

# SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER  
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GIVEN OVER BY MOHOROSH ZT"l AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"l

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## CHIZUK from the PARSHA

## APPRECIATE AND ELEVATE

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשׁ חֳדָשִׁים

*This month shall be for you the beginning of months.*

When Hashem gave the *mitzvah* of *kiddush hachodesh*, Rashi says that Moshe Rabbeinu did not understand how the moon must look. To demonstrate, Hashem ‘pointed’ at the new moon in the sky, and Moshe Rabbeinu understood. This is perplexing, though – what was so complicated about this *mitzvah* that he could not grasp it?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan* 1:282) that a person must always be *dan l'kaf zechus* and judge others favorably, even a *rasha gamur*. One must search to find at least one positive attribute in another – no matter how small – and he will then elevate the other person to become entirely good. This is as David Hamelech says (*Tehillim* 37:10), “וְעוֹד מְעַט וְאֵין רָשָׁע וְהִתְבּוֹנֵנֶת עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאֵינְנוּ” – look for the little bit of good in another; see the small area in which he is not a *rasha*. Then, when you will look back at the place where he was, you’ll see that he is no longer there; he has already improved and is on a higher spiritual plane.

In interpersonal relationships, this concept is very helpful; in being *mechanech* children, this concept is **crucial**. The more we focus on the good qualities in others, the more we will be able to inspire them to grow.



Not only must we seek out the good in others, but we must look for the good in ourselves, too. We each have many positive attributes but they tend to be eclipsed by our hyper-focus on our negative traits. However, the Rebbe urges us to change our approach and celebrate our good qualities and small successes instead. This will engender in us joy and confidence, and we will then be able to withstand life’s inevitable challenges until *וְהִתְבּוֹנֵנֶת עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאֵינְנוּ* – we will be completely transformed and in an entirely different place spiritually.

This is the significance of the *mitzvah* of *kiddush hachodesh*. The moon plays a central role in *Yiddishkeit*, determining Rosh Chodesh and all *yamim tovim* on the Jewish calendar. As the moon cycles through the month, it shrinks until it is completely invisible. Then, in the darkest nights of the month, eager eyes comb the sky to find the tiny sliver of moon when it first reappears, and excited “moon-spotters” hurry to *beis din* to report their findings. “*Mekudash, mekudash!*” the members of *beis din* exclaim and Rosh Chodesh is thus established.

R’ Nosson teaches (*Likutei Halachos, Hashkamas Haboker* 1) that this is a message to every one of us. Gone astray, hopeless, lost? Search for a tiny sliver of good in yourself; strain yourself to find the smallest indication that you are not all bad. “*Mekudash, mekudash!*” will be the result, as that tiny bit of good will grow and increase until you will become a complete *tzaddik*.

The *mitzvah* of *kiddush hachodesh* was hard to understand because it’s an idea that isn’t easy to live by. By nature, we harp on our negative traits, but we must know that this does not inspire growth. True improvement occurs when a person finds and focuses on every good deed he has done, every good *middah* he has mastered, every struggle he has overcome.

Let us begin viewing ourselves and others in a positive light and we will experience a life-altering transformation.

## MOHOROSH SPEAKS

## TINY ACTIONS



Beaten. Op-pressed. De-graded. For two

hundred and ten years, *Klal Yisroel* endured unspeakable torture and hardship at the hands of the merciless Egyptians. Finally, when Moshe Rabbeinu came to tell the Jews of their imminent salvation, he had a problem: they wouldn’t even listen to him “מקצר “רוח ועבודה קשה” (*Shemos* 6:9).

This problem unfortunately exists in every *galus*. *Tzaddikim* have so much wisdom to share with us, such apt guidance to help us grow in *ruchniyus*, but we also don’t listen “מקצר “רוח ומעבודה קשה””. The Rebbe teaches that מקצר רוח refers to a lack of *emunah*. Sure, we believe in Hashem – His power, His omnipotence and His involvement in this world – but belief in our own power to accomplish great things with the small *mitzvos* we do? That’s another story altogether.

In the yetzer

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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Fortunate are you that you focus on what is important, putting effort into raising your children. In this merit you will *be'ezras Hashem* see *nachas* from your family.

