

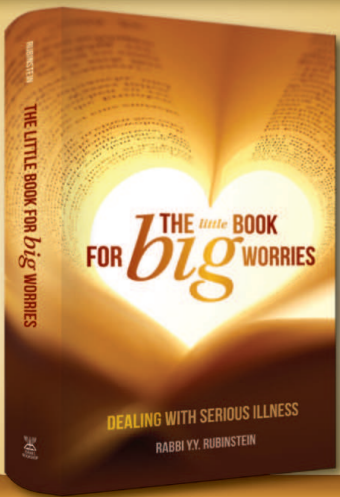
Will Reuven and Shimon ever speak to each other?



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I ATTENDED a session at the recent Agudas Yisroel Conference where the first words of *Kovetz Maamorim* were repeatedly discussed. In it, Rav Elchonon Wasserman zt'l quotes the Rambam who writes in *Sefer Hamitzvos* the following words, “The first mitzvah is to know and believe in Hakodosh Boruch Hu.”

The obvious question is, if a Jew can “know” that Hashem exists, why does he need to “believe?” Knowing is much better than believing!

I went to visit my great teacher, Rav Mattisyohu Salomon a few days after the conference and we discussed the question. He explained it, quoting Reb Simcha Zissel ztl.

“There is the mind and there is the heart,” he said. “One is called ‘Reuven’ and one ‘Shimon.’ The two are completely independent of each other and despite being closely related, they seldom communicate. Reuven may know something with absolute clarity and certainty. That same knowledge will mean little or nothing to Shimon.”

How can you get these two close relations to speak together?

The personalities of the two are very dissimilar. Reuven is cold and logical. To be blunt, he does not seem to be such a “Fun Guy.” Shimon on the other hand is passionate and emotional, a “Party person”, a real “People person”. The two don’t even speak the same language.

When I addressed the Aguda Convention, it was for a session entitled, “Maintaining Emunah in a Madhouse of Kefira.”

I began by saying that I believed I was making history in addressing the Conference as I suspected I was the first Rabbi from Scotland ever to stand at that podium.

The Talmud says in Sota 48b, “Someone who has enough food for one day and worries about the next, is only one of those possessing the smallest amount of Emunah.”

And to be honest, as I would be worried, then, I sadly fit into that category.

But I believe, (honestly believe) the words I say whenever I recite *Birchas HaMozon*, “*Poseach es yodecho umasbia*” all food comes from Hashem. He lacks nothing and there is nothing He cannot provide me. So why then do I worry and fret over things like *parnossah* and find myself standing firmly amongst the “*Ketane Emunah*,” those who possess minimal Emunah?

The answer is that “Reuven” Rubinstein *does* believe 100% in Hakodosh Boruch Hu! and His infinite ability to supply food or anything else. It’s “Shimon” Rubinstein who is the problem. Yehudah Yonah Rubinstein’s job is to get the two communicating with each other.

“Take an idea that really touches you and work on that out loud. Repeat it constantly. Review the idea you found exciting in your mind before you go to sleep.”

A few days after the Aguda Conference, I was walking with my wife towards a large gathering of Jews who had come to hear me and one of my oldest friends give shiurim. I was scheduled to speak second.

As we walked to the shul an elderly lady asked us if we knew where the event was taking place. We pointed her in the right direction and she became very agitated. She could not find her husband and believed he had gone to listen to the shiurim.

When we arrived in the building her anxiety was almost uncontrollable and she started to shout that she wanted to find “Yankel”. My friend was just finishing his shiur when the old lady burst into the hall and started screaming, “Yankel, Yankel!”

People tried to calm her down but nothing helped and in fact matters simply got worse. Most people were shocked as they watched the organizers try to calm the old lady down. Her husband was not there after all and she was taken outside.

Like everyone else, I was distressed by her outburst and lack of self-control. Why had she behaved so badly? Then the same thought occurred to both my wife and me.

Perhaps the reason that this old lady could not control herself was because she was suffering from a deterioration in her mental faculties. In fact, I wondered, perhaps she lost her husband a very long time ago and doesn’t even realize it.

You have to know why a person behaves the way they do and will not listen to reason. You have to know what approach will help and which will be futile.

The same is true of “Reuven” and “Shimon”. It is important to find out how to get Shimon to listen to Reuven and what approach will work.

Reb Mattisyohu expressed it incisively. “It is all comes down to Mussar and Mussar has to be learned with “*Hispa’alus*” (“Emotion” or “Rapture.”)

Hispa’alus-Emotion- is the language of “Shimon”. It is the language of the heart. It is the language he relates to and understands. For Reuven to get Shimon to understand him, he has to communicate using the language Shimon will hear. The cold logic of the head has to speak to the heart in the way that will get it to pay attention.

So the Mussar has to be learnt with passion, “*Hispa’alus*” for Shimon to listen to what Reuven is telling him.

Reb Mattisyohu offered me another insight into how to get these two talking.

I told him I had been learning, Shaar Habitochon of Chovos Halevovos daily for some years. He approved but added, “Take an idea that really touches you and work on that out loud. Repeat it constantly. Review the idea you found exciting in your mind before you go to sleep.”

Of course, an idea which my cold and logical mind gets excited about, what “Reuven” gets excited about, is an idea about which he will find it easiest to convey and convince “Shimon”. Excitement is part of Shimon’s vocabulary.

Will Reuven and Shimon ever speak to each other? It may take a while, but as long as you can get the two to be using the same language and sharing the same approach, after a while, Shimon Rubinstein too will eventually come to see things like Reuven Rubinstein. It will be at that point when Yehudah Yonah Rubinstein will no longer be able to count himself among the “*Ketanei HaEmunah*”.



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