

במחשבת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar
Rosenbaum shlita**

Acharei -Kedoshim

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The Three Pillars of the World

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן בְּקִרְבָּתָם לְפָנָי ה' וְגו' (טז,
(8)

And Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of the two sons of Aharon when they came close before Hashem... (16:1)

“Toameha” of Yom

Kippur:

This Parshah is read on Yom Kippur, and it is known that when we read the *kiryah* of a specific day, it elicits the influences of that day. In this vein, it is related that Rav Osher of Stolin zy”a would become very emotional when reading Parshas Acharei Mos, to the extent of almost falling to exhaustion. It is said that the explanation of this is that when a person cooks a food, he takes a taste to see if it is ready to be eaten. So too, we “take a taste” of Yom Kippur on this Shabbos. In other words, it is a “*toameha*” of Yom Kippur.

Punished For Silence:

The Medrash states that when Iyov saw the death of Aharon’s two sons, he said (Iyov 37:1): “For this too does my heart tremble.” The Chida *zt”l* (Sefer Nachal Kedumim) explains by citing the Gemara (Sotah 11A) that says that Pharaoh had three advisors – Bilaam, Iyov, and Yisro. When Pharaoh suggested the plan of enslaving the Jews, Bilaam promoted the idea and, as a result, was killed. Iyov was silent, and, as a result, he was punished with suffering. Yisro fled and was rewarded.

Iyov thought that he had done nothing wrong by remaining silent and he would not be punished for this. However, when he saw the death of Aharon’s two sons, he realized that he had been mistaken. This is as the Gemara says (Sanhedrin

52A) that the reason the two sons of Aharon were punished was because Moshe and Aharon were walking on the road, with Nadav and Avihu walking behind them and the rest of the nation behind Nadav and Avihu. As they walked, Nadav said to Avihu, “When will these two old men die already so that you and I can lead the nation?”

We see that Nadav spoke while Avihu remained silent but both of them were punished. This is proof that one can be punished for silence. When Iyov saw this, he realized that he also was liable for his silence and he said that he too had to tremble for what he did.

This is an important lesson. **A person can be punished for remaining silent when he should speak out. There is a time to be silent and a time to speak up** and protest against a wrongdoing.

Gentle Rebuke:

Although one must speak up and rebuke his friend on occasion, it should be done in a gentle way. For this reason, the Torah warns us (Vayikroh 19:17): “You shall surely rebuke your friend and he should not carry a sin.” Rashi explains this to mean that one should not carry the sin of shaming his friend in public.

Similarly, Sefer Hachasidim (Siman 54) writes that because Aviya ben Rechavam chastised Yeravam in public in order to embarrass him, he died before his set time. **Even though he was protesting for the honor of Hashem, since he did it in public and shamed Yeravam, he was deserving of punishment.**

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ וְאַל יָבֹא בְּכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּגְו' (טז, ב)

And Hashem said to Moshe: Speak to Aharon your brother and do not come at all times to the Kodesh... (16:2)

Geulah without Chevlei Moshiach:

Sefer Ateres Yeshua explains this *pasuk* by relating that when the Magid of Kozhnitz zy" a would read the verses of the Tochacha and he would come to the *pasuk* (Vayikroh 26:31) that says: "V'hashimosi es mikashichem" (and I will make desolate your temples), he would say, "May Hashem make this come true very soon."

This seemed very puzzling. Why would we want a *pasuk* that speaks of destruction to come true?

The Ateres Yeshua explained by citing the words of Chazal (see Menachos 110A and Tosafos ibid, as well as Zohar Hakadosh, Chelek 3, 33A) that "Michoel the Kohen Gadol stands and

sacrifices the *neshamos* of Yisroel and they serve as a pleasant fragrance for Hashem like *korbanos*." It is also known that when Yidden are killed in sanctification of Hashem name, it creates a pleasant aroma for Him. Accordingly, the Magid was saying that the *pasuk* means that the concept of Yidden being destroyed will become desolate and will no longer exist and Hashem will no longer receive this pleasant fragrance, and he davened that this should come true soon.

Chazal say that the deaths of the sons of Aharon was also a *Kiddush Hashem*, as is stated (Shemos 29:43): "And it will be sanctified for My glory." Chazal (Zevachim 115B) understand this to mean that Hashem is sanctified through those who

glorify Him, meaning the holy sons of Aharon. The Medrash also says (Vayikroh Rabbah 12:2) that Moshe told Aharon, “I thought that the house would be sanctified through either me or you. Now I see that they were bigger than us.”

With this in mind, the Ateres Yeshua explains the *pasuk* as saying that after the *Kiddush Hashem* made by the death of the sons of Aharon, Hashem said not to come at any time to the *kodesh*. The words “*al yavo b’chal eis*” have a *gematriah* of 572, which is the same numerical value as the word “*ikvas*” (the footsteps), which is a hint to the *ikvesah d’meshicha*. Thus, the *pasuk* is saying that the redemption should be soon and it should come about without the deaths of any holy people or any *chevlai Moshiach*.

