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

FOREVER FORWARD

History was in the making. A beautiful and verdant land, totally corrupted by its inhabitants' ugly deeds, was going to be completely annihilated. Just one family — a man, his wife, and two daughters — were led to safety. Accompanied by an angel, they were given one command: don't look back.

One woman did not obey. One turn back, one more casualty — now a pillar of salt.

We all make this mistake, all the time. There's something inside us that compels us to look back — not at the devastation of a city behind us, in our case, but at our own ruins. Our own mistakes. Our own failings.

Mistakes are an inevitable part of life. But much of the pain, hurt, and embarrassment associated with making mistakes are our own doing — all because of the urge we have to revisit, replay, and rehash the past. As the *passuk* says, **וַתַּבֵּט אִשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו** — When a person keeps looking back and rehashing his past mistakes, **וַתְּהִי נְצִיב מֶלַח** — his life is full of "salt"; full of bitterness.



Flaw or Gift?

Hashem gave us a unique gift — one that seems to be a flaw, but is actually the greatest blessing: the ability to forget *(Sichos Haran 26)*. If we would vividly remember every single event and episode that ever happened, we'd be paralyzed by our past. Constantly haunted by memories of our misdeeds, we would be too discouraged to ever try again. The gift of forgetfulness is what makes it possible for us to let bygones be bygones and move on.

The words והיה and ויהי are used frequently in *Tanach* — similar words with very different connotations. "ויהי — and it <u>was</u>" is a word used for sad times *(Megilla 10b)*, while "והיה — and it <u>will be</u>" is a term used for happy times *(Bereishis Rabba 42:3)*. This teaches us a valuable lesson: **Looking back at past failures and misfortunes causes tremendous heartache, whereas focusing on the future brings hope and joy.**

Every Moment is a New Start

Almost every person alive today is a *gilgul* that has lived another life previously — a life that we know nothing about. Yet we don't give our "past lives" too much thought, since we have no recollection of them, and they are simply not relevant to our current lives.

In the same way, we can choose to begin anew each day — a new "*gilgul*", so to speak. There's no need to actually die and be reborn, because **every moment that we live is an opportunity for a new start.** We must constantly begin anew, constantly tell ourselves, *"Whatever happened in the past doesn't pertain to me anymore. I am newly reborn — today, I am a different person entirely!"*

Success requires us to stop revisiting the past and start living in the now. The choice is ours.

Asher Haya el Yoel, Vayeira 5762

MOHOROSH "SPEAKS"

RUNNING... WHERE?

R' Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev zt"l once noticed a man dash out of shul shortly before the conclusion of shacharis. "R' Yid, where are you rushing to?" the tzaddik asked.

"I'm running to make parnassa," came the hurried response.

*"What makes you think you are running **to** your parnassa?" R' Levi Yitzchok countered. "Perhaps you are running **away** from it!"*

Does this scenario feel familiar? Does it resonate a bit uncomfortably? In our rush to get the workday started, many of us rush through davening or cut our *tefilla* short in order to make a few more dollars.

It's ironic, really, because every believing Jew knows that Hashem is the One Who provides us with a livelihood, yet when faced with the dilemma of *"Should I finish davening like a mentch or hurry to be on time to work?"* or, *"Should I finish this daf Gemara or check my work email?"* — all too often, the pull of the office (or the irate boss or client) is stronger.

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A LETTER
FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

MARRIAGE ADVICE FROM A NON-JEW?!?

Dear …,

You are right not to read the book that was written by a non-Jewish woman, even though it's very popular in *frum* circles. *Klal Yisrael* is so deeply entrenched in this *galus* — we have lived among non-Jews for so many years that their *treif* views have begun to infiltrate our homes.

It's not good to read books written by non-Jewish authors — no matter how many letters they have after their names, no matter how much experience they have in the field, and no matter how many raving reviews there are on their work.

There are enough books on *shalom bayis* written by *erliche* writers. Mohorosh wrote wonderful *sefarim* on *shalom bayis* that are available today in many languages. "Make your Marriage Work," "A Peaceful Home," "Getting Along," "To Love and to Cherish," "Happily Married," are some of the English titles. This is what you should read, and this is what will teach you how to build a proper Jewish home.

If you would know who the writers truly are, you would never allow them into your home!

