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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

COLD. HOT. BOILING!

וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם מֵרַחֵק וּמֹשֶׁה נָגַשׁ אֶל הָעֶרְפֶּל אֲשֶׁר שָׁם הָאֱלֹקִים

The people stood from afar, and Moshe approached the thick cloud where Hashem was.

Yosef's life was on hold. All he had done was tell his doctor about some odd symptoms he was experiencing, and suddenly he was thrown into the world of testing, consultations, and the anxious wait for results...

To Yosef's relief, the tests all came back clear and the entire episode was chalked up to nothing more than a scare. However, he couldn't just go back to life as it was before. Facing his own mortality had a sobering effect, and after taking stock of himself he realized that his *ruchniyus* was sorely lacking. "That's it," Yosef told himself. "I can't let my time on this world slip through my fingers with nothing to show for it. From today onward, I'll daven every tefilla with a minyan, no matter what."

After just a few days, his initial ironclad commitment began to wear down. It wasn't his fault, really – suddenly, emergencies kept coming up right when he had to leave for shul! It didn't take long before Yosef was back to davening without minyan more often than not.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan* 1:115) that when a person who has lived his entire life steeped in *gashmiyus* becomes roused to serve Hashem properly, he'll find it very difficult. This is because the *middas hadin* raises accusations against him in *Shamayim*. "Where was he until now?" It demands. As a result, despite the person's pure intentions, numerous obstacles are placed in his path and thwart his efforts again and again.

The secret to overcoming these hardships is understanding that **Hashem, in His infinite mercy, conceals Himself in the difficulties**. If the person doesn't get fazed by the darkness and instead persists, he will find Hashem right there, waiting for him.

In this week's *parsha*, *Klal Yisrael* saw a thick cloud obscuring *Har Sinai*. וַיֵּצֵא הָעָם מֵרַחֵק – the simple Jews stood from afar, afraid to come close. This represents the majority of people who, when faced with hardship, just throw up their hands in defeat. But וּמֹשֶׁה – a person who follows the *da'as* of a *tzaddik*, וַיֵּצֵא אֶל הָעֶרְפֶּל – goes straight to the fog and murkiness because he knows אֲשֶׁר שָׁם הָאֱלֹקִים – that's where Hashem is!

Have you ever played "Hot and Cold"? In this game, one child steps out of the room while the others hide an object. When he comes back, he looks for the hidden item while the other children guide him to its location by yelling "Cold!" when he's far away and "Warm" or "Hot!" as he gets closer, until he discovers the object. This simple game holds a profound lesson for us. When a person faces challenges and feels as though the *yetzer hara* is burning inside him – it is "Boiling!" and he can't take the heat, he must know that at that moment, he is closest to his goal!

Don't run away at the first sign of clouds. **Yes, the beginning will be hard – oh, how hard!** – but remember that Hashem is there **within** the fog, **within** the darkness. A person who stays strong will eventually succeed in overcoming the difficulties and will become an *erliche Yid*.

Asher Haya el Yoel, Yisro 5782

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

FORGIVE ME

There are just a few days left to *Shovavim*, these six auspicious weeks with great potential for *teshuva* and renewed connection to Hashem.

Seeing the countdown to the end – just one more week! – can cause a feeling of hopelessness "I, too, want to be *zoche* to true *teshuvah*," one may think to himself, "but how?"

The first and simplest step to take is by accustoming oneself to *vidui devarim* – confessing one's sins to Hashem. We know that there is accountability for every action, and we are held responsible for every misdeed we do. When we do this first crucial step of *teshuva* before the heavenly prosecutors even have a chance to bring their accusations against us to Hashem, we strip the *mekatregim* of their power and remove all harsh judgment from ourselves.

Additionally, *Chazal* teach us (*Sifra, Bechukosai* 8)

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YES, YOU CAN LEARN!

Dear ...

The *seder derech halimud* is not **my** *derech halimud*; it is the Rebbe's gift to us. Your gratitude should be toward the Rebbe, as well as Mohorosh, who revealed this *derech halimud* to the world.

A person who begins learning with the *seder derech halimud* discovers a new world: he realizes that **there's a way for every single person to learn and to complete the entire Torah.**

The Rebbe teaches (*Sichos Haran 76*), שאין צריכין בלמוד רק האמירה לבד לומר, – Even when a person understands nothing at all, he should continue saying the words of Torah and he'll eventually come to understand. He must not become discouraged when he struggles to comprehend what he is learning at first, because it is the desire to understand that actually impedes the person from reaching comprehension. Instead, he should continue to say the words and in the end he will understand.

