

לוקוטי ופסקי הלכות

"חוקי חיים"

ותלמוד
"חוקי חיים"
לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הזדאה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochohs compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Halochohs of



Bein Adom

Lechaveiro

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"תוקי חיים"
לעשות רצונך
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ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"



שע"י "חדר הזרחה" שבונת מנחת יצחק פעה"ק ירושלם טובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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read during
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Krias HaTorah

Matters of Bein Adam L'Chaveiro | Behar-Bechukosai 5781

222

In Sorrow

We are within the shivah following the terrible tragedy in which Hashem took from us 45 [מ"ה] pure neshamos in the holy town of Meron, on the holy day of Lag BaOmer, by the tomb of the holy, G-dly man who was anointed from the holy Middos. At this time, the whole world is broken and crushed by the heartrending tragedy that happened. We take part in the pain of the bereaved families that lost loved ones.

And we ask ourselves, "Now, Yisroel, **what** [מ"ה] does Hashem, your G-d, ask from you?" **What** [מ"ה] is different about this night than all other nights? Although Hashem's ways are hidden, how can we improve ourselves to remove Middas Hadin from us? What important thing can we do for the zechus of the neshamos, who roused us all to make real and tangible improvements, so that these neshamos can take comfort and say that their sacrifice was worthwhile if only to spark such massive growth?

My Anguish, My Anguish over the Corpses

There is a point that is terrifying and chilling: These people did not die in a disaster caused by murderous enemies, ch"v, or in a natural disaster, e.g., fire, water, or the like, lo aleinu. These people died an unnatural death. They were suffocated to death by their friends and relatives next to them as they fell and were crushed against each other in a jumbled heap of bodies, both dead and alive, lo aleinu.

Days of Chizuk

1. In the previous issue (221), before the tragedy, the final paragraph (33) was about chizuk during the days of sefirah: "During the days of sefirah, when 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva's talmidim died, ו"ל, for not acting with respect toward each other, let us work on respecting each other with even greater vigor." It seems that we need to expand on this topic so that we can make even greater improvements, as we have still not learned the lesson. Thus, we will dedicate this issue to awaken ourselves to improve in very important areas of bein adam l'chaveiro. Although this publication is generally focused on halachos and psakim, "derech eretz precedes Torah."

Note: If there are those who think that perhaps some of the wording of this issue is too sharp or we are touching on very sensitive matters that should not be written about, it should be noted that we will only accept reactions and comments from people who faced the awful sights in Meron after the catastrophe or from people who also waited long hours in the Institute of Forensic Medicine in the Abu Kabir neighborhood, searching for the missing among rows and rows of bodies, with everything that entailed ... – our eyes do not stop flowing with tears.

They Did Not Act with Respect toward Each Other

24,000 Talmidim

2. There is a well-known statement of Chazal (גמ' בימות דף ס"ב ע"ב): "Rebbi Akiva had 12,000 pairs of talmidim from Gavasa until Antipras, and they all died in one period because they did not act with respect toward each other. The world was desolate [Rashi: the Torah was forgotten] until Rebbi Akiva came to our rabbanim in the south and taught it to them: Rebbi Meir, Rebbi Yehuda, Rebbi Yosi, Rebbi Shimon, and Rebbi Elazar ben Shamua. They were the ones who upheld the Torah at that time.

3. "Askeras." Continues the Gemara: "They all died a bad death. What is it? Rebbi Nachman said, 'Askeras,'" a type of obstruction of the airway.

Respect for Torah

4. Some interpret "לא נהגו כבוד זה לזה" to mean that none of them was concerned for the respect of his fellow's Torah – "There is no respect other than Torah." They died in this way because Torah is life. It could be that they spoke lashon hara and derogatory words about each other; askera is a sign of lashon hara (מהרש"א יבמות ס"ב).

Transmitters of Torah Should Have Impeccable Middos

5. Some point out that the Gemara does not say Rebbi Akiva's talmidim shamed each other; the claim against them was just that they did not act with respect toward each other. The reason this was held against them to the point that they were liable to death was because they needed to be the transmitters of Torah from Rebbi Akiva to the future generations. To transmit Torah properly, one must master all 48 ways of acquiring Torah, which include attaching oneself to friends, and the like. Thus, once Hashem saw that they had not developed impeccable middos, He took their neshamos. It was impossible for the transmitters of Torah not to be refined with good middos since to be a talmid chacham, it is not enough to know the Torah; one must also have good middos (הגר"א קוטלר, משנת רבי אהרן ג, יז).

6. **Torah without middos is worthless.** Another message derived from the Gemara is that Hashem would rather not have any Torah in the world than have Torah if those who learn it behave without good middos and do not honor each other. That is why Hashem took the lives of everyone who was learning Torah, leaving the world desolate and the Torah forgotten (see Rashi quoted in paragraph 2). The very existence of the world was in jeopardy – as the world was only created for Torah – until Rebbi Akiva came and established a few new talmidim on condition that they learn with each other and honor each other. As the Midrash says, (קהלת י"א, י), "[Rebbi Akiva] said to them, 'The first ones only died because they were begrudging in Torah to each other. You will not be this way.' Immediately they got up and filled all of Eretz Yisroel with Torah."