More Careful than with Food

I plead with you, remain strong with your principles. **Don't bring any non-Jewish books into your home — and also those written by Jewish authors which don't have a *haskama* from an *erliche rav*.**

When it comes to food, we all check carefully to make sure we only bring good *hechsherim* into our homes. What many people don't realize, however, is that we also have to be very careful with reading material — even more than with food! — because reading skewed *hashkafos* poisons the soul.

A Home Built on What?

Build your home based on Torah, not on the influence of your friends. Don't rush to buy magazines just because they seem to be Jewish and "everyone" reads them. If you'd know who the writers truly are, you'd never allow them into your home — likewise, you shouldn't allow their opinions inside.

When you have a few spare moments, take a *sefer Tehillim* and say a few *perakim*. Talk to Hashem and plead with Him,

"Hashem, please help me be *zoche* to build a pure Jewish home, and be able to raise my children and grandchildren with *emunah* and *yiras Shamayim*."

In the merit of keeping your home pure and untainted from foreign influences, you will be *zoche* to *hatzlacha* in all areas.

Adapted from Atzaso Emunah Volume 6, Letter #523

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

continued from page 1

We find ourselves "escaping" *shul*, turning away from Hashem to pursue illusory sources of *parnassa* instead.

Cutting Off the Blessings

The truth is, however, that when we cut our *tefillos* short or skips learning for the sake of a livelihood, we don't gain in the long run. We actually incur losses in all areas! On a spiritual level, we lose our davening, our learning, and the connection to Hashem that these bring. We also lose out in material matters, because Torah and *tefilla* are the conduits for Hashem's *bracha*. **When these "pipelines" are broken or missing completely, the Heavenly *shefa* simply can't reach us.**

If we internalize the principles of *emunah* and strengthen our belief that Hashem is the sole Source of *parnassa*, we'll have the presence of mind to daven slowly and with concentration. Not only that, but this serene state of mind will even allow us to learn some Torah before running off to work. We'll approach all our *parnassa* matters with peace and calm — unafraid of the possibility of losing income or potential clients — knowing that results are not in our control.



ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה' והיה ה' מבטחו — One who relies on Hashem will have bountiful *parnassa*, since Hashem comes through for those who truly rely on Him.

Who is More Successful?

The Ben Ish Chai *zt"l* aptly illustrated this concept with the following story:

Two merchants living in the same neighborhood owned competing textile shops, each at opposite ends of the city.

The first shop opened each day at 7:00 am. The owner, in his haste to make the most sales, raced through davening and ran off to work, without even having a chance to eat breakfast.

The second merchant had a completely different approach. He began each day by immersing in a mikvah, engaging in a lengthy, enthusiastic davening, and then learning for a couple of hours. He then ate a leisurely meal with his family and only opened his shop at about 11:00 am.

The owner of the first textile shop was thrilled with this setup. He believed that he was

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MOHOROSH SPEAKS

continued From page 2

attracting all the customers since he was open for many more hours each day, and was sure that he was much more successful.

Until one day…

A new line of expensive, high-quality fabrics was introduced to the market. Both businessmen bought a large stock, hoping to make a substantial profit.

The local poritz heard of the luxurious new fabrics. Early the next morning, he sent his servant to summon a textile merchant to his estate, with the promise to buy a large quantity of fabrics and give recommendations to his family and friends.

The servant found only one shop open at that hour, and let the textile merchant know why he had come. With no other choice, the merchant gathered samples of the fabric, temporarily closed his shop, and followed the servant to the poritz's stately home.

The setting sun marked the end of the day, but the hapless merchant was held captive at the poritz's home.

The poritz was in no hurry. He spent many hours debating the pros and cons of each sample, wasting precious time and business for the poor merchant. When he still couldn't come to any decision, the poritz called in his wife, who needed a full replay of the qualities and flaws of each. She, too, wasn't exactly sure what to buy and called all their children to join and give suggestions.

In the interim, the second merchant finished davening and made his leisurely way to his shop, where he found tens of customers waiting to check out the new fabrics. Within minutes, his stock was completely sold out, leaving him with a nice profit.

The setting sun marked the end of the business day, but the hapless merchant was held captive at the poritz's home, where he described his fabrics for the umpteenth time to all the people there. Yet at the end of it all, the poritz could not make up his mind and didn't make any purchase at all.

