



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

לזכות רפואה שלמה
יוכבד בת חסי' רחל רבקה
בתוך שער חולי ישראל

CHIZUK
FROM THE
PARSHA

THE MIDDLE WAY

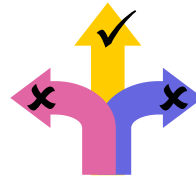
Balance is very difficult to achieve. Human nature is inclined to extremes – running a home that is severe and strict, or one that is liberal and chaotic; keeping to a rigorous diet or overindulging in any and all food; learning *sha'os retzufos* or not opening a *sefer* at all; etc. However, the Rambam teaches (*Hilchos De'os* 1:4) that a person must always choose the *דרך הממוצע* – the middle path – and not veer too much to the right or to the left.

Extremes can be dangerous, especially in areas of *avodas Hashem*. At times, a person can be stirred by powerful inspiration and totally taken over by it, going all-out to accomplish a particular spiritual goal. Ignited with fervor, he is liable to detach from the world and completely devote himself to serving Hashem. This approach may seem exalted and holy, but it isn't sustainable – driven primarily by emotion, a zealot is **in danger of losing everything if he just loses his momentum**.

At the same time, one must beware of the opposite extreme as well. **When a person allows hopelessness to overcome him, he loses his inner drive and his entire *avodas Hashem* is then at risk.** Unenthusiastic and unmotivated, he is likely to drop everything: davening, learning and self-improvement.

Double Protection

The Rebbe says (*Likutei Moharan* 1:61) that the only way to keep oneself on the middle path is by having *emunas chachamim* and heeding the words of *tzaddikim*. The *passuk* says (*Devarim* 17:11), “לא תסור מן הדבר אשר” – “Do not budge from the words that they tell you, neither to the left nor to the right. The Rebbe explains this to mean that the *tzaddikim* protect us from the danger of both extremes – the “far right” (ימין) of doing way too much, and the “far left” (שמאל) of losing interest and giving up.



This is the lesson in this week's *parsha*. The *passuk* states as follows:

לא תוסיפו על הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו ממנו לשמור את מצות ה'... אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם

You shall not add to the word that I command you and you shall not subtract from it, to observe the commandments of Hashem... that I command you.

The words in the *passuk* seem to be repetitive. Wouldn't it be enough to say “That I commanded you” just once for both parts of Hashem's command?

With the Rebbe's teachings in mind, we can understand the *passuk* on a deeper level: **לא תוסיפו על הדבר** – Don't add to the Torah with your passion; don't be overzealous because this may cause you to ultimately go against Hashem's will. How can one achieve this level of balance? Only with **אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם** – by listening to Moshe, the *tzaddik*.

The opposite attitude is also detrimental. **ולא תגרעו ממנו** – don't give up on yourself and stop trying to achieve your spiritual goals, consequently “subtracting” from the *mitzvos* of the Torah. To keep going despite a lack of motivation, we also need the *tzaddik*; therefore, the *passuk* repeats the words **אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם**. *Tzaddikim* protect us both from the *ימין* extreme and the *שמאל* extreme.

May we be *zoche* to subjugate our own understanding to the guidance of *tzaddikim*, and in this way we will become truly *erliche Yidden*.

Zos Hatorah, Va'eschanan 4

MOHOROSH
SPEAKS

EMOTION-LESS

We people are very good at talking. The power of speech is what distinguishes us from the animal kingdom, and we embody this ability exceptionally well.

The Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 2:25) that the same way one speaks to a good friend – naturally, easily and frequently – he should also talk to Hashem. This practice is called *hisbodedus* and is a fundamental concept in Breslev.

As anyone who tried it can attest, *hisbodedus* is gratifying. When a person is overcome with yearning or overflowing with emotion, talking to Hashem is easy and feels good. Yet the challenge begins when one's heart is dry and cold, when saying even one word to Hashem takes immense effort. Yet the Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan* 1:99) that a person should push himself to keep doing *hisbodedus*, regardless of the presence or absence of emotion.

