

Darkei HaChizuk

ארבעה צריכים חיזוק (ברכות לב:) - שיתחזק אדם בהם תמיד בכל כחו (רש"י)

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Taking a Break from Learning Torah – Danger!

Bein hazmanim is over and the new *zman* already began. *Bein hazmanim* is not a simple time — there were tragedies during this time. During the present *bein hazmanim* there was a tragedy as well, on the very last day a special young man was killed. On *bein hazmanim* there's less learning and the merit of Torah is lacking. When the public learns and a lot of people are learning Torah, there's the merit of Torah, which gives us good life. But when there's less learning taking place, the merit of Torah is diminished.

I already told the following true story: The Israeli army was preparing for a dangerous military operation and they wanted a *berachah* from the tzaddik from Netivot, the Baba Sali. So they drove down to Netivot and asked him to bless them that there would not be any tragedies. He asked them, "What time is the operation set for?" They told him: 2:00 p.m. He told them not to do it then, because *yeshivos* and *kollnelim* have their afternoon break then, and everyone is eating and resting; the merit of Torah is missing. He told them it would be best to schedule the operation for 4:00 p.m., or before 2:00 p.m. — when everyone is busy learning Torah. If people aren't so involved in Torah learning at a certain time, the merit of Torah is lacking and it's a dangerous time.

Even though the Rambam wrote (*Hilchos De'os* 3:3) that if someone sleeps for the sake of Heaven so that he'll have energy to fulfill the 613 mitzvos the next day, his sleep is *avodas Hashem* and he is serving Hashem in his sleep.

Likewise, someone on a mitzvah mission is not obligated in the mitzvah of sukkah even when he is sleeping. The *Mordechai* (*Sukkah Siman* 740) explains: "Since while they are resting comfortably and enjoying their sleep at night, they will be able to do more the next day, and everything is included in being 'occupied with the mitzvah.'" That is, since sleeping conditions in a sukkah aren't very comfortable, *sheluchei mitzvah* are permitted to sleep comfortably outside the sukkah so they'll have more energy the next day to carry out their mitzvah mission with greater perfection. And therefore their sleep is considered "being occupied with a mitzvah!" Similarly, anything that is necessary for the mitzvah — if one has intent for the mitzvah — it's considered that he is "occupied with the mitzvah."

Therefore, if someone rests in the afternoon, with the intent that he needs this sleep for learning Torah, and he only sleeps as much as he really needs and no more — without

taking his mind of his learning and without losing himself; rather he treats his nap as a serious matter for his health — he is considered "occupied with a mitzvah" and there's nothing to worry about.

Practically, however, only special individuals act this way; most people take their mind off learning during their break and aren't very connected to Torah then. That's why the merit of Torah is lacking at that time, even if they learned on that day.

All the more so is this true regarding *bein hazmanim*. Even though there are *yeshivos bein hazmanim* and there are set times for learning, it's not the same level of *hasmadah* as is during the *zman* and the merit of Torah is lacking. That's why tragedies occur during *bein hazmanim*. During this *bein hazmanim* the tragedy occurred on the last day. Many years ago as well, a tragedy took place on the last day of *bein hazmanim* and a young man lost his life on a trip.

The reason it happened on the last day is because the sin is much more serious by then. With every day of *bittul Torah* that passes, it is another sin. On the last day, the sin has grown, and so there is *middas ha-din*, *Rachmana litzlan*.

Middas HaDin — A Wake Up Call

Middas ha-din is not simply a punishment for the past. All heavenly punishments are meant to correct us. The past effects a punishment so that from now on, things will be better, as we will act more appropriately. The purpose of a punishment is to wake us up so that we should learn from it.

