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שיעורי הרב שמעון שפיגער שליט"א

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## Bein Adam LaMakom and Bein Adam Lachaveiro

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### Two Tablets

Rashi points out that the letter *vav* in *וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים* teaches us that just as the *Aseres Hadibros* were given at Sinai, so were the halachos in *Parshas Mishpatim*. These halachos are predominantly *bein adam lachaveiro* – the interpersonal mitzvos. In order to appreciate the importance of those halachos, we need to understand their relationship with mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* – between man and Hashem.

In *Parshas Yisro*, the Ramban points out that the *Aseres Hadibros* were divided into two parts. The five mitzvos engraved on the right-hand tablet were all mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* – between man and Hashem, whereas the five mitzvos on the left-hand tablet were all mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* – interpersonal mitzvos.

The basic explanation for this format is that Hashem wants us to realize that a person cannot actualize his potential and reach a state of *shleimus* unless he is complete in both of these areas. Someone who meticulously keeps mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* but not *bein adam lachaveiro* cannot be considered part of society because no one will want to associate with him.

### Two Bracelets, Ten Measures of Gold

In *Parshas Chayei Sarah*, Eliezer presented Rivkah Imeinu with two bracelets, whose combined weight was ten measures of gold. Rashi explained that this was an allusion to the two *Luchos* and the ten mitzvos engraved in them. The *Arugas Habosem* explains,

This explains the division of the mitzvos into categories of *bein adam lachaveiro* and *bein adam laMakom*. Some people are very meticulous when it comes to observing mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*,

but view mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* as unimportant. Similarly, there are people who devote their time, energy and resources to helping others with lovingkindness and *tzedakah*, but are not very careful about observing mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*. In truth, they are all mitzvos of Hashem, and we must be careful to observe them to the greatest extent possible.

This is the reason that the letters of the mitzvos were written on both sides of the *Luchos*... **Otherwise, one might say that the two categories can be separated.** The mitzvos written on the other side of the *bein adam laMakom* tablet were the *bein adam lachaveiro* mitzvos, and vice versa. The result was that all ten *dibros* were engraved in each of the two *Luchos*. As we explained, if someone does not keep mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*, his mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* are seriously lacking, and vice versa.

Eliezer saw how much effort the *tzaddekes* Rivkah Imeinu put into the mitzvah of *gemilus chasadim* by watering all of his camels. He was concerned that this would lead people to treat those mitzvos as primary, and mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* as subsidiary. Therefore, he gave her two bracelets that represented the two inseparable *Luchos*, with the ten mitzvos inscribed on them.

### Bein Adam LaChaveiro Is More Precious

Several Rishonim clearly state that mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* are more precious than mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*.

The Rosh comments on the *mishnah* in the beginning of *Maseches Pe'ah*, which we recite every morning. The Mishnah lists the actions whose 'fruits' a person can eat in *Olam Hazeh*, while the principal remains for *Olam Haba*. Among them we find *gemilus chasadim* – acts of lovingkindness, and restoring *shalom* between two people:

For Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires mitzvos that also fulfill the will of people, more than mitzvos between man and his Creator.

The Rambam writes a similar explanation in his commentary on the Mishnah.

The Chazon Ish said,

People who differentiate between mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* and *bein adam lachaveiro* often mistakenly assume that mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* are “lighter” – easier or less important. This simply is not true. There is no difference between any of the mitzvos. The only reason that Rishonim classified mitzvos as *bein adam laMakom* or *bein adam lachaveiro* was to enable us to define the parameters of the mitzvah based on its source in the Torah.

There are even later discussions that define the parameters of a halachah by its place in the Tur/ Shulchan Aruch. The laws of *ribbis*, interest, are found in the *Yoreh De'ah* section of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the section that covers *issur v'heter* topics, such as the laws of *kashrus*. (This is surprising because it would seem more natural for those halachos to be placed in *Choshen Mishpat*, the section that deals with monetary halachos.) One explanation for this is that putting *hilchos ribbis* in *Yoreh De'ah* teaches us that money gained by taking interest is *treif*, and utilizing such money is like eating *neveilos u'treifos*.

**Someone who transgresses the laws of *bein adam lachaveiro* forms barriers that separate him from others.** That person may not realize that at the same time, he sins against Hashem and distances himself from Hashem.

The basis for this statement is that Hashem made man **בצלם אלוקים**, in His image. Someone who does not care about the *tzelem Elokim* in his fellow man also sins against the Creator Who made that person.

