

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY PUBLICATION

BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLEV ZT"L

GIVEN OVER BY MOHOROSH ZT"L AND THE ROSH YESHIVA SHLIT"A

PARSHAS DEVARIM

8 Av, 5785

ISSUE #59

CHIZUK from the PARSHA

MAXIMIZE THIS DAY

אתה עבר היום את גבול מואב את ער

Today, you shall cross the border of Moav at Ar.

How many people are as successful as they wish to be? Taking a poll would reveal a shockingly low percentage. For most, success is a dream that is just too difficult to attain. Ironically, the wealthiest people in the world are not the smartest ones, and the most capable individuals can live out their years in poverty. What, then, is the secret to success?

Often, it is the lack of mental fortitude which prevents a person from being able to climb the corporate ladder. His own mind can quickly become his greatest enemy as it begins to bombard him with negative self-talk. *You're just not good at this kind of thing. Remember all the times you've failed in the past? Why do you think this time will be different? Or, There are so many things that can go wrong. Why bother trying if this venture is doomed to fail?* Thoughts like these take him over and paralyze him, stopping potential success in its tracks.

Today is the Key

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:272) that in order to be successful, one must look only at היום – today. Not at the past; not at the future. *"What are my responsibilities **right now**?"* we must constantly ask ourselves. *"What can I do to maximize **this day** to its fullest?"* This approach will result in success in material matters, and even more importantly, in the spiritual realm as well.

Every Jew truly wants to be good and succeed in his *avodas Hashem*. In order to do so, one must first master his mind and not allow unproductive thoughts to immobilize him.

He must not dwell on the past, because such thoughts will deject him:

"I've never been able to control myself before; today won't be any different." Or, "I'm a loser anyway; look at how often I succumbed to my negative desires. Why should I bother trying again?"

... and he must close his mind to the future, because it will only overwhelm him:

"At the rate I'm going, I'll never accomplish my goals anyway; what's the point in trying?" Or, "I know I should try harder and invest more effort, but I won't be able to keep it up forever..."

In any area of *avodas Hashem*, a lifetime of perfection is impossibly daunting but a commitment for **just today** is very attainable. By looking at just the here and now, everything becomes possible. With the mindset of היום, a person can attain true greatness.

This is the powerful message in this week's *parsha*. In order for us to overcome the wickedness of מואב and ער, referring to the forces of evil that try to distance us from Hashem, the key is to take the lesson of היום – today. If we will reject all thoughts of the past or future and not allow them to intimidate us, we will be *zoche* to success in all areas.

Zos Hatorah, Parshas Devarim

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

שבת חזון

“

The Shabbos that immediately precedes Tisha B'av is called *Shabbos Chazon*. The word חזון is *roshei teivos* – half anger and half consolation (*Sefer Shaar Hamelech*). Tisha B'av is a sad time but the sorrow is not total; we can be comforted because when Mashiach comes, it will become a *yom tov*.

It's all a matter of perspective. We see this in the well-known story that *Chazal* tell us (*Makkos* 24):

A group of *chachamim* passed the ruins of the *Bais Hamikdash*, and at the sight of the terrible destruction, they all broke down in tears. *Rebbi Akiva*, however, began to laugh! Confused by his reaction to the unspeakable tragedy, the *chachamim* asked for an explanation.

"Along with the nevuah that warned us of the imminent churban," Rebbi Akiva said, "we were also told about our eventual geula. Just like the first portion of the prophecy has

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לרפואת יונכד בת חסי' רחל רבקה בש"י

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Dear ...

I received your letter.

Stay strong and do not allow despair to overtake you. **You must believe that Hashem has a *shidduch* waiting for you** and that you will become a *chassan* when the right moment comes.

It's easy for me to say, "Stay strong," yet it is gruelingly difficult for someone in your position to remain positive. There is no greater anguish than that of a *bachur*, and no one in the world can truly understand your pain and loneliness. This is especially true of one who succumbs to the sin of *p'gam habris*, which causes him to become even more depressed and feel as if it is impossible for him to stop this destructive habit.

Despite how hard it must be for you, remain strong! The Rebbe gave us the gift of *hisbodedus*, which is the solution to every problem. Try it! Find a quiet place and pour out your sorrow and pain to Hashem. Tell Him:

Ribbono shel Olam, my compassionate Father, help me find my shidduch! It is so difficult for me to be alone; the yetzer hara is raging within me and I continuously succumb to my temptations. What can I do? I don't want to sin, yet I feel like I'm chained to my aveiros and I can't break free.