Regarding Nadav and Avihu who brought up a foreign fire before Hashem, the *pasuk* states that Moshe Rabbeinu told Aharon (*Vayikra* 10:3): "This is as Hashem spoke, 'I will become sanctified through those who are close to Me.'" Rashi explains: "Where did He speak? In *Parashas Tetzaveh* (*Shemos* 29:43): 'And there I will arrange meetings with Bnei Yisrael, and it will be sanctified by My glory (*bichvodi*).' Don't read it '*bichvodi*' but '*b'mechubadai*' (through My honored ones). Hashem was hinting that on the day the Mikdash was erected, the most important, honorable people will die. And as a result, the Shechinah will rest on the Mishkan.

Rashi quotes Chazal who say that when Hashem inflicts strict justice on tzaddikim, "*misyarei, misaleh u'miskaleis*." That is, when *middas ha-din* strikes *tzaddikim*, the public receives *yiras Shamayim*, "*misaleh*,"

rises up to a higher level, and “*miskaleis*,” rises even higher. The general public receives such great *madreigos*. To merit having the Shechinah rest in the Mishkan, Bnei Yisrael needed *zechuyos* and a high *madreigah*. They merited it through the *din* of these tzaddikim.

At first, Moshe Rabbeinu thought the *din* would be inflicted on him and Aharon, the *gedolei hador*, but when Nadav and Avihu died, he realized it had been referring to them. Their death had a great impact on the community, as it says (Vayikra 10:6), “And your brothers, the entire house of Israel, will wail over the conflagration that Hashem has burnt.” And they fulfilled the “*misyarei, misaleh, u’ miskaleis*,” and in their merit, the Shechinah rested on the Mishkan. Through their deaths, they merited being an impetus for something that Moshe and Aharon did not merit in their lives.

Likewise, if there is a tragedy and *middas ha-din* strikes someone who is on a high *madreigah*, an important person, this is to wake up the public. The Gemara relates (Kesubos 8) that the young son of one of the Amoraim passed away and people comforted him, saying, “You are important on High, as they caught you and your son for the sins of the generation — fulfilling through you [the concept] that when there are righteous people in the generation, they are caught instead of the generation. This is because the generation needs *hisorerus* and *chizuk* and they need a *kapparah*. The *kapparah* is achieved through the *tikkun* — when the public is aroused to remedy matters due to the *middas ha-din* that struck *tzaddikim*. **And when the generation is on a low level, and they need to reach a higher level, then if a *chashuv*, important, person passes away, the generation is aroused and they strengthen themselves in Torah and *yiras Shamayim*, and good *middos*.** This is what happened at the end of *bein hazemanim*.

The Gemara (Moed Katan 21b) relates another story. When Rabbi Akiva’s two sons passed away, all of Klal Yisrael came to their *levayah*. Rabbi Akiva stood on a high bench and said, “My brothers, the House of Israel, for whom have you come? If you’ve come because I am Akiva, there are many more Akivas in the marketplace; and what’s the difference between me and them? However, you said as follows: ‘*Toras Elokav b’libo* — The Torah of his G-d is in his heart.’” That means you’ve come here because of the Torah within me; because Rabbi Akiva is a *gadol baTorah*, the *gadol ha-dor*, and you’ve come to honor the Torah. Since this is the reason, “I am comforted.” Rabbi Akiva was able to be comforted even though Chazal say (Avos 4:18) “Don’t comfort him when his deceased still lies before him” — others cannot comfort him, but he can comfort himself. And Rabbi Akiva was comforted by the fact that all Klal Yisrael came in honor of the Torah.

This episode is explained further in Yalkut Parshas Yisro and in Maseches Semachos chap. 8. Rabbi Akiva was comforted because this act revealed to him that his sons were on a high level. In their death, they caused this tremendous outpouring of *kavod haTorah*, just as Nadav

and Avihu brought Klal Yisrael to great *hisorerus* through their passing. If Rabbi Akiva’s sons merited bringing about such immense *kavod haTorah* through their death — even unintentionally — but it finally occurred through them, this showed that they had other prior, unrevealed *zechuyos* that this merit. And when Rabbi Akiva saw what great *zechuyos* they had, this is what comforted him. In their merit, there was *kavod haTorah*, and they merited impacting Klal Yisrael on a level that others did not — even Rabbi Akiva himself didn’t merit this. And he had 24,000 *talmidim*, but it was not the same level of *kavod haTorah* that occurred when all Klal Yisrael came to his sons’ *levayah*, solely to honor the Torah.

