

As we begin our regular schedule of serving *Hashem* on a "normal weekday," we must attempt to keep the light and warmth of *Tishrei* burning strong. To help us facilitate this, a new sub-section of this *Halachah* column entitled "The Weekly Chizuk" will be introduced. This is an attempt, based on the words of *Chazal* and the *Sifrei Mussar*, to allow the "would-be climber" a practical approach to self-improvement. Experience has proven that the following points assist an individual to "make it work":

- 1) Work on one specific item at a time for a week to thirty days. Do not try to do too much all at once.
- 2) Make it a "small step" as opposed to a huge overhaul. ("Small step" could mean simply fitting in easily with one's schedule and circumstances. Often these "small steps" can change a person's entire level of *Avodas Hashem*.
- 3) (This quite possibly may be the most important point.) Whatever you do, do it together with a friend. Ask each other in person or over the phone, every few days, "Did you remember to do it?" or "Did you follow through?" If one is doing a *Shabbos* improvement program, let him be in contact with his friend at least once a week.
- 4) If possible, organize a larger group (10 - 12 people) who meet each month to discuss how to improve themselves.
- 5) Write down your goals and what you wish to accomplish.

6) Some people find a "Reward/Penalty" system effective, i.e. rewarding oneself with a special *Shabbos* food when one excels, or penalizing oneself by donating money to *tzedakah* when he "slips" during his self-improvement process.

7) Changing one's attitude by studying once a week about the six "constant" *mitzvos* (חיוב תמיד), as explained in the **Sefer Hachinuch**, and quoted on the first page of the **Mishna Berurah**, in **Biur Halachah**.

Of course, all these things should be done *bli neder* (Reserving one's right of never having to do so), as *Mitzvah* habits done without this stipulation may be considered Rabbinic "vows." Some of these improvement points are actually halachic obligations which really do need to be observed every day, and not simply a good "habit."

WEEKLY CHIZUK # 1

On Friday afternoon, a person must be careful never to work right up until the last minute. This is a safeguard so as not to do work after sunset and to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Tosfos Shabbos*. Ladies should try to *bentch licht* at precisely the right time for 4 weeks straight and men should attempt to be in shul on time, or even early, for *Mincha*. In truth, this is in fulfillment of the fifth of the six "constant" *mitzvos*; To fear *Hashem* and not come to sin. Being מחזק - *strengthening*, oneself to refrain from sinning is true *Fear of Hashem*.

הוא היה אומר...

R' Ephraim Shlomo Luntzitz ZT"L (Kli Yakar) would say:

"Why doesn't the *Torah* state after the creation of man, 'כי טוב' - *It was good*,' as it does after all the other things created during the six days? Because every other creature was created complete, with its nature and instincts ready to be applied to the world. Man, however, is given free will and the responsibility for his own development and improvement. Thus, it doesn't state, '*and it was good*' - we must wait and see how man behaves before passing judgment.

R' Yosef Yoizel Hurvitz ZT"L (Alter from Novardhok) would say:

"If a person has to work night and day just to fulfill the curse of 'בזעת אפך תאכל לחם' - *By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread*,' how much more so should he expend time and effort to attain the blessing of '*Blessed is the man places his trust in Hashem*'?"

R' Nachman of Breslov ZT"L would say:

"*Emes* - Truth is singular. There is only one truth. If one tries to divide this truth into a number of separate truths, what he's done is create *sheker* - falsehood!"

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Mitch Kushner on the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Meir Aryeh

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תורה תבלין

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שבת קודש פרשת בראשית - מברכים חודש השון

Shabbos Parshas Bereishis

כ"ט תשרי תשס"ז - October 21, 2006

הדלקת נרות שבת - 5:50 (Monsey, NY) מנחה גדולה / שבת - 1:11

שקיעה של ערב שבת - 6:08 ~~~~~ שקיעה של יום השבת - 6:07

זמן קריאת שמע / מ"א - 9:21 ~~~~~ צאת הכוכבים / מעריב - 6:57

זמן קריאת שמע / הגר"א - 9:57 ~~~~ צה"כ / לשיטת רבינו תם - 7:19

פתח לבי בתורתך

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ וגו' (א-א)
איתא במדרש תנחומא: ילמדנו רבינו, הבונה בית חדש כיצד צריך לברך? כך שנו רבותינו, הבונה בית חדש מברך שהחיינו כדי שיעשה נחת רוח ליוצרו עכ"ל. ויש להבין, איזה שייכות יש לענין זה אל "בראשית ברא אלקים"?

אלא מבאר האדמו"ר מסיגעט, הרה"ק מו"ה יקותיאל יהודה טייטלבוים זצ"ל, בס' ייטב לב, שבכל ענינים, על האדם לכוון מיד בראשית עשיית הדבר לקיים בו את מצות בוראו. כגון כשבונה בית תהיה עיקר כוונתו כדי לקיים בו מצות מזוזה, ומעקה, והכנסת אורחים. וכשקונה בגד תהא עיקר כוונתו לקיים בו מצות ציצית. וע"י מחשבה זו הוא מקיים את המצות עוד לפני שהקב"ה נותן לו במה לקיימן. ועליו נא' "מי הקדימני ואשלם" (איוב מא-ג) - מי שמקדים את מצותי לפני שאני נותן לו את האפשרות לקיים אותן, בודאי שאשלם לו כי מגיע לו שכרו עפ"י הדין.

