

## 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 • Parashas Vaera 5782

469

### David Came and Condensed Them into Eleven

Chazal say at the end of *Maseches Makkos*: “613 mitzvos were related to Moshe, 248 *mitzvos aseï* and 365 *mitzvos lo ta'aseï*. David came and condensed them into eleven.” This sounds like they only kept eleven mitzvos. This requires an explanation. Did David HaMelech *chas v'shalom* take away from or reduce the *Taryag Mitzvos*? Rashi there explains: “Condensed them into eleven: At first the tzaddikim were able to accept upon themselves the yoke of many mitzvos, but the later generations were not such great tzaddikim. Had they expected to fulfill all the mitzvos, there wouldn't have been anyone who would have come out meritorious. So David came and condensed them... so that they'd be meritorious if they'd fulfill these eleven mitzvos.” This too requires an explanation. After all, we fulfill many mitzvos, like Shabbos and Yom Tov, *tzitzis* and tefillin, and so many other mitzvos. We can surely keep all 613 mitzvos.

The commentaries explain: Of course, we can fulfill all the mitzvos; David wasn't coming to reduce the quantity of mitzvos we observe. All he said was that if we do certain things, they will give us *chizuk* to fulfill all the other *mitzvos b'sheleimus*. All these eleven matters that David HaMelech singled out were not even actual mitzvos. They were *madreigos* and special virtues of *sheleimus*; matters that give a person *chizuk* to fulfill all mitzvos.

What were those eleven matters? The first one was ***holeich tamim, walking with temimus***. The Gemara there tells us that this refers to Avraham Avinu, as it states, “And walk before Me and be *tamim*.” The *pasuk* doesn't delineate any specific deed; it's referring to having a level of *temimus* and *sheleimus* of *emunah* just like Avraham Avinu had. The second matter was ***po'el tzedek, be a righteous laborer***, like Abba Chilkiyah. The Gemara (*Taanis* 23b) relates how careful Abba Chilkiyah was to fulfill his obligations as a hired worker. He was so careful that he didn't respond when the Chachamim greeted him during work hours. He was a hired worker and was obligated to work every minute, every second. If he'd stop for a second to say “hello,” he'd be reducing his work, even slightly.

The third matter was ***dover emes bilvavo, speaking the truth in his heart***, like Rav Safra did. There's a well-known story (cited in *Rashi* on *Makkos* about Rav Safra who wanted to sell a certain item. Someone who wanted to buy it came to Rav Safra and quoted a price. But Rav Safra was in middle of saying Shema, and he didn't want to stop, so he did not respond. The potential buyer thought Rav Safra's silence was his way of expressing dissatisfaction for the

offer, so he raised his bid, again and again. When Rav Safra completed saying Shema, he told him, “I will sell you the item for the first, low sum you offered, because I had already inwardly agreed on that price.”

This is “*dover emes bilvavo*.” After he had agreed — in his heart — on a certain price, he did not retract it even though the buyer was unaware of his acquiescence. In any case, the truth is that he had agreed, and since he agreed in his heart, he did not renege on his agreement — this refers not only to agreement in speech, but even in thought! If he thought about something that would benefit someone else, he would not go back on it. This is the third of the eleven matters that David HaMelech instituted. They are all *madreigos*, not from the primary 613 mitzvos, but they are special *hanhagos* of *sheleimus* in character traits.

The fourth matter was ***lo ragal al lishono, using one's speech properly***, which refers to Yaakov Avinu, who said “Perhaps my father will feel me, and he will view me as a deceiver.” Rashi explains: From the very outset, he did not want to lie, as he said “Perhaps my father will feel me.” However, his mother forced him, and it was with Divine guidance, as it states: “Your curse will be upon me, my son.” Targum explains this as: “It was told to me through prophecy.” When Rivkah told him to dress up as if he were Esav, Yaakov did not want to lie. Even when Rivkah told him that she received a *nevu'ah* that he must receive the *berachos*, so he must lie for this to happen, Yaakov was still cautious, and when his father asked him, “Who are you, my son?” he responded, “I am, Esav your firstborn.” Rashi explains, “I am the one bringing [food] to you, Esav is your firstborn.” Thus he was careful not to utter even one untrue word, even though in this situation, lying was permitted because there had been a prophecy about it. He was careful not to lie in speech, he just wore Esav's clothing.