The same is true now, those that were struck by *middas ha-din* merited making an impact and generating more *zechuyos*.

Those Involved in Torah Bring Merit to Klal Yisrael

Now that the *zman* has started, *baruch Hashem* we are involved in Torah and we are bringing merit to the entire community, for the merit of Torah has an influence! And we already mentioned from the Chazon Ish (Kovetz Igros vol. 3, 62) that there is obvious powers of influence in a true *baal Torah* — when there is a true *baal Torah*, meaning, someone on a high level in Torah, he can influence others and his influence is apparent. Even if he doesn’t say a word, the simple fact that he is around and is involved in Torah, his behavior will generate the Torah’s influence.

I think you can see this. In Bnei Brak, there are a lot of *lomdei Torah* and there are secular Jews in Bnei Brak as well. But the irreligious Jews who live near *bnei Torah* have a different heart — they’re not the same as their counterparts living in Ramat Gan, for example. For they are influenced by the *bnei Torah* and they respect and honor Torah more. Torah has an impact on the place. And it’s well known that when there is a yeshivah in a certain place, it has an influence on that place, and if the yeshivah moves away, the *kedushah* is driven away from that place. That’s the matter of the merit of Torah and its influence.

And we are involved in Torah — each person according to his level and abilities, as is written in the end of *Mesillas Yesharim*, that even someone who is involved in lowly work to support his family, if he learns Torah as much as he can during his available time, he brings merit to the masses and influences the place; he has an impact and in his merit, the place has a right to exist.

From this we see that all of us who are involved in Torah are bringing merit to Klal Yisrael! And the Chazon Ish wrote that a true *baal Torah* can influence his surroundings and his influence is apparent. And he has an impact on more distant places, but there it is not apparent. So there is an influence in Ramat Gan and the like, but we simply don’t see the influence.

Transforming Material Acts to Mitzvos

And we've already mentioned what the Rambam says: A person can be sleeping and serving Hashem. Last week, we discussed at length that although the Rambam wrote about sleeping, this idea holds true regarding all of man's physical needs. If he is involved in them so that he will be healthy to serve Hashem — regarding his eating habits, for example. If he eats because he must eat like a soldier in the king's army — if he does not eat, he will not have energy to carry out his mission — then he is involved in a mitzvah. Just as his sleep is a mitzvah, his eating is also a mitzvah.

But it all depends on his intentions. Why is he eating and why is he sleeping? If he's sleeping just because he wants to, this is not *avodas Hashem*. But if he sleeps with the intention to better fulfill the 613 mitzvos, this is *avodas Hashem*. The same is true regarding eating. If he eats because he wants to, this is not *avodas Hashem*; but if he eats because he must eat, this is considered that he is involved in a mitzvah.

And as we mentioned, the Rambam wrote about sleeping, which is not an action; it falls into the category of "*shev v'al ta'aseh*." So *kal v'chomer*, eating which is an action in the category of "*kum v'aseh*," if he makes the right calculation and has the correct intention for *avodas Hashem*, it is the same thing. It is considered that he is serving Hashem while eating.

We have already mentioned what Chazal said (Yoma 71a): One who wants to perform the mitzvah of *nisuch hayayin* on the *mizbeach* should fill the throats of *talmidei chachamim* with wine." That is, one who wants to perform this mitzvah nowadays, when we don't have a *mizbeach*, should give *talmidei chachamim* wine to drink. For when a *talmid chacham* drinks wine, he does so with the intention that it should give him strength for learning and his *avodas Hashem*. Since all his eating and drinking is *l'shem Shamayim*, it is *avodas Hashem* just like bringing the *yayin nesech*, which is a *korban* on the *mizbeach*, is *avodas Hashem*. And then it's considered that he brought a *korban*. And similar to the *nesachim*, wherein the *kohanim* sacrifice the *korban* and the one who offered the *korban* is called "the one who brings it up"; so too when a *talmid chacham* drinks wine, the one who gave him the wine is considered as having brought a *korban*, as his wine effected *avodas Hashem*.