In this week's *haftarah*, the Navi says (*Yeshaya* 40:1), “נחמו נחמו עמי” – Be consoled, be consoled, My nation. The double consolation teaches an important lesson about *tefilla* and *hisbodedus*.

All the pain we experience in *galus* is rooted in our

(Continued on page 2)



CONTROL YOUR ANGER

Dear ...

Try with all your might not to lose your temper. The Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Os Ka'as*) that a woman who is prone to anger destroys her home. When children see their mother constantly being short-tempered and irritable, they develop anxiety and low self-esteem. Additionally, the Rebbe says that angry parents will have children who are fools. Mohorosh explains that constantly shouting at and belittling children frightens them and causes them to become withdrawn, and they therefore grow up emotionally lacking.

Heed the Rebbe's advice for controlling anger. Start your day with a nourishing breakfast; a mother must realize that in order to be calm, she cannot be hungry. The Rebbe says (*ibid.*) that when one eats bread in the morning, it will protect him from succumbing to anger. Start today – wash on bread for breakfast and eat well, and you will remain calmer all day.

Above all else, a person must daven to Hashem to be protected from the *middah* of anger. This is especially important on *erev Shabbos*, a time when short tempers and angry words are all too common. Shabbos is the source of all blessing, and one must be sure not to spoil the day with anger. The *Chida* writes (*Sefer Avodas Hakodesh 4:140*) that on *erev Shabbos*, the *yetzer hara* has a mission to create arguments and tension between husband and wife, in order to ruin the atmosphere in their home for the entire Shabbos. He works overtime to create conflict and friction in every Jewish home on *erev Shabbos*, because he knows that when a husband and wife live together in harmony, he has no control over them and cannot lure them to commit *aveiros*.

Tefilla is a crucial component in overcoming the *yetzer hara*. Daven to be able to look the other way and not be triggered every time things don't go your way. This is the primary way to be protected from the *yetzer hara*, whose only goal is to create strife, as the Rebbe says (*Sefer Hamiddos, Os Meriva*), "The *yetzer hara* is found in a place of arguments and conflict."

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 50

perceived distance from Hashem. In reality, Hashem has never left us – He is with us at every moment. We

begin to suffer when we forget this fundamental truth, and then our hardships become arduously difficult. The solution for this *galus* of mind is *hisbodedus*. By talking to Hashem, we draw close to Him and renew our belief in His never-ending love and kindness. Since our relationship with Hashem is so important, it cannot wait for a time when we feel inspired. We must talk to Hashem constantly, whether our minds are at peace or in turmoil and whether our hearts are impassioned or impassive.

This is the meaning of the double "נחמנו" in the *haftarah*. Our solace is having a connection with Hashem, which is developed by talking to Him all the time. Although dry, disconnected *tefillos* may seem worthless to us, the time will come when we will have a **two-fold** consolation, when we will see the value of **both** the fervent and the forced *tefillos*.

Furthermore, the Rebbe teaches (*Likutei Moharan 1:99*) that when a person persists in his *hisbodedus* even when he feels nothing, his emotions will eventually follow. Additionally, all his past *tefillos* will automatically be elevated.

Parshas Va'eschanan begins with Moshe Rabbeinu's pleas to enter Eretz Yisrael. The Rebbe explains the first *passuk* of the *parsha* as follows: 'וְאֵתָּחַן אֵלָּה' – one must talk to Hashem constantly, regardless of what he does or doesn't feel. Ultimately, בעת ההוא – the time will come when לאמר – the words will be easy for him to say because his heart will have opened up to feel the connection to Hashem.

This is true in all areas of *avodas Hashem*. As we try to fulfill Hashem's *mitzvos* in the most ideal manner, we forget that **even mitzvos done halfheartedly have value – perhaps even more than those done with passion and excitement**, because Hashem looks at the effort we invest. It's much harder for a person to daven, learn and do *mitzvos* when his heart is not in it; therefore, when one exerts himself to keep up his *avodas Hashem* despite his lack of passion, his actions are even more cherished by Hashem.

