

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 • **Bamidbar - Shavuos 5785**

619

A Sichah Delivered in Yeshivas Ponevez

on the First Night of
Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah, Sivan 5765 (2005)

The Primary Zechus for Success — Deveikus in Torah

It is almost Shavuos, Zman Matan Toraseinu. We are now beginning the Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah, which are very special, auspicious (*mesugal*) days. As we know, if a person has a lot of *deveikus baTorah* during the Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah, it is a *segulah* for success in Torah throughout the entire year. As the *sefarim* write, Shavuos itself is also a Day of Judgment regarding Torah, and the level of *hatzlachah* a person will merit on this Yom HaDin is based on the amount of *zechuyos* he brings along with him on this day.

What are the *zechuyos* for *hatzlachah* in Torah? It’s certainly simple that the first thing is *deveikus* in Torah — as much as a person clings to Torah and is connected to Torah, that is the greatest *zechus* for continued *hatzlachah*. It’s as Chazal say (*Yoma* 38b): “One who comes to be purified is helped” — the same matter with which he “comes to be purified,” is what they will help him achieve. When one comes to be purified with Torah, he is given help to succeed in Torah.

Middos Tovos and Minimal Pleasures

But there are other things that are necessary for success in Torah. We learn in *Pirkei Avos* (2:12), “Correct yourself to learn Torah.” That is, a person must rectify himself to learn Torah. However, the *mishnah* does not explain what is the required correction for success in Torah.

Rabbeinu Yonah explains: “Correct yourself to learn Torah” — through *middos tovos*. Because a person with good *middos* is “corrected,” he is “rectified.”

Rabbeinu’s Second Yahrtzeit 10 Sivan

Rabbeinu ztvk”l’s second *yahrtzeit* falls out on the Friday after Shavuos. Every year, on the *yahrtzeit* of Maran the Ponevezer Rav, ztvk”l, Rabbeinu would deliver a *sichah* and arouse the *talmidim* to strengthen themselves and increase *zechuyos l’illui nishmaso*. What follows is the *sichah* he delivered in 5775 (2015).

If the Rav would be with us, what would he tell us? The Rav is now in Yeshivah shel Maalah, in Gan Eden, and what does he want from us? It’s simple: As much Torah as possible, as much as possible! He would demand from us; he would tell us: Maintain all the yeshivah’s *sedarim*, because *chizuk* of Torah takes place through *chizuk* of all the *sedarim* in yeshivah: come to davening on time, and then a *sefer* of *limud haTorah* on time, and then *mussar* on time.

Mussar seder gives every single one of us the strength and training regarding how to behave throughout the day. It educates us regarding all our actions, speech, and thought — what to do, what not to do, what to say, what not to say, what to think, what not to think. *Mussar* gives a person the path and the *chizuk* to use all his *kochos* for doing what he’s obligated to do, to merit *chayei shaah*, temporal life, and *chayei Olam*, Eternal life.

Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 104a), a son brings his father merit. The good deeds a son does brings merit to his father. Additionally, if someone influences others to do *maasim tovim*, whatever those people do as a result of his influence confers merit on him! And even if he’s already in the Olam HaEmes, as it states “*Ba’mesim chofshi*” (see *Shabbos* 30a), and cannot do anything else, he still has *maasim tovim* continuing due to the *koach* of his *hashpaah*. And he continues to receive more reward. He is not an “*omeid*,” he is a “*holeich*.”

Talmidim can give *zechuyos* to their rebbi, and all the Torah that is learned in this yeshivah gives the Ponevezer Rav z”l the merit of Torah, and he’s waiting for it! He’s waiting for you to give him more *zechuyos*, more Olam HaBa, and more Torah in yeshivah shel Maalah! He’s waiting for us to give him this, and we are obligated to do so. It’s also a great *zechus* for us, as *talmidim* who were influenced by him, to merit increasing *zechuyos* for the *mashpia*!

Without good *middos*, he is “out of order,” he is not corrected, and he is like a different person. This is the explanation of “correct yourself”: Be corrected and perfected through good *middos*, as they are the necessary prerequisite for success in Torah.

