

## Darkei HaChizuk

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

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### “And Mitzrayim Will Know That I Am Hashem”

In discussing Yetzias Mitzrayim, a *pasuk* is repeated a few times: “And Mitzrayim will know that I am Hashem” (*Shemos* 14:4 and others). The purpose of the *makkos* and the miracles was so that the Egyptians would develop *emunah* from them and would know that “I am Hashem.” It’s important to understand what the need and benefit of this is. Why was it so important to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that the Egyptians received *emunah*?

The explanation is as is written in *Yeshayahu* (43:7): “All that is called in My Name, for My glory I have created it, formed it, even made it.” *Chazal* say (end of *Pirkei Avos*): “Whatever Hashem created in His world was only created to give Him honor.” This means that the entire Creation is *kevod Shamayim*, and who sees this honor? Hashem’s creations! Every person in this world sees *kevod Shamayim*. That is the purpose of the entire Creation.

It also says that the purpose of this is to perform kindness with His creations, to make it good for them in this World and in *Olam HaBa* — primarily in *Olam HaBa*, that they should merit *Olam HaBa*. By promoting *kevod Shamayim*, one merits *Olam HaBa*.

The *mishnah* (end of *Makkos*) says: “HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to bestow merit on Klal Yisrael; therefore, He gave them abundant Torah and *mitzvos*, as it says: ‘Hashem desired, for the sake of Klal Yisrael’s righteousness, to make Torah great and glorify it.’” The Rambam explains in his commentary on the Mishnah that HaKadosh Baruch Hu wanted to give Klal Yisrael the *zechus* of *Olam HaBa* — that is the happiest, most fortunate life, meriting *Olam HaBa*! But if a person does *mitzvos shelo lishmah*, he only merits *Olam HaZeh*, not *Olam HaBa*. In order to merit *Olam HaBa*, one must do *mitzvos lishmah*, with proper intent. That’s why Hashem gave us an abundance of Torah and *mitzvos*, so that from all of these *mitzvos*, there will be at least something we do *lishmah*. In that way, we’ll merit *Olam HaBa*, some more, some less. There are many *madreigos* in *Olam HaBa* — may every person merit to attain at least a small portion of *Olam HaBa*.

As mentioned, one merits *Olam HaBa* by promoting *kevod Shamayim*, because that is “*l’shem Shamayim*,” honoring Hashem and fulfilling His will. Hashem desires to benefit His creations, His will is that they should attain the true good and merit *Olam HaBa*.

If so, this may be what “And Mitzrayim will know that I am Hashem” is all about. If they know that I am Hashem, they will have *emunah*. Having *emunah* is a *madreigah*,

and through it, one is *zocheh* to *Olam HaBa*. [Editor’s note: See *Rambam*, *Hilchos Teshuvah* chap. 3; *Hilchos Melachim* chap. 8 — even non-Jews can attain a portion in *Olam HaBa*.]

The truth is, the *pasuk* states (*Shemos* 14:18): “And Mitzrayim will know that I am Hashem as I become honored through Pharaoh, his chariot, and his horsemen.” This is how *kevod Shamayim* is manifested: “I become honored through Pharaoh”! Through the Egyptians’ punishments and all their suffering — with his chariot and his horsemen. And that was for their own good — so they should know that I am Hashem, and through this, they will have a small portion of *Olam HaBa*. Of course, they will surely be punished in Gehinnom as well, but they’ll also have a little bit of *Olam HaBa*.

I haven’t looked into the *mefarshim* now, but it seems that this is the explanation: A person who recognizes the *emunah* and sees that “I am Hashem as I become honored through Pharaoh, his chariot and his horsemen,” one who notices that this is Hashem’s doing, this recognition serves as a merit for him, and he merits *Olam HaBa*.

In Hallel, we say, “May all the nations praise Hashem, all peoples laud Him, for His kindness has overwhelmed us...” Right afterward, we say: “Give thanks to Hashem for He is good, for His kindness is everlasting.” The Brisker Rav’s explanation on these words is famous (*Chiddushei HaGriz al haTorah* p. 109; see the introduction to *sefer Toras Zera’im*): Regarding the nations, the terms “praise” and “laud” are used: “all the nations praise Hashem, all peoples laud Him, for His kindness has overwhelmed us...” The *goyim* see Hashem’s greatness, they see how He does *chesed* with us, so they praise and laud Him due to the greatness they’ve seen and the *kevod Shamayim* they’ve witnessed.

