

Only Human

written by Chaim Kramer

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A person must always remember that he is human. We all make mistakes, and may even succumb to temptation and sin outright. Yet through repentance, we can dust ourselves off and start over again. Rebbe Nachman's famous parable, "The Tainted Grain," illustrates this point:

A king once told his prime minister, who was also his good friend, "I see in the stars that whoever eats any grain that grows this year will go mad. What is your advice?"

The prime minister replied, "We must put aside enough grain so that we will not have to eat from this year's harvest

The king objected, "But then we will be the only ones who will be sane. Everyone else will be mad. Therefore, they will think that we are the mad ones!"

After thinking for a while, the king decided, "It is impossible for us to put aside enough grain for everyone. Therefore, we too must eat this year's grain. But we will make a mark on our foreheads, so that at least we will know that we are mad. I will look at your forehead, and you will look at mine, and when we see this sign, we

will know that we are both mad" (Rabbi Nachman's stories, Parable #21).

Every success and failure contributes to the person we are today. By accepting the truth of our situation instead of ignoring or denying it, we can pinpoint our errors, repent for our wrongful deeds, and redirect our energies towards positive accomplishments. We free ourselves to take that bold step forward (to "mark the forehead"), even if that same step is a mark of surrender.

Excerpt of Hidden Treasure, Written by Chaim Kramer

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