

Darkei HaChizuk

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

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Tzaddikim Are Taken Due to the Generation's Sins

Baruch Hashem, the situation is improving. There are far less *cholim*, more learning possibilities are open; there is public Talmud Torah and more learning. But **to our great sorrow, Middas HaDin struck tzaddikim, and they passed away from the virus. We must pay attention: What has Hashem done to us? What is the reason for the death of tzaddikim?**

The Gemara relates (*Kesuvos* 8b) that Rav Chiya bar Abba lost a son, a young child, and Reish Lakish came to be *menachem avel*. He said, “*Chashiv at l'etfusi adara* — You are important that you were ‘caught’ for the generation.” Rashi explains, “You are important On High, so they ‘caught’ you and your son due to the generation’s sins, as it says (*Shabbos* 33b), ‘When there are tzaddikim in the generation, the tzaddikim are taken on account of the generation,’ as it states, ‘And you shall start from My holy ones.’”

The reason the son was *niftar*, and the reason for the father’s *tzaar* as well, is because of the generation. The generation needed a *kapparah* because they had sins, and tzaddikim are taken on account of the generation’s sins. So that’s why Rav Chiya’s son was *niftar*, and that’s why the father experienced pain — it was all a *kapparah* for the generation. Tzaddikim are “caught” and atone for the generation, as Chazal say (*Moed Katan* 28a): The death of tzaddikim atones.”

The reason “tzaddikim’s death atones, is because when people see that a tzaddik is *niftar*, they realize that the *tzibbur* was responsible and they are aroused to repent. That’s why a tzaddik’s death atones — because it caused them to do *teshuvah*.

You may think: why is it the tzaddik’s fault? He wants to live; why should he die? How can it be that a tzaddik is punished due to the generation’s sins?

But the truth is, it is a *zechus*. When a tzaddik passes away and atones for the generation, it is a great *zechus* for him because he caused the generation to repent. He saved the generation since his death was a catalyst for *teshuvah*. Since people were aroused to *teshuvah* in his merit, it turns out that he was a *mezakeh*. Now he has *zechuyos*, since through his death, he was *mezakeh es*

harabbim. Death is actually profitable for him, as he gains *zechuyos* that he would have never been able to accrue in his lifetime.

The Gemara (*Moed Katan* 21b) discusses the story of Rabbi Akiva’s two sons who passed away and all Klal Yisrael attended the *levayah*. When Rabbi Akiva saw the large crowd, he stood on a bench and said, “My brothers, Bnei Yisrael, why did you come? If you came for Akiva — in honor of Rabbi Akiva — there are many others named Akiva in the marketplace, and how am I different from them? However, you must have said (*Tehillim* 37:31), *Toras Elokav b’libo*, ‘His G-d’s Torah is in his heart.’ That is, you came because I am a *talmid chacham* and you value my Torah. Since this is why you came, I am comforted.”

This Gemara is terse; it doesn’t really explain how this comforted him. But in *Maseches Semachos* chap. 8, and in *Yalkut Parashas Yisro*, it is explained further. There, it says Rabbi Akiva was comforted by the fact that his sons were *mezakeh es harabbim*. All Klal Yisrael came in honor of Rabbi Akiva’s Torah. Through their deaths, they brought about a high degree of *kavod haTorah*, a level that did not exist while they were alive. Even though it was unintentional — they didn’t ask to die — their deaths brought it about, so they acquired the merit of *kavod haTorah*, which is something we cannot fathom.

Anything good that a person brings about — even unintentionally — is a *zechus* for him. Take for example, the mitzvah of *shikechah*. If someone forgets *omer* in his field and poor men come and take it — as this is the halachah of *leket*, *shikechah*, and *peah* — even though he doesn’t know that he dropped it, since the poor men enjoy his sheaves of wheat, he gets the *zechus* of mitzvas *tzedakah* and is promised blessing for this, as it states (*Devarim* 24:19): “So that Hashem your G-d will bless you.”

