LESSONS IN OTOTIP

A TREATISE ON AHAVAS YISRAEL BY THE REBBE RASHAB

לע"נ התמים **יצחק אליהו** בן **ליפמאן** ע"ה

ולזכות מרת **רייצא** בת **שיינדל מלכה** לרפו"ש ואריכות ימים ושנים

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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

In the present chapter, the Rebbe Rashab continues developing his analysis of the negative effects that *yeshus* has on relations between people, focusing in particular on the qualities of faultfinding and harping on undesirable traits that another person might have.

We all have such negative traits. Part of the human condition is that man is born imperfect. G-d has given every person a particular life task to refine certain character tracts. Since these traits are embedded in a person's character, he cannot be expected to refine them overnight. There is no magic pill to take to enable immediate change. Instead, a detailed and long-term process is necessary.

The question is how one relates to another person who has such faults. Does one gently make him aware of them and help him build himself and correct them? Or does he exaggerate them and degrade the other person, and even humiliate him publicly?

The answer to these questions is a good barometer of one's own spiritual state. When one focuses on the negative in another person that shows that he himself is characterized by *yeshus*. He feels the need to build himself up by putting the other person down. Not only is that a specific fault, it reflects a telling and encompassing lack of focus. Rather than being concerned with spreading G-dliness in the world, the person is caught up in petty criticism of a colleague.

The above concepts are particularly relevant as we approach *Yud-Beis Tammuz*. As reflected by the title of the first *maamar* the Rebbe Rayatz sent out to commemorate the occasion, *Asarah Sheyoshvim*, "When ten sit together," and the letters he directed to the chassidim which emphasized the theme of communal Torah study, he saw *achdus*, Jewish unity, and communal activity as fundamental to the continuity of our people. It is our hope that the study of *Heichaltzu* will enable these ideals to be realized.

Sichos In English

9 Tammuz, 5780

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יא) רהנה כמו״כ בעניני עבודה אינם יכולים להתערב ולהתאחד, מפני שאינו מחשב כלל עבודת זולתו, ואינו חושב אותו לעובד, שנותן מגרעת בעבודת חבירו, וימאס ויבטל את הטוב שלו. ומה שימצא בו איזה חסרון, אף גם בחיצוניות, שאינו נוגע לגוף ועצם העבודה כלל. יגדיל וירחיב הדבר. וידבר בזה הרבה. ויבזה אותו. ומכ״ש

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In the previous chapter, the Rebbe Rashab explained how *yeshus* prevents symbiotic relationships in Torah study and avodah, Divine service. In this chapter, he develops the idea that yeshus can prevent a person from looking positively on a fellowman.

יְהְנֵה כְּמוֹ כֵן בַּעְנִינִי Similarly, in matters of Divine service, people motivated by a self-oriented approach cannot coop-להתאַחֶר וּלְהָתְאַחֵר erate and join in unity.

The insecurity their *yeshus* breeds prevents them from valuing the Divine service of another person at all

and/or considering him to be an oved, i.e., a person who devotes himself earnestly to Divine service and self-refinement.

Such a person minimizes other people's Divine service and shows antipathy to their positive חֲבֵרוֹ וְיִמְאֵס וִיבַשֵּל אָת הַטוֹב שֵׁלוֹ. qualities, considering them of no worth.

וֹמַה שֵׁיִמְצָא בּוֹ אֵיוָה חְסַרוֹן When he finds a fault in another person,

יוֶצֶם הָעֲבוֹדָה כָּלָל vice at all,

even if it is merely superficial and affects neither לגוּף the main body nor the essence of that person's ser-

he will magnify it and expand upon it, speaking יַגְּדִּיל וְיַרְחִיב הַדָּבָר וִידַבֵּר about it often, and humiliating that person.

וֹמְכָּל שֵׁכֵן כְּשֵׁוּמְצָא בּוֹ How much more so should he discover an internal character flaw in his fellow – איזה מְדָה לֹא טוֹבָה

כשנמצא בו איזה מדה לא טובה, אשר אין אדם צדיק כו'48, יפסיק בשביל זה כל חלק הטוב שלו, שהוא כאין ואפס ממש, ויגדיל את הרע על הטוב ח"ו, עד שהוא אצלו כאילו אינו כו׳. ובאמת אינו כן, דהרי מה שעובד את ה׳ בתפלה ועוסק בתורה וקיום המצות, הרי זה טוב, והרי זהו עיקר מלאכתו ועבודתו כל היום, שעוסק בתפלה ותורה כו'. ומה שנמצא בו מדה רעה, זהו לפי שלא נתקן עדייז, כי הרי עיר פרא אדם יולד⁴⁹, דמתחילת

,אַדֶּיק בּוּי, which is inevitable, for "there is no righteous man on earth who does good and does not sin"1 -

עַמְשׁ מַמְשׁ whatsoever.

