



SPARKS OF EMUNAH

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

לעלוי נשמת
מרים חנה בת ר' דוד צבי הלוי
יוכבד בת ר' אליהו נתן

CHIZUK
FROM THE
PARSHA

ONE AND ONE

וַיִּתֵּר יַעֲקֹב לְבָדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֶק 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 determined to destroy him. Who will be the final victor? This war will define destiny.

The *Medrash* points out (*Bereishis Rabba* 77:1) that just as Yaakov was **לְבָדּוֹ** (alone), so it is said about Hashem (*Yeshaya* 2:11): **לְבָדּוֹ** וְנִשְׁגָּב ה'. 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 *Medrash* bring a connection to Hashem's sole, unmatched glory?

The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran* 53) that only a person who has *emunah* truly lives life, because he is always happy no matter what circumstances he faces. When life is going well, he is happy – but that is not where his greatness lies. A person who has *emunah* can even keep his spirits up when he goes through hard times, because he knows that Hashem is the One behind the difficulties and he is optimistic that Hashem will help him.

In stark contrast to this is the life of a person without *emunah*. For him, life is misery – the smallest mishaps throw him into a depression, and he has nothing to comfort him because he has no faith.

Like a Doctor

Two patients underwent emergency surgery on the same day, in the same hospital. Both surgeries were successful, yet both patients had a 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.

Ultimate Triumph

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 one's needs. The more a person does so, the stronger his *emunah* becomes.

The *Medrash* in this week's *parsha* teaches us a crucial lesson of *emunah*. **וַיִּתֵּר יַעֲקֹב לְבָדּוֹ** – Yaakov Avinu was one man, alone; how was he able to subdue such a powerful *malach*? With **לְבָדּוֹ** וְנִשְׁגָּב 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

TO BE SUCCESSFUL

We spend our lives chasing success, in the pursuit of the elusive state of happiness. It's a mad race to complete the checklist. Get married. Have children. Secure a well-paying job. Buy a house. Invest money well. Marry off the children. Live happily ever after.

We would all love for our lives to be perfect – smooth, easy and problem-free. We wish to find the mystical formula that will enable us to sail through life, meeting milestone after milestone without any glitches on the way. Sometimes in a quiet moment, we might stop and wonder if success is even attainable, if happiness is even possible. Is there any way to achieve this elusive goal?

Tip #1: Shift your Mindset

No person is a stranger to disappointment. We have visions of the way things should be in order for us to be happy; inevitably, though, our carefully thought-out plans often go awry. When faced with such frustration, we must keep in mind that the setbacks are not what define a person as a success or failure; rather, it is one's **thoughts** in those cru-

(Continued on page 2)



"HASHEM, I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!"

Dear ...

I received your letter.

You write of your numerous failed attempts at *hisbodedus*; however, know that your simple words are actually a beautiful *tefilla*. Continue saying, **"Hashem, I want to talk to You"** – say it thousands of times and soon you will begin to intimately feel Hashem's presence.

When a person tries to do *hisbodedus*, it may take a while until he begins to feel that Hashem is listening, as if he's having a face-to-face conversation with another human being. The Rebbe relates (*Shivchei Haran* 12) that when he first began speaking to Hashem, it seemed that his *tefillas* were being disregarded and he was being pushed away, because so many days and years had passed and he still felt far from Hashem. For the most part, the Rebbe remained firm and persisted in his efforts to serve Hashem, but there were times when he became discouraged and stopped talking to Hashem as much. However, the Rebbe soon realized his mistake and was ashamed that he had lapsed in his *avodas Hashem*, and he started doing *hisbodedus* again with renewed energy. This cycle repeated itself numerous times.

The Rebbe teaches that a person should remain staunch with *tefilla* and *hisbodedus*, no matter what. **Even if his heart is devoid of emotion or it seems that his efforts are in vain, he must be stubborn and continue with his *avodas Hashem*.** In the end, one who persists with *hisbodedus* will be *zoche* to a pure mind; he will acquire true *emunah* and will fear nothing and nobody.

