



SPARKS OF EMUNAH

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

לזכות רפואה שלמה
יוכבד בת חסי' רחל רבקה
בתוך שער חולי ישראל

CHIZUK FROM THE PARSHA

HAPPY YET?

וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבֵיתְךָ

And you shall rejoice with all the goodness that Hashem has given you and your household.

The world is filled with billions of people who are obsessed with the pursuit of happiness. When life throws yet another curve ball, however, happiness seems to be an elusive dream. What is the secret to attaining joy when faced with hardship? How can a person come to the state of true happiness despite the challenges he endures?

A man once came to the Chofetz Chaim, crying bitterly. "Why do I have such bad mazel?" He lamented. "Why do I have to struggle to make ends meet? Why can't I see nachas from my children? Why do others enjoy good health while I have so many medical problems?"

The tzaddik listened as the man poured his heart out. When the long list of grievances finally ended, the Chofetz Chaim told him, "You are like a newcomer to shul who watches the gabbai call people up for aliyos, seemingly at random. There seems to be no rhyme or reason at all – one person is called up from the back of the shul, another from the left, and a third from the front. A fourth person is seated at the far right and a fifth is in middle, and so forth.

"After davening, the guest approaches the gabbai and asks, 'Can you explain why you chose only those specific people for aliyos?'

"The gabbai looks at him strangely and replies, 'It's your first time in our shul – of course you don't understand the reasons behind my decisions. If you would have been davening here for a few months, you would have seen that different people get aliyos each week and that everyone gets a turn in the end. How can you expect to understand after seeing these proceedings just once?'"

The Chofetz Chaim continued, "A person comes down to this world for just a short time and immediately, he's full of questions and complaints about how Hashem runs the world. If he would live a thousand years, he wouldn't have any questions. You ask why you don't have parnassa? Maybe you were very wealthy in a previous gilgul and didn't give any tzeda-ka. You want to know why you haven't merited nachas from your children? Perhaps you caused pain to your parents in a previous gilgul. We live in this world for such a short time; there's no way we can understand Hashem's intricate calculations."

David Hamelech says (Tehillim 115:2), "למה יאמרו הגוים" – "Why?" is a question that the non-Jews ask. A Jew must have emunah and recognize that every occurrence is from Hashem. If Hashem willed it to be, then it must be. Even when we don't understand, we must believe that Hashem runs His world perfectly – there is no room for questions, no room for doubt.

The passuk in this week's parsha exhorts us, "וְשִׂמְחֶתָּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּלְבֵיתְךָ" – Hashem has given every person so many blessings – it is our obligation to rejoice with them! Instead of harping on our difficulties, we must focus on and appreciate the good that we have. This is the way we can attain true, lasting happiness.

Adapted from Asher Banachal Volume 2, Letter #98

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

ראש השנה

The year is drawing to a close. It's been a year of so much good, but one with many tragedies, too. We live in a world where no one has it easy; as long as we live, we must endure hardship and struggle.

Rosh Hashana is a treasured opportunity we have each year, a time when we can effect change in our destiny. If we will use this powerful day wisely and plead with Hashem for it to be a blessed year, He'll certainly accept our tefillos and grant us a shana tova umesukah.

Standing Trial

Imagine the uncertainty of a person who stands before an imminent court case. His fate lies in the hands of the judge, who can sentence him death, a decades-long prison sentence, or a hefty fine... or have mercy and set him free. In such a case, the man would surely throw himself at the judge's feet, pleading for a merciful verdict. And perhaps even more importantly, he would search the globe for a top-notch lawyer and beg him to represent the case well and attain an acquittal.

Rosh Hashana is a worldwide trial, when Hashem determines the fate of the entire universe for the following year. Life and death hang in the

(Continued on page 2)





GUARD YOUR EYES

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

What do you mean by saying, "I don't actually do any *aveiros*"? Do you really think that looking is not an *aveira*? That there is nothing wrong with sinful thoughts? *Chazal* teach us (*Yoma 29b*) that thoughts of sin are worse than the sin itself! When a person's mind is full of immoral thoughts, he is then triggered to sin. And what do you think causes these immoral thoughts? It is the "looking," which you think is so innocent. *Chazal* teach us (*Sotah 8a*) that the *yetzer hara* only has power over one who has looked at that which is forbidden; when a person is not careful with *shmiras einayim*, actual sin is not too far behind.

Chazal also teach us (*Bamidbar Rabba 10:2, Tanchuma Shelach 15*) that a person's eyes and heart are "salesmen" for sin. It all begins with looking at *aveiros*, which then awaken one's heart with the desire to commit *aveiros*, until he cannot withstand the temptation and engages in sin. Therefore, it is crucial that we guard our eyes in order to prevent thoughts of sin from entering our minds.