Tzedakah Not Only For One’s Family:

The Saraf of Strelisk zy”a quotes the Gemara (Kesuvos 50A) that says: “Do *tzedakah* at all times. (Tehillim 26:3)” This refers to one who financially supports his sons and daughters.

He says that one might try to exempt himself from helping others by saying that he has already fulfilled his obligation to give *tzedakah* by supporting his family members. To counter this claim, the verse says that one should do *tzedakah* “at all times”, meaning that in addition to helping one’s family, one must help others as well.

The Satmar Rov zy”a once asked a wealthy man to give a certain sum for a specific *tzedakah* cause. The man responded that all his *maaser* money went to supporting his sons and sons-in-law, who were

exceptional *talmidei chochomim*, and he had nothing left for anyone else. The Rov told him, “The Torah says (Devarim 16:11): ‘And you shall rejoice before Hashem... you and your sons and your daughters and your servants and maidservants, and the Levi who is in your gates, and the convert and the orphan and widow who is in your midst.’ Rashi explains: ‘The four that are Mine are in accordance with the four that are yours. If you make Mine happy, I will make yours happy.’ (The *pasuk* mentions four people who are part of one’s household: sons, daughters, servants and maidservants, and four that are ‘Hashem’s’: Leviim, orphans, widows and converts. This indicates that if one takes care of Hashem’s people, He will take care of his people.)”

The Rov asked, “Why does it say that a person has to bring joy

to his servant and maidservant? Why isn’t it enough to bring joy to his sons and daughters (sons-in-law) who are *talmidei chochomim*? We see from here that **one must also bring joy to others, even if they are not related to him.** If one does this, Hashem promises to ensure that ‘his people’ will always be happy.”

The opposite is also sometimes true. There are some people who distribute money to the poor and needy but neglect their own relatives. This too is not a good *middah*. One must help his family members, in fulfillment of the Torah’s words that “you shall not abandon your flesh”, and also give funds to others.

In this vein, it is related that a man told the Satmar Rov that he gave a lot of money to *tzedakah* but not to his poor brother because he did not get along with him. The Rov told him,

“The same *yeitzer hara* that persuades you to give *tzedakah* to others so that you can attain *kovod* persuades you to ignore your brother because no one will know about it and you won’t get any honor.”

בְּזֹאת יִבְאֶה אַהֲרֹן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּפֶרֶךְ בֶּן בָּקָר לְחַטָּאת וְגו' (טז, ג)

With this Aharon shall go to the Kodesh, with an ox the son of a cow for a Chatas...

Mesiras Nefesh Numerous Times:

(16:3)

As is well known, a Magid would come from Shomayim to study with the Bais Yosef *zt”l*. This Heavenly Magid revealed to him numerous times that he was destined to die *al kiddush Hashem*.

Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz *zy”a* quotes his father, Rav Yehoshua of Belz *zy”a* as asking his father, The Sar Shalom of Belz *zy”a* why we don’t find that this ever occurred. It seems that the Bais Yosef died peacefully, and was not killed *al kiddush Hashem*. The Sar Shalom answered that the Bais Yosef

was *moser nefesh* and gave over his soul to Hashem numerous times; however, Hashem had mercy on him and allowed him to live.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh writes that when the *pasuk* says that the sons of Aharon died “when they came close to Hashem”, this means that they had such *dveikus* to Hashem that their souls left their bodies. However, the *pasuk* says about Aharon that he should go to the Kodesh “with this”, meaning with this same level of *dveikus* and *mesiras nefesh*, but he was promised that Hashem would have mercy on him and he would not die.

The Torah is Holier Than All Else: not equal the holiness of Torah.

The Gemara (Horios 13A) states that a *mamzer* who is a *talmid chochom* takes precedence over a Kohen Gadol who is an *am ha'aretz* to make the first *bracha* on the Torah. This is learned from the *pasuk* (Mishlei 3:15) that says that Torah is more valuable than "*peninim*" (pearls), which is understood to mean that it is more valuable than a Kohen Gadol who enters "*lifnei u'lifnim*" (to the innermost place, i.e., the Kodesh Hakedoshim).

