LESSONS IN OTOTIC

A TREATISE ON AHAVAS YISRAEL BY THE REBBE RASHAB

Dedicated to the Lubavitcher Rebbe



whose teachings and example are a
never-ending source of life for all mankind.
May we continue in his paths, and complete
the mission with which he has charged us:
to make the world conscious of the imminent Redemption
and to prepare an environment
in which this ideal can be realized.

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

Shabbos was 28 Sivan, the anniversary of the Rebbe's arrival in America. Here was a meeting of two distinctly different gestalts.

To Americans, raised on the approach of rugged individualism, vulnerability is a foreign concept. The American ideal is to be tough, not to flinch in the face of opposition, but rather to rise to challenges and overcome them.

That approach has led to enhanced achievement and the attainment of success in many fields. However, there is the possibility that it also will lead to rigidity, to a person being fixed in his own perspective and affected by tunnel vision to the extent that he cannot see another person's viewpoint.

Chassidism underscores the primacy of *bittul*. Now *bittul* and strength are not opposites, Quite the contrary, it is a person who is permeated by *bittul* who possesses truly formidable power. His response to opposition is not necessarily to barricade himself in his own position. Instead, his *bittul* gives him the potential to open himself to the divergent approach, for his positions are vulnerable, but he is not.

For example, as the Rebbe Rashab explains in the chapter that follows, in the intellectual realm, such a person is willing to subject his theories and thoughts to the most rigorous examination. He has nothing to lose, because his goal is not to show that he is right. He wants to know what is right, and if in the process of discovering what is right he has to admit that he had a misconception, he is only too happy.

Similar concepts apply when it comes to a person dealing with his inner faults. He does not want to defend himself. He wants to be the best version of himself possible and therefore is open to listen to any constructive assessment of how he can improve any character weakness he possesses. He is willing, indeed eager, to change and rid himself of any undesirable qualities in his personality.

Continuing this line of thought, although the Rebbe Rashab does not mention it here, the same motif applies in interpersonal relationships. When a person

opens himself up to the point that he is vulnerable, that he is not holding anything back, he can become truly one with another person.

Sichos In English

Rosh Chodeh Tammuz, 5780

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ין ביותר ימצא עון שנאת חנם בעוה"ר בעובדי ה", שכאו"א בונה במה לעצמו, הן בעסק התורה ע"פ דעתו ושכלו דוקא, וכמו"כ בעסק העבודה ע"פ חכמתו דוקא, ואינם מתאחדים ומתחברים זע"ז כלל. אשר באמת יסוד ועיקר גדול בעוסקים בתורה ועבודה, שיתחברו וידברו זע"ז, הן בעסק התורה, הלא ברזל"

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In this chapter, the Rebbe Rashab develops the theme emphasized in the previous chapters, that a person's self-concern can create friction and strife. He emphasizes that such undesirable conduct can exist in a Torah community.

יַהְבֶּה בְּיוֹתֵר יִמְצֵא עֵוֹן On account of our many sins,¹ the sin of baseless hatred is found especially² among those who יה בְּעוֹבְדֵי ה׳ engage in Divine service.3

בּוֹנֵה בַּמַה לְעַצְמוֹ

שׁכַּל אָחָד וְאָחָד Each person builds himself a pedestal

הן תַּלְבָּה הַתּלְרָה עַל פִּי both in the realm of Torah scholarship, where he bases himself specifically on his own knowledge and understanding,

and in his Divine service, which he carries out על פִּי חַכְמַתוֹ דַוְקָא, guided by his own wisdom.

יִמְתַחַבְּרִים זֵה עִם זֵה כָּלֵל. one another at all.

Such people neither come together nor bond with

This is undesirable, for in truth, it is of fundamental importance for those who are occupied in Torah and Divine service בַּתּוֹרָה וַעֲבוֹרָה

וה עם וה,

to bond and communicate with each other.

^{1. &}quot;Due to our many sins" is a commonly used Rabbinic expression implying a regrettable situation.

