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

From the *Sichos* of Maran Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Gershon Edelstein *ztvk"l* • *Bereishis 5787*

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There Is No Limit to Siyatta d'Shemaya in Ruchniyus

Chazal say in *Brachos* (32b), "Four matters require *chizuk*: Torah, *maasim tovim*, *tefillah*, and *derech eretz*." Rashi explains: "A person should strengthen himself in them constantly, with all his might." This is what *chizuk* must be like: constantly, and with all one's energy.

A person who strengthens himself is successful, every single person who strengthens himself! Without exception! Because one who strengthens himself and works hard to improve is called "coming to be purified," and Chazal say (*Yoma* 38b), "One who comes to be purified is helped." And when you have *siyatta d'Shemaya*, there is no limit to success.

And this is how it is in *ruchniyus*, as there is no limit or boundaries to *ruchniyus*, but regarding *gashmiyus*, this is not the case. Now, *chizuk* is necessary in *gashmiyus* matters too, as Rashi explains that "*derech eretz*" refers to *gashmiyus* (this will be explained further soon), but *gashmiyus* is limited, because each person's material needs are allocated from Rosh Hashanah (*Beitzah* 16a), and a person cannot be more successful in *gashmiyus* matters than what has been allocated to him. So *chizuk* won't work there, but when it comes to *ruchniyus*, there is no limit to *siyatta d'Shemaya*!

Income Is Set in Gashmiyus, but Not in Ruchniyus

Chazal say that a person's livelihood is allocated to him from Rosh Hashanah, and Rashi explains that has a practical application: "A person should be careful not to have excessive expenditures, as they will not increase his payment for provisions beyond what had been decreed for him." That is, since his provisions and material expenditures are allocated, he won't receive more than whatever had been allocated to him. Therefore, a person must take care not to overspend. This is very *l'maaseh* — make sure your expenses are not excessive. However, as we said, this only applies to material expenses, which are limited, but there is no limit or set allocation regarding expenses for *ruchniyus*.

The Gemara adds that a person's entire livelihood is set for the year, aside from his expenditures for Shabbasos and Yomim Tovim, and expenses for his children's Torah education. This is because they are *ruchniyus* matters,[1] and there is no set allocation for *ruchniyus*! If one spends less, they give him less, and if one increases his expenditures, they increase his allotment. Rashi explains: "According to what he is used to, it is given to him — at that time, or later."

That is, Shamayim gives a person the amount he needs based on what he is used to spending for his Shabbos and Yom Tov needs. It can happen in two ways: at that time, or later. That is, he either receives all his Shabbos expenditures right away, or he will receive the sum later — even though he doesn't have it now.

Shabbos Expenses — Borrow on My Account

Earlier in the same Gemara, the following *pasuk* is quoted, "For the joy of Hashem is your strength." Hashem told Klal Yisrael, My sons, borrow on My account and sanctify the sanctity of the day, believe in Me and I will repay [the loan]. That is, even if you presently don't have the funds, borrow for Shabbos and Yom Tov expenses and I will pay off the debt.

It mentions that HaKadosh Baruch Hu uses the term "my sons" when He gives Klal Yisrael this message. There are times when Bnei Yisrael are called "sons," and times when they are called "servants" (*Kiddushin* 36a). Here they are called sons, because if someone does not have money, yet he borrows in honor of Shabbos, because he wants to honor the Shabbos and sanctify the holiness of the day, that is the *madreigah* of "*banim*, sons."

The Gemara adds, "And believe in Me and I will repay the loan." That is, this person believes in Hashem and has perfect trust in HaKadosh Baruch Hu that He will repay the debt. For if not, he would not borrow — as one who borrows

[1] Editor's note: See *Ritva* ad loc., who writes that this refers not only to Shabbos and Yom Tov expenses, but to all expenses for *mitzvos*. Shabbos and Yom Tov were given as an example because they are more prevalent.

without having a way to repay his loan is called "the wicked borrows and does not repay" (see *Avos* 2:9). But not this man — he lives with calculations; he doesn't go through life without a *cheshbon*. He doesn't borrow money for other expenses, because if he doesn't have, he doesn't spend. But when it comes to Shabbos and Yom Tov expenses, since it is in honor of *kedushas ha'yom*, and he believes that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will pay it off, he borrows. A person who lives like this has the promise of "borrow on My account and I will repay the loan"!

The Gemara says that if he spends less, they give him less, and if he spends more, they give him more. Rashi explains: "according to what he's used to." That is, if he minimizes his expenditures and does not rely on the promise that he will receive the money he borrowed, he does not receive enough even for what he is used to buying. He does not deserve it.

