

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



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

PARSHAS VAYISHLACH
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

ONE AND ONE

וְיִתְרַ יַעֲקֹב לְבָדוּ וַיִּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ

And Yaakov was left alone and a man wrestled with him...

In the darkness of night, a bitter battle wages. One man, alone, fights a mighty angel who is set to destroy him. Who will be the final victor? This war will define destiny.

The *Midrash* says (*Bereishis Rabba* 77:1) that just as Yaakov was לבדו – alone, so it is said about Hashem – לבדו וְנִשְׁגַּב ה' (Yeshaya 2:11). What does one have to do with the other? Why, when speaking of Yaakov's long, one-man battle with the *sar shel eisav*, does the *Midrash* bring a connection to Hashem's sole, unmatched glory?

The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran* 53) that he who has *emunah* truly lives life. No matter what circumstances he faces, he is happy – when fortune smiles at him and things go well it is certainly good for him. When he goes through hard times, life is still good, because he knows that it is all from Hashem, who will surely have mercy and help him. However, for a person without *emunah*, life is misery – the smallest mishaps throw him into a depression and he has nothing to comfort him because he has no faith.

Two patients underwent emergency surgery on the same day, in the same hospital. Both surgeries were successful, yet both patients had a long, difficult recovery ahead. Gamliel, forty-two years old, thanked the surgeon profusely and had a magnificent bouquet of flowers delivered to his home. Rafi, five and a half, howled in terror whenever he saw the surgeon again in the hospital corridors.



When a person understands that everything that occurs is from Hashem, he can see the positive within the pain. He can withstand all hardships because he knows that Hashem, like a doctor, is doing it all for his ultimate benefit.

How can we attain this iron-clad *emunah*? The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan* 2:44) that faith is dependent on speech. The more a person speaks about Hashem and includes mention of Him in everyday conversation, the more *emunah* he will inevitably acquire. In another sense, *emunah* can also be acquired by speaking **to** Hashem, by davening and turning to Him for all his needs. The more a person does so, the stronger his *emunah* becomes.

The *Midrash* in this week's *parsha* teaches us a crucial lesson of *emunah*. וְיִתְרַ יַעֲקֹב לְבָדוּ – Yaakov Avinu was one man, alone; how was he able to subdue such a powerful *malach*? With לבדו וְנִשְׁגַּב ה' – his rock-solid faith in Hashem, by believing that there is no one in the world but Him.

When a person knows with perfect clarity that Hashem is always with him and is the only One who can help him, he alone will be able to triumph over all evil.

Asher Haya el Yoel, Vayishlach 5782

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

TRY AND FAIL...



Failure. Anyone who has had this unpleasant experience can tell of the overwhelming bitterness, the crushing despair, and devastating blow to one's morale.

Chazal tell us (*Shabbos* 120) that oftentimes, failure is actually a necessary prerequisite for success. It is only through our mistakes that we learn how to better conduct ourselves in the future. Furthermore, failing can impel a person to dig in his heels and try even harder, spurring him onward to eventual triumph. Messed up badly? This may be your ticket to success.

Skilled electricians all began as inexperienced novices, vulnerable to numerous electric shocks as they attempted to navigate the intricacies of their new line of business. The prominent businessmen of today made some bad investments at the beginning of their careers, losing thousands of dollars, until they were successful at establishing a niche for themselves and learning which ventures are worthwhile. The secret is to embrace the initial struggles



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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Time and time again, Mohorosh used to remind us, "There is no such thing as a true friend – a person's only friend is his wife." Nobody else really cares about you or has your best interests in mind. Spend time with your wife; if you'd like to go out to eat, go on vacation or just have a good time, do it with her – not with friends. Leaving her home alone in order to join friends for vacation or for parties is foolish and wrong.

A person who encourages you in your *avodas Hashem* and helps you grow is a good choice of someone with whom to socialize. However, even that has its limits. Beware of exploiters – there are people out there who help others and gain their trust, only in order to take advantage of them later. As soon as anyone begins to interfere in your personal life, you must have the good sense to set boundaries before you lose everything.

This is especially true in regard to money matters. Be very cautious when lending money – unfortunately, there have been many stories of people who have been robbed of their life's savings by "friends" who borrowed money and never repaid their loans. When you are asked to lend money, wisely find a polite way to decline this request.

