



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

NO MORE DISCORD

פֶּן יֵשׁ בְּכֶם שָׂרֵשׁ פְּרָה רָאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה

Lest there be among you a root that produces bitter and toxic growth.

Every year, we hear the *shofar*. We hear the same sounds we heard last year, and the year before that. But there is a question we have to ask ourselves: Are we actually hearing the *shofar's* message?

The Arizal teaches that the word **שָׂרֵשׁ פְּרָה רָאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה** (*Devarim 29:17*), referring to a person who breeds negativity and *machlokes* among *Klal Yisrael*. The *shofar's* cry tells us: **Stop. Take a look at yourself. Are you to blame for increasing conflict in your life and in the lives of those around you?**

Silent Strength

Mohorosh teaches that when a person engages in difficult *avodos* — davening passionately for many hours each day; learning Torah diligently, with single-minded focus; giving huge amounts of *tzedaka* to anyone and everyone; and so on — all while harboring hatred for another Jew in his heart, all his hard work is laughable. In *Shamayim*, they say about him: “First remove the loathing from your heart, and then we’ll look at the other things you do” — for **what value is there in one’s *avodos Hashem* when he hates another one of Hashem’s children?**

The first thing we need to change is to stop breeding negativity and conflict. We must stop being the “root that produces bitter growth.”

It isn’t just about not **starting** the fight — it’s about being smart enough to allow a quarrel to die. Human nature is to want to fight back. After being blamed or shamed, retaliation is very tempting — but **often, the most powerful response is no response at all**. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:6*), עיקר התשובה כשישמע בזיונו ידום וישתוק — The greatest form of *teshuva* is remaining quiet in the face of disgrace. By accepting humiliation with love, one can be *zoche* to rectify everything.

Carrying Mail

We must also stop speaking negatively about other people, for can anything breed more ill will in *Klal Yisrael* than *lashon hara*? Speaking *lashon hara* is such a grave *aveira*, to the point that *Chazal* teach us (*Eruchin 15b*) that it’s worse than the three cardinal sins.

And as for listening to *lashon hara*, know that the same person who delivers mail to your home also takes your outgoing mail and delivers it to others. Gossip works the same way — those people who constantly talk to you about others are also talking about you behind your back.

As we listen to the *shofar* this year, may we be *zoche* to hear not just its sound — but also its message, loud and clear.

Atzaso Emunah Re’eh, Shoftim 5786

MOHOROSH “SPEAKS

ROSH HASHANA

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

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A TIME OF MERCY

Dear ...,

The months of Elul and Tishrei are a time that Hashem gave us out of His mercy for us — it's a time when we can do *teshuva* and return to Hashem.

There was once a wise and compassionate king who reigned over a large empire. He ruled his kingdom fairly and was beloved by all his subjects.

Since the king spent his days in the royal palace, the only ones who could speak to him regularly were his closest advisors and high-ranking ministers. Once a year, the king traveled through his empire, visiting all the towns and villages. That was the time when even his simplest subjects — farmers, peasants, laborers and the like — were able to meet with the king without an appointment and speak to their beloved ruler. (Likutei Torah, Re'eh 32:2)

This time of year is Hashem's 'journey' through His kingdom. It's a time when even the simplest, lowliest Jews can come to Hashem and beg for compassion. It's not a scary time — on the contrary, it's a beautiful time of closeness to Hashem. Take a look in a *machzor* and see the poignant *piyutim* that fill us with longing for *kirvas elokim*.

We All Believe...

Read the words of **וְכָל מֵאֲמִינִים**, for example:

וְכָל מֵאֲמִינִים — we all believe,

שֶׁהוּא חַי וְקַיִם — that Hashem is forever,

הַטוֹב — He is good,

וּמְטִיב לְרַעִים וּלְטוֹבִים — He does kindness, both with the wicked ones and with the good ones.

הַפּוֹתֵחַ יָד לְדוֹפְקֵי בְּתוּבָה — He opens the door to those who want to repent.

שֶׁהוּא פְּתוּחָה יָדוֹ — He stretches out His hand for us to return.

הַצּוֹפֶה לְרַשֵּׁעַ וְחֹפֵץ בַּהַצְדָּקָה — He searches for the good in the *rasha*.

A Beautiful Time!

This is not frightening — it's so moving and beautiful! It's a time when we see the greatness of Hashem's compassion for us and the power of *teshuva*.

Instead of being afraid, say some Tehillim each day. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 2:73*), that saying Tehillim regularly brings a person closer to Hashem and helps him do *teshuva*. This is why all of *Klal Yisrael* says more Tehillim during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*.

Kesiva vachasima tova.

Adapted from *Atzaso Emunah, Re'eh 5783*

Hashem determines the fate of the entire universe for

the following year. Life and death hang in the 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 Breslov 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 *tziyun* 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 *tziyun* and pouring their hearts out? Who would be attracted to an article highlighting the *teshuva*, the *tefilla*,

The Rebbe promised to help all those who come to him for Rosh Hashana and give them a year full of blessings!

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the crying and the davening that takes place in Uman ‘round the clock?