"If one doesn't understand his learning at the first try, he will at the second. And even if he doesn't understand the second time, he must still not be deterred, because Chazal teach us (*Shabbos 63a*) that a person should first say the words of Torah, and only afterwards should he learn in order to understand.

"He who accustoms himself to learning quickly is zoche to make great progress in the holy Torah. Such a person ends up reviewing everything multiple times and eventually understands everything he has learned."

R' Nosson added to this, saying, "The Rebbe often spoke about the *derech halimud*, saying that one shouldn't initially try to understand, because by learning consistently he will ultimately reach complete comprehension.

"When a person learns with the *derech halimud*, he achieves much more than if he were to go at a slow pace and try to understand every single word, because doing so can sometimes hinder a person's success. Learning slowly and in depth has stopped many people from learning Torah altogether, because they did not feel accomplished by learning in this manner.

"One who accustoms himself to learning quickly and consistently will be zoche to learn the entire Torah – Gemara with all the poskim, Tanach with all the midrashim, and Zohar Hakadosh, just as the Rebbe wanted us to."

It's impossible for a person to understand the benefits of learning with the *derech halimud* without actually trying it out for himself. When a person learns in order to understand, he is at risk of becoming discouraged and stopping to learn as soon as comprehension seems to be out of his reach. However, when a person learns for the sake of learning, and he doesn't seek to understand everything immediately, nothing in the world will take him away from Torah learning.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 74

that the moment a person ad-

mits to his sins, Hashem's compassion is aroused and He Himself comes to the person's defense.

The most powerful tool for *teshuva* is one's mouth. All we need to do is apologize and state our true desire to improve our behavior. The *passuk* teaches us (*Hoshaya 14:3*), קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה', which Chazal explain to mean (*Pesikta D'rav Kahana, 24*) that with our דברים – our words, we can return to Hashem.

How To Do It

Vidui devarim sounds like a big, intimidating concept, but the truth is that it's quite simple. Talk to Hashem and tell Him how you regret your actions. Spell them out, one by one. **"Hashem, I did this aveira, I committed that great sin... But Hashem, my misdeeds were not done to spite You. I didn't even want to do them at all! What can I do if my yetzer hara overpowers me again and again? Please Hashem, forgive me!"**

One sincere confession is all it takes to lead a person down the road to complete *teshuva*.

Otherworldly Powers

When a person succumbs to the *yetzer hara* and sins, he causes far-reaching, long-lasting damage. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:4*) that sinning affects not just our *neshamos*, but our physical bodies, as well. The *passuk* says (*Yechezkel 32:27*), "ותהי עונותם חקוקה על" – the *aveiros* a person commits become etched into his bones. This causes him to suffer from physical and emotional afflictions.

Sinners brings hardship and suffering upon a person, reducing one to a bitter, broken man. However, when a person puts his ego aside and confesses his sins to Hashem, the *aveiros* leave his bones, his suffering comes to an end, and joy and vitality are restored to him once more.

Chazal understood the incredible

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effects of *vidui* and established that it should be recited daily. Some people say *vidui* more than once each day; some say it by *shema koleinu* in *shemona esrei*, and some as part of their nightly routine, in *krias shema* of the *Arizal*.

Even daily *vidui* recital may sometimes be inadequate. When confession means simply reading well-rehearsed lines off a paper, it isn't very meaningful. Therefore, we must make time to talk to Hashem **in our own words** and confess, repent and promise to be better in the future. Such a confession, as opposed to oft-repeated words off of a paper, come from a place of truth and contain so much more thought and emotion. This kind of *vidui* is lovingly accepted by Hashem, Whose mercy is aroused for His apologetic child. Subsequently, all punishment is removed from us.

Not True!

If *vidui devarim* is so powerful and relatively simple, why is it so hard for us to honestly and sincerely confess to Hashem?



One thing that holds us back is the knowledge that we will not be able to keep to our good resolutions. Knowing that our *yetzer hara* is still so strong and that in just a few hours, we will likely sin again in the exact same area, apologizing and promising to improve feels dishonest and wrong.

Even if this is true and our good resolutions won't last, confessing our sins still has much benefit. We can see this from the story of Bilaam, the *rasha* who attempted to curse the Jewish Nation three times. When the *malach* that blocked his path, brandishing a sword, held him to task for his behavior, the *passuk* says (*Bamidbar* 25:34) that Bilaam's reaction was, "חטאתי – I have sinned." The irony is that Bilaam, wicked as he was, had no intentions of true repentance; the *Medrash* says (*Bamidbar Rabba* 20:36) that he was acting by pure logic: he knew that after admitting that he had sinned, no *malach* would be able to harm him. Although immediately thereafter, he continued on his way to curse *Klal Yisrael*, he was spared punishment due to his confession.

