

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF MOHOROSH ZT”L
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PARSHAS SHOFTIM
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

WINNING THE BATTLE

וְהָיָה כְּקִרְבְּכֶם אֶל הַמִּלְחָמָה וּנְגַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן וְדִבֶּר אֶל הָעָם... אֵל יִרְדּוּ לִבְבְּכֶם
אֶל תִּירְאוּ... כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם

*At the time when you draw close to war, the kohen should say to the nation,
“Have no fear, for Hashem is the One Who goes with you to fight for you.”*

Wartime. *Klal Yisrael* stands at the ready, rows of soldiers equipped to fight for the sake of Hashem. Before heading out to battle, there was a *mitzva* that the nation had to fulfill: the *kohen mashuach milchama* was required to speak to the army, reassuring, encouraging and emboldening them in preparation for war.

The Torah is eternal. Although parts of it seem to have only been applicable to Jews of long ago, the truth is that since the Torah is forever, every word in it is relevant to every person, forever. If so, how does the subject of the *kohen mashuach milchama* apply to us today?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan 1:115*) that when a person wants to come close to Hashem, the *yetzer hara* – his sworn enemy – works relentlessly to stop him in his tracks by thwarting his every attempt. It’s a constant battle, a never-ending war. The person tries to daven. Tries to learn. Tries to overcome his temptations. Tries to conquer his bad *middos*. Yet he keeps hitting obstacles that hinder his efforts, discouraging him from his mission because it seems to him that Hashem is too far away, too unreachable. However, quite the opposite is true.



The Rebbe teaches that Hashem, in His infinite mercy, conceals Himself **within** the difficulties, readily accessible to those who keep trying to come close to Him and don’t give up. Knowing this, a person can gather the fortitude to persist despite the constant hardships he encounters.

This is the lesson of the *kohen mashuach milchama* – it’s a message that is applicable for every person in every era. The *passuk* reveals the method for overcoming one’s *yetzer hara* and emerging the victor: וְהָיָה כְּקִרְבְּכֶם אֶל הַמִּלְחָמָה – When a person finds himself under attack, helpless in the face of the *yetzer hara*’s cunning strategies, וּנְגַשׁ הַכֹּהֵן וְדִבֶּר אֶל הָעָם – he must listen to the words of the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik* calls out to all who will listen, אֵל יִרְדּוּ לִבְבְּכֶם אֶל תִּירְאוּ – Don’t be frightened when you are confronted with challenges; don’t be disheartened when your *avodas Hashem* comes with an enormous amount of struggle. אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הֵהָלֵךְ עִמָּכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם לָכֶם – Hashem is with you in your difficulties! He will fight for you! All He wants is to see you persevere. Keep going, keep trying!”

When a person remains steadfast and refuses to abandon Hashem for any price in the world, he will succeed in peeling back all the layers of concealment and find Hashem right there, waiting for him.

Toch Hanachal, Shoftim 5764

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

ELUL! ELUL!



The month of Elul is here, marking the imminent arrival of the *yamim noraim*. In just a few short weeks, we will be cry out, ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה מעבירין את "רע הגזרה!" It’s no secret that the *Yom Hadin* is nearly upon us – let’s prepare ourselves by working on *teshuva*, *tefilla* and *tzedaka* **now**, instead of waiting to try to annul decrees which have already been transcribed.

Elul is a time for introspection and improvement. All year long we operate by habit, going about our daily routine without thinking much into each of our actions and interactions. In preparation for the *Yom Hadin*, we must shake ourselves awake and rouse our *neshamos* from slumber. We must take a good, honest look at ourselves and reevaluate: “Where am I up to in my *avodas Hashem*? What should I be doing differently?” It is a time to make amends for the past and implement proper change for the future.

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לע"נ יואל משה יצחק ע"ה בר' פנחס זעליג שלום שליט"א
נפטר ה' אלול תשפ"ג ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Dear ...

The most basic foundation of *shalom bayis* is open communication; if you are upset with your spouse, you must discuss it. The problems begin when either spouse keeps things bottled up, or if one is afraid to broach certain topics.

Your wife's respect for you depends on you – if you want her to esteem you and value your opinion, be careful with the way you treat her. The way you conduct yourself with your wife is the way she will behave toward you, as Shlomo Hamelech says (*Mishlei 27:19*), כמים הפנים לפנים כך לב האדם לאדם – just like your reflection imitates the expression you show it, so too, people mirror the treatment you show them. Try it! Speak kindly to your wife and she will respond in the same manner. Constantly express your admiration for her and she will start respecting you and asking you for your opinion.

