

SPARKS OF EMUNAH



HEICHAL HAKODESH BRESLEV WEEKLY NEWSLETTER
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CHIZUK from the PARSHA

SPECIAL FOR ME

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֶל הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם, לֵנֶפֶשׁ לֹא יִטְמָא בְּעַמִּי
Hashem told Moshe, "Say to the kohanim the sons of Aharon, and say to them..."

When Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to teach the *kohanim* about their laws of *tuma'as meis*, Hashem said to **tell** the *kohanim* – twice. Why the repetition?

Have you ever heard a lecture which was so on-target... for your neighbor? Ever read an inspiring book and thought, "My brother should read this"? We often deflect what we hear instead of taking it to heart, simply because change is uncomfortable. Instead, in our "holy" mission of correcting the world, we mentally transfer the *mussar* to others, completely forgetting that we are the ones who need to hear it most of all.

The truth of the matter is that whatever a person sees or hears was intended for him. One who is genuinely self-aware recognizes his weaknesses and knows that he is imperfect. When he hears sharp words of rebuke or reads a powerful piece of *mussar*, he knows that it was made for **him** to hear. He does not get defensive or shut it out, and his mind does not immediately jump to all the others who should be hearing it; rather he accepts the reproach as a wake-up call. Unafraid to look himself squarely in the face, he acknowledges his flaws and tries to correct them.



The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:121) that a person who truly wishes to grow takes a lesson from whatever he reads or hears. This is as David Hamelech says (*Tehillim* 40:8), אז אמרתי הנה באתי במגלת ספר כתוב עלי – When I learn a *sefer* and feel that it is written for me, it is a sign that לעשות רצונך אלקי חפצתי – I truly want to do Hashem's will.

This is the lesson that the *parsha* teaches us – this is the purpose of the repetition in the aforementioned *passuk*. Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to give over His command to the *kohanim*, but simply saying it was not enough. He had to make it clear to them that וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם – he was speaking specifically to them. They had to **take his words to heart and not think about all the other people who need to change**. This is how לֵנֶפֶשׁ לֹא יִטְמָא בְּעַמִּי – they learned not to disdain others because they realized that the *tzaddik* was talking to **them**; they understood that they must accept the *mussar* and work to improve.

The same is true for us. We tend to be blind to our own faults, blind to all the areas in which we must improve. Consequently, although hearing others point out our faults can be painful, it is also infinitely valuable – if it is an impetus for change. Let us make a point of **really** listening to what we hear (as uncomfortable as it may be!) and in this way we will be *zoche* to perfect ourselves and truly serve Hashem in the best way possible.

MOHOROSH SPEAKS

שבת קודש

“ Shabbos. The mere mention of the day evokes feelings of peace and tranquility.

But what about *erev Shabbos*? How does Friday look and feel?

In every Jewish home, much time and energy is invested in preparing for Shabbos properly, and this usually comes along with stress and tension. Therefore, we must also prepare **ourselves** by stocking up on endless amounts of patience, so that we will be able to greet Shabbos with joy and serenity.

Chazal tell a story (*Gittin* 22) of a couple that spent every single Friday fighting. No matter what, the *yetzer hara* always found a way to have them greet Shabbos with sour faces and hard feelings.

Hearing about this unfortunate state of affairs, R' Meir Baal Haness decided to get involved. One *erev Shabbos*, he knocked on their door and asked for permission to learn in their home. The quarreling couple was humbled, awed and quite surprised. Notwithstanding, they respectfully showed him to a quiet corner where he settled with his *sefarim*.

With the *gadol hador* in their own



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Dear ...

I received your letter.

What do you mean by saying, “*Hisbodedus* is not something that appeals to me”?! *Hisbodedus* is not some novel idea that the Rebbe conjured up; the Rambam writes (*Hilchos Tefilla* 1:1-2) that *tefilla* is a *mitzvas asei* and an obligation for every Jew. A person must daven to Hashem for his every desire in whichever language he prefers. It is a *mitzvah* to daven every single day, anytime or anyplace, and since *tefilla* is not limited to a specific time, women are also obligated in this *mitzvah*.

A Jew must never say, “*Hisbodedus* does not appeal to me”, since *hisbodedus* and *tefilla* are actual obligations. When the *Anshei Kenesses Hagedolah* foresaw the long, arduous *galus* and realized the need for formal *tefilla*, they established the specific *nusach* of *shacharis*, *mincha* and *maariv*; however, the concept of speaking to Hashem in one’s own words is something that every person must do.

It seems that you don’t really know what *hisbodedus* means. Perhaps you are under the impression that it’s a bizarre act and that’s why you think *hisbodedus* is not for you. I am assuming that you have never even attempted it, because once a person gives it a try and pours his heart out to Hashem, he begins to feel liberated. He experiences such pleasure from this that he no longer seeks anything else.

