

## Darkei HaChizuk

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

A Sichah from Maran HaGaon Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita*, Rosh Yeshivas Ponevez • Parshas Noach 5781

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### Yiras Shamayim Does Not Contradict Happiness

We've experienced Elul and *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, which are times of *yiras Shamayim*, and those days were followed by Sukkos, *zman simchaseinu*, which brings down a *hashpa'ah* of joy in fulfilling mitzvos. If so, there should presently be a *hashpa'ah* of *yiras Shamayim* together with *simchah*.

However, there seems to be a contradiction here. How can *simchah* coexist with *yirah*? *Yirah* means fear, *pachad* — isn't fear a contradiction of joy?

But the truth is, there is no contradiction here, and a *pasuk* in *Tehillim* proves it (2:11): "Serve Hashem with *yirah*, fear, and rejoice (*gilu*) in trembling." A person must be in a state of fear and trembling, but at the same time, he must be joyful! *Gilah*, the word used in this *pasuk* to describe joy, expresses a state of happiness that is a higher level than *simchah*. Indeed, in the final *berachah* of *sheva berachos*, we say "*asher bara sasson v'simchah*," and only then do we say "*gilah*." This means *gilah* is a step above *simchah*. In any case, it's clearly written that *simchah* can exist together with *yiras Shamayim*.

### Closeness to Hashem Increases Joy

There is a reason why this is not a contradiction. The *Mesillas Yesharim* (Chap. 19) cites Chazal who say that when a person davens, "your heart should be joyous because you are praying before an unrivaled king." That is, one must be happy when he prays, for he is davening before a king Who has no equal and he is talking to Him and He hears and wants to listen. Now, after all, of course davening must be conducted with *yiras Shamayim* since he is standing in front of the King, and it is frightening to stand in front of a king. But at the same time, he is also happy — "your heart should be joyous"! *Yiras Shamayim* is not a contradiction to *simchah*.

Fear of a human does not include joy, but *yiras harommemus* can go hand in hand with joy — and so can *yiras harommemus* of a great person, like when a person is standing near the Chazon Ish. On the one hand, fear is present, *yiras harommemus*, but you also experience joy and a good, pleasant feeling that you are standing near the Chazon Ish. This is fear together with joy. Therefore, *yiras Shamayim* is not a contradiction to happiness. *Tefillah* is conducted with *yirah*, but "your heart should

be joyous," because *kirvas Hashem*, closeness to Hashem, increases happiness.

A story is told about the author of *Menuchah v'Kedushah*, who was a *talmid* of Rav Chaim Volozhiner. Once, while he was reciting Selichos and he said the words: "To You is righteousness, and to us is embarrassment," he felt so utterly embarrassed that he began to cry. But he was so happy that he felt embarrassed! For the rest of his life, he pined for the day when he'd be *zocheh* to reach this level again; he wanted to experience that level of feeling embarrassed, but he never did again. Nevertheless, he was so happy that he felt the embarrassment — that his *yiras Shamayim* and his *emunah* were on a level of such *sheleimus* that he was moved to tears.

### Happiness Davening to an Unsurpassed King

The *Mesillas Yesharim* (Chap. 19) describes what *tefillah* is and how much one should rejoice in his *tefillos*: for he is *zocheh* to speak to the king, the king hears him, and wants to listen to him, and waits for man to ask for more and more.

Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Berachos* 9:1; *Midrash Tehillim* chap. 4) that when a person makes a request of a human king, if the king does not fulfill his request, and the person repeats his request, yet the king still does not respond, if the person would come back and restate his need once again, the king would become angry. After all, the person should have realized the king doesn't want to fulfill the request; why does he keep asking?

But HaKadosh Baruch Hu does not act in this manner. To the contrary, He says, *harchev picha, v'amaleihu*, "Open your mouth [continue asking and asking] and I will fill [your requests]." The more a person davens and the more he keeps asking, the happier Hashem is. Hashem wants us to make requests of Him; He wants to keep asking and asking! This is the inherent joy of the *zechus* of being able to daven to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, for He is an unparalleled king Who wants people to constantly turn to Him with their requests.

### How To Achieve Fear and Happiness

If so, *yiras Shamayim* can coexist with happiness, and it is not a contradiction, but one needs to know how to achieve this *madreigah*. How does a person attain this level? The answer is by contemplation, *hisbonenus*; by

thinking and thinking some more about *yiras Shamayim* and *simchah!* Through *hisbonenus* and thoughts one can attain *yiras Shamayim* — and happiness as well.

