

## Darkei HaChizuk

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

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### Omlei Torah Merit Hanhagah Above Nature

In this week's *parshah*, **Im Bechukosai teilechu**, If you follow My statutes (*Vayikra* 26:3), there are many *brachos* and promises — *l'maalah min hateva*, above the laws of nature. For example, it says, "The trees of the field shall give its fruit (*Ibid. pasuk* 4), and Rashi explains that non-fruit bearing trees will bear fruit. Another example: "You will eat your bread to satiety" (*pasuk* 5), and Rashi explains: "He will eat a small amount and it will become blessed in his innards." That is, he'll eat something small and it will fill him up. Another example: "I will walk in your midst" (*pasuk* 12), and Rashi explains: "I will stroll with you in Gan Eden as if I am one of you, here in this world." Gan Eden in this world! All this will happen in the days of Mashiach, *l'maalah min hateva*.

And what is "*Bechukosai teilechu*"? What will cause us to merit all these *brachos*? Rashi explains: "*She'tiheyu ameilim baTorah*, You shall toil in Torah." All Klal Yisrael together will merit seeing Hashem acting with them *l'maalah min hateva* in the merit of toiling in Torah. It will surely be like this in the future, in Mashiach's times, when all Klal Yisrael will be *ameilim baTorah*. In that *zechus*, they will merit such incredible *hanhagah Hashem, l'maalah min hateva*.

We still haven't been *zocheh* to see this, we still don't have the *zechuyos* that all of Klal Yisrael would be *zocheh* to this. But each person on his own can merit this, every single person has been thus promised, so it seems, every single person can merit in the *zechus* of these *maasim tovim* and if he is *amal baTorah*. He will merit *hanhagah l'maalah min hateva*. That is the level of *hashgachah*.

Chazal say in *Pirkei Avos* (6:4), "This is the way of Torah: eat bread with salt, drink measured water, and sleep on the ground, live a life of privation, and toil in Torah. If you do so, you will be fortunate in this world." *Ashrecha!* This is the greatest happiness and fortune possible here in this world. The most fortunate and the happiest person is only someone who follows the Torah's path, with *amal haTorah* and minimal pleasures. *Miut taanug*, minimizing pleasure, is also one of the 48 acquisitions of Torah.

It has to be this way specifically — with bread and salt. And even if you have more to eat than just bread and salt, you should not be eating for the sole purpose of pleasure, you should be eating *l'shem Shamayim*. Indeed, the Rambam writes in *Hilchos Deios* (3:3) that a person whose actions are

*l'shem Shamayim* is serving Hashem even when he sleeps, because the purpose of his sleep is *kevod Shamayim*. The same is true regarding the level of *hashgachah* a person merits: if you eat "bread with salt," if you minimize pleasures and toil in Torah, then "*ashrecha baOlam haZeh*, you will be happy and fortunate in this world!"

On the other hand, "**Im lo tishmi'u li**, If you do not listen to Me" (*Vayikra* 26:14), then there is horrible *tochachah*, rebuke. And what is the sin? What did everything start from? Rashi explains, If you don't listen to me to be *ameilim baTorah*, to toil in Torah. If one doesn't toil in Torah, then he continues in a downward slide until he *Rachmana litzlan* becomes a *koifer b'ikkar*, an atheist. Rashi explains that this is the *yetzer hara*, and this is spiritual *teva* — a lack of *ameilus baTorah* naturally causes one to deny the basic tenets of Yiddishkeit!

Chazal tell us the general rule (*Yoma* 38b), "One who comes to be purified is helped, and one who comes to be impure, they open the path for him." Toiling in Torah is "coming to be purified," so then he enjoys *hatzlachah* and *siyatta d'Shemaya*, but if you don't listen to Me, and are not *amal baTorah*, that is "coming to be impure," and then you "earn" the *tochachah*. This is the reality.