Rav Yisroel Salanter *zt"l* would say that the Kohen Gadol is the holiest person in Klal Yisroel, Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year and the Kodesh Hakedoshim is the holiest place on earth. **Yet even when all three of these things are placed together, they do**

The Value of One Word of Torah:

The Alter of Kelm *zt"l* said that it would have been worthwhile for Hashem to create the world and sustain it for six thousand years just for one Jew to say the words "*boruch hu u'baruch shmo*" one time. And the recitation of "*boruch hu u'baruch shmo*" one thousand times does not equal the greatness of one recitation of "*amen*". And the recitation of "*amen*" one thousand times does not equal the greatness of one recitation of "*amen yehei shmei rabbah.*" **And the recitation of "*amen yehei shmei rabbah*" one thousand times does not equal the greatness of one word of *limud haTorah.***

כְּתָנִת בַּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ וּמְכַנְסֵי בַד יִהְיוּ עָלָיו בְּשָׂרוֹ וְגו' (טז, ד)

He shall wear a holy linen shirt and linen pants shall be upon his flesh... (16:4)

Wearing Weekday Clothing to Remember to Ask for Gashmius:

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a explains that the Kohen Gadol is on an extremely lofty spiritual level when he enters the Kodesh

Hakedoshim on Yom Kippur and, therefore, is apt to forget to daven for the nation’s physical and material needs. Therefore, he is commanded to wear weekday clothing to remind him to pray for these things.

וּשְׁמֶרְתֶּם אֶת חֻקֹּתַי וְגו' אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתְּם הָאָדָם וְחֵי בָהֶם אֲנִי ה' (ית, ה)

And you shall guard my laws and my statutes that a person should do and live by them, I am Hashem. (18:5)

Doing Mitzvos With Enthusiasm:

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 74A) states: “*V’chai bahem*. And live by them’ – and not die by them.” Rav Moshe of Kobrin zy”a explains this to mean that **all of one’s Torah and mitzvos should be with “*chiyus*”, enthusiasm.** One should not “die with them”, meaning that Torah and mitzvos should not be lifeless and unenthusiastic.

The Ropshitzer Rebbe Healed a Cripple:

Rav Yankele of Pshevorsk zy”a related the following story in the name of the Shinover Rebbe zy”a:

The Ropshitzer Rebbe zy”a once traveled to the city of Stavnitz to attend the wedding of his grandson, Rav Mendele of Glogov zy”a, who was marrying the daughter of the author of

Sefer L'Shamayim zy" a.

In the city of Stavnik, there lived a man who had been crippled for ten years. The Ohr L'Shomayim advised him that he should lie down on the ground in the path of where the *mechutanim* would walk on their way to the chuppah. When the *mechutanim* – the Ropshitzer Rebbe and the Ohr L'Shomayim – were one their way to the chuppah, the Ropshitzer Rebbe saw the man lying on the ground and thought he was playing a joke on them. He tapped him with his cane and said, "Get up and run away from here."

The man immediately stood up and ran away. This miracle created a big commotion. When the Ropshitzer Rebbe heard the commotion, he asked what was going on, and the Ohr L'Shomayim told him, "This man has been crippled for many years and he is now fully healthy

and able to walk!"

When the Ropshitzer Rebbe heard this, he locked himself in his room for three days, refusing to come out, because he always was careful to avoid having the miracles he performed publicized and now, without realizing it, he had performed a wondrous act in front of a large crowd.

On the topic of fleeing from publicity, it is related that well-known and well-respected Rov once came to the Steipler Gaon *zt"l* and told him that he was suffering a lot, both in terms of *ruchnius* and in terms of *gashmius*. The Steipler told him, "You are very famous. And it is known that fame leads to *tzaros!*"

The Prayers of Righteous Women:

It is related that the daughter

of Rav Yaakov Emden *zt"l* went to the market one Friday morning to buy fish for Shabbos. She found a large fish and happily bought it, thanking Hashem for sending it her way. She then added a prayer, "Hashem, thank you for sending me this nice fish. Please also send me a good guest to share this fish with!"

And so it was. In the afternoon, the great *tzadik*, Rav Yitzchok of Drohovitch *zy"l* (father of the Magid of Zlotchov *zy"l*) appeared at her door. No one recognized him and he did not tell them who he was, but from his appearance they could tell that he was a holy man. They received him with much honor and asked him to be their guest for Shabbos.

After Shalosh Seudos, Rav Yitzchok made a "*She'elos Chalom*" to ask why he was sent to this specific house and what he was meant to rectify in this

place. The answer he received was that he didn't need to fix anything. The reason he was sent was because the woman of the house was of holy lineage and was the daughter of a great *talmid chochom*, in addition to being a *tzadekes* in her own right. She had davened for an honorable guest for Shabbos to enjoy her fish and he had been sent in answer to her prayers.

After Melave Malka, Rav Yitzchok left the house, escorted by the family members. He then told them that they shouldn't utter such prayers in the future, as they had caused him the trouble of traveling a long distance to spend Shabbos with them.

From this story, we can learn the power of *tefillah*. They can break through the Heavens and be accepted immediately.

Emunah:

The Magid of Zlotchov zy”a had a student named R’ Shmuel. He once told this student to travel to the home of a man named R’ Avrohom, who would teach him what true *emunah* is.

