



לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' אייזיק גרשון
בן ר' אברהם זאב ע"ה
נלב"ע ב' חשון ה'תשנ"ג
תנ"צ'ה'
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אברהם זאב
חזנות מרת הינדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
מינץ

Just One

The power of one action, one speech, one thought

צריך כל אדם שיראה עצמו כל השנה כולה כאילו חציו זכאי וחציו חייב. וכן כל העולם חציו זכאי וחציו חייב. עשה מצוה אחת, הרי הכריע את עצמו ואת כל העולם כולו לכף זכות וגרם לו ולהם תשועה והצלה...

Throughout the entire year, a person should always view himself as equally balanced between merit and sin and the world as equally balanced between merit and sin... If he performs one mitzvah, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others...

(Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva Perek 3, Halacha 4)

A common recurring theme in the Rebbe's sichos is the power of each and every individual action, performed by each and every individual person. In fact, the Rebbe emphasized that it need not even be an action: even a dibbur echad or machshava achas, one single word or one single thought, has the power to bring salvation to the world.

In this new column we will be exploring various themes from the Rebbe's Torah, beginning this month with this important topic.

IF ONLY ONCE

There are those who ask: "What is the benefit from going out and spreading the *mitvzoim*? You find a Yid and put *tefillin* on him only once; meanwhile you have no idea where he will be tomorrow and if this will have a lasting impact on him at all!"

The Rebbe addressed this topic at a farbrengen, explaining that only an *am ha'aretz* could ask such a question. The Gemara clearly states that a person who never put on *tefillin* in his lifetime will be in a terrible category in the World to Come. Helping another Yid put on *tefillin*, even if only once, would remove him from this category!

But aside from that, the Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya that every single mitzvah is of infinite value. With every mitzvah, the *neschama* becomes unified with Hashem, not only at the moment of the act, but “יחוד זה למעלה הוא נצחי לעולם ועד”—in Heaven, this unification is everlasting.”

More importantly though, there is another impetus to carry out the *mitzvaim*:

The world is currently in a turbulent state. We live with constant uncertainty as to what could *chas v’shalom* go wrong in the next moment. To correct all these problems, the Rambam gave us a perfect formula: A person should always view himself, and the entire world, on an even scale. Doing even one single mitzvah can tip the scale and bring salvation to the entire world!

This is how the Rebbe teaches us to view the power of every single mitzvah: the potential outcome of the mitzvah is infinite, and the power of the act itself has limitless impact on the world.¹

WHAT IS THE BRACHA WORTH?

A similar question was posed to the Rebbe by Rabbi Norbert Weinberg, a *rav* in Yonkers, NY in the 5710s.

Rabbi Norbert was the principal of the Hebrew school in Yonkers, working very hard to instill Yiddishkeit in the hearts and minds of the young children, but was slowly becoming discouraged. These kids learn so much in school, he thought to himself, but then they go home and absorb all the values contrary to everything they’ve learned. “Am I really making a dent here?” he asked himself. “Perhaps I should leave this profession altogether and pursue a career as a lawyer or doctor.”

He decided to present his dilemma to the Rebbe in *yechidus*.

The Rebbe shined light on the issue, completely changing Rabbi Norbert’s perspective. The Rebbe explained:

According to Jewish law, it is almost impossible for *beis din* to put anyone to death. We know that a *beis din* that puts someone to death once in 70 years is called a bloodthirsty court.

Say a person is, in fact, sentenced to death. Can you imagine what kind of person this had to be for the court to hand down that sentence? Such a person had refused to listen to the warning of the two *eidim* and murdered someone in front of other people; an individual with no fear or shame.

Think about this: This murderer was sentenced to death by the court. If he now asks for a glass of water before the verdict is carried out, he has to make a *bracha* on that glass of water just like the greatest *tzaddik* in the world...

“You are asking me,” the Rebbe continued, “what importance there is in teaching these children. These young people are guiltless, they’re just starting out in life. Each of them can become the greatest of men, the greatest of Jews. You’re asking me if it’s worthwhile to teach them?! Even a murderer on the way to execution would have to make a *bracha* the same way a *tzaddik* has to make a *bracha*. How, then can you deny this child the opportunity to recite a *bracha*? Teaching a child to make a *bracha*—what can be greater?”

