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## Rabbi Shlomo Boruch Pomerantz z"l

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It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Rabbi Shlomo Boruch Pomerantz z"l of Chicago, who was *niftar* after battling a difficult illness.

Thousands had been *davening* for a *refuah sheleimah* for Shlomo Boruch *ben* Shaindel Bracha, who had recently written various letters of *chizuk* as a *zechus* for his *refuah*. The letters were full of inspiration and encouragement, and we share several of them here as a *zechus* for his *neshamah*.

*Yehi zichro boruch.*

### BUMPS IN THE ROAD

We sometimes experience bumps in the road. These bumps are not necessarily insurmountable obstacles. Rather, they are speed bumps. They serve as signals to slow down and take notice of those things that we may not have seen or been sensitive to in the past, providing an opportunity for reflection, inspiration and growth.

Recently, I have encountered just such a speed bump relating to my vision. Although I am consulting with medical professionals as to the appropriate way to address this matter, I also tried to think of how I might take inspiration from this particular challenge and share that inspiration with others.

It is interesting to note that the *parshiyos hashovva* read during these weeks which usher in the summer season share a common thread in that they all deal with seeing. For example, at the beginning of *Parshas Shelach*, *Rashi* notes that the *parsha* of the *meraglim* is joined to the *parsha* of Miriam because "these *reshaim* saw [how Miriam had been punished for speaking *lashon hara* against Moshe Rabbeinu] and they did not take *mussar*." Similarly, in *Parshas Korach*, *Rashi* (16:7) explains that Korach rebelled against Moshe Rabbeinu because "his **eye** deceived him."

Perhaps we can suggest that it is not by coincidence that between these two events Hashem commands us to wear *tzitzis*, "so that you will **see** it, and you will remember all the *mitzvos* of Hashem and do them and not follow your heart or your **eyes** and run after them." Maybe the Torah is teaching us that had the *meraglim* and Korach had the visual clarity that can be achieved through the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*, they may have been able to save themselves from their misguided ways.

Thus, there are two things that we can be *mechazeik* in, particularly during these days of summer: *tzitzis* and *kedushas einayim*. The *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* was given to men to remind them not to follow their base desires. We should be sure to wear *tzitzis* at all times to keep us focused on what is important. Because the world is typically dressed immodestly during the summer, it is imperative for men to be vigilant about not allowing their eyes to roam unnecessarily. In this way, we can transform an ordinary moment into an *eis ratzon*. Whenever a desire or a test comes one's way and one overcomes the challenge, it is an opportune time to ask *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* for one's personal needs.

We can also encourage our boys to be *makpid* on wearing *tzitzis* during the summer, even when playing sports. Just as the *Ananei Hakavod* protected *Klal Yisroel* in the desert, *tzitzis* can serve as the personal *Ananei Hakavod* for individuals.

Extending this theme, I would like to address our *noshim tzidkaniyos*. I would like to suggest that Chava sinned with the *Eitz Hadaas Tov Vora* because she allowed her **eyes** to be desirous, as the *posuk* says, "*Taavah hee le'einayim*." She allowed her eyes to deceive her.

However, *neshei dor hamidbar* ultimately made amends for this misstep by seeing good through the bad. When Moshe Rabbeinu told the spies, "...and **see** the land what it is... whether it is good or bad," although the spies came back with a negative report, unlike the men who were unable to **see** the good beyond the bad, the women were able to **see** the good. Therefore, the *neshei dor hamidbar* merited to enter Eretz Yisroel.

Perhaps our *noshim tzidkaniyos* can continue to use this positive outlook to inspire themselves and the men to constantly look for the good and see the good in Hashem's world and each other. When we speak about the good, Hashem will bring about the good. Perhaps every camp should have a "Seeing the Good" program. Children can write down the positive things that others did or they saw. In fact, let's start a new *Readers Write* section titled "Seeing the Good." I will be happy to start.

1. A dear friend came to my home to help me submit a letter to the *Readers Write* column.
2. 3,000 community members always make sure that I have a companion to accompany me to treatments.

One last suggestion relating to this theme is that we should make sure to recite *Birkas Hamapil* every night, for in that *bracha* we ask Hashem to illuminate our eyes.

May we be *mechuzak* in these areas, thus creating a *zechus* for ourselves and all of *Klal Yisroel* to ultimately see the coming of *Moshiach*.

