

The following is our Tikkun Middas HaKa'as Review Notes, as culled from the Sefer *Haser Ka'as Milibecha*, by Rabbi Avraham Tovalsky, Shlita:

1. The Rabbeinu Tam (whose Yahrzeit, as noted above, is today) teaches in the Sefer *HaYashar*: “*Kol Hama'arich Apo Leolam Lo Yischareit*--one who delays getting angry will *never* be sorry.”
2. The Sefer *Orchos Tzaddikim* notes that to be *Erech Apayim*--slow to anger, is one of the Thirteen Middos of Hashem. Especially if one feels that his nature is predisposed to Ka'as, and still overcomes it--about him Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, writes (Mishlei 16:32): “*Tov Erech Apayim MeiGibor U'Moshel Berucho MiLocheid Ihr*--he who is slow to anger is superior to a mighty person, and one who controls his spirit is greater than the conqueror of a city.”
3. The Sefer *Yalkut Mei'am Loez* pointedly writes: “If you want to learn whether a person **has seichel or not**, see if he is able to control his temperament when others anger him.”
4. The Sifri (Parshas Matos 48) teaches that: “*Bah Lichlal Ka'as Bah Lichlal Ta'us*--if one gets himself angry, he will lead himself to make the wrong decisions.” Simply stated, Ka'as is **the portal** to mistake!
5. Chazal (Nedarim 22B) teach about one who angers: “*BeYaduah Sheavonosav Merubin Mizechuyosav*--it is certain that his iniquities exceed his merits.” Based upon this, the Chofetz Chaim concludes that ‘one with a brain in his head’ should run away from the Middah of Ka'as as one runs from fire--for this Middah will ‘do-him-in’ on the Yom HaDin.
6. Based upon the Zohar, Parshas Pekudei: A child knocks over (even intentionally) a \$25 glass vase in the dining room, and breaks it. Would his father then throw a \$500 piece of crystal at him and break that-- in order to show him what a dastardly deed he had done? When one--instead of throwing the \$500 crystal--instead hurls out anger and rage, perhaps with caustic words and *ona'as devarim* on top of it all--he has hurled much more than a \$500 crystal! One must use his head!
7. Rabbi Yisroel MeiRozhin, Z'tl, makes the following fantastic comment: Chazal (Shabbos 105B) teach that one who angers is as if he served avodah zara. Chazal do not exaggerate. Let us consider how rare or infrequently we are challenged with the aveira of avodah zara in our days. We may, however, often be challenged with the aveira of Ka'as. Based upon this Chazal, when one overcomes his anger in our days, he will obtain the same reward as if he had prevented himself from worshipping avodah zara!
8. The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvah 4:5) lists 24 items which are *Me'akeiv Teshuvah*--and being one who angers is one of the 24. Indeed, HaRav Shlomo Gavirol, Z'tl, writes in his Sefer *Tikkon Middos HaNefesh* (4:1), that one who is beset by a strong level of anger is actually *ainenu rachok min hameshugaim*. Hakhel Note: Who wants to be in that category?

9. One who looks at the face of one who is angry suffers from forgetting his learning, and forgetting in general (Sefer *Chassidim* 11:26).

10. HaRav Chaim Vital, Z'tl, writes: "My master, the Arizal, was more *makpid* with the sin of Ka'as than with all other aveiros." Indeed, it is forbidden even for the sake or in the course of a Mitzvah--as we find in this week's Parsha with Moshe Rabbeinu and the *Mei Meriva*, on Moshe's exalted level. The Ari would explain that **Ka'as pollutes the entire neshama in a way that no other aveira does**, and can cause other even more horrific results to the neshama (which he details) as well. One should simply understand that his Lev is the Heichal HaShechina and that one who allows himself to get angry is allowing an idol to come into the Heichal--with the first result being that the Shechina departs. Indeed, the Sefer *Reishis Chochma* writes that there is nothing that voids one's *deveikus* with Hashem more than Ka'as.

11. When one attempts to rebuke, and does so in a tone of anger and loud voice--then, rather than fulfilling the Torah command of *Hocheiach Tochiach*, he has instead **violated** the Torah command of *Lo Sisah Alav Cheit*. Moreover, one who angers will many times **violate** the Mitzvas Asei of *V'Ahavta L'Reiacha Kamocha* by hurting the person being addressed by word or action, and also **violate** the Mitzvas Asei of *B'Tzedek Tishpot Amisecha* by making the improper assumption and allowing himself to be angered as a result.

