

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

TORAH FOR EVERYONE

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם

What made the *mishkan* a place for the *shechina*? The *pesukim* in this week's *parsha* enumerate, in exhaustive detail, the descriptions of each *keili* that Hashem commanded Moshe Rabbeinu to build. After the *mishkan* was complete, the *shechina* descended and rested upon the *mishkan*, and later in the *beis hamikdash*.

Although there is no *mishkan* today, this *passuk* still holds true. Every person can make a place for Hashem inside himself by turning his mind and heart into a *mikdash me'at*. How can one accomplish this? The first of the *keilim* that is described in the *passuk* is the *aron*: the home for the *luchos*. Torah is the foundation of *Yiddishkeit*; when a person learns Torah, he "brings the *aron* inside himself" and the *shechina* will dwell with him.

The Torah is deep and vast, and the Rebbe teaches us to learn all of it (*Sichos Haran 28*). Just like wealthy people travel the world and brag about all the places they've been, a person should learn the entire Torah, and in *Olam Haba* he'll say that he "visited" all of it.

Lucky is the one who will be able to tell the *beis din shel maalah*, **"I've been to the country of Bavli,"** and **"I've been to the country of Yerushalmi"**... Even a person who didn't get to learn the entire *Shas*, will at least be able to say, **"I visited a town (a mesechta)/ a street (a daf)/ a house (a few lines) of Bavli/Yerushalmi."**



Imagine how special it will be for a person who actually learned the entire Torah! He will be able to say, **"I've toured the entire Chamisha Chumshei Torah, Nevi'im, Kesuvim, Shisha Sidrei Mishna, Bavli, Yerushalmi, Tosefta, Rambam, Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Midrashim, Zohar... I've visited Tikunei Zohar, and I've been to all sefarim of R' Nachman of Breslev..."** This is what will bring a person honor in *Olam Haba*.

When a person understands his learning, *limud haTorah* is pure delight. What can be more satisfying than grasping a *sugya*, truly acquiring the depth of the back-and-forth of the *rishonim* and *acharonim*? Yet it's when the going is tough that it's tough to keep going. When a person sits over a *gemara* for hours but does not comprehend a word, or when he reviews a *sugya* over and over but cannot seem to remember a thing, learning can be very discouraging. Despite this, *halacha* dictates (*Shulchan Aruch Harav, Hilchos Talmud Torah 2:13*) that a person should learn the entire Torah at least once in his life – even without understanding it! – so that in *shamayim* he'll understand all that Hashem learns with his *neshama*.

Every single person, no matter his capabilities, can learn the entire Torah in his lifetime. Whether he understands or not, whether he remembers or not – saying the words of Torah is tremendously valuable, and it eventually leads to complete comprehension (*Sichos Haran 76*). **You, too, can make a *siyum on kol haTorah kulah* – in as little as three years!** All you need to do is begin. First establish a *shiur* in *Mishnayos*, then continue with *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*, and keep adding *shiurim* until you, too, will finish the entire Torah.

Asher Haya el Yoel, 5782

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

שבת שקלים

“ Chodesh Adar is in the air! Shabbos marks the first day of this long-awaited joyous month, as well as the first of the *Arba Parshios* – four weeks of enormous potential to become close to Hashem.

Each of the *Arba Parshios* teaches us important foundations in *Yiddishkeit*. The first of the four is *Parshas Shekalim*, which is symbolic of the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka*. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan, 2:4*) that when a person gives *tzedaka*, it clears the way for him to start serving Hashem properly. This is the reason why it says in *halacha* (*Yoreh De'ah 249:14*) that one should give money to the needy before davening – *tzedaka* is where *avodas Hashem* begins.

Tzedaka shields a person from sin. The Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Tzedaka*) that the *machatzis hashekel* protects a person from the *yetzer hara*; this refers both to hearing *Parshas Shekalim* (which is like giving the *machatzis hashekel*) and to giving *tzedaka*. Both protect a person from

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(Continued on page 2)

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Dear ...

I received your letter.

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 2:24*) that it is human nature to be drawn toward sadness – or “bad moods”, as you say you experience – due to the hardships that one inevitably faces on a daily basis. Nonetheless, a person must exert himself to remain happy, even behaving in a silly manner to do so.

Bad moods are not something that only you have to contend with; it’s a universal battle that is every human being’s struggle. This is the very nature of man, to be drawn to bitterness and anxiety. The solution is to listen to the Rebbe and gladden oneself with whatever one can, even by occasionally behaving in a silly manner.

The best advice I can give you to remain upbeat is davening for it every day. Daven that you should be *zoche* to happiness; say the following *tefilla* often:

“Ribono shel Olam, please help me always stay happy and not be pulled into a bad mood. Help me keep in mind the countless blessings You grant me each day, and never to forget that You are with me at every opportunity.