Even though he didn’t do anything and the *shikechah* was unintentional, the poor men *were* sustained by his forgetfulness, so since it was his, he performed *tzedakah*.

Rashi cites the Midrash: “So that He will bless you’ — even though this occurred unintentionally... From now on, say, if he drops a stone and a poor man finds it and profits from it, he is blessed as a result.” Just as

shikechah is a *zechus* even though it happens unintentionally, the same is true regarding all forms of charity. If a person drops a coin in the street and doesn't even know that he dropped it, but a poor man finds it and is sustained from it, it's considered *tzedakah* on the loser's part. Even though he didn't intend to lose it and had no idea it was lost, when all is said and done, the money did belong to him, and by losing it, he caused the poor man to have food to eat. This is *tzedakah* and he is blessed as a result.

Similarly, when someone dies and his death is the catalyst for a great mitzvah, the mitzvah belongs to him and is attributed to his *zechus*. That's why Rabbi Akiva said, "I am comforted." Through their death, his sons were the cause of extraordinary levels of *kavod haTorah* when all Klal Yisrael came to give honor to Rabbi Akiva. *Kavod haTorah* is a great mitzvah; we can't even fathom its greatness. Since his sons were the cause of it all, they acquired the *zechuyos* of *kavod haTorah*, and this knowledge comforted Rabbi Akiva.

The *Yalkut* and *Maseches Semachos* explain that Rabbi Akiva was comforted by something else as well. Chazal say (*Avos* 5:18), "Moshe had *zechuyos* and brought merit to the public." This means that in order to be *mezakeh es harabbim*, one needs previous *zechuyos*. Once a person has his own merit, he can bring merit to the public. Moshe Rabbeinu as well first merited himself, due to previous *zechuyos* he had, and in this merit, he "brought merit to the public" by bringing down Torah from Sinai.

What previous *zechuyos* did Moshe Rabbeinu have before Kabbalas HaTorah? The *Midrashim* relate (*Shemos Rabbah* 2:2) that he shepherded Yisro's sheep. Once a lamb ran away from the flock and Moshe Rabbeinu ran after it. The lamb continued running till it reached water; then it stopped to drink. When Moshe Rabbeinu saw this, he said, "I didn't know you ran away because you were thirsty. Now you're probably tired, I'll carry you on my shoulders so you won't have to walk." When HaKadosh Baruch Hu saw how he had mercy on his sheep, He told him, "You have the attribute of mercy to shepherd a human's flock; by your life, you will shepherd my sheep, Yisrael." Due to this prior *zechus*, Moshe became Moshe Rabbeinu and received the Torah from Sinai.

The same Midrash speaks about Dovid HaMelech, about why he was *zocheh* to become king and to be the predecessor of the Davidic line of kings till the end of times. He too was a shepherd and he would make sure that the weaker sheep would have what to eat. He took care of them with mercy, as is written in *Tehillim* (78:71): "Due to the *alos* they brought him to shepherd His nation Yaakov and His portion Yisrael." *Alos*, nursing ewes, are weak sheep that need help; in the *zechus* that he treated them with mercy he merited to "shepherd His nation Yaakov and His portion Yisrael."

In any case, in order to be *mezakeh es harabbim*, one needs prior *zechuyos*. And that's what Rabbi Akiva said: If his sons brought merit to the public through their deaths, it means they had previous *zechuyos* which no one knew about. If so, they certainly had a place in Olam HaBa. This is what comforted him. Even though Chazal say (*Avos* 4:18), "Do not comfort a person when his loved one is lying dead in front of him," this means that others shouldn't comfort him, but he can comfort himself. This is how Rabbi Akiva comforted himself over his sons' deaths.

From this, it's clear that if someone's death is a catalyst for *zikui harabbim*, all the *zechuyos* belong to him and bring him merit.