^{2.} Perhaps because the potential for unity is greater in the realm of holiness, when not developed, the pendulum swings in the opposite direction and greater strife arises.

^{3.} As mentioned, Divine service is being used as a translation of the term avodah. It refers to a person's efforts to serve G-d and elevate and refine his character.

בברזל יחד ואיש יחד פני רעהו44, כי לא יכול לומר אשר כפי שכלו הוא האמת, וכששומע דעת חבירו ומפלפלים זע"ז באמיתות. ה"ה באים לאמיתת הדברים. וכמו״כ בעניני עבודה, שמגלים נגעי לבבם זל״ז ומדברים בזה, שיש בזה כמה פרטי הטוב. הא׳, שיש כמה דברים שאינו מוצאם בעצמו (ער חאַפט זיך ניט אַליין) מצד

דהן בְּעֵכֶק הַתּוֹרָה This applies regarding the study of Torah, to which our Sages⁴ applied the verse,⁵

יַחַד בַּרְזֵל יָחַד "[Just as] iron sharpens iron, so does one man אישׁ יַחַד פָּגֵי רֵעֲהוּ. sharpen another." They explain, just as one piece of iron is honed with another, two Torah scholars can enhance each other's knowledge. Such interaction is necessary because

יפי שכלו הוא האמת is true.

no person can assume that his own perspective

עם זה בַאַמְתּוּת

רּכִּשֵׁשׁוֹמֵעַ דַּעַת Only when he hears a colleague's opinion and they engage in a sincere analytical discussion,

is it possible to arrive at a true understanding of the . לַאַמְתַּת הַדְּבַרִים matters at hand.

וּכְמוֹ כֵן בִּעְנִינֵי עֲבוֹדָה Similarly, in avodah, Divine service,

The benefits of speaking with others that result when discussing abstract intellectual concepts are magnified many times when discussing personal issues. It is specifically in the emotional realm, that the input of others has a powerful effect.

when people reveal their inner faults to each other and speak about them freely,

. שֵׁישׁ בַּוֶה כַּמָה פְּרָטֵי הַטוֹב a number of benefits can be attained.

^{4.} An allusion to Taanis 7a quoted in ch. 6 of the maamar beginning, Issa BeZohar, Cheilek Gimmel, 5694, by the Rebbe Rayatz, which develops the themes of Heichaltzu, and was published as an addendum to that maamar.

^{5.} Mishlei 27:17.

אהבת עצמו, דעל כל פשעים תכסה אהבה 45, ומכ"ש על חסרונות במדות וכדומה, האהבה שהאדם אוהב א"ע בטבעו מכסה ע"ז, וחבירו מעוררו ע"ז. ועוד זאת, כשמגלה נגעי לבבו בדבור, הנה בעת שמדבר בזה, מצטער בנפשו מאד מזה הרבה יותר מכמו שהצטער מקודם, וממילא מתחרט בנפשו על כל הענינים הלא טובים,

תאפט זיך ניט אַלֵיין) them,

דָבָרִים Eirstly, every person has certain faults which he שֵׁאֵינוֹ מוֹצָאַם בְּעַצְמוֹ (עֵר will not find on his own; he will never notice

קצַר אַהָבַת עַצְמוֹ for his own self-love dulls his sensitivity,

תכסה אהבה,

as it is written, "Love covers all faults."

אונוֹת פֿעל שַׁכֵּן עַל הַסְרוֹנוֹת How much more so does this apply regarding one's shortcomings with regard to various character traits and the like.

For example, he may criticize another person for showing pride, without realizing that he displays that very same fault.7

עַצְמוֹ בָּטָבְעוֹ מְכַפֵּה עַל זֶה

סף אוֹהֶב אַת One's innate self-love masks them,

. בַּחַבֶּרוֹ מְעוֹרְרוֹ עֵל זָה and another person will help him by bringing them to his attention.8

ועוֹד זֹאַת כְּשֵׁמְגַלֵּה Furthermore, when a person reveals his inner נגעי לְבַבוֹ בַּדְבּוּר faults in conversation with a true friend,

as he speaks about them,

האָדְעַעֵּר בְּנַפְשׁוֹ מְאֹד he feels greater remorse. They pain him much more than they did before speaking, touching a deeper ישֶׁהְצְטַעֵר מִקֹּרֵם. point within his soul.

