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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

SEE THE POSITIVE

Human beings are inclined to negativity. There are so many things in life that can get us down, and we tend to capitalize on that instead of focusing on the good that we have. However, the Rebbe teaches that in order to be successful, positivity is crucial – especially in the way we view the people around us.

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:282) that by viewing a person positively – even if he is a complete *rasha*! – one can cause a total transformation. The Rebbe brings this out with the *passuk* (*Tehillim* 37:10), “וְעוֹד מֵעַט וְאֵין רָשָׁע וְהִתְבּוֹנֵנֶת עַל מְקוֹמוֹ וְאֵינֶנּוּ,” and explains it as follows: *וְעוֹד מֵעַט* – if you find one small area *רָשָׁע* – in which the person is not totally wicked, then *וְהִתְבּוֹנֵנֶת עַל מְקוֹמוֹ* – when you will look at the level where he was originally, *וְאֵינֶנּוּ* – he will no longer be there; he will have become a better person. **Just by finding the tiniest sliver of good in a person, one can cause him to become a *tzaddik*.**

This principle is one that can be applied in all areas: *chinuch*, *shalom bayis*, general interpersonal relationships... 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. Every person has many positive attributes, but they tend to be eclipsed by our hyper-focus on our negative traits. The Rebbe urges us to change our approach and celebrate our good qualities and small successes instead, and slowly, our inner landscape will shift to be one of joy and confidence. This will help us withstand life's challenges until *וְאֵינֶנּוּ עַל מְקוֹמוֹ* – we'll be completely transformed, on an entirely different spiritual plane.



The Moon's Message

הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם רֵאשׁ חֹדָשִׁים – *This month shall be for you the beginning of months.*

In this week's *parsha*, we see how the moon plays a central role in *Yiddishkeit*. A deeper look at the phases of the moon teaches us this important lesson. As it cycles through the month, it shrinks until it becomes 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 re-appears, 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*.

Let us begin viewing ourselves and others in a positive light and we'll see how everything will change for the better.

Toch Hanachal, Bo 5761

MOHOROSH “SPEAKS

CONCERN FOR OTHERS

Yitzchak, an unfortunate man who davened in Mohorosh's beis medrash, was going through a rough time. He was deeply in debt to the point of being evicted from his home, he struggled with his children and was plagued with many other hardships.*

One day during davening, he was approached by one of his fellow mispallelim who informed him that he wasn't wearing his tefillin correctly.

Distraught, Yitzchak shouted, “What do you want from me? If you are truly concerned about me, you should be worrying about my gashmiyus, not my ruchniyus!”

Mohorosh witnessed this entire exchange. He gave chizuk to the broken man, and afterwards devoted an entire shiur to this subject.

It is a basic obligation for every one of us to look out for the wellbeing of our fellow Jews and ensure that they have everything they need. Noticing where others are lacking is an instinct that is

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* not his real name



DON'T LET THE PROBLEM GROW!

Dear ...

I received your letter.

I see how distressed you are and I feel in your anguish. This challenge is so painful – your older son has completely left *Yiddishkeit* and now your second son started to follow in his footsteps...

Let me share an important piece of advice with you: When a person goes through a *tzara*, it is crucial that he prevents it from multiplying into more *tzaros*. When parents see their child leaving the Torah way, they must be very careful not to lose their other children because of that one child. Too often, parents fall prey to bitterness and depression or begin blaming each other – the husband says it's because his wife was too soft, or the wife says it's because her husband was too harsh, etc... What happens next? The entire family falls apart.

I hear from so many *bachurim* that they have no stable home anymore – their father is not who he used to be; their mother is not who she used to be – all because of one sibling who began to slide in *ruchniyus*. The bitterness and blame can cause parents to lose the rest of their family as well.

You write that you are so angry with your son that you want to him to die; let me tell you a story:

The Be'er Mayim Chaim zt"l had a son who left the Torah way, and still the *Be'er Mayim Chaim* let him stay at home and gave him food and clothing. Every morning, he told Hashem the following: "Hashem, look what I am doing for my son. Although he is not behaving the way he should, I still give him food and whatever else he needs to live. I am a mere human being; surely You, our compassionate Father Who gives endlessly, should help Your children with all they need – even when they don't behave the way they should..."

Here's another story:

R' Naftali, a *talmid* of the *Rebbe*, also had a son who abandoned *Yiddishkeit*. Distraught, *R' Naftali* went to the *Rebbe's* *tzion* every day and davened for his son to die. His *tefillos* were so powerful that his son indeed passed away. When *R' Nosson* heard what had transpired, he reproached his friend *R' Naftali*, "I don't understand you. You know that *tefilla* has enormous power – why did you ask for your son to die? Had you davened for him to come back to the Torah way of life, he would have done *teshuva*."