### Heavenly Help for Repentance

What is the purpose of the *tochachah*? The *pesukim* explain (*Ibid. pasuk* 41), "**Then their clogged heart becomes humbled, and then their sin will be appeased.**" The *tochachah* will generate submissiveness and will bring a sinner to repentance. That's the purpose of the *tochachah*. Heavenly retribution is not simply punishment for the past, it is rectification for the future. This is the general rule for Heavenly retribution, for any punishment or difficulty that's from *Shamayim*: it's for the person's benefit; it's to bring him to his *tikkun* (rectification), and to cause him to do *teshuvah* and perform *kevod Shamayim*. That's the purpose.

The truth is, more is written at the end of the *Tochachah* (*pasuk* 44): "**But despite all this, when they are in their enemies' land, I will not despise them and will not reject them to utterly destroy them, to nullify My covenant with them, for I am Hashem their G-d.**" Chazal said (*Megillah* 11a), "I did not despise them' in the days of the Kasdim, when I set up Daniel, Chananyah, Mishael, and Azaryah. 'I did not reject them' in the days of the Greeks, when I sent them Shimon haTzaddik and the Chashmona'i and his sons, and Mattisyahu Kohen Gadol. 'To utterly

destroy them' in the days of Haman, when I sent them Mordechai and Esther. 'To nullify My covenant' in the days of the Persians, when I sent them the House of Rabbi and the sages for all generations." That is, there is *hashgachah* over Klal Yisrael — there will always be spiritual leaders who will influence the generation to do teshuvah.

Rav E.E. Dessler *zt"l* said (*Michtav MeEliyahu* vol. 1, p. 233, and more) that this *hashgachah* is present on an individual level as well. Every Jewish person has an inner point (*a pintelet Yid*) and an inner spark of *kedushah*, and the purpose of this is to influence him to repent.

As we said, "one who comes to be purified is helped," and "one who comes to be purified" begins with Torah. Torah is accessible to every single individual, according to his abilities and the time he has available. Even if it's just a short time, he should utilize it all for *esek haTorah*. In the *zechus* of being *ameilim baTorah*, they are *zocheh* further and further, each person according to his abilities. Just as the promise for the Klal is true, the promise for each individual is also true. This is the path to follow, to be *amal baTorah*.

### The Power of a Heartfelt Tefillah for Ruchniyus

There's another *eitzah* regarding *tefillah*. It's known that Rav Yisrael Salanter said that it's tried-and-true that there's no limit to what a *tefillah* for *ruchniyus* can achieve. If a person davens for *ruchniyus* matters, a true, heartfelt *tefillah*, he will have *siyatta d'Shemaya* for success.

We've already told the story of the secular Yid who came from *chutz la'aretz*. He did not have *emunah*, but he did the accepted thing and came to the Kosel. While he was there, he started thinking that if concepts of *emunah* are true, he wants Heaven to have pity on him and give him *siyatta d'Shemaya* to become a *baal emunah*. At that very moment, a *kiruv* activist approached him and asked him if he'd like to learn more about Judaism. In the *zechus* of his heartfelt *tefillah* and request, he had such *siyatta d'Shemaya* for learning about Yiddishkeit.

And one more story. This happened in France. A young Jewish woman went to a priest and asked to learn about his religion. He apparently was an upstanding person, and he asked her if she was Jewish and if she knew about Judaism. She told him that she was Jewish, but she did not know anything about her religion. He told her, If so, first go find out about Judaism, and then you can come back to me. She went to learn about Judaism and became a true *baalas teshuvah*, a real *tzaddeikes*. She married a highly respected older man, he was a widower, and was *zocheh* to raise a beautiful family.

I once told this story in Ramat Gan, and one of the people came over to me and told me, "I am that woman's son." She was *zocheh* to such *siyatta d'Shemaya* because she wanted to know the truth and she searched for it. She went first to the priest because she mistakenly thought that she'd find the truth there, but Heaven worked things out that the priest would tell her to first find out about Judaism, and she truly

did become a *baalas teshuvah*. She was *zocheh* to build a family of *baalei emunah* and *baalei madreigah*, because "one who comes to be purified is helped."

