

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLEV ZT"l
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PARSHAS VA'EIRA
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

MELTING A HEART OF STONE

The wind howls as the storm rages, flooding rivers, uprooting trees and demolishing homes. In a mere few hours, a flourishing town is reduced to a wasteland.

The most powerful tool a person possesses is his mouth – with the ability to speak, one can reach the greatest heights or the lowest depths. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:38*) that when a person uses his power of speech properly, he becomes closely bound to Hashem; however, when a person uses his mouth for foolish or forbidden speech, the רוח פיו – the breath of his mouth, carries with it רוח סערה – a storm wind, bringing much evil upon him.

When a person allows himself to lose control of his mouth and begins speaking foolishness or *divrei aveira R"l*, he brings a storm into his mind. His negative speech causes him to lose his *yishuv hada'as* and he becomes muddled, losing his focus and meaning in life. Untethered, the person drifts through each day, becoming callous and apathetic.

This concept is alluded to in this week's *parsha*:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵל מֹשֶׁה כְּבֹד לֵב פְּרָעָה מֵאֵן לְשַׁלַּח הָעָם

What is the primary factor that causes a person to become a **כבד לב** – hard as stone, cold and indifferent? **פרעה** – פה רע – he uses his mouth improperly.



Heart extinguished, life empty. Now what? How can a person undo the damage his speech has caused and bring himself back? The solution to the problem is the reverse of its cause – just like the mouth was the trigger for a deep spiritual decline, so too can it be the gateway to greatness. Every person, no matter how lowly he may be, can propel himself to the highest of places with the power of speech. When we were redeemed from *galus Mitzrayim*, Hashem gave us the *yom tov* of פסח, which is comprised of two words: פה סח – the mouth that speaks. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:52*) that in order to become close to Hashem, a person must use his mouth to speak to Him – constantly and unashamedly, sharing all his struggles and successes, all his disappointments and joys.

Talking to Hashem purifies one's entire being, for when a person uses his mouth to constantly **talk** to Hashem, he programs his mind to constantly **think** of Hashem, thereby acquiring *emunah* and peace of mind. Over time, he develops a deep connection to Hashem and becomes a truly righteous and holy individual.

It isn't easy at first, especially when one's mind is so tainted and confused by sin. A person who is a **כבד לב** is impervious to feelings of spirituality; nonetheless, he must begin to speak to Hashem even if he feels no connection at all. Soon enough, his heart will follow and he will start to sense Hashem's presence in his life and begin to reconnect to Him. As a result, his apathy will melt away and he will regain his former vibrancy and joy.

If we, too will strengthen ourselves to talk to Hashem consistently and persistently, we will be *zoche* to be redeemed from our 'exile of the mind' and develop a real and lasting connection with Hashem.

Toch Hanachal, Va'eira 5766-5767

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

RECALCULATING



Shovavim!

These electrifying פרשיות שמות, וארא, בא, בשלח, יתרו, משפטים bring an undercurrent of introspection and repentance, similar to that of the *Yamim Noraim*. The Ari Hakadosh teaches that these are potent days to do teshuva for our *aveiros* and return to Hashem.

Taking an honest spiritual reckoning is a sobering experience. When a person looks at his misdeeds – both the deliberate and the inadvertent – he begins to realize what an enormous spiritual debt he has. The Ari Hakadosh teaches that in order to rectify our sins, each *aveira* requires us to fast for a specific number of days; however, a quick calculation reveals that for most of us, life is too short – there is no way that we can fast enough days in one lifetime to repent for all our sins. Even with the best of intentions, we would never be able to fast as much as we need to. If so, how can we possibly get a *tikkun*?

The Rebbe aptly resolves this quandary with a *mashal* (*Chayei Moharan 447*):

A wealthy and generous business-

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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Chazal teach us (*Shabbos 127*) that *hachnosas orchim* is a tremendous *mitzvah*, greater even than welcoming the *Shechina*. By inviting guests into one's home, a person can inspire them to welcome the *Shechina* into their own lives.

Hachnosas orchim does not have to be a contradiction to *chinuch*. The Rebbe teaches (*Sefer Hamiddos, Hachnosas Orchim*): that through fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *hachnosas orchim*, one will merit children. The *mitzvah* itself is powerful *chinuch* – when children see their parents welcome guests into their home, it instills in them a sensitivity toward others, and they will mimic this behavior when they grow up. Nonetheless, be careful that it does not come at your children's expense. Seat your young children close to you and the guests after them; review the *parsha* with your children, tell them a story and sing *zemiros* with them.

