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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

WINNING THE BATTLE

וְהָיָה כִּקְרַבְכֶּם אֶל הַמִּלְחָמָה וְנִגַּשׁ הַכֹּהֵן וְדָבַר אֶל הָעָם...
אֶל יָרֵךְ לִבְבְּכֶם אֶל תִּירְאוֹ... כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֹךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם

At the time when you draw close to war, the kohen should say to the nation,
"Have no fear, for Hashem is the One Who goes with you to fight for you."

Wartime. Klal Yisrael stands at the ready, rows of soldiers equipped to fight for the sake of Hashem. Before heading out to battle, there was a *mitzva* to fulfill: the *kohen mashuach milchama* had to speak to the army and reassure them in preparation for war.

The Torah is eternal. Although parts of it seem to have only been applicable long ago, the truth is that since the Torah is forever, every word in it is relevant to every person – forever. If so, how does the subject of the *kohen mashuach milchama* apply to us today?

Another Kind of War

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:115*) that when a person wants to come close to Hashem, the *yetzer hara* – his sworn enemy – works relentlessly to thwart his every attempt.

It's a constant battle, a never-ending war. The person tries to daven. Tries to learn. Tries to overcome his temptations. Tries to conquer his bad *middos*. Tries to do all the right things in order to improve his connection with Hashem. Yet as he keeps hitting obstacles he becomes discouraged, because a relationship with Hashem begins to seem unattainable. However, the Rebbe teaches us that the opposite is true. Hashem, in His infinite mercy, conceals Himself **within** the difficulties, readily accessible to those who don't let their challenges stop them. Knowing this, a person can gather the fortitude to persist despite the constant hardships he encounters.



The Key to Victory

This is the lesson of the *kohen mashuach milchama* – it's a message that is applicable for every person, forever. The *passuk* here reveals the method for overcoming one's *yetzer hara* and emerging the victor:

וְהָיָה כִּקְרַבְכֶּם אֶל הַמִּלְחָמָה – When a person finds himself under attack, helpless in the face of the *yetzer hara*'s cunning strategies, וְנִגַּשׁ הַכֹּהֵן וְדָבַר אֶל הָעָם – he must listen to the words of the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik* calls out to all who will listen, אֶל יָרֵךְ לִבְבְּכֶם אֶל תִּירְאוֹ – Don't be frightened when you are confronted with challenges; don't be disheartened when your *avodas Hashem* comes with an enormous amount of struggle. כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֹךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם – Hashem is with you in your difficulties! He will fight for you! All He wants is to see you persevere. Keep going, keep trying!"

When a person remains steadfast and refuses to abandon Hashem for any price in the world, he will succeed in peeling back all the layers of concealment and find Hashem right there, waiting for him.

Toch Hanachal, Shoftim 5764

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

ELUL! ELUL!

The month of Elul is here, marking the imminent arrival of the *yamim noraim*. In just a few short weeks, we will be crying out, ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה מעבירין, "את רע הגזרה!" Let's prepare ourselves by working on *teshuva*, *tefilla* and *tzedaka* **now**, instead of waiting for later to try to annul decrees which have already been transcribed.

Elul is a time for introspection and improvement. All year long, we tend to operate by habit, going about our day-to-day lives without thinking much into our actions and interactions. In preparation for the *Yom Hadin*, we must shake ourselves awake and rouse our *neshamos* from slumber. We must take a good, honest look at ourselves and reevaluate: "Where am I up to in my *avodas Hashem*? What should I be doing differently?" It is a time to make amends for the past and implement proper changes for the future.

Trembling in Awe

In days of old, the mere mention of the word "Elul" struck a chord in every heart.

(Continued on page 2)

IT DEPENDS ON YOU!

Dear ...

The most basic foundation of *shalom bayis* is open communication – if you are upset with your wife, you must discuss it. The problems begin when one spouse keeps things bottled up or is too afraid of the other to broach certain topics.

Know that your wife's respect for you depends on **you** – if you want her to esteem you and value your opinion, be careful with the way you treat her. The way you conduct yourself with your wife is the way she will behave toward you, as Shlomo Hamelech says (*Mishlei 27:19*), "כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם" – Just like your reflection imitates the expression that you display, so too will people mirror the treatment you show them. Try it! Speak kindly to your wife and she'll do the same to you. Constantly express your admiration for her and she will then start respecting you and asking for your opinion.

You write that your wife doesn't have energy for housework and can't keep things under control – well, I have news for you: as her husband, it is your job to help her out. Charity begins at home – there is no greater *mitzva* than helping one's wife and children. Additionally, this will do wonders for your relationship because your wife will see that you care about her and are attentive to her needs. Find time to help her and you will reap the rewards: in This World, you'll have a healthy wife and children, and in *Olam Haba* you'll receive *schar* for doing your part in building an *erliche Yiddishe* home.

