

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

Life is fraught with challenges, both big and small. Although we know that no one has it easy, the inevitable hardships still take us by surprise. Upset and aggravated, we question, we complain, "Why me? Why now? Why do I have to deal with this?"

Perspective is often all it takes to help us stay positive when faced with obstacles. "Could have been worse," is a frequently-used expression; however, it usually provides poor solace since it attempts to "disqualify" the difficulty from even being called difficult, simply because there is worse that exists. Nonetheless, perhaps we must think more deeply into this clichéd expression, for this is the key to a drastic attitude shift.

It's not just that it "could have been worse", but it probably even **should** have been! After all, is there anyone in the world who can confidently say that he has never done anything wrong and is not deserving of any punishment? If only! The unfortunate truth is that we have all sinned, yet in His infinite mercy, Hashem sends us relatively minor hardships to atone for our *aveiros* instead of the major *tzaros* we ought to have. No matter how big the problems are, they are small and insignificant relative to what we really deserve.

The Rebbe teaches this based on the oft-repeated *passuk* in this week's *parsha*: (Likutei Moharan 1:165)

לא תקם ולא תטר את בני עמך... ואהבת לרעך כמוך אני ה'

The simple meaning of the word רֵעַ is "your fellow," but it can also mean רַע – your bad. Hashem tells us, **וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ** – love the bad that happens to you, because of **כְּמוֹךָ** – the way you are. You really deserve harsh punishments, but **אֲנִי ה'** – I am the *Baal Harachamim*, so I'm treating you with tremendous mercy and bringing you smaller difficulties instead.

Rather than being a source of frustration, challenges should bring about a feeling of gratitude. "Thank You Hashem that it's only this! Thank You for allowing me to get off easy, for sending me this instead of the terrible tragedies which I really deserve."

There is usually a person to fault for our problems. Pointing fingers is very easy, yet this is when it's most crucial to remember that **everything is from Hashem – people are just His messengers**. There is no purpose in getting upset or taking revenge on others; the only solution is to turn to the One Above and do *teshuva*.

The *passuk* therefore tells us, **לֹא תִקֵּם וְלֹא תִטֵּר אֶת בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ** – Don't take revenge on those who have wronged you. **וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ** – Rather, love the bad that others have done to you, because **כְּמוֹךָ** – the way you are, it could have been a lot worse. Despite what you really deserve, **אֲנִי ה'** – I, Hashem, am treating you with mercy instead.

By internalizing that Hashem is in control and that nobody can harm us, we will rid ourselves of anger and resentment. We will then be able to fulfill the simple meaning of the *passuk*, **וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כְּמוֹךָ** and truly love others as we love ourselves.

May we be *zoché* to live in harmony with those around us and enjoy a happy and meaningful life.

Toch Hanachal, Seuda Shlishis Acharei-Kedoshim 5761

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

ל"ג בעומר



"Bar Yochai nim-shachta ashrecha..."

With Lag Ba'omer just around the corner, talk of traveling to Meron is on everyone's lips. When this time of year rolls around, Meron holds a mystical magnetic force, attracting people numbering in the hundreds of thousands. This spiritually charged day, called the "Yoma D'hilula of Reb Shimon," is Reb Shimon bar Yochai's personal *simcha*. Just like a wealthy *ba'al simcha* bestows gifts upon all those who join in his celebration, so does Reb Shimon.

The *Gemara* says (*Brachos* 9), כְּדָאֵי הוּא ר' שמעון לסמוך עליו בשעת כְּדָאֵי הוּא ר' – anyone in a difficult situation can be helped in the *zechus* of Reb Shimon, whose greatness is beyond the scope of our understanding. Throughout the long years of *galus*, Jews have come to Meron to plead for salvation and incredible *nissim* have resulted on this awesomely powerful day.

For One and All

There's nothing like Meron on Lag Ba'omer. The air is loaded with



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Dear ...

Fortunate are you that you wish to learn the *sefarim* of the holy Rebbe. The essence of Breslevar *chassidus* is studying the Rebbe's teachings, as the Rebbe states (*Likutei Moharan* 1:192), "The countenance, the intellect and the soul of a *tzaddik* can be found in his *sefarim*." Only one who learns the Rebbe's teachings can rightly say that he has a connection to Rebbe Nachman of Breslev.

Begin with the *sefer Likutei Moharan*. You will find many parts that are difficult to understand but don't let that stop you. The Rebbe taught (*Sichos Haran* 76) that even when a person does not understand what he is learning, he should not sit and break his head over it but rather keep going; continue saying the words and comprehension will come later, after learning it a few times. By learning *Likutei Moharan* each day, your *neshama* will awaken and begin to thirst for Hashem. The Rebbe said (*Chayei Moharan* 349), "A person who learns *Likutei Moharan*, can become a true *ba'al teshuva* from this *sefer*. Learning with an *emes* cleanses one's clogged blood vessels and causes him to become an *erliche Yid*."