Rabbeinu Yonah explains further: “Correct yourself” — minimize pleasures. This concept of minimizing pleasure is also related to *middos*, because the body naturally is drawn after pleasures and relaxation and it wants to enjoy itself. Even a person who has good *middos bein adam lachaveiro* and never hurts or harms anyone, and is not arrogant or seeking honor either, he still enjoys pleasures and delicacies.

The body actually needs a small measure of pleasures in order to be sustained, but if a person “aspires” to attain pleasures and is drawn after his love of pleasures, his state of “correct yourself” is lacking and he has not reached the proper state of being rectified for Torah. Chazal have already told us (ibid. 6:4), “This is the path of Torah: eat bread with salt...” That is, one must not aspire to attain physical pleasures.

These two matters, *middos tovos* and minimizing pleasures — not aspiring to attain physical pleasure — are the two essential matters of “correct yourself.” This is how a person becomes “rectified” and perfected and ready to merit Torah.

Torah Is an Antidote to Overpower Nature

The truth is, this way of life is against human nature. The body naturally wants pleasures and wants to rest; it wants to eat and drink and it wants all the other physical pleasures as well, enjoyment that our nature aspires to and urges us to attain. This same characteristic applies to *middos* as well — humans naturally have aspirations for

superiority and honor, for goading and boasting, so how is possible for us to defy our nature and become rectified and perfected in these matters?

The simple, famous answer is, as Chazal say (*Kiddushin* 30b), “I created the *yetzer hara*, and I created the Torah as an antidote to it.” That is, through *deveikus* in Torah, through the *koach* of Torah, things change. The more *deveikus* one has in Torah, the more his nature changes and his *middos* change, and his love of physical gratifications fades away. When a person has *ahavas Torah* and *mesikus haTorah*, it refines his

soul! Indeed, the soul then aspires for something else — it knows that Torah is the greater pleasure.

Without Torah, Nothing Can Subdue the Yetzer

Actually, a while ago, someone from the south of Eretz Yisrael came to talk to me. He told me that it’s hard for him to overpower his *yetzer hara*. He said he knows about Gehinnom, but it still does not help him! His *yetzer hara* is still active. He also said that there had been a time when it was easier for him to overcome his *yetzer hara*, but lately, it’s become difficult again, and he’s very worried about himself.

I asked him: How did things suddenly change? What happened lately? He thought about it, and then told me that he had previously been very engrossed in his learning. Now, he is experiencing a *rifyon* in Torah, and he’s no longer engrossed in his learning. I told him, If so, it’s simple. When there is a *rifyon* in Torah, there is no solution against the *yetzer hara*. We need Torah! I encouraged him to return to his learning, to strengthen himself in Torah once again and become engrossed in his learning. He has not come back since then; apparently, he understood the message and strengthened himself in Torah.

Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah on Friday and Shabbos

In 5781 (2011), Shavuot fell out on a Monday, as it does this year. Rabbeinu told the following to the *talmidim* of Nachlas Chaim from Beiter Illit who came to visit him on Thursday night, the first night of *Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah*:

We are now beginning *Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah*. Shavuot will be on Monday, and *Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah* are on Friday, Shabbos, and Sunday. It’s known that anyone who increases his *esek haTorah* over *Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah* will merit *hatzlachah* the entire year. The more a person is engaged in Torah over these days, the greater *zechus* he has for success in Torah all year round.

Now, it ends up being over Friday and Shabbos; time is usually wasted over Friday and Shabbos. We must be *osek baTorah* and use the time wisely, and learn as you should even on Friday and Shabbos.

I knew about children who learned eighteen hours over Friday and Shabbos without making great investments. They ate, slept, and learned, and out of those 48 hours of Friday and Shabbos, they managed to learn for 18 hours, without any overworking.

Now it’s the *Sheloshes Yemei Hagbalah*, which are a *segulah* for success in Torah the entire year! *B’ezeras Hashem*, may you be *zocheh* to much *hatzlachah*.