Wishing all of *Klal Yisroel besuros tovos yeshuos venechamos*,

**Shlomo Boruch ben Shaindel Bracha Pomerantz**

#### GREATER SENSITIVITY

*Boruch Hashem*, I received a positive response to my previous letter. I would like to add a few more thoughts with regard to speech:

In *Parshas Vayeishev* (37:20), we find that Yosef's brothers said regarding Yosef, "*Come, let us kill him and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say: An evil beast has eaten him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*" *Rashi*, quoting Rebbi Yitzchok, states that *ruach hakodesh* said the last part of this *posuk*, because "it is impossible that they (the brothers) should say, 'And we will see what will become of his dreams,' for since they will slay him, his dreams have been in vain!"

Why couldn't the brothers have said, "And we will see what will become of his dreams"? Couldn't *Rashi* have explained simply that Yosef's brothers spoke in a sarcastic manner concerning Yosef's dreams?

I heard in the name of Rav Leib Bakst *zt"l* that *Rashi* did not explain it in this manner, because the idea of speaking sarcastically was so foreign to *Rashi* that he could not comprehend reconciling this statement with the brothers' decision to kill Yosef other than to explain that *ruach hakodesh* said it.

We see from *Rashi* that sarcastic speech is abhorrent.

I also heard from Dayan Aharon Dovid Dunner an amazing observation that underscores the importance of silence: *Klal Yisroel* did not know how they ended up in Mitzrayim. They knew that Yosef had become its viceroy and that Yaakov Avinu came to Mitzrayim because Yosef could not leave. However, it was not until after *Matan Torah* that *Klal Yisroel* discovered how Yosef came to be in Mitzrayim and eventually became its viceroy. How interesting that during all those years in Mitzrayim, it was never revealed that Yosef had been sold by his brothers, which resulted in his eventual sale to a Mitzri.

I would also like to share a thought relating to *Chanukah*. *Chanukah* is an opportune time to work on the home. *Chazal* say that one should light at the doorway of his house. The *meforshim* explain that this is also referring to the spiritual openings of our bodies, i.e., our eyes, mouths and ears. In this vein, we should be vigilant about what we bring into our physical house or spiritual house. Similarly, we have the ability to light up the spirits of our wives and children with nice comments and acts of patience.

In conclusion, I have one more thought (and request): The question is asked: If Yosef forgave his brothers for selling him by saying, "*Fear not, for am I in the place of G-d,*" why did *Klal Yisroel* need another *kapparah* through the *Asarah Harugei Malchus*?

The *Acharonim* posit that it may be that this additional *kapparah* was necessary because Yosef never explicitly stated that he forgave them.

On this note, I have a personal request. I began to serve as a counselor at the young age of 13. I started out as a counselor in Camp Torah Vodaas and then went on to Camp Agudah and other places. I feel confident saying that it was a positive experience for nearly everyone. However, one never knows, especially during the tumultuous teenage years, if one might have hurt an innocent boy's feelings.

As we get older, hopefully we are more sensitive to others, and if we embarrass a child in a *chinuch* situation, we have the maturity to ask the child for *mechilah*. Undoubtedly, the child will always remember that gesture.

In fact, it is recommended that, each night, before reciting *Krias Shema Al Hamitah*, we proclaim our forgiveness of others who may have offended or wronged us.

I would therefore like to request from anyone who had been a camper of mine from 1982 through 1992 who is reading this letter to be *mochel* me if I wronged him in any way.

At this time of the year, when we celebrate, among other things, the rededication of the *Bais Hamikdosh*, may we recommit ourselves to speak and act positively, and may this be a *zechus* for myself and all of *Klal Yisroel*.

**Shlomo Boruch ben Shaindel Bracha Pomerantz**

#### THE POWER OF SPEECH

I would like to share a few thoughts regarding the power of speech which we can glean from the *parshiyos* we have read in the recent past and will be reading in the near future:

