

Words of chizuk

Posted by GetChizuk - 31 Dec 2012 05:17

I started a blog where I write words of chizuk for help with abstaining from aveiros and for staying connected (or re-connecting) to Hashem in general. I am far from being in a position to be able to give someone else mussar.

On the contrary, I write these articles for myself as I derive inspiration and strength from reading and reading them, but I put them online so that anyone can read and perhaps derive chizuk.

GetChizuk.blogspot.com

When I add a new blog entry I'll post it here too bln.

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Bringing a korbon

Posted by GetChizuk - 31 Dec 2012 05:19

We find in Chazal and in halacha that the worse aveiroh is chilul Hashem. While tshuva helps for every other aveiroh, complete atonement for chilul Hashem can only be achieved by death (after doing tshuva and more). This actually fits with we find elsewhere that everything and everyone in this world was created with the purpose to bring kvod shamayim (more on than some other time iyh), so creating a chilul Hashem is the ultimate perversion of one's purpose.

I only wrote this as a preface so you understand that by extension, the greatest mitzvah is making a kiddush Hashem. In fact, according to some rishonim, full atonement for a chilul Hashem can be achieved by 'balancing out' with a kiddush Hashem (in addition to tshuva, of course).

So then how does one make a kiddush Hashem? The Rambam writes that when one refrains from doing an aveiroh, not because of any human consequences but because they know Hashem is watching and they want to please Him, in that moment they make the greatest kiddush Hashem possible. And the greater the temptation the greater the kiddush Hashem is.

When one is faced with a nisoyon where one really wants to overcome the yh"r but finds it so extremely difficult, focusing on the words of the Rambam can be very helpful. Just remember, Hashem, the Creator of every person and their temptations, knows exactly how great the temptation is at that moment, and when one manages to successfully fight off the yh"r Kavyochol has the most tremendous pleasure imaginable.

All the malochim gather and praise Him as His holy Name is sanctified by this mere mortal. Kavyochol sits on His holy throne and boasts to all and sundry, "Look down and see how [this super-mortal] has put Me before the 'other guy' (the yh"r). He/she has sacrificed part of him/herself for Me."

And the malochim reply, "Fortunate is the King who has such loyal servants."

Not since before the destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh (when the bringing of korbanos was still in place) has Hashem derived such pleasure as when a Yid holds back from an aveiroh solely because he/she wants to please Hashem.

It isn't easy. It's very hard. In fact it is as difficult as ripping of a piece of one's own flesh. Nay, even harder - this is a piece of one's soul. Every fibre in the body is screaming "DO IT! DO IT!"

yet the Yid somehow manages to summon the extraordinary strength to abstain, and that is a korbon in the purest form.

Knowing this doesn't mean that we don't fall. "Seven times the righteous falls and rises again." But when one truly does want to overcome the yh"r it helps tremendously to understand how great and magnificent this abstinence is.

Lastly, when one does indeed overcome their yh"r (with even the tiniest thing), either by abstaining from and aveiroh or by making the effort to do a mitzvah, it is well advised to always be in the habit of thinking beforehand, "I am doing this to bring a kvod shamayim, and to please Hashem."

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Does Hashem 'need' our mitzvos?

Posted by GetChizuk - 31 Dec 2012 05:20

I was asked the following: why does Hashem 'need' us humans to serve Him, after all He has plenty of malochim?

Excellent question but you stopped too early; let's move it further back: Since Hashem is omnipotent, how is it possible that He derives any pleasure from our deeds? In fact, since He does not lack for anything, why even ask of us to do something as if it matters to Him?

The truth is that Hashem indeed doesn't lack anything and it is impossible for anyone to 'give' any kind of sustenance or pleasure to the Kol Yochol (Omnipotent One). However, Hashem, in His infinite mercy that we cannot in a million years fathom with our limited mortal minds, wanted to give human beings the privelege of 'pleasing' Him.

With this goal Hashem created a world with human beings who constantly struggle against temptation and the yh"r in all forms, so we should be able to 'earn' the right to bring pleasure to Kavyochol. Since Hashem designed the world for this tachlis, He actually receives pleasure when we do His will, and the greater the nisoyon the greater His pleasure.

In short, this privelege and honour of being able to please Hashem is in itself (one of) His greatest acts of kindness to mankind, and He set it out so that He truly derives pleasure from our good deeds.