Rabbi Norbert was absolutely stunned. During all his time in education, such a perspective had never occurred to him.

As Rabbi Norbert was leaving, the Rebbe gave a few final words of advice: “Don’t worry about it –don’t worry about what they will or won’t do. You just try your best with them and their *mitzvos* will have strength of their own.”²

IN OUR REALITY

These concepts may sound spiritual and hard to relate to. Is it really possible for a single action, performed by a lone individual, to create significant change in the entire world?

Recent scientific discoveries prove just that, says the Rebbe.

People used to think that in order to bring about change in a large part of the world, one needed vast amounts of material, hold command of a large military, and have many means.

Not so today. Now we know that with just a small atom, a person can press a button that will bring about mass destruction in an instant!

If this is true with regard to destruction, all the more so are we able to harness this power for good causes. We don’t need vast amounts of material and power to bring about positive change; even one small action can change the world for good.

Furthermore: the person who actually presses the button of the atom bomb doesn’t necessarily need to understand all the scientific workings of nuclear power. He can be even the simplest person around—even a very small child—all he needs to do is press the right button at the right time.

When the Rambam issues a *psak din* that every single person has the possibility to bring positive change to the entire world with even one small act—we no longer need to rely on our *emuna* to believe that this is true. We can already see this as a real concept in our own physical world!³

A FAVOR FOR HASHEM!

This subject, as discussed in all of the Rebbe's Torah, is extremely vast and is reiterated in various ways. By learning the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim*, we will come to appreciate the infinite power of every single *maaseh*, *dibbur*, or *machshava*, and their potential to change the world and bring the *geula*.

In conclusion, one final amazing *vort* from the Rebbe on the subject:

Mr. Fred Chernowski visited the Rebbe in *yechidus* for members of the Machne Yisroel Development Fund on 7 Tishrei 5752.

Fred's father was 84 years old and suffered from a terrible brain disease that was slowly robbing him of much of his physical strengths to the extent that he couldn't walk anymore. As a *frum* Yid, he really wanted to go to shul and do other *mitzvos* but he wasn't able to do much. In despondency, he cried a lot.

The Rebbe told Fred to tell his father:

As a *frum* Jew, he surely learned in Pirkei Avos that every Yid has a *shlichus* from Hashem to do a *mitzvah*. When a Yid does a *mitzvah* here in this world, he is doing a favor, *kvayachol*, for Hashem Himself! Emphasize to your father that as a *frum* Yid, every *mitzvah* that he can do in this world is a gift from him to Hashem. How can he forgo such a *shlichus*?

All the good things in the world are no match for even one of the favors he does for Hashem, by putting on *tefillin* or giving *tzedakah*!⁴ **T**

1. *Sichas* Yud-Aleph Nissan 5743; Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3, p. 1210.
2. Here's My Story, published by JEM, Shabbos Parshas Tazria 5774.
3. *Sichas* Yud Shevat 5746; Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 2, p. 454.
4. Living Torah program 229; chabad.org/818259.

FOR FURTHER READING:

- *Sichas Purim 5747*, adapted in *A World In Balance*, *Derher Tammuz* 5776.
- **Waves:** *How every thought, speech, and deed can make a world of difference*; video by JEM, www.chabad.org/132937

INSPIRE THEM!

While in *yechidus* with the Rebbe on 19 Teves 5730, Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Gurary, *mashpia* of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Montreal, asked the Rebbe for advice:

Farbrengens have always been a venue for giving over values of Chassidus, he wrote to the Rebbe. Stories of Chassidim who lived in past generations, and *Chassidische hergeshim* were always the staple of his farbrengens. Now, however, he sees that *bochurim* sometimes need to hear about basic concepts in *yiras Shamayim* and *minhagei Chabad*, but he was not sure how to go about doing it. Which *osiyos* should be used, he asked the Rebbe, when encouraging them to fulfill the bidding of Shulchan Aruch?

The Rebbe told him (among other things) that his message should be based on the Gemara in Kiddushin, “לעולם יראה אדם עצמו, שקול וכל העולם כולו שקול—a person should always see himself and the entire world as being on an even scale.” In this manner, he should impress upon the *bochurim* that each action that they do, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, carries with it great opportunity; it could be that small action that will bring the *geula ha'amitis v'hashleima*.

(Interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Iyar 5775)