How unfortunate are you that you're afflicted with the disease of "looking." The Torah says, "והיית משוגע ממראה עיניך אשר תראה" (*Devarim 28:34*)— You will become insane from the sight of your eyes that you will see. Mohorosh used to say that this *passuk* refers to *shmiras einayim*; there are people who have literally become insane, spending hours looking at what they shouldn't, and this leads them to commit the worst *aveiros*.

Take the Rebbe's advice and begin doing *hisbodedus*. Find a quiet place where you can be alone and pour out your troubles to Hashem. Talk to Him about your challenges, about the sinful thoughts and temptations that plague you, and plead with him:

"Hashem, please have pity on me! I so badly want to be *erlich*; I wish I could keep my eyes and mind pure, but what should I do if my *yetzer hara* is just too strong? My *taavos* are destroying me! Hashem, You know how badly I want to be good, but I am just sinking deeper and deeper in *aveiros*. I am obsessed with looking at (and here, verbalize all the inappropriate things you look at), and this causes me to sin with *p'gam habris*. Hashem, please save me! My spirit is broken and my life is full of darkness.

"Hashem, I don't know what to do! I keep saying that I will finally change, but I return to my bad habits again and again. My mind is diseased, Hashem; I can't stop myself from looking at (again, verbalize the improper things you look at), and I don't see any way out. Hashem, only You can help me and extract me from the depths that I have sunken to. Please, Hashem, implant a *ruach tahara* in me so that I shouldn't look at or think about that which is forbidden."

Speak to Hashem in this manner and beseech him to give you the strength to overcome your challenges.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 126

balance. On this awesome day, every Jew must

beseech Hashem for a merciful verdict. Additionally, with so much at stake, a wise one will do whatever he can to obtain a lawyer to plead his case.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslev is the greatest lawyer with the most experience in the field of advocacy. He said (*Chayei Moharan 405*), "I know the secret of Rosh Hashana; the entire world is dependent on my Rosh Hashana." Furthermore, the Rebbe promised (*Chayei Moharan 406*) that he will intercede on behalf of all those who come to his *tzion* on Rosh Hashana, and he will spare no effort in ensuring that they will be granted a year full of blessings. **Is there anyone else in the world who has given such a promise?**

Uman: A Hospital

With persistent abdominal pain that would not let up, Zundel finally hobbled into the doctor's office. After a thorough examination, the doctor diagnosed him with kidney stones and sent him straight to the hospital. When Zundel arrived at the emergency room, he was dismayed at the sights that met him there. One patient had a large bandage wrapped around his head, another had an IV line snaking into his arm, and a third sat weakly in a wheelchair with both his legs immobile. Through it all, the sound of beeping machinery and anguished moaning created a grating background noise to the hullabaloo.

"What is this? A place for sick, crazy people?" Zundel cried out. "I don't belong here!" Ignoring his agony, he lurched off his bed and stumbled out of the hospital.

Unfortunately, the word "Uman" has become synonymous with "eccentric," "peculiar," and "wild." This is because of the magazines that publish uncomplimentary articles about Uman, painting a picture of a gathering place for the world's most eccentric group of oddballs. And why not? The readership thrives on different, unique and exciting. Who would be interested in pictures of people standing by the Rebbe's *tzion* and pouring their hearts out? Who would be attracted to an article highlighting the *teshuva*, the *tefilla*, the crying and the davening that takes place in Uman 'round the clock?

Like a hospital, the Rebbe's *tzion* attracts all kinds of people who come to him for a *tikkun*; everyone comes to Uman to do *teshuva*, each in their own way. When so many sects of *Klal Yisroel* gather in one place, it is inevitable that some peo-

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be easily deterred by this. “What am I doing in this place?” He might ask himself. “I don’t belong with these types of people!” Yet only a fool escapes a place of healing because of the way the other patients appear.

Don’t be turned off by other people’s problems – look at **yourself** and what **your** *neshama* needs. Use your time at the Rebbe’s *tzion* wisely and daven to merit a sweet new year.

What about the Women??

Being so far from home for *yom tov* isn’t easy for the men, but what about the women? Staying home alone can often be even harder. However, women who know of the Rebbe’s promise should send their husbands off to Uman with joy, because the benefits of this trip far outweigh its challenges.



Life or death, good health or illness, prosperity or poverty, happiness or heartbreak – and everything in between – all depend on this day.

There are countless stories of miracles that have occurred to those who came to the Rebbe for Rosh Hashana. The gravely ill were healed, the childless miraculously bore children, the destitute saw a sudden change in fortune... One week of struggle is certainly worthwhile for the sake of an entire year of goodness.

Then there’s the added challenge that some women have to contend with: disdain from family and/or friends. Yet how foolish it is to give up on this once-a-year opportunity, only because of the opinions of those who will not be of any help at all throughout the year.

Will those scornful ones be able to help when faced with challenges a few months down the line? Will they be able to solve *parnassa* problems? Will they do anything in case of a medical crisis? Or in the struggle with a challenging child? No, they won’t be able to help – the most they will do is cluck their tongues sympathetically. Women, swallow the scorn. Think of **yourself**. Think of **your** future.