12. In the *Igeres HaRamban*, the Ramban instructs: "*Tisnaheig Tomid LeDabeir Kol Devarecha B'Nachas Lechol Adam U'Vechol Eis.*" In the Sefer *Cheshbono Shel Olam*, each phrase of the Ramban is explained, to demonstrate its meaning and application:

***Kol Devarecha B'Nachas*--all of one's words should be calm.** By this, the Ramban means that even if one has a complaint or claim against another person which could be delivered in a strong or angry tone--he should assure that it is softly stated.

***Lechol Adam*--to every person.** Even to a person who is difficult or annoying, and who makes one feel unsettled, and even to a person who had initially consciously or willingly hurled hurtful or insulting words.

***U'Vechol Eis*--at all times.** Even if one is tired, has not eaten, has no time, or is beset by difficulties or burdens--nevertheless he must be sure not to let his personal situation out for any reason on others.

13. The Pasuk (Bamidbar 31:14) teaches "*Vayiktsof Moshe*"--and Moshe Rabbeinu was upset with the soldiers who had returned from the war against Midyan, for it appeared that they had left the women of Midyan alive. However, the Pasuk immediately continues (Bamidbar 31:15): "*Vayomer Moshe*"--and Moshe said to them--the word ***Amira***--indicating a soft and gentle tone. The Sefer *Aznayim LaTorah* explains that the Torah is providing us with a great lesson here. Once Moshe realized his immediate reaction of upsetness, he remained silent--until his words would be not of *Vayiktsof*--but of *Amira*--the soft and gentle tone of the Torah Jew!

14. In this week's Pirkei Avos (5:11), the Mishna teaches that there are four different types of temperaments. Of the four, the two ends are one who is difficult to anger and easy to appease, who is deemed a *Chossid*, and one who is easy to anger and difficult to appease, who is deemed a *Rasha*. HaRav Moshe Schick, Z'tl, explains that by the Tanna referring to these temperaments as *Chossid* and *Rasha*, he is teaching us that one cannot excuse himself by saying he was born with the nature of an angry person, for which there is no adequate correction possible. Rather, a person must appreciate that he can overcome this Middah--if he does not he is a *Rasha*--and if he does, he is a *Chossid*!

15. Chazal (Eiruvim 65B) teach that a person can assess himself by his conduct in three areas: (i) *koso* (his drinking), *kiso* (how he deals in monetary matters); and (iii) *ka'aso* (controlling his anger). The Ben Yehoyadah (ibid.) explains that one does not drink all the time, nor is he engaged in monetary matters all the time--but the test of *ka'as* applies day and night, weekday, Shabbos and Yom Tov. Hakhel Note: What a test to pass!

16. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbi 50:1) teaches that after the Malochim who had visited with Avraham Avinu in Chevron left Avraham's house, they waited hours until nightfall to actually enter Sedom. This was because they were *Malachei Rachamim*--and were hoping that somehow those who deserved punishment could actually be spared. The Sefer *Peninei HaSheleimus* points out how nobly the Malochim had acted--they delayed going back to Shomayim and instead stayed in a foreign and inappropriate world for them, in order to help save a sinning city. All the more so must we react with patience and mercy to those who dwell in the very same world that we do!

17. HaRav Yechezkel Levenstein, Z'tl, teaches that every day in Shemone Esrei we daven to Hashem "*Borcheinu Avinu Kulanu K'Echad B'Ohr Panecha*--Hashem please bless us together with the light of Your countenance." If we truly seek Hashem's *Ha'aras Panim*--how then, asks HaRav Yechezkel, can we show another anything but our light of countenance as well?!

18. HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, Z'tl, the Alter of Slobodka teaches: "*HaRagzan Makeh Es Atzmo Bishvil Ha'avlah She'asah Zulaso*--the angry person *hits himself*--for what the other person does to him!"

19. The Chidda writes that all Middos Tivos and Raos are impressed on a person's palm. When a person performs a Mitzvah and gets angry as a result, the Chidda continues, the Mitzvah does not appear on his palm--but the aveira of anger does! Hakhel Note: Maybe we can remember this from time-to-time as we glance at our palm!