*Chinuch* is the foundation of Yiddishkeit. If a person is not *mechanech* his children while they are still young, he can lose them entirely *ch"v*. The Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Banim 64*), "It is essential to teach one's child *derech erez* when he is still young" – the earlier you begin, the better off you and your children will be.

From the age of five or six years old, teach your children that boys play with boys and girls play with girls. You don't have to supervise them all day – if you convey it with wisdom, they will absorb your words and listen. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:29*), "When a person speaks softly and with *seichel*, his words will be accepted."

Remind your son gently and with a smile, "You're a big boy already – play with boys your age; only little boys play with girls." If you say this calmly as often as necessary, your words will soon penetrate.

Even with the best advice, one must still cry and plead with Hashem for *erliche* children. There once was a Breslever *chassid* who raised a beautiful family of truly *erliche* children. When he was asked how he was *zoche* to such righteous children, he replied, "What do you think, that children are apples you can pick off a tree? Each day, I davened to Hashem and shed copious tears that I should merit righteous children. The *nachas* that I see today is in that *zechus* alone."

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 106



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*hara's* tireless efforts to stop us from coming close to Hashem, he often wins us over with his all-or-nothing approach: "Either serve Hashem in a lofty, spiritual manner or do nothing at all." Deep into our psyche, he implants the idea that Hashem is distant and unreachable, and the only way to come close to Him is by engaging in difficult spiritual *avodos*, such as with fasts or physical afflictions. We forget that Hashem gave us many *mitzvos* to perform in our day-to-day life, designed to do just that: to bring us close to Him. Thus, the קצר רוח – lack of *emunah* – causes us to be busy with עבודה קשה – difficult *avodos*. The problem that follows is that most of us are incapable of maintaining intense *avodah* to such a degree, and we become disheartened and stand at risk of giving up on our entire *avodas Hashem*...

To counter this warped way of thinking, our *tzaddikim* teach us that *Yes! You are important! Yes! Every mitzvah has inestimable value! Yes! You can come close to Hashem with the small, small actions you do!* Washing *negel vasser*, davening with *minyan*, donning *tefillin*, learning Torah, conducting yourself honestly in business... Unlike the "big leagues" *avodos* that most people are incapable of holding onto, these *mitzvos* don't require that much effort on our part and these "small steps" of growth is therefore sustainable.



### Small Actions, Big Impact

Contrary to what we may think, it is specifically the *mitzvos* which seem so insignificant that have the most potential to bring us to true *dveikus ba'Hashem*. Those which we do almost without thinking, to our minds seem almost worthless, yet when examined through the Torah lens we can come to appreciate their immense value.

*Chazal* teach us (*Brachos 24b*) that one area in which people make this mistake is *tefilla* – if a person screams loudly by *shemona esrei*, it is a sign that his *emunah* is weak. Why? He thinks that Hashem is so far away that he can only be heard if he shouts. However, this "*avodah kasha*" is completely unnecessary; Hashem is right nearby and listening to every word we say, no matter if it is in a piercing scream or a barely audible whisper. There is no need to try so hard; we must daven however we are able to and we can be certain that Hashem is listening.

Do we realize the power of our words? By saying *אמן יהא שמא רבא*, a person can annul all the bad decrees for the next seventy years. It is mind-boggling to think that one simple utterance can spare a person so many years of anguish.

In the area of *kashrus*, too, small actions go a long way.

*The Rambam* once received a letter from a group of people with fundamental questions in *emunah*. His return let-

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ter contained a surprising response. The holy Rambam wrote (see Degel Machane Ephraim, Parshas Eikev) that their doubts indicated that they must have consumed non-kosher food, which was then absorbed in their blood and had clogged their minds from internalizing emunah.

The converse is also true: a factor so seemingly small as eating only kosher food has huge positive effects, instilling in us emunah and bringing us closer to Hashem. Even today, when it's so easy to obtain food with proper hechsherim, we must appreciate the value of this mitzvah and how much benefit it brings to our neshamos.

Another example of this is with the mitzvah of tzedaka. No need to do avodah kasha here; you don't have to be the richest guy in town and give huge sums in order for your mitzvah to be valuable. Even giving a penny, nickel or dime to a worthy cause brings Hashem much nachas and connects us to Him. One can even perform this exalted mitzvah without money, just by smiling at a fellow Jew! Chazal teach us (Kesubos 111b) that simply giving a smile can be more valuable than providing another with milk to drink.