If your wife doesn't have the strength for housework, it is your job to help her out. Charity begins at home – there is no greater *mitzva* than helping one's wife and children. This will improve your relationship, because your wife will see that you care about her and are attentive to her needs. Find time to help her and you will reap the rewards: in this world, you'll have a healthy wife and children, and in *Olam Haba* you'll receive *schar* for building a Jewish home with *erliche* children.

If your wife is not interested in anything related to Breslev, don't talk to her about it. You can live with and share the inspiration without quoting its source, as the Rebbe said, "Why should it bother me that another person will say *birchas hamazon* as he should, without knowing that the inspiration comes from me?" Give her *chizuk* without mentioning the Rebbe's name; you can say, "I saw in a *sefer*..." or, "tzaddikim say..." In this way, she will accept your words and eventually things will improve. Just don't expect instant results – real change takes time. Remember that הסבל תחבולה למי שאין לו תחבולה – when there seems to be no way out, patience is the solution.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #1, page 20



Trembling in Awe

“ In days of old, the mere mention of the word “Elul” struck a chord in every heart. When the *chazzan* recited, “...ראש חודש אלול יהיה ביום...” during *birchas hachodesh*, all the *mispallelim* trembled in fear and awe. Just hearing about the imminence of the month of Elul was enough to jolt them awake and galvanize them to *teshuva*.

As a six-year-old child, R' Moshe Kobriner zt"l was playing outside with his friends when his sister passed by and called out, "Moishele! We have already bentched Rosh Chodesh Elul! The fish in the oceans are trembling in awe – how can you still be playing?" R' Moshe later said his sister's words, said with such temimus, ran a tremor through him that he felt again every Elul of his life.

A fraction of this immense awe is possible for even a person in today's generation to feel.

Accused of money laundering and tax evasion, Isaac's freedom was hanging in the balance. His court case was looming and he knew he was only days away from a possible life sentence. Each time he thought about his ever-nearing trial, his heart lurched and he broke out into a sweat.

Rosh Hashana is the day when the fate of every human being is decreed. Life or death, good health or illness, prosperity or poverty, happiness or heartbreak and everything in between – it all depends on this day. How can Elul **not** strike at least a little fear in our hearts?

At this time of year, every *erliche Yid* should be moved to *teshuva*. So much is hanging in the balance; we must do whatever we can to tip the scales in our favor.

Take Action

R' Nosson of Breslev once remarked that many people become so aflame with an Elul-induced passion, but they don't **do** anything to prepare themselves for the *Yom Hadin*. Feeling the holiness and trepidation of the approaching *yamim noraim* is admirable, but if it isn't the impetus for change, it isn't enough. In order to actualize the potential of Elul, action is needed – we must work to improve in our *avodas Hashem*. In these potent weeks, let us make a point of acquiring *zechusim* by davening a little more, learning a little more, taking a few more minutes to talk to Hashem.

The *Zohar* teaches (*Vayakhel 206a*) that each time the *aron kodesh* is opened in *shul*, the *sha'arei*

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rachamim open as well, and it is an *eis ratzon* to daven for anything we need. On the same note, the *Arizal* says that the forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur have that same power. It is a tremendous *eis ratzon*, a time when all the doors are open for us. One who uses these forty days wisely by increasing his *tefilla* will merit to see *yeshuos*.

Grand Plans

Ahh, summer. Tzvi walked home with a spring in his step, his vacation stretching before him. He had big plans for his precious few weeks off, a long list of all that he hoped to accomplish. The days flew by and all too soon, the long-anticipated break was drawing to a close. Tzvi ruefully thought of all his dreams that had unfortunately never made it past the planning stage...

When the month of Elul stretches ahead, we tend to assume that there is ample time for all our new resolutions; realistically speaking, however, there isn't much time at all. In preparation for Rosh Hashana, Breslever *chassidim* try to complete the entire *Tanach*, *shisha sidrei Mishna*, *Tikunei Zohar*, all the Rebbe's *sefarim*, the relevant *halachos* of the *yamim noraim*, all in addition to the regular *shiurim* we have all year round. We must use every minute of these sacred days wisely and not squander this precious opportunity.



Even doing all the right things has a risk. In our desire to maximize every moment and accomplish as much as possible, we sometimes take on too many new commitments and bite off more than we can chew. Inevitably, we fall short of our expectations and soon fall prey to disillusionment. It is important to remember that this holy time doesn't "expire" so fast; Hashem gives us an "extension" every year. We can continue to work on personal goals of self-improvement until Simchas Torah, and even until Zos Chanukah, which is a continuation of the *yamim noraim*. Even after that, we must not get discouraged by our failure to accomplish as much as we hoped to.

May we all merit to use this Elul wisely and be *zoche* to an uplifting Rosh Hashana and a growth-filled, successful year.



aged; just continue to say the words even without comprehension. With Hashem's help and with time, you will begin to understand.