If you don’t “go for” *hisbodedus*, what will you do in the times of Moshiach? The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:2) that Moshiach’s weapon with which he will conquer the world is *tefilla*. This is not referring to a physical battle but rather the manner in which he will bring spirituality to all of mankind. Moshiach he will illuminate the world with such a holy light so that we will all begin to truly feel that Hashem is with us every moment. Naturally, we will then begin to speak to Hashem at every opportunity, as the *passuk* says (*Tzefania* 3:9), “כי אז אהפך אל עמים שפה ברורה, לקרא כלם בשם ה’” – For then I will change the nations to speak a pure language so they will all call out the Name of Hashem”, and everyone will see Hashem, as the *passuk* states (*Yeshaya* 52:8), “כי עין בעין יראו בשוב ה’ ציון.” Why wait until then? If you will begin to speak to Hashem now, while we are still in *galus*, you will feel as if Mashiach is already here.

You ask for advice on how to turn over a new leaf and start anew – there are many *eitzos* for this, but it is only possible to implement these strategies with *tefilla*.

A man once pleaded the Rebbe for advice on how to become an *erliche Yid*. First the Rebbe told him to learn Torah, but the man replied that he cannot learn. To which the Rebbe responded, (*Likutei Moharan* 2:111), “Through *tefilla*, one can attain everything: Torah, *avodas Hashem*, *kedusha* and all good in This World and the Next.”

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from *The Light of Emunah* #3, page 217



“home, the blaming and bickering instantly ceased. The couple was simply too embarrassed to fight in front of a *tzaddik*, and so they actually spent an enjoyable day preparing for Shabbos.

R’ Meir did this for three consecutive weeks. On the third week (after a *chazaka*), the voice of the *satan* was heard crying out, “Oh no! Poor me! R’ Meir sent me out of this home.”

Same Old. Same Old

While this took place centuries ago, the *satan* still has not retired. Every *erev Shabbos* he visits each of our homes and uses all the means at his disposal to instigate *machlokes* among us. He causes such tension that we get angry over trivialities, blame each other for every mishap, and exchange harsh words that we would be ashamed to hear played back to us later. Inevitably, we end up downhearted and in low spirits, and this poisons the atmosphere for the entire Shabbos.

What does the *yetzer hara* gain by causing us to fight? What’s the point of it all?

The *yetzer hara* knows that Shabbos is the source for all goodness. He is well aware of the fact that if we experience a joyous Shabbos, we will merit a successful week. When we are happy on Shabbos, we are blessed with *hatzlacha* in all areas – in business matters, in *shalom bayis*, in raising our children... and of course, in spiritual pursuits as well. This is the *yetzer hara*’s worst nightmare; therefore, he works overtime to make us tense and uptight on Friday. In this way, he spoils not just *erev Shabbos*, but Shabbos as well, ultimately ruining the entire week.

The Torah says (*Shemos* 35:3), לא תבערו אש בכל משבתכם ביום השבת – Do not light a fire on Shabbos. The *Zohar* teaches (*Tikunei Zohar* 125) that this refers to the fire of temper. Anger on Shabbos is the cause of bad *mazel*, poverty and all *tzaros*. We need to be extra-mindful not to lose ourselves or get angry, because this will cause us to lose all *bracha* in life as a result.

By no means is this easy. We work so hard all week just to make ends meet and eagerly anticipate a calm and quiet Shabbos to recharge. With so many day-to-day pressures plus the added strain of getting ready for Shabbos, it takes only seconds to lose control

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when things don't go exactly as planned. However, if we would only know of the hardships we can spare ourselves by staying calm, we would invest much more effort in doing so.

What wouldn't we do for *parnassa*? What wouldn't we do for our health? All success is dependent on Shabbos.

Try it. Stop the arguing. Use this *erev Shabbos* to imbue yourself and your family with *simcha*, and you'll see the entire atmosphere change. If you will try to stay calm and happy, this positivity will spill over into the following week and bring *bracha*, *hatzlacha* and *siyatta dishmaya* in its wake.

For the Children's Sake

The *seudos* we eat on Shabbos are an opportunity to actually transform our homes into *Gan Eden*. We are so busy throughout the week, so taken over by our daily struggles, that we don't have time for our greatest treasure: our children. Shabbos is a day to reconnect. When we sit at the table with the family, we can use the time to **really** listen to them and to speak about *emunah*, tell stories of *tzaddikim*, sing *zemiros* and just enjoy the time together.



There are those who make the mistake of sharing only *divrei Torah* at the Shabbos table, not realizing that after an entire week of school, children don't have patience to sit and listen to more speeches. They want to hear stories and have their own stories heard. Warmth and camaraderie hold the key to children's hearts.