Like a hospital, the Rebbe’s *tziyun* 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 people will view others as odd, and a newcomer to Uman can 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 *tziyun* wisely and daven to merit a sweet new year.

What about the Women!?!?

Being 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.



Countless miracles 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 people who won’t even 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 (*Chayei Moharan* 403), “**He who is with me for Rosh Hashana can rejoice the entire year.**”

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



I read your question over and over and I cannot understand how a *Yid*, who is holy and pure, would seek out a relationship with a *goy*! It is so clear to me what *Chazal* say (*Sotah* 3), “אין אדם עובר עבירה אלא אם כן” – “נכנס בו רוח שטות” – a person does not sin unless a foolish spirit has entered him. Your actions make no logical sense; a *רוח שטות* has entered you, *Hashem yishmereinu*.

The *eitza* for you is to do as the Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:1): “עיקר הכנעתו של יצר הרע הוא על ידי התורה” – the main way of subduing the *yetzer hara* is with the Torah. The Rebbe explains that the Torah corresponds to the letter ‘ו’ (whose numerical value is six) because the *luchos* were six *tefachim* long by six *tefachim* wide. The letter ‘ו’ is in the shape of a stick that is used for beating, alluding to the fact that the Torah can be used to “beat” the *yetzer hara*, who tries to drive a person insane. The insane can’t understand the voice of reason, only that of force and beatings; so too, one who sins (and who is considered “insane”) must be “struck” with the Torah. Only by learning Torah will he be able to overcome his *yetzer hara* and stop sinning.

A person who has lost his mind can’t listen to words; an insane person understands only one language: that of the stick. The same applies to you – if the *yetzer hara* has ensnared you in his net, you must grab the stick and go to battle. Open a *Mishnayos* and start learning one *perek* after another. You won’t understand what you are learning at first, because after succumbing to *p’gam habris* so often, one loses his power of concentration. Nonetheless, be persistent and continue learning, for this is what will save you and cleanse you from sin. The Rebbe teaches (*Sichos Haran* 19) that even if a person has already fallen into the *yetzer hara*’s clutches and has sunk to the depths of impurity, he can still be saved by learning Torah. No matter how low he has fallen, if he will learn a set amount of Torah each day, he will eventually emerge from his filthy state.

R’ Nosson relates (*Chayei Moharan* 573) that after he heard the Rebbe say this, he asked if Torah learning can also help a person who has succumbed to the *aveira* of *p’gam habris* *R”l*. In response, the Rebbe cried out with passion, “Do you know how powerful the Torah is? Torah is stronger and greater than everything.”

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Q & A

IS THERE STILL A WAY OUT FOR ME?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I am a sixteen-year-old bachur who listens to your shiurim regularly. I discovered the hotline approximately half a year ago and I deeply connected to the concepts of hisbodedus and seder derech halimud.

Up until recently, I could never understand why the Rosh Yeshiva speaks about the importance of shemiras einayim so often; I always viewed those who are noticeably vigilant as simply wanting attention. This was all until I once got access to a phone without a filter. I started watching inappropriate material and my decline was swift in coming. Since being exposed, I am hungry for filth and always searching for more – I even started hanging out with non-Jews in parks and I am sinking lower and lower.

When I take an honest look at myself, I don't like what I see. I desperately need a way out of the muck that I am in. I still want a chance at life; I don't want to grow up to be a depraved sinner who chases aveiros all day. With tears in my eyes, I am begging the Rosh Yeshiva to please give me an eitzah! I have already tried advice that I've gotten from others but nothing has helped. I need guidance and a guarantee that I too can be helped.

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

I am assuming that you don't know the consequences of your actions. If you would even begin to fathom how severe *p'gam habris* is, if you would know even one percent of the terrible punishments that await one who commits this sin, you would never hang out in parks looking to do *aveiros*.

The *aveira* of *p'gam habris* is so terrible; it is worse than any other sin in the entire Torah (Shulchan Aruch, Even Ha'ezer 231). Chazal teach (Niddah 13b) that when a person transgresses the sin of *p'gam habris*, it is as if he has committed murder and worshipped *avoda zara*, and he deserves to be killed. Even physically, this *aveira* inflicts tremendous damage upon a person – it causes one to lose his hair and his eyesight, causes a bad odor to emit from one's mouth, causes one to age before his time and brings much suffering upon a person (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 240:14).

When a person sins in this area, he loses everything. If he is single, he forfeits his *shidduch* and if he is married, he loses his *shalom bayis* (Likutei Moharan 2:87). Why would you want to lose your chances of ever being married? Why would you choose to destroy your life?

Don't think you will be able to hide your actions by hanging out in the park, away from the eyes of those in your community. The Rebbe ridiculed those who engage in such despicable acts and said that in the end, they will be humiliated before all. The Rebbe said (Sichos Haran 304), "או נסיון, או בזיון" – either a temptation or a disgrace. Every person has *nisyonos*; if he fights temptation, their status will remain those of *nisyonos* that he battles but does not succumb to, but if he does sin, he will ultimately be found out and disgraced.

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