

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

THE ART OF LEADERSHIP

Moshe Rabbeinu's life was nearing its end after more than forty years of leading *Klal Yisrael* with unsurpassed devotion. Ever-dedicated to his people, he beseeched Hashem not to leave them like sheep without a shepherd, but to appoint a qualified leader in his stead.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 2:18*) that being a leader is a risky undertaking, because along with its potential to accomplish, leadership has the power to destroy, too. The danger of an unqualified leader is that he might give improper guidance, which can do so much damage that it is likened to murder.

What makes a good leader? To be a leader is to be a motivator, to influence each of one's followers to attain greater heights. The challenge with this task is that every individual is different – what inspires one person to grow may cause another to despair. There is no single approach that works for every person.

The words of Moshe Rabbeinu's plea teach us the key component of effective leadership. He said, "יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' יָקֵד ה' אֱלֹקֵי הָרוּחַ לְכָל בָּשָׂר אִישׁ עַל הָעֵדָה" – Hashem, You know the workings of each person's mind; appoint a person to lead the nation." Rashi explains that he asked Hashem to choose a leader with a deep understanding of the way different minds work, so that he would know how to guide each individual in *Klal Yisrael*.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 2:68*) that this is the greatness of a *tzaddik* – he knows just the right approach for each individual. Those on the top rungs of the spiritual ladder and those at the very bottom need to hear completely different messages in order to grow, yet a *tzaddik* understands how to speak to each one. To a person who considers himself a *ba'al madreiga*, the *tzaddik* comes with passionate rebuke. "Don't think you've reached perfection yet," he says. "Take hold of yourself! There is so much you still have to improve." This message has the power to shake the person out of his complacency and urge him forward. However, these same words can be tremendously destructive when said to the wrong individual. *Mussar* can completely crush one who has already lost hope in himself; since he is so dispirited already, he needs to hear encouragement that can lift him out of the quagmire of self-deprecation and guilt. "You are so beloved by Hashem," the *tzaddik* tells him. "Hashem is right here with you; you are so close to Him! He is just waiting for you to take one step in the right direction."

This is the kind of *manhig* Moshe Rabbeinu requested. The *passuk* continues as follows: "וְאִשָּׁר יוֹצִיאֵם וְאִשָּׁר יָבִיאֵם" – Who will take them out and bring them in." A leader must urge the complacent ones onward by "taking them out", i.e. showing how distant they still are from proper *avodas Hashem*. However, he must "bring in" the downtrodden ones by giving continuous encouragement and support.

A *tzaddik* can differentiate between those who need rebuke and those who need encouragement, but how dare we, simple people, give *mussar* to others? Do we even begin to understand the workings of their minds? By criticizing others, we are liable to cause anger and despair and thereby do irreparable damage. Instead, we must only look for the good qualities in those around us. By encouraging and praising others, we can affect real change and inspire them to become truly *erliche Yidden*.

Toch Hanachal, Pinchas 5765

MOHOROSH SPEAKS DOING CHESSED



Klal Yisrael is special. We all have each others' backs

– there are countless organizations, *gemachim* and other services which have been specially designed to help others by filling the numerous needs in our communities.

Hashem prides Himself with our kindness. What can be greater *nachas* for a parent than seeing one child helping another? Every act of *chesed* gives our Father in Heaven a tremendous *nachas ruach* and is the conduit for all good to be bestowed upon us from Above.

An powerful story involving the Me'or Einayim, R' Nochum of Chernobyl zt"l, underscores this point and shows us the immeasurable value attributed in Heaven to those who do *chessed* for others.

After his passing, R' Nochum of Chernobyl used to come down from *shamayim* each day to learn with his son, R' Mordche of Chernobyl zt"l, a *tzaddik* in his own right.

These daily

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Dear ...

The Rebbe once said to R' Nosson, (*Sichos Haran 279*) "When things get really bad, be מבטל yourself - nullify yourself completely and give everything over to Hashem."

R' Nosson asked, "How can a person attain this level?"

"By closing your eyes and remaining silent in the face of difficulties - that is ביטול," The Rebbe replied. In a difficult situation, if you want to survive, you cannot question Hashem's ways.

למה יאמרו הגוים - "Why?" is a question for *goyim*. A Yid knows that everything is perfectly planned out for him, that Hashem makes no mistakes and does everything for his benefit. At a time like this, you must close your eyes and accept what Hashem brings upon you.

