



SPARKS of EMUNAH

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BASED ON THE SEFARIM OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLEV ZT"L
AS TAUGHT BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

לעלוי נשמה
מרים חנה בת ר' דוד צבי הלוי
ווכבד בת ר' אליהו נתן

CHIZUK FROM THE PARSHA

COLD, APATHETIC? HERE'S A WAY OUT!

The wind howls as the storm rages, flooding rivers, uprooting trees, and demolishing entire homes. In just a few minutes, a flourishing town is reduced to chaos.

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:38) that when a person speaks foolish or forbidden speech, the breath of his mouth (רוּח פִּי) becomes a storm wind (רוּח סְעָרָה) and wreaks havoc on his life – physically, emotionally and spiritually. When a person loses control of his mouth, the storm wind takes him over, muddling his mind and causing him to forget about Hashem. Now lacking focus and meaning in life, his passion is quickly extinguished and he becomes cold and apathetic.

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

ויאמר ה' אל משה בַּכְדֵּךְ לְבָבְךָ מַאֲן לְשַׁלֵּחַ הַעַם

What causes a person to become a **בַּכְדֵּךְ לְבָבָךְ** – hardened as stone, cold and indifferent? **בַּפְּרַעָה** – his mouth improperly.

The Way Back Up

Just like the mouth can be the cause of a steep spiritual decline, so too can it be the gateway to greatness. The Rebbe says (*ibid.*) that when a person uses his mouth properly, he becomes closely bound to Hashem. That means that **every person, no matter how lowly he may be, can propel himself to the highest of places simply with the power of speech.**

Our redemption from *Mitzrayim* is celebrated each year with the *yonm tov* of **בְּשִׁׁירָה**, which is comprised of two words: **בְּשִׁׁירָה** – 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 Hashem constantly, sharing his struggles and successes, his disappointments and joys.

Talking to Hashem purifies one's mind, for when a person uses his mouth to constantly **talk** to Hashem, he trains his mind to constantly **think** of Hashem, and he thereby acquires **emunah** and an inner serenity. Over time, he develops a deep connection to Hashem and becomes a truly righteous and holy individual.

Even Without Feeling!

It isn't easy to talk to Hashem at first, especially when one's mind is so clouded by sin. A person who is a **בַּכְדֵּךְ לְבָבָךְ** 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'll regain his former vibrancy and joy.

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



MOHOROSH SPEAKS

TINY ACTIONS

Beaten. Oppressed. Degraded.

For two hundred and ten years, *Klal Yisroel* endured unspeakable torture at the hands of the merciless Egyptians. Finally, when Moshe Rabbeinu came to tell the nation of their imminent salvation, he had a problem: they wouldn't even listen to him! The *passuk* says, "ולא שמעו... מCKER רוח ומעבודה קשה" (*Shemos* 6:9).

This problem unfortunately exists in every *galus*. *Tzaddikim* have so much wisdom to share with us, such brilliant guidance to help us grow, but we don't either listen "מCKER רוח ומעבודה קשה." The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 2:86) that **מCKER רוח** refers to a lack of **emunah** – not a lack of **emunah** in Hashem, but a lack of **emunah** in **ourselves**. We don't believe in our ability to accomplish great things with every small *mitzvah* we do.

With the *yetzer 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 psyches, he plants the idea that Hashem is



A LETTER FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

KEEP YOUR FOCUS

Dear ...

I received your letter.

What's the point in arguing? Why do you even care about what others have to say? A wise person does what's good for himself and doesn't busy himself with the opinions of others. Why are you getting involved in arguments and letting yourself get confused? Before long, we will have to leave this world and then we will see the truth and the greatness of the Rebbe's *derekh halimud* (as explained in *Sichos Haran* 76).

Treasured Words

Mohorosh zt"l wrote the following in his *tzava'ah*: "When you will arrive to the *Olam Ha'emes*, you will realize the truth of the Rebbe's *seder derech halimud*. Therefore, don't argue with anyone; **try it out yourself and you'll see how sweet and pleasurable it is to learn Torah**. Accustom yourself to learn Torah with the *seder derech halimud* and you will experience the ultimate pleasure of this world, because the Torah is our entire life in this world and in the next; the Torah gives us both *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*. Fortunate is he who doesn't allow himself to be fooled, and remembers that ultimately, the purpose of *limud haTorah* is to do *ratzon Hashem*."