The same is true regarding *tefillah*. It's tried-and-true that a true, heartfelt *tefillah* for something related to *ruchniyus* is effective. Even an unspoken *tefillah* helps: even a *tefillah* within your heart, and a prayer from your heart is even better, that is, if a person asks in his heart: *Ribbono shel Olam, I want siyatta d'Shemaya* for *ruchniyus*, if he mentally expresses something like this, and he really wants it, even if he doesn't say anything. "Hashem knows man's thoughts" (*Tehillim* 94:11), and (*Mishlei* 23:26): "My son, give Me your heart." If a person has aspirations and thoughts or requests in his heart, that's already considered a real request. When he davens verbally, it could be that he's simply reciting the *nusach* printed in our siddurim, and he's not necessarily paying attention to what he's saying or taking it to heart. However, a *tefillah* in one's heart is always with one's full heart, and that's a different type of *tefillah*.

It is tried-and-true, like Rav Yisrael Salanter said, that a *tefillah* for *ruchniyus* always helps, and a silent *tefillah*, expressed without words, is also a *tefillah*. Of course, we are obligated to daven three times a day, and those *tefillos* must be verbalized, but even a wordless *tefillah* can give you the *zechus* of *siyatta d'Shemaya*.

This is very easy, and it's available to anyone. Whoever wants *hatzlachah* in *ruchniyus* — Torah, *yiras Shamayim* or *middos tovos* — *siyatta d'Shemaya* is applicable in any of these cases. Through *tefillah*, you can be *zocheh* to *siyatta d'Shemaya*. There are *tefillos* for *yiras Shamayim*, such as in the *brachah* of *Ahavah Rabbah* "and unify our hearts to love and fear Your name." Similarly in *Tehillim*, there are many *pesukim* and requests for *yirah*, such as (*Tehillim* 86:11), "Unify my heart to fear Your name." Now, Chazal say (*Brachos* 33b), "Everything is in Heaven's hand except for *yiras Shamayim*." If so, it seems like we have control over our *yiras Shamayim*, so why are we asking Hashem to help us with it? But this is exactly what's in man's control — asking for help! He should daven and beg for mercy! If we daven with our heart, if we recite (or think) a heartfelt prayer, it is a true request, and then it is tried-and-true that we will have *siyatta d'Shemaya*.

As we mentioned, it is something very easy and available for every single person. And every single member of Klal Yisrael wants success in *ruchniyus*, Torah, *yiras Shamayim*, and *middos tovos* — which is what the world stands upon — and if he offers up a heartfelt *tefillah* he will be *zocheh* to *siyatta d'Shemaya*. And there is no limit in *ruchniyus*, as Chazal say (*Brachos* 50a), "'Open your mouth wide and I will fill [your requests]' — this is referring to *divrei Torah*." HaKadosh Baruch Hu is asking us: Ask!

Chazal say (*Yerushalmi Brachos* chap. 9; *Midrash Tehillim* chap. 4) that when a person makes a request of a human king, and the king does not answer, if the person would repeat his request, the king would be furious! After all, he

should have realized that the king didn't want to take care of it, so why is he asking again? HaKadosh Baruch Hu is not like that. *Adaraba*, Hashem Yisbarach wants us to ask more and more: "Open your mouth wide and I will fulfill your requests." Ask and ask — the more you ask, the more *zechuyos* you will receive.

This is what we can be *zocheh* to by begging for *rachamim*. It can be a verbal request, even though a non-verbal request

from one's heart is usually more real. We can be *zocheh* to *siyatta d'Shemaya* in *ruchniyus* matters: Torah, *middos tovos*, *yiras Shamayim*, and davening with *kavanah*. *Siyatta d'Shemaya* for *tefillah* with *kavanah*. Through *tefillah*, one can merit *siyatta d'Shemaya* for all these matters. *Ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu* that we have these opportunities to merit *madreigos* in *ruchniyus* in all these areas. *B'ezras Hashem*, may we be *zocheh* that Hashem have mercy on us and give us the *zechuyos*.