This shows us the power of the *middos* and inclinations of human nature. Without Torah, it is impossible to overpower them — that can only happen through Torah. On one hand, without good *middos*, one's Torah is not *b'sheleimus*, but on the other hand, without Torah, it's impossible to overcome the *yetzer hara* and acquire good *middos*. Each one is dependent on the other. That's the reality.

Focusing on Desires Hinders Success in Torah

The truth is, the connection between *middos tovos* and success in Torah is written explicitly in Chazal. We also see that it's the reality. It's also the spiritual nature: more *deveikus baTorah* accords a person *middos tovos*, and good *middos* gives a person success in Torah. That's how HaKadosh Baruch Hu created a person's soul.

It's also true that there is a natural, comprehensible side to the fact that *middos tovos* help a person succeed in Torah and that bad *middos* hinder his success in Torah. After all, the Gemara's words are well known (*Avodah Zarah* 19a), "A person can only learn Torah where his heart desires to learn." A person will only have success in Torah if he learns where and what he wants to learn. The Gemara there relates that even the Tanna Levi, who learned Torah under Rabbeinu HaKadosh, wanted to learn *Mishlei* when Rebbi was learning *Tehillim* with him. *Tehillim* was not a "*libo chafetz*" learning, and he told Rebbi, "You gave me permission to stand up," meaning, Levi cannot continue learning Torah from Rebbi if he teaches Levi something he doesn't want to learn.

Rashi explains the reason for this: It's because "his heart is focused on his desire." That is, when he was learning *Tehillim*, he was thinking about *Mishlei* and he wanted to learn *Mishlei*. This "desire" was a kosher desire. It was not a physical desire; it was a *taavah* for Torah — he wanted to learn *Mishlei*. But since this desire was real and he had an inclination and aspiration to attain it, he couldn't remain focused on his learning. Why? Because his heart's desire disturbed his concentration and hindered him from remaining connected to what Rebbi was teaching him — even though Levi was a Tanna! And Rabbeinu HaKadosh was his *rebbe*! Even so, *hatzlachah* in Torah is not possible if one learns something he does not want to learn. In such a case, there's automatically an aspect of *bittul Torah* included; he learns with a little *batalah*, and his Torah is not *b'sheleimus*.

And this was the reality even when "his heart is focused on his desire" was actually a desire of Torah,

and it was the Tanna Levi. *Kal va'chomer*, if a person harbors other desires and aspirations in his heart, such as a desire for honor, superiority, physical pleasures, or any other aspirations, if "his heart is focused on his desire," then while he learns Torah, he definitely also has a desire for his physical aspiration, and it's simple that *hatzlachah* in Torah is not possible in this manner. And this is a natural reason. So aside from the fact that this is the natural spiritual reality, there's a natural reason for this as well.

Success in Torah — Only If There's No Batalah

There's another thing that one must be very careful about — being attracted to *devarim beteilim*. First of all, it is *assur* to speak *devarim beteilim*, as Chazal say (*Yoma* 19b), "ודברת בם", And speak in them" — speak about them and not about other matters. Although, the Gra teaches us that one needs a little *miut sichah*, "minimal speech" — the amount needed for *yishuv hadaas*. However, anything beyond what is necessary is already *devarim beteilim*. Chazal say about this (*Avos* 3:10), "Children's chatter, and sitting among the ignorant remove a person from this world." Idle talk removes a person from this world; it's a contradiction to Torah, because it's *batalah* and it is harmful. Success in Torah is not possible when *batalah* is present.

This is because the concept of *hasmadah* in Torah is no less important and necessary than the concept of *middos tovos*. In the same *mishnah* that Chazal tell us "Correct yourself to learn Torah," they say immediately afterward: "for it is not an inheritance for you." Rabbeinu Yonah explains: "You will not acquire it if you do not toil in it; for it is not like a parental inheritance that a son receives without toiling." Anyone who plans on acquiring Torah as an inheritance will not know anything. You have to learn with *hasmadah* and toil in Torah. Even if someone has good *middos*, he should not rely on his good *middos*, because if *batalah* is present, there is no *hatzlachah* in Torah! If a person learns with diligence and *hasmadah* without *batalah*, only then will he have *hatzlachah*.