Stay strong, my dear brother. Instead of wanting you or your son to die, there is a better way – beg Hashem to bring your son to *teshuva*. Don't be busy with foolish thoughts of how you can get rid of your son. I know that your pain is unbearable, but remember that Hashem is running the world. He is capable, He is powerful, and He is all-knowing. We don't understand his ways, and all we can do is daven. Whenever you ask Him for help, He helps; you just need to keep asking and have patience to wait for a *yeshua*.

May Hashem help your sons do *teshuva* and may He bless you with *nachas* from all your children.

Adapted from *Atzaso Emunah* Volume 2, page 207

deeply embedded in our natures. However,

we tend to use it the wrong way and try to "fix" them.

Our mistake is our focus – instead of concerning ourselves with others' *ruchniyus*, **we must focus on our own *ruchniyus* and others' *gashmiyus***. We must be ready to sacrifice our own comfort and happiness in order to help a fellow Jew achieve comfort and happiness.

R' Mechele, a grandson of R' Nosson, was hosting the venerated R' Yisroel Karduner. Before retiring for the night, R' Yisroel Karduner asked R' Mechele to wake him in time for chatzos ha'layla.

*Chatzos came and went and R' Mechele did not wake his guest. The next morning, R' Yisroel reproached him, but R' Mechele's response was, "My father used to tell me in the name of my grandfather R' Nosson, that a host must concern himself only with the *gashmiyus* of his guests, not with their *ruchniyus*."*

This rule applies to all of us, all the time – not just when we are hosting guests. We must train ourselves to constantly think, "How can I help others?" but only in terms of their *gashmiyus*.

No Matter What

Being on the giving end is a gift, and is one that we must not take for granted even when we don't get the appreciation we expected. Often, the beneficiaries of our generosity completely ignore the fact that a favor was just done for them; sometimes, they even go so far as to repay it with negativity! This is a part of human nature, as it's uncomfortable for people to admit their dependence on others. However, a lack of appreciation will not deter one who is sincere in his desire to truly help another.

Regardless of what the other person's needs are – whether it's money, a favor, a compliment or a smile – it is imperative that we never send a needy person away empty-handed but rather give them as much as we can.

Don't Hold Back

Mohorosh told a story that occurred in the time of the *Baal Shem Tov* zt"l:

*In a small town in Eastern Europe, the community leaders were sitting at a meeting to discuss all the important matters of the *kehilla*. One of the topics to be covered was the budget, and it included reviewing the previous year's ledger and making*

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ceeded the income. Two solutions were proposed:

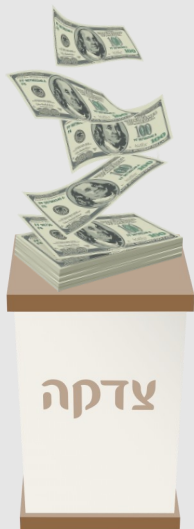
#1: Increase income;

#2: Decrease expenses.

Option #1 was immediately rejected. How would it be possible, after all? Kehilla fees were high enough as is, and the richer members of the community were already giving as much as they were willing to donate.

Option #2 was given more thought. The next portion of the meeting was spent deciding which expense to decrease, with much discussion and disagreements that were quickly leading nowhere. Finally, one rav suggested that the easiest cost to reduce was the charity fund that had been established to help the town's more unfortunate members. No, he wasn't saying that they should stop supporting the poor people altogether, just to cut back on the amount given.

The rav's proposal was accepted as the most convenient option, and it was put into practice that very week.



One struggling member of the town relied heavily on his weekly charity stipend. As soon the amount of money decreased, he felt the noose tightening around his neck, but he still managed somehow. But it didn't stop there. Over the next few months, the community leaders cut back again and again, and the poor villager was reduced to a pauper who was all but starving to death.

The shame and pain of this unfortunate man and others like him did not go unnoticed in Shamayim, and the rav who had spearheaded the new reductions policy was sentenced to a harsh punishment. Almost overnight, he began to be plagued by blasphemous thoughts, and after a few weeks of inner turmoil, he decided to convert to Christianity R'l.

One Motzaei Shabbos, the rav went to the local priest to request a baptism. Instead of the eager welcome he expected, all he encountered was skepticism. The priest couldn't believe that a respected rav would actually want to be baptized; he was sure it was just a ploy to cause him problems.

Despite the rav's insistence on his sincerity, the priest refused to take his words at face value, and he invited the rav into his home for a meal and a deep discussion about the matter at hand. A bottle of strong whiskey was deliberately placed in the center of table, and the priest kept surreptitiously refilling the rav's glass as they spoke, hoping to loosen his tongue so that he'd see what was really on the rav's agenda. Soon, the rav became completely inebriated and lay on the ground in a drunken stupor.

