

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

A Sichah from Maran Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Gershon Edelstein *shlita* . **Vayishlach 5783**

512

The Purpose of Man's Creation — To Delight in Hashem

At the beginning of his *sefer*, the *Mesillas Yesharim* writes what man's purpose in life is — why was man created? **“Our Chachamim zichronam livrachah wrote that man was created solely to delight in Hashem and to derive pleasure from the radiance of His Shechinah.”** The purpose of man is to delight in Hashem!

“And the place of this delight is, in truth, in Olam HaBa.” That is, the true delight and pleasure is found in Olam HaBa, but it is possible to attain these pleasures in this world as well, to derive pleasure through Torah and *avodah*. There are many pleasures of *avodas Hashem* in Olam HaZeh as well. But the true pleasure is in Olam HaBa, **“which is the true delight and the greatest pleasure of all possible pleasures.”** Pleasures of Olam HaBa are the greatest pleasures; there's nothing greater than them. And they are eternal pleasures that last, and more and more pleasures are constantly being created.

Olam HaBa Pleasures Are Endless

The *navi* already told us (*Yeshayahu* 64:3), “No eye has seen, Hashem, aside from You, what You will do for the one who hopes for Him.” Chazal explain (*Brachos* 34b), that Olam HaBa pleasures are on a level that no one has ever seen — except for Hashem. We cannot fathom the level of such pleasures, and Olam HaBa's pleasures was a concept that even *neviim* could not fathom — such tremendous pleasures that are constantly being increased and added to, endless pleasures!

We can learn about this from Chazal's comments about Moshe Rabbeinu (*Avos* 5:18): “Moshe was meritorious and influenced the public to be meritorious, and the *zechus* of the public was accredited to him.” Moshe Rabbeinu “was meritorious,” he performed *maasim tovim* himself, yet he also “influenced the public to be meritorious,” he was *mezakeh es harabbim*, Klal Yisrael, with the Torah from Har Sinai — both *Torah she'bichsav* and *Torah she'baal peh*. Everything is from Moshe Rabbeinu, and he was *mezakeh es harabbim* in this manner. As a result, “the *zechus* of the public was credited to him,” whatever the *rabbim* did, do, and will

do throughout all the generations is credited to him. And in this way, he merits more and more eternal, endless pleasures in Olam HaBa.

Moshe Rabbeinu Was Meritorious — And Thus Could Influence Others

First, it says that Moshe “was meritorious,” he had his own *zechuyos* of his *maasim tovim*, and only after that did he “influence the public to be meritorious” — in the merit of his previous *zechuyos*. A person needs prior *zechuyos* in order to be *mezakeh es harabbim*.

The *mishnah* here does not delineate Moshe Rabbeinu's prior *zechuyos*. However, the Midrash tells us explicitly (*Shemos Rabbah* 2:2), “Our rabbi said, when Moshe Rabbeinu *a"h* shepherded Yisro's sheep in the desert, one lamb ran away from him. Moshe ran after the lamb until it reached a small, shaded place.” Since Moshe was the shepherd, he was obligated to watch the sheep, so he chased after the lamb to catch it.

“When he arrived at the shaded place, he found a well of water and the sheep stood and drank. When Moshe arrived, he said, ‘I didn't know that you ran away because you were thirsty; you must be tired!’ He put the lamb on his shoulders and walked back.” When Moshe saw that the lamb was drinking, he realized that the reason why it ran away was because it was thirsty. If so, the lamb was right for running away, and now it must be tired. Moshe had compassion on the lamb and carried it back to the flock.

The Midrash concludes, “HaKadosh Baruch Hu said, ‘You have mercy to lead the flock of a human being like that, by your life, you will shepherd My flock, Yisrael!’” This was Moshe Rabbeinu's prior *zechus*, this was how he was meritorious — through *middos tovos* and having mercy on Hashem's creations.

Explaining the *pasuk* “And Moshe grew up and went out to his brothers and he saw their suffering,” the Midrash (1:27) asks: “What is ‘and he saw’? He would see their suffering and cry and say, ‘Woe is me about you, if only I could die instead of you, for there is no harder labor than the labor of working with mortar.’ And he would lend a hand and help every single one of them.” This was before he was a shepherd, when he was growing up in Pharaoh's

house and he saw his brethren doing backbreaking labor. He had mercy on them and felt their pain, so he went out to help them.

These were the prior *zechuyos* that provided Moshe Rabbeinu with the merit to perform the tremendous *zikkui harabbim* of Kabbalas HaTorah at Har Sinai and giving it over to Klal Yisrael.

