

Darkei HaChizuk

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

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

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Excerpts from “Lev Shomea” Organization’s *Chinuch* Conference for *Rabbeim* and *Marbitzei Torah*

Zikui harabbim is really extraordinary. It’s well known that when someone brings merit to the *tzibbur* with *maasim tovim*, it’s as if he is keeping him alive. Who is considered a “*mezakeh harabbim*”? A rosh yeshivah is considered *mezakeh harabbim*, because he brings merit to the entire yeshivah. So too, a *maggid shiur*, a *mashgiach*, and a *meishiv* are all considered *mezakei harabbim*. In fact, every single individual brings merit to the masses as well. Every single person — via his actions and behavior — has an influence on others. When others see good behavior, it has an influence. What kind of influence? An influence of *ahavas Torah*, *hasmadah*, understanding in Torah, *yiras Shamayim*, *middos tovos*. The influence is prompted by personal behavior, by setting an example, and also through speech — when people speak about these things.

It’s well known that people have an innate fear of authority, *yiras haromemus*. Anyone who is a position of some sort of power — a rosh yeshivah, a *mashgiach*, a *maggid shiur* or *meishiv* — any type of power or control, the *tzibbur* has *yiras haromemus* of him. Those under his jurisdiction are aware of his elevated status and hold him in great esteem, and that’s how he can have an influence on them. Since they respect and have esteem for him, he wields an influence over them.

But the extent of his influence depends upon his behavior — if he behaves properly, seriously, nicely, in a way befitting someone on a high *madreigah*. He cannot act like a “friend” to the people on whom he has an influence, because if he acts like their friend, he will not have an influence on them. He can be a “*yedid*” who cares about them and wants what is good for them, but he cannot be a buddy. If he acts like their friend, he won’t have any *hashpa’ah* on them.

There’s another rule regarding *hashpa’ah*. A person can only have an influence over others in a friendly, pleasant manner, not with force. Influencing others by forcing them to do something will not teach them anything; it is not *chinuch*. While the person is being forced, he has no choice and he does whatever he’s forced to do, but later, when he is no longer under coercion, he reverts to his natural behavior. He has not received *chinuch*.

The Gemara tells us (*Berachos* 17a) that women can have the merit of *zikui harabbim* as well, within their own family circle — their husband and children — by affording them opportunities to learn and perform good deeds. In this manner, they are bringing merit to the masses as well.

Indeed, this is all true when there is a personal connection with each individual, but now the connection is only over the phone. We hope there will be a solution soon, but meanwhile one can have a *hashpa’ah* over the phone — the rosh yeshivah, the *maggid shiur*, anyone who has a *hashpa’ah* — any type of *hashpa’ah* can take place over the phone. We hope that the original methods of *hashpa’ah* will begin again as they had been in the past, *b’ezeras Hashem*.

Q and A: Instructions and Guidelines for Current Issues

For *Maggidei Shiurim*

Question: *Ra”mim* are asking: Rabbeinu *shlita* said that *rabbeim* must call their *talmidim* to speak in learning. Must the rav do so even if it will take away from his own learning?

Rabbeinu *shlita*: Of course, what’s the question — it’s *zikui harabbim*. It’s *zikui harabbim*, what’s the question;

the rav can learn at a different time. This is *zikui harabbim* and it’s considered that he’s learning! And when he teaches others, that *sugya* is clearer to him than when he learns by himself. When he learns alone, he doesn’t have such clarity, but when he explains it to others it’s clearer — it’s clearer for the *melamed* himself.

Question: And when the rebbi is on the phone, does he have to speak with the *bachurim* about matters unrelated to learning, in order to create a good rapport?

Rabbeinu shlita: That's right, it's a good idea too, to have personal conversations with each *talmid*, to find out what's troubling him, what's hard for him and what's bothering him, of course, to give guidance, to guide him and calm him down. It's very important.

Question: Should the *morahs* do the same for girls and call them up?

Rabbeinu shlita: Why not? Certainly! It will be a great benefit for the *talmidos*, in *limudei kodesh*, for example, or in other subjects that the girls need help with. And they should have personal conversations as well, to encourage their students and calm them down.

Question: *Ram"im* have a question about their *shiurim* over the phone: Should the phone *shiur* last as long as the *shiur* usually is in yeshivah? In yeshivah, the *shiur* can last for an hour or two. So should it be shorter on the phone to make it easier for the *talmidim*?

Rabbeinu shlita: It all depends on the *teva* and abilities of the *bachurim* he's teaching. If it's too hard, it's not worthwhile, because if it's too hard, they won't process it. The *ra"m* has to find out from the *bachurim* if it's hard for them or not.

For Parents and *Mechanchim*

Question: There are some parents who feel slightly disappointed with their sons. Since the *bachurim* only come home periodically, they thought their sons in yeshivah learn all the time, but the current situation is a little difficult for them, and the father or mother notice that their sons aren't exactly engrossed in learning or davening all day. What should these parents be told?

Rabbeinu shlita: [Communicate with their sons] Nicely, only in a friendly way, without force. Influence them without force. Every critical comment is harmful and will just exacerbate the situation. The child knows what his parents expect of him, it's just hard for him. And it's not a secret that parents who criticize their children ruin them.