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Lost the battle?

Posted by GetChizuk - 31 Dec 2012 05:21

The answer to the question in the title should be 'Which one - that of this second, one second

ago or ten seconds ago?'

Every second is a new battle and a fresh start. Life is about struggling with the yh"r - all the time. It matters not what happened till now but what one does henceforth.

The question one must always ask of themselves is: what does Hashem want from me NOW? Then one must say: I don't care what happened before, right now I'm going to do His will.

More on this another time iyh. Be strong.

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R' Pinchos's news...

Posted by GetChizuk - 31 Dec 2012 05:21

R' Pinchos'l of Koritz (on of the talmidim of the holy Baal Shem Tov) once said:

I have news, I have news. If a person is in the street and is nichshal (stumbles) with an aveiroh, he should say, "Shema Yisroel Hashem Eloikeinu Hashem Echod, you are my G-d and You will help me!"

If he then sins again he should say, "Shema Yisroel etc., You are my G-d and You will help me!"

Even if he stumbles a third time he should still repeat, "Shema Yisroel...You are my G-d and You will help me!"

If the poor man goes on to sin a fourth time he should still stick to his mantra, "Shema Yisroel...You are my G-d and You will help me!"

No matter how far one has strayed he should always bear in mind that he is part of the Chosen Nation, and Hashem will always remain his G-d.

R' Pinchos'I added in the name of the Baal Shem Tov:

For the Yetzer Horah it is never about the aveiroh (that he caused the man to transgress) but about the depression (into which the man falls).

One must do proper tshuva but not fall into a depression. "You are my G-d and You will help me!"

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Re: Words of chizuk

Posted by GetChizuk - 31 Dec 2012 22:56

Often times the question is asked, since Hashem is so good and loves each and every one of us with boundless and endless love, will He really punish me for a few small sins?

Chzal tell us ??? ?' ????? ??? ????? ????? ?????? ?????? ??? ????? - R' Chanina said, "If one says Hashem is a 'vatron', i.e. One who lets misdemeanors slide, may that person's intestines become loose and unravelled." (Shekalim 14a)

At first glance the punishment of ???????? ??? ?????? (yisvatron bnei me'oyi) is a play on words for saying Hashem is a 'vatron'. However, after proper study of the meforshim we see that it goes much deeper.

The Taklin Chadetin explains why it is so bad to think Hashem lets aveiros be (however 'minor'), and why indeed He doesn't. While we can only perceive of our actions having small, sometimes minute, local effects, in reality every deed that a Yid does brings repercussions of enormous magnitude - both in the visible, physical world, and even more so in the spiritual world.

Our mortal minds are so very limited, and our vision so very restricted, that it is hard for us to even grasp this concept, yet it is so very real. When one transgresses even the 'tiniest' aveiroh one creates the most humongous rips in the very fabric of the world. Entire spiritual worlds are destroyed and spiritual-earthquakes of the greatest force reverberate throughout the universe. [Of course when we do a mitzvah the opposite occurs; we unleash wellsprings of fortune and sustenance.]

There is good reason why we cannot perceive all the far-reaching effects of our deeds. Since the purpose of our creation is to vanquish the Yetzer Horah, there has to be a challenge. Had we been able to see and hear what joy and abundance we bring to the world by our mitzvos, versus the destitution caused by our aveiros, it wouldn't have been possible to ever do an aveiroh, thus defeating the purpose.

Hashem, by virtue of being the Creator and Sustainer of all that is in existence, knows exactly how great are the repercussions of every tiny deed a Yid does, for better or for worse. Therefore He cannot let even the tiniest misdemeanor pass, because every single mitzvoh and every single triumph over the Yetzer Horah is needed for entire creation to be complete in all its glory.

The intestines are a paradigm of this idea. Despite the extraordinary length of the small intestine (over 23 feet!), every single inch is necessary for it to function properly. When a person I"a has even a small part cut out for due to illness, they will very often need to take vitamin supplements for the rest of their lives, for the shortened intestine cannot do its job adequately.

When someone says Hashem is a vatron, i.e. He won't mind if I'm not completely as I should be, let him contemplate life with a portion of the (seemingly superfluous) intestines missing.

Then apply this thought to ruchniyus.