At the same time, in the city of Mezhibuzh, the Baal Shem Tov was surrounded by his talmidim and still deep in middle of shalosh seudos. Suddenly, he commanded one of his talmidim to bentch and make havdala immediately, and to quickly hire a horse to take him to a particular house in a particular town not too far away. Before taking leave, the Baal Shem Tov gave the talmid a piece of challah and said, "When you arrive, you will know what to do."

The talmid hurried to do as his Rebbe had instructed. When he arrived at the house of the Baal Shem Tov's description, he saw a priest standing near a rav who was sleeping on the ground. The rav suddenly awoke, ravenously hungry. Before the priest could give him anything to eat, the talmid intervened. He took out the Baal Shem Tov's challah and helped the rav wash and make a bracha, and the rav ate with gusto.

As soon as he finished eating the challah, the rav began feeling terrible for his blasphemous thoughts and what they had nearly brought him to do. Terribly ashamed that he had stooped so low, he escaped the priest's house and soon did a complete teshuva.

This story illustrates the severity of withholding aid from a fellow Jew. If such is the punishment of one who *doesn't* give, how much greater is the reward for one who *does* give. A person who goes out of his way to help others will see that Hashem will help him and make his life easier, just like he helped the other person.

May we be zoche to always remain on the giving end.

many people actually end up going against the Torah and the *chachamim*, who instructed us to marry off our children young and in this way protect them from *aveiros*.

Your doubt is the doing of the *yetzer hara*, who wishes to stop you in your tracks. Why focus on the isolated incident in which one couple divorced? Why not focus on the many who are married and live wonderful lives? If you have been blessed to be the right *shaliach* until now, carry on with this tremendous *mitzvah*. Continue with your holy work to help *Klal Yisrael*.

I am so grateful that Hashem has given me the *zechus* to have been the *shadchan* for countless couples. Throughout the years, I've also had a handful who divorced, yet that doesn't stop me from davening to be able to continue carrying out more *shidduchim* and having a part in establishing more *batim ne'emanim b'Yisrael*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 192



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

There is something that has been on my mind for a while and I've been searching for clarity.

I've been a shadchan for many years, and I have baruch Hashem been successful in bringing many shidduchim to fruition. A short while back, one of the couples whose shidduch I was involved in ended up getting divorced. It was a messy story, and one that caused the children to suffer tremendously to the point that two of them turned their backs on Yiddishkeit completely.

As the ex-couple's shadchan, I am now left with serious doubts and an overpowering sense of guilt, feeling that this saga is partially my fault. Perhaps I didn't do enough when inquiring about the shidduch, perhaps it was a bad idea to begin with... Whenever I bump into members of either family, guilt gnaws at me and I cannot look them in the eye. Since then, I often hold myself back from working on more shidduchim because this incident still haunts me; I am simply too discouraged to continue with shadchanus.

How would the Rosh Yeshiva advise me to proceed?

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

If only there were more like you! How fortunate are you and how great is your reward that you occupy yourself with the great *mitzvah* of bringing about *shidduchim*. There is no greater *zechus* than this!

Mohorosh writes the following in his *tzava'a*:

"I thank Hashem that I have had the zechus to bring over two thousand shidduchim to fruition, and as long as I live, I daven to be able to continue with this, thereby protecting our youth from the yetzer hara.

"I hereby promise every bachur or single girl who will come to my tzion after my passing and say the entire sefer Tehillim as a zechus for me, that I will make every possible effort to help find his/her intended match. Consider this a promise on my part.

"With this, I end my tzava'a and you can publish it for all to see. May Hashem's holy Name be sanctified, both while I am still alive and also after my passing. Amen v'amen."

The heartache you feel is the *yetzer hara's* doing. He knows that he does not have the same level of control over a person who is married; therefore, he tries with all his might to prevent *shidduchim* from happening. Chazal teach us (*Yevamos 63b*) that as soon as a person gets married, he is protected from *aveiros*. The *yetzer hara* does not want to release his prey because he wishes to continue enticing them to sin.

Just look at the fact that today, girls are encouraged to pursue a degree or a career and only afterwards consider marriage. Parents are persuaded that this is the best option for their child, but really it is a trap of the *yetzer hara* so he can prevent *shidduchim* from being carried out. He celebrates every time a girl chooses education over *shidduchim*.

Likewise, parents are advised not to listen to *shidduch* suggestions for their sons in the middle of a *zman* so that they should continue to *shteig*. Marrying at a young age becomes something to laugh at. As a result,

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