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### מכתב התחזקות (יב)

In Megillas Rus it is written that when Rus asked Boaz to perform Yibum with her, he told her that he had to get permission from Ploni Almoni who had first right. The possuk tells us, that the next morning, this very person happened to pass by the gate where Boaz was sitting, enabling Boaz to then ask him for permission to perform Yibum.

The Medrash highlights this incident, that the person whom Boaz needed to contact, just "happened" to pass by the next morning, and the Medrash continues: "Even if this person would have been at the other end of the world, Hashem would have arranged it that he be brought there, in order not to delay the righteous actions of Boaz. Boaz played his part and did all that he could, Rus did all that she could and Naomi also did all that she could. Upon which Hashem said I too will do my part."

"בועז עשה את שלו ורות עשתה את שלה ונעמי עשתה את שלה, אמר הקב"ה אף אני אעשה את שלי"

This same expression we find in Parshas Bamidbar. Hashem instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to count Shevet Levi from thirty days old, and Moshe asked how could he go into their tents to see how many babies were in each one, to which Hashem told him "You do what you can and I will do what I can" "עשה אתה שלך ואני אעשה שלי". Moshe went outside each tent, and a Heavenly voice proclaimed how many babies were in each tent.

This concept is a great chizuk, a person has to know that we are not expected to achieve more than we are capable of doing. A person has to try his best, and then he will get siyata dishmaya to overcome the difficulties he encounters. This applies to limmud HaTorah as well. Sometimes a person feels like giving up, he thinks that he is unable to understand what he is learning and it is beyond him, but one has to bear in mind the above concept



“עשה אתה שלך ואני אעשה שלי” “You do your part and Hashem will do His Part”!

When a person does his part, he merits brocha above the laws of nature, as Chazal have told us (Ovos Ch. 6, 2) “כל מי שעוסק בתורה הרי זה מתעלה” “**Everyone** who learns Torah will become elevated”, and the Tiferes Yisroel explains that Chazal stressed that this applies to “everyone” who learns Torah, not merely to those who are more gifted. Every person who learns Torah, regardless of his capabilities, will become elevated.

The famed gaon and poseik the Maharam Shik zt”l testified about himself, that as a young bochur, his comprehension was so weak that he was unable to understand a single blatt of gemara, it was simply too hard for him to understand. Yet he did not give up and he persevered until he finally merited that the gates of wisdom were opened for him and he understood his learning.

The Mishna in Mesechta Ovos tells us that Rabbon Yochanon Ben Zakai had five main talmidim, and he would extoll their many virtues and achievements. Writes the Maharam Shik on this Mishna as follows: “It would appear that the reason why Rabbon Yochanon Ben Zakai would extoll their many virtues and achievements, was in order that we should appreciate that these talmidim did not inherently possess these lofty madreigos, rather it was through their great toil and effort that they merited to achieve such great heights.

Therefore Rabbon Yochanon Ben Zakai extolled their achievements so that others should copy their example. If their madreigos would simply have been the result of their higher superior intellectual powers, what is there for us to learn from them? It must be that their madreigos were a result of their diligence and not because they possessed superior intelligence, and this is what we must learn from them.

This concept also lies behind the minhag to decorate the shuls on Shavous, with trees. The Mogein Avrohom explains the reason for this minhag is that on Shavous, the world is judged, to determine the quality and quantity of fruit that the trees will produce, therefore we place trees in shul to remind us to daven that the trees should produce good fruit.





The meforshim question this explanation, because according to the Mogein Avrohom we should place only fruit trees in the shuls, and we don't see people being particular to do so. Rav Menachem Mendel of Strizov zt"l addresses this dilemma in his sefer Sova Semochos, and he offers a beautiful insight into this minhag. (It is especially significant to quote from this sefer, as Rav Menachem Mendel was niftar during a cholera epidemic in the year 1831. He announced that he was giving up his life to be a kappora for Klall Yisroel. Straight away he became ill and was niftar and the epidemic stopped!)

The Torah tells us in Parshas Bechukosei, that when Yidden keep the Torah properly they will be rewarded **ועץ השדה יתן פרי** and Rashi tells us that even non fruit bearing trees will produce fruit. Explains Rav Menachem Mendel of Strizov, that we place non fruit trees in shul to remind us of this promise.

