

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 - Shmini 5773 #53

Yetzias Mitzrayim

During the Maariv service, in the blessing that speaks of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we recite the words, *ואנחנו ישראל עמו* - *and we, Yisroel, are His nation. Klal Yisroel* is referred to as Hashem's nation. This label repeats a few more times in the blessing, *ויוצא את עמו ישראל* - *and He took His nation, Yisroel, out*. Later on in the *brocho*, the term that refers to us changes to *בנים* - *sons*. *Who passes His sons through*, and again, *וראו בניו את גבורתו* - *and His sons saw His strength*, and once more, *מלכותך ראו בניך* - *Your sons have seen Your Kingship*. We must understand this change in terminology.

It seems that while *Bnei Yisroel* were in Egypt they were still not on the level describes as "sons". While there, *Bnei Yisroel* were immersed in the 49 levels of impurity. Even during *Yitzias Mitzrayim* we were still referred to as a "nation", and not as "sons", *ויוצא את עמו* - *and He took His nation, Yisroel, out from the midst [of Mitzrayim]*. Only upon reaching Yam Suf, were we called sons - *Who passes His sons through the openings of the Reed Sea*. It was only at the time of *קריעת ים סוף* - *the splitting of the Reed Sea*, that *Bnei Yisroel* merited to be elevated to this new lofty level; a closeness that is shared by father and son.

We know that during *krias Yam Suf Klal Yisroel* merited tremendously lofty levels. We are told in the *Mechilta*, *ראתה שפחה על הים מה שלא ראה יחזקאל בן בוזי* - *A maidservant saw upon the sea (at the splitting of the sea) things that even Yechezkel the son of Buzi did not see through prophecy*. Rashi on the *Passuk* זה קלי

ואנווהו - *This is my G-d, and I shall beautify Him* (*Shemos* 15:2) explains that the people were able to point with their finger at Hashem's glory. These levels were attained specifically at the splitting of the Reed Sea. What was so extraordinary about this event that warranted *Klal Yisroel* achieving such spiritual heights?

We should first point out that at the beginning of the *שירת הים* - *the Song that was sung at the splitting of the Reed Sea*, the first group of verses all refer to Hashem in the third person, *גאה* - *He was honored*, *רמה* - *He lifted*, and so on, while at the end of the song the verses switch to second person, *ימינך* - *Your right hand*, *גאונך* - *Your pride*, *מי כמוך* - *Who is like You?* The verses switch from a hidden tense to a revealed one. What is the reasoning behind this?

We can explain that as long as *Klal Yisroel* saw the Egyptians, they weren't on the loftiest level of *emunah* - *belief* that they could have been. This heightened level was not feasible as long as the Egyptians were around. Only once the Egyptians drowned, did *Klal Yisroel* ascend in their levels of *emunah*. In reflection of this, the *shira* - *song* switches to a loftier level, one in which *Klal Yisroel* refers to Hashem in the present, second person tense.

As long as the Egyptians were alive for *Bnei Yisroel* to see them, the effects were that the *Yidden* were not able to ascend in their levels of belief. This idea is found also regarding Avrohom Avinu upon his leaving his nephew, Lot. The verse says: *והשם אמר לאברם אחרי* - *and Hashem said to Avrom, after Lot departed from him*. Rashi explains that as long as the evil one (Lot) was with him, prophecy left him (*Bereishis* 13:14). While Lot was physically near Avrohom Avinu,

the *kedusha* - sanctity (*holiness*) departed from Avrom and hence, he was not able to receive prophecy. So too, was the case with *Klal Yisroel* upon our leaving Egypt. As long as the Egyptians were around, our spiritual levels were hindered.

After the Egyptians were drowned in the sea, and *Bnei Yisroel* were not able to see them, did *Bnei Yisroel* merit reaching tremendously lofty levels of *emunah*. Corresponding to this, we changed the *shira* to one of present tense, talking to G-d directly. *Klal Yisroel* tangibly saw and felt *emunah* in Hashem. At that time we merited to be elevated to the level of “sons to Hashem” and also merited the levels of prophecy. This is indicated later on in the *shira*, where we see verses that are prophesying future events. All this was only possible after the Egyptians were not visible.

In *Nissan* we were redeemed

Chazal tell us in *Rosh Hashana* (11a), בניסן נגאלו אבותינו - *In Nissan, our fathers were redeemed from Egypt; and in Nissan we will be redeemed in the future.* This month is an auspicious time for redemption.

Every *geulah* - redemption requires merits. We must be on a much higher level than normal to merit the redemption. When Chazal say that “In *Nissan* our fathers were redeemed” they mean that during this month, *Klal Yisroel* merited being on a higher spiritual level that in turn, made the redemption a possibility. Every year, during this time, this special spiritual bounty comes back to us. This time is auspicious for spiritual growth. The final redemption, we are told, will also take place during *Nissan*, as it will be a time in which *Klal Yisroel* will heighten its levels of spirituality, and will therefore be worthy of being redeemed.