### How to Succeed in Torah — Rabbeinu's Address at the Beginning of the Zman to the Talmidim of Yeshivas Nachlas Binyamin

It's known that a yeshivah sanctifies the place. A yeshivah is *mashpia kedushah*, *yiras Shamayim*, *ahavas Torah* and *middos tovos*. Therefore, all *bnei yeshivah* who are *osek baTorah* and all *marbitzei Torah* who are influencing others to Torah, *yiras Shamayim*, and *middos tovos*, have a tremendous *zechus*. The *Chovos HaLevavos* writes (*Shaar Ahavas Hashem* chap. 6) that all the *maasim tovim* done by people who were influenced by someone else all belong to the *mashpia* — whatever they do, and whatever their descendants till the end of time do, are all credited to the first person who had the good influence.

Those who were influenced and are being *osek baTorah* are clinging to *kedushah*, for Torah sanctifies a person — and he becomes holy! He becomes sanctified every second that he's learning Torah. When he stops learning, if he's resting so that he'll have *koach* to continue learning, then his rest is considered *esek haTorah*. There's proof for this. But if he's just resting unnecessarily, he is stopping the *kedushah*.

And it's important to be aware of this: every person who learns becomes sanctified! Additionally, *every single person can become a gadol baTorah*. It has nothing to do with talent, it depends on *hasmadah*, **diligence**, because "one who comes to be purified is helped" and he receives *siyatta d'Shemaya*. Especially the *mashpi'im*, who are *mezakei harabbim*, they are *zocheh* to great *siyatta d'Shemaya*. But even a person who learns himself is constantly being sanctified and is *zocheh* to *siyatta d'Shemaya*.

When you learn with a *chavrusa*, that's *dibbuk chaveirim*, and that's another *maalah*. Each one adds to his friend's *havanah*. But it has to be with "dibbuk," clinging, it cannot be through arguments, just through *dibbuk chaveirim*. Well, there can be arguments too, but they must be *l'shem Shamayim* (and not for the sake of "winning"). So too, *shimush chachamim* and *pilpul hatalmidim* are necessary. *Pilpul hatalmidim* can occur between the *bachurim* themselves — if one *bachur* is a better learner than the other, one is the *rav* and his friend is the *talmid*. So for the latter, it is "learning from my *rabbanim*," and for the former, it is "learning from my *talmid*." A yeshivah is a wonderful place for *hatzlachah* in Torah, as Chazal say (*Avos 2:7*): "One who increases yeshivah (sitting/learning in yeshivah), increases wisdom." And they also said, "One who increases Torah, increases life," but if you increase "yeshivah," you increase wisdom!

It's important to be aware that every single person can finish Shas over a certain period of time — without stress and without extraneous, special effort. You can finish Shas with a feeling of "ashrecha baOlam haZeh," and with great pleasure, as it states: "Hashem's statutes are straight, they make one's heart joyous." *Divrei Torah* are interesting, and every single person can succeed in Torah, according to his abilities. It has nothing to do with talent, it's all *hasmadah*! Over time, he can complete Shas and then start learning Shas again, *Bavli* and *Mishnayos* — including *Zeraim* and *Taharos*, that's not a problem.

One has to **use his time wisely**, without wasting time. There are many things that cause *batalah* that stems from curiosity. Things are interesting, and people want to know what's going on in the world — but what does it have to do with me? There are world wars, floods, and news — but what difference does it make to me and why do I have to know about it? After all, during that time I could have directed my curiosity to what's written in the Gemara, what does the Gemara say? What does Rashi say? What do Tosfos say?