When a person toils in Torah even if he understands very little of what he is learning, his words of Torah are exceptionally precious to Hashem. The Zohar says about such a person (*Kedoshim* 85b) that every word of his Torah learning goes straight up to Hashem, Who rejoices with them. Hashem then plants these words of Torah near a stream, and beautiful *arava*-trees then bloom from them. The Zohar continues that this applies even to a person who makes countless mistakes as he learns due to his lack of understanding, as the *passuk* says (*Mishlei* 5:19), "באהבה תשגנה תמיד" – In his love for Torah, he learns even with many errors.

What Really Matters

What should I tell you? **Every day that passes without Torah learning is a terrible loss.** Life goes by as quickly as a shadow, as the *passuk* says (*Divrei Hayamim I*, 29:15), "כבל ימינו על הארץ" – Our days on earth are like a shadow. *Chazal* say (*Bereishis Rabba* 96:2), "If only our days would be like a shadow of a wall or a tree, which takes time until it wanes, but it is not so. A person's life is like the shadow of a bird flying overhead, which lasts just a few moments..."

Fortunate is a person who listens to the Rebbe with *temimus*, without making his own calculations. By doing so, he will reach great heights in *avodas Hashem*. The Rebbe once said (*Chayei Moharan* 354), "There are two categories of people whom I pity greatly: those who had the opportunity to have a connection to me but didn't, and those who are my followers but don't listen to me.

"The time will come when a person will lie with his feet toward the door (referencing the day he will die), and he'll see what his *ruchniyus* state is and he'll be filled with regret. He'll lament, 'Why didn't I listen to the Rebbe? If I would have followed his advice, I could have reached the highest levels in *avodas Hashem*.' However, it will be too late."

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 91

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

continued from page 1

distant and unreachable, and the only way to come close to Him is by engaging in difficult *avodos*, such as fasting or physically afflicting ourselves.

This thinking is a mistake. Hashem gave us many *mitzvos* to fulfill in our day-to-day lives, designed to bring us close to Him. Thus, the **קצ"ר רוח – lack of emunah** – causes us to be busy with **עבזה קשה – difficult avodos**.

The problem that follows is that most of us are incapable of maintaining intense *avodah* to such a degree, and we quickly become disheartened and remain 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 oneself honestly in business...

Unlike the "big leagues" *avodos* that most people are incapable of holding onto long-term, these *mitzvos* don't require that much effort on our part, and these "small steps" of growth are actually sustainable.

Small Actions, Big Impact

Contrary to what we think, it is specifically the *mitzvos* which seem insignificant that have the most potential to bring us to true closeness to Hashem. The *mitzvos* we do almost without thinking seem almost worthless to us, but when they are examined through the Torah lens we can come to appreciate their immense value.

Chazal say (*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, because he thinks that Hashem is so far away that he can only be heard if he shouts. This **עבזה קשה** is unnecessary; Hashem is right near us and listening to every word we say, even if it is in a barely audible whisper. There is no need to work so hard!

Another easy *mitzvah* that has tremendous power is saying **amen yihia shma Rabba**. Do we realize the power of our words? By answering correctly to *kaddish*, a person can annul

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all the bad decrees for the next seventy years. It is mind-boggling that one simple utterance can spare a person so much 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 letter 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. The forbidden food was then absorbed in their blood and had clogged their minds from internalizing the concepts of emunah.*



A factor so seemingly small as eating only kosher food has the opposite positive effect, instilling in us *emunah* and bringing us closer to Hashem. Even today, when it's so easy to obtain food with proper *hechshirim*, 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 *עבודה קשה* here; you don't have to be the richest guy in town who gives out 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 giving a smile can be more valuable than providing another with a cup of milk.

You Matter!

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 be'ezras Hashem be zoche to truly come close to Hashem.