Not too long ago lived a talmid chacham named R' Menashe. Scholarly and erudite as he was, he unfortunately struggled greatly with his children, who gave him scant nachas and much heartache. His next-door neighbor, an unlearned fellow, was zoche to have erliche and successful children.

There were many who wondered about this phenomenon. Why was it that the talmid chacham had children who caused him such distress, and the ordinary, "nothing-special" one had so much nachas? Toward the end of his life, R' Menashe shared what he thought to be the key difference between the two.

"I love to learn and value Torah learning above all else," he explained. "Throughout the years, I rushed through the Shabbos seudos so that I could get back to my sefarim. My neighbor, on the other hand, enjoyed each seuda with his family. He sang with his children and conversed with them, and the entire family had a wonderful time, week after week. Unlike my children who have all but forsaken me, his have grown up to become confident adults who value and find pleasure in Yiddishkeit."

R' Menashe sighed and said, "If only I would have focused more on my children... Perhaps then I would have merited to see some nachas from them..."

In order to be successful in both *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*, children need their parents to spend time with them. Shabbos is a golden opportunity to do just this: talk to your children. Spend time with them. Not with *lashon hara* or foolishness, but rather with wholesome and healthy enjoyment. It may not be easy, but it's an investment. An investment worth working for.

Kuntres Gut Shabbos



As soon as R' Elimelech heard these words, he ran over to the oven, thrust his hands directly into the fire and cried, "Hands that hit a mother must be burned!"

The next day, he was unable to put on his tefillin because his hands were so badly blistered. The tzaddik then turned to Hashem, and said, "Heliger Bashefer! Meilech wants to put on tefillin but Meilech has no hands." Immediately, the tzaddik's hands were miraculously healed.

Stories like this must be told to children, because although they can never do as R' Elimelech of Lizhensk did, they **can** learn that one may never lift a hand against a parent. This story also demonstrates the greatness of a *tzaddik*, that he does *teshuvah* for *aveiros* he committed when he was too young to be held responsible for his actions. Lastly, this story shows that when a person davens, Hashem helps.

Tell them about how R' Elimelech fasted all week long for twenty one years straight – seven years to atone for his own sins, seven years to atone for the sins of his children and grandchildren, and seven years so that *Klal Yisrael* should merit heavenly blessing. This is something one cannot and should not try to emulate; however, it gives us a glimpse into the greatness of our *tzaddikim*.

It is important to share as many stories of *tzaddikim* as possible. Whether or not your students can imitate the *tzaddik's* actions is irrelevant. We must know we are light years away from the levels of *tzaddikim* and are still far from being the people we must really be, but if we will listen to our *gedolim* and connect ourselves to them, we will also merit to be *tzaddikim*. This is as Chazal teach us (*Keilim* 12:2), "That which is connected to something pure is also pure."

May Hashem bless you with success in all your endeavors.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #3, page 256



WHICH STORIES SHOULD BE TOLD TO CHILDREN?

Question:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you for the lengthy response regarding my question about a melamed being on time.

STORY Time

The Rosh Yeshiva also mentioned the importance of telling stories of tzaddikim – I wanted some clarity as to which types of stories this is referring to. Many stories we recount demonstrate the incredibly lofty levels that the tzaddikim attained, as well as the extraordinary acts they have done which are not at all possible for the children to imitate. Then there are the other stories which tell of their acts which are possible to emulate; for example, the story of R' Abishel Frankfurter who cried to Hashem until he was able to understand the holy Torah, as well as the countless stories of tzaddikim who were extremely careful with others' feelings, and so forth.

I would appreciate if the Rosh Yeshiva would clarify exactly what kind of stories should be told to children. Thank you.

The Rosh Yeshiva's Response:

Dear...,

When telling your students stories of tzaddikim, you must know how to recount them. It is important to relate that tzaddikim were also born with a yetzer hara and that they also struggled when they were young. The Rebbe once said (*Likutei Moharan 2:48*), "I heard from great tzaddikim that they also had difficult *nisyonos*, that they felt rejected by Hashem and that they had to fight mighty battles with the yetzer hara."

Hearing stories of tzaddikim is essential for *avodas Hashem*, and even more so for children.

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 of Lizhensk and his brother, the tzaddik R' Zusha. Stories about tzaddikim will awaken a yearning in them to also grow up to be *erlich*."

The point isn't whether or not the children can imitate the tzaddik's actions, since it isn't always possible to do exactly as tzaddikim do. The following story about R' Elimelech of Lizhensk zt"l illustrates this point:

R' Elimelech's once saw his grandson, a baby of a few months old, crying in his mother's lap and hitting her with his little fists. Appalled, R' Elimelech cried out, "Oh no! How can one hit his mother?!"

The Rebbe's elderly mother was there at the time, and she remarked, "When you were that age, you also hit me...."

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