This is tried-and-true: if someone is not completely connected to Torah — if certain times and parts of his day involve *batalah* which is not part of the essential need for his required "*miut sichah*" — he will not succeed in Torah, neither in *havanah* nor *yediah*, because his *התקן עצמך*, "correct yourself," is incomplete. The correction, the rectification, does not only apply to one's *middos* or his essence, it also applies to *hasmadah* in Torah.

No Batalah — the Level of Rabbanan

This concept has halachic ramifications as well. The Gemara says (*Bava Basra* 8a), “*Rabbanan* do not require guarding.” This is referring to expenses for guarding the city — there was a city tax to pay for the guards, and every resident was required to pay the tax. However, “*Rabbanan*” do not require guarding, because their Torah protects them, and their Torah also protects the entire city. Therefore, they are exempt from paying this tax.

The Rosh there writes (*siman* 26): Who is called *Rabbanan*? “It seems that a *talmid chacham* who has a trade or does a little business in order to support himself minimally, and not in order to become wealthy, and whenever he is free from his business dealings, he reviews *divrei Torah* and learns *divrei Torah*, it is considered that ‘his Torah is his occupation.’”

That is, even if someone must spend some time working to support himself, as long as he’s only working “to support himself minimally” — to cover whatever it takes for his sustenance — and he spends the rest of his time learning, and is not looking for wealth, and does not have the yetzer hara of lust for money; as long as he is working only as much as is needed and spends the rest of his time learning and engaging in Torah, he is also called “*Rabbanan*” and he too, protects the city and is exempt from paying the guard tax. This is a halachah in *Shulchan Aruch*. (See *Yoreh Deiah*, *siman* 243. However, the Rema writes there that this only applies to a *talmid chacham* who knows how to deal in Torah and understands, on his own, most places in Gemara and its commentators. The Chazon Ish writes similarly in *Emunah u’Bitachon* chap. 3, see there. See also *Teshuvos Maharshdam*, *Choshen Mishpat*, *siman* 361.)

We can infer that the opposite is true as well. Even if someone learns full time and does not go out to work, if he wastes his time and does not “review *divrei Torah* and learn *divrei Torah*” whenever he has an available moment, he is no longer called “*Rabbanan*”! And he must pay the guard tax, because he does not protect the city. It is possible that someone who learns less than he does, actually protects him. Because the quantity of learning is not what counts here; *batalah* is the deciding factor. If there is *batalah* — even if he learns for a long time — his *batalah* changes his prestige and his *maalah*, and he no longer can be called “*Rabbanan*.” He receives a different title and a different essence.

Rabbanan Influence the Entire World

Regarding who can be called “*Rabbanan*,” we find that on one hand, it depends on his *deveikus baTorah*, as we explained, but we see that it also depends on *middos*. The Gemara there (*Bava Basra* 8b) mentions a number of *pesukim* about *dayanim*, *gabba’ei tzedakah*, and *melamdei tinokos*, who are *mezakei harabbim*, *mashpi’im* and *mechanchim*. They bring merit to the public through their Torah and *chessed* and we cannot fathom the magnitude of their reward. The Gemara attributes the following *pasuk* to them: “And the wise ones will shine like the brightness of the sky and those who bring the multitudes to righteousness [will shine] like the stars forever and ever.”

The Gemara continues: “And what about *Rabbanan*?” Rashi explains: “*Talmidei chachamim* who are engaged in Torah constantly, what is written about them?” *Lichorah*, *Rabbanan* are not *mezakei harabbim*. after all, they are not *tzedakah* collectors, and they don’t teach children — so what’s said about them? The Gemara tells us that the following is said about *Rabbanan*: “But those who love Him, shall be like the sun when it goes forth in all its might.” That is, they will receive an exponentially great reward, as Tosfos explains there.

In other words, we cannot fathom the value of the *madreigah* of *Rabbanan* compared to the other *mezakei harabbim* — *Rabbanan* are so much greater! Because “*Rabbanan*” is someone who has reached perfection in Torah, so when he learns and engages in Torah, it’s not only beneficial for him; it also has a *hashpaah* on his surroundings. Just as he personally does not need a guard to protect him from worldly troubles, in the same manner, he bestows a spiritual *hashpaah* on his surroundings and benefits the entire world. Therefore, we cannot fathom the magnitude of his *madreigah*.

