



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

לעלוי נשמת
מרים חנה בת ר' דוד צבי הלוי
יוכבד בת ר' אליהו נתן

CHIZUK
FROM THE
PARSHA

IMPACT. INFLUENCE. INSPIRE.

וְיִסְפֹּר פֶּרְעָה לָהֶם אֶת חֲלֹמוֹ וְאֵין פּוֹתֵר אוֹתָם לַפֶּרְעָה

In the royal palace, Pharaoh was in panic mode. His frightening dreams would not leave his thoughts, and none of his advisors' interpretations could calm him down. Only Yosef Hatzaddik's interpretation succeeded in setting his mind at ease. What was different about Yosef's explanation? Why did Pharaoh accept his but not the others'?

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Mohoran* 1:234) that telling stories of *tzaddikim* purify one's mind. Sharing and hearing tales such stories have the power to set a person's heart aflame and instill in him a strong desire to become a *tzaddik*, too. It is important to know, however, that in order for the story to accomplish this, one must know **how** to relate them.

Stories... with a Risk

Dramatic stories are the ones that are most often told: *the tzaddik who caused water to materialize in the desert for his thirsty talmid... the tzaddik who transformed a cripple into a healthy person... The tzaddik whose blessing resuscitated a dying man...* Hearing miraculous tales like these are a mega-injection of *emunas chachamim*, but not always do they have a lasting impact. They even pose an element of risk: the listener may merely be left with the feeling of, "Wow! This *tzaddik* was someone special for whom *avodas Hashem* came easy. I'll never get there; I'll never be a *tzaddik*."

The truth that must be told is that every *tzaddik* only attained greatness after enduring enormous hardships and persevering through them. Glossing over their trials and extraordinary inner strength defeats the purpose of the stories! The hard-fact, true-to-life situations are the narratives which must be told, for such stories imbue the listener with strength to withstand his own challenges.



Helpful or Not?

When the royal advisors lined up before Pharaoh, each had something else to say. "You will bear seven daughters and then bury them all," or "You will conquer seven nations and they will all rebel against you." None of these interpretations set Pharaoh's mind at ease, for none of them included any practical application at all! Pharaoh couldn't accept them, because his heart screamed, "What am I supposed to do with that information? When I am faced with the challenges you describe, how will this help me?"

Yosef's words were different. He also spoke of troubles, yet he included advice on how to deal with them. Finally, this was something that resonated with Pharaoh, and this interpretation was able to be accepted. Not surprisingly, this was also the catalyst for Yosef's new position as leader of Mitzrayim. Having endured bitter hardships in his personal life, Yosef Hatzaddik was a paradigm of fortitude and was able to teach others how to remain strong in trying times, too.

May we always take an example from *tzaddikim* and persevere, and we will then be *zoche* to reach great heights.

Toch Hanachal, Mikeitz 5761

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

א פרייליכן חנוכה

In the middle of the dark, cold winter, *Klal Yisrael* celebrates the joyous *yom tov* of Chanukah. It is a time of warmth, joy and light; eight days when we commemorate our miraculous victory over the Greeks, as well as the restoration of the *Beis Hamikdash*, which illuminated our lives.

Chazal tell us (*Bereishis Rabba* 2:4) that the *Yevanim* darkened the eyes of the Jews with their many decrees. In what way? They forced the Jewish People to engrave the horns of their oxen with the words, "We have no connection with the G-d of the Jews," *chas v'shalom*. Why was this referred to as "darkening our eyes"?

Deeply rooted in human nature is the desire to attain true happiness. People spend thousands of dollars each year in the pursuit of that ever-elusive joy, not realizing that it is impossible to acquire true contentment without acquiring *emunah* first.

Challenges are an unavoidable part of life. From small stresses like missed buses, upset bosses, and thwarted plans, to bigger issues like

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DON'T STOP MAKING SHIDDUCHIM

I received your letter.

If only there were more like you! How fortunate are you and how great is your reward that you occupy yourself with the great *mitzvah* of making *shidduchim* – there is no greater *zechus* than this.

Mohorosh wrote the following in his *tzava'ar*:

"I have had the *zechus* of bringing over two thousand *shidduchim* to fruition, and I daven to be able to carry out more *shidduchim* as long as I live, and thereby protect our youth from the *yetzer hara*. I hereby promise every *bachur* or single girl who will come to my *tzion* after my passing and say the entire *sefer Tehillim* as a *zechus* for me, that I will make every possible effort to help him/her find his/her intended match. Consider this a firm promise on my part. With this, I end my will and you can publish it for all to see. May Hashem help that His holy Name be sanctified, both while I am still alive and also after my passing. *Amen v'amen*."

A Holy Battle

The heartache you feel is the *yetzer hara's* doing. He knows that he does not have the same level of control over a person who is married; therefore, he tries with all his might to prevent *shidduchim* from happening. *Chazal* teach us (*Yevamos 63b*) that as soon as a person gets married, he is protected from *aveiros*. The *yetzer hara* does not want to release his prey because he wants them to continue sinning.