יַפְּסִיק בְּשָׁבִיל זֶה כֵּל he will decide that this flaw proves that any good the other person possesses is really of no value

ביגדיל אַת הַרַע עַל הַטוֹב Conversely, he will exaggerate the evil in comparison to the good to the point where he overlooks any good the person possesses and considers it as nothing.

וּבֵאֵמֶת אֵינוֹ כֵּן, In truth, this does not reflect the reality.

וְקִיוּם הַמִּצְוֹת הַרֵי זֵה טוֹב, good,

That individual's Divine service in prayer, Torah study, and the fulfillment of mitzvos, is in itself

and this – his involvement in prayer and Torah study – constitutes his primary labor and field of . בְּתִפְלַה וְתוֹרֵה כוּיִ. activity throughout the day.

דיבה שָּנְמְצָא בּוֹ מְדָה רָעָה The fact that he still possesses a negative charac-, זהוּ לְפִי שֵׁלֹא נִתְבַן צַרִין, ter trait is understandable. The person is striving to develop his character. It is only that there remains what to be corrected.

בי הַרִי עַיִר פַּרָא אָדָם יְוָלֵד, Every person has such traits, since "Man is born [like] a wild young donkey."2

דְּמְתְּחַלֵּת לֵּדְתוֹ אֵינוֹ מְתְקֵּן He is born in an unrefined state,

^{1.} Koheles 7:20.

^{2.} Iyov 11:12.

לידתו אינו מתוקן, כ"א זהו עבודתו כל ימי חלדו לתקן מדותיו, שעז"נ⁵⁰ ימי⁵ שנותינו בהם שבעים שנה, בהם אותיות בהמה⁵¹, וקאי על המדות הרעות הטבעים של הנה"ב⁵², שע"ז ניתן לאדם שבעים שנה לברר הז"מ רעות כו⁵², וא"א לתקן הכל

פָּי אָם זֶהוּ עֲבוֹדָתוּ כָּל and this is the service he is destined to perform יְמֵי חָלְדּוֹ לְתַקּן מִדּוֹתִיוּ throughout his entire life: to correct his character traits.

In addition, to the all-encompassing mission to refine the world and make it a dwelling for G-d through the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos*, every person is given an individual mission – to refine and elevate his own personality and character traits.³

שַׁצַל זֶה נָאֲמֵר יְמֵי שְׁנוֹתְינוּ The need for such efforts is alluded to 4 in the verse, 5 "The days of our years in them number seventy."

The Hebrew word for "in them" (בהם, bahem) contains the same root letters as the word for "animal" (בהמה, beheimah)

וְקְאֵי עֵל הַמְּדּוֹת and thus refers to the natural negative character הָבְעוֹת הַמְּבְעִים שֶׁל traits inherent to the animal soul.

The Rebbe Rashab is referring to the seven *middos* (emotional attributes) of the animal soul.

שַׁעַל זֶה נְתַּן לְאָדָם A person is given 70 years in which to refine these שְׁבְעִים שְׁנָה לְבְרֵר הַז׳ seven negative character traits.

70, 7x10, reflects how the above-mentioned seven attributes are integrated with every other one of the soul's ten attributes. Over the course of his life, a person has an obligation to refine his animal soul and its attributes until they reflect the positive qualities of his G-dly soul.⁶

^{3.} See K'llalei HaChinuch VehaD'rachah, where the Rebbe Rayatz develops similar concepts.

^{4.} See Likkutei Torah, Devarim, p. 37d ff., the maamar entitled Ki Sih'yenna Le'ish.

^{5.} Tehillim 90:10.

^{6.} This is a frequently discussed subject in Chassidus. See Sefer HaMaamarim 5626, p. 97; Sefer HaMaamarim 5638, p. 222; Sefer HaMaamarim 5657, p. 121; Sefer HaMaamarim 5686, p. 53, et al.