In order to battle the yetzer hara and his wily tactics, we must remember the lesson that our tzaddikim teach us: You matter. Your actions matter. Your 'small' mitzvos have tremendous value. With this in mind, we will beezras Hashem be zoche to truly come close to Hashem.

Toch Hanachal, Seuda Shlishis  
Parshas Va'eira 5775



talmidim as follows:

On a stroll through the town, the Baal Shem Tov approached the water carrier of the village and asked, "How are you doing, Yankel?"

"How I am?" The water carrier responded bitterly, "I'm eighty years old and I still have to carry such heavy pails of water. My legs can barely carry me anymore – why am I destined to work so hard?"

The Baal Shem Tov listened to his woes and then went on his way with his talmidim. A week later, they once again met Yankel the water carrier, but this time the conversation was entirely different. Again, the Baal Shem tov called out to him, "How are you doing, Yankel?"

This time, the water carrier replied, "Rebbe, how can I complain? I am so blessed! Hashem granted me such an easy parnassa – I don't have to invest a penny; I just draw water from the well and people pay me for it! I am so grateful to Hashem for everything!"

The Baal Shem Tov turned to his talmidim and said, "Both the bitter Yankel and the happy Yankel are the same Yankel. A person's mood is not dependent on his circumstances, but rather on his perspective. One who takes Hashem out of the equation will be full of complaints and worries, whereas one who clings to his faith and focuses on the blessings he receives will live a joyous life."

When Sarah Imeinu was niftar, Rashi explains that the way the passuk enumerates the length of her life implies that "כולן שבים לטובה" – her years were all equally good. At one hundred she was like a twenty-year-old, and at twenty she was like a seven-year-old. Despite all the difficult trials and tribulations that filled her life, she understood that whatever Hashem does is for her good; she saw the blessings and therefore lived a good life. Perspective is the key.

Strengthen your emunah and give your mother chizuk. Speak to her about Hashem and His infinite power; emunah will give her strength to find joy in her life and focus on the nachas instead of on the problems. The more you will strengthen your emunah now, while you are still young, the more beautiful your life will be even in your later years.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah, Pamphlet #34

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# Q & A



## THE MORE CHILDREN, THE MORE WORRIES!?

### Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,

My parents have been blessed to raise a large family in which all children have grown up to be *bonei Torah*

who have gone on to establish families of their own. My mother enjoys her *nachas* from the family; however, her days are overshadowed by worry for all of us. One of my brothers lives in a modern neighborhood and my mother worries about his children's upbringing, another sibling has financial difficulties, another has a few children who are slightly delayed... The list goes on.



As a result of this, my mother has restless days and sleepless nights full of heartache. She invests so much time and strength to help her family; she makes time to listen to her children's problems and davens for every child and grandchild, but all this worrying has taken its toll on her. Often, I ask myself, "Is this the way it's supposed to be? Is this a mother's role? The more children, the more worries and the less peace of mind?" It doesn't look like the problems will diminish; if anything, it is just the opposite – the more time goes on, the more issues crop up. As the family expands and the children grow, so do the problems and difficulties.

Is there any way for me to help her? Is this the lot parents of large families must contend with? Will this be my destiny, too?

### The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

You ask a very important question, a question many people have.

The answer is that it all depends on the person himself. If a person's *emunah* is strong, his life is sweet and pleasant. When a person internalizes that Hashem is in control of everything that happens and that whatever occurs – both his ups and his downs – is only because Hashem determined it to be so, he will not falter when things do not turn out exactly the way he envisioned. The number of children one has makes no difference to his emotional state; if anything, more children only generate more blessing and

more *nachas* for the person and for Hashem.

When a person looks at life through the lens of coincidence and thinks that events occur by chance, every little thing brings him much heartache. Constant worrying leaves him weak, old and depressed. It makes no difference how many children a person has – worries plague him with or without a large family. It all depends on one's approach to life. There can be two people with the exact same life circumstances, yet one will be relaxed and enjoy every moment of life, while the other will be anxious and restless.

The Baal Shem Tov once demonstrated this point to his

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