20. The following are possible practical *Eitzos* for a person to purify himself from and purge his *prior* middah of *Ka'as*:

A. HaRav Chaim Volozhiner, Z'tl, teaches that if one feels that he cannot give rebuke or reprimand another without speaking in a harsh tone, he is *patur* from giving the *tochacha*, and should not do so.

B. HaRav Chaim Volozhiner also teaches that one should specifically daven to Hashem daily that he overcome the middah of Ka'as, and not be makpid at the affront of others.

C. The Sefer *Peleh Yoetz* writes that remaining silent when one is angry is like pouring water over a fire.

D. The Sefer *Erech Apayim* gives various anti-Ka'as techniques, which include taking a drink before expressing anger or fining oneself money to tzedaka each and every time he loses control. Hakhel Note: A related *Eitzah* given by the Sefer *Tzidkas HaTzaddik* is that when one realizes he is getting angrier or angry--he should leave the room that he is in or go out of the house. Hakhel Note: A change of scenery!

E. A good friend may want to record another when he gets angry, and give him the recording the next day--so that an indelible impression is left upon him of how he sounds when he is angry. Every so often, one may listen to the tape to remind himself about the folly of anger.

F. The Shelah HaKadosh writes that if one feels that he is about to burst out in anger, or actually realizes that he is angry, he should pick up the corner of his tzitzis and look at it. Fascinatingly, the Gematria of Ka'as (150) is also the Gematria of Kanaf--the corner of the tzitzis!

G. The Shela HaKadosh also teaches that the Gematria of Ka'as (once again 150) is the number of Kepitelech that there are in Tehillim--150! This literally gives us an idea of what we should be reciting when feelings of anger come on--Tehillim!

21. If one realizes he is entering a situation (going to a place or about to meet a person) which may bring him to anger, he must not ignore the situation, but rather prepare for it. If one lets himself 'be surprised'--it is much more likely that he will fail. How can one 'prepare'? One can daven to Hashem for his assistance, and contemplate what he will do to avoid the situation of anger which will likely present itself in one way or the other. Hakhel Note: The Sefer *Chareidim* brings that Rebbi Akiva would daven to Hashem every day: "*Yehi Ratzon Shelo Echos Velo Achisecha*--may it be Your will that I do not get angry, and that I do not anger You!"[This is already in Elokai Netzor in Nusach Sfard--and it can certainly be added into the personal tefillos of one who is reciting Elokai Netzor in Nusach Ashkenaz!]

22. There are certain other times when one must exercise special care--when one has not eaten for while; when one is in a rush to get to work; in the course of rushed Shabbos preparations; when one needs to make a plane, train or bus; when one is preparing for a Simcha, are some common examples of when a prior mental note is necessary in order to avoid the challenge of Ka'as--which will almost surely come up in one or more ways--and for which a special Tefillah, and a special 'on-guard' should be implemented!

23. If one is angered by a person who clearly has mental issues, one should rationally consider his verbal attacks or challenges not meaningful. On the other hand, when one is criticized by a

wise person, one should more deeply contemplate what this person is saying to him--maybe he is right, at least in some way?

24. The Sefer *Erech Apayim* writes that one way to deflect anger is simply to think: 'In the long run, will this really matter?' Indeed, if it is really a short term issue, one can think: 'Tomorrow, will this really matter?'

25. Another important technique to combat anger is for one to take upon himself, after his anger (in any situation) has been diffused, to commit to say something like: "Anything that I said about you should not come true" or "I was surely wrong in what I said." If one knows that he will have to state words such as these, his own feelings of self-worth should help in diffusing the anger *ab-initio*.

26. A wonderful technique to avoid anger at someone is to instead give him a gift of some sort or praise him--as Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, generally teaches: "*Im Ra'av Sonecha Hachileihu Lechem*--if your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat....(Mishlei 25:21). Indeed, it is well known that Rebbi Yisroel Salanter, Z'tl, would immediately react to somebody who attempted to incite him or harm him--not only by forgiving them, but by performing a beneficial act on their behalf or towards them. Rebbi Yisroel held that by doing so, he was fulfilling the Mitzvas Asei Min HaTorah of *VeHalachta BeDrachav*--following in the ways of Hashem--Who when people sin, continues to give them the gift of life and, moreover, fulfill their needs and wants! **Hakhel Note:** What an approach...overturning Ka'as into *VeHalachta BeDrachav*! We can all do it!

