

## Darkei HaChizuk

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

A Sichah from Maran HaGaon Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita*, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevez • Parashas Naso 5782

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### Torah Is Acquired through Humility and Happiness

We all want *hatzlachah* in Torah, and there are 48 ways to acquire Torah. The Gra writes in his commentary to *Mishlei* that *Eishes Chayil* is the Torah. The *gematria* of "חיל" is 48, corresponding to the 48 *kinyanei Torah*. And that's why we say, "*Eishes chayil mi yimtza*, Who can find the *Eishes chayil*?", meaning, it's difficult to find someone who has all 48 acquisitions. In any case, every acquisition on its own is a *zechus* for success in Torah. The *hatzlachah* is concomitant with the acquisitions; the more *kinyanim* a person has acquired, the more success he'll see in Torah. The contrary is also true; the less *kinyanim*, the less success.

For example, one of the *kinyanim* is *b'anavah*, with humility. I've noticed that not everybody knows what humility is. Some people think *anavah* means seeing only his faults and not his *maalos*, as if he must think that he's worthless, that he's a nothing, and he has no good attributes. But this is really not *anavah*! And it's not right either, because every single person has many *maalos*; thinking that he is worthless is not being humble.

The Torah is acquired *b'simchah*, with happiness, both with happiness and humility. If *anavah* means thinking that you are worthless, how can you be happy? The two are contradictory! That type of "humility" is a contradiction to happiness! And included in the 48 acquisitions to Torah are both "happiness" and "being happy with one's lot" — they are two different concepts. One is being happy while a person is learning, and the other is being happy even when he isn't learning. But if *anavah* means thinking "I'm worthless," how can a person be happy?

### Humility — Like a Poor Man Who Receives Charity

The answer is, that is certainly not *anavah*. The *Mesillas Yesharim* speaks about *anavah* at length in Chap. 22. He explains that of course every person has many good attributes, talents, good *middos* and *yiras Shamayim*, and a person should be aware of his good qualities. And yet, it is still possible to be humble. There could be someone, a *gadol baTorah*, a great *talmid chacham* who comes up with *chiddushei Torah*, a *baki*, a *baal havanah* who has reached a high level in Torah, someone who experiences success in Torah and *ruchniyus*, someone who is aware of this and happy with his lot — and yet, he is still humble.

Why? Because all the *maalos* a person has are not things he's done on his own; they are gifts from *Shamayim*;

everything is in Heaven's hands. The fact that he understands his learning is from Heaven. Good *middos* are from *Shamayim* — he was gifted with a good nature with *middos tovos*, and his nature is from *Shamayim*. The same is true when it comes to talents, a good memory, ability to explain well, and all other *maalos* a person may have. They are all Heavenly gifts, all *chesed Hashem*.

If a person has *emunah* and he believes this, he knows that everything is *chesed v'rachamim* from Hashem. **What can this be compared to? To a poor man who doesn't have anything and other people have mercy on him and give him things, so he subsequently has food to eat. If not for other people's mercy, he wouldn't have food. So can it be that the poor man will consider himself special because he has food to eat?** After all, whatever he does have is only because other people took pity on him and gave it to him. So too, any person who has *maalos*, all the *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus* a person has, it is all in Heaven's hands. Why does he have it? *B'chesed u'v'rachamim*! Due to Hashem's kindness and great mercy! Why would a person feel important about this? Feelings of superiority are surely out of place, because everything is from *Shamayim*.

Therefore, there is no reason why a person should consider himself important; he should just be happy with what he has, like the poor man is happy that he has something to eat, that he's full and is not hungry. So too, a person should be happy what whatever he has, with all his *maalos* — both in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus* — and he should rejoice that he has these attributes, but it doesn't make sense that he should feel important because of them, since it is all *chesed v'rachamim* from *Shamayim*. Why would feeling important about this make sense?

Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (1:12) about the attribute of submissiveness (*hachnaah*). A person who sinned and repents must do so with submissiveness. He must think about how "he did not remember his Creator Who created him something from nothing, and performed kindness with him, and His hand guided him at all times, and He protected his soul at every moment. And how could his heart have turned to anger Him?" A person should think: How could I have forgotten that there is a Creator Who created me *yeish me'ayin*. And performed kindness with him — He did *chesed* for me! And His hand guided him at all times — HaKadosh Baruch Hu is constantly leading and guiding man. And He protected his soul at every moment — Every moment that a person is alive is Heavenly mercy. And





*middos tovos, yiras Shamayim*, and all the spiritual *maalos*, with *siyatta d'Shemaya*. In Shemoneh Esrei, we ask "Return us, our Father, to Your Torah." We speak in the plural form, davening for each and every Jewish person. "Forgive us," and all other *ruchniyus* matters are also mentioned in the plural form, as we daven for every member of Klal Yisrael. *Yehi ratzon* that *Shamayim* has mercy on all Klal Yisrael, and may we be *zocheh* to become *baalei madreigos* in *ruchniyus*. And then we will experience "*ashrecha baOlam haZeh*."

Indeed, Chazal say in *Pirkei Avos* (6:4), "This is the way of Torah: eat bread with salt and drink measured water... and toil in Torah. If you do so, you will be fortunate in this world." It doesn't matter if you only have bread with salt and a little water, you should still constantly toil in Torah.

By doing so, you will be fortunate. The happiest, more fortunate life is only through *esek haTorah*!

This is well known. Nowadays, we see this actually happening. Those who are *osek baTorah* live happy lives. And this is true even regarding people with families — those who are *osek baTorah* are the ones who live happy, content lives. I know many stories about people who led happy lives while they were *osek baTorah*, but when they decided to try to earn a little more money through other means, they were not successful! If a person is busy with other things that are not Torah, there's no *hatzlachah* and one cannot attain "*ashrecha baOlam haZeh*." Only Torah, or *parnasah* through Torah [i.e. teaching *talmidim*], can bring a person to "*ashrecha baOlam haZeh*." *B'ezras Hashem* may all Klal Yisrael attain *ashrecha baOlam haZeh* with the true happiness.

בס"ד, אייר תשפ"ב

**לאחינו בית ישראל שיחי', שלו' ורב ברכה.**

Chazal at the end of *Sotah* state that from the day of the Destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, every day is more cursed than the preceding one. Rabbeinu the Chafetz Chaim cites Chazal who say that the sin of *lashon hara* arouses the great Prosecutor against Klal Yisrael. Therefore, he composed the *sefer* "*Chafetz Chaim*" about the laws of *lashon hara* and the *sefer* "*Shemiras HaLashon*," which contains much *divrei mussar* and *chizuk* for guarding our tongues. It's well known that the Chafetz Chaim's *sefarim* are "words that come from the heart" and due to their *kedushah* they have a great influence on those who learn them.

Therefore, we call upon all Yidden, wherever they may be, men, women and children. **Every single one of you should try to learn two halachos daily from the Chafetz Chaim zt"l's sefarim, on a regular basis.** And it is surely a proper, important undertaking that our young children should become involved in from a young age. They should set upon their hearts and souls the *halachos* of *shemiras halashon* and strengthen their *emunah* from a young age.

*Yehi ratzon* that this act of strengthening *shemiras halashon* should be a great rectification for sins committed with our mouths, for which we were exiled from our Land, and due to which our Beis HaMikdash was destroyed. May we, and all Klal Yisrael, merit *chaim u'brachah l'mishmeres shalom*, and the *geulah sheleimah*, speedily in our days. Amen.

Y. Gershon Edelstein

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