“Those Who Are Insulted and Do Not Retaliate”

The *pasuk* the Gemara attributes to *Rabbanan* “like the sun when it goes forth in all its might,” is mentioned in another Gemara (*Gittin* 36b) regarding *sheleimus in middos*. They said, “Those who are insulted and do not retaliate, who hear their shame and do not respond in kind, who perform out of love and rejoice in suffering, about them the *pasuk* says: ‘And those who love Him shall be like the sun when it goes forth in all its might.’” “Those who are insulted and do not retaliate,” that is, the reason they do not respond with an insult is not because they are unable to, because if they would be unable to answer back, that would not be considered

a *maalah*; however, even when they are capable of insulting their insulters, they do not, because they have *middos tovos*!

Similarly, “those who hear their shame and do not respond in kind” means that even if they could respond, they choose not to, due to their *middos tovos*. Now, the truth is, when one has such good *middos*, they simply “can’t” respond because their good *middos* prevent the *koach* of evil and negativity — the very nature of responding and answering back and insulting.

“Those who perform out of love and rejoice in suffering” means that even their suffering does not make them sad and they are *sameiach b’chelkam*, happy with their lot, even when it involves suffering. I once met an old man who had terrible pain in his feet — and he was happy about it. He told me: This pain is so wonderful! Because he understood that it was for his benefit, apparently it was a *kapparah*. After all, everything is from *Shamayim*, and “whatever the Merciful One does is for the good” (*Brachos* 60b). It’s like an operation. If someone needs surgery, then even though it’s painful, it is the cure and it is life-saving. So too, a person who believes with complete *emunah* that “whatever the Merciful One does is for the good,” and as Chazal said (*Taanis* 21a), “*Gam zu l’tovah*, this too is for the good,” he will automatically rejoice in his suffering!

And it’s about people like this that the *pasuk* says, “But those who love Him, shall be like the sun when it goes forth in all its might.” They are on the same *madreigah* as *Rabbanan*, because *Rabbanan* are also on this *madreigah*; they also have these good *middos*: they don’t insult back, they don’t respond in kind, and they rejoice in their suffering. And about people like this, the *pasuk* states: “But those who love Him, shall be like the sun when it goes forth in all its might”! And once again, we see the connection between Torah and *middos tovos*.

Kabbalas HaTorah — One’s Nature Should Match Torah

Chazal say about Kabbalas HaTorah (*Avodah Zarah* 2b), “The *pasuk*, ‘And He said, “Hashem came from Sinai, and He shone forth from Se’ir to them, He appeared from the mountain of Paran.” Why did he come from Se’ir, and why did He come from Paran? Rabbi Yochanan says, This teaches us that HaKadosh Baruch Hu went to every single nation and none of them wanted to accept the Torah, until He came to Yisrael and they accepted it.” That is, before Matan

Torah, HaKadosh Baruch Hu gave all the nations the opportunity to accept the Torah. The Midrash tells us (*Sifrei, V’zos HaBrachah*) that they asked: What’s written in it? And HaKadosh Baruch Hu answered them, Do not murder; Do not commit adultery; Do not steal. And they replied: If so, we cannot accept it.

Someone asked me once: All these *mitzvos* — Do not murder; Do not commit adultery; Do not steal — are part of the Seven Noachide Laws, and they were already obligated to observe them. So why did it bother them to accept the Torah, if in any case they were already obligated to keep those *mitzvos*?

The explanation is very simple. When Hashem said, “Do not murder” at Kabbalas HaTorah, that meant they would not have the “nature” of murder. Some people enjoy murdering; there is a nature like that. Just as there are those who enjoy *ona’as devarim*, using words to pain another person, and they enjoy embarrassing their friends; there is also a nature of enjoying murder, *Rachmana litzlan*. This nature is prevalent among non-Jews.