“Hashem, have compassion on me! I feel as if I have two warring forces raging in me. One moment I am happy and upbeat, but soon darkness descends and the next moment I am depressed; one moment I am calm, but the next moment I’m stressed and anxious. I so badly want to remain happy, calm and positive. Help me be able to withstand the yetzer hara’s attempts to embitter me and rob me of a pleasant life.

“Help me in the *zechus* of the *tzaddikim* who sacrificed their lives for You; in the merit of R’ Shimon Bar Yochai, in the merit of R’ Yitzchok Luria Ashkenazi, in the merit of R’ Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, in the merit of Rabbeinu Nachman Ben Faiga m’Breslev, his talmid R’ Nosson m’Breslev, and in the merit of Rabbeinu Eliezer Shlomo M’Breslev. *Amein.*”

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 61



falling into the *yetzer hara*’s net.

This is true of mere financial assistance – even as little as a few pennies – all the more so for providing spiritual sustenance. What can be greater than giving a person a will to live? What can be greater than giving a person guidance for dealing with his day-to-day struggles? Giving *tzedaka* to print and distribute *sefarim* that bring people back to Hashem certainly provides the giver with tremendous benefit. When a person helps save others from their *yetzer hara*, Hashem acts *middah k’neged middah* and saves him from his *yetzer hara* as well.

Complete with Hashem

With Hashem’s command for each member of *Klal Yisrael* to contribute to the *mishkan*, the instructions were very specific: every person was to give **half** a *shekel* – no more, no less. The lesson here is simple yet profound: alone, a person is incomplete; he cannot do anything without Hashem. *Chazal* say (*Kiddushin 30*) that none of us can fight the *yetzer hara* alone; we all need Hashem in order to win the battle. When a person realizes that he alone is only half and begs Hashem for help in his everyday struggles, he becomes a whole person and can lead a successful life.

The *Gemara* says (*Yerushalmi Shekalim 2:3*) that those who crossed the *Yam Suf* had to give a *machatzis hashekel*. What’s the connection between the two?

When *Klal Yisrael* stood before the *Yam Suf*, they were trapped with no way out. At those critical moments when they suddenly realized that they needed Hashem for their very survival, they turned to Hashem in a desperate plea for mercy and He made wondrous *nissim* to save them. The *machatzis hashekel* reminds us of this same concept: we can do nothing alone. We need Hashem’s help every moment.

Dramatic *nissim* weren’t only for those times – even today, we need *nissim* on the level of those that were experienced then. Both *parnassa* and *shidduchim* are compared to *krias Yam Suf* (*Pesachim 118, Sotah 2*) – both are difficult, daunting and impossible to handle alone. Just like *Klal Yisrael* at the *Yam Suf*, every Jew today needs to come to the realization that he is incomplete and incapable without Hashem.

Complete with Others

The *machatzis hashekel* also teaches us to live in harmony with others. A person alone is only half – he becomes whole when he stands together with others in unity.

When Haman slandered *Klal Yisrael* to Achashveirosh, he said (*Esther 3:8*), “ישנו עם אחד מפוזר ומפדל” – there is one nation that is scattered and divided; they are in constant conflict with each other.” The discord among the Jewish People was what brought the decree of annihilation upon them, so to rectify this, Esther told Mordechai to gather them **together** – with *achdus*. Their new state of unity brought them to a level of completion and brought about the *yeshua*.



(Continued on page 3)



A person is only whole when he lives in peace with others – especially with his family. *Shalom bayis* is so important, both for one's *ruchniyus* and for his *gashmiyus*. Without *shalom bayis*, a person is incomplete – his mind is confused and scattered and he cannot live a meaningful life. One must do whatever he can to maintain *shalom* in his home, because only by living in harmony with his wife and children can he lead a happy and fulfilling life.

A True Tzaddik

Parshas Shekalim also hints at the importance of connecting to a *tzaddik* that can bring a person close to Hashem.

When Hashem gave Moshe Rabbeinu the command to count *Klal Yisrael* with the *machatzis hashekel*, He said, "כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל" – count the Jewish People." These words can also mean to **lift up** the Jews. Just like Moshe Rabbeinu, the *tzaddik* of his generation, brought *Klal Yisrael* to lofty levels in *avodas Hashem*, so too, every generation has *tzaddikim* who can

elevate their followers and bring them close to Hashem.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:111*) that there are two types of leaders. One kind of leader is referred to by the *roshei teivos* of the *passuk* כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל – this *רבי* elevates his followers by encouraging them to live with Hashem and follow the Torah. The other kind of leader doesn't help his followers at all. He is referred to in the *passuk* (*Shmuel 1 2:9*) ר'שעים ב'חשך י'דמו – the wicked (i.e. his followers) remain in darkness. He doesn't change them for the better; they remain wicked and remain in darkness.

