SPARKS OF EMUNAH

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

נתנדב על ידי
הרוצה בעילום שמו
לזכות זרע של קיימא

CHIZUK FROM THE PARSHA

SEEING OR BELIEVING?

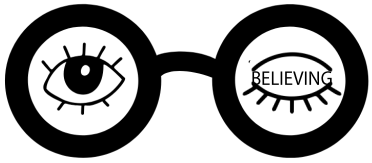
וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל בֵּית אָבִי וְהָיָה ה' לִי לֵאלֹקִים

And I will return to my father's home in peace, and then Hashem will be my G-d.

At first glance, Yaakov Avinu seems to be making a deal with Hashem. But *avodas Hashem* isn't a deal—**we serve Hashem whether or not life goes the way we want.** So how could the father of our people speak the language of "if... then..."?

The answer is in what *shalom* actually is.

Life in this world runs the full range of emotions: joy and tragedy, celebration and grief. As Jews we attribute all of it to Hashem —we say הטוב והמטיב on the good, דיין האמת on the sorrow. *Chazal* teach *(Pesachim 50a)* that this will change in *Olam Haba*. When Moshiach reveals Hashem's boundless *chesed*, our *emunah* will be so clear that every event will be recognized as pure good, and we will bless הטוב והמטיב—always. As David Hamelech says *(Tehillim 56:11)*, "**בֵּאלֹקִים** אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר, **בַּה'** אֲהַלֵּל דָּבָר"—both Names reveal one goodness.



Also For You, Today!

This is not only for the future. The Rebbe teaches *(Likutei Moharan 1:4)* that when a person's *emunah* is strong and he knows with certainty that everything that happens to him is for his good—**he can taste *Olam Haba* right now.** Even in *galus*, one can live with ברוך אתה ה'... הטוב והמטיב through joy and through heartbreak alike—**trusting a Father's hand guiding every detail.**

It's not easy. Life is hard. The mind tires, the heart aches, and focus wavers. But that is our *avodah* in *Olam Hazeh:* **to believe even when we cannot see.** When a person merits this level of *emunah*, he "lives" *Olam Haba* while still in *Olam Hazeh*.

Not Easy—With Peace

So what is the meaning of *shalom*? The Rebbe teaches *(Likutei Moharan 1:33)* that when a person recognizes Hashem's loving hand in everything, he joins *din* with *rachamim* and reaches true peace—inner peace.

This is the key to Yaakov's request. **He wasn't bargaining for an easy life; he was davening for *emunah* to face the hardships that were bound to come his way.** "וְשַׁבְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹם אֶל בֵּית אָבִי"—let me return with this *emunah*, this *shalom* within; and then "וְהָיָה ה' לִי לֵאלֹקִים"—the Name of compassion *(Hashem)* and the Name of judgment *(Elokim)* will be one to me, so that even what seems like harsh judgment I will know as infinite mercy.

May we be *zoche* to this level of *emunah*—to taste *Olam Haba* within *Olam Hazeh*, and to live *Gan Eden* in this world.

Toch Hanachal, Vayeitzai 5765

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

CLIMBING

In his heartfelt *tefilla* prior to the davening, R' Elimelech of Lizhensk *zt"l* includes a poignant request:

וממדרגה למדרגה תעלנו, שנזכה
לבוא למעלת אבותינו הקדושים,
אברהם יצחק ויעקב

May You raise us up higher and higher so that we should merit the level of our holy forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

All through *Sefer Bereishis,* we learn about the events in the lives of our *avos* in full detail. These are not merely stories for us to read and enjoy; each detail in the Torah was revealed to us as guidance for how to conduct ourselves through our own (often challenging) journeys. Yaakov's life, especially, teaches how a Jew in *galus* can endure his hardships.

In this week's *parsha*, we read about Yaakov's dream. In his heavenly vision, he saw a ladder that reached from the ground all the way up to *shamayim*. Profoundly inspiring to all those going through a spiritual slump, this dream teaches that no matter how low a person may have fallen, there is always a possibility of rising once again.

(Continued on page 2)

A LETTER
FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

STAY HOME.

Dear …,

Don't spend your nights out with friends. Daven Ma'ariv, go home, and use the long winter nights to learn Torah. **Don't go looking for other places to be—just stay home.** When a person learns Torah at home, the entire house becomes filled with vitality and the home comes alive.

Chazal teach us *(Eiruvin 18b)*, "Any house in which words of Torah are heard at night will never be destroyed." Such a home won't fall apart, because *shalom bayis* grows stronger—the wife sees her husband learning, the children see their father learning, and the very walls seem to declare, *"An erliche Yid lives here,"* and, *"Torah is learned here,"* as *Chazal* teach *(Taanis 11a; Chavakuk 2:11)* that the walls of a person's house bear witness to what happens inside. The children grow up with a father who learns, the husband becomes respected by his wife, and everything shifts for the good.