Question: What should we tell *bachurim* who call up and say they feel their parents are disappointed in them?

Rabbeinu shlita: The parents are right! They really are disappointed! What do they want, that their parents shouldn't be disappointed?! They have to learn *mussar*, and when they learn *mussar*, their parents will also be pleased with them. Let them behave according to halachah, let them do what the Torah demands of them. The parents are right to be disappointed. But what's the

problem? The *bachur* cares. Does it bother him? Yes, but it's his own fault.

Question: There are *bachurim* who developed anxiety due to the virus. They're afraid of dying, anxious about the current situation. What should we tell them?

Rabbeinu shlita: There are health guidelines, and if we follow them, there's no problem! They should be careful, it's really important to follow the rules, and if we are careful, there's no problem.

For *Yeshivah Bachurim*

Question: If a *bachur* is asked to learn Chumash with his little brother, and this will take away from his time to learn *b'iyun*, is it the right thing to do?

Rabbeinu shlita: Yes, after all, the younger brother has to learn, so this is *chinuch*; it's *zikui harabbim*.

Question: When a *bachur* learns with his younger brother, it's also considered *zikui harabbim*?

Rabbeinu shlita: Of course, it's *mechanech* him! It's not just this moment, it provides him with *chinuch* for his future as well — he acquires *ahavas haTorah*.

Question: A *bachur* called "Lev Shomea" and said he and his neighbor sit on their balconies and learn together, and they shout at each other from their balconies. He wants to know if it's a *chillul Hashem*; people think they're fighting, screaming at each other.

Rabbeinu shlita: They won't think so, they won't think so...

Question: Is this — screaming loudly — considered getting used to acting with *chutzpah*?

Rabbeinu shlita: There's nothing to worry about.

Question: A certain *bachur* wants to wake up at 7:00 a.m., just like they do in yeshivah, and learn at the times of the yeshivah *sedarim*, but the *minyan* in his apartment building starts later, at 8:00 or 8:30 a.m. What's better, to daven with a *minyan*, or to keep to the times of *sefer* in yeshivah?

Rabbeinu shlita: No, he should daven with a *minyan*! Let him learn at other times; davening with a *minyan* is a great thing. He can learn at other times.

Question: Some *bachurim* have a hard time learning in this *matzav*. Can we tell them that the current situation can promote success in learning? Did we see such incidents in previous generations?

Rabbeinu shlita: They should learn easier things, whatever's easier.

Question: But in order to encourage them to learn, is the present time *davka* considered a more opportune time for *hatzlachah* in learning?

Rabbeinu shlita: Yes, but it's difficult. Let them learn easy things, *limud* that's not hard, easier things, Gemara with Rashi without Tosfos, or less Tosfos, easy Tosfos, whatever they understand better. This also causes *hasmadah*. Simple learning is enticing and promotes

hasmadah, and boring learning causes *batalah*. They should learn what's interesting, whatever attracts them.

Question: *Yasher koach gadol*. Will the Rosh Yeshivah give us a *berachah*?

Rabbeinu shlita: *B'hatzlachah, b'siyatta diShemaya*.



An Address at Lev L'Achim's Knessiah Gedolah — Nissan 5780

Lev L'Achim's work is *zikui harabbim*, *zikui harabbim* through 613 mitzvos, all the mitzvos, Torah and *maasim tovim*, *tefillah*, and all *maasim tovim*, all 613 mitzvos. It's well known what's written that if someone brings merit to the masses, all *maasim tovim* done by the people he influenced belong to the person who influenced them. All their *maasim tovim* and the good deeds of their future generations — after all, they continue the influence over their immediate family and their offspring. Everything belongs to the first person.

The activists, the *avreichim*, men and women, all those who help, the supporters and office staff, every one of them is involved in *zikui harabbim*.

Zikui harabbim brings merit to the original *mezakim* — not only in Olam HaBa, but also in Torah, literally. All the Torah learned by those who were influenced belongs to the original influencer, and he knows all the Torah learned as a result of his influence. Now, in this world, it only enters his *neshamah* and does not yet become active, but in Olam HaBa, he will know all the Torah learned due to his influence.

A story is told about someone who left over his estate to be used for supporting Torah. A yeshivah bought a *sefarim* shrank with the *sefarim*. Among the *sefarim* on the shelves was a set of *Chiddushei Rashba*, and at that point, the yeshivah was learning *Maseches Gittin*. A while later, the *niftar* appeared in a dream to the person who took care of selling his estate, and began reciting the Rashba in *Gittin* by heart, word for word! Even though he never in his life learned Rashba, and the person who had the dream did learn Rashba, but he didn't remember it by heart, now the *niftar* was perfectly familiar with the Rashba.

When someone has an influence on others, he too knows all the Torah learned in this world as a result of his influence. It's just that here it enters his *neshamah*, and in Olam HaBa he will know it *mamash* clearly. That's the *inyan* of *zikui harabbim*.

Now, when it's impossible to have a convention or any regular functions, activity can take place over the phone. Continue the bond over the phone, renew connections and continue them, men and women. It is a great *zechus* for every single person.

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להצלחת בניהם ובנותיהם
בתורה וביראת שמים

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darkei.hachizuk@gmail.com

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