

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



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

PARSHAS MIKEITZ
SHABBOS CHANUKAH
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CHIZUK from the **PARSHA**

IMPACT. INFLUENCE. INSPIRE.

וַיִּסְפָּר פַּרְעֹה לָהֶם אֵת חֲלֹמוֹ וַאֲיֵן פֹּתֵר אוֹתָם לְפָרְעָה

Pharaoh was in panic mode. After experiencing two frightening dreams, he called all his advisors and demanded an interpretation, but none of their ideas felt right to him. Only after Yosef Hatzaddik came with a unique explanation did Pharaoh finally calm down. What was different about Yosef's interpretation? Why did Pharaoh accept his but not the others'?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Mohoran 1:234*), "Telling stories of *tzaddikim* and the events in their lives is a very great thing; it purifies one's mind." Sharing and hearing tales of *gedolim* have the power to set a person's heart aflame and instill in him a strong desire to become a *tzaddik*, too. It is important to know, however, that in order for the story to accomplish this, one must know **how** to relate them.

Dramatic stories are the ones that are most often told: *the tzaddik who caused water to materialize in the desert for his thirsty talmid... the tzaddik who transformed a cripple into a healthy man... The tzaddik whose blessing resuscitated a dying man...* True, hearing about miracles that *tzaddikim* performed is a mega-injection of *emunas chachamim* and very important for *avodas Hashem*, but not always do they have a lasting impact. They even pose an element of risk: the listener may merely be left with the feeling of, "Wow! *This gadol was someone special for whom avodas Hashem came easy. For me, on the other hand, life is full of struggles. I'll never get there; I'll never be a tzaddik.*"

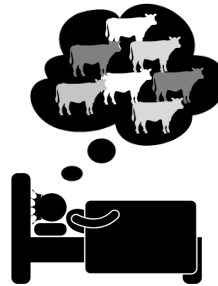
The truth is that every *tzaddik* only attained greatness after enduring enormous hardships and persevering through them. Glossing over the reality of their trials and extraordinary inner strength defeats the very purpose of the stories! The hard-fact, true-to-life situations are the narratives which must be told, for these are the ones which inspire greatness in even the simplest people. Hearing such stories imbue the listener with the strength to withstand his own arduous challenges.

When all the royal advisors lined up before Pharaoh, each had something else to say. "You will bear seven daughters and then bury them all," or "You will conquer seven nations and then they will all rebel against you." Nobody's words set Pharaoh's mind at ease, for none of them included any practical application at all! Pharaoh couldn't accept them, because his heart screamed, "What am I supposed to do with that information? When I hit upon the challenges you describe, how will this help me?"

Yosef's words were different. He also spoke of troubles, yet he included advice on how to survive through the difficulties. Finally, this was something that resonated with Pharaoh. This interpretation was able to be accepted. Not surprisingly, this was also the catalyst for Yosef's new position as leader of Mitzrayim. Having endured bitter hardships in his personal life, Yosef Hatzaddik was a paradigm of fortitude and was able to teach others how to remain strong in trying times, too.

May we always take an example from *tzaddikim* and persevere, and we will then be *zoche* to reach great heights.

Toch Hanachal, Mikeitz 5761



**MOHOROSH
SPEAKS**

א פרייליכן חנוכה



In the middle of the dark, cold winter, *Klal Yisrael* celebrates the joyous *yom tov* of Chanukah. It is a time of warmth, joy and light, a time when we commemorate our miraculous victory over the Greeks, as well as the restoration of the *Beis Hamikdash*, which illuminated our lives.

Chazal tell us (*Bereishis Rabba 2:4*) that the *Yevanim* darkened the eyes of the Jews with their many terrible decrees. How so? They forced the Jewish People to engrave on the horns of their oxen, "We have no connection with the G-d of the Jews," *chas v'shalom*. Why was this called "darkening our eyes"?

Deeply rooted in human nature is a desire for true happiness. People spend hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars yearly in the pursuit of that elusive joy, not realizing that it is impossible to acquire true contentment without acquiring *emunah* first. This is because an unavoidable part of the gift called "life" is the various challenges that come along with it. Happiness can seem impossible when day-to-day living is



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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Just keep learning Torah – don't think so much about whether you enjoy it or not. Feeling the pleasure in learning doesn't come in an instant; rather, by learning consistently each day for a while, one will be *zoche* to taste the sweetness inherent in *limud hatorah*.

Continue with the *seder derech halimud* (learning without a strong focus on comprehension) and you will see that after a short time you'll experience a life-altering transformation. You will begin to feel the joy of learning Torah and you'll attain inner peace and contentment, as the Rebbe said (*Sichos Haran 17*), "Once the Torah reveals her face to a person, he no longer desires anything else." Fortunate is the person who maximizes every spare moment to learn *perakim* Mishnayos and *dafim* Gemara, for he lives in *Gan Eden*.