Regarding the fact that your wife is not interested in anything related to Breslev – don't talk to her about it. You can live with and share the inspiration without quoting its source, as the Rebbe said, "Why should it bother me that another person will say *birchas hamazon* as he should, without knowing that the inspiration came from me?"

Give her *chizuk* without mentioning the Rebbe's name. You can say, "I saw in a *sefer*..." or, "Tzaddikim have said..." In this way, she will accept your words and eventually things will improve. Just don't expect instant results – real change takes time. Remember that תחבולה למי שאין לו תחבולה – when there seems to be no solution, patience is the only solution.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #1, page 20

When the *chazzan* recited, "ראש חודש אלול יהיה ביום..." during *birchas hachodesh*, all the

mispallemim trembled in fear and awe. Just hearing about the impending month of Elul was enough to shake them awake and galvanize them to *teshuva*.

As a six-year-old child, R' Moshe Kobrinert zt"l was playing outside with his friends when his sister passed by and called out, "Moishele! We have already bentched Rosh Chodesh Elul! The fish in the oceans are trembling in awe – how can you still be playing?" R' Moshe later said his sister's words, said with such *temimus*, gave him a jolt that he felt again every Elul of his life.

A fraction of this immense awe is possible even for a person in today's generation to feel. How?

Accused of money laundering and tax evasion, Isaac's freedom was hanging in the balance. His court case was looming and he knew he was only days away from a possible life sentence. Each time he thought about his ever-nearing trial, his heart lurched and he broke out into a sweat.

Rosh Hashana is the day when the fate of every human being is decreed. Life or death, health or illness, prosperity or poverty, happiness or heartbreak, and everything in between – it all depends on this day. How can Elul **not** strike at least a little fear in our hearts?

At this time of year, every Jew must be stirred to do *teshuva*. So much is hanging in the balance; we must do whatever we can to tip the scales in our favor.



Take Action

Fear itself is not an end goal. R' Nosson of Breslev once remarked that many people become so aflame with an Elul-induced passion, but they don't actually **do** anything to prepare themselves for the *Yom Hadin*. Feeling the holiness and trepidation of the approaching *yamim noraim* is admirable, but if it isn't an impetus for change, it isn't enough. In order to actualize the potential of Elul, action is needed – we must work to improve in our *avodas Hashem*. In these potent weeks, let us make a point of acquiring *zechusim* by davening a little more, learning a little more, taking a few more minutes to talk to Hashem.

The *Zohar* teaches (*Vayakhel 206a*) that each time the *aron kodesh* is opened in *shul*, the *sha'arei rachamim* open as well and it is an *eis ratzon* to daven for anything we need. The *Arizal* says that the forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur have the same power. It is a tremendous *eis ratzon* – a time when all the doors are open for us – and one who uses this time wisely by increasing his *tefilla* will merit *yeshuos*.

(Continued on page 3)

Grand Plans

Ahh, summer. Tzvi walked home with a spring in his step, his vacation stretching before him. He had big plans for his precious few weeks off, a long list of all that he hoped to accomplish.

The days flew by and all too soon, the long-anticipated break was drawing to a close. Tzvi ruefully thought of all his dreams that had unfortunately never made it past the planning stage...

When the month of Elul stretches ahead, we tend to assume that there is ample time for all our new resolutions; realistically speaking, however, there isn't much time at all. In preparation for Rosh Hashana, Bres-lever *chassidim* try to complete the entire *Tanach*, *shisha sidrei Mishna*, *Tikunei Zohar*, all the Rebbe's *sefarim*, and the relevant *halachos* of the *yamim noraim*, all in addition to the regular *shiurim* kept throughout the year. We must use these sacred days wisely and not squander even a moment.

On the Other Hand...

Even doing all the right things has a risk. In our desire to maximize every moment and accomplish as much as possible, we sometimes take on too many new commitments and bite off more than we can chew. Inevitably, we fall short of our expectations and soon fall prey to disillusionment.

It is important to remember that this holy time doesn't "expire" so fast; Hashem gives us an "extension" every year. We can continue to work to improve ourselves until Simchas Torah, and then until Zos Chanukah, which is a continuation of the *yamim noraim*. Even after that, we must not get discouraged by our failure to accomplish as much as we hoped to.

May we all merit to use this Elul wisely and be *zoche* to an uplifting Rosh Hashana and a growth-filled, successful year.



FOR YOUR CHILD'S Sake -4-

*Translated from לב אבות על בנים,
 a kuntres written by Mohorosh zt"l.*

PART 2: EXCUSES, EXCUSES - continued

EXCUSE #1, continued:

("My son/daughter is still so 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.")

