

# SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER  
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLEV ZT"L  
GIVEN OVER BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI  
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## CHIZUK from the PARSHA

## TZEDAKA – IT'S NOT JUST MONEY

וְאִם מְדַּח הוּא מְעַרְכָּךְ וְהַעֲמִידוּ לִפְנֵי הַכֹּהֵן, וְהָעֵרִיד אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן, עַל פִּי אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיג יָד הַנֶּדָּד יַעֲרִיכֵנו הַכֹּהֵן  
If he is too poor to pay the full amount, he shall be brought before the kohen, who will assess how much he can afford to pay.

It's a tight economy today. Anyone in finances will tell you that we live in difficult times. Some people have lost major investments; others simply can't afford to spend as much as they are accustomed to. Many struggle just to make it through the month; some even have to beg for a loaf of bread. Living with less can be challenging, yet there is a kind of poverty that's much worse than financial instability. The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:106*) that **he who is impoverished in mind is most unfortunate of all.**

In order to make it through the trials of life, we must have a rock-solid *emunah*. The belief that Hashem is in control and only does what is best for us is the only thing that can keep us strong, for it isn't merely life circumstances which cause us to suffer, but rather our frame of mind. If a person faces a challenge and his *emunah* is not sufficiently developed, or if his difficulties are so great that he doesn't have the presence of mind to strengthen himself, he is in trouble.

This, says the Rebbe, is the most extreme kind of poverty. Hence, the greatest form of *tzedaka* is not done with money, but rather with words. Simple, heartfelt words of *chizuk* can strengthen others and help them persevere through their difficulties. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us all is to reassure others that Hashem will help. To encourage them not to despair. To remind them that the hard times will pass and it will soon be good.

When a person gives money to a poor man, how much could those few dollars help him? Perhaps he'll be able to buy food for his family, or maybe pay rent for another month, but the cash will soon run out and he'll have to collect *tzedaka* again. However, **when one gives *chizuk* to another, it can change his life forever!** More valuable than the most magnanimous donation is one word of encouragement. Go distribute "*tzedaka*" – spread hope; spread positivity!

Yet the obvious question arises: One can only give *tzedaka* if he has money to give. How can a person be *mechazek* others if he is also dispirited and in desperate need of encouragement?

The solution to this lies in this week's *parsha*: **וְאִם מְדַּח הוּא מְעַרְכָּךְ** – If a person is "poor" – he is disheartened and thinks he is worthless, **וְהַעֲמִידוּ לִפְנֵי הַכֹּהֵן** – he must be brought to the *tzaddik*, **וְהָעֵרִיד אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן** – the *tzaddik* will then find the good in him and remind him of how valuable he is. This encouragement will give him strength to continue despite his hardships, and enable him to give *chizuk*, as well.

That is why it is so important to have a connection to a *tzaddik*. Our *tzaddikim* reveal the enormous *kochos* that lie dormant inside us and give us the ability to remain strong and strengthen others, no matter what hardships we endure.



## MOHOROSH SPEAKS

## GETTING ALONG

The weeks of *sefiras ha'omer* are drawing to a close, and Shavuot is just a few days away. While every occasion on the Jewish calendar is special, Shavuot is even more so. The *yom tov* of *matan Torah* is the very core of *Yiddishkeit*; the day we accept the Torah is what makes us who we are.

It isn't a brilliant mind, illustrious family background or extraordinary capabilities that enable a person to accept the Torah. Rather, *Chazal* teach us that דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה – good *middos* are the prerequisite for *kabbalas haTorah*. The seven weeks of *sefira* are forty-nine days of preparation, forty-nine days of introspection and improvement in the area of *bein adam lachaveiro*.

### Emunah, Emunah, Emunah

In our dealings with other people, conflict is all too common. According proper respect to one's fellow can be an arduous task. The truth is, however, that it doesn't have to be so. Since the root of all interpersonal

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Dear ...

A non-Jew once approached Hillel Hazakein with the desire to convert, on the condition that Hillel would teach him the entire Torah while he stood on one leg. The great *tanna* replied with these few but powerful words: "דעלך סיני – לחברך לא תעביד" – that which is hateful to you, do not do to others (*Shabbos 31*).

If you would like to create an atmosphere of love and connection in your home, treat your wife and children the way you would like to be treated. How would you want them to speak to you? In which manner would you want them to conduct themselves towards you? Don't do to them what you wouldn't want them to do to you.

The key to *shalom bayis* is being careful with the way you speak to your wife. When Moshe Rabbeinu gave the Torah to *Klal Yisrael*, Hashem instructed, "כה תאמר לבית יעקב ותגיד לבני ישראל" – Rashi explains (*Shemos 19:3*) that the term *tאמר* is an expression of gentle speech; Hashem instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to speak softly to *בית יעקב* – the women. This teaches us how essential it is to speak kindly and gently in one's home.

Be generous with compliments – there's no limit to how many you can give. The more you will invest in your relationships, the more you will benefit.

You write that this is hard for you because you didn't hear this kind of talk when you were growing up. As with everything else, *tefilla* is the solution. Say the following *tefilla* from R' Elimelech from Lizensk each day:

"שנדבר כל אחד את חברו

בדרך הישר והרצוי לפניך"

Add your own words afterwards: "Hashem, please help me speak kindly to everyone. Help me not get upset with my wife or children and always remember to speak gently to them."

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 263



issues is a lack of *emunah*, by strengthening our *emunah* we can also improve our relationships.

*Shmuel noticed that his friend recently splurged on a new, luxurious SUV. Unable to contain his jealousy, Shmuel muttered, "What a spoiled fellow."*

*Avromy snorted as Yaakov told him about a major auction he had organized single-handedly. In truth, he was secretly impressed. "Why can't I ever pull off something like that?" He berated himself.*

Chazal say (*Yoma 38b*) that Hashem is the only One Who gives and the only One Who takes, and therefore it is impossible for a person to touch anything that was destined for another. Financial security, good looks or talent that we see in others were given to them directly by Hashem. Instead of eating ourselves up and suppressing thoughts of inferiority by knocking those around us, we must work on strengthening our belief in Hashem.

When it is crystal-clear in our minds that Hashem runs the world and that nobody can help or harm us, we don't get upset at others; rather, we channel our challenges into *tefilla* and ask Hashem for whatever we need.

Talking to Hashem solidifies our *emunah*. If we will take time every day to "have a conversation" with Hashem – the way we would speak to a close friend – we'll begin to feel His presence at every turn. With Hashem such a real part of our lives, it becomes much easier to live in peace with others.

### Judging Others, Judging Yourself

*The courtroom is packed. It's a tough trial; the defendant is facing stiff charges. The prosecution stands on one side of the room, with a lineup of witnesses behind him. The attorney for the defendant has his own staff on the other side of the room.*

*Who will win the case? All the assembled turn to the accused, waiting to hear him utter his **own** sentence.*



This is the scene in the Supreme Court – in Heaven. Unbeknownst to us, our cases are brought to court and judged, and our sentences pronounced... by none other than ourselves! The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 113*) that before a heavenly verdict is passed, the "defendant", i.e. the one whose case is being judged on High, is asked if he agrees with his sentence. Since nobody can judge his own case objectively, if we'd be asked point-blank if we deserve to be punished, we'd never agree. Therefore, we are put into situations that trigger the "judge" inside us. Watching others act improperly, we're quick to "sentence" them:

*"How dare he! He doesn't deserve so much money."*

*"She can't raise a family normally. They should take her children away!"*

*"What rotten middos! Nobody will want to marry him."*

Unbeknownst to us, our cases may be on trial in *shamayim* as we speak and the Heavenly Tribunal may be waiting for our reaction, waiting to hear whether we agree with the outcome. We must stop judging others! We may really be judging ourselves, sentencing ourselves to be punished for a similar offense.

This is the meaning of the *mishna* (*Avos 3*), "ונפרעין מן האדם, מדעתו ושלא מדעתו." When a person is punished, it is *מדעתו* – with

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his consent, because he agreed to the sentence. Yet it is also שלא מדעתו – without his consent, because he had no idea that he was really judging himself.

If we can find it in ourselves to overlook others' misdeeds and be *dan l'kaf zechus*, we can spare ourselves much heartache. *Chazal* say (*Shabbos* 127), “הדן את הבריות לכף זכות דנין אתו לכף זכות” – when we judge others favorably, our case is also judged favorably, and the punishments we deserve can be avoided.

### **To Build a Yid**

About 250 years ago, the rabbanim issued a strict ruling against using *kabbalah* to cause supernatural events, due to the spiritual danger involved.

It soon became known that a man named R' Mendel had disobeyed the *gedolim* and used the powers of *kabbalah* for his own purposes. The people of the town hurried to report R' Mendel's misdeeds to the *rav*, who declared that the offense necessitated severe punishment. As per the *rav's* instructions, the townspeople wrapped R' Mendel in a cloth and publicly beat him and degraded him.

Humiliated and broken, R' Mendel fell into a deep depression and lay in bed for weeks on end, bitter and listless. His family tried to get him out of it but he refused to be consoled. They ran to every *tzaddik* in the country, desperate to heal him, but nothing helped.

Eventually they came to the holy Rebbe, R' Nachman of Breslev. When they recounted the horrific story, he exclaimed, **“Is it a talent to break a Yid? No – it's a talent to build a Yid!”**

The Rebbe spoke with R' Mendel at length, giving him *chizuk* and encouragement (and gently told him not to use *kabbalah* anymore). Slowly, R' Mendel emerged from his depression and soon regained his vitality.

This is the power of caring, of kind words and reassurance. It's easy to hurt, deject and discourage. Talent is to encourage talent is to build.

These weeks leading up to Shavuot and *kabbalas haTorah* are for working on relationships. In this time, let's aim to avoid conflict and instead focus on the good in others, spreading positivity wherever we go. In this merit, Hashem will look for the good in us, and we will be successful in everything we do.

*Sichos Mohorosh Volume 8, Erech Dan Es Chaveiro*



wouldn't be able to bear it. The *yetzer hara* has found such an easy way to get people to sin; instead of having to convince a person to leave his house to go to inappropriate places, he just puts a smartphone in the person's hand and causes him to do terrible *aveiros* – all without even stepping outside his room.

At first, the internet seems convenient, exciting and very tempting. However, after just a short time it can literally kill a person. The *aveiros* he commits cause him to fall into a depression and he then loses his will to live.

Get rid of your (unfiltered) smartphone! Throw it away immediately! Do you think your wife is so naïve? She knows exactly what you are up to – she's just pretending to be oblivious. There is no one in the world who knows a person like his wife does. Tell her that you finally decided to listen to the *gedolei Yisroel*. Explain to her that *erliche* children are more important to you than anything else.

Be prepared for a long and difficult journey. It's not easy to escape from this *nisayon*, especially after having watched so much inappropriate content – your *yetzer hara* will constantly try to drag you back to your past behavior. Nevertheless, there is a solution. *Chazal* teach us (*Kiddushin* 30b) that Hashem created the Torah as an antidote against the *yetzer hara*. Start saying *perakim* of Mishnayos and *dafim* of Gemara each day; doing so will protect you from falling prey to the sin of *p'gam habris*.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

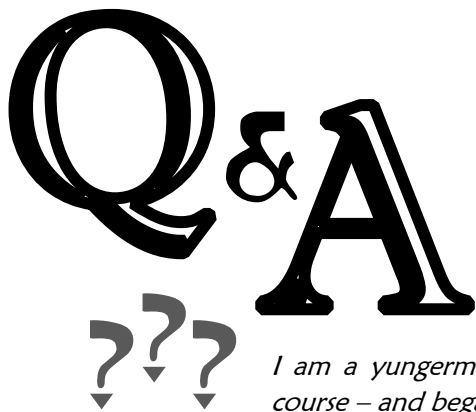
*Adapted from The Light of Emunah #1, page 66*

## **THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS:**

“This Shabbos, shuls around the globe will resound with the cry of, “Chazak, chazak!” as we conclude Sefer Vayikra. We are more than halfway through the completion of *chamisha chumshei Torah* – are you a part of our halachically mandated “learning program”? Are you *maavir sedra* each week, or does Shabbos pass with it just an unfulfilled plan?

**You, too, can finish the entire Torah if you'll learn Chumash with Targum every day.** Learn until sheini on Sunday, until shlishi on Monday, etc. **Don't wait until the end of the week.** It's time to stop making excuses; just open a Chumash – as well as a Mishnayos and Gemara – and learn. Try it and you'll start feeling the joy that comes with learning Torah.”

**FOR THE CHIZUK YOMI, CALL KOL BRESLEV: (212) 444-9191 press 1, 1, 1**



## IS THERE STILL A WAY OUT FOR ME?

### Question:

*To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,*

*Thank you for all the shiurim which give me so much chizuk throughout my day.*

*I am a yungerman with several children. Recently, I bought myself a smartphone – filtered, of course – and began using it at home to watch the news, play games, etc.*

*It wasn't long before I found a way to circumvent the phone's filter, and since then my yetzer hara has been having a heyday. I started watching the worst movies, and this has led me to succumb to terrible aveiros. They have also caused me to lose interest in my wife, and my marriage is suffering.*

*I know you'll tell me to get rid of my smartphone, but it's not so simple. I'm so attached to it – addicted even! Besides, what will I tell my wife? She'll want to know what happened; how can I tell her the reason? Should I tell her that when she isn't home, I use my phone in the worst possible ways and that it brings me to aveiros?*

*Please give me a way out of my addiction! It is destroying my relationship with my wife and with everyone else. Please save me!*

*Thank you.*



### The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

The internet is a terrible tzara that has already destroyed countless *neshamos* and wreaked havoc on many families. So many people have abandoned Torah and *Yiddishkeit* because of the internet, and many homes have crumbled due to this scourge.

When a person is lax in his *shemiras einayim* and watches inappropriate things, he loses everything. His mind becomes consumed by immorality, and he then falls into terrible *aveiros* which cause him to lose his *emunah*.

*Chazal* say (*Sotah 9b*) that the Pelishtim tortured Shimshon Hagibbor by gouging out his eyes because he wasn't careful to guard them properly. On a spiritual level, this occurs to anyone who isn't careful with *shemiras einayim* – his eyes are seized by the *klippas* which obscure his spiritual

vision. The person then loses the ability to perceive holiness, and soon his *aveiros* destroy his *emunah* and *yiras Shamayim*, too. All these and more are consequences of falling into the internet's trap.

Forgive me, but I don't understand your question. You are asking what to do about your smartphone, which you use to access the worst filth. You write that this is affecting your *shalom bayis* and the purity of your home – what exactly is the question? Why would you hold onto a device that's destroying your life? If you will continue in your bad ways and keep watching movies, you will lose everything – your marriage, your children, etc.

If the *tzaddikim* of the previous generations would get a glimpse into the destruction that the internet causes, they

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