For example, regarding thoughts of *yiras Shamayim*, a person should think about himself and his current situation: he should think about his deeds and his *aveiros*. Is it possible that a person doesn't have even one *aveirah* in the years that past since his bar mitzvah? Take the sin of *bittul Torah* — there are only a handful of lofty individuals who learned with due diligence since the day of their bar mitzvah; but this is very uncommon, people like this are the minority of the minority.

If so, everyone has the sin of *bittul Torah* or davening without *kavanah*, saying Hashem's name without the proper level of fear, like Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Iggeres HaTeshuvah* (Letter *yud*) regarding the *pasuk*, "Fear Hashem your G-d," that upon mentioning Hashem's name, one must say it with fear and awe, and if one is not careful about this, it is a sin.

### **Teshuvah for Bittul Torah and Yiras Shamayim**

One must do *teshuvah* for this, for *bittul Torah*, and for a lack of *yirah*. The *teshuvah* for *bittul Torah* is *azivas hacheit*, abandoning this behavior from now on and to learn with all one's strength, each person according to his ability, making sure not to waste time from learning. This certainly is a little hard, but it's not that hard because *divrei Torah* are interesting and sweeter than honey, and there is sweetness and curiosity involved, so abandoning the *cheit* of *bittul Torah* isn't terribly difficult.

One must express remorse for the past deeds. Rabbeinu Yonah discusses this in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (1:10). He describes what remorse is and how to have remorse. Having remorse for *bittul Torah* is not that hard either when one has already fulfilled *azivas hacheit*.

But repenting for a lack of *yiras Shamayim* is not simple at all, because one needs to be afraid, he needs to have *pachad!* To acquire *pachad*, one must learn *sifrei mussar*, there's no other solution — merely thinking about it isn't enough. Once a person learns *mussar sefarim*, he must also spend time in *hisbonenus*, contemplating his situation.

The *Shaarei Teshuvah* writes (2:26), "Indeed, when a person hears *mussar* he must arouse his soul and place these matters on his heart and think about them constantly. He should add on his own teachings. He should meditate in the chambers of his spirit and internalize the *mussar* in his soul and not rely solely on the *mussar* of the rebuker; he must rebuke himself daily, on a regular basis, until his soul accepts the *mussar* and is purified."

That is, once a person already knows and heard words of rebuke or learned *mussar sefarim*, he must "turn the hand of his *mussar* on his soul," meaning, he must contemplate on his own and internalize the rebuke, the fear, and remorse. This type of *hisbonenus* has an influence, but it must be preceded by something that arouses him, such as hearing or learning *sifrei mussar*. This is how one does *teshuvah* for lack of *yirah*.

The truth is that in davening we say "Forgive our Father for we have sinned," meaning, sins such as *bittul Torah* and all other sins we may have done. We are admitting and saying "we have sinned." This is *vidui*, along with a request to be forgiven for our sins.

The next *berachah* "Return us to Your Torah," is also a prayer and a request to succeed in *azivas hacheit*, abandoning our sinful ways. We ask "Return us to Your Torah" — repentance for Torah, and we ask, "And bring us close to service of You" — repentance for service of Hashem, like davening without the proper *kavanah*. All other mitzvos are included in this as well, as they are *avodas Hashem* and must be fulfilled with a feeling of servitude.

### **Attaining Yiras Shamayim through "Shivisi"**

The way to acquire *yiras Shamayim* is explained in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim*, first *se'if*): *Shivisi Hashem l'negdi tamid...* "I place Hashem before me always" is a fundamental principle in the Torah and the attributes of the righteous who walk before Hashem. For a person's sitting, movements, and activities when he is alone in his home are not the same as his sitting, movements, and activities when he is standing in front of a great king. Neither is his voluntary speech and expression when he is with his family and close ones the same as his speech in the king's presence. All the more so, when a person takes to heart that the Great King, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Whose glory fills the world, is standing over him and watching his actions... immediately, fear will come upon him, as well as submissiveness due to his fear of Hashem Yisbarach and his constant shame in front of Him."

That is, one must always remember that there is a King that sees whatever I do, and hears whatever I say, and also knows whatever I think (this idea is not mentioned in the *Shulchan Aruch*), for Hashem knows thoughts — all of man's thoughts are revealed before Him! And if one thinks about this often, it leads to *yiras Shamayim*, as the *Shulchan Aruch* concludes: "immediately, fear will come upon him." This is referring to fear with happiness — that I am fearful, but I am happy that I'm fearful. This is not a contradiction; on the contrary, fear produces happiness!

But as we mentioned, one first must have a steady learning session in *mussar sefarim* in order to constantly arouse his *yirah* and increase *yirah*.