The Hollowness Inside

My dear brother: going with friends to the *shvitz*—or to any other places to hang out—won't fill the void inside you. Traveling with friends won't either give you what you're looking for. Maybe you'll get a momentary lift, but a day later the emptiness returns. **That hollowness you feel inside you is from the lack of Torah learning, the lack of *dveikus* to Hashem.**

Hanging out or traveling with friends won't fill the emptiness inside you.

People chase all kinds of distractions—making parties with friends, going on Shabbatons and Yom Tov getaways—because inside, they're suffering. They're not happy, not satisfied. They think, *"Maybe if I go there, I'll be happy,"* or, *"Maybe if I do that, I'll feel fulfilled."* But true satisfaction comes only from learning Torah and a connection to *tzaddikim* that bring us to Hashem. R' Nosson used to say, "The world is 'not' and you can't acquire it; Torah and *tefilla* are 'yes' and you can acquire them."

Invest in your family.

Stay home with your family. Invest in your wife and children. **It's a pity on those who run to their friends day and night, only to discover later that they have never really had friends at all.** They're left alone—disappointed in themselves for having chased their friends day and night, only to find that those same friends no longer even look their way. And by then, the family is gone too, because when a wife and children who see that their husband/father is never truly home, they distance themselves from him. In the end, the person is left entirely alone.

But a person who has the wisdom to accept the guidance of *tzaddikim*—to stay home, be present at home, and invest in his home—will merit a beautiful old age. His wife and children will never abandon him; rather, they'll remain at his side his entire life and treat him with great respect.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from Atzaso Emunah, Chayei Sarah 5787

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

continued from page 1

Although at times one may feel that he is at an all-time low, at "Ground Zero", he can always lift himself out of the depths and reach way up to Heaven. All he needs to do is gather the courage to begin to climb.

A Ladder and a Voice

Chazal teach us *(Zohar 3:267a)* that the word סולם – ladder – has the same gematria as קול – voice. When a person uses his voice for *tefilla,* he enables himself to keep climbing to the loftiest spiritual heights.

The *Zera Kodesh* teaches another connection between a ladder and a voice. The letters of the word קול symbolize a ladder. The base of the letter ק is planted firmly in the ground, and the upper section of the ל extends upward to heaven. Using one's קול is the means with which one can rise ever higher, overcoming all hurdles and reach his full potential.

R' Nosson's journey toward Breslov was a path fraught with challenges and emotional turmoil. Before discovering Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, R' Nosson was part of a different chassidus which had a custom to gather every Motzaei Shabbos. Each week, they drew lots to choose one chassid to go buy bread for melave malka.

One week, R' Nosson's name was drawn. He dutifully headed out to the local bakery, when he was suddenly consumed by a profound sense of futility. He so badly yearned to be close to Hashem, yet the mundanity of where he was headed seemed to mock him, giving him no rest.

"Is this really what I was created for?" He thought desolately. "To buy bread?" In terrible distress, he ran into an empty beis medrash, grabbed a sefer Tehillim and burst into heartrending sobs. He tearfully recited the timeless words of David Hamelech, perek after perek, until he fell into a deep sleep.

While asleep, R' Nosson

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MOHOROSH SPEAKS

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dreamed that he was standing before a ladder that extended way up to heaven. He tried to climb it but lost his grip after just a few rungs, falling to the ground with a painful thump. He tried again, yet fell again. Over and over, he tried with all his strength to get to the top but just kept falling. On his last attempt, R' Nosson reached quite high, but then tumbled to the ground with such tremendous force that he just gave up.

Bruised and despondent, R' Nosson looked hopelessly toward the top of the ladder. There, he saw a man with a luminous countenance calling down to him, "Keep going! Don't give up!"

A few weeks after he had this dream, R' Nosson met R' Nachman of Breslov for the first time. He immediately recognized the Rebbe as the face at the top of the ladder who had given him chizuk to keep forging onward.

They took a walk together, Rebbe and talmid, and R' Nosson opened his heart and told the Rebbe of all the trials he endured on his quest for spirituality. The Rebbe laid a hand on his shoulder and said, "It's good to talk to Hashem as one would speak to a close friend."



At that moment, R' Nosson finally understood the deeper meaning of his dream: Life is like a ladder, with many rungs to climb in order to attain true closeness to Hashem. The only way to succeed despite the intense hardships along the way, is by constantly speaking to Hashem and telling Him of the challenges one faces. This is the greatest empowerment, the greatest gift a person can own.

Down and Up

It isn't always an upward journey. Throughout our lives, we're constantly faced with obstacles that send us tumbling down, and we seem to lose so much of the progress we thought we already made.

Davened with minyan three times each day for ten weeks straight… and then woke up late and missed shacharis.

Worked on my patience for months… and then had a weak moment and completely lost it at my wife.