Therefore, **all the *tzaddikim* we lost to this virus were a *kapparah* for the generation, like they said, "Chashiv at l'etfusi adara," because the *dor* needed an atonement.** Going back to our original question: why is it the *tzaddik*'s fault? Why should he die? Well, the truth is that they are not losing out; they are gaining, because they are bringing merit to the entire generation! When people do teshuvah and are aroused to become better as a result, it turns out that they accrue all the *zechuyos* of one who brings merit to the public. **Since they are *tzaddikim*, Heaven presented them with more *zechuyos* — to be *mezakei harabbim*!**

Additionally, Chazal said (*Moed Katan* 25b), "*Rochev aravos* is joyous and happy when a pure, righteous soul comes to Him" When someone dies, and he's pure and righteous, his *neshamah* arrives in Heaven and HaKadosh Baruch Hu is ecstatic with him. The *neshamah* sees that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is happy with him, and surely the *neshamah* itself is joyous as well. When the *neshamah* is in the Heavenly yeshivah in Hashem's presence and sees that Hashem is happy with him, he is certainly happy. So for him it is a *zechus* and a very great favor — he is entering a world that is complete happiness. It's just a loss for the family, and that's why there are *halachos* of *aveilus* and *kavod hameis*, for the family is in pain. The *tzaddik* himself, however, is happy and content in the Heavenly yeshivah.



Sefiras HaOmer

We are in the days of *Sefiras HaOmer*. Chazal (*Yevamos* 62b) tell us that Rabbi Akiva had 24,000 *talmidim*, and they all died during the days of Sefirah, between Pesach and Shavuot. What was their sin? The Gemara explains that it was because they did not treat each other with *kavod*. The Midrash says (*Bereishis Rabbah* 61:3) that they didn't *fargin* each other.

Rabbi Akiva was left without *talmidim*. The Gemara relates that the world was desolate, but then he began

teaching [five more] *talmidim*: Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yosi, etc. and they rebuilt Torah. But his original *talmidim* all passed away because they had *tzarus ayin*, a begrudging eye, and couldn't rejoice over their colleagues' honor.

Why couldn't Rabbi Akiva speak to his *talmidim* and admonish them? Rabbi Akiva probably didn't even notice his *talmidim*'s behavior; it was something very subtle and unrecognizable. Just a miniscule amount of *kavod* was lacking, but there was no recognizable irreverence or resentfulness. If so, it's even more astounding as to why they were liable for death. Where else have we ever seen that people were *chayav misah* for such behavior?

The answer is that due to their great *madreigah*, since they were extraordinary *tzaddikim* — and HaKadosh Baruch Hu is exacting with *tzaddikim* like a hairsbreadth — so HaKadosh Baruch Hu took them to task for this miniscule hairsbreadth, this miniscule amount of resentment and lack of honor, and they died. This occurred during Sefirah, between Pesach and Shavuot. We must try to understand why Rabbi Akiva's *talmidim* died specifically during this time.

The *Sefer HaChinuch* writes (Mitzvah 306) in the reason for Mitzvas Sefiras HaOmer, "We were commanded to count from the day after Yom Tov of Pesach until the day of the Giving of the Torah to express with our soul the great desire for this honorable, much longed-for day, as a slave eagerly yearns for the shadow [of evening] and constantly counts the days till that longed-for time when he attains his freedom. For counting shows man that his sole desire is to reach that time. The fact that we count forward to the Omer — that is, saying: X amount of days have passed — and we don't count backward, that is: X amount of days are left, is to reveal our intense desire to reach that time."

When Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they knew that the purpose of Yetzias Mitzrayim was Kabbalas HaTorah, as HaKadosh Baruch Hu said to Moshe Rabbeinu (*Shemos* 3:12): When you take the nation out of Mitzrayim, you shall serve Hashem on this mountain." Moshe Rabbeinu relayed this message to Bnei Yisrael — that they'd merit Kabbalas HaTorah after Yetzias Mitzrayim. As long as they hadn't received the Torah, they didn't fall into the category of "*metzuvim v'osim*," doing the mitzvos because Hashem commanded them to. They only were obligated in the Seven Mitzvos Bnei Noach and a few others, like *milah* and *gid hanasheh* — but that's it! And at Kabbalas HaTorah they'd merit all 613 mitzvos! And they'd receive the Torah!

