will surely cause us to see things that are improper. The same is true for the internet – just one moment of laxity will certainly cause one to see impure sights. We must therefore be extra-vigilant to guard our eyes so that we will not come close to seeing anything that is sinful.

Blinded

A blind person cannot see any light. Eyes that have been used for *aveiros* become blinded and can no longer see the light in this world. So many people experience a melancholy, an unhappiness, a discontent that remains beneath the surface no matter what they do to try to shake it off or cover it up, and much of this is rooted in a lack of *shmiras einayim*. One who does not guard his eyes inevitably falls into sin, and his *aveiros* then drain him of all vitality, leaving him dispirited and depressed.

So much lies at stake. So much is dependent on these two organs which seem small in the physical sense, while in the spiritual realm they dwarf all the others. May we merit to guard our eyes and look only toward Hashem, and in this way we will attain true success in all areas of our lives.

Kuntres “Zei Matzliach”



For Your CHILD's Sake -3-

לב אבות על בנים,
 a kuntres written by Mohorosh zt”l.

PART 2: EXCUSES, EXCUSES

Let us analyze some of the most common excuses that people use – both consciously and subconsciously – to justify themselves for not marrying off their children as soon as possible.

EXCUSE #1:

“My son/daughter is still young – why should he/she be saddled with such responsibilities so soon? Marriage (and all that it entails) is too heavy a burden to place on such young shoulders.”

This is one line of reasoning that is heard from many parents, and superficially, it sounds very sensible. Why indeed should we trouble our children so soon?

While this attitude seems to stem from a true concern for the welfare of one’s children, the reality is that there is nothing more detrimental to their wellbeing than this approach. Parents who truly seek the best for their children must know that the best thing for a grown child is to get married. It’s a difficult world today – each moment brings new dangers; each day holds the risk of them succumbing to damaging behavior which will haunt them for the rest of their lives. The only safeguard is to marry them off, and with the spiritual protection that having a spouse provides, they will be able to overcome the temptations of our debased world.

Waiting a few years will not help the children become “more mature.” If anything, the opposite is true – remaining single for so many years only brings problems which prevent them from ever being able to establish happy marriages later on. In contrast, when a person marries young with a mind that is pure and untainted by improper thoughts or behavior, he will then truly be able to succeed in marriage and in life.

Chazal teach us (Sanhedrin 76b) that a person who raises his children properly and marries them off young will experience peace and harmony in his home. The sooner one marries off his children, the more he spares himself hardship and heartache, and the more pleasant his home atmosphere remains. *Chazal* also say (Pesachim 113a), that a person should even free his slave to marry him off to his grown daughter, all so that she should not remain single for a moment longer than necessary.

To be continued next week, be’ezeras Hashem.

Q & A

HOW CAN I NAVIGATE A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP WITH MY FATHER?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I am a young bachur learning in a good yeshiva, ba-ruch Hashem. I often listen to the shiurim on the hotline and I wanted to thank you for the chizuk you give on a constant basis.

My father is a successful businessman, and he is usually overworked and very stressed. My relationship with him is very confusing; there are times when he is kind and loving towards me, but then there are other times when he yells and humiliates me. It goes back and forth like this all the time and causes me much pain.

I want to ask the Rosh Yeshiva for chizuk and for advice on how to behave.

Thank you.

to believe that there is something wrong with you. Therefore, **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 Breslever 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 should receive your satisfaction through doing *ratzon Hashem*. With this attitude, you will always be able to 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 nature or coincidence; everything comes from Him. No person has any power whatsoever and nothing can happen without Hashem decreeing it to be so.

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

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #1, page 27

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

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

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