The aforementioned needs clarification, as we recite daily in the *אני מאמין* - *Thirteen Principles of Faith*, that “I shall wait for him everyday, for his coming”. This indicated that we anticipate the *geulah* daily, not only during the month of *Nissan*. We could explain this based on the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* (98a): כתיב בעיתה וכתיב - *It says “in its time” and it also says “I shall hasten it”*. The Gemara resolves the contradiction as follows: זכו אחישנה לא זכו בעיתה - *If Klal Yisroel merits the geulah, I will hasten it, and if not, then it will come in*

its proper time. If *Klal Yisroel* repents and merits the final redemption, Hashem will hasten it and it will come prior to its actual scheduled time. This hastening can occur at any moment and does not have to fall out during *Nissan*. The actual scheduled time though, is indeed, during the month of *Nissan*.

There is a principle called, זה לעומת זה עשה אלוקים - *This in parallel to this, Hashem has made* (this means that every positive force has an equal and opposite negative force Ed.). With this in mind, given that this is an auspicious time for spiritual elevation, the *nisyonos* - *trials of bittul Torah* are much greater. *Nissan* also happens to be *bein hazmanim*, a time which is known for its weakening of Torah study. One must remember that which is taught to us in *seforim*; *bein hazmanim* was intended for teachers, not for the students. The teachers used to be busy with their students from morning until night without any respite. During *Nissan*, they were given time off in order to give them ample time to prepare for the *yom tov*.

Since this is a time of a general weakening in Torah study, one’s obligation to learn is much greater. One must strengthen himself during this time to learn with greater *hasmada* - constant, uninterrupted learning. One must think about these ideas and not look for excuses to remove from himself the yoke and responsibility of Torah. Many people do not understand this. I just heard from a *bachur*, that his mother demands that during *bein hazmanim* he should learn less than during the rest of the year, as he must rest. This diagnosis should only be prescribed by a doctor or a psychologist.

Nissan is not the only time that suffers from a weakening in Torah study. Throughout the year, during times that are auspicious for growth, such as Fridays and Shabbos, we find a weakening in Torah study. Shabbos is a day that is holy and sanctified. A day that is tailor-made for success in Torah. Torah learnt on Shabbos is more valuable than that which was learnt during the week. We know that the *Seforim* teach us that a *mitzvah* performed on Shabbos is worth a thousand fold than when performed during the week.

The Rema writes (*Orach Chaim* 290) that those who work throughout the week need to learn on Shabbos more than they did throughout the week. Those who learn all day throughout the week need to rest a bit on the Shabbos. This was only geared towards those who learn with tremendous efforts and with great *hasmodo* - *constant, uninterrupted learning*, the way people used to

learn Torah. Most of the public, though, are not in need of special rest during Shabbos.

Erev Shabbos is a time to prepare for Shabbos and already resonates with the sanctity of Shabbos. The *sefer Yesod Veshoresh Ha'avodah* tells us that if one's soul is in *Gehinom*, it is pulled out from there already from Friday, from the time he used to cease doing prohibited Shabbos activities. The Chofetz Chaim (*Shem Olam* Ch.4) writes in the name of a certain *Gadol* that the time one desists from *melocho* on *erev* Shabbos is considered for him as Shabbos and the merit of Shabbos protects him. We see that if one accepts the Shabbos early and adds to the *tosefes Shabbos* - *addition of Shabbos* (*halachic* obligation to begin Shabbos prior to its actual arrival time Ed.), he will be granted more rest from *Gehinom*.

There are some people who are dressed and ready for Shabbos from the time of *Mincha Gedolah*. They spend the next few hours immersed in Torah study. Any person who follows this schedule will be spared from *Gehinom* (for those hours, as they are considered for him as Shabbos). One cannot fathom the extent that being spared from *Gehinom* for even one moment is a tremendous reward. Most people do not pay attention to any of this.

Torah and *Middos*

What is considered *התמדה* - *hasmodo* (constant, uninterrupted learning)? Harav HaGaon HaTzaddik, Rabbi Yosef Zundel of Salant zt"l writes (*kuntrus Hanhagos Yesharos*): **Whenever one must take care of his physical needs, such as eating and the like, he should make sure to constantly be thinking Torah thoughts. He should try to minimize these activities as much as he can, and he should always think to himself, "When will I be able to go learn?"** Even while a person must stop his learning he should constantly yearn to return to it. He must keep thinking, "When will I finish what I am currently doing and will be able to return to my learning?"

A higher level is to keep one's thoughts in the learning material. I know of some individuals who's heads are immersed in Torah even while not learning. They do not allow their mind to think of anything outside of Torah. There are many areas in which one can think of Torah: what he has recently learned or what he would like to learn. One can also contemplate the meaning of the

words of the prayer services. One can take a personal spiritual inventory, and see if his actions are up to par. In Kelm they used to say that even in places where one is prohibited from learning one can think about the futility of man, i.e., his own shortcomings.