כאחת, רק מעט מעט אגרשנו מפניך כו׳53, שצריכים ע״ז ריבוי יגיעה ועבודה, עד שבמשך זמן, בריבוי עבודה בתפלה בהתבוננות באלקות ובהתגברות המדות של הנה"א, מחליש ומברר ומזכך את המדות טבעים דנה"ב כו', וכאשר הוא עובד ה'

דְאִי אֵפְשַׁר לְתַקּן הַכֹּל כְּאֲחַת This process of self-correction cannot be completed at once;

רק מְעֵט מְעֵט אָגָרְשֵׁנּר rather, "little by little will I drive them out from ישניף כר׳, before you."

In its source, this verse refers to the manner in which G-d would drive out the Canaanite nations before the Jewish people during their conquest of Eretz Yisrael. In a similar way, in every person's process of internal spiritual refinement, his self-correction cannot be immediate. Instead,

this requires considerable effort and labor. יגִיעַה וַעֲבוֹדֵה

הַמְּדּוֹת שֵׁל הַנֵּפֵשׁ הַאֵּלֹקִית soul,

עַר שֶׁבְּמֶשֶׁךְ זְמֵן בִּרְבּוּי Ultimately, over the course of time, after extensive endeavors in prayer, meditation on G-dliness, and strengthening of the attributes of one's G-dly

is it possible to weaken, refine, and purify the natural character traits inherent to the animal soul. דְנֵפָשׁ הַבַּהַמִית כוּ׳,

A twofold process is involved. First of all, by intensifying his labor in his Divine service, a person will inevitably weaken the material orientation of his animal soul. In addition, if he sincerely desires to refine himself, he must undergo a step-bystep, systematic process of developing his intellectual and emotional potentials, highlighting and polishing his positive potentials and correcting his shortcomings. That takes time; it cannot happen overnight.

Taking all this in mind, it is necessary to judge another person generously. Since he serves G-d,

^{7.} Cf. Shmos 23:30.

בטח יברר ויתקן מדותיו. ולפעמים צריכים ע"ז סיוע מזולתו, כי בעצמו, מצד אהבת עצמו, לפעמים אינו יודע מהמדה רעה שבו, וצריך חבירו לעוררו ע"ז ולהמציא עצות כו׳ כנ״ל, ואם הוא אוהבו באמת, צריך לעוררו ע״ז בינו לבין עצמו, שיתקן מדתו הלא טובה, וימציא לו עצה איך לתקן כו׳. וכשאינו עושה כן, כ״א מבטל ומבזה ומשפיל אותו. ובפרט בפני אחרים. זהו הוראה על שנאתו אותו. ששונא אותו בלבו.

over the course of time, he will surely refine and correct his character traits.

The interrelation between people is important in this זָה סִיּוּעַ מִזּוּלַתוֹ, process of self-refinement because at times, one needs help from others in order to achieve this goal.

בּי בְּעַצְמוֹ מִצֵּד אַהְבַת Every person's **self-love will sometimes** blind him עצמו לפּעַמִים אָינוֹ יוֹדֶע and deter him from recognizing a negative char-מהמדה רעה שבו. acter trait he possesses on his own.

וצריד חברו לעוררו It is his friend's responsibility to tactfully and lov-על זה ולהמציא עצות ingly make him aware of this fault and advise him on how to correct it, as mentioned previously.8 כה' פנזפר לעיל,

When people are in a relationship and one has a fault,

וֹאָם הוא אוֹהָבוֹ בַּאָמֵת if one truly loves the other

אַריך לעוֹרָרוֹ עַל זֵה he should arouse his attention and speak to him בינוֹ לְבֵין עַצְמוֹ about his character faults privately,

encouraging him to correct an undesirable trait,

איד לתקז כו׳.

מוַמְצִיא לוֹ עֵצַה and offering him advice how to correct it.

וֹכְשֵׁאִינוֹ עוֹשָה כָּן If he does not do so,

פי אָם מְבַטֵּל וּמְבַזָּה but instead, considers the other person as nothing, וֹמַשָּׁפִיל אוֹתוֹ, humiliates him, and degrades him,

,וּבְפָרֵט בָּפְנֵי אֲחֵרִים particularly if he does so in public –

^{8.} See ch. 10.