When a human being exists in the physical world and wants to draw closer to his Creator, it is very difficult to realize that aspiration. Hakadosh Baruch Hu gives us a gateway to that closeness, in the

mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro*. By drawing close to the *tzelem Elokim* in our fellow man, we are also drawing closer to Hashem. On the other hand, if one distances himself from others by sinning *bein adam lachaveiro*, he also distances himself from Hashem.

### Five to Five

The Kli Yakar explains at length that mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* were not given **in addition** to those *bein adam laMakom*. Rather, they complement and complete the mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*. Therefore, if you see someone who lacks *shleimus* in the interpersonal mitzvos, know that he also lacks *shleimus bein adam laMakom*. This is one of the reasons that mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* are so precious to Hashem.

The Kli Yakar then explains in detail how each of the five mitzvos on the left-hand tablet complements and completes the corresponding mitzvah on the right-hand tablet.

*Lo sirtzach* – do not kill – corresponds to אנכי השם אלוקיך, for someone who kills a human being (or embarrasses him publicly, which Chazal equate with murder, *Bava Metzia* 58a) has removed the presence of a *tzelem Elokim* from the world.

לא יהיה לך אלוהים – *do not commit adultery* – corresponds to לא תהיה לך אלוהים – *do not have other gods*. Throughout the *Nevi'im*, the metaphor of adultery is used to portray the evil of *avodah zarah*. When Bnei Yisrael sinned with the daughters of Moav and then worshipped their *avodah zarah* (*Bamidbar* 25), that's an example of how immorality leads to idolatry. When the Torah warns us of the danger of intermarriage, it says, כי יסיר את בנך מאחרי (Devarim 7:1) *for it will remove your son from following me*.

*Lo Signov, do not steal*, corresponds to *Lo Sisa – do not swear falsely or meaninglessly in Hashem's name*. A thief will end up swearing falsely in an attempt to deny his wrongdoing. The underlying link between the two *aveiros* is that the man who swears falsely in Hashem's name, just like the thief, acts as if Hashem does not see what he is doing.



*Lo saaneh*, testifying falsely, corresponds to Shabbos, for Chazal said that when someone is *mechalel Shabbos*, it is as if he is denying that Hashem created this world in six days and rested on the seventh.

*Lo Sachmod* – do not covet that which belongs to others – corresponds to *kibbud av va'eim*. Often, the mitzvah of *kibbud av va'eim* requires a person to spend money in order to honor and care for his parents. A person who desires others' money or property certainly will not honor his parents properly, because of his obsession with material wealth.

Therefore, when a person serves Hashem consistently and meticulously, the mark of true *emunah* is in his behavior towards others. Someone who always interacts with people in a gentle way, cares for their honor, takes care not to take anything that is not honestly his own, and does not covet that which belongs to others, has internalized *emunah* so completely that no situation and no pressure can induce him to forget it.

### Who is Respected? One Who Respects Others

The *Beis Aharon* (*Pirkei Avos* 4) explains the statement, איזהו מכובד? אִיזְהוּ מְכֻבָּד? – *Who is respected? One who respects Hashem's creations.* When someone respects Hashem's creations without differentiating between one person and another, that means he truly understands that a person is a *tzelem Elokim*. He doesn't spend time examining a person's appearance, intelligence, talent, or any other external factors; he focuses on the person's *neshamah*. For the same reason, this person also will not attribute much importance to his own success, and his own external advantages will not cause him to be arrogant. Naturally, then, he will be respected by all who know him.

As we have learned, the true test of a person's spiritual level is in the way he interacts with others. One who is careless with words and hurts others, even unintentionally (or as a "joke"), clearly has not internalized the understanding that the person standing before him was created *b'tzelem Elokim* and has within him ממעל אלוך, a G-dly spark.

He does not realize that Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the א-ל מסתתר, Who hides in our world, is hiding within this flesh-and-blood person.

### The Greatest Revelation

Chazal teach us (*Sanhedrin 38a*, and *Bereishis Rabbah 8:1*) that if a person behaves properly, he is held above all other creations. If he does not, he is told, "The mosquito was created before you." In other words, the *neshamah* of a person is higher than any other creation, but the *guf*, the physical aspect of a human being, is lower than all other creations.

Therefore, if we learn to see our friend as a *neshamah* that was hewn from beneath the *Kisei Hakavod*, as opposed to identifying him by his physical aspect, we've accomplished something very special. It is easy enough to stand before Niagara Falls and proclaim מה רבו מעשיך ה'. It is a lot harder to proclaim the greatness of a Jew who is covered in mud and filth, treats people badly, and ignores Hashem's mitzvos. If we are able to see through all of that and recognize his lofty *neshamah*, then we have fulfilled the mitzvah of אנכי השם אלוֹקִיךָ in its highest form.

