

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 • *Mattos-Masei* 5785

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## Sinas Chinam Led to the Churban<sup>1</sup>

Let's take a close look at the things that are important for us to know during these days, during Av. When Rosh Chodesh Av comes in, we diminish our joy, and there are many *minhagei aveilus* over the Churban.

Chazal tell us (*Yoma* 9b), During the time of the second Beis HaMikdash, Klal Yisrael was engaged in Torah and *mitzvos* and *gemillus chasadim*. So why was it destroyed? Because of *sinas chinam*, baseless hatred, hating others for no good reason. Even though they were engaged in Torah and *mitzvos* and *chesed*, which are the three pillars that hold up the world (*Avos* 1:2), "*Torah, avodah, u'gemillus chasadim*," and *avodah* refers to *mitzvos*, it was still possible to possess the trait of *sinas chinam* — because people have a *yetzer hara* that is liable to overpower them. And that's why the Churban took place.

And the Churban is continuing until today. Chazal say (Yerushalmi, *Yoma* 1:1), "Every generation in which the Beis HaMikdash is not rebuilt in their days, it is as if it was destroyed in their days." If the Beis HaMikdash has not been rebuilt, it's a sign that the present generation is to blame, and it's considered as if they are destroying the Beis HaMikdash again. Because if the sin had been rectified, and the people of that generation had been acting with *ahavas habriyos*, without *sinas chinam*, the Beis HaMikdash would have been rebuilt already. After all, why shouldn't it have been rebuilt? The only reason why it hasn't been rebuilt is because the sin is continuing, and we are perpetuating the Churban by continuing to act with this *middah*, and the sin, of *sinas chinam*.

And what is *sinas chinam*? It is hating another person for no good reason. **The time will come and people will realize that their hatred was a mistake. When a person arrives in the Olam HaEmes after his 120 years, the yetzer hara will no longer be around, but Gehinnom will be there. And then he'll realize what a mistake he made by hating others when he had no reason at all to hate them!**

## Maran Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ztvk"l's Yahrtzeit

This week, 27 Tammuz, was the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbeinu Rosh Roshei Yeshivos Maran HaGaon Rav Shmuel Rozovsky ztvk"l.

On one occasion Rabbeinu ztvk"l commented about the fact that Rav Shmuel's Torah is learned all over the world. What follows is excerpted from the *hesped* Rabbeinu delivered at the *levayah* of Rebbetzin Rozovsky a"h, in Cheshvan 5763 (2002).

It's very hard to define and describe the Rebbe's *gadlus*. *Mori v'rabi*, I received Torah from him in Lomzha already, and then in Ponevez — during the yeshivah's very first year. He was the first one of all the *roshei yeshivah* to come; the others came later. And he had a lot of hardships; you can say that he taught Torah with "superhuman" strengths. Later on, too, his *harbatzas Torah* came along with very great hardship.

It's known that Rav Akiva Eiger wrote in his will not to say any praise about him — expect for one thing: from age fifteen or sixteen until the day of his death he learned with *talmidim* despite his terrible suffering and pain.

Rabbeinu ztvk"l, too, was *zocheh* to do the same. Despite great hardship and difficult situations, he was *zocheh* to teach and raise *talmidim* in a special, wondrous, indescribable way, to give over such a *geshmak*, and such *havanah* and *behirus*; his *hasbarah* was delivered with such vitality — it can't be described in words.

Rav Akiva Eiger was *zocheh* that people all over the world enjoy his Torah — to such an extent that he's more respected than all other Acharonim. Rav Chaim Volozhiner said that Rav Akiva Eiger's *derech halimud* is like one of the Rishonim (see *Chut Hameshulash*, *siman* 3). Rav Akiva Eiger himself attributed his *zechus* to the fact that he learned with *talmidim* even while he was experiencing *yissurim*.

We see that people from all over the world are learning Rabbeinu's Torah as well. Even now, we are being *osek* in his Torah and receiving Torah from him, from his works that have been printed. He himself didn't write them down; his *talmidim* did — and everything is so well arranged and clear. These *sefarim* are being used all over the world, and it's not something to be taken for granted — one needs special *zechuyos* for this. There are many *gedolim* who did not merit this, and there's nothing left of their *chiddushei Torah*. While we are not privy to Hashem's ways, it's possible that he was *zocheh* to this in the merit of teaching Torah despite his *yissurim*!

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from a *sichah* in Yeshivas Knesses Meir, Rishon LeTziyon, Av, 5770 (2010).