Just look at the fact that today, girls are encouraged to pursue a degree or a career and only afterwards consider marriage. Parents are persuaded that this is the best option for their child, but really it is a trap of the *yetzer hara* so he can prevent *shidduchim* from being carried out. He celebrates every time a girl chooses her education over *shidduchim*.

Likewise, parents are advised not to listen to *shidduch* suggestions for their sons in the middle of a *zman* so that they should continue *shteiging*. Marrying at a young age has become something to laugh at. As a result, many people actually end up going against the Torah and *Chazal*, who instructed us to marry off our children young and thereby protect them from *aveiros*.

The *yetzer hara* is trying to stop you, and that is why you are so full of doubt. Why focus on the isolated incident in which one couple divorced? Why not focus on the many who are married and live wonderful lives? **If you were blessed to be the right *shaliach* until now, carry on with this tremendous *mitzvah*.** Continue with your holy work to help *Klal Yisrael*.

Still Worthwhile

I am so grateful that Hashem has given me the *zechus* to have been the *shadchan* for so many couples. Throughout the years, I've also had a handful who ended up getting divorced, yet that doesn't stop me from davening to be able to continue carrying out more *shidduchim* and having a part in establishing more *batim ne'emanim* forever.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 192

strained finances, *shalom bayis* problems, or health issues... the list the list goes on and on. A person who does not have *emunah* firmly etched into his being will easily fall into despair when he is confronted with challenges. Without faith to hold onto, his joy and vitality get sucked out of him and life loses all meaning.

Conversely, a person who lives with *emunah* is clear in the belief that Hashem is behind every detail of his life. He knows that everything that happens to him is perfectly planned and that nothing is without reason. With this mindset, his life can be full of joy. His hardships don't break him, because he knows that they, too, are from Hashem and certainly for his benefit. **By talking to Hashem constantly and asking Him for help, he can be strong and overcome all difficulties.**

This clarity of faith is what the *Yevanim* sought to eradicate. By forcing us to denounce our faith, they "darkened our eyes," stripping us of every ounce of happiness. Only later, after the *Chashmonaim* defeated the Greeks and worked hard to infuse us with *emunah* again, was our joy restored.

Source of Joy

Besides attempting to uproot our *emunah*, the *Yevanim* enacted many decrees to prevent us from fulfilling the *mitzvos*, specifically targeting the *mitzvos* of *Shabbos*, *bris milah*, and *kiddush hachodesh*. The first letters of *שבת*, *מילה*, and *חודש* spell out the word *שמח*, because each of these *mitzvos* go hand in hand with joy.

This connection between these *mitzvos* and *simcha* is alluded to in various places in the Torah. *Chazal* tell us (*Yalkut Shimoni Beha'aloscha 5725*) that when the *passuk* says "וביום שמחתכם," it is referring to *Shabbos*, because *Shabbos* is a day that was given for us to rejoice in. In

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accepted by the Jewish People with *simcha* and is performed with a tremendous amount of joy to this very day. *Rosh Chodesh*, the Gemara teaches (*Pesachim 77*), is our guide to the dates of all our happy times – the *yamim tovim*; therefore, it is considered a *yom tov* of its own and is celebrated monthly by singing and dancing at *kiddush levana*. These three *mitzvos* have a special connection to *simcha*, a special power to bring joy to those who perform them.

Why did the Greeks put such an emphasis on these *mitzvos*? They wanted to topple us from our very foundation – they knew that by depriving us of our connection to Hashem, which is our source of *simcha*, we would be deprived of our life force and of the will to live.

In the Rema's colossal work on the Shulchan Aruch, he begins with the words, "שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד" – I keep Hashem before me always. His last words are, "וטוב לב משתה תמיד" – One must always be in a joyous frame of mind. These two *pesukim* are closely connected: how can a person constantly be *b'simcha* when life can be so full of pain? Only if he keeps Hashem before his eyes, remembering that Hashem is near him, with him and helping him every moment. This *emunah* is what generates real, constant joy.

Simcha First

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:52*) that when doing *hisbodedus*, a person should choose to focus on one *middah* at a time and implore Hashem to help him overcome that specific negative trait. Only after he masters that first *middah* should he move on to the next one. This gives rise to a question: We all have so many character imperfections we would like to rectify. Where do we begin? What should we tackle first?

First and foremost should be the *middah* of *simcha*. All *aveiros* and other bad traits stem from sadness, and they will automatically fall away when a person is in a positive frame of mind. We need to constantly daven to Hashem to help us

regard to *bris milah*, the Gemara teaches (*Shabbos 120*) that this *mitzvah* was ac-

cepted by the Jewish People with *simcha* and is performed with a tremendous amount of joy to this very day. As a result, we will be able to improve in all areas.