In any case, it says that he “was meritorious” himself first, because before *zikkui harabbim*, one needs his own *zechuyos*. Even if someone wants to do *zikkui harabbim* without prior *zechuyos*, it is not *shayach*. There are many people who want to do *zikkui harabbim*, as it’s a *chashuve*, respectable thing to do, but one must know that everything is in *Shamayim*’s hands, and *Shamayim* hands things out based on a person’s *zechuyos*. A person’s *zechuyos* generates *siyatta d’Shemaya*! As we saw in Moshe Rabbeinu’s case, his prior *zechuyos* are what gave him the merit to be *mezakeh es harabbim*.

A Mezakeh HaRabbim Has Endless Merits

The *mishnah* in *Avos* says, “the merit of the public is attributed to him.” That is, all the *zechuyos* that the public performs due to Moshe Rabbeinu’s influence are credited to him — they belong to him and it’s considered as if he did them. And he receives additional reward in Olam HaBa for the multitudes of good deeds performed by Klal Yisrael, whose actions are the result of Moshe Rabbeinu’s influence.

Moshe Rabbeinu gave us the *Torah she’bichsav* and *Torah she’be’al Peh*. If so, whatever Klal Yisrael did, does, and will do throughout all the generations is due to Moshe Rabbeinu’s power and influence, and all these *zechuyos* are attributed to him, as if he did them himself. And this is a known principle: if someone is *mezakeh es harabbim* through *maasim tovim*, it’s considered as if he performed these *maasim tovim* himself. And this is true in all areas of *zikkui harabbim*: *Torah, middos tovos, emunah, yiras Shamayim*, in whatever realm a person influences or brings merit to others, it’s considered as if he did the actual mitzvah himself.

The *Chovos HaLevavos* (*Ahavas Hashem* chap. 6) writes: “And my brother, it is fitting for you to know, that the *zechuyos* of a *maamin*, even if he reaches the furthest extreme in rectifying his soul in its devotion to Hashem and comes close to the level of *malachim* in their good *middos*, praiseworthy conduct, zeal in *avodas Hashem* and pure *ahavas Hashem*, it cannot be compared to the *zechuyos* of one who leads others on the good path and straightens out the wicked, bringing them to *avodas haBorei*. For his merits are multiplied by their merits, every day and at all times.”

If someone is *mezakeh es harabbim*, he has tremendous *zechuyos*, more than a person who performs *maasim tovim* himself and is not involved in *zikkui harabbim*. Because even if the person who does *maasim tovim* himself is on a *madreigah* “close to the level of *malachim*” — with the *kochos* of a *malach* to perform many *maasim tovim* — his *zechuyos* simply cannot come close to those of one who is *mezakeh es harabbim*. After all, they merit the *zechuyos* of all future generations — from the second and third generation after the one who was influenced, all the way down to the end of days, as everything comes from the *mezakeh es harabbim*’s *koach* and is credited to him. His merits are constantly being multiplied! We see that there is no end to the *zechuyos* of a *mezakeh es harabbim*.

More Olam HaBa Pleasures Are Constantly Being Added

This is Chazal’s intention when they said about Moshe Rabbeinu, “the merit of the public is credited to him.” He is constantly being credited with more *zechuyos* for the *maasim tovim* that the *rabbim* are doing, due to his influence. And even though he is no longer alive, and he is in Gan Eden and already enjoying an unimaginable level of Olam HaBa, he is still gaining more and more Olam HaBa pleasures.

And even though Moshe Rabbeinu’s Olam HaBa is surely not lacking anything, there is no limit to *taanugei Olam HaBa*! Even after all the tremendous pleasures he already has, an unimaginable amount of pleasure is still being added to his Olam HaBa, because there is no limit and no end to the delights of Olam HaBa, i.e., the quality of the pleasure.

And this is all due to the merit of the *rabbim*, as all the *maasim tovim* that Klal Yisrael continues carrying out after Moshe Rabbeinu’s *petirah*, are all the results of his *koach* and influence, and they are all credited to his *zechus*. Thus, he is *zocheh* to more and more Olam HaBa pleasures, which are unlimited. Indeed, “no eye has seen, aside from You, Hashem”!

One Who Influences Others to Sin

On the other hand, the later part of the *mishnah* in *Avos* discusses Yeravam ben Nevat: “Yeravam sinned and influenced the public to sin; the sin of the *rabbim* is attributed to him.” That is, just as we discussed regarding the positive side, the converse is true as well regarding someone who influences others to sin. Yeravam ben Nevat performed sins by himself and served *avodah zarah*, but he also influenced the *rabbim* to sin, *Rachmana litzlan*. As a result, the sin of the multitudes is attributed to him — all the sins of the *rabbim*, whatever

sins anyone did because of his influence, is credited to him and he is held guilty for it.