Your Friend's Honor Should Be as Dear to You as Your Own

7. Some explain the Midrash based on the statement in Avos (פ"ב מ"ח) that says "The honor of your friend should be as dear to you as your own." It is also taught (שם פ"ד מ"ג), "The honor of your friend should be like the fear of your rav, and the fear of your rav like the fear of Shomayim." They did not behave like this, so they were punished and died. They caused a desecration of the Torah, as people were saying, "Woe to one who learned Torah ..." (שו"ת תשב"ץ ח"א סי' קע"ח)

Resentment over a Friend's Success

8. Some explain that there was resentment of each other's success (ב"ר פ"ר ס"א אות ג'). This is a very serious matter. If a person is successful in learning or avodas Hashem, arising to lofty heights, and his fellow is resentful toward him, he disgraces the Torah and Hashem Himself, as he hates his friend's success in his holy work. People like this are called "haters of Hashem" (רבינו יונה שערי תשובה שער ג' אות ק"ס)

Honor Him Even if He Doesn't Honor You

9. One might have figured that the talmidim did not act with respect toward each other because the others did not act with respect toward them. Perhaps one does not need to honor someone who does not honor him, as a sort of middah k'neged middah. To this, the Gemara informs us that they did not act with respect toward each other, yet they all died in one period nonetheless. The reason is because even if one does not honor you, it is still incumbent upon you to honor him.

Differences of Opinion – Machlokes

Different Hashkofos

10. There have always been differences of opinion in Klal Yisroel: in Torah, life hashkofos, how to serve Hashem, way of life, and all sorts of other issues. As long as they are all based on Torah, they are all beloved and pure. Just as people's faces are not the same, people's minds are not the same, and it could be that it will be this way until Moshiach comes. However, there is no reason for these differences to cause scorn, hatred, jealousy, distance, or division between people. On the contrary, everyone should understand that the world is built on the existence of differences between people. It is not uniformity that sustains them, but rather their differences that sustain them, as will be explained.

Klal Yisroel Is Like One Body

11. It is known that Klal Yisroel is all one body with one neshamah, and each Jew constitutes a certain body part. This is what is behind the responsibility each Jew has for another Jew's sin – we are all one neshamah, and our bodies are different elements of the limbs, like the branches of a tree (אריז"ל טעמי מצוות פ' קדושים).
12. A person needs a right hand and a left hand, a right foot and a left foot, and so forth. If both his hands were on the same side, he would not be able to hold things properly. It is the same with Klal Yisroel: every Jew has spiritual qualities which he must use to serve Hashem. At the same time, he must understand and accept that there are other paths in avodas Hashem, and they are also parts of the limbs of Klal Yisroel's body, just on the other side. If they were on the same side of the body or duplicates of the same limb, the body is blemished, as having an extra limb is akin to missing a limb.
13. Thus, on the one hand, every person should follow in the Torah-true ways of his rebbeim and ancestors. At the same time, he should understand that there are people with different outlooks and paths, as long as they are all serving Hashem. Then, the body of Klal Yisroel is unblemished and functioning properly. Consequently, there is a mitzvah to love all of Klal Yisroel with one's heart and soul, as the posuk says, "ואהבת לרעך כמוך." This is a major rule in the Torah since your friend is also a part of your body – he is truly "כמוך," like you.

"The Hands Are the Hands of Eisav"

14. There are some people and factions with different views who, sadly, break out at times into fights and feuds among each other, even coming to blows, all ostensibly under the banner of kavod haTorah or kana'us for Hashem. They must remember that "the voice is the voice of Yaakov, while the hands are the hands of Eisav." Force through fighting and exchanging blows has never been a path in avodas Hashem in line with the Torah. That is the way of goyim, fools, reckless people, and outcasts. They do not have yiras Hashem and they are not serving Hashem; they are serving themselves and their egos. We have not seen this in any of our rabbanim. Already Moshe Rabbeinu cried out at the Jewish aggressor, "Rasha, why do you strike your friend?"

15. **Embarrassing ["מלבין"] another.** Sadly, we recently heard how yeshiva bochurim from various factions throw leben [a type of yogurt] on each other. Regarding such actions, Chazal say, "One who embarrasses ["מלבין," as in "leben"] another in public does not have a portion in Olam Haba (גמ' ב"מ דף ג"ט ע"א)." They also take shenders, which are meant to be used for Torah learning, and use them as weapons. There is no greater desecration of Hashem's Name and His holy places than this.

