



SPARKS OF EMUNAH

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

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

CHIZUK
FROM THE
PARSHA

DESTROYING AMALEK

This Shabbos, *shuls* in every corner of the globe will resound with the timeless words, "ותמחה את זכר עמלק מתחת השמים לא תשכח" Hashem commanded us to wipe out the memory of Amalek, yet we must first understand — who and what is Amalek? What is its power and what are we so focused on destroying?

Poisonous Power

The letters of עמלק have the same *gematria* as ספק — doubt — teaching us an important connection between the two: **Amalek's goal is to bring doubts into our minds.** He makes us wonder (*Shemos 17:7*), "היגש ה' בקרבנו אם אין" — *Is Hashem with us or has He forsaken us?* Amalek poisons our minds and fools us into thinking that the world runs by a series of coincidences, robbing us of what is most precious: our *emunah* in Hashem.

But even that is not enough for him. In his evil mission to destroy us from the inside, Amalek fills us with other doubts, too — **self-doubt.** "Can I still do *teshuva* after everything I've done?" "Who needs me anyway?" "Is Hashem listening to my *tefillos*?" This is Amalek's voice in our minds. His goal is to paralyze us, causing us to give up on ourselves and our *avodas Hashem*.

Counterattack!



So how can we "wipe out the memory of Amalek"?

Amalek is *safek*, and *safek* is poisonous. **We must counteract the doubt by implanting *emunah* deep into our hearts,** and in doing so we'll destroy Amalek and all that he represents.

The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran 53*), "מי שיש לו אמונה, חייו חיים" — *Emunah* makes it possible to live a happy and successful life. Only by believing that Hashem is running the world and that absolutely nothing happens by chance can a person persevere through his challenges.

Belief is a thing of the mind and can therefore be hard to work on. The Rebbe teaches us a practical way to strengthen our *emunah* in Hashem (*Likutei Moharan 2:44*): The *passuk* says (*Tehillim 89:2*), "אודיע אמונתך בפי" — I will make *emunah* known with my mouth. **The more we speak about Hashem and His greatness, the stronger our *emunah* will become.**

But that isn't enough. In order to really destroy Amalek, we must also strengthen our *emunah* in **ourselves.** We need to remember — **Yes! We do make a difference! Yes, every small mitzvah counts! Yes, every little thing we do gives Hashem a nachas ruach!** Appreciating our own worth propels us forward in *avodas Hashem* and allows us to achieve even more.

Happy, Happy, Happy!

אין שמחה כהתרת הספיקוט — Only after getting rid of Amalek inside us can we feel true happiness. This *Shabbos Zachor*, let's remove every bit of doubt from our minds and destroy Amalek once and for all. Let's get ready for a real *simchas Purim*!

Ish Yehudi, Shabbos Zachor U'michiyas Amalek

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

HAPPY PURIM!

The clock is ticking... there are only a few days left until the long-awaited *yom tov* of Purim!

"*A freilichen Purim,*" we wish one another, but how can we truly experience the joy of the day?

Mohorosh taught us not to squander the opportunities inherent in this day. Purim is a day full of *mitzvos* as well as a special time to daven. Using this day properly will make Purim be a truly happy day, and the joy of the day will spill over to the entire year.

Megillas Esther

An essential part of Purim is reading/hearing the *megilla*. At first glance, *Megillas Esther* seems to be made up of a series of random, unrelated coincidences. Achashveirosh decided to kill Vashti... by chance. Esther was forcibly taken as Queen... by chance. Mordechai overheard Bigsan and Seresh's plot... by chance.

Only after hearing the **entire** story does the true picture emerge. It becomes blatantly clear that every detail was precisely orchestrated by Hashem, all as preparation for the *yeshuah*.

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DRINKING ON PURIM

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

Good for you that you stopped drinking wine throughout the year. The Rebbe warned us not to drink wine or any other alcoholic beverages, for when a person becomes inebriated he forgets about Hashem (*Likutei Moharan 2:26*).

Alcohol is the cause of so many problems. Chazal say that wine causes grief (*Yoma 76b*), wine leads to immorality (*Bamidbar Rabba 10:6*), and that wine brings troubles and poverty upon a person (*Tanchuma, Shemini*).

Unfortunately, there are many people who drink on Shabbos — they go from *shul* to *shul* looking for alcohol, and then they hang out with friends and get drunk. Then, in their tipsy state, they quickly fall into vulgar speech and other ugly sins, *R"l*. This is truly tragic, for instead of a *yungerman* going home and spending time with his wife and children — the one day of the week when he actually has time to do so — he wastes his Shabbos drinking and ends up ruining his own life.

Purim: The Exception

Regarding drinking on Purim, *Chazal* say (*Megillah 7b*) that a person is supposed to become intoxicated on Purim until the point of not knowing the difference between "ארור המן" and "ברוך מרדכי," and the Shulchan Aruch's ruling is as such (*Orach Chaim 695:2*). However, Mohorosh used to warn us every year to drink in moderation. A person must watch himself and not become so drunk that he misses *mincha* and *maariv*, and forgets to *bentch* after the *seuda*, etc...