Just as a *mezakeh harabbim* receives the merits of the people he influenced, one who causes the masses to sin “earns” all the sins of the people he influenced and he’s punished for them in Gehinnom — which is endless. Gehinnom is *yissurei hanefesh*, and while there is a limit to how much suffering the body can bear, the *nefesh* continues to exist and can bear even more horrific suffering. And that is Gehinnom. Just as there are pleasures, there are also *yissurim*, *Rachmana litzlan*. That’s the meaning of “the sin of the multitudes is attributed to him.”

One’s Behavior Defines Him — Zikkui HaRabbim or the Opposite

The truth is, that every single person in our world, in Olam HaZeh, can be either a *mezakeh es harabbim* through his behavior, or *chas v’shalom*, the opposite. We live among people, and every person influences his friend and is influenced by him. He has an influence on his surroundings, and his surroundings have an influence him.

If he performs *maasim tovim* — with prior *zechuyos* — he is being *mezakeh es harabbim* and influencing them to perform *maasim tovim*, because they see how he acts. They see his *yiras Shamayim* and *middos tovos*, *ahavas Torah* and *esek haTorah*. All the *maasim tovim* that he does, has an influence on the people who see him. And the converse is true too: if he sins, he brings down an influence of sin, *Rachmana litzlan*.

Baruch Hashem, our *tzibbur* has *yiras Shamayim*, *middos tovos*, and *ahavas Torah*. Through these good characteristics, the *tzibbur* is influenced and has an influence on others — who in turn, are *osek baTorah* and *maasim tovim*, daven and perform *chesed*. By conducting himself in the proper way, every single person can have an influence on others and be *mezakeh es harabbim*!

A person can be doing *zikkui harabbim* without even saying a word, and without intending to influence other

— just the very *metzius* of what he is doing also has an influence.

A True Baal Torah Influences without Speaking

The Chazon Ish writes (*Kovetz Igros* vol. 3, 62): “In the surroundings of a true *baal Torah* there are clear powers of influence over many people, in ways that any practical *hishtadlus* cannot achieve. So too, there are effects on those far away even though the seeing eye doesn’t notice them.” That is, someone who is a “true *baal Torah*,” an *adam mushlam*, has an apparent influence on his surroundings. Even if he doesn’t say a thing, even if he doesn’t explain matters or actively try to influence others, without doing anything! But just being himself, with his conduct, just the very fact that he is present has a noticeable *hashpaah*. The *hashpaah* is visible.

The Chazon Ish continues and says that such a person has a concealed *hashpaah* on more distant places. Although his influence is not actively apparent, the influence did occur deep inside one’s heart. Some things are in the *penimiyus ha-lev*; they remain in potential. Not only does a true *baal Torah* have a visible *hashpaah* on his surroundings, he also has a concealed influence on people who don’t live very nearby.

This is what we have. *Ashreinu, mah tov chelkeinu* that through our conduct, with our behavior, every single person — corresponding to his abilities, his possibilities and his condition — who acts with *yashrus* will be *mashpia* and will be *mezakeh es harabbim* without having to do anything specific. Every single one of us is *mezakeh es harabbim*.

Baruch Hashem we have a *tzibbur* with *yiras Shamayim*, *middos tovos*, and *ahavas Torah* and we are here together and each one has an influence on the next — and the general influence intensifies more and more. These are the great *zechuyos* we have, *baruch Hashem*. *B’ezeras Hashem* may we continue to be *zocheh* to *siyatta d’Shemaya* to gain our own merit and to influence others to be meritorious!

Shidduchim (compiled from Rabbeinu’s sichos)

The *pasuk* states (*Bereishis* 28:10), “And Yaakov left Beer Sheva and went to Charan.” Yaakov Avinu went to Charan to find a wife from from Lavan’s daughters. The Midrash tells us (*Bereishis Rabbah* 68:3), “There are those who go to their *zivug*, and those whose *zivug* comes to them. Yitzchak’s *zivug* came to him, as it states, ‘And he saw and behold the camels were arriving.’ Yaakov went to his *zivug*, as it states, ‘And Yaakov left.’ That is, Yaakov Avinu had to go to Lavan’s house to find his *zivug*, while Yitzchak Avinu didn’t have to go find his *zivug*; instead, his *zivug* came to him. Rivkah came to his home.

Let us understand what the Midrash is coming to teach us. After all, isn’t this how *shidduchim* work? Sometimes a person finds his *shidduch* easily, and sometimes it’s harder. Some people have to travel overseas to find their *shidduch*.