And so, they waited with great anticipation for Kabbalas HaTorah. They knew it would be on Shavuot, 49 days later, and every day that passed made them happy and excited, for they had an immense desire to receive the Torah and their joy intensified as the day drew closer.

We see from here that this period of Sefirah during Yetzias Mitzrayim was a time of intense longing for Torah. The *sefarim* tell us (see the Ramchal's *Derech Hashem* 4:7, and others) that throughout history, whenever Bnei Yisrael reached a certain *madreigah* at a specific time, this *hashpa'ah* returns to the world every year at that time, and it's up for the taking. Every generation can merit reaching the same *madreigah*.

For example, Shavuot is called "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*," because on Shavuot we received the Torah at Har Sinai. Even though Kabbalas HaTorah occurred in the past, Shavuot is still called "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*" today! Every year on this day, the *hashpa'ah* of Torah returns.

Pesach is called "*Zman Cheiruseinu*," due to the spiritual freedom that we merited during Yetzias Mitzrayim. The Zohar writes that when Klal Yisrael was in Mitzrayim they were entrenched in the 49th level of impurity and HaKadosh Baruch Hu took them out to *cheirus olam*, "eternal freedom" — spiritual freedom, which is everlasting freedom, freedom from the *yetzer hara* and the Angel of Death (*Shemos Rabbah* 41:7). Pesach is the time Bnei Yisrael left impurity and headed toward *kedushah*. That's why it's called "*Zman Cheiruseinu*," because the *hashpa'ah* of freedom of *kedushah* returns every year.

Sukkos is called "*Zman Simchaseinu*" because it is a time that has a *hashpa'ah* of *simchah shel mitzvah*, and this *hashpa'ah* returns every year. The word "*simchah*" is written three times in the Torah in regard to Sukkos (see *Yalkut Emor* 654). This is why Simchas Torah immediately follows Sukkos, a time that is conducive to attaining high levels of *simchah shel mitzvah*.

The period of Sefiras HaOmer is a time awash with intense yearning for Torah and immense love of Torah. Success in Torah depends on good *middos*, as is apparent in the 48 attributes (mentioned in *Avos* chap. 6) with which Torah is acquired. Many of these attributes are matters of good *middos*, such as: modesty, joy, a good heart, loving one's fellowman, happy with his lot, and more. Although other attributes such as "with fear," are mentioned, most of the characteristics mentioned are related to *middos tovos*.

Since good *middos* are a preparation for Kabbalas HaTorah, if so, **during the period of Sefirah when Bnei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, there was a *hashpa'ah* of *middos tovos* — after all, during that time there was a deep desire and intense preparation for receiving the Torah. *Middos tovos* are preparation for Torah, and as mentioned, the *hashpa'ah* returns every single year.**¹

¹This is what the Yaavetz writes in *Avos*, chap. 6: "There is no doubt that during this time we will be more ready to accept all aspects of *avodas Hashem* more than at any other time, because the impression we received on

Now, since there is a *hashpa'ah* of good *middos* during this period, if there is the opposite of good *middos*, the sin is more severe. Each person is judged according to his *madreigah*, as they said, “HaKadosh Baruch Hu is exacting with tzaddikim like a hairsbreadth.” As a result, during this period, Hashem was more demanding of Rabbi Akiva’s *talmidim* — who were tzaddikim and on extraordinarily high *madreigos* — when it came to *middos*. They exhibited a miniscule degree of *tzarus ayin*, ill will, and lack of *kavod*, and because of their high *madreigah*, a miniscule deficiency in *middos* is already considered a great sin.

This is the matter of the Days of Sefirah. We, who are currently living through Sefirah, are so fortunate. We are living through a period that contains a *hashpa'ah* of good *middos*, a *hashpa'ah* of Torah and of deep desire for Torah — and Torah and *middos tovos* are two vitally important matters.