Toch Hanachal, Seuda Shlishis Parshas Va'eira 5775



She's Not the Problem

Passing judgement and labeling is easy but is not right. **Just because your wife shouts, it doesn't mean she has a disorder; just because your wife cries, it doesn't mean she has a problem.** Whenever a person is weak or downhearted, he is likely to cry and lose control of himself. This is especially true with the mothers of *Klal Yisrael*, who endure so much on a daily basis: the pain of carrying children, of giving birth, and of raising children. These are all very difficult to go through, and if a woman has an inconsiderate husband who criticizes her instead of being supportive, of course she will lose her temper or cry. That doesn't mean she is mentally ill; it doesn't mean that she is the problem.

I am begging you and warning you, don't ruin your own life! Don't destroy your home! **Stop blaming your wife, and instead seek out her good qualities.** One good thing I can tell you about her (without knowing her at all) is that she didn't leave you; she's actually still married to you even though you view her with such negativity.

Be her Therapist!

Do whatever you can to make your wife happy. You be her therapist! You can heal her! **A good, loyal husband can heal his wife from all her problems.** When a husband encourages his wife and gladdens her with kind words and affection, all her ailments disappear.

If you will view your wife positively, she'll stop shouting at you. She will do everything she can for you, and your marriage will transform into one of love and connection.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 176

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS:

This week was our long-awaited siyum on Maseches Zevachim, and we have begun learning Maseches Menachos. Don't be left behind! Learning a daf Gemara helps one become an erliche Yid and protects him from harm.

Hold onto the daf; stay strong with learning Torah each day. R' Sheftil, the son of the Shelah Hakadosh, wrote the following in his will: "Learning a daf Gemara each day should be as important to you as putting on tefillin."

Do it every day without compromise."

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Q & A

HOW CAN I STAY STRONG DESPITE MY WIFE'S DISORDER?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you for all the shiurim and chizuk.

My wife has a personality disorder, which is understandably very hard for me and the entire family. Our shalom bayis is unpredictable, chinuch is a challenge, and even parnassa is difficult as a result of her disorder. The shiurim are what give me strength to keep going.

I am an erliche yungerman, but I have many struggles in the area of kedusha. Especially with shmiras einayim – I don't own a smartphone, but when temptation takes hold of me, I go to places where I can watch all the inappropriate content I want.

While doing this, my brain tells me, "You're an erliche yungerman, how can you stoop to such things?!" But at the same time, I justify myself because I'm married to such a difficult wife, who shouts and cries all the time. I wish things would be different! Very often, I fantasize about how wonderful life would be if I would be allowed to do aveiros.

I really want to have a Torah-true home and raise my children to be erlich, but I keep succumbing to my yetzer hara. What can I do? I feel so stuck.

I hope the Rosh Yeshiva will be able to give me guidance for my situation.

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear,

Claiming that your wife is mentally ill is a convenient excuse but it won't get you anywhere. It won't cause anyone to have pity on you, won't help you, and surely doesn't justify your actions or the aveiros you stoop to.

I don't know who you are, but by reading your letter I can see that you need a big yeshuah. You are entrenched in sin; your entire mind is consumed with thoughts of aveiros. You are not even ashamed to say things that, after hearing such words, one should tear kriah. You write about "how wonderful life would be if you'd be allowed to sin" – have you got no shame? How can you say such things? And at the same time, you refer to yourself as "an erliche yungerman"!

In Your Hands

If you want to see an end to your suffering, do teshuva and ask your wife for forgiveness. The Baal Shem Tov zt"l taught that when a person sins b'machshava (with his thoughts), his children will cause him pain; when a person sins b'dibur (with his speech), his wife will cause him pain; and when a person sins b'maaseh (with his actions), the people he interacts with will cause him pain.

Mohorosh taught another interpretation of the words, "When a person sins b'dibur (with his speech), his wife will cause him pain" – when a man criticizes his wife and speaks to her in a hurtful manner, she will make his life miserable.

A person must watch over his mouth and speak kindly to others and never use obscene language. Especially when interacting with one's wife, a person must go out of his way to speak softly to her, praise her and build her self-esteem. Doing so will work wonders for their relationship – she'll do whatever she can to please him and he won't need anyone or anything besides her. As they age together, the love and loyalty between them will only intensify.

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