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כ' אייר ל"ה למסב"י תש"פ

מכתב התחזקות (י)

We can take a chizuk from the first possuk in this weeks parsha, Parshas Bechukosei where the Torah promises us a great reward, "If you will go in the path of the Torah and you will observe the mitzvos and you keep them". " אם בחוקתי תלכו ואת מצותי תשמרו ועשיתם אותם ". The meforshim ask, why is this possuk written in the future tense, "If you will go in the path of the Torah and you will observe the mitzvos", and not in the present tense?

Answers the Ohr HaChaim that the possuk is referring to a situation where a person is an *Oi'nes* and at present is unable to learn or keep the mitzvos as he would like to. About such a person Chazal have told us (שבת סג.) "A person who desired and wanted to perform a mitzva but due to an *oi'nes* was unable to do so, the Torah considers it as if he had performed the mitzvah" חשב אדם לעשות מצוה ונאנס ולא עשאה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו עשאה.

Therefore the Torah writes the possuk in the future tense. A person who at present is being prevented from learning and keeping the mitzvos properly, but as soon as he can, "he **will go** in the path of the Torah and he **will** observe the mitzvos", the Torah considers his yearning as if he has kept them, and he will also receive the full reward mentioned in the parsha.

Rav Yonoson Eibeshitz (יערות דבש ח"ב דרוש ב) and the Apta Rov, added on a further chizuk to this concept. When a person performs a mitzva, the amount of reward is relative to the actual performance of the mitzva. A person who does the mitzva lishmo and puts in more concentration and does the mitzva in a more beautiful and mehudar way, will receive more reward than someone who does the same mitzva without proper care and devotion.



When a person is yearning to do a mitzva but was prevented from doing so, the Torah considers it as if he had performed the mitzva, it is self-understood that it is considered as if he had performed the mitzva in the way that the Torah requires the mitzva to be performed. It is as if he had done the mitzvah lishmo, with all its inyonim and all its hiddurim!

This is a chizuk for our present situation, although we are unable to learn and daven in shul, and we cannot perform many of the mitzvos in the way we are used to, Hashem looks at our intentions, and regards it as if we kept all these mitzvos properly, in the best and holiest way.

Thus the famed Rebbe Reb Mendel of Rimnov zt"l, once went to immerse himself, and when he arrived, he discovered the mikva was broken and not useable. Said Reb Mendel Rimnover: "Today I merited a mikva with all the kavonos! Normally, it is never possible for a human being to have in mind all the different meanings and kavonos of a mitzva, but today that I was an *oi'nes*, the Torah considered it as if I have performed the mitzva properly and the Torah knows all the kavonos!"

With this in mind we can perhaps understand the following comment of the Rebbe of Rizhin zt"l. One of his chassidim suffered from many ailments and this Yid once moaned to the Rebbe that he was very distressed that his ailments prevented him from davening and learning in the way he would have liked. The Rizhiner answered this person: "**How do you know what is more precious to Hashem, your davening and learning, or your yearning!**"

Indeed the sefer Shem MiShmuel writes: "The words of Chazal that the Torah counts the good intentions of a person who was an *oi'nes* as if he had performed the mitzvah, **is a lesson to every person who wants to ascend higher, that he should not feel upset or depressed that he was unable to carry out his good intentions.**

These good intentions are themselves regarded as a mitzva which in turn will cause and be the catalyst to bring the person more mitzvos מצוה גוררת מצוה and will give the person new and higher strengths that he did not know of previously. Through this new strength, he will climb even higher. Chazal mention (מדרש רבה רות, ג, ה) this concept regarding Rus. 'As soon as Rus made the decision to become a giyoires, the possuk puts her on an equal status with



Naomi'. A person who changes their mindset is no longer the same person and is no longer on the same level they were on beforehand"!

This concept is also the underlying explanation of Tikkun Leil Shavous. It is an ancient custom to recite the beginning and end pesukim of every sedra and all the twenty four seforim of Neveim and Kesuvim.

Writes the Bnei Yissocher as follows: There is a tradition amongst Gedolei Yisroel, that if a person is prevented from being able to learn a particular sefer, he should at least learn the beginning and the end of the sefer, and this will be accepted by Hashem as if he has learnt the entire sefer. Therefore it is the minhag on the night of Kabbolas HaTorah to learn the beginning and the end of all parts of Tenach and Shisho Sidrei Mishna, in order that that this be regarded by Hashem as if he has learnt the entire Torah.

These words are a big comfort for us in our current situation. At the moment we are unable to learn and daven in the way we are accustomed, and despite all the heroic efforts to maintain a seder hayom and daily shiurim, many feel they are missing the intensity of their learning. However, when a Yid tries his best, we have been promised "מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו עשאה" and Hashem regards it as if we have davened and learnt on the highest level!