If the benefits of learning *Mishnayos* would be more well-known, everyone would take the time to learn it. The Bais Yosef *zt"l* used to learn many *perakim* of *Mishnayos* every day – sometimes forty, sometimes even more – and each time he did so, a heavenly *maggid* came to learn with him (*Sefer Maggid Meisharim, Mishlei 23:163*). We see from here that a person can reach great heights by learning *Mishnayos*.

Your next *shiur* should be in Gemara. *Chazal* say (*Shabbos 106b*) that by learning Gemara, one eradicates all the forces of evil that surround his *neshama*. Say the words of Gemara even if it's hard for you to understand. *Chazal* teach us (*Shir Hashirim Rabba 2:15*) that when an unlearned Jew says the words of Torah with mistakes – for example, instead of saying 'וְאֶהְיֶה אֵת ה' he says וְאֶהְיֶה – Hashem says (*Shir Hashirim 2:4*), "וְדַלְגָּה וְדַלְגָּה עָלַי אֶהְיֶה – his errors are beloved to Me." Even when a person mistakenly says the opposite of what is written, his Torah is still cherished by Hashem.

Don't look for *mitzvos* when you're supposed to be learning in *yeshiva*. The Ropshitzer Rav *zt"l* used to say (*Zera Kodesh, Parashas Shoftim*) that the *yetzer hara* tries with all his might to stop us from learning, because he knows that when a person learns Torah, his evil inclination is rendered powerless. *Chazal* say (*Kiddushin 30b*), "Even if one's *yetzer hara* is strong as a stone, through Torah it will dissolve; if it is tough as iron, through Torah it will shatter." Therefore, the *yetzer hara* uses all the means at his disposal to distract us from learning Torah – including the opportunity to do *mitzvos*. He tricks us into thinking, "I am too busy with *mitzvos* to learn"; however, we must realize that this is just another tactic of the *yetzer hara*.

Go back to your *yeshiva* and ask your *menahel* and *maggid shiurim* for forgiveness. Give them your word that you will stick to the *sedarim* in *yeshiva* and behave with *derech eretz*. If you want to do *chessed* and visit sick people in the hospital, do it after *yeshiva* has ended for the day.

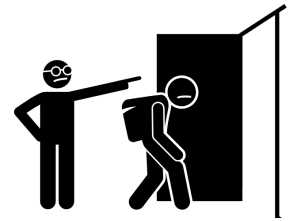
May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

I WAS THROWN OUT OF YESHIVA – SHOULD I GO BACK?



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita*,
Thank you for all the *shiurim* and *chizuk*.



I'm a nineteen-year-old *bachur*. I was thrown out of *yeshiva* because I visited an acquaintance in the hospital during *seder*, and they will only let me back if I pay a fine of five hundred dollars. I'm unsure of how to proceed. First of all, I don't have money and I have no idea how to come up with so much, and second of all, I'm not even sure it's worth it for me to go back. I don't feel that I gained anything in the two and a half years I've been in this *yeshiva* – if anything, my *yiras Shamayim* has declined. No one understands how hard it is to be a *bachur* and how badly I want to get married already; instead I'm stuck in a place where they treat me like a child.

Should I go back to *yeshiva*, pay up and continue feeling like I'm in kindergarten, or should I switch to a *kollel* and find myself a *chavrusa* to learn with, without having to comply with my *yeshiva's* bothersome policies?

Thank you.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...

Go back to *yeshiva*. If you apologize and resolve to abide by the *yeshiva's* rules, they will surely allow you to return. A *bachur* can't just skip a *seder* whenever he pleases; whether you are in a *kollel* or *yeshiva*, you must adhere to the *sedarim* for your own sake – you cannot be successful if you will come and go as you please.

Now is a time when you can sit and learn without distractions. Why not utilize this time for Torah? True, you long to get married already so that you can be *erlich*, but these years are not useless. You can use this time as a *bachur* to sit and learn without interference.

With the Rebbe's *seder derech halimud*, you can learn and complete the entire Torah in just a short time. Begin

with learning Chumash **each day** – *shnayim mikra v'echad targum*, along with *Rashi*. The *Shulchan Aruch* says (*Orach Chaim 285:3*) that one can begin being *maavir sedra* on Sunday; so too, the *Mishnah Berurah* says that the *Gra zt"l* used to be *maavir sedra* a little each day. Don't wait until the end of the week; start on Sunday and learn until *sheini*, on Monday until *shlishi*, and so forth. By accustoming yourself to do so, you will complete the entire *parshah* every week and the entire *chamisha chumshei Torah* each year.

After establishing a daily *shiur* in Chumash, add a *shiur* of *Mishnayos*. Start with *Masechtas Brachos* and learn one *perek* after the next, one *masechta* after the next, until you complete entire *shisha sidrei Mishnah*. Even if it's hard for you to understand what you are learning, don't be discour-

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