

## THE KEY TO OUR SURVIVAL

### WHO IS THE TRUE OUTCAST?

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In this letter written on 8 Adar Beis 5727, in English, the Rebbe addresses the struggles of a recent Baal-Teshuva couple, particularly in matters in of Torah and Mitzvos. In fact, the Rebbe portrays the lessons we can learn in our Avodas Hashem from the Yetzer Hora!

By the Grace of G-d  
8<sup>th</sup> of Adar 2, 5727  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

#### Blessing and Greeting:

...With reference to your letter, I read with considerable interest your outline of your **curriculum vitae**. I am gratified to note that you are conducting your home in the way of our sacred Torah, called Toras Chaim because it is both the source of true life as well as the true guide in the daily life, despite the difficulties which you had in the past, and are still experiencing to some extent.

To be sure, that period of time in the past when the daily life should have been different, requires rectification, especially by means of a determined effort to improve the present and future, so as to make up for the past.

On the other hand, human nature is such that things that come easily are taken for granted, and are not so appreciated and cherished as things for which one had to fight and struggle. Thus the level of Yiddishkeit which you and your husband have attained through real efforts has permeated you more deeply and thoroughly, and may G-d grant that you should both continue in this direction together with your children, without allowing yourself to be hindered or influenced in any way by the difficulties which you describe in your letter.

On the contrary, the difficulties themselves can serve as a challenge and stimulus to greater spiritual advancement, as is also explained in Chassidic literature, namely that one could learn a lesson even from the Yetzer Hora.

For, it is clear how persistent and relentless the Yezer Hora is in doing its duty to distract a Jew from the way of the Torah and Mitzvoth, by presenting him constantly with various difficulties, temptations and all sorts of arguments to the contrary. So much so that the Yetzer Hora often appears in the guise of piety and "The voice of morality," such as the commandment of honoring one's father and mother, the need to preserve peace and harmony, and the like justify a deviation from the way of the Shulchan Aruch. The determination and dedication of the Yetzer Horah to its duty should therefore serve as an inspiration how much more should a person be devoted and dedicated to his real task, considering that the Jew has a Divine soul and a natural inner drive towards the good and the which should make one truly thrilled to be able to serve G-d with joy and gladness of heart.

In connection with the above I must take exception to the expression which you use in your letter, that you sometimes feel like "outcasts" within your family whose ways have parted from the Jewish way of life, and who resent your adherence to traditional Yiddishkeit.

As a matter of fact, the situation is precisely the reverse, for if anyone is to be considered an outcast, it is the one that excludes

# תמים ביחידות

himself from the way of the Torah and the Jewish tradition which goes back more than a hundred generations to the time when the Jewish people became a holy nation at Mt. Sinai.

Jewish history has clearly demonstrated what has been the mainstream of Jewish tradition and the very basis of Jewish existence throughout the ages. We have always had deviationists, from the time of the Golden Calf worshippers to present-day assimilationists. But **all** these have been passing phenomena which came to a more or less swift end when some of the deviationists returned to the mainstream of Jewish tradition, while the others, the outcasts, were lost.

The same was true in regard to the Baal worshippers during the period of the first Bais Hamikdash in Jewish history, the Sadducees during the time of the second Bais Hamikdash, followed by the first Christians, later the Karaites, etc., etc.

The common denominator that bound all Jews together, and served as the basis of Jewish survival, cannot be considered in terms of territory – for Jews have been without a country for the greater part of their history. Nor can it be considered the language – because Jews spoke different languages, at different times and countries, and even during the time of King Chizkiah, there were Jews who spoke Aramaic.

Nor can other cultural or social factors be considered as the common denominator of Jewish survival, since these too have changed from time to time and from country to country.

The only things which have not changed in Jewish life are Shabbos observance, Kashrus, Tefillin, and all the other Mitzvos of the Torah, both the written Torah and the oral Torah. It is therefore the Torah and Mitzvos which is the basics of Jewish life and survival. Consequently, the more one's daily life and conduct adheres to this pattern of Jewish living, the more one is attached to the Jewish people, and conversely, the more concessions one is willing to make, the more one lessens one's bonds with the Jewish people, until one may become an outcast G-d forbid.

As for the "charge" that some people make to the effect that this kind of traditional Jewish life is "fanaticism" and the like, this is also nothing new, for there have always been Jews, from the time of the Golden Calf worshippers mentioned above who considered themselves "modern" and called others fanatics, fundamentalists, and the like...

With blessing, *M. Schneerson*

Rabbi Boruch Sholom Kahn of New Haven, Connecticut, relates a Yechidus with the Rebbe he merited to have at the age of seventeen:

"I went into the Rebbe for Yechidus, after having previously written to the Rebbe for a Brocho and Aitza for my "*Pizur Hanefesh*." "How," I asked, "would I be able to attain more of a תוקף הדעת, a strong-mindedness? For instance, what should I do to stop myself in middle of speaking idle words, and in other areas in general?"

[Although the Rebbe had sent me a letter in response (on 25 Menachem Av, printed in Igros Kodesh Chelek 4, p. 472), the Rebbe also spoke to me during my Yechidus regarding some of the points that he had already written.]

The Rebbe told me: "During Davening, you should accustom yourself to *daven* from inside the *siddur*. And should you start to become distracted by other thoughts, you should gaze and focus on the letters inside the *siddur*. During learning as well, you should have your *sefer* or *Ma'amar* which you're thinking about close to you, and as soon as you feel yourself getting distracted, look in the letters of the *sefer*."

[In my letter the Rebbe writes how the אותיות are מאירות, and how their shine will cause the darkness and distraction to scatter...]

The Rebbe quoted the Posuk from Megillas Esther: "וְזָבֻחַהּ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ אָמַר עִם הַסֵּפֶר יָשׁוּב מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ" הרעה. The Rebbe's intention was that if I look in the *sefer*, my distracting thoughts will go away.

The Rebbe then continued:

"You should learn the first page, and the first few lines of the second page of Perek 41 of Tanya by heart, and throughout the day whenever you should feel the need, you should verbalize the lines of "וְהָיָה ה' נֹצֵר עָלָיו כֹּף אִם עֹשֶׁבְדוֹ כִּרְאוֹ".

The Rebbe also pointed out, that in general when I have questions or need advice, I should ask the advice of my Mashpia, and of course not to forget the 3 Shiurim of Chitas...".