The *derech halimud* of the Rebbe is an extraordinary way for every person to complete the entire Torah. However, the *yetzer hara* ensures that there is much mockery and scorn regarding this topic. "That's the easy way out." "It isn't called 'learning Torah.'" Nonetheless, one must remain steadfast and daven that he not be influenced by this foolishness and not come to *Olam Haba* empty-handed.

The Rebbe once said (*Sichos Haran 51*), "Heed my words: the world tries to fool you; don't allow yourself to be fooled." One must be cautious not to be misled by others. A person who considers himself an *erliche Yid* but does not learn any Torah – not Chumash, not Mishnayos and not Gemara – is fooling himself.

Mohorosh wrote in his *tzava'a*: "When you will be called up to the *Olam Ha'emes*, you will finally see the truth of the *seder derech halimud*."

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #2, page 205



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accompanied by stresses, missed buses, upset bosses, thwarted plans, un-materialized dreams ... the list goes on and on. A person who does not have *emunah* firmly etched into his being will easily fall into despair when he is confronted with challenges. Without any faith to hold onto, his joy and vitality get sucked out of him and life loses all meaning. Conversely, a person who lives with *emunah* is clear in the belief that Hashem is behind every detail of his life. He knows that everything that happens to him is perfectly planned and that nothing is without reason. With this mindset, his life is full of joy. Even his occasional hardships don't break him, because he knows that they, too, are from Hashem and certainly for his benefit. By talking to Hashem constantly and asking Him for help, he can be strong and overcome all difficulties.

This clarity of faith is what the *Yevanim* sought to eradicate. By forcing us to denounce our faith, they "darkened our eyes", stripping us of every ounce of happiness. Only later, after the *Chashmonaim* defeated the Greeks and worked hard to infuse us with *emunah* again, was our joy restored.

Mitzvos: The Source of Joy

Besides attempting to uproot our *emunah*, the *Yevanim* enacted many decrees to prevent us from fulfilling the *mitzvos*, specifically targeting the mitzvos of Shabbos, *bris milah*, and *kiddush hachodesh*. The first letters of *שבת*, *מילה* and *חודש* spell out the word *שמחה*, because each of these *mitzvos* go hand in hand with joy, as alluded to in various places in the Torah. *Chazal* tell us (*Yalkut Shimoni Beha'aloscha 5725*) that when the *passuk* says "וביום שמחתם," it is referring to Shabbos, because Shabbos is a day that was given for us to rejoice in. In regard to *bris milah*, the Gemara teaches (*Shabbos 120*) that this *mitzvah* was accepted by the Jewish People with *simcha* and it is performed with a tremendous amount of joy to this very day. *Rosh Chodesh*, the Gemara teaches (*Pesachim 77*), is our guide to the dates of all our happy times – the *yamim tovim*; therefore, it is considered a *yom tov* of its own and is celebrated monthly by singing and dancing at *kiddush levana*. These three *mitzvos* have a special connection to *simcha*, a special power to bring joy to those who perform them.

Why did the *Yevanim* put such an emphasis on these *mitzvos*? They wanted to topple us from our very foundation – they knew that by depriving us of our connection to Hashem, which is our source of *simcha*, we would be deprived of our life force and the will to live.

In the Rema's colossal work on the Shulchan Aruch, he begins with the words, "לגדי תמיד – שויתי ה' – I keep Hashem before me always." His last words are, "וטוב לב משתה תמיד" – one must always be in a joyous frame of mind." These two *pesukim* are closely connected: how can a person constantly be *b'simcha* when life can be so full of pain? Only if he keeps Hashem before his eyes, remembering that Hashem is near him, with him and helping him every moment. This *emunah* is what generates real, constant joy.



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Simcha First



The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:52*) that when doing *hisbodedus*, a person should choose to focus on one *middah* at a time and implore Hashem to help him overcome that specific negative trait. Only after he masters that first *middah* should he move on to the next one. This gives rise to the obvious question: We all have so many character imperfections we would like to rectify. Where do we begin? What should we tackle first?

First and foremost should be the *middah* of *simcha*. All *aveiros* and other bad traits stem from sadness and will automatically fall away when a person is *b'simcha*. We need to constantly daven to Hashem to help us become joyful people and never let anything get us down. As a result, we will be able to improve in all areas.

R' Ozer, a talmid of R' Nosson of Breslev, was a tremendous oved Hashem who was always seen with a somber countenance. His intensity of devotion to Hashem just didn't lend itself to lighthearted joy, and smiles were just not in his lexicon. When R' Nosson heard of his talmid's perpetually serious demeanor, he rebuked R' Ozer, saying, "This is not the approach I learned from the Rebbe. The main thing is to be happy. At times it is appropriate to be serious, but that is secondary."

Let us strengthen ourselves to focus on *simcha*, making it a number one priority in our lives.