I heard from my father, *ztkv”l*, a story that took place in Russia many years ago, when regular transportation still hadn’t been instituted. People would travel from place to place with a horse and buggy, and there was also a “sleeping cabin” in the wagon. A Jew traveled with a non-Jewish wagon driver — the two were friends. He fell asleep during the ride, but woke up suddenly. He saw the non-Jew standing next to him, and then the *goy* started kissing him. The Jew asked him, “What’s this all about?” And the non-Jew told him, “A tremendous miracle just happened. While you were sleeping, I suddenly felt a strong urge to kill you and I almost did. But right then you woke up, and I recalled our friendship and your life was saved.” That is a *goy’s* nature; they have a lust for murder, as the *pasuk* states, “You will live by your sword.” Esav’s entire vitality comes from murder, and he enjoys it.

That’s the essence of the Torah’s commandment, “Do not murder.” It doesn’t only mean that murder is prohibited; it means that your nature will be transformed; you will become incapable of committing murder and you won’t enjoy it! Similarly, “do not steal” is a commandment regarding one’s nature; it’s saying that a Jew’s good *middos* will be so natural that stealing will be against his nature. And this is the preparation for Kabbalas HaTorah — instilling *middos tovos* in one’s nature.

Non-Jews cannot accept this, because it’s against their nature. Even though “do not murder” and “do not

steal” are included in the Seven Noachide Laws, and they have a prohibition against “acts” of murder and robbery, but to go so far as to turn it into their nature? They can’t bear that; it’s contrary to their nature. The person for whom this behavior goes against his nature is incapable of accepting the Torah, because *Kabbalas HaTorah* and *deveikus baTorah* is not possible if a person’s nature is not suitable for Torah. A person’s nature must suit *dinei Torah*, and *dinei Torah* includes good *middos*. If a person’s nature opposes good *middos*, it opposes *dinei Torah*. So someone whose nature is opposed to good *middos* cannot forge a connection to Torah. That’s the rule.

Other Nations’ Jealousy at Kabbalas HaTorah

The Midrash tells us (*Yalkut Bamidbar* 684) that when Bnei Yisrael received the Torah, the other nations were jealous that Yisrael had become closer than they had. That is, even though they couldn’t accept the Torah, they were still jealous that Klal Yisrael had received the Torah. They weren’t upset that they did not receive the Torah, they were just upset that Klal Yisrael had merited receiving the Torah. This is the negative side of jealousy — when a person is not upset about what he is lacking, but he does not *fargin* the other person, he is not happy with their success or good fortune. They were jealous of Klal Yisrael, they were jealous of their good fortune, that they had merited *kirvas Elokim* — because even the *goyim* know that there is a *maalah* in *kirvas Elokim* and they are jealous of it!

The Midrash continues: HaKadosh Baruch Hu closed up their mouths and told them: “Bring me your *Sefer Yuchsin*, your book of lineage, as the *pasuk* states, ‘Bring to Hashem the families of nations,’ just as My children bring: ‘And they declared their lineage according to their families.’” [In another place, it explains: Klal Yisrael has more *maalos* and better *middos* than the other nations do, as they can trace their lineage to their father’s family. Every family knows their *yichus*, while the other nations commit adultery and have lusts and cannot trace their *yichus*. Therefore, they are not worthy of receiving the Torah.]

The Midrash continues: When Bnei Yisrael came to Shittim, and they began to commit adultery with Bnos Moav, the nations of the world rejoiced and said: The crown that they possessed has been taken from them. The praise that Klal Yisrael had been special and chosen is now nullified; they are our equals! If there is

adultery among Klal Yisrael, they are like the other nations who don’t have *Sifrei Yuchsin*, and their praise and *maalah* is nullified. The other nations rejoiced that Klal Yisrael was now equal to them and they no longer had a reason to be jealous of them. Klal Yisrael’s *maalah* was now diminished.