וזהו "בראשית" - בשביל מי שמקדים את המצות בראשית המעשה, "ברא אלקים" - מדת הדין, כי יכול להתקיים עפ"י הדין ואין זקוק לרחמים, כי "את השמים ואת הארץ" - מפני שהקדים דבר השמימי לדבר הארצי. ולפי"ז והיינו מש"כ המדרש: "הבונה בית חדש מברך שהחיינו" - על שזוכה לעשות נחת רוח ליוצרו, כי עיקר הודאתו צריכה להיות על שזוכה לקיים את המצות התלויות בבית או בגד וכיוצא ב, ולעשות על ידי זה נחת רוח ליוצרו.

ויצא קין מלפני ה' וישב בארץ נוד קדמת עדן (ר-טז)
איתא במדרש: ויצא קין מלפני ה' - פגע בו אדם הראשון. א"ל מה נעשה בדינך? א"ל עשיתי תשובה ונתפשרתי. התחיל אדם הראשון מטפח על פניו. אמר כך היא כחה של תשובה ואני לא הייתי יודע. מיד עמד אדם הראשון ואמר "מזמור שיר ליום השבת" עכ"ל. וכבר אחז"ל (שבת קיח:): "כל המשמר שבת כהלכתו, אפ"י עו"כ כדור אנוש מוחלין לו, שנא' "אשרי אנוש יעשה זאת וכו' מחללו" - אל תקרי מחללו אלא מחול לו ע"כ. ומפרש מרן הגמ"ר יצחק אלחנן ספקטור זצ"ל, בס' עין יצחק, עפ"י דברי ה"ט"ז (אור"ח רמ"ב) שכתב שתשובה לבד אינה מועילה לו לאדם שימחלו לגמרי, אלא כאן נתחדש בגמ' שאם עשה תשובה וגם שומר שבת כהלכתו, מועילה תשובה שיהיה נמחל לו לגמרי. ובכך י"ל שכאשר פגש אדם הראשון את קין בנו, שמע מפיו שנתפטר על חטאו. ומהי הפשרה? כאשר משלם מחצה ועל החצי הנותר מרחיב לו את זמן הפרעון, כדרך הפרשות בעניני ממונות וכדומה, וכדרך תשובה בעבירות חמורות שתשובה מכפרת מחצה, ועל המחצה השני יסורים וגלות ומיתה ממש משלמים את הכפרה. ולכן, חיפש אדם הראשון עצה טובה להשלים את הכפרה. אז אמר "מזמור שיר ליום השבת" - דהיינו, ששמר שבת כהלכתו, שעל ידי כך מתכפר החטא כולו.

clear that he could not even afford to pay for his travel expenses. The determined young *bochur* decided that he would go nevertheless, and with the blessings of his parents and the few coins that his father could spare, he set out for the nearest city.

Over a period of the next two weeks, with no money or means other than his ferocious determination, he hitched, hiked and practically walked all the way to Grodno. Quite a feat for a young teenager with barely a penny to his name. He arrived in Grodno after nightfall and realized that he had nowhere to even spend the night. Exhausted and starving, he decided that if *Hashem* had allowed him to come this far, he would not allow him to fail now.

He located the modest home of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, R' Shimon Shkop, and with what little strength he had left, he knocked on the door tepidly. After a moment, R' Shimon, himself, answered the door and when he saw the young, shivering boy standing on his doorstep, he bade him come inside. The *bochur* entered and told the *Rosh Yeshivah* that he would like to learn in the *Yeshivah*. "I have a '*Shtickel Torah*' (learned discourse) prepared and I would like to tell it over to the *Rosh Yeshivah*."

But R' Shimon would not hear of it. Shaking his head, he told the boy, "It is late and not the time for long discourses. Instead, I would like to ask you two questions." The boy's anxiety level immediately sky-rocketed. Two questions? Why, R' Shimon could ask him a hundred questions and he wouldn't know the answers to any of them! He was not fluent in all the different *sugyos* and only remembered what he had prepared. What are the chances that he would be able to answer the great *Gaon's* two questions? And after all the time and effort he put into preparing his "*Shtickel Torah*"!

R' Shimon gazed at him intently and then said, "These are my two questions: When was the last time you ate a decent meal and when was the last time you had a proper night's sleep?!"

The boy stood there speechless. He couldn't fully digest the words of this holy man and R' Shimon took his silence as an admission. Without a second's hesitation, the elderly *Rosh Yeshivah* led the boy to the kitchen where he prepared a solid and much-needed meal. After the boy ate, R' Shimon took him into his own private room and told him to lay down on the bed. "Believe me," he said softly, "Tomorrow, there will be plenty of time for '*Shticklach Torah*.' Now, you must sleep!"