Chazal tell us (*Brachos 60b*) to always say that everything Hashem does is good. When a person truly believes that everything that happens is for his own benefit, **he is zoche to live in Gan Eden in this world**, regardless of his suffering. He doesn't even consider running away or *chas v'shalom* ending his life; instead, he uses his difficulties to come closer to Hashem.

I beg of you: get rid of your negative thoughts and adopt the Rebbe's *eitzos* of *tefilla* and *hisbodedus*. Find a quiet place with no one to disturb you and pour out your heart to Hashem. Tell Him about your pain and plead with him to help you. Everything will change for the better - your situation will improve and you'll start finding the joy in life.

Talking to Hashem is not easy at first. When a person sins, he creates a barrier between him and Hashem, and that makes it hard to feel His presence. If you have a hard time with *hisbodedus*, daven for that, too!

Be persistent. Don't let yourself get disheartened. In this way, you will be zoche to a beautiful life.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 21



learning sessions held on for a while until unexpectedly and inexplicably, R' Nochum stopped appearing to his son. The sudden termination of their learning caused R' Mordche tremendous anguish.

One day, R' Nochum suddenly reappeared to learn with his son. Overjoyed at the opportunity to learn again yet curious about the reason for the interruption, R' Mordche asked his father to explain.

"My son," the *tzaddik* replied, "I have *baruch Hashem* merited to continuously rise from *madreiga* to *madreiga* in *shamayim* and I have now reached a very exalted level. It is very difficult for me to come all the way down from such a high place."

"What changed now?" R' Mordche wanted to know. His father replied with a story:

Berdichev was home to many righteous and G-d-fearing Jews, some more well-known than others. The shochet of the town, R' Eliezer Yehoshua, was a tremendous yarei Shamayim who was known to do anything and everything just to help a fellow Jew.

The town held a fair regularly, providing the opportunity for those looking to do business with various influential vendors. Once, as R' Eliezer Yehoshua passed the area where the fair was taking place, he noticed an unusual commotion.

When he came closer, R' Eliezer Yehoshua saw people running to and fro, pouring water on a figure lying prone on the ground. A bystander explained that the unfortunate man had come to the fair hoping to strike it rich, but had been robbed of the astronomical sum of six hundred gulden. Two hundred gulden were his own, saved up bit by bit. An additional two hundred had been borrowed. So sure was he of his impending success that he even convinced others to invest money with him, totaling another two hundred gulden. All that money was now lost, instantly reducing him to a penniless pauper with a massive mountain of debt. In shock and pain, the businessman-to-be fainted and could not be revived; as soon as he remembered what had occurred, he immediately passed out again. The people at the fair were at a loss, not knowing what to do to help him.

After hearing this account, R' Eliezer Yehoshua sprang into action. He ran over to the poor man and whispered in his ear, "I think I found your money! Just give me proper signs to confirm that it is yours."

A glimmer of hope lit up in the businessman's eyes. He slowly got up and proceeded to describe the color of the wallet and the exact quantity of each banknote denomination. "Yes! Yes!" R' Eliezer Yehoshua exclaimed. "The money I found is yours! Let me just run home to double check."



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The real story was that R' Eliezer Yehoshua had painstakingly saved up money to be able to marry off his children, yet in the face of another Jew's pain, he was ready to give it all up. When he arrived home, he counted up his savings and saw that he indeed had six hundred gulden. He changed the banknotes to match the man's description and placed them inside a wallet of the right color.

Precious wallet in hand, R' Eliezer Yehoshua ran back to the fair and "returned" the money to its "rightful owner". The recovered man thanked him effusively, and R' Eliezer Yehoshua turned to leave, happy that he was able to help another Jew.

Nobody in the audience knew of R' Eliezer Yehoshua's tremendous mesiras nefesh, except for one man. Standing among the spectators of the affair was the thief himself, the person who had truly "found" the money. He was a Jew who, in a weak moment, could not control his yetzer hara and stole the money, but watching the incredible events unfold inspired him to do teshuva. Before the entire crowd, the thief stood up and shamefacedly admitted his misdeed.



"No, no, that's not the lost money. I have it right here," and he held up an identical wallet. "I stole it. I'm sorry."

To his shock and dismay, R' Eliezer Yehoshua completely ignored this confession, insisting that **he** had found the money and had come to return it. A fight ensued, with both parties arguing over who should give back the money. They eventually decided to consult with R' Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev for guidance on how to proceed.

