

The following is our Review Notes on proper conduct *Bein Adam L'Chaveiro*, as culled from the Sefer *Hizharu Bichvod Chaveireichem*, by Rabbi Avraham Tovalsky, Shlita:

1. Chazal (Brachos 28B) relate that when Rebbi Eliezer was sick, his students came to visit. They asked him to teach them *orchos chaim*--the proper way in life for which they could be zoche to Olam Haba. He **began with** *Hizharu Bichvod Chaveireichem*--be careful to show the proper respect to your friends!
2. The Alter of Kelm teaches that when one makes it his common practice to view his friend as greater than him and is careful to honor him--then what follows will be one's care in giving proper honor to Hashem Himself!
3. An artisan creates a new product with much dedication and love --and places it outside of his store. A passerby looks at the creation and begins to joke and poke fun at it. How badly and how upset the artisan will feel! When one shames or disgraces another human being--he is likewise mocking Hashem's handiwork--who was created *B'Tzelem Elokim!*
4. Moreover, when one causes pain or anguish to another--it is as if he is bringing pain upon an entire world, for Chazal (Midrash Tanchuma Pekudei 3) teach that every person in this world is an *Olam Katan*. It is no small wonder, then, that Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men teaches (Mishlei 11:12): "*Baz L'Rei'eihu Chasar Lev*--one who disgraces his neighbor is devoid of sense." Instead, Shlomo HaMelech continues (ibid.), even if one has been hurt by another--"*Ish Tevunos Yacharish*--one who is silent and does not react to insults--but instead keeps his peace--is a man of understanding."
5. Chazal (Avos D'Rebbi Nosson 13) teach that one who greets his friend *B'Sever Panim Yafos* will be viewed by Hashem as having given his friend all of the *matanos tovos* in the world--even if he has physically actually not given him anything. Thus--a person who makes it a life goal to show *Sever Panim Yafos* is giving out all of the *matanos tovos* in the world to so many people--it is as if he is the richest person in the world! Even within *Sever Panim Yafos*, however, one may add on to his *madreiga* by expressing such Simcha in greeting another that the recipient **feels** the Simcha as well! *Sever Panim Yafos B'Simcha*--let us work on it!
6. Why does the Torah not identify the kind of tree the Eitz HaDa'as was? Chazal (see Bereishis Rabbah 15:8) teach that it was because Hashem did not want to disgrace this tree forever--as the tree over which the world was punished for thousands of years. If Hashem was concerned about the honor of the Eitz HaDa'as in this way--all the more so should we be concerned with human beings, making sure not to shame anyone in any way. In fact, shaming a person is brought by Chazal as a form of killing him. Moreover, The *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (3:139) teaches that the pain caused by disgracing another is worse than death.
7. In order for us to fathom how horrible it is to shame another, Chazal (Bereishis Rabbis 65:16) teach that Aviyahu, the king of Yehuda, passed away at a young age because he embarrassed one of the greatest reshamim of all time, Yeravam Ben Nevat.

8. Hashem greets Moshe at the *sneh*--the burning tree, and advises him that he will be the leader to take K'lal Yisrael out of their desperate servitude in Mitzrayim. Moshe refuses day after day for a seven day period--because he does not want Aharon, his brother and the leader of K'lal Yisrael at the time, to be offended. Upon reflection--having a glimpse of Aharon and his greatness--would he really have been hurt? He would have been overjoyed over K'lal Yisrael being redeemed! We see from here how we must avoid even the perceived pain of another. (Sefer *Ohr HaTzafun*, Chelek Bais) The *Sichos Mussar* (II: 18) adds that when Hashem was upset with Moshe Rabbeinu, it was not for his refusal to go--but over his not treating Aharon with the proper regard! Indeed, that is why Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu that not only will Aharon not be pained by Moshe's selection--but will see Moshe and be glad of heart ("*VeRa'acha VeSamach B'Libo*"). Furthermore, continues the *Sichos Mussar*, if Moshe would have been right--that Aharon would have been upset--then Moshe would have been correct in rejecting his position as leader!

9. Chazal teach that someone who commits suicide does not have a chelek in Olam Haba. Yet, Chazal also clearly teach that if one has a choice in front of him--either to shame another person, or to throw himself into a fiery furnace, as was the case with Tamar who could have shamed Yehuda by identifying him or be thrown into the fire--then in that case one will not lose his Olam Haba for taking his own life. From this we can see how serious the sin of shaming another is--as even suicide is permitted as an alternative! (Sefer *Penei Yehoshua* to *Bava Metziah* 59A)

10. One always looks to double his rewards--his points, his profits, and the like. HaRav Yeruchem Levovitz, Shlita, brings Chazal (Avos 4:1) who teach that "Who is honored? He who honors Hashem's creatures, as the Pasuk (Shmuel I, 2:30) says '*Ki Mechabdai Achabeid*--I will honor those who honor Me.'" How does the Pasuk brought relate to those who honor Hashem's creatures--the Pasuk only refers to honoring Hashem Himself?! The answer is clear: When one honors Hashem's creatures, he is also honoring Hashem--performing a double Mitzvah!