We, on the other hand, were the recipients of all this *chesed*, so we also “thank”: “Give thanks to Hashem! For He is good, for His kindness is everlasting.” We are giving thanks for the goodness and the *chesed* that we receive from HaKadosh Baruch Hu — but the *goyim* don’t give thanks. In any case, they see Hashem’s greatness and give praise, and this is a *zechus* for them. This, then, is the matter of “And Mitzrayim will know that I am Hashem” — the Egyptians will merit *Olam HaBa* through their knowledge of Hashem.

### “And You Will Know That I Am Hashem”

Actually, in the section of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the phrase “and you will know that I am Hashem” is written often.

We are supposed to gain *emunah* from this, and it is to our merit to be *zocheh* to *emunah*: “And you will know that I am Hashem!” In the beginning of *Parshas Vaera*, four terms of redemption are mentioned: *V’hotzeisi, v’hitzalti, v’ga’alti, v’lakachti* — “And I will take you out, and I will save you, and I will redeem you, and I will take you [as a nation].” These are levels and *madreigos* in spiritual redemption. The last term: “And I will take you as a nation for Me” is referring to Matan Torah. Right afterward, the *pasuk* says, “And you will know that I am Hashem... and I will bring you to the Land.”

The Sforno explains that all four languages of redemption came true, but “I will bring you to the Land” was not fulfilled during the Generation of the Midbar. They died in the Midbar and only their sons merited entering Eretz Yisrael.

The Sforno explains why: The *pasuk* begins with “And you will know that I am Hashem,” and only then does it say, “And I will bring you into the Land.” This shows that knowledge of Hashem is a condition to entering the Land. Later in the *pesukim*, it says, “And thus Moshe spoke to Bnei Yisrael but they did not listen to Moshe due to their shortness of breath and hard labor.” Moshe told Bnei Yisrael everything Hashem had told him, but they did not accept it. They did not listen to Moshe, to “And you will know that I am Hashem” — they were so downcast and overworked that they didn’t take the time to pay attention and receive the level of *emunah* of “and you will know that I am Hashem.” Therefore, “I will bring you” was not fulfilled in their generation. The ten *nisyonos* that subsequently took place in the Midbar were all the result of their deficiency in “And you will know that I am Hashem.”

### ***Emunah in Hashgachah Pratis — And Not Believing in Kochi v’Otzem Yadi***

*Emunah* is an obligation, as it is written (*Shemos* 20:2): “I am Hashem Elokecha Who took you out of Mitzrayim.” This is the mitzvah of believing in the reality of Hashem, in *hashgachah pratis*, that He took us out of Mitzrayim. There are many levels in *emunah*.

But it’s human nature to think *kochi v’otzem yadi asah li es hachayil hazeh* — “my strength and the power of my hand brought me to this accomplishment” (*Devarim* 8:17). A person thinks he was successful because he is smart and he has power: “*kochi v’otzem yadi*” — lots of power! He thinks he is very powerful, he has lots of wisdom and intelligence, and he believes that his success was due to his strength and intelligence.

Just like in materialism, **a person becomes wealthy, and he naturally thinks it’s because he’s a good businessman, he sold and bought, he invested, and the combination of his power and intelligence made him become wealthy. But this is not true. On Rosh Hashanah it is written who will be poor and who will be rich. Everything is already decreed on Rosh Hashanah. It is not in his control; it is due to *hashgachah*. He became rich because Heaven willed that he should**

**become wealthy. It is human nature to make a mistake and think: *kochi v’otzem yadi asah li es hachayil hazeh*.**

**And in *ruchniyus*, too, when a person has success in Torah, it is human nature to think, “I am a *baal kishron*, I’m talented.” But where did his talents come from? Did he create the talents? Talents are also *chesed* and gifts from Hashem. Even if someone is talented, he still needs *chesed* and *rachamei Shamayim* to live and utilize his talents. If he wasn’t alive, how would his talents help him? His very life, every single breath, is a *chesed Hashem* that HaKadosh Baruch Hu keeps him alive every single second.**

But human nature is that a person thinks “I” succeeded because I am smart, I am talented, I am intelligent, I am a *lamdan*, I, I, I. He considers himself important.

### **Thinking You Are Important — A Mistake!**

This is all *ga’avah*, haughtiness, about which is said (*Mishlei* 16:5), “All haughty men are an abomination to Hashem.” *Ga’avah* is *sheker*! It’s not true, because “he” didn’t do whatever it is; everything is a *chesed* from Hashem. A haughty person can be compared to a *nebach* case whom everyone pities and gives him something. HaKadosh Baruch Hu, our merciful Father, has pity and gives man intelligence and power and understanding. He gives man the ability to live and gives him energy to be involved in Torah, to learn and to teach. Everything is a *chesed Hashem*; it is not due to the ability or powers of a person. It’s just human nature that people make this mistake.

The Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 7b) tells us about Rav and Mar Zutra Chassida. Whenever the community honored them, they would recite *pesukim* that discussed humbleness so that the *kavod* would not have an effect on them to feel even the slightest bit important.

This is because it is human nature that when a person sees others honoring him for his greatness in Torah, he might actually think that he deserves this honor and he might feel important. In order not to let his human nature control him, he has to arouse himself by reciting *pesukim* and the like. He has to understand that everything is a *chesed* from *Shamayim* and he does not deserve this honor.

On the other hand, the community needs to honor him, because this is *kavod haTorah*. He can’t hold them back from honoring him, because they gain *zechuyos* as a result. But he must maintain an awareness that the honor has nothing to do with him, and that it is a *nisayon* for him not to become a *baal ga’avah*.

### **Humility — Recognizing That Everything Is a *Chesed* from Hashem**

We’ve already mentioned that humility doesn’t mean that a person underestimates himself and doesn’t recognize his importance. Humility is recognizing the truth; he knows the reality and understands that he truly doesn’t have any

importance because everything is a *chesed* from *Shamayim*.

The greatest *anav* in the world was Moshe Rabbeinu, as the Torah testifies (*Bamidbar* 12:3), “And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any other man on the face of the earth.” Meaning, there was no one ever as humble as he was. Even Avraham Avinu, who said (*Bereishis* 18:27): “And I am dust and ashes,” in any case, his humility was not on the level as Moshe Rabbeinu’s, who said (*Shemos* 16:7), “And what are we?” He felt that he was nothing, not even dust and ashes. And it’s written clearly in *Chullin* 87, “What was said by Moshe is greater etc.” See there.

This is because Moshe Rabbeinu could see with *aspaklaria ha-meirah*, clear vision (*Yevamos* 49b), and as a result, his recognition of the truth was the clearest of anyone and he felt that he was nothing: “And what are we?” Avraham Avinu’s *madreigah* was slightly lower — he felt something, though it was nothing more than dust and ashes. David HaMelech said (*Tehillim* 22:7), “And I am a worm, not a man.” This is one *madreigah* lower — like a worm, which is a living creature, slightly more important than dust and ashes. All of these are slight differences in their level, based on their great *madreigahs*. But human nature is not like this. A person naturally feels important — more important than a worm, and more than dust and ashes.

In the Mishnah, at the end of *Sotah*, they said: “When Rebbi passed away, humility was nullified.” That is, Rabbeinu HaKadosh was on a high *madreigah* of humility, and when he passed away, humility was nullified. And in the Gemara, it says, “Rav Yosef said to Tanna, ‘Don’t say humility is nullified, for I am here.’” That is, as long as Rav

Yosef, who is an *anav*, is still in the world, humility hasn’t been nullified.

If we think about it, isn’t it *ga’avah* to say about oneself that he is an *anav*? It’s *pashut* that it’s not *ga’avah*, because he was merely saying, “I am aware of the truth that I’m completely unimportant.” After all, Moshe Rabbeinu wrote about himself in the Torah that he was an *anav* and he still remained an *anav*. The fact that he knows he’s an *anav* is not a contradiction to humility; he’s merely saying, I know that I’m nothing and there’s no importance to me, and I am truly sure of this, because the truth is that everything is the result of *chasdei Shamayim*, and has nothing to do with me! That’s what Rav Yosef said: I know that I am nothing and there’s nothing about me to consider myself important. Recognizing the reality is not *ga’avah*.

In any case, it still is a high *madreigah*. The Maharsha on this Gemara points out that it is not the way of *chachamim* to brag about their good attributes. That is, even though this is not *ga’avah*, in any case, it is not accepted to speak about a person’s own *madreigah*. This is something else, unconnected to *ga’avah*; see the Maharsha’s commentary there.

There are many *madreigos* in *emunah*, there are endless levels. The practical suggestion to attain them is through *mussar sefarim*, having a set time daily to learn *mussar* for a few minutes a day. This inspires and engenders *emunah* and changes one’s behavior entirely. With *emunah*, one conducts himself completely differently; the new conduct is very pleasant. *Yehi ratzon* that we all merit *emunah*!