Next, begin learning *Chayei Moharan* and *Sichos Haran* each day. These *sefarim* will be easier for you to understand. R' Nosson once said, "I learned more about the Rebbe from conversations with him [than from his teachings]." If you will learn the Rebbe's *sichos*, you will become a truly righteous Jew, as the Rebbe once remarked (*Chayei Moharan* 358), "Through every discussion I have with you, you can be *zoche* to become an *erliche Yid* – not just an *erliche Yid*, but an *erliche Yid* the way I define an *erliche Yid*."

Start with the second section of *Chayei Moharan*, which is replete with beautiful discussions of the Rebbe; once you complete it, go back and learn the first section of the *sefer*.

Additionally, establish a *shiur* in *Sippurei Ma'asios*. The Rebbe praised his stories extensively, saying (*Chayei Moharan* 25) that they awaken a person from his spiritual slumber.

Another important *sefer* to learn is *Sefer Hamiddos*. The Rebbe once remarked to his *talmid*, R' Naftali (*Chayei Moharan* 379), "My beloved friend, this *sefer* made me who I am."

Above all else, you must also establish a *shiur* in *Asher Banachal*. This multi-volume *sefer* comprises the letters Mohorosh wrote and is a guidebook for every situation one may find himself in.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #2, page 232



tremendous potential just waiting to be tapped into, and the area is packed with enormous crowds. Looking around, you will notice a fascinating sight. See the diversity?

White shirt, striped *kaftan* and fluorescent orange t-shirt blend as the people stand hand in hand, dancing with fervor and joy. *Chassidish*, *litvish*, *ashkenazi*, *sefardi*... Every Jew, no matter who he may be, finds his place at Reb Shimon Bar Yochai's *kever*.

The *sefer Bais Aharon* explains this as follows: "Just as Hashem is for all of *Klal Yisroel*, so is Reb Shimon Bar Yochai for all of *Klal Yisroel* – even for the lowliest amongst them." *Tzaddikim* speak the one language we all have in common: that of the *neshama*. This is why every Jew feels a connection to Reb Shimon.

In Your Own Corner

Elbowing and squeezing through thousands of people is part and parcel of the Meron experience. As thrilling as it is to brag to family and friends that "I made it into the *me'arah*," it isn't really necessary to forcibly push your way inside. The *kedusha* of Reb Shimon is not limited to the actual *me'arah*; the entire mountain and surrounding areas of Meron are saturated with holiness.



Whether you find yourself with hundreds of people ahead of you in line or you simply don't have the stamina to walk up the mountain, remember that the actual location is insignificant since you can connect to Reb Shimon from wherever you are. Find a quiet corner where you can actually hear your own thoughts and daven to Hashem in your own words. Ask for your *tefillos* to be answered in the *zechus* of all the *tzaddikim* buried there, and you'll surely receive the *yeshuos* you are davening for.

To Merit Children

The *Midrash* tells the following story:

There was once a childless couple that came to Reb Shimon bar Yochai for advice. "We are married for ten years and still have no children," they told him. "Is it time for divorce? Maybe we should each remarry and perhaps bear children from another marriage."

Reb Shimon agreed to arrange the *get*, on condition that their divorce be celebrated as a joyous event. "Just like you celebrated your marriage with a *seuda*, so too should your divorce be with a *seuda*."

The couple prepared a festive meal in their



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home and invited many guests to join, in gratitude to Hashem for the connection, love and understanding they had shared.

After drinking a bit too much wine, the husband stood up before the crowd and addressed his wife. "You have been so good to me all these years," he declared. "You were the light of my life and the joy of my days. Before you leave, I would like to give you a gift. Choose one thing from my house – anything your heart desires – to take along with you to your father's home."

He finished his drunken speech and promptly fell into a deep sleep. His wife then instructed the servants, "Lift the bed on which my husband is sleeping and carry it to my father's home."

When her husband awoke, he was surprised to find himself in his father-in-law's home – and was even more surprised to see his almost-ex-wife sitting across him! "Where am I? What is the meaning of this?!" He exclaimed.

"I chose you," she said simply. "Nothing is as important to me as you."

The couple then went back to Reb Shimon Bar Yochai and asked the tzaddik what to do. "If you love and value each other so much, don't get divorced," he advised. "May you be zoche to healthy, erliche children."

And so it was. The couple renewed their commitment to each other and built a beautiful family.

Time and again, childless couples have been zoche to children in the merit of Reb Shimon. The day of Lag Ba'omer holds this special power, too – the power of being granted children in the zechus of Reb Shimon.

Bringing Meron Home

Do you wish you can be in Meron but circumstances simply don't allow it? Are you wishing you could just hop onto the next plane and fly over?

Even if you will not get there this year, know that **you are where your mind is**. You can "be there" in the truest sense of the word – your *tefillos* can have the same potency as those said at the *me'arah*. All you need to do is stop for a few moments and focus; simply speak to Hashem and daven for whatever you may need, in the zechus of Reb Shimon Bar Yochai.

Looking to give your *tefillos* an extra boost? The most powerful way to connect to a tzaddik is through learning his *sefarim*. By learning *Zohar Hakadosh* or *Tikunei Zohar* – even just a few words! – your *tefillos* will gain an awesome strength and be able to accomplish everything you can possibly imagine.