When dealing with others one must only see their positive attributes and not their shortcomings. I heard about a teacher with great *middos*, that told his students to each write what the other student's positive attributes were. After this activity, the whole environment in the classroom changed.

Rabbeinu Yona (*Shaarei Teshuva* 1:18) explains the verse in *Mishlei* that states: *בעלוץ צדיקים רבה תפארה ובקום רשעים יהופש אדם* - *In the elation of the righteous, tiferes is great, and with the rise of the wicked, man will be searched*. He explains that while the righteous are happy and joyous they will *תפארו ומשבוה* - *praise and exalt* others on their positive *middos*. When the wicked rise to power, they search out people's flaws and see only their shortcomings.

One must always search for the good in the creation. The *Chovos Halevavos* (*Shaar Hachnia* Ch.6) writes of a certain pious individual, who upon passing by a rotting, bad smelling, dog carcass, his disciples commented about the putrid smell. He, on the other hand, said: "How white are its teeth". The students had remorse for what they said. One must train himself to see the good in everything.

One must take special care to refrain from speaking *lashon hara*. For some, this prohibition has become second nature. A person has to remember not to pass judgment upon any other person. The Chofetz Chaim wrote at length about the different ways one could be transgressing the prohibition of *lashon hara*. Sometimes it can even result from trying to complement another. In his *sefer Shmiras Halashon* (*Shaar Hatvuna* Ch.3) he writes about the Gaon Rabbi Refael from Hamburg zt"l. During his later years he tried his best to not pronounce another person's name. This way he will not come to the prohibition of *lashon hara*.

It seems, though, that if one is telling over a story about a *Gadol*, for the sake of teaching, one will not falter and speak *lashon hara*. On the contrary, one can learn from their actions. The Gemara relates many stories that the Amoraim said over to their students, while mentioning the name of the person who was involved in the story.

There are many stories, involving our *Gedolim*, which people should learn from. Let us say over two such stories, one about the Chazon Ish, and the other about the Brisker Rov. How great were their *middos*, and to what extremes they tried to prevent weakening others.

A man from Tel-Aviv came to see the Chazon Ish zt"l. He inquired of him, as he was bothered by the following: in his *sefer*, the Chazon Ish asks a question which is already asked by the Yerushalmi Talmud. Why, then, did the Chazon Ish not cite it as the source of the question? The man proceeded to show the Chazon Ish that particular part of the Yerushalmi inside, to which the Chazon Ish replied, "True, true" and agreed with the man's comment.

After the man left, the Chazon Ish thought that perhaps that man did not understand that the Chazon Ish indeed agreed with him, and that maybe he thought that the Chazon Ish actually had a way of answering his wonderment but rather chose to brush him off. He was very worried he would cause this man some sort of *חלישות הדעת* - lit. *weakening of his mind*. He therefore, asked his disciple, Harav HaGaon Shteinberg zt"l to track down the man and rectify the potential situation. Rabbi Shteinberg did not know the man; in fact he only saw him that one time he came to ask the question. Nevertheless, he went to Tel-Aviv and entered the main *shul* there. He found the man and told him that the Chazon Ish wanted to see him.

Upon return, the Chazon Ish explained to him that while writing that particular piece he did not know that Yerushalmi Gemara. At that time, he was learning in a *shul* in Vilna which did not house *seforim* and therefore the Chazon Ish did not see that Yerushalmi Gemara. [He explained all this to him because had he just told the man

that he did not know that part of the Yerushalmi Talmud, the man would not have believed him.]

We must learn from the Chazon Ish's behavior and *middos*. He exerted himself, sent a special messenger to search for the man. He did all this in order to spare the man some potential negative feelings that he feared he might have caused him.

A similar incident involved the Brisker Rov zt"l. A very big *talmid chochom* approached him with some questions regarding some complicated Gemaros. To each question the Brisker Rov responded with "Correct". He meant that the questions were indeed very good and that he did not have answers to them. After the incident, the Brisker Rov worried that the man might not have understood his intentions, and perhaps he thought that Rov tried to brush him off.

The Rov kept this incident in his heart for a year until a man from the city where that *talmid chochom* resides came to visit him. He requested of his visitor to relay the message to the other *talmid chochom* that he did indeed agree with his questions. These are the lofty *middos* of the *Gedolim*. They always thought of the other person. They always made sure not to cause others, any negative feelings.

Around the time of Pesach there are great trials in the area of *middos*. The *yom tov* must be prepared and there is a lot of pressure in the home. One must stand up to the test and remain in good spirits, not getting too emotionally worked up or angry. One must control himself. This is a tremendous time for elevation, which is also full of *nisyonos* - tests. May it be Hashem's will that we will merit *Siyatta DiShmaya* - Divine assistance!

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

For donations or dedications of the Hebrew and English flyers, or to receive the *sichos* to your email, please contact: darkei.hachizuk@gmail.com

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