11. An amazing insight: Chazal (Brachos 14A) teach that if an honorable person passes by, and one is in between the Parshios of Kriyas Shema--one can actually greet him. One can also respond to anyone who greets him. This is brought in Halacha in Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 66:1) How could this be so--one is in the process of being *mekabel* Ohl Malchus Shomayim and Ohl Mitzvos--how do other human beings fit into the picture? HaRav Yechezkel Levenstein, Z'tl, explains that the answer is that demonstrating respect to others is part and parcel of demonstrating respect to Hashem!

12. Rebbi Yitzchak of Vorki, Z'tl, provides daily life-guiding advice: When Chazal teach that one should greet another, they use the phrase: "*B'Sever Panim Yafos*" (Avos, 1:15). We most certainly can understand the term *Panim Yafos*--a pleasant countenance. What does the word *Sever* add? Rebbi Yitzchak explains that even if one does not cherish the person that his is about to greet, even if one does not appreciate his opinions or his deeds, even if he is not 'my style', and even if one feels that it is a burden to deal with this person--even then one must greet him with *Sever*--with thought--so that at least he feels liked, and perhaps even good about himself, rather than feeling hurt, offended or a burden. *Sever Panim Yafos*, then, teaches that the way one greets another is not just a natural reaction--it is a thoughtful one!

13. HaRav Shalom Schwadron, Z'tl, would relate that HaRav Elyashiv's father, HaRav Avraham Elyashiv, Z'tl, would daven that "Hashem save us from new mitzvos and new aveiros." What was his example of a *new mitzvah*? When one person gets another angry, it becomes a '*mitzvah*' to put him down and shame him. What was his example of a *new aveirah*? It is when one explains that he will not be giving tzedakah to a person because it is an '*aveirah*' to help that person.

14. Why does a Kohein not make a special bracha every day--*She'asani Kohein*? The Gerrer Rebbe, Z'tl, explains that we were all originally fit to serve as Kohanim--as the Pasuk states "*Ve'atem Tiheyu Li Mamleches Kohanim*--and you shall be for Me a kingdom of Kohanim." Accordingly, if a Kohein would make such a bracha--the Kohein would be honoring himself at the expense of shaming another. This one can never do!

15. The Avnei Nezer once heard someone mention the name of a Jew who was a known *rasha*, and then added after his name *yimach shemo v'zichro*. Startled, the Avnei Nezer turned to the speaker and said: "Do you know what the Halacha is regarding a Jew who converted to another religion (a *meshumad*) who dies without children?" There was no response. The Avnei Nezer continued: "The Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 157:5) rules that his wife requires *chalitzah*. Remember that *chalitzah* is in the place of *yibum*, and the reason that we do *yibum* is as the Torah declares: *VeLo Yimache Shemo B'Yisrael*--so that a name will not be obliterated from K'lal Yisrael. Think about it--the Torah itself does not want a name in K'lal Yisrael to be eliminated--and you do?!"

16. In a similar vein, HaRav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, Z'tl, once heard his relatives curse one of the famous *apikorsim* who lived in Yerushalayim. HaRav Sonnenfeld sighed and commented: "One should never say such things even about apikorsim--Hashem is full of mercy, and could extend His mercy even to a rasha like this--and even possibly give him Olam Haba. We must fight against what reshaim stand for--as they may ruin others--but it is not our role or part to take away from their Olam Haba. Hashem does not withhold anyone's reward--even a compliment or an encouraging statement will not be forgotten--there is no *bitul* of even one good deed, no matter how many aveiros the person commits!" [Hakhel Note: The converse is also true--there is no bitul accomplished by many Mitzvos of even one aveirah!]

17. If a person is given the choice: "Embarrass that Jew in public-- or you will be killed!" The Halacha is that he should allow himself to be killed and not embarrass the Jew in public!! [Tosfos Sotah 10B; Rabbeinu Yonah (Avos 3:11); see also *Shailos U'Teshuvos Binyan Tzion* 172]

18. If a person is accustomed to a particular nickname--even if he is used to it and is not embarrassed by it, it is still prohibited to use this nickname if you intend to shame him when doing so.

19. When someone gives a degrading job to another person to do in order to avoid doing it himself, he is considered to have been *miskabeid b'klon chaveiro*.