R' Ozer, a talmid of R' Nosson of Breslev, was a tremendous oved Hashem who was always seen with a somber countenance. His intensity of devotion to Hashem didn't lend itself to lighthearted joy, and his smiles were few and far between. When R' Nosson heard of his talmid's perpetually serious demeanor, he rebuked R' Ozer, saying, "This is not the approach I learned from the Rebbe. The main thing is to be happy! At times it is appropriate to be serious, but that is secondary."

Let us strengthen ourselves to focus on *simcha*, making it a number one priority in our lives.

Today is Not Here to Stay

Hardships come up. Every person has days when very it's hard to be happy. Remember, though, that this day will soon be history and this challenge will be just a memory. Don't let it get you down! Don't waste your time on this world wallowing in a bad mood. *Chazal* teach us (*Tanchuma Shemini*), "אין השמחה ממתנת לאדם, לא כל מי ששמח היום" – don't wait to become happy, because happiness is fleeting. **Joy isn't sustainable unless you work on making yourself happy, no matter what you are going through.** Don't get stuck in the *yetzer hara's* trap of "Today is a goner; I'll try to be happy tomorrow" – you don't know what tomorrow will bring! Work on being happy today.

Happiness is not dependent on circumstances. **The choice of how to live your life lies in your hands.** ראה אנכי נותן היום – Hashem gives you the day itself; you choose what to make of it. It is up to you to turn it into קללה or ברכה – if you will focus on the miracles in the smallest details of life and celebrate them, you will live a life of *bracha*, but if you highlight the negative and allow it to completely overtake you, your life will be a very sad one.

בחרת בחיים – Choose the good life, the successful life. The happy life.

*Toch Hanachal, Mikeitz 5759;
 Sichos Mohorosh Erech V'tov Lev Mishteh Tamid;
 Sichos Mohorosh Erech Simcha*



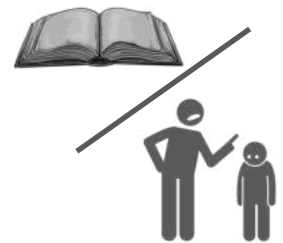
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Q & A

CAN TEFILLA TAKE THE PLACE OF CHINUCH?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I recently read a letter from the Rosh Yeshiva, written for a mother whose son was rebelling against the Torah way. In the letter, the Rosh Yeshiva wrote to her that the way to merit erliche children is with constant tefillos.

This seems odd to me, because if a home is not the way it should be and the chinuch is not up to par, how can tefilla be enough? If the children are lacking in tznius, if a child buys himself a smartphone, or if any other hashkafic issue arises, is it enough to simply turn to Hashem and ask Him to take "responsibility" and help the situation? Or is it the responsibility of the parents to establish and enforce proper behavior?

Can tefilla really take the place of proper chinuch? How can it be that davening for righteous children is all it takes to raise an erliche family?

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Dear ...,

The letter you read is not a letter of general guidance to all parents in all situations. It was addressed to parents of children who no longer listen to what they say. When dealing with grown children who have strayed from Yiddishkeit R"l and who spurn all attempts to set them back on track, giving mussar only backfires. Chazal teach us (Yevamos 65b) that just as it is a mitzvah to admonish a person if he will accept mussar, it is also a mitzvah to remain silent if the rebuke will be rejected.

Of course, parents must teach their children the proper way to behave. **Chinuch begins when children are very young and still receptive to what their parents have to say.** Those who raise their children properly from a young age will reap the rewards of their hard labor, whereas for those who are too lazy or afraid to do so, the end is very bitter.

Shlomo Hamelech famously said (Mishlei 13:24), חוּשׁ שְׁבֵטוֹ שׂוֹנֵא בֶן – he who spares the rod hates his child, while a parent who loves his child makes sure to discipline him. Chazal teach us (Shemos Rabba 1:1) that if a parent is not mechanech his children, they will ultimately leave Yiddishkeit. We see this multiple times in the Torah, once with Avraham Avinu – he remained silent when he saw Yishmael busy with avoda zara, and eventually had to drive him away so that he would not influence Yitzchak. Similarly, Yaakov Avinu loved Eisav and did not reprimand him, and Eisav later committed many terrible aveiros. This is true today, too – if a person does not take the opportunity to be mechanech his children while they are still young, he will regret his actions later on.

If you'll reread the details of the letter-writer's question, you'll see that the discussion is about a teenager who no longer listens to his parents, relying on his own wisdom (or lack of it) instead. In such a case, admonishing him or trying to enforce proper behavior will not be effective at all. Quite the opposite, it will be as Shlomo Hamelech says (Mishlei 9:8), פֶּן יִשְׁנָאָךְ, אל תוכח לו, – Do not rebuke him, for it will only push him further away.

Tefilla remains the most effective tool, whatever the situation may be. Parents must constantly daven for success in raising children to be righteous Jews. Even for a person whose children have turned their backs on Yiddishkeit R"l, it is vital to continue davening for them, because tefilla is the most powerful cure. Even when it seems as if there is no hope, a person who remains strong with tefilla and hisbodedus will witness miracles.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #1, page 147

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