It was a three-day journey to the city where R’ Avrohom lived. When R’ Shmuel arrived, he found that R’ Avrohom lived in a large, fancy house. He wondered how he could learn about *emunah* from a wealthy man who seemed to have everything he could desire. Why would it be difficult for a person who experiences no suffering to have *emunah*?

R’ Avrohom took him into the room where he conducted his business and opened his wallet and all of the drawers. R’ Shmuel saw that they were all empty. There was no money anywhere. He asked R’ Avrohom for an

explanation and the man told him, “That is my entire fortune. I have nothing. Whenever I need money, Hashem sends it to me. Whenever I am offered a business deal, I sign onto it, and I rely on Hashem to send me the funds I need.”

R’ Shmuel stayed there overnight. In the morning, he saw two men come to the house to ask R’ Avrohom to pay back a debt of 5,000 rubles that he owed them. R’ Avrohom greeted them warmly and said, “Wait here. I will go into my office to get your money.”

R’ Shmuel followed him to see where he would get money from. He saw R’ Shmuel enter the room, take out a siddur, and begin to daven. Suddenly, he heard knocking on the door. A man came into the office and handed 10,000 rubles to R’ Avrohom, asking him to hold the money for him and saying he

could use it for the time being. R' Avrohom then went back to the men he owed money to and repaid his debt.

R' Shmuel now understood why the Rebbe had sent him there. **He saw what it meant to have pure *emunah* every moment of one's life.**

Parshas Kedoshim

דַּבֵּר אֶל כָּל עֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ וְגו' (יט, ב)

Speak to the entire assemblage of Yisroel and say to them: You shall be holy..."
(19:2)

The Torah Speaks in Relation to Three Levels:

The Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk zy"ra once traveled to spend time in the healing spas to drink from the waters which were known to be therapeutic. On Shabbos, a number of Maskilim who were also spending time there came to the Rebbe's *seudah* and asked him to tell them some nice *divrei Torah*.

The Rebbe recognized that their intentions were bad. They wanted to mock him and the

Torah. Therefore, he began to deliver an incisive *drasha* that he knew would enter their hearts and silence their mockery.

He began by noting that the Parshah uses the words "*ani Hashem Elokeichem*" three times. It says: "You shall be holy... I am Hashem, your G-d", "A man shall fear his mother and father... I am Hashem, your G-d", and "Do not turn to the sorcerers... I am Hashem, your G-d." He asked: Why are these words reiterated three times? Why aren't they just said once after all three mitzvos are listed?

He answered that the Torah is directing these words towards three distinct types of Jews: *tzadikim*, *beinonim* (mid-level people), and *reshaim*. Furthermore, the word “*tzibur*” is an acronym for “*tzadikim, beinonim, reshaim.*” This teaches us that one who gives a *drasha* to a *tzibur* has to address all three types of people.

The *pesukim* are addressing these three types of people. It first speaks about *tzadikim* who work on making themselves holy and even are “*mekadesh atzmo b’mutar lach*” – they sanctify themselves by refraining even from permitted things. Hashem tells them to “be holy because I, Hashem your G-d, am holy.” It then speaks to *beinonim* and tells them to at least honor their parents and keep Shabbos and to remember that “I am Hashem, your G-d.” Finally, it speaks to *reshaim* who don’t

even keep those mitzvos and says to at least not turn to sorcerers. At the very least, it tells them, don’t “*shmad yourself*” and remember that “I am Hashem, your G-d.”

Everyone on His Level:

The Yismach Yisroel quotes Rav Yitzchok of Vorka *zy”a* as explaining that **the Torah is telling everyone to serve Hashem on their own level, and not to try to jump to a level that is above them.** It says to “be holy” as you are, maintaining the level of *kedusha* that you currently are on, and not to try to push ahead to a level you have yet to attain. This is as *tzadikim* say: “You cannot fall from the ground”, meaning that if you don’t try to climb higher than you are able to climb, you will not have a downfall.

One Should Accustom Himself to Say That “I Am Holy”:

The Medrash (Rabbah 24:9) states: “‘You shall be holy.’ You might think like Me; therefore, the *pasuk* states: ‘Because I am holy.’ My holiness is higher than yours.” The Ruzhiner Rebbe *zy”a* explains that every Jew should say “I am holy because I

am a Jew.” If we constantly say that we are holy, we can keep away the *yeitzer hara*. **Whenever it tries to lure us to sin, we should repeat that we are holy and, therefore, it is unfitting for us to sin. And when the *yeitzer hatov* tells us to do a mitzvah, we should say that we are holy and, therefore, we should do it.**

לֹא תִגְנוֹבוּ וְלֹא תִכְחָשׁוּ וְלֹא תִשְׁקְרוּ וְגו' (יט, יא)

You shall not steal. You shall not deny falsely. You shall not lie, one man to his fellow. (19:11)

The One Who Sees is Also a Thief:

The Ibn Ezra states: “Why is ‘*signovu*’ in the plural? Because one who sees and is silent is also a thief.”