Leave peer pressure behind and focus on what really matters. Daven the following *tefilla*: "ותקננו בעצה – טובה מלפניך Hashem, help me know the right way to behave. Keep me from getting involved in bad relationships. Help me remember that I have no one in this world except You, Hashem."

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #2, page 237



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and learn from one's mistakes, as opposed to throwing in the towel at the first signs of trouble.

Spirituality works the same way. We so much strive to be *erlich*, do what's right, and be "successful" in *avodas Hashem*, yet our path is often full of setbacks and regression. If we would despair and immediately give up, we would never reach our full potential. Instead, we must view our disappointments as "teachable moments" and learn what to do differently next time, using failures as stepping stones to our ultimate goal.

Whose Business?

The problems begin when we get intimidated by others' opinions. Failure is much more difficult to swallow when accompanied by the anxiety of, "What do people think of me now? Everyone will see how utterly incapable I am!" The truth of the matter is, though, that all those who are looking, judging and whispering about us (or so we think) are absolutely powerless and cannot help us. If so, why care about what they think? We must remain focused inward, simply brushing ourselves off and moving on.

In the ninth story of the *sefer Sippurei Maasios*, the Rebbe tells the tale of the wise man and the simpleton. The wise man, despite his many talents and abilities, was never happy with himself or his role. Obsessed with public opinion, he constantly looked over his shoulder to ensure that he was being held in the highest regard. Nothing and nobody was ever good enough for him, and this is what led to his eventual downfall. The simpleton, while being of lesser talent and ability, was content with himself and unfazed by those around him. When he was compared to more successful people in the same profession as him, he responded, "What does that have to do with me? This is my business and that is their business." With that attitude governing his every act, the simpleton eventually became the head minister of all ministers, attaining the pinnacle of success.



Don't Do It Alone

Today was Chaim's clumsy day. He left shul balancing his tallis bag in one hand, a coffee in the other, and two shopping bags in his teeth, when he suddenly tripped on a stray pebble and found himself sprawled on the ground. Absolutely mortified, Chaim attempted to get up quickly, blend into the crowd, and forget about his embarrassing fall, but his right leg spasmed with pain and refused to cooperate. Left with no other choice, Chaim put his ego aside and allowed the passersby to lend him a hand.

We try to be good, we really do. Often, however, we lose our balance and stumble, sometimes falling so badly that we are incapable of getting up on our own. We need a *tzaddik* to lift us, guide us, hold our hands and help us move on.

The Rebbe teaches that a person who has an ongoing connection to a *tzaddik* will not fall, because he constantly receives guidance on how to conduct himself and how to strengthen himself. We must plead with Hashem to guide us to the right leader – a true *tzaddik* who

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can help us and be that perpetual source of inspiration.

Mohorosh told a story of a *chassid* who came to his Rebbe to unburden himself. He shared that he had unfortunately committed some terrible *aveiros* and pleaded with his Rebbe to show him a way to do *teshuva*.

The Rebbe listened as the man wept but gently responded that he was unequipped to deal with such matters. "I would advise you to seek the counsel of the Chazan Ish," he said. "He is the only one who can help you."

The man panicked. Opening up to his own Rebbe was hard enough – he couldn't fathom doing it all over again. Nevertheless, his Rebbe did not back down. "Your situation is so complex and such great *tikkunim* are needed. You must go!"

Seeing no alternatives, the broken man went. When he entered the Chazon Ish's inner study, he was overcome with such awe and admiration that he was rendered speechless. Thoughts of remorse over his past misdeeds filled his mind and he silently vowed to do complete *teshuva* and return to the ways of the Torah.

The *tzaddik* began to speak, counseling, guiding and encouraging. He advised the man to begin learning Mishna Berurah each day as a crucial part of his *teshuva*.

The man left the Chazon Ish's home feeling cleansed, like a new person. In the days and weeks that followed, he indeed began learning Shulchan Aruch with Mishna Berurah and soon became a truly *erliche Yid*, thanks to the *tzaddik* who showed him a way out of the mire.