And thus, one can turn all his simple, material acts into mitzvos. Since they are bodily necessities, and the body needs these things for its health and to serve Hashem, as long as he has the right intention, it is *avodas Hashem*.

There is a halachah in *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 38:8)*: "Those who write tefillin and *mezuzos*, they and their agents and their agents' agents and all those who are involved in Heavenly work are exempt from wearing tefillin all day, aside from the time of *Kriyas Shema* and *tefillah*." And the Rema adds: "And if they had to do their work during the time of *Kriyas Shema* and *tefillah*, they

are exempt from *Kriyas Shema* and *tefillah* and tefillin." And the *Mishnah Berurah* writes in the name of the *Magen Avraham*: "Specifically if their main intent was to produce them to sell them to those who need them, but if their primary intent was to earn money, they are not called 'being involved in a mitzvah.'"

That is, those who sell *tashmishei kedushah* are called "involved in a mitzvah" so they are exempt from other mitzvos, for they are meriting the public with mitzvos. However, it all depends on the intent: are they simply producing *tashmishei kedushah* to make a living, or did they choose this profession because they want to merit the public and they only charge money because they need to make a living? It all depends on the intent!

We already told the story about the *mashgiach* Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, *zt"l*, when he was once hospitalized. A male nurse was taking care of him, and the *mashgiach* grasped his hand and told him: "You should know that you can merit tremendously — you are taking care of me and many others, and by doing so, you are performing many good deeds. True, it is your *parnasah*, but if you think that your goal is doing good deeds, you will merit!" For everything depends on the person's intent. I already told you that I shared this idea with a taxi driver, so he should know he's actually doing *chesed* with people all day long, and he liked it.

This taxi driver told me that he noticed that if someone is *mevater*, gives in, he always gains. He experienced this himself. The dispatcher in his taxi company sends jobs to the taxi drivers to jobs, based on a first-come-first-served basis. Once, it was this driver's turn, but the dispatcher skipped him and gave the next driver in line the job. He was *mevater* and didn't say anything. Right after that — there were no other drivers waiting — in came a call from a customer who had to travel very far. It was a very lucrative trip and he got it because he was *mevater* and kept quiet.

That's the *klal*: anyone who is *mevater* will gain. Someone who has good *middos* and isn't uncompromising will always gain. This is because everything is actually in Heaven's hands. It is not worth it to argue and stand on ceremony for everything is from Hashem. So in the merit of being *mevater* and acting nicely, he will be *zocheh* to the fruits of his behavior in this world. This is written in the Mishnah at the beginning of *Peah*, regarding *gemillus chassadim* and other worthy behaviors *bein adam la'chaveiro* — he merits the fruits in this world. (See the Rambam's commentary there.)

Baruch Hashem we have the Torah and *mussar sefarim* that guide us how to act!

**A Chinuch Lecture at the Central Gathering of
Roshei Yeshivos
Sunday 28 Tishrei 5780**

The first thing you must know is that all *marbitzei Torah* and *mechanchim* have tremendous *zechuyos*. Educating

children to Torah, *yiras Shamayim* and *middos tovos* is *zikui ha-rabbim*, and one cannot imagine how great this *zechus* is. The *Chovos HaLevavos* writes (*Sha'ar Ahavas Hashem* chap. 6) that when someone has an influence on other people, any good deeds those people do belong to the one who had an influence on them. As such, we cannot even fathom the great *zechuyos* inherent in *chinuch*.

And it's also important to know what we've mentioned previously: how to influence others, for this truly depends on the *mashpiah* — what *madreigah* he is on, his caliber, each person on his own level, that's what has an influence.