Lo Signovu... For Important People:

It is asked why in the Aseres Hadibros, the command of “*Lo*

Signov” is in the singular, whereas in this *pasuk*, the command of “*Lo Signovu*” is in the plural. A tongue-in-cheek answer is said that “*Lo Signov*” refers to kidnapping. Only lowly people would kidnap another person. Therefore, we refer to them in the less distinguished, singular tense and say “you” should not steal (*du zalsst night ganvenen*). “*Lo Signov*” refers to stealing money, which is done

by important, respected people. Such people are referred to with the more honorable, plural tense, and are told “you shouldn’t steal” (*ihr zalsht nisht ganvenen*).

A *shochet*, who was also a big *talmid chochom* and *yarei shomayim*, once came to Rav Yisroel Salanter *zt”l* and said that he wants to leave his profession because he is afraid of the responsibility of ensuring that everyone’s meat is fully kosher. Rav Yisroel asked, “So

what will you do for *parnassah*?”

The man answered, “I will open a store.”

Rav Yisroel told him, “You are scared to be a *shochet* but this only involves one potential prohibition, that of *neveilah*. If you open a store, you will have to worry about many prohibitions, such as theft, jealousy, cheating customers, lying, having bad scales, etc.”

וְלֹא תִשָּׁבְעוּ בִשְׁמִי לְשָׁקֵר וְחִלַּלְתָּ אֶת שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְגו' (יט, יב)

You shall not swear falsely by My Name, thereby profaning the Name of your G-d....
(19:12)

Do Not Swear Falsely:

The Ben Ish Chai (Drashos, Parshas Mishpatim) relates the following story of how his grandfather, Rav Moshe Chaim, saved a man from swearing falsely:

Two men once came to Rav Moshe Chaim for a *din Torah*,

with each one claiming that the other was lying. With his wisdom, he realized which man was lying and understood that the man was prepared to swear falsely. He told that man, “You think I am going to make you swear on a Sefer Torah. That isn’t what I’m going to do. I’m going to make you swear with

the ‘Shnei Luchos Habris!’”

Rav Moshe Chaim then said to his *shamash*, “Quick, bring the Shnei Luchos Habris!”

The unlearned man had no idea that “Shnei Luchos Habris” is the name of a sefer (the sefer of the Shlah Hakadosh). He thought that the Rov was going to make him swear on the actual

luchos that Moshe brought down from Shomayim. He got very scared and said, “I don’t want to swear. I will pay.”

The Rov replied, “You can’t do that. You have already obligated yourself to swear.”

The man then admitted that he was lying and said the truth.

לֹא תִקְלֹל חֵרֶשׁ וְגו' וְיִרְאַתָּ מִמְּאֻלְקֵיךָ אֲנִי ה' (יט, יד)

Do not curse... and fear your G-d. I am Hashem. (19:14)

A Curse Destroys the Curser:

The Ran (Drashos HaRan, Drush 12) asks why the Torah only says that it is forbidden to curse a deaf man. Isn’t it forbidden to curse anyone?

He answers that the Torah is teaching us an important lesson. It is understandable why it is forbidden to steal or hurt someone else, as the Torah doesn’t want anyone to suffer.

One might think that this is why it is forbidden to curse someone, as this would cause that person to feel pain. If this were true, it should seemingly be permitted to curse a deaf person, as he cannot hear the curse and won’t be insulted.

However, the Torah does forbid cursing a deaf man. The reason for this must be that although the one being cursed won’t be harmed, the one

uttering the curse will. **The Torah is concerned for the curser because he is destroying his own *neshama* by spewing vitriol against someone else.**

Therefore, one should accustom himself to forgive others and not to speak badly about anyone, even if the person

cannot hear what is being said about him. We also see from here that the prohibition to steal or to hurt someone else is also for the benefit of the thief or the damager. The Torah knows that such actions harm the soul and avoiding them can only benefit a person.

לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ עוֹל בַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְגו' בְּצִדְקָה תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתְךָ (טו, טז)

You shall commit no injustice in judgment...you shall judge your fellow with righteousness. (19:15)

Judging Favorably:

On the topic of judging others favorably, it is related that Rav Zelmele of Volozhin *zt"l's* shirt was stolen one erev Shabbos while he was in the mikveh. Rav Zelmele did not say a word. He simply put on his coat and went home.

asked him where his coat was. He answered, "Someone must have accidentally put on my shirt, thinking it was his."

She then asked, "If so, why didn't you put on that person's shirt?"

He replied, "What could I have done? He also forgot to leave his shirt there!"