The next one: ***Lo asah l'rei'eihu ra'ah***, he did not act improperly even if his fellow did; and ***cherpah lo nasa al kerovo***, this is someone who brings his family members close — this refers to *chesed*.

***Nivzeh b'ainav nimas***, one who is despised in Hashem's eyes is disgusting to him too. This refers to Chizkiyahu HaMelech who dragged his father Achaz's remains in a degrading fashion, in a bed of ropes. Achaz was a wicked idol-worshiper, and Chizkiyahu was a tzaddik, so he degraded his father at the funeral since he was “*nimas*.” Rashi explains: One who is despised by HaKadosh Baruch Hu is disgusting in his eyes, and since his father was a *rasha*, Chizkiyahu despised him — even though there's an

obligation of *kibbud av*. Since Achaz caused the public to sin, it was *kevod Shamayim* to disgrace him in this manner. (See *Rambam Hilchos Mamrim* 6:11, and *Sefer HaMaftai'ach* ad loc.)

**V'es yirei Hashem yechabed**, And he honors those who fear Hashem. This refers to Yehoshafat King of Yehudah. Whenever he would see a *talmid chacham*, he'd rise up from his throne, embrace him and call out: "*Rebbi, rebbi, mari, mari.*" Despite his exalted state as king, he'd stand up and honor *talmidei chachamim*, hug and kiss them, and call them "*Rabi v'mori*" — you are my rav and I am your *talmid*! What a *madreigah* of *kevod talmidei chachamim*.

These are all special *madreigos*, and they can bring about *chizuk* for all the 613 mitzvos; they can fortify a person against his yetzer hara. All the other matters that David HaMelech mentioned are also *hanhagos* and *madreigos* that have the power to bring a person to observe all the mitzvos *b'sheleimus*.

### **Emunah and Yirah — Antidotes to the Yetzer Hara**

Yeshayah came later and condensed them into six matters. They too were similar matters, special *madreigos* of human characteristics. Then Michah came and condensed them into three. Yeshayah once again condensed those into two, and finally, Chavakuk came and condensed them into one, as it states: "*Tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh*, a tzaddik lives through his *emunah*." This teaches us that the foundation of all *chizuk* is *emunah*. A person must first and foremost strengthen his *emunah*, and *emunah* will bring about *chizuk* in fulfilling all 613 mitzvos.

However, David HaMelech and all the prophets who preceded Chavakuk did not say that strengthening *emunah* is first priority. They stressed other matters, because in their days, there already was *sheleimus* in *emunah* — it did not require special *chizuk*. As such, it was possible to start the *chizuk* from other points, other matters. Chavakuk lived later on, and in his times there was *yeridas hadoros*; the generation's *emunah* was in a weakened state. They first needed *chizuk* in *emunah*, and then they'd be able to continue strengthening other parts of their *avodas Hashem*.

What kind of *emunah* needed strengthening? What kind of *emunah* is effective against the yetzer hara? *Pirkei Avos* (2:1) tells us: "Look at three things and you will not come to sin. Know what is above you: An eye that sees, and an ear that hears, and all your deeds are inscribed in the book." That is, remember that there's an "eye that sees" all your deeds, and there's also an ear that hears whatever you say, and all your deeds are written down — they're recorded for posterity! "*Ein shichecha lifnei kisei kevodecha.*"

This is *emunah* — living with a level of *yiras Shamayim* that you always remember that there's an eye that sees and an ear that hears. When I do something — they're looking! When I say something — they hear! And there's one more thing not mentioned here: thoughts. Even thoughts are revealed in front of HaKadosh Baruch Hu! The *pasuk* in *Tehillim* states (94:11), "Hashem knows thoughts of man." Having such a level of *emunah* and *yiras Shamayim*

provides a person with the strength to stand up against the yetzer hara.