This tradition is also mentioned by the She'loh Hakodosh (הגהות לתודלות אדם, בית אחרון י) "Someone who is very ignorant of Torah, and is upset about his lack of Torah knowledge and his inability to understand the Torah, should read with all his heart the names of the various sedras and seforim of Nach. Afterwards he should read the names of the various mesechtos of Shas and their chapters, and then the names of the various Medroshim, Medrash Rabbah, Tanchumo, Sifro, Sifrei, Mechilta etc. and all the various Kabbalistic midroshim, Zohar Tikunei Zohar etc. If he reads these names with great enthusiasm and is very upset that he has been unable to master them, and he also helps those who do understand them, his actions will be accepted by Hashem and in the next world he will merit to understand them.

Therefore every person – even someone who is not ignorant - should record for himself a list with all the various names of the seforim and he should read it regularly until he is fluent in



it, and the reading of the list will be as if he has learnt them all. This is on condition he tries his hardest to do his best”.

The Mishna Berura (ס' קנ"ה) and the Shulchan Aruch HaRav (הל' ת"ת פ"ב ס' יג) both tell us that a person who tried his best, whatever he did not understand in this world, he will merit to understand in the next World and he will be granted a seat amongst the Chachomim.

There is a most amazing medrash (אגדה בראשית פד.) which is not well known. “In the future, all are going to wonder about so and so, who never learnt anything in his lifetime, and yet he is sitting and talking with the Ovos. Hashem says to them: “Why are you amazed, they only merited this because they listened to me during their lifetime!”

This medrash seems to be a mystery. How can someone who has never learnt anything possibly be referred to as listening to Hashem? I once asked the Gateshead Rosh Yeshiva Hagaon Rav Avrohom Gurwicz shlita, and Hagaon Rav Chaim Kanievski shlita, for an explanation to this medrash. They both answered that the medrash must be referring to a person who wanted and tried to learn, but despite his best efforts, was never able to do so. This person will still merit a high place in Gan Eden as mentioned above.

The Chofetz Chaim zt"l was once asked to explain the words of the Zohar Hakodosh who writes “Torah that is learnt without true fear and love of Hashem, is not accepted in Heaven”. If this is so, who can be confident that Hashem is happy with their learning? Who can truly say about themselves that they conduct themselves with true fear and love of Hashem?

The Chofetz Chaim replied that he once met an old acquaintance of his, whom he hadn't seen for many years. The Chofetz Chaim stopped to ask him how he was managing. The Yid moaned bitterly how difficult life was for him. He was a baker by profession, and every day he had to chop wood for his oven and then carry the heavy logs to his bakery. Every morning he got up very early to bake the bread, rolls and cakes, but despite all his efforts, he was unable to sell much of his merchandise.

Before the days of thermostatic ovens, it was difficult to accurately control the temperature in the oven. Somedays the bread was a bit overdone and burnt, on other days they weren't fully



baked. The shape of the cakes also didn't always come out as they should have. People would come into his shop and they would look at his bread and cakes but weren't tempted to buy them. So although he worked so hard, much of his work was rejected.

Some years passed and the First World War broke out. Again the Chofetz Chaim happened to meet this person and he stopped to enquire after his welfare. The Yid told the Chofetz Chaim how his business was booming, and he had never had it so good. The Chofetz Chaim was taken aback, and asked how this could be? He was barely managing in the relatively good times before the war, so how could it be that now when even the wealthy people were struggling, he was doing so well?

Answered the Yid to the Chofetz Chaim: "Before the war people could afford to be fussy, and if my bread and cakes weren't exactly to their liking, they rejected them and refused to buy them. Now however, there is a war going on and there is a shortage of food. No one can afford to be fussy, whatever I make is bought right away, no matter its appearance or taste.

Explained the Chofetz Chaim, the same concept applies to Torah learning. Those words of the Zohar Hakodosh that you quoted, were written by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai almost two thousand years ago. In his times, there were many great and holy Tenoim, if one's learning was not up to scratch, it was rejected. Nowadays however, there is a spiritual war going on, and the generations are much weaker than previous generations. In our times Hashem gratefully accepts every bit of Torah that we learn, as long as we try our best and our hardest, even if it isn't perfect and up to the highest standard!

These words echo the words of the Holy Arizal, as recorded by Rabbi Chaim Vital: "A person's greatness is not measured merely by his actions, but also according to the time and the generation in which he lives. The small accomplishments of the later generations, is equal in Shomayim, like the great achievements of the earlier generations".

If this is so all year round, all the more so at the moment, Hashem receives gratefully and with great love, all our efforts, no matter how small they appear to us.