Machlokes L'Sheim Shomayim

16. Any machlokes that is l'sheim Shomayim, i.e., to reach the truth, will stand. In other words, the connection between the parties will stand and continue for many long years to come. However, a machlokes that is not l'sheim Shomayim, i.e., it is just for the sake of undermining someone else and for personal, selfish reasons, will not last, and the parties will not succeed in doing teshuvah (משנה אבות, (על פי רבינו יונה והרמב"ם, משפטי השלום פ"ד אות י"ג).
17. **Definition of l'sheim Shomayim.** When the two have total love for each other outside of the matter they disagree about, it is clear their machlokes is l'sheim Shomayim. But if they harbor ill will for each other because of the machlokes, it is not a machlokes l'sheim Shomayim (עירות דבש ח"ב דג"ח).

Various Ways of Improving in Bein Adam L'Chaveiro

Making Peace

18. Many people have a person or people they do not speak to, whether because of a past quarrel or conflict, because of a feud in the family originating with arguments between their fathers, because they belong to different factions and have different hashkofos, or the like.
19. Our task during these days is to make peace with everyone. That is not to say we must be friends with everyone, but at the very least we cannot avoid talking to people on principle. When one wants to make peace with someone but feels uncomfortable to suddenly start speaking to him, he can preface by saying that in view of the tragedies that Klal Yisroel has experienced, he wants to make peace and live in harmony and tranquility.
20. **Partaking in simchas.** Another suggestion to thaw the tensions and warm the frosty relations is to partake in the next simchah the other one makes and wish him mazel tov, or the like.
21. **Rabbanim, admorim.** The following words are hard to write but the truth cannot be ignored. This is also a heartfelt appeal to rabbanim, geonim, and admorim to be an example to others. Some of them do not speak with others, including their brothers, and do not partake in family simchas due to disputes and the like. At times, it is their gabbaim and members of their inner circles and the like who prevent them from taking the proper and just course of action.
22. As with any mitzvah involving personal sacrifice, it is incumbent on the leaders to initiate and serve as a personal example. They must put all causes of fighting aside, and instead, foster love, unity, peace, friendship, and tranquility in Klal Yisroel. Hashem calls upon us to do this, and if not now, when? To quote Mordechai's words to Esther, "Who knows whether you attained royalty for a time like this?"

לעולם יהא אדם

23. **Menschlichkeit.** An important action we can commit to is behaving with humanity toward others and being a mensch. We say "לעולם יהא אדם" – before anything else, be a mensch; behave toward others with good middos, compassion, and patience; do not cause anguish to anyone at any cost; speak nicely and with a pleasant demeanor; then, "have yiras Shomayim in private and in the open."
24. **נעשה אדם נאמר בעבורך.** The word אדם in gematria is 45. When we grow in the area of being a mensch toward others, it will be a zechus and an ilui neshamah of the 45 korbanos, and we will thereby fulfill "נעשה אדם נאמר בעבורך" (from the words to the piyut *Bar Yochai*).

Learning Halachos of Bein Adam L'Chaveiro

25. In order to grow in the halachos of bein adam l'chaveiro, a person should set aside more time to learn sefarim that discuss these halachos (גון 'משפטי השלום' לידידי הג"ר סילבר, ובין אדם לחבירו לידידי) (הגרי"י פוקס ועוד topics in shuls, and teachers in schools and chadarim should encourage their students and teach them these halachos.

Preparation for Matan Torah

26. Klal Yisroel received the Torah at Har Sinai. Although each shevet stood apart from each other and each one received the Torah according to its spiritual qualities, there was no discord between them whatsoever. They camped "like one person of one heart," because Klal Yisroel is in fact one body (above, 11).
27. **Before Shavuos.** Thus, it is our responsibility to finish this task: we have until the end of sefirah – until Shavuos – to put an end to all strife and fighting. We must start a new chapter of life and honor each other. We must certainly not demean, tread upon, or verbally degrade others; and all the more so not lift a hand toward anyone, ch"v. We must look kindly on all other people; rejoice in all the good they have; teach them Torah; praise their successes in learning and in other areas; and be a mensch. We must accept every person with their differences and understand that it is only through these differences that the body of Klal Yisroel is complete.
28. **מלכות שבמלכות.** Then, after working on our middos, we will approach Shavuos to receive the Torah and we will attain the Middah of "מלכות שבמלכות." Only when we are one nation of one heart will Hashem's kingship be eternally whole.
29. When all this happens, with siyata d'Shmaya and b'ezras Hashem, it will be a tremendous ilui neshamah for all 45 [מ"ה] kedoshim who perished in Meron, until "they themselves [הן ה"ם] will acknowledge, praise...and crown the Name of our King constantly" ["ידו ויברכו"] ("וישבחו ויפארו...וימליכו את שמך מלכות תמיד").

This is dedicated leiliu Nishmas those that were tragically nifter in Meron on Lag Beomer immediately after the Psukim of Krias Shema, said at the Hadloko. Sincere Nechoomo wishes to all the families who lost their close ones "המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים"

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