^{6.} Mishlei 10:12.

^{7.} See the maamar entitled Issa BeZohar, 5694, loc. cit.

^{8.} See Derech Mitzvosecha, mitzvas ahavas Yisrael, where similar concepts are explained.

^{9.} See Sefer HaMaamarim 5659, p. 5, et al., which elaborates on the potential within the power of speech to intensify the energy in a particular emotional quality.

ועוקר רצונו מהם כו', שעי"ז נתתקן הרבה כו'. שז"ע וידוי דברים, כידוע שהוא תיקון גדול לנפש החוטא, והיינו מפני שכשבא בדבור אז נוגע לו הדבר (עס רירט עם אן) בפנימיות נפשו, שמצטער מאד ומתחרט כו'. ודוגמא לזה הוא מ"ש⁴⁶ דאגה בלב איש ישיחנה, וארז"ל⁴⁷ ישיחנה לאחרים, ואנו רואין שבעת שמדבר בצערו, אז

אַל מִתְחָרֵט בְּנַפְשׁוֹ עַל As a matter of course, this pain will lead to a strong sense of regret over all his character faults

,יעוֹבֶר רְצוֹנוֹ מֶהֶם כוּי, motivating him to totally uproot his desire for them,

thereby correcting שַׁעַל יְדֵי זֶה נִתְתַּקֵן his personal qualities .יבה כרי. significantly.

This is the inner reason for vidui dvorim, a verbal confession of one's sins.10

As is well-known, this corrects the soul of the נְדוֹל לְגַפֵשׁ הַחוֹטֵא, sinner to a great degree,

עם אַן) בַּפְנִימִיוּת נַפְשׁוֹ

for the verbalization of one's sin strikes the inner-אַז נוֹגְעַ לוֹ הַדְּבֵר (עָס רִירָט most chords of his soul,

וּמְתַחַרָט כוּ׳.

causing him to feel great pain and regret.

ן שֶּׁבֶּתוּב A similar concept is reflected in the verse, "[When דאָנָה בְלֶב אִישׁ יִשִּיחֵנָה there is] worry in a man's heart, he should divert [his attention]."

ישיחנה Our Sages¹² explain that the Hebrew word ישחנה, yash-לאחרים, chena, translated as "divert" suggests a similar verb ישיחנה, yesichena, that means "speak of it." Thus, they interpret the verse to mean, "If there is worry in in a man's heart, let him tell others about it."

^{10.} Halachah requires a person to verbally confess his sins. Having thoughts of regret is not sufficient (Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah 2:2-3). See also the Tzemach Tzedek's, Derech Mitzvosechah, mitzvas vidui veteshuvah, which speaks about these and related concepts.

^{11.} Mishlei 12:25, as understood by Yoma 75a; Rashi to the verse.

^{12.} Yoma 75a.

יגדל צערו ביותר מכמו שהי׳ קודם, אמנם אח״כ נוח לו יותר (עס ווערט עם בעסער). וכמו״כ בעבודה. כשמדבר בעניני נגעי לבבו. בעת מעשה הוא מצטער יותר. ואח״כ נוח לו יותר, מפני שבזה מסיר הרבה מהנגעים והעוונות כו'. עוד זאת, כשמדברים יחד, ממציא כל א' עצות לזה איך לתקן, ועושים הסכם בקבלה על להבא לתקן מעשיהם שיהי׳ כך וכך כו׳, וההסכם אשר עושים שנים או רבים, יש לזה חיזוק הרבה

,בּיוֹתֵר מִכְּמוֹ שֵׁהָיָה לְדֵם, before,

וְאָנוּ רוֹאִין שֵׁבְּעֵת שֵׁמְדַבֶּר In actual fact, we see that when a person talks about his troubles, his pain becomes greater than

(עס ווערט עם בעסער).

but afterwards he feels better.