27. Once Rebbi Yisroel Salanter and those accompanying him were waiting for a train in the train station. Somebody heard a noise and called out: "It's the train--the train is coming!" After this had happened several times with no train in sight, the people in the station began to yell and scream at this newfound 'boy who cried wolf'. Rebbi Yisroel turned to his students and taught: If one has presence of mind, he will come to the conclusion that there is nothing to be angry about in a situation such as this. The person obviously meant well, hoping that the train would come soon and trying to spread the good news to others. He was simply inexperienced, overly hopeful, jumping too-quick to conclusions, and not yet enough of a *ba'al mussar* to learn from his mistakes!

28. HaRav Eliyahu Lopian, Z'tl was asked: "*Bameh He'erachta Yamim*--in what zechus do you have Arichas Yamim?" He answered: "From the day I reached understanding, I did not become angry at anyone or anything."

29. HaRav Lopian also explained that the most important test for a person's anger is how he acts with the members of his household--as, after all, is he not the 'head of the house'?

30. HaRav Lopian would also add that it is not only on Erev Shabbos that a person's temperament is tested--but **on Shabbos itself**--especially during the meals, when everything is not going as he had hoped or looked forward to.

31. The Meiri writes in his *Chibur HaTeshuvah*: “*Ki Lo Yerucham Machar, Asher Lo Teracheim HaYom*--the one who does not have mercy today, will not be the subject of mercy tomorrow!”

32. The Sefer *Peninei HaChochma* brings a startling contrast between Socrates and the leaders of our people. It is well-known that Socrates excelled in the trait of patience. He was married to an evil wife who constantly tried to upset him and make his life miserable. Once, for example, he prepared a plentiful party--and she entered and overturned the tables, turning the lavish settings into a big mess. He turned to all and said: “Has it not happened to you before that a rooster or other animal has reeked destruction in your house--would you be angry at the animal--no, that is its nature. Just as one should not be angry at an animal, so I am not angry at my wife.” On the other hand, Chazal (Yevamos 63A) record that Rebbi Chiya had a difficult wife. Rebbi Chiya told Rav how he views his relationship: “I look away from the difficulties and think of the good that she does for me...!” Let us contemplate the difference between the Greek philosopher who compared his difficult wife *to a rooster or animal*, and Rebbi Chiya whose wife put him in wrenching circumstances, and who nevertheless looked at the *good* that she provided him with--at least from time-to-time! When we are moved to anger in the immediate circumstance, we should instead transfer it to a feeling of recognition or appreciation for another situation -- remember, **it is a test** that *everyone* can pass!

33. Finally, the story is told of Zalman *Ka’asner*--Zalman the Angry One. His time had come to leave this world, and the local townspeople heard and gathered about his house. Even a few little children jumped up on the windowsills, trying to peer in. Out of the corner of his eye, Zalman looked up and noticed the children on the windowsills. This preoccupied his mind over everything else--and he began to bang with his fists to get the children off the window sill. He left the world banging with his fists on the post of his bed. All present learned that if one does not teach himself to control his Middos (and especially his Ka’as) while he is able to in this world...this is what he will take with him as he leaves this world...for eternity. On the other hand, if one begins to convert those *middos ra’os* with **Ka’as near the top of the list into middos tovos with savlanus and simcha at the top of the list**--imagine the everlasting nachas-filled existence of an Olam Haba that is forever and ever!

Hakhel Note: We note the following pointed words of the *Sha’arei Teshuvah* (1:16) relating to Ka’as: “The trait of the fool is characterized as the opposite of the wise man, for the fool becomes angry, but nonetheless is confident that sin or injury will not befall him. This is in the face of the fact that **one who is inclined to anger is prey to sin and given up to injury**, as the Pasuk says (Mishlei 29:22): “*U’va’al Cheima Rav Posha*--and a wrathful man abounds in iniquity”, and “*Ihr Perutzah Ein Chomah*...like a city broken down without a wall, so is he whose spirit is without restraint” (ibid. 25:28).”