Drinking on Purim night is not a mitzvah and is not a sensible thing to do. So many *bachurim* make the mistake of drinking the first night, and they get so drunk that they miss out on the entire rest of Purim. Purim day is the time to drink and dance, to be joyful and spread happiness to others.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from Atzaso Emunah Volume 3, Page 271

Today, more than two thousand years later, the story of Purim remains a tremendous source of *chizuk* for every

Jew. We can at times feel as though Hashem "forgot" about us, leaving us to fend for ourselves. Things can seem to happen at random, without any rhyme or reason, and at times we feel completely abandoned. Still, we must remember the lesson of the *megilla* — **Nothing is random. Hashem is always with us and is arranging every detail of our lives, creating the most beautiful story.**

As the *megilla* is read and the events unfold, let's allow ourselves to get drawn along and imagine that the story is happening again — to us! Because really, Hashem does tremendous *nissim* for each of us all the time — they are just hidden from view. Our job is to focus on the good and recognize the *nissim* that Hashem does, just like He did in the times of Mordechai and Esther.

Purim and Tefilla

Chazal say about Purim (*Yerushalmi, Megilla 1:4*), "כל מי שהוא פושט את ידו לטוב, "נותנין לו" — On this day, any person who puts out his hand for *tzedaka* is given money, no questions asked.

On a deeper level, this teaches us that Purim is a uniquely powerful day that is specially designed for *tefilla*. Whatever we ask of Hashem on this day, we are granted — no questions asked. We daven and He fulfills our requests.

This Purim, as busy as you may be, take a few minutes to talk to Hashem. Discuss all your difficulties with Him — tell Him about how hard it is for you to just get through each day; tell Him about your struggles with your *yetzer hara*. Ask Him for whatever you may need — no request is too big or too small! Even mumbling a few measly words, even speaking from a dry heart is so worthwhile. Don't wait! Especially on such a powerful day, speak to Hashem even just a bit — every word has tremendous value.

Purim and Teshuva

Chazal teach us (*Tikunei Zohar 57b*) that Purim is like Yom Kippur — Hashem forgives all our *aveiros* on Purim just like He does on the holiest day of the year.

At times we can feel distant from Hashem. We look at ourselves and realize that we've wasted our days with foolishness, and trapped in our bad ways, we think, "What am I worth? Hashem surely doesn't need me — look how many *aveiros* I do."

However, we must remember that Purim is like Yom Kippur and is the perfect time for *teshuva*. On this day, Hashem doesn't check up on you to see if you are or aren't worthy. Even if you committed the worst *aveiros*, now is the perfect time to reconnect. Tell Hashem that you want to be better and beg Him to forgive you. Ask Hashem to help you return to Him, and He will most certainly accept you with open arms.

Hashem, Help Me!

R' Nosson of Breslev had a talmid R' Meir Tepliker, who was a tzaddik in his own right and had many followers. One of his

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talmidim was a simple villager who would often come to R' Meir to hear chizuk from the Rebbe.

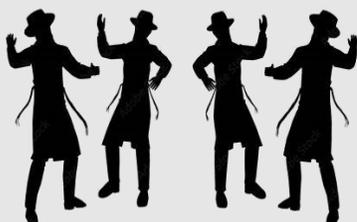
R' Meir Tepliker used to host a large Purim seuda each year, where he and his talmidim danced together with tremendous simcha until the wee hours of the morning. One Purim, R' Meir noticed the villager sitting on the sidelines, eyes downcast, instead of joining in the festivities.

Concerned, R' Meir went over to the villager and asked, "Why the long face? It's Purim — a day of simcha! Come join in the dancing!"

The villager just sighed and responded, "How can I be happy when I have a 'Tzivia' on my head?"

The villager had a whole lineup of single daughters at home, of whom Tzivia was oldest. He could not marry them off because he had no money to do so, and he was under so much pressure that he couldn't even put a smile on his face.

R' Meir responded with a gentle rebuke, "Is this the solution — sitting on the sidelines, depressed? The Rebbe taught us a different way! When



things are difficult, we must turn to Hashem and cry, 'צרות לָבָי הִרְחִיבוּ מִמְצוּקוֹתַי הוֹצִיאֵנִי Hashem, take me out of my tzara! I can't do this anymore!"

R' Meir grabbed the villager by the arm and pulled him into the dancing ring of already-drunk chassidim. "Listen to me!"

he cried out with passion, "if things are hard, talk to Hashem! Scream to Hashem! Repeat after me: צרות לָבָי הִרְחִיבוּ מִמְצוּקוֹתַי הוֹצִיאֵנִי"

The villager did as he was told and began to sob. He danced as he cried, all the while repeating, "צרות לָבָי הִרְחִיבוּ מִמְצוּקוֹתַי הוֹצִיאֵנִי... Hashem, help me! Help me! מִמְצוּקוֹתַי הוֹצִיאֵנִי Hashem, help me!" And so he continued until he got hoarse from screaming.