1. *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* created the world through speech, i.e., ten utterances (*Avos* 5:1).
2. Noach spoke and blessed Sheim and Yefes but cursed Canaan (*Noach* 9:25-26).
3. When Avrohom Avinu withheld his speech and did not ask Hashem for a sign concerning His promise of children, it was considered a *zechus* and a *tzedakah* for him (*Lech Lecha* 15:6).
4. *Seforim* note that we suffer from Yishmoel because Avrohom Avinu asked Hashem, "*Lu Yishmoel yichyeh lefanecha*" (*Lech Lecha* 17:18).
5. I heard the following observation from Dayan Aharon Dovid Dunner. When the *shevatim* came back and said, "*The man, the lord of the land (Yosef), spoke roughly with us,*" Yaakov Avinu remained silent regarding "*the lord of the land.*" Had Yaakov reacted (as is common for a person to react) and said, "*That anti-Semite should die,*" Yosef would have died instantly. However, fortunately for Yosef Hatzaddik, Yaakov Avinu restrained himself and kept silent. (I would like to suggest that this exercise in restraint was a *tikkun* for Yaakov Avinu's reaction concerning Lavan's *terafim*, about which he said, "*With whomever you find your gods, he shall not live,*" and the *Medrash* points out that Rochel Imeinu died on account of those words.)

Wow! The power of knowing when and when not to speak!

If I may share some suggestions for using our speech in a positive fashion:

1. Let us make a point to clearly compliment our children's *rabbeim* and teachers, particularly in front of our children.
2. Let's appreciate our children even when we are frustrated, never saying, "What a *parsha* he/she is!" or screaming, "Sha!" at him/her and that "he/she will never get married with those *middos*!"

3. Don't jump to conclusions. Better stay silent.
4. When learning, say the words out loud.
5. Let's not be compelled to talk and complain about the horrid weather, etc. Either say nothing or merely comment that the weather is challenging.

May any step the *tzibbur* takes in refining this vital area of *shemiras hadibbur* be a *zechus* and *tzedakah* for myself and all of *Klal Yisrael*.

Wishing all of *Klal Yisrael besuros tovot, yeshuos, venechamos,*

**Shlomo Boruch ben Shaindel Brachah Pomerantz**

#### YOUR *TEFILLAS* DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

I am writing this letter to encourage everyone to continue using the *koach* of *hakol kol Yaakov* to continue *davening* for yourself, your wife, your children, *Klal Yisroel*, *bias haMoshiach*, and whatever needs you might have.

Approximately three months ago, in a letter that the *Yated* was kind enough to print, I encouraged you, the *heilige Am Yisroel*, to strengthen yourself, in particular during the summer months, in *shmiras einayim*. *Boruch Hashem*, I am happy to report to the *tzibbur* that since that time, my vision has improved. I am sure you recognize, as I do, that it is not (chemo)therapy that heals, but rather *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* who is *Rofeh Chol Bosor*. I know that it was through the *kla's tefillos* and *chizuk* that Hashem blessed me by restoring my eyesight. In fact, when I *daven*, I ask Hashem to please send me a *refuah* in the *zechus* of the *tefillas* of the *tzaddikim*, the *tzibbur*, and my former *talmidim* who *daven* for me.

Because we are approaching the *Yomim Noraim* and *tefillas* play a pivotal role amongst our *avodos*, please allow me to share a few thoughts regarding how we may strengthen our most potent weapon, *tefillah*:

1. Come on time to *davening* or, better yet, as Rav Shimshon Pincus *zt"l* advises, arrive a few minutes early to allow your mind to focus on the privilege of speaking directly to Hashem. It's almost impossible to concentrate properly on *Shemoneh Esrei* when we start late and hurried.
2. *Daven* from a *siddur* with translation. There is no reason to be ashamed. Each day, choose one *posuk*, read its translation, and gain a new insight. You will be amazed at how that one *posuk* can inspire your entire *davening*.
3. Concentrate on one *Boruch Atah* in *tefillah*. Contemplate the awesome privilege and responsibility to be talking directly to Hashem. By saying, "*Blessed are You Hashem*," it humbles as well as inspires a person to appreciate his/her role in the world.
4. Say the words out loud. If *davening* out loud is uncomfortable for you, ask a friend to join you or stand next to a friend who also *davens* out loud.

5. Realize that we inherited the ability to *daven* well from our *avos* and *imahos* and we need to believe in ourselves. Let's go for it.

Thank you, once again, *Am Yisroel*, and especially the Chicago community, for your *chizuk* and *tefillas*. May *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* continue to listen to our *tefillas* and allow the *middas harachamim* to prevail over the *middas hadin*. May *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* answer our ultimate *tefillah* to bring *Moshiach* and restore the glory of Hashem and of *Klal Yisroel*. *Hatzlachah* in all your *tefillas* and may everyone be blessed with a *kesivah vachasimah tovah*.

**Shlomo Boruch ben Shaindel Brachah Pomerantz**

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