### Excerpts from Rabbeinu’s Address at Last Week’s Siyum HaShas in Kollel Morashah VaDa’as

This *tzibbur* is full of people who are involved in Torah, and some of the *tzibbur* even finished Shas. We don’t know how to properly value just what is *esek haTorah*. The story is told about Maran the Chazon Ish *zt”l* who was taking a walk and said, “When I stand here, I feel *kedushah*. This place is *kadosh*. There is *kedushah* here, and I feel the *kedushah*. A short while ago, *yeshivah bachurim* stood here and spoke in learning, and since they discussed *divrei Torah*, the place became *kadosh*! I don’t know how long it will stay *kadosh*, but now, since not that much time passed since they were *osek baTorah*, the place is *kadosh*.” We don’t feel the *kedushah*, but the Chazon Ish felt it. When Maran the Ponevezer Rav *zt”l* would go visit the Chazon Ish, he would say, “I feel *kedushah* here.” Not everyone felt *kedushah*, but the Ponevezer Rav did. It’s a *madreigah* to feel the *kedushah*, *kedushas haTorah*.

We too are in place that has *kedushah*, as until now people were involved in Torah, and even now we are speaking *divrei Torah*, so there is *kedushah* here. But we just don’t feel it because it depends on one’s *madreigah* and we are not on that *madreigah*.

Chazal relate (*Sukkah* 28a) that when Yonasan ben Uziel would sit and learn Torah, any bird that flew over him would be burnt immediately. This is due to the power of *kedushas haTorah*. Due to his *esek haTorah*, there was *kedushah* and *kedushah* is fire.

The Yerushalmi relates (cited in Tosfos on *Chagigah* 15a) that when Elisha ben Avuyah was born, his father made a *seudah* in honor of the *bris milah* and he invited the Tannaim Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. There were others there as well; they were speaking about inconsequential matters, but Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua said, “They do their things, we do ours.” We will speak in *divrei Torah*! And they sat down and became involved in Torah, and a

fire came down from *Shamayim* and encircled them. Then the *baal habayis* came and said, “Do you intend to burn down my house?” They replied, “*Chas v’shalom!* We were simply learning Torah, and the Torah engenders as much joy as when it had been given at Har Sinai, and subsequently, there was a fire, for *divrei Torah* were given in fire.”

It’s brought down that Torah on the level of “Torah,” that is, Torah in its complete state, and in *kedushah*, there is fire with it. This is what they said about Yonasan ben Uziel, that when he learned Torah, any bird that flew over him would be burnt immediately.

He himself would not be burnt, because he and the Torah are one. His clothing wouldn’t be burnt because they were part of his body, since he needed them, and because the clothing became holy along with him. A holy man’s needs also are holy.

It’s known that Chazal said (*Yoma 71a*), “One who wants to bring *yayin nesech* on the *mizbeach* (nowadays) should fill the throats of *talmidei chachamim* with wine.” One who wants to fulfill the mitzvah of *nisuch hayayin* in our days when there is no *mizbeach*, should give *talmidei chachamim* wine. If they drink wine, it’s equal to *nesachim* because a true *talmid chacham* drinks wine *l’shem Shamayim*, so that he’ll have energy for learning Torah. His drinking is like *nesachim* on the *mizbeach*. Whoever gave the wine has the merit of “*nesachim*.” This is the *madreigah* of *esek haTorah*.

Just as some of the *tzibbur* here finished Shas, every single person here can finish Shas! Without tension and unusual efforts. If one utilizes his time, he can accomplish a lot. Usually, time is wasted on inconsequential matters. For example, when someone’s walking down the street, he sees a billboard and stops to read the signs. That is a waste of time. What do the signs have to do with him? Or someone who interested in what’s written in the newspaper, but what does it have to do with him? Especially news about what’s happening in America or Australia.

However, it is human nature to be curious and to want to gain knowledge. But one can utilize this curiosity for Torah! Just as Rashi writes on the *pasuk* (*Devarim 6:6*): “And these matters that I command you today shall be on your heart.” What is “today”? Rashi says: Like a new decree that everyone runs to hear about. That is, like a new law from the king, which everyone is curious about, and wants to know what the new law is. It’s because it’s human nature to be curious, but harness this curiosity for *divrei Torah*! Ask about what’s written in the Gemara; what’s the *kasha* and what’s the *teirutz*? What did Rashi say, and what did Tosfos say? This is truly very interesting and enticing.

The reason *divrei Torah* are interesting and sweeter than honey is because the Torah was given to us so we’d be *osek baTorah*, involved in it. Therefore, there is sweetness and curiosity included in Torah, so that we can be *osek baTorah* a lot, and so that we’ll be drawn to *divrei Torah*.

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