When a Yid keeps the Torah properly, even trees that are unable to produce fruit will also give forth delicious sweet fruit, and the same applies to us as well. Even those who feel that they are barren of Torah and they cannot understand and grow in Torah, they can also merit to produce beautiful fruit and grow in Torah and Yiddishkeit. (The same explanation is also given by the Chasam Sofer).

This can serve as an inspiration to us in the present situation where our normal seder hayom has been disrupted, and people are faced with many difficulties and impediments. Despite this, we must not despair, and we have to be mechazeik ourselves and to believe that even in the present difficult situation we can produce beautiful and sweet fruit and grow higher in Torah and Yiddishkeit.

In the sefer Ginzei Yisroel, is recorded the words the Chortkover Rebbe zt"l said on Shavous, during the First World War. During the War, fierce fighting took place in the city of Chortkov, and much of the town including the Chortkover Rebbe's own home was destroyed, and he was forced to flee from Chortkov to faraway Vienna. Many of his chassidim were also exiled from their homes, and were scattered far and wide.

The Rebbe said on that Shavous as follows: "It would appear to me that the reason why Hashem chose to give us the Torah in the midbar, a place which is totally barren and



desolate, is to teach us, that in every time and every place we are obligated to learn and to keep the Torah. We have no excuse to exempt ourselves, even in our present situation that we are suffering various hardships, and we are strangers and refugees in foreign lands, undergoing many trials and tribulations, for our situation is not worse than being in a desolate wilderness surrounded by poisonous snakes. The giving of the Torah in the midbar is a lesson to all generations that they should not be negligent in their observance of the Torah and mitzvos because it is the Torah which gives us life.”

With the above, we can understand the possuk in Parshas Voeschanan: “And you shall inform and teach your children and their children the day we stood in front of Hashem in Chorev” “והודעתם לבניך ולבני בניך יום אשר עמדת לפני ה' אלקיך בחורב”. The possuk specifically exhorts us to remember that we received the Torah in a place called חורב. Throughout the entire parshas Yisro, the place of mattan Torah is only referred to as Midbar Sinai and Har Sinai, not once is it referred to as Chorev. So why, when we are instructed to always remember mamaad Kabbolas HaTorah, is the place referred to by its other name, Chorev?

The name Chorev is first mentioned in Parshas Shemos. When Moshe Rabbeinu came to the burning bush, we are told “ויבא אל הר האלקים חרבה” “He came to the mountain of Hashem at Chorev”. The Ibn Ezra and the Abarbernel both explain that the area was called Chorev from the term Churban, denoting that the entire area was totally desolate. The area was so dry and arid that nothing could grow there.

Thus the Torah wants us to remember that we accepted the Torah in a place which was Chorev, desolate and arid, and therefore when we see that sometimes things are not going as we would want and the person is in a tight spot, he still has to accept on himself to fully keep and uphold the Torah.

We can also derive a chizuk from this. As soon as Klall Yisroel agreed to accept the Torah, the parched and desolate Chorev became transformed, and Har Sinai and the surrounding area became a luscious meadow with beautiful green grass. Thus the Remo writes “It is customary on Shavous, to decorate the shuls and houses with greenery זכר לשמחת מתן תורה. We have to make a zecher how a desolate area became transformed, and in a wilderness where nothing could grow, blossomed forth beautiful green meadows. This is a lesson to us that when a





person accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, Hashem will make his other problems fade away, because “if you do your part Hashem will do His part” “עשה אתה שלך ואני אעשה שלי”.

This point is stressed by the famed Rebbe of Sochatchov the Avnei Nezer zt”l. He once said as follows: “If a person has disruptions and disturbances which interfere with his ability to learn Torah and keep the mitzvos, he should be mechazeik himself with all his strength and attempt to remove those obstacles from in front of him. If he does so, he will see that these difficulties and obstacles will be transformed into something positive, for how can it be that Hashem should create a situation to prevent a person from Torah and mitzvos?

Rather the truth is that they are toi’vos, and the person has to overcome the difficulties and delve into the Torah and mitzvos, and then he will see with his own eyes how all these difficulties were really for the good”.

His words are a light to the eyes in this difficult period, in which many people are silently wondering to themselves the question of the Avnei Nezer “How can it be that Hashem should create a situation to prevent a person from Torah and mitzvos?” The Avnei Nezer provides us with the answer to this question as well, it is our responsibility to take all these difficulties and transform them into toi’vos.