But if he spends more, they give him more, because it's not for his material provisions, it's in honor of Shabbos, and for this, he is promised: "Borrow on My account…" Since it's a *hargashah* of "sons," the feeling of a son and a father, that he's a son fulfilling his father's desires, when the Father sees that His son is doing His will and to that end, he is spending money, He gives the son more money. He knows that His son will use those extra funds to continue fulfilling His will; and His son will not defy His will. Therefore, if he spends more, they give him more.

Siyatta D'Shemaya for One Who Strengthens His Ruchniyus

This is always the rule in matters of *ruchniyus*: if a person invests effort, Shamayim gives him more. In this case, it is financial expenses, but the same is true regarding any form of effort — not only monetary effort. When a person invests any effort for *ruchniyus*, he receives *siyatta d'Shemaya* and *Shamayim* gives him more and helps him.

Chazal tell us regarding *hiddur mitzvah* (*Bava Kama* 9b), that the obligation of *hiddur* is up a third [of the item's value], and if a person pays more than a third for *hiddur*, he receives payment from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Rashi and Tosfos there explain that this means he "reaps dividends in this world and the principal awaits him in Olam HaBa." Since paying more than a third is going beyond his obligations, he is showing how much he loves *mitzvos*. And since this shows that he loves *mitzvos*, they give him more as a result.

Similarly, any *chizuk* in *ruchniyus* gives a person *siyatta d'Shemaya*. Rav Chaim Volozhin writes in *Ruach Chaim* in the beginning of *Pirkei Avos*, "When a person undertakes to perform a mitzvah, the mitzvah connects to its root in Heaven, causing the *ohr hamakif* (the surrounding light) from the *kedushah* to surround that limb; and the person is in the middle. This light helps him complete the mitzvah." That is, even when a person merely has a thought of performing a mitzvah, and he thinks about doing a good deed, a light of *kedushah* immediately surrounds him, and this light gives him *chizuk* and leads him to complete the mitzvah and turn his good thought into action. This is the reality of *ruchniyus*.

Don't Be Drawn After Batalah

The truth is, we see a lot of young people and older people too who have strengthened themselves. They lead a life of *chizuk*, and they are very happy. They are strong in Torah and *mitzvos* but they don't act strange. The *chizuk* did not make them strange; they are calm and happy, and they eat, drink, and sleep like everyone else, but they lead a life of *chizuk*! They use their time wisely.

And what is *chizuk*? How are they strengthened? They are not attracted to *devarim beteilim*, frivolous, wasteful matters. They don't waste their time. Human nature is the opposite. A person naturally is drawn to relaxation and does not want to work hard. And not only doesn't he want to work hard, he is also naturally drawn to spend his time on other things, such as speaking about things he should not be talking about and listening to things he shouldn't be hearing.

But those who don't act this way, those who strengthen themselves to go against human nature, are strengthening themselves internally. In their *penimiyus*, they know about the importance of Torah and *mitzvos*, therefore their human nature does not control them. And even though human nature is very strong, and it can draw you to do things that negate success and oppose *chizuk*, these people know that there are obligations and they make an effort to fulfill them.

Everyone Can Attain the Lofty Maalos

When a person goes in the Torah's ways, he can attain many lofty *maalos*. Indeed, Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah* (3:17) that the lofty *maalos* have been passed down in the *mitzvos asei*. They are *chiyuvim* that can be attained, one just needs *chizuk* for this, as Rashi writes in *Brachos*: "Constant *chizuk*, with all his might." A person does not need supernatural abilities, nor does he have to invest extraordinary efforts; each person has to use his natural strengths, according to his abilities.

One merely needs to know how: how does one gain *chizuk* and succeed? How does one reach what he needs and what is possible to attain?

People are not familiar with the ways to achieve *chizuk*, because it is against human nature, and our nature draws us to do even things that are prohibited. Sometimes, we make mistakes and think they are *mitzvos*, because a person is biased. Every single person can be biased; no one is immune to biases! A person needs a lot of *chizuk* and a lot of caution, along with a lot of *siyatta d'Shemaya* not to let his personal biases control him. But once he reaches this stage, and once he knows the way, he will undoubtedly succeed.

It's simple. There are 613 *mitzvos* in the Torah which we are all required to keep. If the Torah obligates us, it means that the person is capable of fulfilling them. If not, there would be no *chiyuv*. And if the Torah obligates us in these lofty *maalos*, which are many levels of *chovos halevavos*, duties of the heart (as Rabbeinu Yonah elucidates in *Shaarei*

Teshuvah), even though they are *lichorah* very difficult, if the Torah obligates us, it means we can acquire them! We just need to know how to do it.