Struggles in spirituality should spur us onward, not cause us to despair. In order to maintain this focus, it is incumbent upon us to find a *tzaddik* who can guide us on our journey. Constantly connected to a *tzaddik*, we will *be'ezras Hashem* merit success in all our endeavors.

*Sichos Mohorosh Volume 15, Erech Nefila;
Volume 4, Erech Kishalon and Erech Tzaddik*



all the way up to Hashem Himself. All he must do is say, "*Ribonoi shel Olam*, forgive me for my sins! I will no longer do what is wrong, I want to begin anew." By doing so, one's *aveiros* are wiped clean and he is exempt from any punishment that would have awaited him.

Do not allow yourself to be discouraged when you see what others have achieved. R' Nosson says (*Likutei Halachos Pesach 9:22*), that it is understood that one must be cautious when surrounded by wicked people, because their mockery can cause him to falter in his *avodas Hashem*. What is less obvious is that it is just as important (if not more so) to be cautious when in an *erliche* environment. The pitfall of being among righteous people is just as you describe: one can become disheartened when he sees others' spiritual accomplishments, which are so far beyond his. However, one must remain unwavering in his *avodas Hashem* regardless and never compare himself to others.

A person's focus must be what **he** can achieve and how **he** can create a *nachas ruach* for Hashem – the only way to succeed in *avodas Hashem* is by taking no notice of others. Avraham Avinu teaches us this lesson, as the pasuk says (Yechezkel 33:24) "אחד היה אברהם" – Avraham Avinu was able to serve Hashem only because he didn't pay attention to others. (*Likutei Mohoran, Hashmata*)

Don't be jealous of others or wish to be just like them, even if it is their spirituality that you envy. Mohorosh used to explain that *Chazal* say (*Bava Basra 21*), קנאת סופרים תרבה, because the goal isn't to imitate others. When you see someone succeed in any area, don't just copy him; learn from him by asking yourself, "What can I do to succeed in the area which I am attempting to improve?"

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 182

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS:

Shabbos seudos are a time to instill emunah into children. It is not a time for fathers; pressuring children to have all the right answers (and in front of the entire family) it usually does not lend itself to positive associations. Instead, listen to your children speak about their week and speak to them in ways that keep them interested. Prepare stories of tzaddikim to tell them, weaving in age-appropriate lessons of emunah and tefilla.

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I FEEL LIKE I CAN'T FIGHT ANY LONGER

Q & A

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Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,

This past Shabbos, I participated in the combined *Shabbos Hisva'adus* and *Siyum Hashas* (this letter was written nearly five years ago) and it evoked very painful emotions in me. Looking around at the other guests, I saw *bachurim* many years younger than me who have already completed Shas, while I have not yet accomplished anything.



For years, I've been struggling just to be *frum* and uphold the basics of *Yiddishkeit*. I made some foolish mistakes as a teenager and these are the consequences I am suffering until today. I had no idea that my actions would cause me such pain. I so badly want to be good, yet I'm fighting the same battle for the past few years now, without much success. I feel like I can't fight any longer.

As I write, my tears flow freely. I beg the Rosh Yeshivah to give me a path to turn my life around. My only desire is to be *erlich*, but I am failing miserably. I feel like giving up.

Thank you.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

My dear brother, don't allow your past to break you. Every person can do *teshuva* and turn over a new leaf; it makes no difference what you have done in the past. These thoughts of giving up are from the *yetzer hara* – his goal is to convince you that since "you won't amount to anything in any case," you should stop trying. His victory is when you believe these thoughts and, out of hopelessness, return to your negative behavior.

Don't allow your past to consume you. Forget what has happened and start anew. The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran 26*), "The world views forgetfulness as a flaw, but I consider it a virtue." Many people would do anything to boost their

memory, viewing poor memory as a problem, while in truth, it is quite the opposite. Forgetfulness is a gift – if a person would remember every last thing he ever did, he wouldn't be able to serve Hashem. Constantly plagued by thoughts of his sins, he would be too discouraged to try again. However, since every person has the power to forget what has happened previously, one can move forward and continue to grow.

You cannot fathom how cherished *teshuva* is to Hashem. *Chazal* say (*Yoma 86*) that when a person repents, his *teshuva* reaches all the way to the *kisei hakavod*. In just a moment, a person can merit to rise from the lowest depths and reach

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