The fact that your children leave the table *mid-seuda* is not a result of having guests – it's a child's nature to lose interest and prefer to play with his toys. Parents must use wisdom to know when to demand that the children return to the table and to determine how long they must participate, each child according to his age.

The key to raising good children is *tefilla*. Mohorosh used to relate the story of a man who came to the Chofetz Chaim *zt"l*, requesting a *bracha* for righteous children. The *tzaddik* picked up a *Tehillim* that was swollen with moisture and exclaimed, "This is my mother's *Tehillim* – each day she cried to merit *erliche* children. *Tefilla* is the way to merit righteous children."

Heed this advice and daven each day for *erliche* children, healthy children, children who will illuminate the world with their Torah and *avodas Hashem*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 228



man had the grand idea to use his riches to help people in need. He let it be known that any person in need of a loan could borrow money from him, interest-free. This announcement was greeted with great excitement and he was immediately swamped with throngs of people who were eager to take advantage of this offer. He handed out the money graciously, meticulously writing down the amounts of each loan and the deadline for its return. After the first few deadlines came and went with no return of any borrowed money, the businessman was upset to discover that while the townspeople were very eager to borrow, nobody was too eager to repay.

Among the debtors was a young man who had borrowed a relatively small sum for a deal that ultimately fell through, leaving him penniless. Instead of ignoring his debt like all the others, he approached the businessman to explain and apologize.

"I feel terrible," he began, hanging his head. "You were so kind to lend me money for a business venture, but it completely disintegrated. I know I need to repay my debt now, but with my current financial state, it is impossible."

The wealthy man brushed his words away with a sigh. "The little money you borrowed doesn't make much of a difference anyway," he replied. "It is but a drop in the bucket compared to the amounts that other people owe me. If you would truly like to repay your debt, remind the others to pay back what they have borrowed. If they would only give a small percent of their loans, it will be thousands of times more than the amount that you owe, and I will completely absolve you from your debt."

The same is with us and our spiritual debts. We wish there would be something we can do to pay back what we 'owe' Hashem, but with the limited time we have on this world, it is impossible. Yet all is not lost – there is one thing we can do. The Rebbe teaches that bringing people to *teshuvah* has immeasurable value. When we give *chizuk* to others and rouse them from their spiritual coma, encouraging them that they are never lost and that Hashem yearns for them to come close to Him, we can rectify our own sins. How so? Because by inspiring others to reignite their connection with Hashem and 'pay back' a part of their own 'debts', we will be absolved of whatever remains of our own.

Sharing the Gift of Chizuk

Trying a hand at being *mekarev* others often involves treading a delicate balance. Face-to-face *chizuk* can be uncomfortable for a person to accept; therefore, it is more effective to give *sefarim* which inspire and encourage. True, doing so does not provide instant results, since many people stuff even the most well-intentioned pamphlets into their pockets and move on with nary a glance, yet in privacy they will take it out to learn when in need of *chizuk*. As has been proven time and again, one small *sefer* can be the catalyst for a wayward person's complete return to Hashem.

The Rebbe left us a treasure trove of *sefarim* filled with *chizuk*, inspiration and practical guidance that is so applicable to our lives today, despite having been written more than two centuries ago. So much of the suffering that people endure can



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be alleviated, if they would only have access to Rebbe's wisdom.

Quite understandably, the *yetzer hara* does not allow that to happen without putting up a fight. Since his life's work is to discourage and depress us, he is afraid of the results of the Rebbe's powerful *chizuk*. Content, confident people who believe in their inherent goodness and know that Hashem values every small *mitzva* they do, make bad bait for the *yetzer hara*. He therefore does everything in his power to withhold the spread of the Rebbe's *sefarim*, stopping the inspiration from reaching others.

Mockery: His Weapon



In the seventh story of the sefer Sippurei Maasios, the Rebbe recounts that when his neshama was about to be sent down to this world to begin its mission, the yetzer hara protested. "Once this neshama goes down to this world and begins inspiring others that they are never hopeless, all my work compelling people to sin will have been for naught! For what purpose, then, was I created?"

Despite the truth in his words, the yetzer hara's complaint was disregarded. "This neshama must go down to the world. Go find a solution to your problem."

The yetzer hara left and returned after a short while, accompanied by an old, bent man. Laughing, the two of them said, "We have found a solution!"

Laughter. Mockery. Cynicism. Ever since the Rebbe's teachings have begun to spread, the *yetzer hara* has been battling them with hefty doses of *leitzaanus*. Breslev is scorned. The *sefarim* are belittled. However, a person who can look past public opinion and examine Breslev through a clear lens is truly fortunate. He will immediately realize the depth and beauty in the Rebbe's *sefarim* and see for himself that they have an extraordinary ability to inspire and encourage even the most downtrodden Jews.