When he got home, his wife

לֹא תִשְׁנֵא וְגו' הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֶטְא (יז, יח)

You shall not hate... You shall surely rebuke your fellow and you shall not bear a sin on his account. (19:17)

Rebuke That Will be Accepted:

It is stated in Sefer Hachasidim that **if one rebukes his friend and the friend doesn't listen, the rebuker takes the friend's *zechusim* from him.**

The Chida *zt"l* (Sefer Bris Olam) uses this concept to explain the *pasuk* as saying that one is obligated to rebuke his friend if he sees him doing an *aveirah*. However, he should not "bear a sin on his account", meaning that he shouldn't deliberately give the *mussar* in a way that it won't be accepted because he wants to take his *zechusim* from him. Rather, one should give *mussar* in a gentle way so that his friend will accept it and change his ways.

Rebuke in an Honorable Way:

The *pasuk* (Mishlei 9:8) says: "Do not rebuke a scoffer, lest he come to hate you. Rebuke a wise man and he will love you." The Shlah Hakadosh explains this to mean that one should not rebuke someone in a demeaning way. One should not rebuke him by telling him that he is a scoffer and is guilty of terrible sins. If one speaks to a person this way, that person will surely come to hate him and won't accept the *mussar*.

Rather, one should treat his friend like a wise and good man. He should tell him that he is so smart and good that it is unbecoming for him to sin. Such words will be well-received. The one being gently rebuked will love you for speaking to him this way and he will accept the *mussar*.

He explains this *pasuk* in the same manner. The Torah is saying that when one rebukes his

friend, he should not “bear a sin”, meaning that he shouldn’t focus on his sins and tell him how bad he is. Rather, he should tell him that he is a good person and such conduct is unbecoming of him.

Rebuke Oneself and Then Others:

The Toldos Yaakov Yosef (Parshas Vayeilech) quotes the Baal Shem Tov *zy”a* as saying that a Torah leader must first rebuke himself before rebuking others. He explains that a generation follows the lead of its leaders. If they create a good atmosphere, the general public will be free of sin. If they do not, others will follow their negative example. Therefore, if a Torah leader sees people committing *aveiros*, he must realize that he is somewhat to blame.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is

saying: “*Hochiach*” – first rebuke yourself. “*Tochiach es amisecha*” – and only then may you rebuke others. “And you shall not bear a sin” – do not ignore your own sin and only chastise others.

Even if Only One Person Accepts the Rebuke:

The Chofetz Chaim *zt”l* once encouraged a Magid Meisharim by telling him that he should not be disheartened if it seems like almost no one is listening to his words of *mussar*. He should not think that he is working in vain, as even if one person gets the message and does *teshuva*, it is all worth it.

He compared this to noblemen who spend a lot of time and money on hunting trips. Sometimes, they spend days in the forest searching for prey and still come home emptyhanded.

Still and all, they continue to do this because they know that if they can catch one bear or one deer, it is all worth it for the pleasure they get from that catch.

So too, he said, you may think that very few people listen to you, but you must remember that if you catch one R' Dov or one R' Tzvi, and get him to do *teshuva*, it is all worth it.

לֹא תִקֶּם וְגו' וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמִוֶדְךָ אָנֹכִי ה' (יט, יח)

You shall not take revenge... you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am Hashem.
(19:18)

Rejoicing for One's Friend:

Sefer Ohr Yitzchok (Avos, Perek 3) asks how one can be expected to fulfill this mitzvah. If one buys himself a new coat, does he also have to buy one for this friend? How can anyone be expected to buy coats for everyone he knows? Furthermore, a poor man can't afford to do this, so how could the Torah command him to do something he cannot do?

He answers with a *moshol*: There once was a father who had several sons, all of whom caused

him tremendous grief. One of them had been arrested and was locked up in jail, another was sick, another had stolen from him, and another had no children. The father was greatly pained by the fact that all of his sons had so many problems, and he felt incredible pain and compassion for each one of them as an individual. Of course, each son was suffering due to his own problems, but their pain didn't come close to the pain the father felt for each son.

We are all children of Hashem, as is stated (Devarim 14:1):

“You are children of Hashem, your G-d.” Therefore, we cannot even imagine how much pain He feels as a result of the various forms of suffering His children endure, and how much pleasure He gets when His children succeed.

The mitzvah to love one’s friend like himself does not mean to give him whatever you have, as we are commanded not to give away more than one-fifth of our possessions to others (Kesuvos 50A). Rather, it means that **we should genuinely and sincerely desire for them to be successful and to be happy.** If one’s friend makes money, he should be as happy as if he himself made money. If one’s friend suffers a loss, one should be as upset as he would be if he himself suffered that loss. If one’s friend is in need, he should daven for him as much as he would if he himself were in

need.

The Mitzvah is For One’s Own Benefit:

One should realize that this mitzvah is for his own benefit. If one cannot feel happy for his friend’s success, he is only harming himself.