Let's think about why it's called "for no reason, *chinam*." After all, if someone gets me angry and makes trouble and insults or hurts me, *lichorah*, I have a reason to be angry and hate him. So why is it called "baseless"?

### Hatred Due to Jealousy — Lack of Emunah

Sometimes, hatred is the result of jealousy. When I see another person is more successful than I am, and I hate him for that, that is definitely *sinas chinam* and *kinas chinam* (baseless jealousy), because whatever happens is *b'hashgachah pratis*, from Shamayim. Nothing happens that is not from Shamayim, and everything is from HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Who did, does, and will do all deeds. If the other person is successful and you are not successful, that's how Hashem wants it to be, and there's no reason to hate him. Just try to think about why Hashem wants him to succeed and doesn't want you to succeed. Apparently, he has *zechuyos* that you don't have, or perhaps there's other reasons why Shamayim is giving it to him and not to you.

And if you think that you are more important than him, in the *Iggeres HaRamban* it states: Consider everyone else greater than you. And even if you are a tzaddik, a *lamdan*, and an *oveid Hashem*, and he is a very simple person, you must still consider him to be greater than you.

Why is this so? Is it just a matter of expression that "you should consider him to be greater than you"? The Ramban explains that truthfully, no one knows who is considered more prominent in Shamayim. After all, you received a Torah education, and you have *kishronos* and *havanah*, and that's why you are a tzaddik. You can possibly be doing more, and you aren't. The other person, however, does whatever he can based on his level of intelligence and the *chinuch* he received, and he does not have any further *kochos*. If he commits sins, they are unintentional because he does not know any better. But you are an intentional sinner, because you are a *talmid chacham*, and if you would learn *mussar*, you would know what your obligations are.

And think about it: Have you fulfilled your obligations? Do you learn as much as you should be learning? Do you refrain from speaking *lashon hara*? And do you have the proper amount of *kavanah* in *tefillah*? And do you constantly keep your thoughts pure? And are you free of *sinas chinam*? Therefore, it's not possible to know who is considered more important in Shamayim. Jealousy and hatred are the products of a lack of *emunah*.

### Hatred Due to Anger — A Lack of Emunah

But the truth is, hatred that's the result of anger — I hate the other person because he hurt me and is causing me pain — that too is *sinas chinam*. If I would have been a tzaddik who didn't deserve this pain, how could he have

hurt me? After all, everything is from Shamayim, all pain is from Shamayim, and no pain can happen without *hashgachah pratis*. So a person has to ask himself: why did I deserve this pain, and why did Shamayim give me this *tzaar*?

The truth is, Shamayim might even give *yissurim shel ahavah* to someone who is a tzaddik, in order to increase his reward in Olam HaBa. If so, he surely must be happy about his pain and suffering, because it increases his *zechuyos*. And the one who is caused him the pain is the messenger to give him these *zechuyos*; he did him a big favor. So why should he be angry at him?

However, it's more likely that he's not such a tzaddik who is receiving *yissurim shel ahavah*. Rather, he deserves the pain due to a sin he committed, and he must do teshuvah. If so, why should he be angry at the one who caused him pain? After all, the pain is coming from Shamayim.

A person's main concern should be: why do I deserve this pain; for which sin must I do teshuvah. Because there definitely is some sin, as Chazal said (*Shabbos* 55a), "There is no suffering without sin." So one must search and scrutinize his deeds — what is the sin? That's what should worry you the most! Because if there is a sin, and you don't do teshuvah for it, there will be more pain, as the Torah tells us (*Vayikra* 26): If you treat Me as happenstance, I will continue to cause you suffering. The most worrisome thing should be: which sin must I do teshuvah for?

Stories are told about great tzaddikim (see *Kesser Rosh, os chaf-aleph*), who, whenever they experienced some pain, they would immediately try to figure out what sin they had done and what the *middah k'neged middah* was for this pain. Or they would attribute it *bittul Torah*, which is equal to all sins, and one is punished for it with all types of suffering, *Rachmana litzlan*. (See *Brachos* daf 5; *Nefesh HaChaim* 4:29.)

And so, instead of worrying about what you can do to benefit yourself so that the pain will pass, and so that Shamayim will take it away — instead, you're angry at the one who caused you pain? He doesn't have *sechel*, he doesn't understand, but he does have a yetzer hara. Now, he will be punished for the choice he made, but you would have received pain no matter what, because it's from Shamayim! And we must pity him, because he will eventually be punished. And anything you want to do back to him is incomparable to the punishment he'll receive in Heavenly judgment. After he is punished, he will do teshuvah and realize that he made a mistake. If so, have pity on yourself and on the other person as well. All your anger and hatred stems from a lack of *emunah*.

