



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

KEEP THE PEACE!

The sun is merciless. Every step through the dust is a battle against gravity. The thirst claws at him, and he is desperate. Then, a miracle! He glimpses the shimmer of a stream at the edge of the path! He lunges, knees hitting the sand, palms cupped in desperate hope.

The water is clear and cold. Ecstatic, he brings it to his cracked lips... only to watch it trickle through his fingers. The miracle he has found vanishes back into the dirt. He has the water, but he lacks the one thing that makes it matter — a vessel to hold it.

Holding His Blessings

"לא מצא הקדוש ברוך הוא כלי מחזיק ברכה לישראל אלא השלום" (Uktzin 3:12) — Peace is the vessel which holds all blessing. **If there is no shalom, no matter how much bracha Hashem pours upon us, it cannot hold.**

The Rebbe says (Likutei Moharan 1:33) that *shalom* and *emunah* go hand in hand. When a person lives with *emunah* and realizes that Hashem is behind every single thing that happens, he can keep his equanimity in every situation. His inner peace then reflects outward, and he can attain true peace with those around him, too.

"עשו מלחמה את ברע מלך סדם ואת ברשע מלך עמרה שנאב מלך אדמה"

In this week's *parsha*, war broke out between the four kings and the five kings. Rashi translates the names of the kings to show how wicked they were: ברע was evil to Heaven and evil to people, ברשע was exceedingly wicked, שנאב bore hatred toward the Creator of the world, and so forth... Beneath all of this was a trait they all shared: they were *kofrim* to the highest degree, and as a result, they were constantly fighting.



A Tough Call

Life is full of opportunities for quarrel. It's easy to find ourselves at odds with those around us, and it's even easier to blame it on them! *He is always late; she is so irresponsible; he grates on my nerves; she can never get anything right.* However, we must remember that it isn't circumstances or others' personality traits which cause conflict; rather, it's the state of our own minds. **A lack of *emunah* quickly becomes a lack of *shalom*.** To increase the peace, we must work on increasing our awareness of Hashem and His involvement in the intricacies of our lives.

The *yetzer hara* knows the importance of *shalom*. He knows that with it, we'll be able to receive all of Hashem's goodness. Therefore, he uses all the means at his disposal to cause us to quarrel. Husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, employer and employee, landlord and tenant... He ensures that *shalom* be difficult to attain and even harder to maintain. However, we must never give up on our efforts to keep the peace.

Let's stop the fighting, blaming, battling. Instead, let's spread *shalom* and goodwill by working on our *emunah*. With that, we'll transform ourselves into vessels to hold all of Hashem's blessings.

Toch Hanachal Lech Lecha 5765

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

SHABBOS

Shabbos. The mere mention of the day evokes feelings of peace and tranquility.

But what about *erev Shabbos*? How does Friday look and feel?

In every Jewish home, much time and energy is invested in preparing for Shabbos properly, and this usually comes along with stress and tension. Therefore, we must also prepare **ourselves** by stocking up on endless amounts of patience, so that we will be able to greet Shabbos with joy and serenity.

Chazal tell a story (Gittin 22) of a couple that spent every single Friday fighting. No matter what, the *yetzer hara* always found a way to have them greet Shabbos with sour faces and hard feelings.

Hearing about this unfortunate state of affairs, R' Meir Baal Haness decided to get involved. One *erev Shabbos*, he knocked on their door and asked for permission to learn in their home. The quarreling couple was humbled, awed and quite surprised. Notwithstanding, they respectfully showed him to a quiet corner where he settled with his *sefarim*.

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WHAT IS HISBODEDUS?

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

What do you mean by saying, “*Hisbodedus* is not something that appeals to me”?! *Hisbodedus* is not some novel idea that the Rebbe conjured up. The Rambam writes (*Hilchos Tefilla* 1:1-2) that *tefilla* is a *mitzvas ase* and an obligation for every Jew — a person must daven to Hashem for his every desire in whichever language he prefers. It’s a *mitzvah* to daven every single day, anytime or anyplace, and since *tefilla* is not limited to a specific time, women are also obligated in this *mitzvah*.

How can you say, “*Hisbodedus* doesn’t appeal to me?” *Hisbodedus* and *tefilla* are actual obligations! When the *Anshei Kenesses Hagedolah* foresaw the long *galus* ahead, they realized the need for formal *tefilla* and established the *nusach* of *shacharis*, *mincha* and *maariv*. Nonetheless, the concept of speaking to Hashem in one’s own words is something that everyone must do.

Could it be that you simply don’t know what *hisbodedus* means? Maybe you’re under the impression that it’s a bizarre act, and that’s why you think it’s not for you. I’m assuming that you’ve never tried it, because once a person begins to pour his heart out to Hashem, he begins to feel liberated. He experiences such pleasure from this that he no longer seeks any other pleasures.