Chavakuk Came and Condensed Them into One

At the same time, we need *emunah*, as Chazal say (Avos 1:2): “The world stands on three things: on Torah, on *avodah*, and on *gemillus chassadim*.” Torah and *gemillus chassadim* are these two matters we just mentioned: Torah and *middos tovos*. And *avodah* is *tefillah* and *emunah*.

In the past, *emunah* was so simple, as the Gemara says in the end of *Makkos* (24a), “613 mitzvos were relayed to Moshe... Dovid came and condensed them into 11, Yeshayah came and condensed them into 6, Michah came and condensed them into 3, Yeshayah returned and condensed them into 2, Chavakuk came and condensed them into 1, as it says, ‘A tzaddik shall live by his faith.’”

Rashi explains there, “At first, they were *tzaddikim* and were able to accept the yoke of many mitzvos, but the later generations weren’t such great *tzaddikim*, and if they would have tried to keep them all, no one would have merited doing so. So Dovid came and condensed them.... so that they’d merit upholding these 11 mitzvos. And so it is, every subsequent generation would reduce them even further.

Whatever Dovid HaMelech included, and whatever the other *gedolim* mentioned in Gemara included in their counting, are special *madreigos* of *middos tovos* and *emunah*. For example, they said, “One who walks in innocence, this is Avraham, and one who acts with righteousness — like Abba Chilkiyah, and one who speaks the truth in his heart — like Rav Safra.”

In Dovid’s time, they could work on strengthening 11 points, but then the generations declined and they couldn’t start with all 11 points, so Yeshayah condensed them into 6 — that is, 6 attributes that one must try to get used to, and then use those as a springboard to continue attaining all good traits. Then the generations declined further, and they condensed these into 3 attributes, and then 2, until Chavakuk came and condensed them into one, as he said, “A tzaddik should live by his faith.”

Before Chavakuk, they didn’t need such strengthening in *emunah*, because *emunah* was something simple — it wasn’t considered a special *madreigah*. But in Chavav’s generation, *emunah* had become weaker, so he said that working on *emunah* was top priority, as *emunah* is the foundation of the entire Torah.

It’s not so simple to strengthen one’s *emunah*, to know and remember that everything is in Heaven’s hands, and that “whatever the Merciful One does is for the good.” If a person would live with this *emunah*, then when someone would cause him pain, he would understand that there’s no reason to be upset at the person, because everything is in Heaven’s hands. Hashem had decreed that he’d suffer pain, and if that person wouldn’t have caused him pain, it would have come from elsewhere, because it was decreed that he’d have pain. Of course, the man who caused him pain has bad *middos*, but the pain was a Heavenly decree.

He must contemplate and think: Why was it decreed that I have pain? Am I such a tzaddik that I receive *yissurim shel ahavah*? And if I am, why am I angry? If it isn’t *yissurim shel ahavah*, I obviously have some sin and that’s why I deserved this pain and suffering.

What should I be thinking about? My sin or the person who caused me the pain? What should I be concerned about — my issues or his? Of course I have to think about myself, and why Heaven is sending me this pain. After all, whatever the Merciful One does is for the good — if so, what benefit do I have from this? Probably it’s to make me do *teshuvah*! Based on the type of pain a person experiences, he must look for a *middah k’neged middah* — what parallel sin does he have and what does he have to do *teshuvah* for.

The Gemara relates the story of Rav Huna who had a vineyard and barrels of wine. 400 barrels of his wine went sour. The *rabbanim* told him to scrutinize his deeds and find the reason for it. He told them, “*Adaraba*, if you know a reason, tell me. I also want to know, and I don’t know, and perhaps you can help me discover the sin for which I was punished *middah k’neged middah*.”

our souls then will shine within us now as well.” See also the Ohr HaChaim on the *pasuk*, “And you shall count for yourselves.”