Keep talking to Hashem in your own words – even if it's just a short plea to be able to talk to Him! – soon, your fears will disappear. No doctor will frighten you; even the *Malach Hamaves* won't be able to scare you, because you will fear only Hashem Himself.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #1, page 276

cial moments which determine the outcome.

Sitting across from his therapist, Ezra bemoaned the many reasons for his misery. "My fourth grade teacher didn't like me and my principal never recognized my potential. I was rejected from the yeshiva I should have attended. I could have gotten engaged to a great girl but another guy did instead, so I married an incompetent woman who can't do anything right. In short," he sighed, "my life is a mess and it's everyone else's fault."

The first and most crucial technique for attaining success is to subjugate oneself entirely to Hashem. It's easy to blame others for our misfortunes; however, pointing fingers doesn't accomplish much. Instead of complaining, we must remember that everything in our lives was ordained by Hashem Himself.

Chazal say (*Chulin* 7b) that all occurrences (and annoyances) are predetermined in *shamayim* – even the minor discomfort of a stubbed toe! This means that no one in the world can take anything that belongs to you – your job, your *shidduch*, or even your piece of cake. Hashem has a brilliantly designed plan with which nobody can interfere.

When one makes the mistake of thinking that people have any power whatsoever, he lives in misery. Constantly looking over his shoulder, he thinks that everyone else has it all together. *Everyone in my shul owns a car, a house and a flourishing business*, he gripes. *Why am I the only one who is not successful? Why am I the only one who is struggling?* These harmful thoughts and lack of confidence in himself soon become a self-fulfilling prophesy, and he becomes an unmotivated good-for-nothing.

The cure for this is *emunah*, remembering that Hashem is right here, guiding and directing every detail of our lives in the best way possible. This mindset shift is liberating and empowering, and it helps us succeed in all areas.

Tip #2: Watch your Words

"Before I speak, I am in control of my words. After I speak, my words control me."

Almost all the problems we face are caused by words spoken carelessly. We often underestimate the power our words have, whether for good or bad.

"I sometimes regret the words I speak, but I never regret remaining silent."

One slip of the tongue can wreak havoc on our lives. If we would understand how much hardship and strife we can avoid by choosing to remain silent, we would leave a lot more words unspoken. Husbands, wives, employers, employees, landlords, tenants, neighbors, friends – whenever one remains silent when berated, he spares himself further pain.

(Continued on page 3)



A wise person once explained how he had acquired his vast

knowledge. "The less you speak and the more you listen, the less mistakes you make and the more wisdom you amass."

We all want to be successful. Training ourselves to weigh our words and use them sparingly is the key.

Tip #3: Keep your Secrets

Privacy is virtually nonexistent today. Oversharing is normal – most of society will happily divulge very personal information to anyone who will listen. However, know that in order to be successful, secrets are best kept as they are: secret.

Whether it's the details of your finances, the mistakes of your youth or any information that you would not want



the entire world to know, the wisest course of action is to just keep quiet. Don't even share it with "just this one person"! Once private information is shared, it is no longer private. There are countless stories of betrayal by those who

were thought to be the most trusted – spare yourself the anguish and be careful with the words you say.

This is true even with close friends and family, and **especially** with one's wife. In order for a woman to be able to value and respect her husband, he must preserve his dignity at all costs. A man who speaks badly of himself – even just to evoke his wife's compassion – will ultimately cause her to look down upon him and treat him with disdain.

With this in mind, we can understand Chazal's directive of "אל תרבה שיחה אם האשה" (Avos 1:5), referring to one's wife. Of course it's important for husband and wife to converse with each other and enjoy good times together. The kind of talk that should be avoided is that of negativity and self-disparagement. Share your successes with your wife; share your problems with Hashem.

Looking to be successful? Fortify yourself with *emunah* and internalize that Hashem is the only One in control, the only One to turn to. Prevent problems by watching your words and safeguarding your secrets. Try it! Take this advice to heart, and you will with Hashem's help succeed beyond your wildest dreams.