The Gemara teaches (*Kiddushin 29b*) that Rav Chisda used to say that his greatness was due to the fact that he married young – at the age of sixteen years old. Not only that, but he proclaimed that if he would have gotten married even sooner, at the age of fourteen, he would have attained such an exalted level that he would not have feared the *yetzer hara* at all. This goes to show how good it is for children to get married as soon as possible – not wait and wait until they "grow up".

What's interesting to note is that the rationalization about children being too young is one we hear even from those whose children are already past the twenty-year mark! This is in blatant disregard to what Chazal teach us (*Kiddushin 29b*), that one who is not married by the time he is twenty years old will have thoughts of sin all his life. Remaining single for so long causes a person to become habituated to thoughts of sin, and such thoughts are extremely difficult to "un-train" one's mind from, even after finally getting married. This is no simple matter, since we are taught that thoughts of sin is worse than actually sinning (*Yoma 29b*)!

Parents must know that this so-called mercy of "giving children time" before they get married is false! It is no favor to allow them to get older and older. Quite the opposite is true – the greatest good a person can do for his children is to marry them off as soon as he can.

EXCUSE #2:

"I love my children so much – it's too hard for me to send them from my home so fast. I want them to stay around for another few years."

This reasoning is nothing more than well-worded but twisted logic. This excuse doesn't stem from a true love for one's children, but rather from poorly-disguised selfish interests. It is about this kind of "love" that the *passuk* says (*Eicha 4:10*), "ידי נשים רחמניות בשלו ילדיהן" – The hands of compassionate women boiled their own children. This is no love; this is cruelty – these parents allow their children to become consumed by the *yetzer hara*, all in the name of false love.

Truly loving parents do not seek to do what is best, easiest or most comfortable for themselves, but rather what is truly best for their children. They do everything in their power to marry their children as soon as is humanly possible. With their efforts on the behalf of their children, they display their true love and will be *zoche* to the fulfillment of the *passuk* (*Mishlei 27:19*), "כמים הפנים לפנים כן לב האדם לאדם" – the children will truly love the parents in return.

To be continued next week, be'ezras Hashem.

Q & A

HOW CAN I ENSURE THAT ALL MY STUDENTS FEEL EQUALLY VALUED?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I have been a melamed for eighth grade boys for a number of years, and I have started listening to the Rosh Yeshiva's chinuch shiurim about two years ago. Thanks to the Rosh Yeshiva's guidance, my entire approach has changed and I have begun seeing tremendous success with the boys. I try not to enter the classroom without first listening to one of the shiurim, and the insight I hear inspires me every single time.

I'm looking for advice on how to create a positive atmosphere in my classroom, where all the boys will feel equally valued. The school system divides children into categories based on their intellect – there are the students at the top with sharp and quick minds who do very well, there are the average students who need to put in a lot more effort to succeed, and then there are those who do very poorly no matter how hard they try.

I really don't like this way of comparing and categorizing students. However, the reality is that I need to have higher expectations from some students because they can achieve more, and lower standards for those who are not as capable. How can I nonetheless ensure that my students feel that I value them all equally?

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

One cannot fathom how valued a melamed is by Hashem – how fortunate are you to have this zechus! Chazal say (*Bava Basra 8b*), "ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד אלו מלמדי תינוקות" – those who teach Torah to young children are like the stars that light up the night sky. Mohorosh explains that just like it's not possible to count the stars, it's impossible to count the zechu-

sim a melamed has. The Torah, yiras Shamayim and emunah that he imparts are the foundation for his students' Yiddishkeit; all their resulting good deeds will be zechusim for him.

Do your utmost to instill yiras Shamayim in your students. Tell them stories about tzaddikim – this will awaken their pure hearts to strive to be tzaddikim too.

The Sanzer Rav once questioned his son's melamed, "Do you learn mussar with my child?" When the melamed replied in the affirmative, the tzaddik questioned further, "Which mussar sefer do you learn?"

"Chovos Halevavos," was the response.

The Sanzer Rav replied, "That is not what I meant by mussar. I want to know if you tell them stories of the tzaddik Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk and his brother, the holy Rebbe Zusha. Stories about tzaddikim will awaken a yearning in him to be an erliche Yid, too."

Regarding your question – know that this is entirely in your hands. It's a melamed's job to recognize and highlight the positive traits in every child. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:34*) that every person possesses a unique quality that sets him apart from the others. One child might have a sharp mind, another has good middos, yet a third excels with his derech eretz, and another may be outstanding in his yiras Shamayim.

A melamed must focus on the positive in each student. Even if a child can't grasp of the Gemara or Tosafos, praise him for what he **can** do well. If you notice a weak student displaying good behavior, make a big deal out of it – this will give him encouragement even if he does not succeed in learning.

If you will view all your students in a positive light and emphasize their strengths, you'll create an atmosphere of unity in your classroom where all your students will love and respect each other.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 102

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