Hashem, help me find my shidduch so that I should be able to remain holy and pure! Help me – not in my own merit, but in the merit of the tzaddikim who sanctified Your Name and did everything to serve You.

Take a trip to Mohorosh's *tzion* in Yavniel. All his life, Mohorosh worked tirelessly to help those who are single and alone, and he pledged to continue to intercede on their behalf in *Shamayim* after his *pe-tirah*, as well. His *tzava'ah* states the following: "I promise any *bachur* or single girl who comes to my *kever* and recites the entire *sefer Tehillim* in my *zechus*, that I will do everything in my power to help them find their *shidduch*. I promise this with a strong guarantee."

Countless people have merited miracles after visiting Mohorosh's *tzion*; single *bachurim* and girls travel from far and wide to be able to recite *Tehillim* and see the fulfillment of Mohorosh's promise.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #2, page 100



been fulfilled, I wholeheartedly believe that the second part will come true as well."

Tzaddikim can see to the core of the matter, beyond the layers of struggle and sorrow. Although Tisha B'av is a sad day, if we look a little deeper we can find consolation within the grief. We don't say *tachanun* on Tisha B'av because it is a *moed*; one day, Mashiach will come and take us out of *galus*, this day will become a *yom tov*. This time of mourning will be transformed to a time of festivity and delight, when we will rejoice in our *yeshua* and the miraculous *nissim* that Hashem will perform.

Even in the times of the *geula*, we will continue to read *Megillas Eich*a on the ninth day of Av. However, it will be read in a happy tune, following a joyful blessing of "*Shehecheyanu!*" just like with *Megillas Esther* on Purim. This is why many Breslev *chassidim* recite *Megillas Eich*a twice on Tisha B'av (instead of just the standard one-time night reading) like *Megillas Esther* is read twice on Purim, signifying that Tisha B'av will ultimately be transformed into a *yom tov* in the same category as Purim.

The Story of *My Life*

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 2:101) that when saying *Tehillim*, a person should try to "find himself" within the *pesukim*, connecting the words to his own life. David Hamelech filled pages and pages about the wars that he constantly fought and the countless enemies that sought to destroy him. Can't we relate? We are all in a perpetual state of battle with the *yetzer hara*, our sworn enemy, who consistently seeks to oppress and annihilate us. When saying *Tehillim*, we can make it personal, using David Hamelech's words to tell our own story.

The same principle applies to *Megillas Eich*a. Reading it is painful. The story hurts. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 2:67) that on Tisha B'av, we cry not just because of the *churban* that took place thousands of years ago – we are really crying over our own personal *churban*, today.

The words of this tearful lament should be translated to our spiritual desolation.

עֲיִנִי עֲיִנִי יָרְדָה מִיָּמִים – *My heart cries because I am so far from being an erliche Yid.* אֶנִּי בּוֹכֶה עַל אֶלֶה – *I am crying for my aveiros, which cause so much destruction in my life.* חֲטָא חֲטָא וְנִשְׁפָּלִים – *I am mourning my own downfall; I keep falling into the yetzer hara's trap and I sin again and again.*

While we grieve over the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and plead for the *geula*, let's



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take the opportunity to daven to Hashem for our own redemption. Let's beseech Him to help us in our individual struggles so that we should not delay the *geula*. הַשְׁיִבְנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשׁוּבָה – Hashem, please bring us back to You!

Renewal

On *Motzei Tisha B'av* we say *kiddush levanah* and sanctify the new moon. The Arizal writes (*Pri Eitz Chaim*) that this is a praiseworthy *minhag*.

The lesson of the moon is an important concept in *avodas Hashem* and is poignantly appropriate for this time. Each month, immediately after the moon reaches its lowest point and becomes completely invisible, it renews itself and begins to wax once more. The same is with us on *Motzei Tisha B'av*. After spending nearly twenty-six hours fasting, mourning and



davening – and still Mashiach has not come – we feel helpless and lost. Yet that is precisely the time to refresh ourselves to begin serving Hashem with renewed fervor.

The symbolic *mitzva* of *kiddush levanah* should not be done while still in a state of mourning. *Halacha* tells us to go home, break our fast and put on regular shoes, and only after that say *kiddush levanah* – with vitality and joy. We must be sure to include a heartfelt *tefilla* for the realization of the *passuk*, וְהָיָה אֹר הַלְבָנָה כְּאֹר הַחֲמָה (Yeshaya 30:26) – when the moon will be returned to her former light and glory.