Seeing or Believing?

Chazal tell us (*Megilla 6b*), "אם יאמר לך אדם יגעתי ומצאתי, תאמין" – If a person tells you that he tried and succeeded, believe him. This gives rise to a question: Wouldn't success be quite evident? That which can be **seen** does not require **belief** – why must we **believe** when a person says that his efforts bore fruit?

R' Nosson explains (*Likutei Halachos Birkhos Hapeiros 5*) that in spiritual matters, success isn't readily apparent. No matter how much effort we invest in our *avodas Hashem*, it doesn't always seem that we accomplished our goals.

Still fighting to daven each *tefilla*.

Still struggling to keep learning.

Still battling the same *taavos*.

Still grappling with the same bad *middos*.

(Continued on page 3)



We must remember that **investing effort in avodas Hashem is in itself a success.** Although the re-

sults may not be visible to the eye, we must believe that we have succeeded. No good deed is ever lost; every attempt to improve – and even just the desire to improve – is added to our spiritual bank account. We must only have patience and stamina to keep going, and ultimately, we won't just have to **believe** in our success – we'll be able to **see** it, too.

Add A "One"

A yungerman once came to seek the counsel of R' Dovid Moshe of Tchortkov. He confided that his father-in-law had recently stopped going to shul and had dropped davening altogether. Knowing that his father-in-law deeply respected the tzaddik, he asked if R' Dovid Moshe could perhaps intervene.

R' Dovid Moshe called the father-in-law to his home and gently inquired about the veracity of this report. Shamefacedly, the father-in-law admitted that it was true, tefilla was a thing of the past. "For

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months, each time I prepared to daven, my mind wandered to improper thoughts and unfiltered territory," he defended himself. "No matter how hard I battled these thoughts and tried to refocus, I was unsuccessful. I decided that I should rather skip davening altogether than send such unbefitting tefillos to Hashem."

The tzaddik listened but disagreed. "If you'll continue to daven despite your struggles," he said, "the obstacles will eventually disappear and your tefillos will ultimately be completely pure. However, if you give up, there will be nothing left of your Yiddishkeit at all."

He explained this with the passuk (Tehillim 87:7), "ה' יספר בכתוב עמים" – Hashem counts the same way the non-Jew write. In Lashon Hakodesh, numbers are written out in words: אחד, עשרה, מאה ... In Yiddish, too, they are written in words: איינס, צען, הונדערט ... In the languages of the non-Jews, however, numbers are usually written in digits: 1, 10, 100... Hashem counts like that, too.

R' Dovid Moshe of Tchortkov expounded further, "You may rate your davening as a total zero. Day after day, you see yourself as a complete failure, adding numerous zeroes to your spiritual bank account. However, the day will come that your heart will be awakened and you will begin to feel a closeness to Hashem. Then, the אחד יחיד will join with all those "useless" zeroes and where you previously had 000000000, you will have 1,000,000,000!"

Every good deed has significance, no matter how poorly it was performed. It may seem like a zero, but as long as you have Hashem with you, the value of your zeroes increases more and more.

May Hashem give us the strength to persevere even when we are devoid of emotion, and grant us the ability to keep going even in the face of apparent failure, and with this we will merit immeasurable benefit in this world and in Olam Haba.



FOR YOUR CHILD'S Sake

INTRODUCTION:

Mohorosh zt"l spent fifty years of his life with a pen in his hand. Driven to spread the Rebbe's light of guidance and hope, he wrote thousands of letters and hundreds of kuntresim designed to educate, inspire and encourage Jews from all walks of life.

Perhaps his #1 passion was the plight of single boys and girls. Mohorosh worked tirelessly on their behalf, doing everything in his power to marry them off and save them from a bitter fate.

"For Your Child's Sake" is the English translation of "לב אבות על בנים", a kuntres that Mohorosh wrote for parents of grown children, pleading with them to have pity on their children and marry them off. In honor of Tu B'av, a day that is mesugal for shidduchim, we begin our first installment of this kuntres.