וּכְמוֹ כֵן בַּעֲבוֹדָה כְּשֶׁמְדַבֵּר Similarly, in Divine service, when a person talks about his inner faults, בעניני נגעי לבבו

מצטער יותר,

הוא הוא העשה הוא he feels greater pain while talking about it,

but afterwards he feels better, וְאַחֵר כַּךְ נוֹחַ לוֹ יוֹתֵר

מהנגעים והעוונות כוי. and sins.

שׁבְּוֵה מֵסִיר הַרְבֵּה because the remorse he feels removes many flaws

עוֹד וֹאת כִּשְׁמְדַבְּרִים יַחַד Furthermore there is another benefit that can be attained when people discuss spiritual improvement together.

לגה איד לתקן

Each one proposes means of correcting the flaws

מיהנה כַּךְ וְכַךְ כוּ׳. and/or that.

and they can jointly resolve to correct certain מַל לְהַבָּא לְתַקּן מַצַשִּׂיהֵם aspects of their behavior in the future, doing this

שנים או רבים

A resolution reached by two or more people

יותר מההסכם שעושה בפ"ע כו'. ונמצא שההתחברות בעובדי ה' הוא טוב מאד בכמה פרטים כו׳. וכ״ז הוא כשיש בו ביטול, ויכול להתאחד ולהתקרב עם זולתו, אבל כשהוא במציאות יש, ממילא אינו יכול לגלות כלל נגעי לבבו לזולתו כו׳, או שחושב את זולתו נמוך מאד, וא"כ איך יגלה לפניו את עניניו, ומה יועיל לו, דהיינו

בִּפְנֵי עַצְמוֹ כוּ׳,

ישׁ לְזֵה חִזּיּק הַרְבֵּה is much more powerful and lasting than a resolu-יוֹתֵר מֵהַהַסְכֵּם שֵׁעוֹשֵׂה tion made by one person alone. 13

דומְבָּא שֶׁהַהְתְחַבְּרוּת Thus, when individuals engaged in Divine service come together and combine their efforts, it proves . מאר בְּכַמָּה פְּרָטִים כוּ׳. very beneficial in many ways.

בו בּטוּל All of this is only possible if one possesses the quality of bittul,

and is capable of becoming one with another וּלְהַתְּקֵרֵב עִם זוּלַתוֹ, person and coming close to him.

אַבַל כִּשְהוּא בָּמְצִיאוּת יֵשׁ If, however, one is dominated by yeshus,

פלל נגעי לבבו לזוּלתוֹ כוּ׳. else.

ה מְמֵילֵא אֵינוֹ יַכוֹל לְגַלוֹת he cannot at all reveal his inner faults to someone

His self-concern causes him to employ defense mechanisms that prevent him from opening himself to the degree necessary to bring about genuine change.⁷

אוֹ שֶׁחוֹשֶׁב אָת Another way such a person's yeshus manifests itself is he seeks to magnify his self-image by lowering his opinion of others. This prevents him from speaking openly to them because he will say to himself,

יְגַלֶּה לְפָנְיו "How can I reveal my affairs to that person? What אָת עניַנֵיו וּמַה יוֹעִיל לוֹ, purpose will it serve me?

^{13.} See Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 25, p. 307, and Sefer HaSichos 5748, Vol. 1, p. 331, et al., where the Rebbe refers to this point. In those sources, the Rebbe explains that the power of a person's resolution is amplified when it is made in front of others. Therefore, there is an advantage to making a resolution at a farbrengen, Moreover, the other people can later remind the person of the commitment he made and spur him to keep it.

In the maamar entitled Issa BeZohar cited above, the Rebbe Rayatz mentions a fourth point: that when many people join together in constructive efforts, that arouses powerful positive influence Above.