It seems that we can explain “goes to his *zivug*” as follows: a person has to move forward and increase/add to his virtues in order to be worthy of his *zivug*, since he is still lacking the necessary *sheleimus* for this. Yaakov Avinu went to find his *zivug* in Lavan HaArami’s house, and he needed tremendous preparation beforehand so as not to be influenced by Lavan — as he later said, “I lived with Lavan, עַם לְבַן גֵרְתִי”, and Rashi explains that the *gematria* of גֵרְתִי is תריג. That is, I lived with the wicked Lavan and still observed all תריג mitzvos, and I did not learn from Lavan’s wicked ways. It was a great *nisayon* not to be negatively influenced from Lavan HaArami. That’s why Yaakov first went to learn Torah in for 14 years in the Beis Midrash of Shem v’Ever — it was in order to attain the *sheleimus* he needed in order to have the strength and fortitude to withstand all the *nisyonos* in Lavan’s house.

After attaining *sheleimus* in Beis Shem v’Ever, Yaakov attained a higher *madreigah* than all the Avos, as Chazal say (*Bereishis Rabbah* 76:1) that Yaakov Avinu is the “*bechir ha-avos*,” the chosen one of the Patriarchs. And they also said (see *Chullin* 91b) that his image is carved into the Kisei HaKavod, and the man’s face on the Merkavah is Yaakov Avinu. Now, Avraham was the first of the Avos. Yitzchak received all of Avraham’s *maalos* and added more *madreigos* of his own. Yaakov then received all of Avraham and Yitzchak’s *maalos* and added more *madreigos* of his own. That’s why he is called “*bechir ha’avos*” — since he has the *sheleimus hamadreigos* of all three Avos combined: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

Chazal tell us (*Sifrei, Devarim* 6:4) that Yaakov Avinu merited that all his children were holy, “*mitaso sheleimah*.” Yishmael was Avraham’s child, Esav was Yitzchak’s child, but Yaakov Avinu did not have impure children because he was already on the level of *sheleimus* that made him worthy of bearing and raising the Shivtei Kah. Similarly, the fact that Yaakov married two of the Imahos, Sora, Rivkah, Rochel and Leah, while Avraham and Yitzchak married one each, is apparently because of Yaakov’s *madreigah*.

And that’s why he first had to “go to his *zivug*,” that is, even after all the *maalos* that Yaakov received from the *hashpaah* of Avraham and Yitzchak, he still had to advance and become loftier until he’d reach the level of Yaakov’s *sheleimus*. This is the meaning of “Yaakov went to his *zivug*, as it states, ‘And Yaakov left’” — Yaakov went and ensconced himself in the Beis Midrash of Shem v’Ever for 14 years, so that he could grow and increase his level of *sheleimus* until he’d reach the point that he’d be worthy of bearing the 12 *shevatim*, who would all be holy offspring.

About Yitzchak Avinu, on the other hand, it says that his *zivug* came to him. Since Yitzchak was an *olah temimah* (see *Bereishis Rabbah* 64:3), he did not have to advance and increase his level of *sheleimus* because he already had achieved his *madreigah* at the Akeidah. His *madreigah*, which is called “*gevurah*, strength,” is the *madreigah* of *mesirus nefesh*. Yitzchak had already attained the necessary *sheleimus* for his *zivug* — in order to bear Yaakov Avinu. While it’s true that he also bore Esav, regarding the level of *sheleimus* required to bear Yaakov, Yitzchak had already reached that level and was worthy.

We can learn from here that all hardships and challenges, and the time you spend waiting for your *zivug* are all arranged through *hashgachah* from Shamayim. There are no questions why sometimes it’s easier and sometimes it’s harder, because there are those who have to “go to their *zivug*” and increase *sheleimus* to be worthy of their *zivug*.

The truth is, Chazal said (*Sotah* 2a) that 40 days before conception, a Bas Kol comes out and says, “Bas Ploni l’Ploni.” *Shamayim* has prepared a *zivug* for every single person, and there’s no need to worry. Sometimes, the girl is still too young and the *bachur* has to wait for her to mature. I’ve seen such incidents. But sometimes, the *bachur* is not prepared or ready to run a household; it’s a responsibility to be a *baal b’amav*, and he has to be a leader, he has to be the *meshpia* and the backbone for the family. It could be that he’s not ready for this yet, it’s not for him, and he has to “go to his *zivug*,” he has to fix himself up and figure out how to become a *bar hachi*. Sometimes, it could be that he’s not enough of a *ben Torah*, and he has to learn with greater *hasmadah* in order to be suitable for this role.

The *klal* is that all difficulties and waiting in *shidduchim* are from Shamayim. Whether there are less challenges or more challenges, it’s all from *Shamayim* and it’s with a *cheshbon* — so that the *zivug* will come to fruition, and in order to attain the necessary *sheleimus* for the *shidduch*.

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להצלחת בניהם ובנותיהם
בתורה וביראת שמים

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