For Your Child's Sake -13-

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

PART 6: CONCLUSION

All parents truly want their children to succeed. So much of what we do is centered around the single mindset of: "How can I raise my children to be successful, both in *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*? How can I give them the tools they'll need to be happy, healthy adults who will ultimately raise *erliche* families of their own?"

Even before birth and onward, parents give every ounce of themselves to their children, expending time, money and energy to help them thrive and grow. Where does this selflessness disappear to when it comes to marrying them off? Where does this altruism go when the children's *ruchniyus* is hanging in the balance?

As long as a child is single, he is highly susceptible to negative influences, as well as to the devastating repercussions they can have on his life. No parent has any guarantee for the spiritual safety of his children, for even the best *yeshivos*, schools, and workplaces can have "bad apples" – those who are completely rotten on the inside and who seek to destroy others, too. Singlehood is fraught with risk.

Parents, have pity on your children (and yourself) and marry them off before it's too late! What is more important: the children's future or the neighbors' gossip? Which should be a greater concern? True, making a "mediocre" *shidduch* won't bring any honor or acclaim. True, marrying off a child in a simple manner may cause tongues to wag. However, what difference does all that make when your child's entire spirituality is at stake? How can you place his entire future in jeopardy because of the desire for some foolish, fleeting *kavod*? How can you put marriage as a last priority?

Do it – **for your child's sake**. His entire future is at stake.

Fortunate is the parent who keeps his values aligned with the Torah and marries off his children when they are still young. By putting his personal interests aside and sincerely concerning himself with his children's welfare, he enables them to truly succeed. This is the only way to protect them from spiritual ruin; this is the way to ensure that they will establish Torah-true homes and be a source of *nachas* to their parents and to Hashem.

*To receive the complete kuntres, email:
 thesparksofemunah@gmail.com*

Q & A

PLEASE GIVE ME A WAY OUT OF MY AVEIROS!



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I am completely lost and searching desperately for a way out. I hope you can help me.

I am entangled in a web of immorality and I constantly succumb to p'gam habris. Lacking any self-control to guard my eyes, I am stuck in a cycle of aveiros. I write these words with tears running down my face – this isn't the life I want to live! I so badly want to be erlich!

I tried everything already. At times, things improved but then they got even worse. What will become of me?

I am maavir sedra every week, I say as much mishnayos as I can, and I learn a daf of Gemara every day.

Please help me! Please give me a way out of my aveiros!

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

Even after a person does *teshuva*, he must keep in mind that the *kelipos* that were created with his *aveiros* will continue to pursue him and try to drag him back to his past behavior. With tremendous force, the *kelipos* attack him again and again, causing him to fall back into his *aveiros* until he despairs of ever truly repenting. However, if the

person will remain steadfast and do *teshuva* again each time he stumbles, continually pleading with Hashem to forgive him for his *aveiros*, he will succeed in eradicating all the *kelipos* which pursue him.

My beloved brother, listen to the *chizuk* the Rebbe imparts (*Likutei Moharan* 2:48): "צריכין להיות עקשן גדול בעבודת ה'" – One must be extremely stubborn in matters of *avodas Hashem* and not be deterred even when he doesn't seem to be making any progress. The *yetzer hara* repeatedly pushes one down in order to cause him to despair of doing *teshuva*. Yet when a person is stubborn, and despite repeatedly succumbing to sin he returns to Hashem each time anew, he will ultimately rise to great heights in *avodas Hashem*.

Remain strong and don't give up! You're not alone in your battle; the same happens to every person – as soon as one resolves to do *teshuva*, he encounters even stronger and more challenging *nisyonos* than before. The Rebbe states further (*ibid.*): "This is the tactic the *yetzer hara* uses when he sees he is losing control; when the person nearly enters the threshold of *kedusha*, the *yetzer hara* pulls out all the weapons in his arsenal to bring the person down so that he will despair."

This battle is your beauty and Hashem revels in it. He sees your *nisyonos*, how your *yetzer hara* is so, so strong inside you, and yet even after failing you still pick yourself up and return to Him. **One who falls but still cries out to Hashem, "Ribono shel Olam, I want to be erlich – have pity on me!" accomplishes something that even a *malach* cannot achieve.**

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #3, page 85

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