Since Hashem is so good, will he not let things pass? Absolutely not! In fact it is because He is so good and he wants our spiritual self to be complete, and in a complete world with vast abundance, that He cannot overlook even the tiniest aveiroh.

One must bear this in mind when faced with a nisoyon. On the one hand how great it is when one manages to overcome his/her Yetzer Horah, and what immense pleasure Kavyochol derives from that, but on the other hand how devastating it is to the entire creation when one fails.

[Of course if one has already fallen chalilah, then one has to remember never to give up.]

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2012/12/since-hashem-is-so-good.html

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Is it not a contradiction?

Posted by GetChizuk - 01 Jan 2013 23:59

In some posts we focused on Hashem's boundless love and our unbreakable connection to Him, yet in this one we discussed at length how Hashem will not let even the slightest slight slide; how to these two concepts go hand-in-hand?

The answer is that we must differentiate between the 'before' and 'after'. When a person is faced with a nisoyon (so-to-speak 'before' he sins) he must bear in mind that Hashem is a ?-? ??? - a zealous G-d who demands the utmost dedication and is exacting in His reckoning.

This knowledge should comprise the 'stick' in our battles with the Yh"r (the 'carrot' is the positive focus on what this means to Kavyochol), to help us overcome it.

If, however, rachmana litzlon (G-d forbid), one does stumble and fall prey to the Yh"r he/she is then most vulnerable to the Yetzer's second instalment in his one-two knockout-punch attack - atzvus (depression and resignation). That is when the focus on our inseverable connection to Hashem comes in.

A Yid must always remember, even after chalila committing the gravest of sins, that there is always a way back, and the stronger one wants to return the shorter the path.

When tempted by the Yh"r one must counter with fear of Hashem but when the Yh"r tries to drag one down into the abyss of atzvus, focusing on Hashem's love to His People is the proper antidote.

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/is-it-not-somewhat-of-contradiction.html

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Mitzvos aforethought

Posted by GetChizuk - 02 Jan 2013 23:49

In many Chassidish (and methinks also Sephardic) circles it is the custom to say ??? ??? before doing a mitzvah. This roughly translates as, "I am doing this mitzvah with the intention of unifying Kavyochol and the Shechina..." Many also add the words ????? ??? ??? ??? - [I am doing this in order] to please my Creator, blessed be His Holy Name.

The concept of ??? ???? is an esoteric kabalistic one, and we will not delve into that at present. Also the custom of adding ????? ???? has its roots in deep Chassidish thought, and is an outcome of the Chassidish idea that 'the preparation for a mitzvah is greater than the mitzvah itself'.

While these are lofty concepts, there is, however, also a very practical gain from saying these formulae, and that is to get into the proper mindset. We have discussed at length how Kavyochol derives immense pleasure from our mitzvos, and how overcoming the Yh"r is akin to bringing a korbon.

These ideas, as inspiring as they are, will only give one strength in times of temptation if they remember and focus on them. The problem is, though, that the Yetzer Horah's first strategy is to prevent us from thinking and focusing on our tafkid (purpose in life).

When one actively says to himself prior to doing a mitzvah, "I am going to do this mitzvah in order to please Hashem," it becomes so much easier to actually do the mitzvah properly, with enthusiasm and concentration. Even if saying ??? ???? is not accepted in one's circles (and actually, even if it is...), one would benefit tremendously by getting into the habit of consciously thinking before each and every mitzvah, however minor it may seem, "I am doing this in order to bring a kvod shamayim and to please my Creator."

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/mitzvos-aforethought.html

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Not completely and not forever

Posted by GetChizuk - 02 Jan 2013 23:49

I once read a story about how a Nazi caught a Yid putting in tfilin in the concentration camps. Not content with simply punishing the Yid, the Nazi ym"sh wanted to degrade him and completely demean him, so he asked, "Why do you even bother? Can't you see that your G-d has forsaken you?"

The Yid answered with a few simple but oh so powerful words, "Not completely and not forever."

These 5 words are worth memorizing to use as a mantra in the most difficult times:

Not completely and not forever!

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/not-completely-and-not-forever.html

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Letting Hashem see us

Posted by GetChizuk - 06 Jan 2013 07:28

When the Yidden in Mizrayim suffered the most horrendous tortures imaginable (the evil Pharoah used to bathe in the blood of Yiddishe babies), the posuk tell us ?????? ??? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? - they cried out because of their hard work, and their cries of pain due to their slave-labour rose up before the Almighty, who then sent Moishe Rabeinu to redeem them.