Divine Supervision over Klal Yisrael’s Purity

The Midrash continues: When they had almost fallen completely, Hashem raised them up. Hashem sent a plague on anyone who had become impure and restored Klal Yisrael’s *taharah*. That is, HaKadosh Baruch Hu straightened up Klal Yisrael and strengthened them after the sin of Bnos Moav. The *chizuk* was accomplished through the plague that hit anyone who had ruined himself. Not only was the plague a punishment for the sinners, it was a tool for purifying Klal Yisrael! It is possible that the sinners themselves had some *zechuyos* that would have kept them in Olam HaZeh, but HaKadosh Baruch Hu killed them in the plague in order to bring about a *tikkun* for Klal Yisrael.

These are *Shamayim*’s ways. Klal Yisrael have the *zechuyos* to have their purity restored, as the *pasuk* states (*Devarim* 31:21), “For it shall not be forgotten from their children” — Torah will always remain among Klal Yisrael and they will continue to cling to Torah. If there is any suspicion, *chas v’shalom*, that Klal Yisrael might descend from their *madreigah* and not be connected to Torah, then HaKadosh Baruch Hu will find solutions how to reinstate their purity.

Now, this is in respect to Klal Yisrael as a whole; *Shamayim* promises to reinstate its purity. However, regarding each Jew as an individual, it is dependent on his *zechuyos* — it depends on how many *zechuyos* he has regarding his connection to Torah, his *middos tovos*, and his *hasmadah* and *deveikus baTorah*.

And *baruch Hashem*, we are part of a *tzibbur* that is already strengthened in these matters — in *middos tovos* and *hasmadah* in Torah. We just have to know and feel what our *chashivus* is — we have to be aware of the fact that we have *deveikus baTorah*, and we have *middos tovos* — and we have to strengthen ourselves in these areas even further. And our *chizuk* will have an influence on those people who need to improve themselves and be strengthened in these matters.

צבעניינא דיומאס

Before Shavous 5782 (2022), a group of *bachurim* from the Amudei Eish *chaburah* in Yeshivas Tchernobyl came to Rabbeinu and told him about their learning *sedarim*. Rabbeinu praised them, and then added: **Learn mussar as well; mussar sefarim, sifrei chassidus, there are a lot of chizuk sefarim that are beneficial for strengthening emunah and yiras Shamayim.**

They asked for an *eitzah* for *shidduchim*, and Rabbeinu advised them to strengthen themselves in this list of *zechuyos*:

1. Learn five minutes of *mussar* a day.
2. *Shemiras HaLashon* — don't speak critically about others.
3. Give every person the benefit of the doubt — *dan l'kaf zechus*.
4. Don't have a *hakpadah* on anyone.
5. If someone has a *hakpadah* on you, appease him.
6. Recite a few *perakim* of *Tehillim* every day.
7. Daven for others who need the same *yeshua* that you need.

Then they asked to hear *chizuk* in preparation for Shavuos, and Rabbeinu delivered the following fundamental, short comments:

Mainly, people need *chizuk* after Shavuos. They have to know “*ashrecha baOlam haZeh*,” you are fortunate and content in this world, can only happen if “*baTorah atah ameil*,” you toil in Torah, as it states in *Pirkei Avos*, chap. six: “This is the path of Torah, eat bread with salt, and drink measured water, and if you do so, you will be fortunate and content in this world and it will be good for you in the world to come.” That's the *derech* of Torah, with bread and salt and measured water — with minimal pleasures, which is also one of the 48 acquisitions of Torah: *miut taanug*, minimizing pleasures. Then you will be fortunate and content in this world!

You have to be aware of this: only Torah gives a person happiness and contentment in this world; money is nothing. Nothing. And it has already been decreed on Rosh Hashanah, “who will be poor, and who will be rich.” Therefore, it's very important to know how to live — to have more and more Torah, another minute and another minute. You shouldn't have any time free of Torah. This is the *deveikus* in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, as they say in the Zohar, “Kudsha Brich Hu, and Torah, and Yisrael are one.” *Deveikus* with HaKadosh Baruch Hu can only take place along with Torah. More than with *tefillah*. That's what it says in the *sefarim*, that Torah is greater than *tefillah*. And *b'ezras Hashem*, may you be *zocheh* to “*ashrecha baOlam haZeh*.”

Dedicated by the Kroll Family, Los Angeles

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בתורה וביראת שמים

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