The *rabbanim* told him about a sharecropper who worked in his vineyard, who received his salary in percentages (commission). They said, “He really deserves a portion of the *zmoros*, the branches that are cut from the vineyard and are used for heating. But you Rav Huna didn’t give the sharecropper his portion of the *zmoros*, and that’s why you were punished *middah k’neged middah*, and your barrels of wine from the vineyard went sour.”

Rav Huna replied, “That sharecropper already stole many other things from me. He takes from the vineyard much greater amounts of grapes and wine than he deserves. Why should I offer him a cut of the *zmoros* as well?” The rabbanim answered, “Still, there’s a trace of robbery in failing to give him *zmoros*. Although another person wouldn’t be guilty if he acted this way, more is demanded from Rav Huna because of his *madreigah*.”

At the end of *HaSocher es HaOmnin* (*Bava Metzia* 83a), the Gemara relates the following story about Rabbah bar Bar Chanana, who hired porters to transport a barrel of wine from one place to another. They tripped and broke the barrel, and all the wine spilled out. He wanted to force them to pay him for the damages, but Rav told him to give in, be *mevater* to them. He quoted the *pasuk* (*Mishlei* 2:20): “So that you go in the way of the good” — because of your high *madreigah*, you must act *lifnim meshuras hadin*, go beyond the letter of the law.

Then those workers came and demanded that he pay them for their labor, and Rav obligated him to pay. Rabbah was surprised. Wasn’t it enough that they harmed me, and now I have to pay them as well? Rav told him, This is the halachah for you, because it says (*ibid.*) “you keep the ways of the righteous.” A *baal madreigah* is obligated to behave differently than other men.

It seems that Rabbah himself didn’t consider himself such a *baal madreigah*, so he didn’t think he had to do so. But then Rav came and told Rabbah that he really was a *baal madreigah* and was obligated to act accordingly. So too, Rav Huna didn’t think he was such a *baal madreigah* that he had to be so stringent with himself, but the rabbanim told him that he actually was a *baal madreigah*, and he was obligated to act this way.

In any case, as we’ve mentioned, the Sefirah period is a time of preparation for Kabbalas HaTorah, with a *hashpa’ah* of good *middos* and *ahavas Torah*. It is a very good time for us to be *mechazek* ourselves.

As we constantly mention, the best way to gain *chizuk* is through learning *mussar*. If you learn some *mussar* every day, even for just a few minutes a day, if you learn an interesting *sefer*, it is life-changing. I’ve already shared stories about family men who told me that they started learning *mussar* and their house transformed into a place full of joy, a happy home with a pleasant atmosphere. All

because they learn a little *mussar* every day! Yehi ratzon that we all merit good, fortunate lives, according to the Torah’s path!

7

Wealth or Poverty in Torah

The *pasuk* states (*Bamidbar* 25:35): “If your brother becomes destitute and his hand falters with you, you shall support him.” The simple meaning is discussing *gashmiyus*, financial matters. If a person becomes indigent and loses his money, you must help him with his *parnassah* and give him an interest-free loan, as is written in the next *pasuk*: “Don’t take from him interest.” It’s a mitzvah to help him rehabilitate financially.

But the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 34:4), explains the *pasuk* to be discussing *ruchniyus*, spiritual matters. If someone becomes destitute from Torah and needs help in Torah, you must support him and help him. The Midrash cites a *pasuk* from *Mishlei* (29:13) — and this entire idea is found in *Temurah daf* 16, in short: “A poor man and a man of deep thoughts met, Hashem enlightens the eyes both of them.” The Midrash explains: “A poor man” is a poor man in Torah; a “man of deep thoughts” is someone who has learned one or two *sedarim*. If the poor man approaches the “man of deep thoughts,” and asks him, “Please teach me a *perek*,” and he teaches him, then Hashem enlightens the eyes of both of them — they acquire both worlds, Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa.

The “poor man” mentioned here is someone poor in Torah who doesn’t know how to learn and needs help learning. The “man of deep thoughts” is the person who knows one or two *Sedarim* of *Mishnayos*. He’s not a great *lamdan* who knows *kol haTorah*, but he knows one or two *Sedarim*. The poor man goes over and says, “Teach me a *perek*. You learned and you know *Mishnayos*, but I don’t know. I beg you to teach me one *perek*.”