The Ohr Hachaim (as do other other meforshim) points out a very important detail. The posuk doesn't tell us that the Yidden cried out to Hashem, and certainly there is no mention of tfilah. From this he deduces that they did not cry out in prayer nad their tears were not of supplication; they were just cries and tears of pain. The Yidden were crying because of their terrible hardship, as one groans in pain, and that was enough to invoke the heavenly mercies and bring forth their geulah.

The Ohr Hachaim writes ?? ????? ?' ?????? ?????? ?????? ????? - when Hashem sees someone's pain that in itself is enough to help bring relief, ?? ??? ?????? ?????? ?? ?? ?????? - for Hashem is a merciful One, who shows mercy, and His mercy reaches all beings.

Kavyochol is so merciful that He cannot bear to see when one of His creations is in pain, and for that alone He will relieve the pain, even though that person isn't deserving and didn't even daven for help.

However there is a caveat. When Hashem does want to punish someone He turns away His Face (kavyochol) so as not to see the pain. The Ohr Hachaim adds that indeed we find when Hashem is angry at the Yidden He hides His Face (???? ?????? ???), in order to punish them.

There are two practical points we can take from this beautiful and comforting Ohr Hachaim:

1. In times of pain ch"v one must cry out to Hashem. Even if one is unfortunately in a position where Hashem has turned away, when one cries out to Hashem the posuk tells us ????? ?' ??? ?????? - Hashem is close to all who call Him. By crying out to Hashem we get His attention kavyochol, and that alone can bring forth the awaited relief.

2. There is one aveiroh for which the Torah says ??? ????? - Hashem will turn away from you, and that is immorality. When one isn't careful in areas of immorality they lose the great protection of Hashem's attention, and all that it entails.

So in order to reap the full benefits from Hashem's mercy one must be free from aveiros of immorality (tshuva helps, of course!), and call out to the Almighty so He sees our pain.

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/letting-hashem-see-us.html

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Thank Hashem for the small mercies
Posted by GetChizuk - 10 Jan 2013 07:21

Today I had a hard day. I overslept. I had no work for most of the day (I am self employed so no work means no money). During my learning session with my chavrusa I got pulled into a discussion, so we hardly learnt anything. In short, I was neither fulfilled begashmiyus nor berochniyus.

In addition I had to fork out a sizable amount of cash to some Goy whose car I'd hit on Friday. It was late before Shabbos and I backed out of a narrow driveway into his car. BH there was no major damage, but his wing mirror got broken and would need replacing. I gave him my business card and asked him to call me after Shabbos so I got sort it out privately with cash, thus saving me higher insurance premiums in the next few years.

Monday afternoon he called me and said he got a quote for close to \$450 - a ridiculous amount of money for a simple mirror of a low budget car. I told him I'll have the money for him on Wednesday, and meanwhile I asked around for some quotes myself. The most expensive one I

got was still over \$100 cheaper than his and I told him so.

His reply: Fine, I'll just do it through my insurance.

While I could legally fight it and insist on getting it fixed for less, I decided that it was just not worth the hassle (and risk of losing), so I paid up. I'm very tight on cash at the moment so I had to transfer money from a savings account in order to pay, but I hadn't much choice.

Then my cellphone fell down - but first some background info...

About 6 weeks ago I signed a two year cell phone whereby I received a free top-of-the-range smartphone. I'd only been using it for a few weeks when it fell into the bath. I fished it out and left it to dry, and luckily it was still working without any problems.

For two weeks. Then the mic stopped working. So I could use it for all the other uses one has for a smartphone, except I couldn't talk into it. I sent it back to the company, but they claimed it was water-damaged and so not covered under the warranty. What's more, since the mic is part of the electronics board they can't just replace it. Basically my only option was to buy a new phone.

I decided to use it meanwhile with a bluetooth earpiece (as it was working perfectly except for the mic), while I explore my options. Today, after it fell down, the mic suddenly started working again.

Boruch Hashem.

The loud and clear message I received, and which I'm now sharing with you, is: In the most difficult times Hashem will 'smile' at you and bestow small mercies, just so you remember He is there with you, looking out for you.