Chazal say (Avos 4:21) that “jealousy, desire and honor remove a person from this world.” It is clear that it is easier to feel bad for a person in a dire situation than to feel good for a person who is successful. When a person is going through a hard time, everyone wants to help him, but when a person is doing well, it is very hard not to be jealous.

If one is able to bring himself to rejoice with the success of others, it will be for his benefit as he will not feel bitter or angry

and he will enjoy life more.

Hashem Treats People the Way They Treat Others:

Why does this *pasuk* end with the words “*ani Hashem*”?

The Baal Shem Tov Hakadosh *zy”a* notes that Dovid Hamelech compares Hashem to a shadow (Tehilim 121:5). A shadow always mimics the movements of the person. So too, Hashem always acts towards us the same way we act towards Him. Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that one should love his friend like himself because “I am Hashem”, and I will act lovingly towards you if you act lovingly towards others.

One Who Considers Himself Lowly Loves His Friend:

The Sar Shalom of Belz *zy”a* explains how one can truly love his friend like himself by saying that **if one is humble and lowly in his own eyes, it is not hard to love his fellow Jews.** If one believes that his friends are better than himself, he won’t think that he deserves wealth or honor more than they do, so he won’t be jealous of them and he will be able to feel happy for them.

The letters immediately after the letters of the word “*reacha*” (your friend) spell “*shafel*” (lowly). This indicates that if one chooses to go after his friend by considering himself lowly and unworthy, he will be able to love him like himself.

Hating Oneself and Loving One’s Friend:

One year on Parshas Kedoshim, a *chasid* of the

Kotzker Rebbe hid behind his door to listen to how he reads this Parshah as he does “*shnayim mikrah v’echad targum*”. When the Rebbe reached the words “*v’ahavta l’reacha komocha*”, the *chasid* heard him say them in a questioning way: “And you shall love your friend? Huh? Like yourself?”

After a short pause, he heard the Rebbe say, “Yes. Like yourself!”

The *chasid* didn’t understand. He asked the Rebbe’s close *chasid*, Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Tomachov *zy”a* for an explanation, and Rav Hirsch Tzvi explained: “The Rebbe was asking himself: How can the Torah command someone to love himself ‘like himself’? Is it permitted to love yourself? Kotzk teaches that loving oneself leads to laziness, dishonesty, and other bad *middos*. His answer was that the Torah is saying that

one is obligated to love his friend as much as he is obligated to hate himself. Just like one must completely dislike himself, he must completely love his friend.”

A Small Klal and a Big Klal:

Rav Shlomo of Zhvil *zy”a* once asked his *shamash*, R’ Eliyahu Roth *zt”l*, “It is stated in the Torah that loving one’s friend like oneself is the ‘*klal gadol*’ (big rule) in the Torah. This infers that there also is a ‘*klal koton*’ (small rule) in the Torah. What is the *klal koton*?”

He answered, “If you hear that an esrog merchant is being very successful, **the *klal koton* is not to begrudge him.** You wouldn’t want someone to begrudge you of your success, so you shouldn’t do the same to anyone else. **The *klal gadol* is that not only should you not be upset at his**

success, you also should be happy for him.”

In this vein, the Kotzker Rebbe (quoted in Siach Sarfei Kodesg, Parshas Mishpatim) would explain the verse (Shemos 22:30): “*V’anshei kodesh tihiyu li*” (you shall be holy people to

Me) by saying, “You shall serve Me by making your human tendencies holy.” In other words, the main way to serve Hashem is to overcome one’s inborn tendencies of jealousy and hatred towards others, and to treat everyone nicely and kindly.

The Yahrzeit of Rav Tzvi Hirsch ben Rav Nissan Chaim of the Kretchnifer Rebbe Zy”a

16 Iyar 5666

The Three Pillars of the World:

In honor of the Yahrzeit of my grandfather, the Kretchnifer Rebbe zy”a, which falls on the 16th of Iyar, we shall relate the words said by my father, the Kretchnifer Rebbe *shlita*, on a Yahrzeit several years ago:

My grandfather, Rav Mordechele of Nadvorna zy”a, told his sons, “There are *tzadikim* whose *kochos* are for Torah, there are *tzadikim* whose *kochos*

are for *avodah*, and there are *tzadikim* whose *kochos* are for *gemilus chasadim*. My father (Rav Ber’chi of Nadvorna zy”a) was connected with all three of these like a “*dovnia*” (a kind of heavy plank that was used in those days to level the roads).”

The same can be said about my father zy”a. He used his *kochos* for all three of the pillars that the world stands upon.

The Mishnah in Avos states: “The Anshei Knesses Hagedolah

said: Be pleasant in judgment and establish many students and make ‘fences’ for the Torah. Shimon Hatzaiik, who was from the remnants of the Knesses Hagedolah, would say that the world stands on three things: on Torah, on *avodah* and on *gemillus chasadim*.” We may ask what the connection is between these statements.