If he does the other man this favor and teaches him, then “Hashem enlightens the eyes of both of them” — even the “rav” still needs to learn, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu teaches him! That is, the rav only knows two *Sedarim*, and he also can improve his *havanah*, his understanding; everyone needs *siyatta d’Shemaya* to know and understand better. Since he is teaching the “poor man,” HaKadosh Baruch Hu enlightens them both. The “poor man” understands what he learned, and the rebbi merits that HaKadosh Baruch Hu teaches him.

The Midrash continues, that they both acquire Olam HaZeh and Olam HaBa. Olam HaZeh, as Chazal say (*Avos* 6:4): “You are fortunate in this world,” and Olam HaBa, that they both gain: the “poor man” learns Torah, and the other man helps him learn! Both gain!

This is what Chazal said (*Avodah Zarah* 35b) on the *pasuk*, “Because of the fragrance of your goodly oils, your name is ‘oil poured forth.’” Why is a *talmid chacham* compared to a container of fragrant oil, if it’s uncovered, its fragrance wafts through the air, if its covered, it does not. That is, just as if a bottle of good perfume is closed, one cannot smell its fragrance, but if its opened, everyone can enjoy the aroma, so too, someone who teaches Torah to others gains fame as a *lamdan*. “As is written, ‘Your name is ‘oil poured forth.’ When they reveal and pour out its oil — meaning, when you teach Torah to students, then your name is known.” (Rashi)

The Gemara adds: Not only do hidden things become revealed to him, as it says “*alomos aheivucha*, maidens loved you” — read it, “*alumos*, hidden things.” Rashi explains, “They become revealed to him as if on their own, without any trouble when he’s teaching them.” One who teaches Torah to others merits that hidden things he could never have figured out on his own are revealed to him. This is a special *siyatta d’Shemaya* of *havanah*, aside from the good name he acquires.

Of course, if he learns just to acquire a good name, he will not receive it. Chazal have said (*Avos* 1:13), “One who seeks renown loses his good name.” If he wants to become famous and wants the fame, he will gain the opposite. He should learn because one must learn, to help others, not for the publicity, and then he will automatically gain a good name. And he also merit *siyatta d’Shemaya* for *hatzlachah* in Torah, more than is naturally possible.

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All this is true if one really helps and teaches a “poor man” in Torah, but if the poor man asks for help and no one helps him, well, about this the Midrash quotes another *pasuk* from *Mishlei* (22:2): “A rich man and a poor man met, Hashem created them all.” The Midrash explains: A rich man in Torah and a poor man in Torah. The poor man said to the rich man, “Teach me one *perek*,” but he did not. He told him, “Why would I want to sit and learn with you ‘*Mashkin*’ or ‘*Mei’masai*’? Go learn with someone on your own level!” “Hashem created them all” — the One Who made this one smart can make him foolish, and the One Who made that one foolish can make him smart.

If the rich man in Torah is lazy and does not want to teach the poor man, telling the poor man, “Do I have to exert effort to teach you? Go learn with others on your own level — find yourself *chavrusas* like you, because I am a big *lamdan*, and you have to work hard by yourself just like I did. I don’t have to help you!” If he acts this way and doesn’t teach the poor man, then the One Who made him smart can make him foolish. Even though he is already rich in Torah, he can lose his wealth.

Wealth in Torah is a gift from Heaven. One needs *siyatta d’Shemaya* for everything, and if Heaven provides a person with wealth in Torah, he must use it wisely and fulfill his obligations with it. If someone has wealth in Torah and keeps it all for himself, failing to do *chesed* with his wisdom, he will lose the *zechus* to have it! Even if he was already smart, Heaven can make him become a fool and lose his wisdom. And the opposite is true as well. The One Who made the other person dumb can turn him into a smart man. That is, if someone is poor in Torah, but he wants to learn and begs to learn, he tries and puts in effort, he will have *siyatta d’Shemaya* and has success in Torah. He will become a *lamdan*. This is *hashgachah*: if someone does *chesed* with Torah, he will be *zocheh* to Torah. Hidden matters will become revealed to him effortlessly. And *chas v’shalom*, the opposite is true too — one can lose everything.