Therefore, Chazal say (*Makkos* 24a), “Chavakuk came and condensed them into one: And a tzaddik shall live by his faith.” Throughout the previous generations, they needed *chizuk* in specific areas — if not for that *chizuk*, they would have committed many prohibitions. The Gemara tells us that a number of *neviim* told Klal Yisrael which things needed *chizuk*. From the days of Chavakuk, however, who lived toward the end of the period of the *neviim*, the main *chizuk* that was needed was in *emunah*! And every single person needs *chizuk* in *emunah*. Of course, there are definitely individuals who are great tzaddikim and who have strong *emunah*, but most of the *tzibbur*, even those who are Torah and mitzvah observant, are lacking in the *sheleimus* of *emunah* — because the yetzer hara blinds and bribes them.

### Torah as an Antidote for Middos Rectification

The *eitzah* is as Chazal say (*Kiddushin* 30b), “I created the yetzer hara; I created the Torah as an antidote to it.” The Torah is only an antidote while a person is learning, but if there’s a time when he could be learning and he lazes off and does not learn, and he is unaware of the importance of and the ecstasy inherent in Torah, that is a sin — so how could his Torah be an antidote? After all, once again, there’s a sin of *bittul* Torah. This is what Chazal told us (Yerushalmi, end of *Brachos*), “If you leave Me one day, I will leave you for two days.” If you waste one hour, I will leave you for two hours.

One must constantly keep these ideas in mind. When a person lives like this, he is a different person. He has no *sinas chinam*, no jealousy, and no *bittul* Torah. These are the two primary matters a person should focus on: *middos*

*toivos* and Torah. The more one engages in Torah, the better *middos toivos* he has!

The *Nefesh HaChaim*, Shaar 4, quotes the Rosh in *Nedarim*: What is called ‘*Torah lishmah*’? When one learns because it is interesting, and he enjoys the learning. Sometimes it seems that there are other things that are interesting, but you disregard them and you sit and learn! And don’t feel bad that you “lost out” on those other pleasures, because the pleasure of learning Torah is more important and more pleasurable than everything else. And this is what we ask for in “*V’haarev na Hashem Elokeinu es divrei Torascha b’finu*, And please Hashem, sweeten the words of your Torah in our mouths.” We ask to feel the sweetness, we ask that Torah should be appealing and enticing, and that Torah should be sweet for us. This is called *Torah lishmah* — learning out of pleasure and sweetness.

And this is the most important thing: learn Torah with sweetness — each person according to his *kochos* — as much as possible, with good *middos*.

It’s true that sometimes good *middos* go against one’s natural inclinations, and people have an urge to get angry and hate others. That’s why we have *mussar sefarim* that can educate us and forge a path, based on one’s emotional strengths. *Mussar sefarim* teach us how to overcome our natural inclinations, how to refrain from getting angry and from hating others. The *baalei hamussar* give advice with *chochmas hanefesh*; all the *mussar sefarim* explain these points at length. Anyone who invests efforts in these matters rectifies the sin of the Churban and brings the *geulah*, because he no longer has *sinas chinam*!

## פניני אבות

### בור סוד שאינו מאבד טיפה — How To Remember Your Learning

**Avos 2:8: Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai had five [primary] talmidim... He would enumerate their praises. Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkenos is like a cemented vessel that does not lose even one drop.** That is, Rabbi Eliezer was praised for his memory; he had a very good memory — like a cemented vessel that does not lose even one drop. I heard the following question from Rav Benzion Bruk *ztvk”l*: *Lichorah*, when someone is born with a good memory, that’s a natural talent, so why is Rabbi Eliezer being recognized and praised for it?

It seems that having a good memory is really not enough. If a person’s mind is not focused on Torah, he won’t remember his learning. It’s known that Maran Rav Chaim Kanievsky *[shlita]* is constantly careful not to let his mind fill up with anything other than Torah. Chazal say regarding physical desires (quoted in *Tosfos, Kesubos* 104a) that before a person davens that *divrei Torah* enter his body, he should daven that delicacies should not enter his body. The same is true regarding one’s memory: in order to remember Torah, a person must be engrossed in Torah; it must be “*kol hayom hi sichasi*, all day long I converse in it.”