Chazal say further in *Pirkei Avos* (3:1): Look at three things and you will not come to sin: Know from whence you come, and to where you are going, and before Whom you will stand in the future to give a reckoning." Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (2:25): "The explanation is that when you think about where you came from, you will act submissively and hate haughtiness. When you remember where you are going, you will despise the world and you'll acknowledge that it is nothingness. And you'll only make use of the world to serve your exalted Creator. And when you impress upon yourself Who you will be standing in front of in the future, fear of Heaven will be upon you." This is referring to *yiras Shamayim* as well — be aware of the fact that you will face judgment and that Gehinnom is a reality.

So this was Chavakuk's intention when he said, "A tzaddik will live through his *emunah*." What does "will live" mean? Eternal life! Through *emunah* one merits eternal life, which is the real life. At the same time, in Olam HaZeh as well, through *emunah* one is *zocheh* to *ashrecha baOlam HaZeh*.

### **A Happy Life — Only by Following the Torah's Path**

Our Sages taught in *Pirkei Avos* (6:4): "This is the path of Torah: eat bread with salt... and toil in Torah. If you do so, you will be fortunate, and it will be good for you. You will be fortunate in This World!" Four types of difficulties are mentioned here: eating, drinking, sleeping, and living a life of privation in addition to all this. But you still toil in Torah, and since that is the case: "You will be fortunate in this world." He is the happiest person that exists!

This is the reality: one can only be happy in This World if he leads a life of Torah. Then there are no difficulties, the person is calm and *samei'ach b'chelko*, and he's happy in This World — because he doesn't lack anything! Yaakov Avinu said (*Bereishis* 33:11): "I have everything." But Esav said: "I have a lot." He was not happy with his lot, but Yaakov, who was happy with his lot, said, "I have everything." He did not lack anything and he was happy. *Ashrecha b'Olam HaZeh*. That's the reality.

It's no secret that wealthy people who have lots of money aren't happy. Money doesn't guarantee them a happy life. To the contrary, they are worried and aren't calm. The reason is because on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur it was decreed "who will be poor and who will be rich." And it was also decreed "who will be serene and who will suffer tribulation; who will be tranquil and who will be harassed. Everything is based on a person's *zechuyos*! Everything is in Heaven's hands according to his *zechuyos*. Therefore, wealth will not provide a person with a happy life. It's well known that many wealthy people dress well and smile, but they are not happy. Happiness can only be achieved through a life of Torah; if you toil in Torah, then you will be happy in This World. That's the only way you will be happy! That's the reality.

We've already mentioned that "toil in Torah" is individual, each person according to his abilities and situation. The

*Mesillas Yesharim* writes at the end of his *sefer* that a person who doesn't learn Torah full time and works in a menial job can still reach the level of "*chassid*," as long as he learns as much as he can. When a person does whatever he can to stay on "the path of Torah," he can become a *chassid* even if he doesn't learn many long hours and is occupied with earning a living. If he does whatever he can and learns as much as he can, he is on a high *madreigah*, and he is "fortunate in This World." Each person is measured based on his own personal conditions and situation.

David HaMelech says in *Tehillim* (84:13), "Fortunate is the man who trusts in You." One who trusts in HaKadosh Baruch Hu is fortunate. How does he have *bitachon*? On what basis does he have *bitachon*? The *Chovos HaLevavos* writes (*Shaar HaBitachon* chap. 3, in the fourth *hakdamah*) that he does whatever he's obligated to do, and when a person fulfills his obligations, he's certain (he has *bitachon*) that Hashem will give him whatever he needs. Then he is "fortunate" — *ashrecha b'Olam HaZeh* — because he fulfills his obligations. So *bitachon* revolves around fulfillment of one's obligations and the fact that he has *zechuyos*. How much is he obligated? As we said, it's individual; each person according to his abilities.

### Entreat Hashem for Success in Ruchniyus

Davening for *ruchniyus* is part of our *tefillos*. There are many requests for *ruchniyus* in our prayers. We make requests in *Birkos haShachar* and in *Birkas HaTorah*, where we ask: "Please sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of your entire nation Beis Yisrael." We also ask for our family specifically: "May we and our children and our children's children..." This is a prayer for success in Torah. Why? Because we need *zechuyos* and *siyatta d'Shemaya*. That's why we need *tefillah*. If someone does not ask, why should he receive it? You need to ask from someone who has ability to fulfill your request — and that's why we beg and pray: "*Ve'haarev na*"!