Moshiach’s Weapon

If you don’t “go for” *hisbodedus*, what will you do in the times of Moshiach? The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:2) that Moshiach’s weapon with which he will conquer the world is *tefilla*. This is not referring to a physical battle, but rather the manner in which he will bring spirituality to every person.

Moshiach will spread the light of Hashem in the world, until we’ll know with perfect clarity that Hashem is with us every moment. Naturally, we’ll then begin to speak to Hashem at every opportunity, as the *passuk* says (*Tzefania* 3:9), “כי אז אהפך אל עמים” — “שפה ברורה, לקרא כלם בשם ה’” — For then I will transform the nations to speak a pure language, so they’ll all call out the Name of Hashem. Everyone will “see” Hashem, as the *passuk* says (*Yeshaya* 52:8), “כי עין בעין יראו בשוב ה’ ציון.”

Why wait until Moshiach comes? If you’ll begin to speak to Hashem now, while we’re still in *galus*, you’ll feel as if Moshiach is already here.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 217

With the gadol hador in their own home, the blaming and bickering instantly ceased. The couple was simply too embarrassed to fight in front of a tzaddik, and so they actually spent an enjoyable day preparing for Shabbos.

R’ Meir did this for three consecutive weeks. On the third week (after a *chazaka*), the voice of the satan was heard crying out, “Oh no! Poor me! R’ Meir sent me out of this home.”

Same Old. Same Old

While this took place centuries ago, the Satan still has not retired. Every *erev Shabbos* he visits each of our homes and uses all the means at his disposal to instigate *machlokes* among us. He causes such tension that we get angry over trivialities, blame each other for every mishap, and exchange harsh words that we would be ashamed to hear played back to us later. Inevitably, we end up downhearted and in low spirits, and this poisons the atmosphere for the entire Shabbos.



What does the *yetzer hara* gain by causing us to fight? What’s the point of it all?

The *yetzer hara* knows that Shabbos is the source for all goodness. He is well aware of the fact that if we experience a joyous Shabbos, we will merit a successful week. When we are happy on Shabbos, we are blessed with *hatzlacha* in all areas — in business matters, in *shalom bayis*, in raising our children... and of course, in spiritual pursuits as well. This is the *yetzer hara*’s worst nightmare; therefore, he works overtime to make us tense and uptight on Friday. In this way, he spoils not just *erev Shabbos*, but Shabbos as well, ultimately ruining the entire week.

The Torah says (*Shemos* 35:3), לא תבערו אש בכל משבתיכם ביום השבת — Do not light a fire on Shabbos. The *Zohar* teaches (*Tikunei Zohar* 125) that this refers to the fire of temper. Anger on Shabbos is the cause of bad *mazel*, poverty and all *tzaros*. We need to be extra-mindful not to lose ourselves or get angry, because this will cause us to lose all *bracha* in life.

It isn’t easy. We work hard all week, and we eagerly anticipate a calm and quiet Shabbos to recharge. With so many day-to-day pressures plus the added strain of getting ready for Shabbos, it

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takes only seconds to lose control when things don't go exactly as planned. However, if we would only know of the hardships we can spare ourselves by staying calm, we would invest much more effort in doing so. What wouldn't we do for *parnassa*? What wouldn't we do for our health? All success is dependent on Shabbos.

Try it. Stop the arguing. Use this *erev Shabbos* to imbue yourself and your family with *simcha*, and you'll see the entire atmosphere change. If you'll try to stay calm and happy, this positivity will spill over into the following week and bring *bracha*, *hatzlacha* and *siyatta dishmaya* in its wake.

For the Children's Sake

The *seudos* we eat on Shabbos are an opportunity to actually transform our homes into *Gan Eden*. We are so busy throughout the week, so taken over by our daily struggles, that we don't have time for our greatest treasure: our children. Shabbos is a day to reconnect. When we sit at the table with the family, we can use the time to **really** listen to them and to speak about *emunah*, tell stories of *tzaddikim*, sing *zemiros* and just enjoy the time together.

Sharing many *divrei Torah* at the Shabbos table may be nice — for the adults.

**Children
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 patience to
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 entire week
 of school.**

Children, however, don't have patience to sit and listen to speeches after an entire week of school. They want to hear stories and have their own stories heard. Warmth and camaraderie hold the key to children's hearts.

Not too long ago lived a talmid chacham named R' Menashe. Scholarly and erudite as he was, he unfortunately struggled greatly with his children, who gave him scant nachas and much heartache. His next-door neighbor, an unlearned fellow, was zoche to have erliche and successful children.

Many people wondered about this. Why was it that the talmid chacham had children who caused him such distress, and the ordinary, "nothing-special" one had so much nachas? Toward the end of his life, R' Menashe shared what he thought to be the key difference between the two.