When the tzaddik heard the story, he became very impassioned and called out, "Hashem, who is like Your nation?! Two people are arguing over the privilege of returning money to help another Yid – is there any other nation like this in the entire world?" R' Levi Yitzchok then told them, "You should know that this din Torah made a storm in shamayim. Make an agreement between yourselves and may it be a zechus for both of you."

R' Nochum of Chernobyl finished the story and said, "R' Eliezer Yehoshua was *niftar* today and all the *tzaddikim* were sent out of Gan Eden to greet this great person. Since I was out of Gan Eden anyway, I came to learn with you one last time."

Although not everyone is on the level to give up everything for another, we can all try to step out of our comfort zones and give a little more. May Hashem help us become true *baalei chessed* and reap the benefits it brings.



your husband should come home earlier, but you must use *chochmah*, too. Instead of getting stuck in the details of who is right and who is wrong, see what **you** can do to change the situation for the better.

No one enjoys listening to criticism, especially not from a spouse. Every man has an ego and wants to feel respected; when his wife tries to order him around, it will only backfire. Yelling at your husband will not accomplish anything besides a full-fledged screaming match. Instead, speak to him with respect, as Shlomo Hamelech teaches (*Mishlei 15:1*), "A gentle reply diffuses anger."

Human interactions are like a mirror. Shlomo Hamelech says (*Mishlei 27:19*), "As water reflects the expression on a person's face, so too are the emotions in one's heart reflected back to him by another." Whether you look into water with a smile or frown, your reflection will show you the same expression. The same is true regarding your behavior – the way you treat others is the way they will treat you. If you will work to increase positive feelings and interactions, you'll succeed in changing your situation entirely.

Changing your behavior will be very difficult at first, especially since you already feel so resentful; however, **if you will greet your husband happily and speak positively to him, you will see that things will change between you.** First your mindset will shift. You will greet him without feeling resentful and you'll appreciate the few hours he does spend with you. As a result, he'll enjoy coming home and won't want to waste an hour sitting around after work. (You must, however, be patient until the transformation occurs and not abandon your mission too soon.)

You write that you have tried with positivity, but it is hard for me to believe so. With positivity one can create whatever change he wants. Perhaps you tried talking nicely but with an underlying displeasure; **when one speaks kindly and has patience, he can transform even the most difficult person in the world.**

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.



HOW CAN I CHANGE MY HUSBAND'S BEHAVIOR?

Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you for all that you do for klal Yisrael.

I am a mother of four children under four, ka"h, and one of them has special needs. My husband works nearby, about a fifteen minute walk from our home. Instead of walking home when he ends his workday, he stays at his office to get a ride with a coworker who finishes work an hour later. This arrangement frustrates me to no end, because all I want is for him to come home and help me out after a long day of running from one child to the next, from one tantrum to the next. But the same thing happens again and again – each day, he breezes in an hour late with the excuse that he “had to wait for his ride.”

I have some neighbors who try to help me out, but the bulk of the work falls on my shoulders. It really hurts me that my husband doesn't seem to care about how hard I work. I've tried everything already - positivity, negativity... but nothing has helped. Perhaps the Rosh Yeshiva has advice for me.

Thank you.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

I received your letter.

A woman once came to a Rav to ask for a get. When the Rav asked her why, she said, “My husband comes home very late every day. I can't continue taking care of the children by myself for the rest of my life!”

The Rav replied, “A get won't solve your problems; if you get divorced, your husband won't start coming home earlier – he won't come home at all!”

It may sound like a joke, but in reality, these words convey an important message. When a person is so desperate to escape from his problems, he sometimes runs headfirst into worse problems. True, it's very hard that your husband comes home late every day, but just think how difficult it

will be without him in the picture at all. As hard as it is now, it will only be worse if there is no husband for you and no father for your children.

If you truly want advice on how to create positive change, listen to the guidance of Mohorosh, who constantly reminded us, “Be smart, not right.” This is the secret to a successful marriage; instead of trying to prove just how right you are, be smart. **Think: “Is it worth destroying my marriage for this?”** Shlomo Hamelech says (Mishlei 14:1), “The wise woman builds her home, and the foolish one tears it down with her own hands.”

The biggest tragedy is the destruction of a home, especially when it's still possible to salvage it. You're right that

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