Indeed, many people have acquired new found appreciation, and have strengthened their personal avoda. If until now, a person could at times be lost amongst the crowd, the quarantine has made us aware "אם אין אני לי מי לי" and we have to rise to the challenge, how each of us as an individual is responsible for our own growth bein odom lemokom and bein odom lechaverio.

In the introduction to the sefer Sova Semochos, a story is related about Rav Menachem Mendel of Strizov, whom we mentioned earlier, which can serve as a chizuk to us. One year, he travelled to Lublin, to spend Yom Kippur in the presence of his Rebbe, the Chozeh of Lublin zt”l. A young bochur who was staying in the same accommodation as Rav Mendel, asked to walk together with him to the Beis Hamedrash, to which he agreed. Erev Yom Kippur this young boy lay down to rest and he slept until late into the night.



Rav Mendel wanted very much to go to shul for Kol Nidrei, but did not want to leave the young boy by himself, nor did he want to wake him up, in keeping with a kabbalistic custom he observed, never to wake a person up. Thus he spent the night of Yom Kippur davening by himself ביהדות in the inn! Rav Mendel was very upset over what had happened, and he davened with a broken heart

Rav Mendel was embarrassed to show his face the next morning in shul, and tried to conceal himself from the gaze of the Chozeh, by hiding in a corner, but it was to no avail. In the middle of tefillas Nishmas, the Chozeh walked over to the corner where he was standing, and made a sign to Rav Mendel that he should go to the omud and be the sheliach tzibbur for Shacharis!

After Yom Kippur was over the Chozeh revealed that a difficult decree had been hanging over Klall Yisroel, and there was no one who was able to annul this decree. Only Rav Mendel, who because of his great distress over having to daven ביהדות had davened with a broken heart, was found worthy of annulling the decree. This is the madreiga mentioned in Tehillim. "קרוב ה' לנשברי לב ואת דכאי רוח יושיע." "Hashem is close to those who are broken hearted and He saves those who are crushed in spirit".

This concept we find (פסוק ה.) regarding the Torah as well. The gemora tells us that the reason why Hashem chose Har Sinai was because it did not hold itself high like other mountains, and Hashem dwells amongst those who are humble.

Rav Aharon Karliner once mentioned to his father Rav Osher of Stolin zt"l the words of the medrash, that when Hashem placed His Presence on Har Sinai, "I don't know whether Hashem elevated the mountain until the Heavens, or whether Hashem left the heavens and descended to Har Sinai? Said Rebbi Yehoshua Ben Levi, from the words of the possuk "וירד" "על הר סיני" it is evident that Hashem descended onto Har Sinai."

Rav Osher Stoliner had a great hissorreus from this medrash and he exclaimed: "My son you have revived me! What would we do if we had to elevate ourselves up to the heavens? But if Hashem lowered Himself to give us the Torah, there is hope for us that Hashem will elevate those who are low מגביה שפלים."





When a Yid accepts upon himself the Torah, he can ask that he be worthy receive the brocha of the Torah. On Shavous the Rebbes in Rizhin would bless their chassidim “that they merit to accept the Torah with both escorts, “a long life on the right hand side, wealth and kovod on the left hand side” “אורך ימים בימינה, ובשמאלה עושר וכבוד”.

In this vein the Chortkover Rebbe zt”l explained the statement of Chazal that all agree that on Shavous דבעינן נמי לכם one is obligated to eat and drink and have simchas Yom Tov. Many seforim ask why this is so, one would expect that on the day of Kabbolas HaTorah one should spend the entire day in the Beis Hamedrash learning Torah without interruption, but yet all agree we are specifically commanded to also enjoy simchas Yom Tov on Shavous.

Explains the Rebbe as follows: “The entire world was only created for the Torah, that’s why before the giving of the Torah the whole world came to a standstill, as the medrash (שמות רבה ט) tells us: “The birds didn’t chirp or fly, the ox did not call, the angels did not fly, the waves of the sea did not move, the people did not speak.” The entire world had gone into “lockdown” and was dependent on the Yidden accepting the Torah.

Thus when the Yidden accepted the Torah they gave new life to the world and only then could the world open up again, and resume its daily routine. Therefore Klall Yisroel have the right to ask for life and all their other needs. This is why especially on Shavous all agree that we need to eat and drink and have simchas Yom Tov because it is an auspicious time to daven for all our needs.”

”וה' יזכנו לשמור את התורה ומצוותיו בהרחבה,  
ונזכה לראות עת ימלוך עלינו ועל כל ישראל, במהרה בימינו אמן סלה” עכ”ל.

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן