

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 BAMIDBAR
SHAVUOS
4 SIVAN, 5785
ISSUE #51

CHIZUK from the PARSHA

ONE IN A MILLION

וַיֹּדְבֵר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַּר בְּהֶאֱחָל מוֹעֵד... שָׂאוּ אֶת רֹאשׁ כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
And Hashem commanded Moshe... "Count the Jewish People."

The world is full of people – over eight billion, in fact. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Mo-haran 1:34*) that incredibly, every single individual has specific strengths unlike any other; each person has distinctive qualities that set him apart and make him special.

Time and time again, Hashem counted *Klal Yisrael* in the *midbar*. First by *yetzias Mitzrayim*, later after *cheit ha'egel* and again in this week's *parsha* after the building of the *mishkan*. Rashi says that this repeated counting was because of Hashem's great love for His People. Every Jew is especially valuable to Hashem – each individual is one in a million (or rather, in over eight billion!) and is worthy of being counted over and over.

It's very easy to develop an inferiority complex. In our dealings with others, we often come into contact with people who seem to be "better" – more capable, more talented, more successful, more respected, etc. However, instead of being overcome with jealousy or feeling inadequate, we must remember the lesson of this week's *parsha*: **each and every one of us has a unique quality that nobody else in the entire world has.** Yes, you are also "better." With this in mind, it is possible to remain confident and keep going.

Parshas Bamidbar – the *parsha* of counting – is always read before the *yom tov* of Shavuos, because in order to properly accept the Torah, we must internalize this lesson. There are 600,000 letters in the Torah, which correspond to the 600,000 *nishmos Yisrael*. Just as every letter is crucial (just one damaged *os* causes the entire *sefer Torah* to be *passul*), so too, every one of us is crucial to the existence of *Klal Yisrael*.

The Rebbe teaches (*Sichos Haran 91*) that a *segula* for acquiring *hasmada* – diligence in learning Torah – is to avoid speaking negatively about others. One who speaks *lashon hara* and "invalidates" even one Jew renders the entire "*sefer Torah*" (i.e. *Klal Yisrael*) unfit for use; the parallel to this is that he thus loses his enthusiasm for learning Torah.

Chazal say (*Vayikra Rabba 26:2*) that *lashon hara* kills three: he who speaks, he who listens and he who is spoken about. Negative speech is poisonous for all. Don't get enmeshed in *lashon hara* – remember that those who speak badly of others also speak badly of you. Run away from mockers; flee from negative speech.

In preparation for *kabbalas haTorah*, let us internalize the lesson of this week's *parsha*. We must keep in mind that every Jew is unique, important and necessary, and remember the danger of belittling anyone – including one's own self!

May we be *zoche* to acquire true *hasmada* and the joy of learning Torah.

Zos Hatorah Bamidbar 1, Atzaso Emunah Terumah 5782

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

שבועות



Preparations for Shavuos are in full swing.

Are you set with your *chavrusos* for the night? Planned what you will learn, what you will accomplish?

What about the *seudos* – are you going to have a mega-*milchig* meal? Or just a delectable dairy *kiddush*? The *minhag* to eat dairy foods on Shavuos is universal – what is its significance?

The most basic answer dates back to the time of the *midbar*. After *Klal Yisrael* accepted the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*, they had a problem: their pots were all *treif* and therefore unusable. Therefore, they ate only dairy food (which could be eaten raw) until their pots could be properly *koshered*. To remember their dedication to their new way of life, we continue to eat *milchigs* on Shavuos to this very day.

Yet it really runs much deeper than that. The Rebbe says (*Sichos Haran 26*), "The world views forgetfulness as a flaw, but I consider it a virtue." Forgetfulness is the greatest gift, for if we would constantly be bombarded with memories of past failures, *avodas Hashem* would be impossible.



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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Mohorosh used to advise those with daughters in *shidduchim* that when seeking a son-in-law, one should primarily look for a boy with good *middos* and *yiras Shamayim*. *Lomdus* isn't so important, because it's always subject to change. Once-serious learners who slacked off as soon as they got married are many. On the other hand, I know many others who weren't so diligent in *yeshiva* but became strong learners once they were married. What changed? What made them become serious about their learning after marriage? The key was that their wives respected them and encouraged them to learn and have a steady *shiur* – this transformed them completely. One cannot judge a *bachur* and predict his future by seeing how well he learns in *yeshiva*.

When it comes to *middos*, however, the above does not apply. Once a person reaches marriageable age, it is very difficult for him to change his core character – if the *bachur* in question doesn't have good *middos*, it becomes apparent immediately after *sheva brachos* and the unsuspecting girl ends up suffering.

Likewise, when a person is looking for a *shidduch* for his son, he must inquire whether or not the prospective daughter-in-law is *erlich*, has good *middos* and whether she will respect her husband. *Chazal* teach us (*Tanna D'vai Eliyahu Rabba* 9), "Who is considered a righteous woman? One who does her husband's bidding and is always ready for him." It is normal for a boy to ask if the girl has respect – this does not mean he has a harsh, dictator-like personality. A controlling nature isn't something a person can hide; if he truly is like that, you would have certainly heard so from his friends.

Daven to Hashem that you should be *zoche* to find good *shidduchim*. The Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Os Rachmanus*), על ידי בקשת רחמים, זוכה לעשות שידוכים טובים והגונים.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 43



However, because we can forget all that has happened previously, it is possible to remain enthusiastic and idealistic and constantly forge forward in our quest for spirituality.

This is the message of the *milchigs*. Dairy food is symbolic of a newborn baby, who is dependent on milk for sustenance. Eating milk-based products is a reminder to view ourselves as newborns, filled with the endless possibilities of new life, and constantly start anew in our *avodas Hashem*.

Never too Late

The Chozeh of Lublin teaches another reason for eating dairy foods on Shavuos. Of all perishable food, milk is the only one that is usable even after it spoils. In fact, an essential stage in the cheese-making process is fermenting milk and causing it to become sour.

This necessary spoiling is a great encouragement to us. Do you feel like your essence has soured? Have your past sins caused your *neshama* to feel spoiled and unusable, to the point of no return? Remember that **you are not a hopeless case**. Just as sour milk is used to create all sorts of dairy delicacies, know that great things can come from you, too.

This was the Rebbe's motto and a fundamental concept in Breslev. No situation is ever hopeless! Anyone can do *teshuva*; every *aveira* has a *tikkun*. Think you're an exception? The Rebbe says that even **you** can do *teshuva* and return to Hashem. When he taught this *Torah*, the Rebbe turned to R' Nosson and cried out with passion, "אין שום יאוש בעולם כלל!" – There! Is! No! Despair! EVER!



The *yetzer hara's* primary objective is for us to give up. The *aveiros* he convinces us to commit are not his end goal, as long as we get the message of, "You're a lost cause. Why keep trying?" Enticing us to sin is only his means to an end: getting us to despair. To counter this, the Rebbe said (*Likutei Moharan* 2:112), "אם אתה מאמין שיכולים לקלקל, תאמין שיכולים לתקן" – if you believe that you have the power to destroy, you must believe that you also have the power to repair.

We eat *milchigs* on Shavuos as a message to ourselves. Feeling soured? All is not over. You can still become a *tzaddik*.

Chazal tell us (*Yerushalmi Rosh Hashana* 4:8) that as soon as *Klal Yisrael* accepted the Torah, Hashem considered it as if they had never sinned before. The same is true today – when we take it upon ourselves to learn Torah and do *mitzvos*, Hashem erases our past completely. As we near the *yom tov* of *kabbalas hatorah* and commit to learning Torah, we will be "reborn" – it will be as if we have never sinned.

Shavuos Night

Shavuos is so special... and so short. How can we make the most of each minute and feel like we "did" Shavuos properly?

Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai and his *talmidim* used to spend Shavuos night immersed in learning. They went through the



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entire *Tanach*, reciting the first and last *passuk* of each *parsha/sefer*, and then learned the *taryag mitzvos*. After a full night of this, Rabi Shimon *bentched* them to be *zoche* to true *kabbalas haTorah*.

The first thing to do on Shavuos is to stay up all night and learn. *Tikkun Leil Shavuos* does not need to be as difficult as people make it out to be. Most important is to say the first and last *passuk* of each *parsha/sefer* and the *taryag mitzvos* – all the other *pesukim* are merely additions. Instead of just going to sleep after just a little bit, thinking that you don't have energy to continue saying so much, stay up and focus just on the main *pesukim*.

The night of Shavuos is such a holy time; we need to be careful not to ruin its potency by wasting time on foolishness. You can daven, learn and talk to Hashem, but spending the night schmoozing, smoking and drinking coffee is a waste of the night. Shavuos is a time for *yeshuos* – don't squander the opportunity! On this night, when the gates of Heaven are open, daven for a more meaningful connection with Hashem. Plead with Hashem to give you the ability to learn the entire Torah and fulfill all of His commandments.

Mikvah on Shavuos

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:56*) that by immersing in a *mikvah* before *alos hashachar* on Shavuos morning, one can attain the highest levels of understanding and merit great *yeshuos* in his personal life as well.

Be proactive! When you finish saying *Tikkun Leil Shavuos*, don't waste time. Go straight to the *mikvah*. Whether or not you understand the meaning or significance of this *tevila*, just go through the motions with *temimus* – simplicity – and rely on the Rebbe's promise.

Just Joy

After all is said and done, perhaps the most important thing to remember to do on Shavuos is be *b'simcha*. Are you Jewish? For that alone, you should sing and dance. Chazal tell us (*Midrash Pliah*) that when Hashem said 'אלקיך אנכי ה', Moshe Rabbeinu immediately cried out, "שלא עשני גוי!" Mohorosh explains that as soon as Hashem gave the Torah, Moshe Rabbeinu was filled with such joy that he began to sing and praise Hashem for making him be a part of the Jewish People.

It's a never-fail method. Feeling down? Contemplate the fact that there are billions of non-Jews in the world, but you are a Jew! No matter where you are and no matter what you've done, you have a *Yiddishe neshama*, and this alone gives you a direct connection to Hashem. What a *zechus*; what a source of joy!

May we all be *zoche* to an uplifting and inspiring *yom tov*.

Atzaso Emunah, Bamidbar 5778



shem accepts his *tefilla* even if it is without the proper *kavanna*." This

teaches us the greatness of davening with a *minyan*; even when a *tefilla* is incomplete because it is lacking *kavanna*, it is still accepted by Hashem if it was davened with a *minyan*.

Don't take davening with a *minyan* lightly. If *shacharis* takes very long, you can finish your *shiurim* or say the *yom Tehillim* while you wait. Alternatively, you can use this time for *hisbodedus*; while the *baal tefilla* takes his time, cover your face with your *tallis* and pour your heart out to Hashem.

Continue davening with a *minyan* and you will remove all *kelipos* from yourself. Chazal teach us the following (*Beitza 3b*): דבר שבמנין אפילו באלף לא בטל – Mohorosh explains that when a person davens with a *minyan*, even if there are thousands of *kelipos* trying to invalidate his *tefillos*, לא בטל – his *tefillos* are not rejected, because the power of the *minyan* carries them straight up to Hashem.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

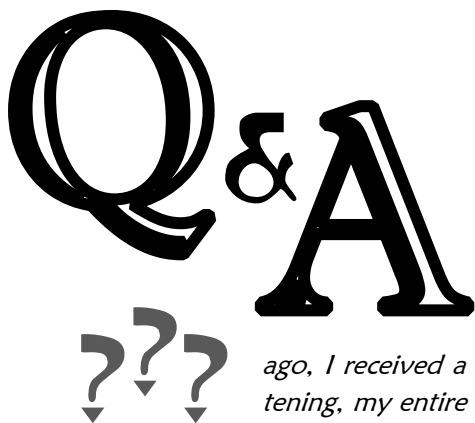
Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 194

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS:

The Torah begins with the word בראשית – see how the ב is almost completely closed? The only side that is open is the one that faces forward. This is the key to being able to learn Torah and serve Hashem: face forward. Don't get stuck in thoughts of the past. Keep forging onward.

LISTEN TO THE ROSH YESHIVA'S SHIURIM ON SHAVUOS AND TORAH LEARNING

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MUST I DAVEN WITH MINYAN IF IT'S DRAWN-OUT?

Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you for all the shiurim and chizuk. A few months ago, I received a card with the Breslev hotline number, and since I began listening, my entire life has transformed. I have learned some Breslev sefarim before, but the Rebbe's lessons have now become so clear to me; the message

that every Jew – no matter who he is or what he has done – can return to Hashem and become an erliche Yid, is something that I only now started to comprehend.

I received so much chizuk to start talking to Hashem, and since I started learning through the Rebbe's seder derech halimud I was zoche to finish Mishnayos four times. I thank Hashem for the chesed He did of bringing me to wellsprings of emunah through the Rosh Yeshiva's shiurim.

I had a question that I wanted to ask. In my town, there are very few regular minyanim for shacharis. I usually daven in the earliest minyan, but when I miss it, I run into problems. The second minyan, led by the rav of our town, is very difficult for me to daven with. The davening is long and drawn out – a regular shacharis can take the same amount of time as a Rosh Hashana davening in other shuls. Once while davening with this minyan, I managed to finish nine perakim of Mishnayos just while waiting for chazaras hashatz to begin.

I have no patience for this unnecessary prolongation. I really want to daven with a minyan, but it's so difficult for me to daven this way. How should I conduct myself when this situation arises?

Thank you.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

One cannot fathom the greatness of davening with a minyan. Chazal teach us (Brachos 7b) on the *passuk* (Tehillim 69:14), "ואני תפלתי לך ה' עת רצון", that there is an *eis ratzon* when a person davens *b'tzibbur*.

Chazal say (Taanis 8) that Hashem only accepts a person's *tefillos* when he focuses on the meaning of the words. The Gemara then cites an apparent contradiction to this: David

Hamelech says (Tehillim 78:36-37) that Klal Yisrael "deceived" Hashem with their mouths by not having the right *kavanos* while davening. Nonetheless, Hashem accepted their *tefillos* and forgave them for their sins. The question that begs to be asked is: Does Hashem listen to *tefillos* that are said without intent or not? The Gemara resolves this paradox by saying, "When a person davens with a minyan, Ha-

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