The *tzuras halimud*, the way a person learns, is important too. When one learns and he doesn't understand, if he initially doesn't understand Rashi or Tosfos, there is an *eitzah*. Wait till the next day, and then learn it again. Usually, whatever you did not understand before becomes clear during *chazarah*. Don't review on the same day, wait for the next day; *chazarah* provides clarity! This is the happy life, *ashrecha baOlam haZeh*, literally! The happiest life is *esek haTorah*.

This is applicable to the future as well. Now you are *bachurim*, but in the future, when you have a family already, the happiest people are the ones who are *osek baTorah*. If you need *parnasah*, and you can make *parnasah* from Torah, you will have a happy life. *Parnasah* from other methods does not guarantee a happy life! Only *parnasah* from *esek haTorah*, or from *talmidim*, or from teaching *aleph-beis* — even *aleph-beis* is *divrei Torah* — each person according to his level. What's important is *esek haTorah* and leading a life according to Torah; this brings you to *ashrecha baOlam haZeh*.

*B'ezras Hashem*, may the *talmidim* merit, and may the *melamdim*, the *mezakei harabbim*, and those who gain *hashpaah* from others — as we mentioned, *chavrusas* can influence each other, one is the *rav* and one is the *talmid* — may they all merit *hatzlachah* in Torah and *siyatta d'Shemaya*, and may they all become *gedolei Torah*.

## Rabbeinu shlita's Address at a Chizuk Gathering for the Families of the Meron Tragedy Victims

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 118) says: "Rabbi Yosi said, 'May my lot be of those who die on their way to performing a mitzvah.'" The Tanna Rabbi Yosi said he wanted to have that very same *cheilek* as those who die on their way to doing a mitzvah. The Gemara does not say that he dies while performing the mitzvah, but while "on the way." On the way to do a mitzvah, he passes away — and may my lot be like his lot! Rabbi Yosi is wishing for that portion, for the Gan Eden of "those who die on their way to performing a mitzvah." This reveals to us that those who pass away on the way to do a mitzvah have tremendous *zechuyos* in Olam HaBa.

Those who were killed in Meron — what was the purpose of their trip to Meron? It was for a mitzvah, they were traveling to the Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's *kever* to gain a *hashpaah*. They wanted to receive a *hashpaah* of *kedushah* from Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. That was their purpose. They were on the way to perform a mitzvah, and they were actually involved in a mitzvah too. And Rabbi Yosi said "may my lot be" about this, with those who die on the way to perform a mitzvah, and all the more so with those who die while performing a mitzvah, who are actually inside the mitzvah itself. We cannot fathom their *zechuyos*, the Gan Eden and Olam HaBa there is for those who passed away while being involved in a mitzvah.

If so, those who were killed are enjoying an incredible Olam HaBa, and they are fortunate, and happy with their lot. They can't come and tell us about the good life they have now, the pleasures of Olam HaBa that no one other than Hashem has even seen. It's something that we cannot fathom — even the *nevi'im* did not know what the pleasures of Olam HaBa were (see *Brachos* 34b). People in Olam HaZeh cannot know what Olam HaBa is, what great pleasure there is in Olam HaBa, but there is one thing we must be aware of: they are fortunate and are happy with their lot, with their "true pleasure," as the *Mesillas Yesharim* (chap. 1) calls it. They are living *chayei netzach*, eternal life, with endless pleasures, and more pleasures are constantly being added.

It is just us who feel the lack. The families miss their loved one who is no longer here with us. It's as if he traveled to far place, a place where contact cannot be made, but he's happy there, with a happy life. So there's no reason to feel bad or pity the *niftarim*, there's nothing to pity and nothing to feel bad about because they have unimaginable pleasures. It's just that we miss them and long for them. That's why we have *halachos* and laws of *aveilus* — what is permissible, and what is not, and how long we should be in mourning. For twelve months, there still is a little *aveilus*, but afterward, there is no *heter* to be pained. *B'ezras Hashem*, may there be only *besuros tovos*, and a good, happy life for all the families.

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