"I love to learn and value Torah learning above all else," he told them. "Throughout the years, I rushed through the Shabbos seudos so that I could get back to my sefarim. My neighbor, on the other hand, enjoyed each seuda with his family. He sang with his children and conversed with them, and the entire family had a wonderful time, week after week. Unlike my children who have all but forsaken me, his have grown up to become confident adults who value and find pleasure in Yiddishkeit."

R' Menashe sighed and said, "If only I would have focused more on my children... Perhaps then I would have merited to see some nachas from them..."

In order to be successful in both *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*, children need their parents to spend time with them. Shabbos is a golden opportunity to do just this: talk to your children. Spend time with them. Not with *lashon hara* or foolishness, but rather with wholesome and healthy enjoyment. It may not be easy, but it's an investment. An investment worth working for.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 2:5*) that the most important thing is *emunah*, and that without it, life is very challenging. The lack of *emunah* causes all the emotional issues that afflict mankind, and only *emunah* can heal these problems. The only way for a person to cure himself from his inner darkness is through faith.

"I See it for Myself!"

Ask around and listen to people's stories — they can tell you from their own experiences that the only thing that works is *emunah*. They'll echo Yisro's words (*Shemos 18:1*): "עֵתָּה יִדְעֵתִי כִּי מִכָּל הָאֱלֹהִים גָּדוֹל ה'." Chazal explain (*Mechilta Yisro 1:12*) that Yisro worshipped every kind of *avodah zarah*. He tried all of them until he came to the realization that they were all worthless. He then came to Moshe Rabbeinu and said, "I know that Hashem is greater than all gods — because I tried them all!"

I see this with so many people — after years of running from therapist to therapist, they finally discover the Rebbe's "therapy." When *hisbodedus* and *emunah* become an integral part of their lives, they declare, "עֵתָּה יִדְעֵתִי כִּי מִכָּל הָאֱלֹהִים גָּדוֹל ה' — like Yisro, they realize that only Hashem can help them.

There's no other way to get rid of anxiety, phobias, and delusions, or to build one's self-confidence. The only solution is *emunah*. The Rebbe can cure every person, as he says (*Sippurei Maasos, Story 13*), "And I heal her." The Rebbe has so much *chizuk* to offer and so many simple *eitzos* to implement that help a person emerge from his emotional captivity.

May Hashem help us live with the Rebbe's *eitzos* and be zoche to an unbreakable faith, which will heal us physically and mentally.

Q & A

IS EMUNAH THE ONLY CURE FOR MENTAL ILLNESS?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I must begin by thanking you for all the shiurim and chizuk that you give every day. I am only one person among thousands who gain tremendous inspiration from the shiurim and the letters that help so many people in their day-to-day lives. May Hashem give you strength to continue with your holy work.

I wanted to ask about something that's hard for me to understand. Chazal say regarding the passuk וּרְפָא יִרְפָּא (Shemos 21:19), that one is permitted (and even expected) to go to a doctor when necessary. When a person suffers from a physical ailment, it's self-understood that he'll seek a good doctor to heal him. The same should be true for a person who suffers from an emotional or mental illness — whatever his problem is, he would have to find a good doctor to heal him.

It's puzzling to me that you write about tefilla being the only solution for emotional/mental afflictions. Yes, I understand that a person cannot rely on the doctor's abilities alone for a refuah sheleima (just like with physical illness), and that a person must also daven to Hashem for a full recovery, but why does the Rosh Yeshiva write that tefilla is the only solution?

I would appreciate clarification on this topic.

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I'm very grateful to Hashem for revealing the light of the Rebbe to me. My journey to the Rebbe was through Mohorosh zt"l, who enabled me to pass on the brilliant and holy eitzos further to our youth. Since Mohorosh passed away, many people from all walks of life have written letters to me expressing their challenges and pain they are experiencing, and Hashem gave me the zechus to be able to reply with letters of guidance from the Rebbe. All the letters I write are sourced in the holy sefer *Asher Banachal*, which is based on the teachings of the Rebbe, comprised of *chizuk* and *eitzos* that accompany a person through every stage of his life.

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan* 2:8) that a person must daven to find a *tzaddik emes* to draw close to, because that's the only way to acquire a pure *emunah*, which is the only way to persevere through challenges. This is what a person gains from having a connection with the Rebbe — all his doubts and confusion disappear, and his *emunah* shines through in every situation.

Regarding your question:

There are many problems with going to so-called "professionals" who claim to heal emotional pain. First of all, many therapists are cunning and corrupt. They can't heal mental illness and they don't even try to — their entire objective is to extort as much money as possible from their clients.

The unfortunate reality is that many people suffer from all kinds of emotional distress — be it trauma, anxiety, destructive thoughts, or any other problem. What they don't realize is that there is only one solution — and it's free. The solution is *emunah*.

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