PART 1: COMING OF AGE

Parenting teenagers is not for the faint of heart.

Teenage-hood is a difficult time, both for the teenagers themselves and for their parents. Some mysterious, monstrous creature seems to take up residence in the teenagers' minds, causing them to become disrespectful, defiant and downright difficult. Confounded parents have no idea how to handle the difficulties of this stage, not knowing what their child's problem is and certainly not the solution for it.

The root of the problem is simple, yet seems paradoxical: The no-longer-a-child needs to get married. She needs to be an adult; he needs to have a wife; she needs to have a husband; he needs to be building his own home.

For parents struggling with teenaged children, this suggestion may seem to be nothing short of ludicrous: "Are you saying that my son/daughter, who is acting like an overgrown, obnoxious baby, just needs to get **married**, of all things?!?" Between the moodiness and difficult behavior that must be contended with on a daily basis, parents cannot fathom how anyone can even **think** that their children are mature enough for marriage. However, this reasoning is fundamentally flawed. The crux of teenagers' problems is the fact that they are not married when they could and should be. By putting them under the *chuppah* and giving them a spouse, they will settle down and become the adults that their parents wish they were.

Q & A

AM I TOO YOUNG TO DAVEN FOR A SHIDDUCH?



QUESTION:

To the Rosh Yeshiva shlita,

Thank you for the shiurim and letters, which have become like oxygen to me. The chizuk I constantly hear helps me make the right choices.

When reading letters from the Rosh Yeshiva, I constantly find tefillos written for bachurim who are waiting for a shidduch. I was wondering if they are for all bachurim, or are they only for those that are at the age to get married? I am fifteen years old, and certain parts of the tefillos don't seem to be relevant to me at all because my parents will not begin considering shidduchim for me before I turn eighteen. Should I be saying the tefillos anyway? Or am I too young to begin davening for a shidduch?

Thank you.

THE ROSH YESHIVA'S RESPONSE:

Of course you should be davening to Hashem to find your shidduch already. Your age makes no difference, as every tefilla that a person utters brings his salvation closer.

Chazal teach us (Devarim Rabbah 2:17) on the passuk in Parshas Va'eschanan, "כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלקים קרבים אליו כה" – Hashem listens to every tefilla we utter. At times, one must daven for forty days before seeing his yeshuah, as we learn from Moshe Rabbeinu; at times one must daven for twenty days before seeing his yeshuah, as we learn from Daniel; at times one must daven for three

days before seeing his yeshuah, as we learn from Yonah Hanim; and at times Hashem listens to one's tefilla immediately and one sees his yeshuah after davening for just one day. Whatever the case may be, a person must internalize that every one of his tefillos is heard and treasured by Hashem.

If we would truly understand the power of tefilla, we'd do nothing but daven all day long, and we would ultimately be zoche to all of our hearts' desires. Therefore, the yetzer hara makes us doubt as to whether it is even realistic to daven for certain things, and we then lose our motivation to daven at all. If we would only remain steadfast and continue to beg, plead and beseech Hashem for whatever it is that we need, we would eventually see every tefilla answered.

Tefilla requires patience. After davening for days, months or even years for a particular yeshuah without seeing results, one must still persevere because his salvation may be just one tefilla away. The Rebbe says (Likutei Moharan 1:2) that there are people who make the mistake of thinking that their tefillos are not accomplishing anything, but it is not so. Every tefilla goes directly to Hashem, but each thing we ask for has a "price tag" – i.e. a certain number of tefillos that are required for him to receive what he is davening for. The Rebbe quotes Chazal, who say (Bava Basra 73b) that at the time when Hashem's mercy is aroused and a person experiences his yeshuah, he will see that all the tefillos he thought were futile had gone straight up to Heaven and eventually brought forth Hashem's compassion.

Daven for your shidduch even if it seems to be so far away, because every single tefilla will bring it closer.

May Hashem bless you with success in all areas.

Adapted from The Light of Emunah #2, page 63

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