Rosh Hashana is getting closer. It’s an awesome day, a fearsome day, and yet the Rebbe said (*Chaye Moharan* 403), “He who is with me for Rosh Hashana can rejoice the entire year.”

May we see the actualization of the Rebbe’s promises and be *zoche* to a year of blessings and joy.

Kuntres “Rosh Hashana with Tzaddikim”



For Your Child’s Sake -6-

*Translated from לב אבות על בנים,
a kuntres written by Mohorosh zt”l.*

PART 2: EXCUSES, EXCUSES – CONTINUED

EXCUSE #4:

“I’m ready to marry off my child, but we haven’t found the right *shidduch* yet.”

This excuse is one that is heard from most parents. The only question is – who is the *shidduch* not “good” for? For whom is the *shidduch* “not the right one”? Is it truly for the child in question? Or is it simply not good enough for the parents?

Those who are brutally honest with themselves will realize that they may be thinking of their own gain more than that of their children. While they search for the “right one,” they keep their children waiting unnecessarily in the hope of striking gold: a *shidduch* that will give them just the right amount of honor and esteem. In the meantime, their children – who just want to get married and don’t care that much about *yichus*, good name or money – are lonely and in pain, sinking deeper and deeper into the mire of sin during the endless wait.

When a *shidduch* is suggested, inquiries are done with a magnifying glass. *What were her grades in school? How well does he learn in comparison to his classmates? What size is she? Is he good looking? Charismatic? Is she loud or quiet? Does he have a lot of friends? What do they say about him? Does her family have money? Will they support the new couple?* As soon as they hear of one small flaw, one insignificant shortcoming, all inquiries stop dead in their tracks because, “Oh, it’s not for us.”

Parents must take a good, hard look at themselves and think, “Who do I think I am? Am I perfect? Do I have every single good quality that exists? Why should they even want to consider a *shidduch* from our family?”

Every single individual has failings, but the nature of a person is to see only the faults of another and remain blind to his own. And yet, even once a person is aware of his own faults and would therefore be willing to overlook similar faults in another, it would be worthwhile for him to keep in mind what *Chazal* say (*Yevamos* 63a): “נחית דרגא ונתיב אתתא” – one must step down a level to find a *shidduch*.

There is no place for arrogance when it comes to marrying off one’s children. When a *shidduch* is suggested and the prospective match is heard to have good *middos* and *yiras Shamayim*, the answer must be a resounding yes! Even if it is not exactly what the parents wanted, or if being *meshadech* with that particular family will not quite give them high scores in others’ minds, they must not turn it down. Ultimately, to Hashem they will have scored highest for rescuing their children from a bitter fate.

To be continued next week, be’ezeras Hashem.

Q & A

SHOULD I SEND MY CHILDREN AWAY FOR SHABBOS?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I come from a large family, baruch Hashem, and most of my siblings are marrying off their children already. Whenever there is an aufruf/Shabbos sheva brachos, they expect everyone to attend – but only the couples. Children are not invited to join. Therefore, if I want to take part in their simchos, I must send my children away for Shabbos.

My husband thinks it is ridiculous, and he does not agree to this arrangement. We keep running into the same issue: I want to be part of each family simcha but he doesn't agree to send the children away for Shabbos. Sometimes, I can convince him to give in, but when he refuses and we therefore cannot attend, the rest of my family gets upset that we missed it. This bothers me very much.

Every simchah creates strife and causes our shalom bayis to suffer. Perhaps the Rosh Yeshiva can help by giving us some guidance.

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I received your letter.

Your husband is right. It should never be your first

choice to send your children away for Shabbos. All week, children look forward to Shabbos; they want to be home for Shabbos, eat the seudos together, and get some attention from both their father and mother. Additionally, Shabbos is an opportunity for parents to instill in their children a love for Hashem and a love for the holy Shabbos.

It isn't fair for people to invite others to a simcha with the stipulation that children cannot attend. If you can't bring your children along, it's better to eat the seudah at home and go over afterwards to wish everyone "mazel tov." If the simcha is too far to walk to or in another city, just stay home.

Shabbos seudos are a time to convey messages of emunah to the children. The Zohar teaches (Parshas Yisro 88b) that by eating three seudos on Shabbos, one demonstrates that he is a child of Hashem and that he has emunah. The Zohar states further that when a person is zoche to eat three seudos on Shabbos, a bas kol proclaims that he has emunah. This teaches us that the Shabbos seudos are a time to imbue our children with emunah.

Understandably, one still must daven for clarity to know how to conduct himself. There are some occasions where you will have to send your children away for Shabbos, but it should never take precedence over staying at home and spending time with your family.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Kesiva v'chasima tova; may you have a sweet and blessed new year.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 210

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