Even though I deserved to be punished (otherwise none of this would have happened), Hashem wanted me to remember and take note that He still loves me and is always here for me.

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/thank-hashem-for-small-mercies.html

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Menashe's Lesson (pt. 1)

Posted by GetChizuk - 15 Jan 2013 00:37

If there is one person who can be blamed for the churban of the first beis hamikdosh, it would be Menashe King of Judea. Chazal teach us that the posuk ?? ??? ????? ?????? - for the bed is too short to allow one to stretch, refers to the time when Menashe brought an idol into the beis hamikdosh. Kavyochol then said, 'There isn't enough room for both of us, therefore I will abandon the beis hamikdosh.'

At that moment the die was cast, and Hashem's decree was finalised. After that it was not a question of 'if', but 'when'.

The psukim relate that eventually, after 22 years of idol worship, Menashe was captured by the Assyrian king, and taken to Assyria bound in copper chains. From the words of the posuk???????? ???????? the midrash rabbah derives the following fascinating and inspiring tale:

The Assyrian king sealed Menashe in a specially designed copper pot which had holes at the top to allow him to breathe, then lit a small fire underneath, so that he should die a slow and painful death. When Menashe felt the heat building up he called out to all every idol in the world, and pleaded with them for help. Needless to say there was no response.

When he saw that no help was forthcoming he turned to Hashem and said, "I remember as a small child sitting on the lap of my saintly father (Chizkiyahu) and hearing him read the posuk '??? ?? - when you will be in trouble, you should return to the G-d of your forefathers, for He is a merciful G-d, and He will not forget the covenant He made with your ancestors'.

"Hashem, I am now following this advice and calling out to you for salvation. However know this, I have already prayed to all the idols in the world to no avail; if You will also fail to save me I will claim that ?" 'it's all the same thing'..."

When the malochim heard such a brazen prayer they rushed to seal the gates of heaven so as not to allow it to enter, but Hashem wouldn't agree. "If I don't accept Menashe's supplication I am allowing other future sinners to have an excuse why they don't repent. They will point out that Menashe tried to return and found the way barred. Therefore I will accept his prayer and grant him the miracle he needs."

Kavyochol Himself 'drilled' a hole beneath the ??? ????? and embraced Menashe's tefillah; a powerful wind then came and blew Menashe all the way back to Yerushalayim.

To be continued...

getchizuk.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/menashes-story.html

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Menashe's lesson

Posted by GetChizuk - 17 Jan 2013 19:37

We read in Menashe's story how he argued that if Hashem won't help he'll claim that 'all deities (lehavdil) are the same'. Upon reflection, it is extremely difficult to comprehend Menashe's argument, and even more so why Hashem accepted it.

On the surface we might say to Menashe, "Look, for so many years you worshipped all kinds of idols; now that you are in trouble go to them! And if they can't help you don't come demanding Hashem helps you, because you just don't deserve it. At the most you might come crawling humbly and beg Hashem for His salvation, with the clear understanding that He might not grant you request, but what right do you have to demand His help in such a brazen way?"

I once heard Rav Shimshon Pincus Ztz"l explain this as follows (I have since heard that it might be an ?????????? ??????):

Menashe was teaching us a beautiful idea that is as deep as it is powerful. He said, "Hashem, I know that there's a good chance you won't want to help me because I've sinned so much and for so long. However, if this is true that means it is possible for someone to sin so much that there is no way he can be saved. If so, this means that there is a limit and a boundary to Kavyochol's mercy and kindness. In that case there really is no difference between the deities (lehavdil).

"The G-d that my father taught me about is an Omnipotent One with endless and boundless mercy and forgiveness. If there turns out to be a limit to Kavyochol's mercy, then indeed the only difference between Him and lehavdil the impotent idols is the range of His mercy, but at the core essence they are chalilah the same."

Hashem heard this powerful argument and He agreed. He said, "I have to accept Menashe's prayer, to show that indeed there are no limits or boundaries to my mercy and forgiveness. I am

truly Omnipotent with neither beginning or end."

This idea is so deep that even the malochim couldn't understand it, and they tried to block Menashe's tfilah, but Hashem disagreed and 'dug' a special tunnel via which He listened to Menashe and sent His salvation.

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