## The Pleasure and Joy in Torah and Mitzvos

And it's really not hard. The *Chovos HaLevavos* (*Shaar HaBechinah* Chap. 5) writes that anything necessary and essential to the world will be readily available and it won't be hard to attain it — such as air for breathing, which the body constantly needs. Air is found in every place and at all times. So too, drinking water, which is extremely necessary for man's existence is found in many springs and rivers. Food, which is not needed as much as water, is not available in the same abundance as water, but *baruch Hashem*, we do have food to eat. Whatever the body needs is present, and it's not hard to attain it.

So too, whatever the soul needs is not hard to find — such as *limud haTorah*, which is interesting, enticing, and sweet. It's not hard to be *osek baTorah*. Likewise, *yiras Shamayim* gives a person a very pleasant feeling, and the many *sifrei mussar* available help a person increase *yiras Shamayim*. *Baruch Hashem*, we have whatever we need for the *nefesh*.

Loving one's fellow, *v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocha*, makes a person happy, because when someone loves another it makes him happy, and he's happy that he has what he loves. We've already discussed in the past that since *ahavas habriyos* is a *mitzvas aseh*, a positive mitzvah, it is ingrained in every Jew's nature to love his fellow Jew. Having loved ones makes him happy; he has what he loves.

*Gemillus chesed* is another example. Lovingkindness is an innate characteristic — a person enjoys performing *chesed*, doing good deeds, and helping others. Since he enjoys it, it isn't hard; it's a pleasure!

## The Yetzer Hara Disturbs Our Growth

But the reality is that there are few *bnei aliyah*, as the Gemara writes (*Sotah* 45b): “Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said, ‘I’ve seen *bnei aliyah*, but they are few. If there are one thousand, my son and I are among them. If there are one hundred, my son and I are among them. If there are two, they are my son and I.’” He meant to say (see *Derashos Hod Tzvi*, p. 26 in the name of Rav Yitzchak Blazer) that even though this type of behavior is different from the rest of the world's behavior, one need not be embarrassed. Being a *ben aliyah* gives a person a happy, good life!

But as we said, in reality, there aren't very many *bnei aliyah*. And this is due to the yetzer hara. The yetzer hara does not allow people to grow; it disturbs Torah learning, disrupts *yiras Shamayim*, and impedes *chesed*.

Chazal said (*Kiddushin* 30) that a person's yetzer hara overpowers him every single day and desires to kill him, as it says, “He seeks out the tzaddik and desires to kill

him, and if HaKadosh Baruch Hu would not help him, he would not be able to overcome him [the yetzer hara], as it says, ‘Hashem will not abandon him to his hands.’” This means that even if a person was victorious over the yetzer hara yesterday, the yetzer hara will overpower him again today, and every day, the yetzer hara becomes stronger and overpowers him again.

The Gemara uses two different words to describe the yetzer hara's tactics: *misgaber*, overpowers him; and *mischadeish*, renews itself. *Misgaber* refers to yesterday's yetzer hara who overpowers him again today, while *mischadeish* refers to a new yetzer hara that did not exist yesterday. This is why there aren't many *bnei aliyah* — because the yetzer hara is *misgabeir* and *mischadeish*.

In order to overpower the yetzer hara, one needs *siyatta d'Shemaya*. Without it, one cannot overcome the yetzer hara, as Chazal say, “if HaKadosh Baruch Hu would not help him, he would not be able to overcome him [the yetzer hara].” We've already mentioned the Gra's words (cited in *Kol Eliyahu, Sukkah*) and the *Mesillas Yesharim* (Chap. 2): When does one have *siyatta d'Shemaya*? When a person is *misgabeir*, strengthens himself and does whatever he can potentially do and has already reached the state that if Hashem wouldn't help him, he wouldn't be able to overpower the yetzer hara. At that point, he has *siyatta d'Shemaya*.

Therefore, we daven and ask for *siyatta d'Shemaya: Hashiveinu*, Return us! And when we say *Selach lanu*, Forgive us, we are saying *vidui*. Additionally, we learn *mussar* daily, which is our *hishtadlus*! And as the *Mishnah Berurah* writes in the first *siman*, *mussar sefarim* are the antidote to the yetzer hara, so that is how to overpower the yetzer hara.

## Avraham Avinu's Influence on His Generation

Chazal say (*Avos* 5:2): There are ten generations from Adam to Noach, to inform you how much patience Hashem has, as all the generations had been angering Him until He brought the waters of the Mabul upon them. There were ten generations from Noach to Avraham... as all the generations has been angering Him until Avraham came and received the reward for them all.”