It's also clear to see that people who ignore mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* never reach *shleimus* in their interpersonal relationships. They might seem respectful and polite but if someone touches a nerve, they may lose control and suddenly curse and scream in a way that might be very surprising. No one can achieve *shleimus bein adam laMakom* alone or *bein adam lachaveiro* alone. They are two facets of the same process.

We can now understand why *gemilus chasadim* and bringing peace between two Jews are mitzvos whose fruits can be eaten in this world. Tzaddikim write that the primary goal of creation was for human beings to live in a dark, lowly, physical world, and reveal Hashem's presence in that world. As we explained, the best way to accomplish this is by ignoring the external physical reality that conceals people's *neshamos* and focusing on the *neshamah kedoshah* that we know exists underneath.

### To Sit Among the Ushpizin

Tzaddikim always went to great lengths to avoid causing even the

slightest pain or discomfort to another Jew. They also respected and admired anyone who followed their example.

Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Liska once traveled to Premishlan to spend Sukkos with his Rebbe, Rav Meir of Premishlan. Rav Meir had the *minhag* of setting seven places at his table for the seven *ushpizin*. He honored his *talmid* Rav Tzvi Hirsh by seating him in the fourth place, corresponding to Moshe Rabbeinu. The next day, during the *seudah*, he explained that he was honoring him because of a particular *tefillah* of Rav Tzvi Hirsh that found favor in his eyes.

After the *tish*, Rav Tzvi Hirsch explained the uniqueness of the *tefillah* that the Rebbe so admired.

“At the beginning of the *tefillah*, I was standing near the Rebbe in the area where the *chassidim* all try to get close to the Rebbe. I thought that perhaps the pressure of the crowd would cause me to think negatively about those who were pushing. Therefore, I left my place and went to daven in the back of the *beis medrash*, by the door, where no one was pushing.”

After hearing a story like that, we must be careful not to despair and give up when we realize how distant we are from true *shleimus* in these important mitzvos. Instead, we should realize that we are meant to strive and make progress in this area, each and every day of our lives.

We are not talking about learning good manners. Most people can learn those behaviors quite easily. We are referring to more difficult *avodah*, such as treating every Jew with *kavod*, even someone who has insulted you, and even if you feel that it is demeaning to honor such a person. It includes the challenging obligation to truly rejoice in a friend’s success, and not covet the good things he has. As difficult as it is, we should remember that each step forward helps Creation reach its purpose.

## The Straight and the Good

The Malbim cites a debate among the *Tannaim* concerning the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 12:28) אֲלֵכֶיךָ ה' אֶלְקֵינוּ הַיָּשָׁר וְהַטוֹב - *When you will do that which is good and straight in the eyes of Hashem*. R. Akiva's opinion is that *tov* refers more to the mitzvos *bein adam laMakom*. For example, a person fulfills the mitzvah of *arba'ah minim* not because he thinks he understands why Hashem commanded us to take those four species and not others; he takes these *minim* because Hashem, in His wisdom, has commanded us to do so. However, we do feel that we understand mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro*, because they resonate with our inner sense of justice. We feel that they are *yashar*, the straight path.

R. Yishmael disagrees and says that *hayashar* refers to *bein adam laMakom*. Since the *pasuk* says הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי ה', it must be speaking about mitzvos that are correct in Hashem's eyes as opposed to our eyes, and we follow them even if we don't understand them. *Hatov*, on the other hand, refers to the interpersonal mitzvos, because we can relate to their goodness.

The Malbim explains R. Yishmael's opinion: The mitzvos *bein adam laMakom* are called *yashar* even though the term *tov* would seem more appropriate, to teach us to relate to and keep those mitzvos as if we understood them with our *sechel*. Similarly, mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* are called *tov*, even though we can understand them, to teach us not to keep those mitzvos **because** we understand them. We should keep them simply because Hakadosh Baruch Hu has decided that they are *tov*.

Based on what we learned above, we can suggest another explanation of R. Yishmael's opinion. Mitzvos *bein adam lachaveiro* are called *tov* because keeping them will help a Jew reach *shleimus* in the realm of *bein adam laMakom* as well. It's clear that even R. Akiva does not disagree about this fundamental principle. He made the famous statement ואהבת לרעך כמוך, זה כלל גדול בתורה, which means that it is impossible to reach *shleimus* without fixing your world of *bein adam lachaveiro*.









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