ואינו חפץ כלל בטובתו (ולא בכללות הענין שיהי׳ עבודת הוי׳, כאשר כאו״א צריך לרצות באמת שיהי׳ עבודת ה׳ בעולם, שזה חפץ ורצון ה׳ כו׳), אדרבה כו׳. והסיבה הוא מצד העדר עבודתו באמת, שהעבודה שלו אינו אמיתית כו׳, דגם שהוא עובד ה׳ בתפלה ותורה כו׳, מ״מ, אינה אמיתית בבחי׳ ביטול והנחת עצמותו, כ״א בבחי׳ ישות

זֶהוּ הוֹרָאָה עַל שִׂנְאָתוֹ אוֹתוֹ שֶׁשֹּׁוֹנֵא אוֹתוֹ בְּלְבּוֹ וְאֵינוֹ חָפֵץ כְּלָל בְּטוֹכָתוֹ	this is a clear sign that he hates that person in his heart and does not seek his welfare in any way.
וְלֹא בִּכְלָלוּת הָעִנְיָן)	(Moreover, such a person's negative orientation is not focused only on other individuals but affects his general approach.
שֶׁיִּהְיֶה עֲבוֹדַת הוי׳,	He is not encouraging that there should be service of G-d.
כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד צָרִיךּ לִרְצוֹת כָּאֲמֶת	That should be the genuine desire of every individual –
שֶׁיִּהְיֶה עֲבוֹדַת ה׳ בָּעוֹלֶם	that the service of G-d flourish in the world,
שֶׁיֶה חֵפֶץ וּרְצוֹן ה' כוּ')	for this is G-d's will and desire.)
שֶׁזָּה חֵפֶץ וּרְצוֹן ה׳ כוּ׳) אַדְּרַבָּה כוּ׳.	
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	On the contrary, such a person does not seek this. He is not concerned with the larger picture. That is evident from the fact that he is concerned with another person's petty shortcomings rather than highlighting
אַדְרַבָּה כּוּ׳. וְהַסִּבָּה הוּא מִצֵּד הֶעְדֵּר	On the contrary, such a person does not seek this. He is not concerned with the larger picture. That is evident from the fact that he is concerned with another person's petty shortcomings rather than highlighting his positive qualities. The reason for his behavior is his own lack of sin-

מְכָּל מְקוֹם אֵינָה nevertheless, his Divine service is not genuine; it is not characterized by bittul. He does not put himself

נהנחת עצמותו, aside and see the larger picture.

study, בַּתִפְלֵּה וְתוֹרָה כוּ׳,

ובמורגש בעצמו כו'.

קיצור. הפירוד בעניני עבודה מטעמים שאינם צודקים. סיבתם שנאה והעדר עבודה אמיחים

פָּי אָם בְּרְחִינַת יֵשׁוּת Instead, his Divine service is characterized by *yeshus* מוֹל. and self-concern.

The way a person relates to somebody else says a lot about his own Divine service. If he slips into faultfinding and criticizing another person, he is revealing his own inner faults.

קצור. Summary:

Divisiveness in matters of Divine service results בַּפְּרוּד בְּעִנְיְנֵי עֲבוֹּדָה from unjustified reasons.

סְבְּתָם שִּׂנְאָה וְהֶעְבֵּר What motivates a person to conceive of these reasons . אֲבוֹדָה אֲמִתִּית. is baseless hatred and a lack of genuine Divine service.

כ) שעז"נ ימי: ראה לקו"ת פ' תצא ד"ה כי תהיינה לאיש [לח, א].

⁴⁸⁾ ע"פ קהלת ז, כ.

[.]איוב יא, יב (49

⁽⁵⁰ תהלים צ, י.

¹⁵⁾ ראה סה״מ תרכ״ו ע׳ צז. תר״ל ע׳ קמב. תרל״ח ע׳ רכב. ע׳ תלג. תר״ם ח״א ע׳ קפד. תרמ״א ע׳ תצט. תרנ״ז ע׳ קכא. עטר״ת ע׳ תכה. תרפ״ו ע׳ נג. תש״ב ע׳ 113.

[.] בהערה הקומות שצויינו בהערה הקודמת.

⁵³⁾ משפטים כג, ל.

POINTS TO PONDER P

♦ Fargin

Why do so many find the need to focus on the faults of the other?

♦ Healthy Critique

Is there a healthy way to offer critique?

♦ What insight can you glean from Heichaltzu chapter 11?