Chizuk Must Match a Person's Nature

The truth is, there is not one person who does not need *chizuk*. Each person must choose a form of *chizuk* that fits his nature, because people's opinions are not equal (*Brachos* 58a), and people's natures are not equal. *Chizuk* will only work if it fits your nature. If a person does things for *chizuk* that do not fit his nature, he will not be successful. Not only will it not give him *chizuk*, it will actually harm him. So one must learn which form of *chizuk* fits his nature.

Health Also Requires Chizuk

The Gemara mentions that one also need *chizuk* in *derech eretz*, and Rashi explains: "If he is a craftsman, [he needs *chizuk* to perform] his craftsmanship, if he is a businessman, for his business, if he is a warrior, [he needs *chizuk*] for his battles." That is, *derech eretz*, for example, refers to someone who has to work for a living — without working, he won't have what to life of. And he needs *chizuk* to go to work, without *chizuk*, he won't be successful. Even though he knows he needs the *parnasah*, it is human nature that other things pull him away from work, and so he needs *chizuk* in this area too.

We see this clearly when it comes to physical matters. People who have diabetes, for example, and know that they shouldn't be eating certain things, yet there are still many who do not control their nature even though it's harmful to their health. Their nature pulls them, because *taavah* has power, the *taavah* for food can be controlling, and it's hard for them to overpower it.

I recently spoke with an *adam gadol* who was sick. I asked him about his health, and he told me that he follows the doctors' instructions perfectly, because it says (*Devarim* 4:15), "And you shall watch yourselves very well." Even though it would be easier to ignore the doctors' instructions, it says "And you shall watch yourselves very well," and he is an *adam gadol* and knows that this is the halachah. So for him, it's not a question at all, and he does what he's supposed to do. This is an *adam gadol*!

This matter requires *chizuk* as well, and it's part of the *chizuk* in *derech eretz*. But a person who isn't an *adam gadol* and hasn't invested in *chizuk* and improving himself, will simply follow his nature and won't strengthen himself. And if this is true regarding worldly matters, all the more so it is true regarding all *ruchniyus* matters.

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Editor's note: Rabbeinu spoke further about how to strengthen oneself in Torah, but due to lack of space, we will continue this *sichah* over the coming weeks.

בעניינא דיומא

The Hashpa'os of These Holy Days: Fear and Joy!

In a *sichah* after Sukkos 5781 (2020), Rabbeinu said:

We've experienced Elul and *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, which are times of *yiras Shamayim*, and those days were followed by Sukkos, *zman simchaseinu*, which brings down a *hashpa'ah* of joy in fulfilling *mitzvos*. If so, there should presently be a *hashpa'ah* of *yiras Shamayim* together with *simchah*. However, *lichorah*, there seems to be a contradiction here. How can *simchah* coexist with *yirah*? *Yirah* means fear, *pachad* — isn't fear a contradiction to joy?

But the truth is, there is no contradiction here, and a *pasuk* in *Tehillim* proves it (2:11): "Serve Hashem with *yirah*, fear, and rejoice (*gilu*) in trembling." A person must be in a state of fear and trembling, but at the same time, he must be joyful! *Gilah*, the word used in this *pasuk* to describe joy, expresses a state of happiness that is a higher level than *simchah*. Indeed, in the final *berachah* of *sheva berachos*, we say "*asher bara sasson v'simchah*," and only then do we say "*gilah*." This means *gilah* is a step above *simchah*. In any case, it's clearly written that *simchah* can exist together with *yiras Shamayim*.

There is a reason why this is not a contradiction. The *Mesillas Yesharim* (Chap. 19) cites Chazal who say that when a person davens, "your heart should be joyous because you are praying before an unrivaled king." That is, one must be happy when he prays, for he is davening before a king Who has no equal and he is talking to Him and He hears and wants to listen. Now, after all, of course davening must be conducted with *yiras Shamayim* since he is standing in front of the King, and it is frightening to stand in front of a king. But at the same time, he is also happy — "your heart should be joyous"! *Yiras Shamayim* is not a contradiction to *simchah*.

Fear of a human is not joy, but *yiras harommemus* can go hand in hand with joy — and so can *yiras harommemus* of an *adam gadol*, like **when one is standing next to the Chazon Ish. On the one hand, fear is present, *yiras harommemus*, but you also experience joy and a good, pleasant feeling that you are standing near the Chazon Ish. This is fear together with joy.** Therefore, *yiras Shamayim* is not a contradiction to happiness. *Tefillah* is conducted with *yirah*, but "your heart should be joyous," because *kirvas Elokim*, closeness to Hashem, increases happiness!

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