However, we know from the Gra that a person also needs to converse a little in *devarim beteilim* — this is how he explains the  *mishnah’s* statement that Torah is acquired with *mi’ut sichah*, minimal speech. He explained that this has a positive connotation — a person actually needs to speak a little *devarim beteilim*, *mi’ut sichah*, so that he could be calm and relaxed.

It once happened that a certain *talmid* in yeshivah began to be careful about speaking *devarim beteilim*. He tried not speaking *devarim beteilim* for a day or two, but then he said he just couldn't bear it any longer, and added that he felt like he wasn't a person. I told him that a person certainly must speak a little bit of *sichah beteilah* — it's like eating and drinking, which is required nutrition and is not considered *bittul Torah*.

On the other hand, however, the *pasuk* states (*Tehillim* 119:97), "It is my conversation all day long." The *mefarshim* explain that it's possible for a person to converse only in Torah all day long. *Lichorah*, we just explained that one needs *mi'ut sichah*, so how can it be "his conversation" all day long?

The answer is in the words of the *pasuk*: "it is my conversation," which means the Torah itself is the conversation, and serves as conversation for a person. The way to reach this level is as the beginning of the *pasuk* states, "How I love Your Torah!" That is, when someone has tremendous *ahavas Torah*, and feels the sweetness of Torah, then it becomes "my conversation" — Torah can serve in lieu of another sort of conversation.

This is because "conversation" is light talking, a type of speech that one does not have to work hard for. The same is true regarding *divrei Torah*. If a person is engrossed in his learning, he speaks *divrei Torah* without having to invest effort, and even his regular conversations revolve around *divrei Torah*. In this manner, we can explain Chazal's statement (*Sukkah* 21b): Even the mundane conversation of *talmidei chachamim* requires study — because it is Torah too. All the conversations of *talmidei chachamim* are influenced by the Torah, so that's why the *pasuk* states, "It is my conversation."

Therefore, in order to be a "cemented vessel that does not lose even a drop," having a good memory is not enough. One needs an additional *maalah* — and that is: being engrossed in *divrei Torah*!

(Keness for Yeshivas Nachlas Binyamin, Adar 5767 [2007])

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Another time he explained this idea further:

In *Pirkei Avos* they enumerated Rabbi Eliezer's praise that he was a "cemented vessel that does not lose even a drop" and he remembered everything. We need to explain why this is considered praise. After all, praise means saying something complimentary about something a person did and created on his own, such as what is mentioned about Rabbi Yosi HaKohen, who was a *chassid* (pious), and Rabbi Shimon ben Nesanel, who was a *yarei cheit* (feared sin) — those are praises, because those attributes depend on them and their choices. But the fact that Rabbi Eliezer was "a cemented vessel that does not lose even a drop," was part of his nature — he was born with a good memory. What's the praise here?

I heard someone explain as follows: A "cemented vessel that does not lose even a drop" also depends on the person's choices and is also considered a *maalah*, because why doesn't he lose even a drop? Because his learning makes an impression on him. It's a principle: you don't forget things that make an impression on you, because it's interesting and you are amazed by it. *Lehavdil*, when it comes to worldly matters, there are certain stories and absurdities that people remember. Sometimes, you'll hear a joke and you'll remember it forever, because something that makes an impression on you stays in your memory. But you forget about serious matters that you don't enjoy.

It depends how much you enjoy a certain thing and what type of pleasure it gives you. You will remember more clearly things that cause you great excitement, and you'll be less likely to remember the things that don't excite you. [On a different occasion, he added: It says in *Tehillim* (119:93), "I will never forget Your precepts, for through them, You have given me life." The Chasam Sofer explains that this *pasuk* hints to us how to remember and not to forget your learning: if "through them, You have given me life" — if a person feels that he lives through *divrei Torah* and enjoys them — he will remember his learning. It's like what we've heard Rav Shmuel Rozovsky *ztlk"l* saying a number of times, "*Dos iz doch mamesh 'ah mechayeh*!" It's part of human nature that a person remembers what he enjoys and things that make an impression on him.]

This is the *maalah* they said about Rabbi Eliezer: he was a "cemented vessel that does not lose even a drop," meaning, he had tremendous curiosity and pleasure in attaining Torah knowledge, and it had such an impression on him, that he could not forget it. **How is one zocheh to this attribute? By ahavas Torah, and through middos tovos and ayin tovah. Because then one's nefesh is clean and his neshamah is pure, and Torah makes an impression on him and attaches itself to his neshamah.**

Related at the beginning of the *daily shiur*, 3 Tammuz 5770 (2010)

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