Shortly after Purim, another Bresleiver chassid was traveling through the neighborhood and stopped at the simple villager's home. Tzivia, the oldest daughter, was the one who served food to the guest and her middos and refined manner piqued the guest's interest.

The guest turned to the villager and asked, "I have a shidduch for your daughter! I have a son of marriageable age and I think your daughter may be the right one for him."

The overjoyed villager could hardly believe his ears. "I just need to ask my Rebbe, R' Meir Tepliker," he said. "I want his bracha before we proceed with the shidduch."

Together, the prospective mechutanim traveled to Teplik to R' Meir, and with his warmest wishes the shidduch was finalized. The tefillos and tears of the poor villager on Purim had brought about the yeshuah.

The power of tefilla on Purim! We must see to utilize the day and cash in on the tremendous power that it has. Let us take at least a few minutes to talk to Hashem, and we will be zoche to see yeshuos and refuos.

"As I stood there waiting, I suddenly heard the sound of a person reading the megilla! I started pounding on the gates of Gan Eden so that they should be opened.

"Soon a malach came and asked me why I was knocking. I told him, 'What do you mean? I hear the megilla being read and I want to enter Gan Eden.'

The malach replied, 'It's true that someone is reading the megilla now, but it's not Purim now — it's Pesach. This isn't the time to enter Gan Eden. You need to wait until next Purim.'

"But I didn't give up. I argued, 'What difference does it make if it's Purim or Pesach? If the megilla is being read, you should open the gates and let me in!'

"I cried and argued and shouted until the Beis Din shel Ma'alah came to see what the commotion was all about. After hearing both sides, the Beis Din said, 'It's true that this is not the time when one can enter Gan Eden, but if you go to the man who is reading the megilla and he rules that you should be allowed into Gan Eden, then you will be admitted.'

The neshama then pleaded with the man, "I beg you, give me permission to enter Gan Eden so that I can be rectified."

The man responded, "I take upon myself the task of rectifying you, and go tell the Beis Din shel Ma'alah that I ruled that you can enter Gan Eden."

The story ends here, and those who heard it from the Ba'al Imrei Yosef understood that he was the man in the story.

Mohorosh used to conclude, saying that we see from this story that while hearing the megilla, a person can be zoche to enter Gan Eden. The Rebbe says (Likutei Moharan 2:119) that Gan Eden is in this world. When a person lives with emunah — he knows that everything that occurs is only because Hashem willed it to be so — he lives with Hashem and that is Gan Eden. This level of emunah is what we can achieve as we listen to Megillas Esther.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Q & A

WHAT IS SO GREAT ABOUT MEGILLAS ESTHER?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I've heard the Rosh Yeshiva quote in the name of tzaddikim that living on this world for seventy years and enduring all the challenges of life is all worth it, if only to hear Megillas Esther once.

As we near the yom tov of Purim, I was wondering — what's so great about Megillas Esther?

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

Our tzaddikim have taught us that while the megilla is read, all the heavens are open and one can be zoche to many yeshuos. This is because every time the word "המלך" is mentioned in the megilla (without specifying the name of the king), it is referring to Hashem, the מלך מלכי המלכים, and we will indeed be zoche to (Esther 2:3), "ויפקד המלך פקידים בכל" — Hashem will remember us with all kinds of yeshuos, both in ruchniyus and in gashmiyus.

The reading of the megilla is an auspicious time to daven for shidduchim, parnassa, children, and so on. Chazal say (Megilla 4a) that the poor await the reading of the megilla. While the simple meaning of this is that the poor people wait for Purim, when they will receive tzedaka without being asked any questions, this can also refer to all Jews, each of whom is poor in his own way. We all wait to hear the megilla because that is when we can be zoche to all yeshuos.

Mohorosh recounted an incredible story that the Spinka Rebbe, the Baal Imrei Yosef zt"l used to tell every year on the second night of Pesach:

There was a man who sat at his table on the second night of Pesach, hours after the seder had ended, and thought to himself, "I have already finished the second seder, the entire haggadah, and also Shir Hashirim. What more can I say to thank and praise Hashem?" It then occurred to him that since Haman was hung on the second day of Pesach, he would read the megilla to thank Hashem for that great miracle.

When he finished reading the entire Megillas Esther, he saw a neshama standing before him. He asked the neshama, "Why have you come? What do you want from me?"

The neshama then began to explain that there are many neshamos in Shamayim who have already been through Gehinnom, but still lack a special zechus that is necessary to enter Gan Eden. On one day a year — Purim — as the megilla is read, the gates of Gan Eden are opened and all the waiting neshamos can enter.

In the months before Purim, tens of thousands of neshamos gather at the gates of Gan Eden and wait for the gates to open, hoping that they will be allowed inside. However, since the megilla only takes a few hours to read around the world, there isn't enough time for all the neshamos to enter and they must wait until the following Purim.

The neshama continued, "For a few years now, I've tried to enter Gan Eden each Purim, but I never made it in before the gates closed. This year, I was about to go inside but the gates closed right in front of me! At that point, I decided that come what may, I wouldn't leave my spot until the next year.

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