The old man in the nursing home looked at his young visitor and smiled. "Young man, you must believe me when I tell you. When I learned in Grodno, I must have heard hundreds of *shiurim* from the *Rosh Yeshivah*. I can tell you today, that I do not remember any of them. There is only one thing that I remember from my *Rosh Yeshivah*," the old man mused with a hint of irony. "I will always remember the 'two questions' that he asked me that night!"

משל למח הדבר דומה

והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחושך על פני תהום וכו' (א-ב)

משל: A group of hikers became lost in the forest, in the dead of winter. Night fell and the group was unable to find their way back to the regular path. No matter how hard they searched, they could not locate the correct trail.

At first light, however, one of the hikers called out, "I found it," and immediately pointed out to the entire group, a large straight path that led them directly back to civilization.

As they happily walked back to the encampment, each member of the group wondered aloud, "How could we have missed it? The path was right there

before our very eyes." It was clear, though, that the thickness of the forest, together with the blackness of the night, prevented them from locating the path.

גמסל: Explains the **Chofetz Chaim ZT"L**, the original "חשך" that covered the earth at the time of creation, is compared to עולם הזה, which is steeped in the darkness of sin, foreign religions, and an under-appreciation of *Hashem*, Who controls this earth. But *Hashem* also created "אור" which correlates to עולם הבא. It is so close, it is right there before our very eyes. All we need to do, is banish the darkness in order to attain this wondrous "light" of the *Torah*.

על כן יעזוב איש את אביו ואת אמו ודבק באשתו וכו' (ב-כד)

The *gemara* (יבמות סא:) states: "A man without a wife is living without טובה - goodness." **R' Boruch Epstein ZT"L (Torah Temimah)** expounds on these words and says that the main purpose of marriage between a man and a woman, is for them to live a life of fulfillment, mutual respect and devotion for one another. Otherwise, they are no different than animals who simply drift together out of natural habit.

R' Avigdor Miller ZT"L's doctor gave him the news: The fainting spells he had been experiencing had finally been diagnosed, and surgery was needed. R' Miller did not agree to the surgery immediately, despite the doctor's warnings. But after spending some time thinking it over, he finally agreed to the operation. B"H, the surgery went well, and before long R' Miller was back to his usual hectic schedule.

A few days after the surgery, a prominent *Rov* paid R' Miller a visit and inquired how he felt after the operation. "You know," R' Avigdor remarked, "I had complete faith in *Hashem* that I would be fine, and I really didn't need the surgery. But I decided to go through the operation for my *Rebbetzin's* sake."

He went on to explain that every morning, his wife would wake up early to escort him down the steps on his way to *davening*. She was afraid that her husband might faint and hurt himself. R' Miller shrugged, "I can't practice my *emunah* on my wife's account," he concluded. "So I agreed to have the operation."

"But *Rebbe*, does one has to extend himself so far for his wife - even to the point of undergoing major surgery?" the *Rov* exclaimed.

"For a wife," said R' Miller emphatically, "one must do far more!"

TORAH GEMS

ותאמר האשה הנחש השיאני ואוכל וגו' (ג-יד)

Chazal tell us (שבת קמו:) that the snake took advantage of Chava and "הטיל בה זיהומא" - "Instilled within her a poison." This זיהומא, represents an impurity which we suffer from until this very day. Obviously, this must be an allegorical allusion; how can a snake have physical contact of this sort with a human being and what is the nature of this impurity that she was instilled with?

Explains **R' Simcha Bunim Berger Shlit'a**, *Chazal* teach us: אין אדם עושה עבירה אלא א"כ נכנס בו "A person does not commit a sin unless a air of stupidity enters him." This wave of stupidity and ridiculous supposition is what the snake brought to this world. In his conversation with Chava, his first remark was that *Hashem* disallowed humans to eat from any of the trees in the garden. Chava immediately countered that this is not the case; they were only warned against eating and touching one single tree. The *Medrash* tells us that the snake then pushed Chava into the tree and said, "You touched it and nothing happened. Surely, nothing will happen if you eat from it." But the damage was done. The snake had succeeded in implanting a seed of doubt within her and later was successful in convincing her to eat and give to Adam from the forbidden fruit.

Today, this "Air of stupidity" is still with us and the influence of the snake continues as well. What we see and hear in the media, what we read and observe from the gentile world, all this implants within us seeds of impurity, origins of sin, and assimilation with the ways of the gentiles. It behooves us to see these influences for what they really are: the original זיהומא - impurity of the snake.

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

ויאמר ה' אל קין למה חרה לך ולמה נפלו פניך וגו' (ד-ו)

A young man was in the habit of walking each week to a local Nursing Home to visit and enliven the lives of some of the elderly people there. There was one old man, reputed to be over one hundred years old, who intrigued him and he began making conversation with him. The old man was happy to have someone to talk to and told him over his life story, including a fascinating tidbit from his youth.

He grew up in an Eastern European village to wonderful parents, however, they were extremely poor. His father did his best but could not afford to provide some of even the most basic necessities. When he became old enough, he told his parents that it would be his greatest wish to learn in the big *yeshivah* in Grodno, under the guidance of the great **R' Shimon Shkop ZT"L**. His father had no objections although he made it very