איזה תועלת יבוא לו מזולתו. והעיקר הוא, שבעצם אינו יכול להתאחד עם זולתו, הן בעסק התורה, שמעמיד על דעתו, וכפי דעתו ושכלו יחשוב שכן הוא האמת, וסברת זולתו אינו מקבל כלל לשמוע ולדון בזה באמיתית, בלי נטי׳ צדדית כו׳. ואז אדרבה, כשמדבר יחד בענין שכלי, הם מתפרדים יותר, ונעשים מנגדים זל"ז יותר (וזה נעשה

יַבוֹא לוֹ מְזּוּלַתוֹ.

איזה תועלת How will that person benefit me?

וָהָעָקֵר הוּא שֵׁבְעֵצֵם אֵינוֹ The fundamental point is that such a person has יבול להתאַחה עם זוּלַתוֹ an essential flaw; he lacks the ability to unite with someone else.

הן בְּעֵסֶק הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁמֵּצְמִיר Accordingly, in Torah study, he will stubbornly על דַעְתוֹ וּכְפִי דַעְתוֹ וְשִׂכְלוֹ defend his opinion and, follow his understand-יַחְשׁוֹב שֵׁכֵּן הוּא הָאֵמֶת, ing and conception, thinking that his opinion is the truth.

ולָדוּן בְּגַה בַּאַמְתִּית prejudice. בַּלִי נִטְיַה צְדַדִית כּוּ׳.

אינוֹ אַינוֹ He dismisses anyone else's opinion and is unwilling to listen to it and consider it impartially without

וְאָז אָדְרַבַּה In such a situation, the opposite occurs. Instead of an interaction between two people fostering unity,

יַחַר בּּענֵין שִׂכְלִי when such a person discusses an abstract idea נאַשִּים יוֹתֵר וְנַעֲשִׂים together with someone else, they draw further apart and oppose each other to a greater degree.

Often, people argue without consciously intending to create division. It is just that they feel that they are correct and want to make that point. However, what is important is the next step. Does their discussion lead to a fruitful exchange of ideas where each person grows from listening and understanding the other? Or does it lead to each one rigidly defending his own position and feeling hostility to the other for not accepting it? Where the conversation leads reflects the persons' motivation in entering into it. Is he genuinely seeking to understand the point under discussion or is he looking for an opportunity to express his own yeshus?

אצלו טענה אח״כ שאינו יכול להתערב ולהתאחד אתו, שהרי אמר כך וכך כו׳). קיצור. שנאת חנם בעובדי הוי׳. תועליות דיבוק חברים והדיבור בלימוד ובעניני עבודה. סיבת הפירוד בעסק התורה.

להתערב ולהתאחד אתו the other in the future.

(וֵוֶה נַעֲשֶׂה אֶצְלוֹ טְעַנָה) (Afterwards, the person uses this disagreement as a אַחַר כָּךְ שֶׁאֵינוֹ יָכוֹל reason not to cooperate and join together with

.('שָהֵרִי אָמֵר כַּךְּ וְכַךְּ כֹּרִי). Their disagreement creates obstacles that prevents them from working together, for "he said such-andsuch," etc.)

קצור. Summary:

שָׂנָאַת חָנָּם בַּעוֹבְדֵי הוי׳.

Baseless hatred among those who engage in Divine service.

וּבְעִנִינִי עֲבוֹדָה.

The benefits of friends' joining together and dis-יהַדְּבּוּר בְּלְמוּד cussing both their study of Torah and their avodah.

סְבַּת הַפֵּרוּד בִּעֵסֵק הַתּוֹרָה. Yeshus as the reason for divisiveness in Torah study.

יט) הלא ברזל: מרמז לדרז"ל בתענית ז', א. הובא לקמן בד"ה איתא בזח"ג פ"ו [ע' מד].

⁴⁴⁾ משלי כז, יז.

^{.45)} שם י. יב.

⁽⁴⁶ שם יב, כה (ושם: יַשְׁחַנַה).

[.]א"א, רע"א (47

POINTS TO PONDER P

♦ Friends

What role do friends play in our lives, and how open should we be with each other?

♦ Venting

Does chassidus approve of venting sessions?

♦ What insight can you glean from Heichaltzu chapter 10?