May we be *zoche* to experience the ultimate redemption from our *galus* – both personal and as a nation – when the long-awaited prophecies of *geula* will be fulfilled and we will merit a complete consolation.

Sichos Mohorosh 1, 10, 16; Erech Bein Hametzarim and Erech Tisha B'av



there will no longer be *bechira*." Their teachings are one and the same – we don't have to wait until the

geula to live with Hashem and constantly feel His Presence. The Rebbe teaches how to experience this even while we are in *galus*, and when a person acutely feels that Hashem is with him, he will automatically call out to Him all the time.

The Rebbe gave us the gift of *hisbodedus*. He taught us to find a quiet place and pour out our hearts to Hashem, in the way one would with a close friend. One who follows the Rebbe's advice with *temimus* will be *zoche* to fulfill what Rashi says (*Vayikra 26:12*), אֲטִייל עִמָּכֶם בֵּן עֵדן כְּאֶחָד מִכֶּם – he will take a stroll with Hashem, so to speak (by talking to Hashem as he walks) and he'll experience *Gan Eden* on this world.

The greatest pleasure a person can experience is the sense that Hashem is with him all the time. There is nothing more blissful than being able to speak freely to Hashem and feel as if it is a face-to-face conversation. Lucky is a person who experiences this constantly; fortunate is he in this world and in the World to Come.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #1, page 78

THE ROSH YESHIVA SAYS:

"The only reason we are still in *galus* is because of the conflicts among us. Different groups in Klal Yisrael resent and reject each other – Ashkenazim dislike Sefardim, Sefardim dislike Ashkenazim, and there is much dislike and discord within each group, too. Mohorosh used to say that Klal Yisrael is comparable to a floundering ship at sea, and the nations that surround us have just one goal: to sabotage the ship and destroy us all. Therefore, **we must unite as one** and do our utmost to help each other survive this *galus*.

When Mashiach will arrive and the entire world will acknowledge Hashem's existence, there will be no more *machlokes* among us. May we be *zoche* to the *geula* speedily in our days."

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HOW MUCH LONGER WILL THIS GALUS BE?



Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

I look at the world around me and I'm frightened by what I see. The state of Yiddishkeit is deteriorating with alarming speed, and it's getting harder and harder to remain erlich. It is not for naught that R' Yochanan asked not to experience the coming of Mashiach because of how low the generation will have sunk (Sanhedrin 98b) – we so clearly see the tremendous spiritual challenges of our



generation and how so many people simply can't withstand their nisyonos.

How much longer will we have to suffer in this difficult and painful galus? When will Mashiach come and fulfill the prophecy of 'ומלאה הארץ דעה את ה'?

We are constantly exhorted to improve in so many areas, but shouldn't we focus only on what we can do to bring Mashiach, which will solve all our problems?

Thank you.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

I received your letter.

Of course we must focus on bringing Mashiach closer; everything we do to improve ourselves hastens his arrival.

If you want to bring the *geula* closer, start learning Mishnayos. *Chazal* teach us (*Vayikra Raba* 7:3) that Mashiach will come only in the merit of learning Mishnayos. The Bnei Yissaschar explains (*Ma'amarei Chodshei Tammuz-Av, Ma'amar 2*) that there are 528 hours in the Three Weeks, corresponding to the 528 *perakim* in *Shisha Sidrei Mishna*. The word מפתח (key) has the *gematria* of 528, too, showing that Mishnayos is the key to being redeemed from *galus*. If you dedicate yourself to learning Mishnayos, you'll have a share in bringing the *geula*.

Even in *galus*, you can live with the lesson that Mashiach will teach the world – that of *hisbodedus*. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:2) that Mashiach's weapon is *tefilla*; every battle that he'll wage and win will be solely through *tefilla*. By revealing the light of Hashem to every Jew, Mashiach will help us constantly feel His loving embrace. We'll talk to Hashem continuously and ask Him for whatever we need, as the Navi prophesized (*Tzefaniya* 3:9), "At that time... all nations will call out in the name of Hashem."

Know that the teachings of the Rebbe and those of Mashiach are one and the same. The Rebbe once remarked (*Chayei Moharan* 266), "The only difference between Mashiach and me is that now, people have a choice of whether to heed my words or not; however, when Mashiach comes

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