I heard from someone who is in a demanding public position that he is being pressured from all ends to do something against halachah and it's a great *nisayon* to stand up against all the pressure. He said that he learned in yeshiva and he saw the Ponevezer Rav and Rav Yechezkel Levenstein the *mashgiach*, זי"א, and when he saw them, he saw *yiras Shamayim*. And that's where he got his *yiras Shamayim* from. And this *yirah* gives him the strength to withstand his challenges. This is the influence of something you see; what you see has an influence!

Therefore it is very important that every *mechanech* and *mashpiah* should be on a high *madreigah*, and this is in his own hands. How? By learning *mussar* on a steady basis. If one learns *mussar* every day — it doesn't matter how much — if he learns every day it gives him a completely different outlook on life and gives him extraordinary abilities. Learning *mussar* daily causes a person to rise to higher levels, and if he's on a higher level, he can influence others.

Regarding influencing *talmidim* to *ahavas haTorah*, that they should love learning, this is only possible if you teach the *talmidim* according to their natural abilities. If the *shiur* is above him, if he has to struggle to understand and he can barely understand, or if he doesn't understand the entire *shiur*, this will not influence him to have *ahavas haTorah*. When the *talmid* can understand the *shiur b'pashtus*, when he understands it well and the information seems very simple to him, then this *pashtus* gives him *ahavah* and it's interesting and enticing. It's well known that learning on the level of *pshat* is interesting and tempting, but learning *b'amkus* — well, it depends what his nature's like. There are individuals who find *amkus* interesting and enticing, but most *talmidim* don't have these abilities, so in order for the learning to be interesting and inviting, we must teach with *pashtus*.

And the influence of Torah, *ahavas Torah*, *yiras Shamayim*, *middos tovos* — it all depends on the *mechanech's madreigah*.

And if there's a *talmid* who needs to be corrected and admonished, know that giving rebuke in public is *halbanas panim* and causes unnecessary pain, and this is against halachah! *Tochachah* must be given in private. And the *mechanech* should not say "You did something bad," rather, he should say, It doesn't befit you or your status, and you're giving yourself a bad name by acting this way, and it's not worthwhile for you to do so. When you speak with a *talmid* in this fashion, he understands and accepts your rebuke.

The Chazon Ish זי"ל wrote in *Emunah u'Bitachon* (4:16) about *chinuch*, that if a *mechanech* periodically becomes angry and his anger is visible, this will influence the student to become angry as well. If a *talmid* sees his *mechanech* getting angry, he will understand that anger must be a good *middah*, not a bad one. Therefore, it is forbidden for a *mechanech* to get angry — even if he has good reason to do so, the children should not be able to feel that he's angry.

We've already mentioned the *pasuk* (Mishlei 27:6), "Wounds from a loved one are faithful." This is the way to influence *talmidim* — with love — as it says in Avos (1:12), "Love people and bring them close to Torah." *Ahavas ha-briyos* is the prerequisite to bring them close to Torah. If one has *ahavas ha-briyos*, and the person he wants to influence feels that he loves him and wants his good, this has an influence on him. This is how it should be; otherwise, there is no influence.

There must be a friendly relationship between the *talmid* and his rebbi. That is, the *talmid* should feel that the rebbi wants his good; however, he shouldn't feel like his friend. The rebbi/*talmid* boundaries should be clear; he is not his friend, he is his rebbi but he is a *yedid* who wants his good. The *talmid* should be able to discuss anything with him, but he shouldn't feel like he's the rebbi's friend — for then, there won't be any *hashpa'ah*. There is natural fear of a rebbi; anyone who is a rebbi or *mechanech*, his *talmidim* are afraid of him. Use it to influence the children and take not to ruin it.

B'eiras Hashem, may all *mechanchim* have *siyatta d'Shemaya*. May they merit to be *mezakeh es harabbim* through *chinuch* in all the good ways they need to educate them. May we all have *hatzlachah* in whatever we need.

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the Kroll Family, Los Angeles**

**להצלחת בניהם וכוונותיהם
בתורה וביראת שמים**

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The *sichos* are transcribed and translated from a weekly *va'ad* in Rav Gershon Edelstein's home.