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There’s another *pasuk* in *Mishlei* (31:26), “She opens her mouth in wisdom and Torah of kindness is on her tongue.” The Gemara comments (*Sukkah* 49b): “Is there Torah of kindness and Torah not of kindness? However, *Torah lishmah* is called Torah of kindness, and *shelo lishmah* is not Torah of kindness. Some say Torah learned in order to teach is Torah of kindness, and Torah not intended to teach is not kindness.” This means there are two explanations as to what “Torah of kindness” refers to: 1) *Torah lishmah* 2) Torah learned in order to teach.

It’s understandable that *Torah lishmah* is in another league, with completely different *sheleimus*. Not only is the mitzvah greater, the actual Torah is different when one learns *lishmah*. Regarding the fact that Torah gives a person *sheleimus*, Chazal say, “I created the *yetzer hara*, I created the Torah as an antidote to it” — if one learns Torah *lishmah*, it’s a completely different level of *sheleimus*.

In the beginning of chap. 6 of *Avos*, it says, “Whoever learns *Torah lishmah*, merits many things...” The *Ruach Chaim* explains that “many things” refers to much more than those “things” written explicitly further in that *mishnah*. Aside from that list, there are things that aren’t delineated “because they aren’t matters that we can comprehend to write about their quality.” We cannot fathom the great measure of *sheleimus* that *Torah lishmah* provides. That’s why it’s called Torah of kindness, because it is a completely different Torah.

We can explain the second explain of “Torah of kindness” — that it’s Torah learned in order to teach — in this manner as well. It’s a completely different level of Torah. If a person learns in order to teach — meaning, he’s not only learning for himself to be a *lamdan*, but to help others as well, then there is *chesed* in his Torah, and it becomes a different Torah — “*Toras chesed*,” Torah of

kindness. It's not Torah standing alone and *chesed* standing alone; the Torah is Torah of kindness.

Therefore, *l'maseh*, it's very important if someone can help those who need more help in Torah. Each person should help according to his ability — this will add to his

sheleimus in Torah, which is a completely different Torah. As a result, he merits success in Torah, much more than is naturally possible, hidden matters are revealed to him, and Hashem enlightens the eyes of both of them.

Rabbeinu's Address to the *Talmidim* of Yeshivas Yad Aharon

Chazal say in *Maseches Menachos* (18a): "How fortunate are you, *talmidei chachamim*, that words of Torah are exceedingly precious to you." *Talmidei chachamim* have *chavivus haTorah*, they love Torah, the love learning Torah. If so, you are fortunate — you are fortunate in this world, as Chazal say (*Avos* 6:4): "You are fortunate in this world, and it is good for you in the next world." In Olam HaBa, of course you'll be fortunate and happy, but Chazal are saying that you'll also be fortunate and happy in this world. A life of Torah is the happiest, most fortunate life in this world.

It's well known that all those who stay in learning and are *osek* in Torah their whole lives lead joyous, fortunate lives. They are happy, their families are happy; they're happy all day long. This is the merit of Torah.

We presently can't be in a yeshivah and everyone is in his own home. But the telephone is there to facilitate communication, and *chavrusas* can continue learning over the phone. There are also *shiurim* over the phone, and it's a wonderful thing. In the *zechus* of *esek haTorah* this *zman* — which is a little harder, but it's not difficult! because we enjoy learning — it is a very great thing and a high *madreigah* in Torah. [Learning well now] is a tremendous *zechus* to merit good *shidduchim* and to lead happy, fortunate lives throughout your lifetime. *Ashrecha baOlam HaZeh!*

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the Kroll Family, Los Angeles
להצלחת בניהם ובנותיהם
בתורה וביראת שמים

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