Just One Sefer

Mohorosh, who taught an entire generation of Breslev *chassidim* and *ovdei Hashem*, often told the story of how he came to Breslev. Someone had given his father a copy of the *sefer Meshivas Nefesh* (written by R' Nosson of Breslev), which Mohorosh found and read. The depth and encouragement in it greatly inspired him and propelled him to great heights in *avodas Hashem*. Subsequently, he made it his life's mission to spread these teachings further and make the *chizuk* accessible to the world.

One sefer. One pamphlet. One word of encouragement in the right place, at the right time can be the catalyst for thousands of Jews' renewed connection to Hashem.

Let us use these sacred days of *Shovavim* wisely to invest ourselves in inspiring others and spreading *chizuk*, and with this we will merit a complete *teshuva*.



on his own that it is not allowed. Now, if your child will ask, "Tatty, why can't I touch something that is *muktzah*?" will you answer, "When you will be older, you will understand?" or will you state firmly, "Because that is what Hashem commanded"?

The same applies to שמירת הברית – when your child asks what פגם הברית means, you should answer, "One may not touch his *bris*." When asked what conducting oneself in a holy manner means, answer, "Guarding one's eyes." Why? "Because that is what Hashem commanded."

A parent cannot rely on his children's *melamdin* or *maggidei shiurim* to teach this subject, because many of them avoid it, not realizing how crucial it is to teach children about *inyanei kedusha*. However, the Satmar Rebbe saw its importance, quoting the following story to demonstrate the significance of teaching young children about this:

Eliyahu HaNavi relates (Tana D'Bai Eliyahu, Perek 18), "I once visited a large city in Bavel and encountered a melamed with two hundred talmidim, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty years. After a year, I returned to the city and sought out the melamed; to my dismay I was told that he had died, along with his wife and children and most of his talmidim. Only a few remained alive. I started to weep over this great tragedy until a malach approached me and asked why I was crying. I said, 'How can I not cry? Look at what misfortune befell this city!'

"The malach replied, 'Eliyahu, do not cry. They did aveiros with each other and were פגום באות ברית קודש; therefore, they died young.'"

The Satmar Rebbe concluded, "From this story, we see the responsibility that *melamdin* have to caution their *talmidim* so that they can know which actions to avoid."

Fortunate are those who are vigilant to protect their children – parents who do so will merit seeing *nachas*.

HOW TO EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT OF KEDUSHA TO MY SON?



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,

I want to begin by thanking the Rosh Yeshiva for all the *shiurim* and *chizuk*.

My ten-year-old son listens to the *shiurim* frequently. Recently, he has begun to ask what פגם הברית means and why it is such a serious transgression. He also asks why the Rosh Yeshiva cautions children to be wary of dangerous people, and more questions along those lines. I answered that he will understand when he will be older, but he is a clever child and my reply did not satisfy him. Can the Rosh Yeshiva perhaps enlighten me on how to respond to my child?

Thank you.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...

Your question baffles me, and your answer even more so. Why do you tell your child that he will only understand this when he will be older, if it is really very simple and his questions don't require elaborate explanations? *Kedusha* is a concept that everyone must be aware of, young and old alike. Hashem forbids us to touch the אור ברית קודש, and if one does so, he is פגם בברית ר"ל. No further explanation is necessary. Every person must be wary of those who seek to harm others, and one must stay far away from people who use vulgar and inappropriate language.

When I was young, we children used to gather every *Motza'ei Shabbos* during the weeks of *Shovavim* to listen to *divrei kodesh* of the Satmar Rebbe *zt"l*. We listened to recordings of the holy Rebbe weeping as he implored his *chassidim* to do *teshuva* and not violate the מדת היסוד. His passionate words instilled *yiras Shamayim* in us and roused us to be careful and stay far away from aveiros.

Likewise, throughout my childhood, my *melamdim* always spoke to us about קדושת הברית. I attended the Satmar cheder in Boro Park, where they heeded the Satmar Rebbe's guidance and taught us about this concept.

It is a parent's responsibility to teach his children of the severity of שמירת הברית from when they are young, without lengthy explanations or reasons. Both mother and father must routinely remind the children that Hashem does not allow one to touch the אור ברית קודש. When bathing a child or taking him to the bathroom, parents must remind the children of this *halacha*.

Why should this be different than any other *halacha*, like *hilchos muktzah*, for example? A parent must review *hilchos muktzah* with his children and routinely remind them that one may not touch *muktzah* items. If a child violates this *halacha* and touches something that he may not, the parent will say, "Shabbos! *Muktzah!*" until the child will remember

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