We never lose out by investing time in our *avodas Hashem.* We must remember to daven properly, learn properly, and rely on Hashem for whatever we may need. In return, He will surely provide us with abundant goodness.

Sichos Mohorosh Volume 16, Erech Bitachon

Q&A

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Soon, a malach came to me and asked, "Why are you crying?" I responded, "Should I then not cry, seeing that all of these people who learned so much Torah have died?"

He said to me, "Don't cry, Eliyahu. They performed filthy deeds — they committed grave sins with one another, and that's why they all died."

In the early years of our *yeshiva,* Mohorosh instructed me never to expel a *bachur* for any reason — unless he is a sick individual who preys on other *bachurim.* Such a person must be sent away immediately, or the *yeshiva* cannot survive.

The Gift of Youth

Use these years wisely, because **whatever you learn in your youth will remain with you for your entire life.** See to establish a *shiur* in *Mishnayos* and *Gemara* — start from the beginning, and keep moving forward in order; don't go back to review until you finish the entire *Shas.*

True, it's very difficult to remain pure as long as you are not yet married, but on the other hand, you don't have the burden of *parnassa* either — now is the time when you can accomplish a great deal.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from Atzaso Emunah Volume 6, Letter #518

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS...

The only way to succeed in avodas Hashem is by staying focused on oneself and one's own ruchniyus.

Constantly looking at others and checking if one measures up to them is one of the biggest obstacles to a person's own growth.

Every person's sole focus must be on what he can achieve and how he can create a nachas ruach for Hashem at each moment.

Avraham Avinu teaches us this lesson, as the passuk says (Yechezkel 33:24) "אחד היה אברהם";

Avraham Avinu was zoche to truly serve Hashem because he didn't look at what others were doing.

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Q&A

WHAT SHOULD I DO ABOUT BAD BEHAVIOR IN MY YESHIVA?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

First and foremost, I want to thank you for the beautiful shiurim, which are truly like "cold water to a weary soul."

I learn in a yeshiva gedolah in Eretz Yisrael, and I try my best to be an erlicher Yid and maintain my standards of kedushah. There are some bachurim in my yeshiva who, unfortunately, stumble in severe aveiros, R"l. I am careful not to have anything to do with them, but I see that they are drawing in other innocent bachurim.

Am I supposed to be doing something about this, and if so, what can I even do?

I look forward to receiving a response.

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear …,

Good for you that you have no connection with *bachurim* who speak *nivul peh* (obscene language). Mohorosh gave us a sign by which one can see who is *erlich* and is worthwhile to befriend: if a person uses refined language, it's a sign that he is a *yarei Shamayim* and a good person. However, but if he uses coarse or obscene language — even if his externals seem to be good and *erlich* — you must flee from him like from fire.

Chazal state *(Chullin 17b)* "רב בדיק בלישניה," on which *tzaddikim* teach us that a person can be encapsulated by his manner of speech — he speaks with refinement, it's a sign that he is an upright Jew, and if not, one must flee from him. As Rebbe says *(Sefer Hamiddos, Os Nivul Peh)*, "When a person speaks *nivul peh,* it's a sign that his entire mind is corrupted, *R"l."* Therefore, I'm happy to hear that you have no connection with *bachurim* who behave improperly.

Take Action!

Of course you must do something about this terrible situation! Inform your *rosh yeshiva* that there are *bachurim* who are doing terrible things, *R"l.* If the *rosh yeshiva* will expel the instigators who are entrapping others in *aveiros,* the *yeshiva* will be able to continue; if not, nothing will remain of the entire *yeshiva.*

Every so often, we see a *yeshiva* disintegrate and nothing remains of it at all — this is because of the sins committed among the *bachurim* themselves.

We see this in the words of *Chazal (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah, Chapter 18)*, where Eliyahu Hanavi related:

I once visited a large Jewish city in Bavel, and I found a melamed with a very large following — approximately two hundred students between the ages of eighteen and twenty.

I returned to that city some time later, but I couldn't find the melamed. I was told that the teacher had died, as had his wife, his children, and all the talmidim, leaving only a few young ones behind.

I began to cry bitterly, thinking to myself, "Why did this teacher, his family, and his talmidim all die?"

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