We are far from being like Bilaam. Every Jew has a holy *neshama* that is inherently good and desires closeness to Hashem. Even if we know that the *yetzer hara* will probably overpower us and cause us to sin again, this doesn't mean we don't truly intend to improve our behavior. If Bilaam was able to confess despite the fact that he was intentionally continuing to sin, how much more so can we!

Even when we feel like our words of repentance don't ring true, we must accustom ourselves to speaking to Hashem and confessing our misdeeds regularly. Eventually, these words will enter our hearts and our *vidui* will be said with true sincerity. This will lead us on the path to becoming truly righteous, and we will then merit a good life in *Olam Hazei* and in *Olam Haba*.

and helps him keep going. Yet even when he cannot accept the encouragement, it's still beneficial. In this scenario, it's called an 'indirect ray' – the *chizuk* returns to the original person and is *mechazek him*.

My dear brother, after following the Rebbe's *sefer derech halimud* so diligently – and especially since you merited to finish so much of Torah, heed the Rebbe's *eitzah* of *shikcha* with the same sincerity. Forget your past and begin anew; start treating your wife with respect and start speaking to her kindly. By doing so, you will have the strength to raise your children to be *erliche Yidden*.

Taste the sweetness of *hisbodedus* – it's a priceless gift from our holy Rebbe. Find a quiet corner where you will not be disturbed and unburden yourself to Hashem. Talk to Him in your mother tongue and tell Him everything that is on your mind.

Try it! Say, **"Hashem, what should I do? As many times as I resolve to start anew, the yetzer hara manages to spoil it all. I argue with my wife and get angry with my children, and I sometimes even hit them. Hashem, please help me control myself and help me restore peace in my home."**

I hope that you'll read this letter many times and try to carry out everything that I wrote here. If you'll take my advice and turn your life around, you will benefit in this world and the next, but if you don't, you'll lose everything that is dear to you. Remember that it's forbidden to hit children – it doesn't accomplish anything and only makes matters worse. Hitting children distances them from you and from the Torah and causes the entire family to fall apart, *R"l*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Q & A

HOW CAN I MOVE ON AFTER A DIFFICULT PAST?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you so much for all the chizuk you give. I began listening to shiurim a year ago, and since then my life has transformed. I learn Chumash, Nach, Mishnayos, a daf of Bavli, Yerushalmi and Tosefta, Shulchan Aruch, Zohar, Midrash and Likutei Moharan each day, and I completed Shas recently only because I now learn with the Rebbe's seder derech halimud.

The Rosh Yeshiva has said on many occasions that a person's entire character changes when he learns Torah, and that he will gain peace of mind and become a patient person. However, it doesn't seem to work for me. I try to follow the Rosh Yeshiva's guidance and control myself, but I find it very difficult. I still don't have patience for my family; I argue with my wife often and I get angry at my children and even hit them.

I have also heard the Rosh Yeshiva say that when a child is constantly belittled by his parents or teachers, it will negatively affect his shalom bayis later on. My wife and I were both constantly put down as children – is it possible for us to have shalom bayis?

I would appreciate if the Rosh Yeshiva can help me out in these three areas: encouragement to continue with the seder derech halimud, chizuk for shalom bayis, and advice on how to have patience with my children.

Thank you for everything.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

Be strong and do not despair. With the Rebbe's eitzos, it's possible to escape from all problems.

First of all, internalize the concept of *shikcha* – forgetfulness. The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran 26*), "The world views forgetfulness as a flaw, but I consider it a virtue. If a person would always remember everything he did, he would be plagued by thoughts of past misdeeds, and he'd be unable to serve Hashem." However, since we **can** forget all that has happened previously, it is possible to move on even after making mistakes.

Listen to the Rebbe and give yourself a fresh start. Don't let thoughts of your past hinder your success and happiness. Thank Hashem that you merited a wife and children and focus on how you can make amends and rebuild.

You write that both you and your wife suffered a painful childhood. This trial gives you the opportunity to strengthen each other. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:106*) that when a person gives *chizuk* to another, he, too is strengthened. Comfort your wife and you will benefit twice: if she is uplifted you will only benefit, and even if your words don't seem to have any effect on her, they will strengthen you. The Rebbe teaches us (*Likutei Moharan 1:184*) that encouragement is always helpful, even if the other does not accept it. Giving *chizuk* creates a flash of light. Sometimes it's a 'direct ray' – it encourages the recipient

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