Hearing the words of כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל in *Parshas Shekalim* should inspire us to daven for a connection to the kind of *רבי* who will lift us up and teach us to serve Hashem.

A Time for Tefilla

In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *shekalim* were used to purchase the *korban tamid*. We don't have the *Beis Hamikdash* or the *korban tamid* anymore; instead, we have specific *tefillos* that we daven each day. The reading of *Parshas Shekalim* is an opportune time to ask that the *tefillos* we daven throughout the year should be accepted.

This is also a time to daven for all the things we learned from *Parshas Shekalim*. Let's daven for *shefa* so that we should be able to give *tzedaka* generously, and that we should be *zoche* to bring other Yidden to Hashem. Let's ask Hashem for help to become complete with Him and with each other – especially with our families. Let's also daven for a connection to true *tzaddikim* who can elevate us and bring us close to Hashem.

Sichos Mohorosh Arba Parshios, Shabbos Shekalim



Mohorosh spoke about this topic countless times. Again and again, he taught that borrowing money is forbidden, and if a person did borrow money, he **must** repay, and if he can't, he must sell every one of his belongings to raise the money to repay. One must do everything in his power not to fall into the category of "thief".

Mohorosh always lived by everything he said. After his marriage, he embarked on the grand endeavor to print and distribute the Rebbe's *sefarim* with *mesirus nefesh*. He spent tremendous amounts of money, accumulating debt of approximately eighty thousand dollars – nearly a million dollars today! His finances were so tight that he couldn't afford fish or meat even for Shabbos. Mohorosh and his wife would eat a meager fare of *challah* and sardines every Shabbos. Nonetheless, he repaid his debts down to the last penny. How? Gradually, penny by penny. Mohorosh used to engage in *hafatza* – sharing *sefarim* of the Rebbe with others and asking for a small donation in return. At the end of each day, he immediately went to the printing shop with the money he had earned by collecting *tzedaka* – some days he brought fifty dollars, some days one hundred dollars, and some days a mere twenty dollars – until he repaid every penny that he owed.

Mohorosh pledged, "One who will engage in *hafatza* will always have money when he needs." You live in Eretz Yisrael, where there are thousands of Jews who are estranged from the Torah – the Zionists destroyed every trace of Yiddishkeit and stripped them of their *emunah*. However, when these lost *neshamos* receive a *kuntres* or *sefer* with *chizuk*, they appreciate it immensely.

Take the *sefarim* and distribute them to others. By doing so, you will not only be able to repay your debts, but you will also be blessed with abundance – you'll be able to buy a house and pay for everything you need.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #3, page 109

I AM DEEPLY IN DEBT – SHOULD I TAKE A SIDE JOB?



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I must begin with expressing my gratitude for the shiurim and chizuk which have completely changed my life and the lives of my wife and children.

I'm married for five years and am the father of a growing family ka"h. My wife works and I learn in a halacha kollel here in Yerushalayim. Baruch Hashem we have managed to cover our expenses until now; however, recently our financial situation has tightened and I am now facing thousands of dollars in debt. I know how destructive debt is, but I don't know what to do about it.

On the one hand, I started considering taking a side job in the evening. On the other hand, I see that many yungel-eit who do so soon leave kollel altogether. I am a strong and passionate learner with an ambition to become a dayan – I've already been tested on hilchos taharah and mikvaos, and I'm currently learning hilchos berachos and taaruvos. I really don't want to abandon my studies; however, I know how the Rosh Yeshiva repeatedly warns us about the dangers of falling into debt.

I hope the Rosh Yeshiva can give me guidance on how to conduct myself.

Thank you for everything.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...

Debt is a serious danger which destroys a person both physically and spiritually. It robs a person of his peace of mind and of his ability to do *teshuva*, as the Rebbe states (*Sefer Hamiddos, Teshuva*), "One who wants to repent should be careful not to accumulate debt."

According to *halacha* (*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 253*), a person who cannot sustain himself can collect *tzedaka* for his needs. Therefore, if you want to pay off your existing debts, I would advise you to collect money for yourself and you'll slowly be able to repay people. It may seem unrealistic – how is it possible to repay thousands of dollars with the

nickels and dimes people give to *tzedaka*? Yet despite your skepticism, if you follow this guidance you will prove to yourself that small amounts slowly add up, and that it won't take long until you'll be absolved from debt.

Surely, you will not want to accept my advice. You'll feel that it's too demeaning to do so. What you do not realize is that collecting *tzedaka* is not embarrassing – borrowing money and not repaying is embarrassing! Not being able to pay rent is embarrassing! One who borrows money and does not repay is even called a *rasha* (*Tehillim 37:21*)!

(Continued on page 3)

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