Then we go on to say: "Accustom us to study Your Torah, and attach us to Your commandments. And do not bring us into the power of cheit (unintentional sin), or into the power of aveirah v'avon (intentional sin), nor into the power of challenge etc. And distance us from a bad person, and let us cling to the yetzer tov." These are all prayers for *ruchniyus*.

We continue to ask: Save us from brazen men and brazenness." "From brazen men" is a request that we don't suffer from brazen people, but what does it mean when we ask to be saved from "brazenness"? The commentators explain that we are asking for help not to act with brazenness. First we ask to be saved from "brazen men," that others should not cause me pain, and then we ask to be saved from "brazenness" ourselves — that we shouldn't act wrongly. And even if brazen people hurt us, we shouldn't hurt them back — we are asking to be from "those who are insulted, but do not insult others, those who hear their shame but do not respond," because we are not brazen. We have good middos, and we act properly.

There are many other *tefillos* for *ruchniyus*. We also daven for *yiras Shamayim*. In the Ahavah Rabbah blessing, we

ask: "Unify our heart to love and fear." In Kedushah d'Sidra, we say "Place in our hearts His love and His fear." This is hard to understand, because Chazal say (*Berachos* 33b), "Everything is in Heaven's hand except for *yiras Shamayim*." If so, how can we daven for *yiras Shamayim*? The *mefarshim* explain that Heaven can send a person *siyatta d'Shemaya* for this — this is the *inyan* of "*Isra'usa d'li'Eila*, an awakening from on High," when a person receives a heavenly *hisorerus* of *chizuk*.

### The Power of a Personal Tefillah

Sometimes a personal prayer from one's heart is more effective than a set prayer, because when we daven the set *tefillos*, it's hard to have complete *kavanah*. We say "Please Hashem, return us to Your Torah," but it's not *pashut* that we have complete *kavanah*. When one offers a personal prayer, on the other hand, he thinks: I want *siyatta d'Shemaya* in *ruchniyus* and I'm going to ask Hashem for this. And then he expresses a *tefillah* in his heart to this effect. This is a "*tefillah ba'lev*"! And it's a true, authentic prayer, and in this *zechus*, one merits *siyatta d'Shemaya*.

I already told you about irreligious Jew who came from Chutz LaAretz to Eretz Yisrael. He was at the Kosel, and he started thinking, "If belief in Judaism is really the true path, I want Heaven to help me figure this out." At that very moment, a kiruv activist approached him and asked him if he wanted to learn about Judaism. This is the power of *tefillah* in one's heart. Just by thinking about this and making a request in his heart, he merited *siyatta d'Shemaya*. And even though he set a condition in his *tefillah*, as *emunah* wasn't such a clear concept to him, he was *zocheh* to *siyatta d'Shemaya* because of his *tefillah ba'lev*.

As we said, sometimes a person can have greater *kavanah* for a *tefillah* in his heart than in a set *tefillah*. The *tefillos* we say have a set *nusach* and it's not so easy to have *kavanah*, but a *tefillah* I say in my heart, with a *nusach* that I composed, based on personal feelings is something else. This is a true *tefillah* and it brings *siyatta d'Shemaya*. [The Chafetz Chaim writes something similar in *Likutei Amarim*, Chap. 10: A person should not suffice with the fact that he davens Shemoneh Esrei three times a day. A person has to pour out *tefillos* and requests a few times a day... because he's already used to these three *tefillos* and he doesn't pay such close attention to them. On the other hand, if each person would take stock of his situation and position etc., then he'd pour out his heart to Hashem Yisbarach, and his *tefillah* would come out with such deep, profound *kavanah* and a broken heart and submissive spirit. And this kind of *tefillah* will not be unanswered.]