20. The Chofetz Chaim expressed great surprise over those who would reprove others in an angry or harsh tone: Why is the Mitzvah of Tochacha different than any other Mitzvah in the Torah--is one supposed to put on Tefillin in anger, to eat Matzah in anger, to sit in the Sukkah in anger...? After all-- Tochacha, Tefillin, Matzah, Sukkah--are all *Mitzvos Asei!*

21. The Torah specifically prohibits anyone from hurting an almanah or a yasom with words. The Ibn Ezra (Shemos 22:21) writes that the prohibition applies not only to the one who is uttering the words--but also to one who stands by silently--and does not come to their aid. The *Sefer Heichal Habracha* adds that in any situation where one witnesses another person being shamed he should not remain silent--but rather object to the greatest extent possible. One who does not do so and remains silent, he continues, is a *rasha gamur!*

22. The *Sefer Chassidim* writes that if one has ever embarrassed another, then when he realizes that he is being embarrassed--rather than respond in kind, he should accept the embarrassment and not respond. One should always remember how makpid the Beis Din Shel Ma'alah is about embarrassment--after all, look at the devastating results of the Kamtzah/Bar Kamtzah episode for all of K'lal Yisrael!

23. The *Peleh Yo'eitz* writes that if one is embarrassed to ask forgiveness of another in person--he should do so through a shaliach or in writing. These are the Halachic solutions to obviate the embarrassment which one would feel when asking for forgiveness in person.

24. Chazal (Yerushalmi Demai 1:3) record that Rabbi Pinchos Ben Yair was once traveling to the Beis HaMidrash, but that the *Genai* river blocked his path, and the waters were so turbulent that he could not cross. Rabbi Pinchos told the river to split--and the river did so. The students accompanying Rabbi Pinchos asked if they could also cross with him. He responded: "Anyone who knows that he never degraded the honor of another can pass through and will not be harmed. If not--then he should not attempt to cross." The lesson--when a person is careful not to shame another all the days of his life--he will be zoche to have nature change for him!

25. HaRav Zalman Volozhiner once saw two people speaking on Shabbos, and thought that one of them was speaking inappropriately for Shabbos. In a soft tone, he approached the person and reminded him that it was Shabbos. The person responded: "No, it was not inappropriate speech, as it related to a certain Mitzvah." HaRav Zalman apologized profusely and asked forgiveness of having suspected him of inappropriate Shabbos speech. The man quickly replied: "You are forgiven, you are forgiven." HaRav Zalman then gave the person whom he had mistakenly admonished Birchas Kohaim. HaRav Zalman explained: "Chazal (Brachos 31B) expressly teach that if one suspects another of something which was incorrect, not only must he appease him--but make sure to give him a bracha as well!"

26. HaRav Shmuel Rosenberg, Z'tl, would generally not correct the mistakes of a Shaliach Tzibur, even if they were blatant, for fear of embarrassing him in public. From this we should learn that before correcting anyone in public--one must know what the Halachos for doing so truly are.

Hakhel Note: HaRav Eliyahu Lopian, Z'tl, was once at a health resort for Parshas VaEschanan, when the Aseres HaDibros are read. A disagreement arose as to with which *trup* the Ba'al Kriyah should lein the Aseres HaDibros--the *ta'am tachton* or the *ta'am elyon*? HaRav Lopian was asked for a p'sak. Surmising that the Ba'al Kriyah only knew how to lein one way--he authoritatively ruled: 'Whatever way the Ba'al Korei knows to lein, is the way to lein.'

27. The first Kabbalah that was found in one of the diaries of the Alter of Slobodkah, HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, Z'tl, was: "*LeHezaher BeChevod Chaveiri BeTachlis, BeSavlanus BeMa'aneh Rach VeShum Pa'am Achas Lo Behisraghshus*--to be exceedingly careful with the honor of my friends, to be patient, to speak softly, and never with anger."

28. What propelled the Alter of Novordak, HaRav Yosef Yozel Hurvitz, Z'tl, to become the mussar giant that he was? [Hakhel Note: Today--17 Kislev is his Yahrzeit!] HaRav Yozel was an extremely successful businessman who met Rebbi Yisroel Salanter in a city named Mamel. Rebbi Yisroel asked him to stay a few days so that they could get to know each other better. HaRav Yozel advised Rebbi Yisroel that he had already hired a wagon driver to take him home. Rebbi Yisroel thereupon urged him to hurry back as soon as possible--for perhaps the wagon driver was looking for him and by being late perhaps he was causing him tza'ar and *Agmas Nefesh*. Rebbi Yisroel urged him on--saying: "No matter how precious the discussion we are having is--it should not be at the expense of another." HaRav Yozel was so moved by this attitude and approach that he gave up his business pursuits--and followed Rebbi Yisroel to learn Avodas Hashem!