Sichos Mohorosh, Erech Lag Ba'omer



learning the *passuk* (Bereishis 28:16), ויִיקֶץ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲכֵן יֵשׁ ה' בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנִכִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי.

Watching and listening from the other side of the door, the man heard Mohorosh explaining the *passuk* as follows, "And Yaakov awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely Hashem is present in this place, and I did not know!'" When Mohorosh said the words "present in this place," he pointed to the walls of his classroom, and when he said "and I did not know," he pointed to himself. Mohorosh then repeated it many times. The man later said that these powerful words made him feel as if the *passuk* was speaking directly to him! This lesson awakened a deep yearning in him; he felt as if his *neschama* was roused from sleep and he thought, "I didn't realize that Hashem is *במקום הזה* – right here with me! I can speak to Him at any moment!" With every lesson, Mohorosh infused the children with pure, unadulterated faith.

A *melamed* must imbue his students with *yiras Shamayim* by telling them stories of *tzaddikim*. When children hear *sip-purei tzaddikim*, it sets their hearts afire with desire to become *erliche Yidden*. The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:248) that relating stories of *tzaddikim* is a very powerful tool, since these stories awaken one's heart to serve Hashem. When a person sees what a *tzaddik* achieved by withstanding his challenges, he yearns to become a *tzaddik*, too. This is especially true with children; because of their innocence and purity, they absorb much more.

The Sanzer Rav zt"l once asked his children's *melamed* if he learns *mussar* with them. At his affirmative response, the Sanzer Rav pressed him further, "Which *mussar sefarim* do you teach them?"

"Sefer Chovos Halevavos," the *melamed* replied.

"That is not what I mean by *mussar*," was the Sanzer Rav's rejoinder. "I wanted to know if you tell them stories of the *tzaddik* Rebbe Elimelech from Lizhensk and his brother, the *tzaddik* R' Zusha. Stories about *tzaddikim* will awaken a yearning in them to also grow up to be *erlich*."

If you will be punctual and utilize your time to teach your *talmidim* Torah and *yiras Shamayim*, you will accrue immeasurable *zechusim*, as the *passuk* says (*Daniel* 12:3), וּמִצְדִּיקֵי הָרַבִּים – Those who teach righteousness to the multitudes will shine like the stars forever and ever. *Chazal* expound on these words (*Bava Basra* 8b), saying that this is referring to those who teach Torah to children. *Melamdin* are likened to the stars that illuminate the night sky; just as it is impossible to count the stars in the sky, so too are the *zechusim* of a *melamed* innumerable.

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #3, page 192



ADVICE FOR A MELAMED TO BE ON TIME TO CLASS

Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you for the letter you sent me with guidance on how to establish a Talmud Torah and teach the children properly.

I wanted to request chizuk on punctuality. I am by nature a last-minute person. The Rosh Yeshiva often repeats at the shiurim the importance of a melamed being on time. Now that we established the chadarim here in Eretz Yisroel, I really want to be able to apply myself properly. What can I do if being on time is against my nature?

Thank you.



The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

The position of a *melamed* is a tremendous *zechus* and is among the most valued to Hashem. At the same time, this position carries tremendous responsibility. If a *melamed* arrives late, does not fulfill his duties or leaves his *talmidim* without supervision, he commits a great sin. The Rambam writes (*Hilchos Talmud Torah* 2:4) that if a *melamed* leaves the classroom during the time that he is responsible for the children or does other things with them instead of learning, he falls under the category of 'רמיה' – Cursed is he who carries out the mission of Hashem deceitfully (*Yirmiyahu* 48:10).

A melamed must be on time. If that is something you cannot do, you must give up your job. The Rebbe once asked one of his *talmidim* who was a *melamed*, "How much money do you earn each week?" When the man specified the amount, the Rebbe made a calculation of how much it amounted to per hour and it was a very small sum. The Rebbe then remarked, "If this is the case, you can lose your reward in This World and in the Next for a few pennies. When a person steals money from another, it is possible to repay it and be forgiven. However, when a person wastes time that

was set aside for learning with children, he can never repay it and can never receive forgiveness." (*Sichos Haran* 240)

There is no *chizuk* I can give you on this topic. You must either learn to be punctual or find a different *parnassa*. A *melamed* must realize that his job is not like any other job; he is working for Hashem and with His precious *neshamos*. Hashem is always in the classroom, listening to every lesson and interaction, waiting to hear the *melamed* instill in his students *emunah* and *yiras Shamayim*.

Mohorosh was a *melamed* for many years. His goal was to inculcate *emunah* into his students, and he demanded complete *derech erez* from them at all times. Mohorosh's *talmidim* relate that in his classroom, Hashem's presence was tangible. The davening and learning were exemplary; it always seemed as if a special guest had just stepped in to observe the class's diligence.

There is a story told (*Sefer Parnassa Tova, Sichos V'hischazkus* 41) about a man who once needed a favor from Mohorosh. He went to meet him in the *cheder* where Mohorosh was employed and arrived in middle of class, just as they were

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