### Increase Sitting and Beg for Mercy

Chazal say at the end of *Maseches Niddah* that they asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanina: "What should a man do to become wise?" How is a person *zocheh* to become a *talmid chacham* and receive *chochmas haTorah*. He answered: "He should increase sitting [*yeshivah* in Hebrew]." That is, he should learn a lot of Torah in "yeshivah," in a *tzibbur*, together with other friends, *dibbuk chavirim*. They asked

him, “But many have done so and they weren’t successful.” Even though they sat and learned, they didn’t see success in their Torah learning. Rabbi Yehoshua told them that they have to be “*mevakeish rachamim*,” beg for mercy, daven to Hashem.

Further on in the Gemara they asked, “What’s the *chiddush* here?” and they answered that one without the other will not be effective. Rashi explains that it’s really a straightforward matter that one must daven, and that there is no success without *tefillah*. A person who doesn’t ask and doesn’t beg, well, why should they give him? It’s no *chiddush* that *tefillah* is necessary, but after one does daven, one might think that he has done enough and he doesn’t have to increase “sitting in a yeshivah, and he can learn on his own as well, or just have a chavrusa, but not in a yeshivah. He might think he’ll be *zocheh* to *siyatta d’Shemaya* due to his *tefillos*. This is what Rabbi Yehoshua was *mechadesh*: *tefillah* is not enough, and one must increase “sitting” and learning in a yeshivah as well. Of course, it’s clear that a person must daven because we need *siyatta d’Shemaya*, but one must also do something, take action! And that’s where “*yarbeh b’yeshivah*” comes in.

Yeshivah means in a *tzibbur* where there is *shimush chachamim*, *dibbuk chaveirim* and *pilpul hatalmidim*, as it says in *Avos* chap. 6. Chazal said further (*Taanis 7a*): “I learned a lot from my *rabbeim*, more from my friends than from my *rabbeim*, but I learned the most from my *talmidim*.” We need to understand how it’s possible to learn more from one’s friends than from his *rabbeim*; after all, he and his friend learned together under the same rav and heard the same things. How can the friend know more than him? Furthermore, how can students know more than their rav?

The explanation is that when it comes to Torah knowledge, it’s true that two friends receive the same knowledge from their rebbi, and neither the friend nor the *talmid* add more *yedios*. However, regarding the level of *havanah*, understanding one’s learning, this is primarily achieved

through *dibbuk chaveirim* — when they speak things out with each other and learn together. *Dibbuk* means “clinging,” and that means without arguments. The learning together should be like *devek*, glue; they should stick to one another and help each other. In this manner, there will be *siyatta d’Shemaya* for *havanah*, for a clear understanding of their learning. The same is true regarding teaching *talmidim*.

This is a two-fold matter. 1) This is the reality *b’derech hateva*. A person is more relaxed with a friend and can therefore examine each thing together with *yishuv hada’as*. This leads to a clearer understanding, and that’s why the *mishnah* says, “more from my friends than from my teachers.” “Learning the most from one’s students” is also *derech hateva*. *Talmidim* ask their *rebbe* questions that he never thought of, so it forces him to go into the *sugya* more deeply and understand it on a deeper level.

2) Besides for being normal reality, the amount of *zechuyos* one gains is different in each relationship. When a *talmid* learns from a *rebbe*, there’s a *zechus* for success, but when he learns with his friend, it’s a greater *zechus* because each one helps the other. *Dibbuk chaveirim* also holds the *zechus* of *ahavas habriyos* — and this generates a greater *zechus* for success in Torah learning, more than the *zechuyos* of learning with a *rebbe*. Learning with *talmidim* creates even more *zechuyos* because the *rebbe* needs patience to explain everything to his *talmid*, time and again until he understands. This patience gives him merits for *siyatta d’Shemaya* more than anything else.

The general rule is that one needs *siyatta d’Shemaya* for everything, and one needs *zechuyos* to merit *siyatta d’Shemaya*. If a person has *zechuyos*, he will merit *ruchniyus*; without *zechuyos*, it’s not possible. *Yehi ratzon* that Heaven should give us all *siyatta d’Shemaya* and that we should all have the necessary *zechuyos* for success in *ruchniyus*.

Please daven for  
גיטה פייגה בת רבקה  
לרפואה שלימה ומהירה  
בתוך כל חולי ישראל

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

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