That is, Hashem is slow to anger for ten generations. If people do not repent after ten generations, there will be a punishment, *Rachmana litzlan*. In Noach's generation, which was the tenth generation that angered Hashem, HaKadosh Baruch Hu brought upon them the waters of the Mabul because Noach did not influence the people of his generation to do teshuvah. That's why the Mabul is called *Mei Noach*, “Noach's water” (*Yeshayahu*, Chap. 54). Since he didn't cause his generation to repent, the Mabul had to occur. (See *Zohar Parashas Noach*, 67b, which states that Noach didn't daven for his

generation, and that's why the Mabul was called "Noach's water.")

But Avraham Avinu, who lived ten generations later, during which all those people angered Hashem, influenced his generation to do teshuvah. By doing so, he saved them from punishment, for Hashem does not act with *erech apayim* for more than ten generations: either the people must do teshuvah, or they will be punished. Avraham Avinu influenced his generation and caused them to do teshuvah, but Noach did not influence his generation to repent.

Shem and Eiver lived during that time, and they had a *beis midrash* and were *osek baTorah*. They knew Torah through *ruach hakodesh*; Adam Rishon knew Torah as well, but neither of them had an influence on their generations. Even though there was a *beis midrash*, it did not affect those generations. But Avraham Avinu did influence his generation and caused them to do teshuvah, so he received the *sechar* of everyone else.

### Avraham Avinu's Rescue from the Fiery Furnace

Avraham merited experiencing a miracle when he was thrown into the fiery furnace in Ur Kasdim. HaKadosh Baruch Hu saved him from being burnt. The Midrash states (*Bereishis Rabbah* 63b) that Avraham was saved from the fiery furnace in the *zechus* of Yaakov. "This can be compared to someone whom the authorities brought to court. He was found guilty and sentenced to be burnt to death. The authorities then saw through astrology that he was destined to bear a daughter who would marry the king. They said, 'It is worthwhile to save him in the merit of his daughter who is destined to be born and marry the king.' So too, Nimrod sentenced Avraham to be burnt to death. HaKadosh Baruch Hu saw that Yaakov would be born from him, and He said, 'It is worthwhile to save him in the merit of Yaakov, as it is written, "Therefore, so he said to the House of Yaakov, who redeemed Avraham." Yaakov redeemed Avraham."

This means that Avraham's salvation from the fiery furnace was all in the merit of Yaakov Avinu, who was destined to be born from him. This begs an explanation. Didn't Avraham Avinu have enough of his own merit to be saved? Why was he saved only in Yaakov's merit?

The commentary *Yefe To'ar* on the Midrash explains, citing the *Sefer HaAkeidah*: "He was not saved in his own merit, because this is Hashem's judgment: those who give up their lives *al kiddush HaShem* are not saved, because this great *sheleimus* is good... Therefore, Avraham's judgment, based on his own character, was to be burnt, because this is the true good before Him. It was only due to Yaakov, who was destined to come out of him, who was the *shalshelos hayachas* and his bed was complete; that Avraham was saved — so that Yaakov should not be eliminated."

That is, one who is burnt *al kiddush HaShem*, for him it is the ultimate good — for himself and for his *madreigah*. By being burnt *al kiddush HaShem*, he is *zocheh* to inestimable Olam HaBa, but sometimes, it is necessary to keep him alive for the generation. This was the case with Avraham Avinu. If he would have been burnt, Yitzchak, and then subsequently Yaakov and the rest of Klal Yisrael would not have existed. Therefore, although Avraham did not need that miracle for himself, HaKadosh Baruch Hu saved him for Yaakov, who would be born from him.

Just as the Midrash says, this is comparable to a king who saved a man convicted to death, in the merit of his future daughter — since the king needed that daughter. So too, HaKadosh Baruch Hu needs Klal Yisrael, as the purpose of Creation is *kevod Shamayim*, to bring honor to Hashem's name, and *kevod Shamayim* is manifested through Klal Yisrael. That's why Yaakov was needed. This is the matter of "the House of Yaakov that redeemed Avraham" — Avraham was saved in the *zechus* of Yaakov.

*Baruch Hashem*, we are all involved in *kevod Shamayim*, we are *osek baTorah*, *tefillah*, and perform good deeds *bein adam lachaveiro* according to our abilities, and it seems we are demonstrating *kevod Shamayim* according to our abilities, as much as we can. If so, *ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu!* How fortunate we are! How wonderful is our lot! We are so lucky to be involved in *kevod Shamayim* and this gives us happiness, and the happiness gives us the strength to continue further. *B'ezras Hashem*, may we all be *zocheh* to do what is incumbent upon us. May we be *zocheh* to increase *kevod Shamayim!*

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