Today is Not Here to Stay

Hardships come up. We all have days when life drags us down and it's hard to be happy. Remember, though, that this day will soon be history and this challenge will be just a memory. Don't let it get you down! Don't waste your time on this world wallowing in your bad mood.

Chazal say (Tanchuma Shemini) "אין השמחה ממתנת לאדם, לא כל מי ששמח היום שמח" – don't wait to become happy, because happiness is fleeting; it isn't sustainable unless you work on making yourself happy, no matter what you are going through. Don't get stuck in the yetzer hara's trap of "Today is a goner; I'll try to be happy tomorrow" – you don't know what tomorrow will bring! Work on being happy today.

Happiness is not dependent on circumstances. The choice of how to live your life lies in your hands. *ראה אנכי נותן לפניכם היום ברכה וקללה – Hashem gives you היום – the day itself; you choose to make of it. It is up to us to turn it into קללה or ברכה – if you will focus on the miracles in the smallest details of life and celebrate them, you will live a life of bracha, but if you highlight the negative and allow it to completely overtake you, your life will be a very sad one.*

בחרת בחיים – Choose the good life, the successful life. The happy life.

Toch Hanachal, Mikeitz 5759; Sichos Mohorosh Erecht V'tov Lev Mishteh Tamid; Erecht Simcha



pursue a degree or a career and only afterwards consider marriage. Parents are persuaded that this is the best option for their child, but really it is a trap of the *yetzer hara* so he can prevent *shidduchim* from being carried out. He celebrates every time a girl chooses education over *shidduchim*.

Likewise, parents are advised not to listen to *shidduch* suggestions for their sons in the middle of a *zman* so that they should continue *shteiging*. Marrying at a young age becomes something to laugh at. As a result, many people actually end up going against the Torah and the *chachamim*, who instructed us to marry off our children young and thereby protect them from *aveiros*.

All your doubts are only because the *yetzer hara* wishes to stop you in your tracks. Why focus on the isolated incident in which one couple divorced? Why not focus on the many who are married and live wonderful lives? If you were blessed to be the right *shaliach* until now, carry on with this tremendous *mitzvah*. Continue with your holy work to help *Klal Yisrael*.

I am so grateful that Hashem has given me the *zechus* to have been the *shadchan* to bring about countless marriages. Throughout the years, I've also had a handful who divorced, yet that doesn't stop me from davening to be able to continue carrying out more *shidduchim* and having a part in establishing more *batim ne'emanim* forever.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 192

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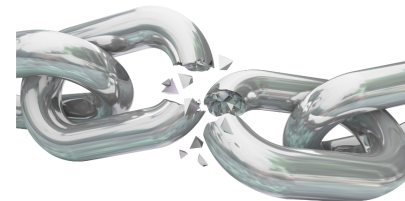
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I AM TOO DISCOURAGED TO CONTINUE WITH SHADCHANUS



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,
There is something that has been on my mind for a while and I've been searching for clarity.



I've been a *shadchan* for a number of years and have *baruch Hashem* been successful in bringing about many *shidduchim*. There is one thing, however, that torments me to no end – one of the *shidduchim* I

was involved with ended in a messy divorce, causing the children to suffer tremendously to the point that several of them left *Yiddishkeit*. As the ex-couple's *shadchan*, I was left with serious doubts and an overpowering sense of guilt, feeling that this saga is partially my fault. Perhaps I didn't do enough when inquiring about the *shidduch*, perhaps it was a bad idea to begin with... Whenever I bump into members of either family, guilt gnaws at me and I cannot look them in the eye. Since then, I often hold myself back from working on more *shidduchim* because this incident still haunts me; I am simply too discouraged to continue with *shadchanus*.

How would the Rosh Yeshivah advise me to proceed?

Thank you.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...

If only there were more like you! How fortunate are you and how great is your reward that you occupy yourself with the great *mitzvah* of carrying out *shidduchim* – there is no greater *zechus* than this.

Mohorosh writes the following in his *tzava'a*:

"I have *baruch Hashem* had the *zechus* to bring over two thousand *shidduchim* to fruition, and as long as I live, I daven to Hashem to be able to carry out more *shidduchim*, thereby protecting our youth from the *yetzer hara*. I hereby promise every *bachur* or single girl who will come to my *tzion* after my passing and say the entire *sefer Tehillim* as a *zechus* for me, that I will make every possible effort to help him/her find his/her intended match. Consider this a firm

promise on my part. With this, I end my will and you can publish it for all to see. May Hashem help that His holy Name be sanctified, both while I am still alive and also after my passing. *Amen v'amen.*"

The heartache you feel is the *yetzer hara's* doing. He knows that he does not have the same level of control over a person who is married; therefore, he tries with all his might to prevent *shidduchim* from happening. *Chazal* teach us (*Yevamos 63b*) that as soon as a person gets married, he is protected from *aveiros*. The *yetzer hara* does not want to release his prey because he wishes to continue enticing them to sin.

Just look at the fact that today, girls are encouraged to

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