Sat on the subway for over an hour, working so hard to guard my eyes… until I just couldn't control myself anymore.

Yes, it can be extremely frustrating when we keep on slipping, yet we must not let it discourage us. Regression is part of the unique tapestry of life – even after falling back, we must strengthen ourselves to begin again.

Just. Take. One. Step. At. A. Time. Don't look forward; don't look back. Just keep going, one tiny step at a time.

Standing on a seeming-never-ending ladder in your ascent of *avodas Hashem*? Keep going! Don't give up! Talk to Hashem through your journey and you will ultimately succeed in reaching the ראשו מגיע השמימה.

Sichos Mohorosh Parshas Vayetzei

Q&A

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help me have patience until my *yeshua* arrives. Help me continue to trust in you and never question Your ways. Help me believe *b'emunah sheleima* that whatever You do is only for my benefit and has an exact accounting. Help me remain strong and not become embittered by my hardships.

"Hashem, only You can understand me! Only You know the depths of my pain! Only You understand how I feel so humiliated and demeaned, as all my friends get married and I am left behind. Help me in this difficult time; make my shame be an atonement for my sins so that I shouldn't have to suffer any longer and I should get married already.

"Hashem, I know and believe that You will never forsake me and that I will eventually be *zoche* to get married. Therefore, I am pleading with you now that when I do get married, help us have *shalom bayis* and never experience friction. Bless us with peace, friendship and affection so that we can have a happy life together, and that we should never come to divorcing, *chas v'shalom*.

"Help me be a *vatran* and always give and give in; I should never initiate or feed into *machlokes*. Help us build a happy home, where the joy is palpable in the air. Give us healthy and *erliche* children, and help us raise them to be *erliche Yidden*, and give us *nachas* from them. Help me keep an open door to guests, and that we should do *chessed* and give a lot of *tzedaka*.

"Hashem, please accept my *tefilla* and send me a *yeshua*; in the merit of all the *tzaddikim* and specifically in the *zechus* of the holy Rebbe, Rabbeinu Nachman ben Faiga *zt"l*, (and in the merit of Rabbeinu Eliezer Shlomo ben Menachem Zev *zt"l*, who composed this *tefilla*), אמן כן יהי רצון."

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #3, page 106

Q&A

WITH TWO OLDER SINGLE BROTHERS, WHEN WILL I GET MARRIED?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I am twenty two years old and have two older brothers who are still single. I am yearning to get married and desperate to move on in life, but it seems like my turn will never come.

I can't speak to my father, because he wants my brothers to get married before even thinking of me entering shidduchim.

Is there anything I can do?

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear …,

What will you gain by speaking to your father? How can he help you? He is even more stressed than you are; he is waiting anxiously for there to be *simchos* in your family.

Your *shidduch* is not in your father's hands, and neither are those of your brothers. *Shidduchim* are only in the hands of Hashem. *Chazal* teach us *(Bereishis Rabba 68:3)* that we see this in *Torah, Nevi'im* and *Kesuvim:*

In *Torah*, the *passuk* says *(Bereishis 24:50)*, "ויען לבן ובתואל ויאמרו מה' יצא הדבר" – Lavan and Besuel saw that they could not hold Rivka back from marrying Yitzchak because 'The matter stemmed from Hashem!''

In *Nevi'im*, the *passuk* says *(Shoftim 14:4)*, "ואביו ואמו לא ידעו כי מה' היא" – Shimshon Hagibor's parents didn't know that the *shidduch* he found was from Hashem.

In *Kesuvim,* the *passuk* says *(Mishlei 19:14)*, "בית והון נחלת אבות, ומה' אשה משכלת" – A house and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a *shidduch* comes only from Hashem.

The following is a *tefilla* Mohorosh wrote for *bachurim* to say every day. Say it each day and you will be *zoche* to find your *shidduch* quickly.

"*Ribono Shel Olam*, help me find a good *shidduch* already. Help me get married quickly and easily and not have to wait so long anymore.

"Hashem, I know there were times when I didn't conduct myself properly, and I wasn't always as *erlich* as I should have been. However, I beg of You, don't withhold my *shidduch* for this reason. Forgive me for everything that I have transgressed and help me get married already, so that I should be protected from the *yetzer hara* and be able to be *erlich* already.

"What should I do, Hashem? If it would be up to me, I would be willing to get married tonight! What can I do if I wasn't yet *zoche* to find my *shidduch*? I'm waiting and waiting and I've been davening for this for so long, but my *yeshua* did not come yet.

"*Chazal* teach us that when one gets married after the age of twenty, he will think of *aveiros* his entire life. Additionally, You say that such a person's bones shall disintegrate. Why do I deserve such a harsh punishment? Am I at fault? Isn't it enough that I suffer pain and anguish for being alone and not yet married?

"Hashem, please help me endure this difficult time and

(Continued on page 3)

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