The explanation is as follows: After Klal Yisroel went into *golus*, much Torah was forgotten, as is seen in Sefer Ezra. Therefore, the Chochomim placed much emphasis on Torah study in order to “return the crown to its glory.” For this reason, they said that one should establish many students.

After the glory of Torah was returned to Klal Yisroel, Shimon Hatzadik said that while it is true that one should have many students, the world does not stand on Torah alone. It also

needs *avodah* and *gemillus chasadim*. The world stands on three pillars, and it needs all three of them to remain standing.

My father, the *tzadik* and *kadosh*, utilized all his strength for all three of these things. He delivered many Torah *shiurim* – on Chumash with Rashi, Gemara, Shlah Hakadosh, Tanya, Chofetz Chaim, etc. He did not suffice with learning on his own. Rather, he used his *kochos* to teach others as well.

He also put much effort into his *avodas hatefillah*, putting much *chiyus* into his davening. Until today, there are many people who credit him with inspiring them to daven with enthusiasm and vigor.

Regarding the pillar of *tzedakah*, he distributed a lot of funds in secret. It is unknown how much he *tzedakah* he gave out because he wanted to do it

l'sheim shomayim, to the extent that no one knew that he was giving so much. Rav Mattisyahu Rubin *shlita* told me that he was my father's *shliach* many times for this mitzvah. In addition to the large sums my father sent to those immersed in Torah, he also gave a lot of money to simple, poor people. During the month of Adar, he would distribute no less than 2,000 shekel to the poor every day.

I once met Rav Shlomo Volpe *shlita*, a well-known Rov in Rishon L'Tzion, at a *simcha* in his city. We did not know each other and he asked where I was from. I told him that I am from Kfar Ata, and he asked me if the Kretchnifer Rebbe was my father. When I said that he was, he told me, "Let me tell you a story about your father that you don't know."

He related, "When I was a bochur, I was very involved in

communal needs. In the years after the war, many child survivors were brought to Eretz Yisroel and all their needs had to be cared for. I heard that there was a nice community of frum Yidden in Kfar Ata and I went there to try to collect some money for this mitzvah. I was walking in the street in Kfar Ata when I heard loud screams emanating from a shul. I ran in to see what was wrong and I saw a young man standing in front of the Aron Kodesh reciting Sefiras Ha'Omer in a loud, tearful voice. I was amazed by his passion and enthusiasm. It took him 20 minutes to recite the *tefillah* of 'Ribono Shel Olam'.

"I waited until he finished and then gave him 'shalom'. He asked me why I had come to Kfar Ata and I told him why I was collecting money. He asked me if I had a place to eat and sleep and I told him that I knew

no one in the city and I had nothing. He personally hurried to bring me supper and prepared a bed for me.

“I had already seen that he knew how to daven but I also wanted to know if he knew how to learn. I had learned in Ponovezh and I was a *lamdan*, so as I ate supper, I told him a *devar Torah*. He got into it right away and had a deep *pilpul* with me. I then saw that he knew both how to daven and how to learn.

“The next morning, I went out to try to collect some money from the people in town. When I returned, he asked me if I had been successful. When I said that I hadn’t collected much, he explained that the residents of Kfar Ata were mostly poor war survivors who didn’t have a lot of money. He then told me, ‘Go to Chaifa. I will write you a note to give to R’ Simcha Fuchs.’

“I took his note to R’ Simcha *z”l*, who immediately took 60 pounds out of his wallet and gave it to me, as your father asked him to do in the note. In those days, most working men made about 20 pounds a month, so this was a lot of money.

“I thus saw that your father excelled in davening, learning and in *chesed* in unbelievable ways!”

In truth, there have been many *tzadikim* who put all their strength into all three pillars of the world. One example of such a *tzadik* was Rav Chaim of Sanz *zy”a*. Even in later generations, there were people like this, such as the Satmar Rov *zy”a*. But what was unique about my father was that he knew how to do each thing in its perfect time and in the perfect way. He knew when to focus on learning and when to focus on davening. He knew whom to give *tzedakah* to and

how to give it. When he saw that it was time to focus on Torah, it was as if nothing else existed in the world. When he saw it was time to focus on any specific part of *avodas Hashem*, he treated that thing as if it were Hashem's only command, and there was nothing else besides for it.

Whenever he davened, it was as if this was the first *tefillah* he ever said, with as much passion

as if it were his first time ever davening. At this time, nothing else existed besides for *tefillah*. And when he immersed himself in the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, it was as if this was the only thing in the world.

May his memory be a blessing for all of Klal Yisroel.

The Rambam Writes About Those Who
Bring Joy to Widdows and Orphans

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Joy to These Unfortunate
Souls Is Comparable to
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