

The following is a our *Anavah* Review Notes, as culled from the Sefer *LeAnavim Yitein Chein*, by Rabbi Avraham Tovalsky, Shlita.

1. Moshe Rabbeinu was praised as '*Anav Me'od*'--this was apparently his most sterling character trait. One who is an *Anav* realizes that one should not be *machazik tov* to himself, and seek praises for his accomplishments. One should, instead, recognize the greatness of Hashem, and that without Hashem giving one any and all of his abilities and capabilities, he would truly have nothing to his credit or merit.
2. For instance, Chazal (Midrash Tehillim 144) teach that Dovid HaMelech exclaimed: "Am I the king? I am not a king--Hashem--anointed me!"; "Am I a *gibor*?"; "Am I wealthy?"; "No--*Lecha Hashem HaGedulah V'HaGevurah*...Hashem everything is and should be ascribed to Hashem! I do not win wars--it is Hashem Who gives me the victory!"
3. No matter how great a person is, he must always remember his true position in the world and in the universe--even Avraham Avinu exclaimed (Bereishis 18:27)"*Anochi Afar VaAifer*--I am dust and ash".
4. The Chida, Z'tl, teaches that the letters of the word *Anav* also spell *Avon* (sin) to teach that if one is truly an *Anav* he is forgiven for his sins. HaRav Pinchos Koritzer, Z'tl, would say that if a person held himself out to truly be an *ayin*, lowly, then he could not be judged--for there would be nothing upon which for the judgment to take hold!
5. The Sefer *Kav HaYashar* (Chapter 7) teaches that there is no *Middah* which purifies the person's soul more than *Anavah*--for through this *Middah* one's physical nature becomes spiritual.
6. The Sefer *Devash LePhi* writes that *Anavah* is the *Ikar HaYehadus* and that without *Anavah* one is considered like an *akum*. Incredibly, Chazal (Sotah 5A) teach that one who is haughty will not arise at *Techiyas HaMeisim*. The Chofetz Chaim explains that this is a *Middah K'negged Middah* punishment--for rather than the person thinking that after 120 years his body will return to the dust, he did not believe so, and instead he put his body in the highest of places. When his body does, then return to the dust--it will not be empowered to move him from his place!
7. Chazal teach that when there is one coin in a container it makes a lot of noise--if there are many coins in container--they do not. If one 'makes a lot of noise' about himself--it shows that his container is mostly empty.
8. Animals and even insects were created before Adam HaRishon. Why? Because if a man begins to think highly of himself, he should consider that which was created before him.
9. The *os Nun* has two forms--bent and straight. The word *Ne'eman* begins with a bent Nun, and ends with a straight Nun. This is to teach us that one who in this world bends himself and acts with humility will stand tall and straight--in the Next World!

10. The Sefer Ma'alos HaMiddos teaches that one will never see an *Anav Mischareit*--a humble person who ever regrets being so!

11. HaRav Chaim Volozhiner, Z'tl, teaches that the term Anavah does not only refer to accepting criticism and remaining silent in the face of derision--it also means one recognizing that he has not acted in accordance with his abilities--which means that anybody and everybody can simply be greater than him because they have reached their potential to a greater extent.

12. If one learns Torah and thoughts of honor for doing so or for his accomplishments or knowledge enter his mind, he must realize that his study is *Shelo Lishma*--but still has the hope of *Mitoch Shelo Lishma Bah Lishma*. **It is of the utmost importance that one realize that his intelligence and abilities are gifts from Hashem--and the fact that one is able to think of and express an insight or Chiddush is not a human power--but a gift given by Hashgacha Pratis from Hashem.**

13. When one is an Anav, he will be an effective *kli kibul ruchnyi*--spiritual utensil, able to accept more and more *ruchniyus* within him.

14. The following statement was made by a Gadol in his *tzava'ah*: "I testify that many times ideas of haughtiness or arrogance came upon me, and the way I was able to successfully block them from going forward was thinking about the Avos HaKedoshim from whom I came and how humble I should feel--knowing their capabilities--and knowing mine."

15. The insight of the Chazon Ish into true Anavah is that even if a person believes that he knows much Torah, he should not seek honor or greatness because of it--for after all, this is his obligation in this world--to grow and grow in *ruchniyus*. Chazal teach: "*Im Lamadeta Torah Harbeh...*--if you have learned much Torah do not hold yourself out as someone great, for this was the purpose for which you were created." Simply stated, if one bought a suit--and paid for it, would one seek the praise of others for doing so?

16. If one endeavors to do perform Mitzvos (including Chesed) privately, it will assist him in Anavah--for it will avoid him being praised and glorified by others.

17. HaRav Yisroel Salanter, Z'tl, would always point out that although a person must run away from honor himself, he nevertheless must give as much honor as he can to other people. HaRav Yisroel taught that one would not violate the prohibition of *Lifnei Iver* by according another person a deserved honor--even though he may feel the honor as a result.

18. When contemplating how great a person thinks he is, he should consider the true picture of life--how much he could do and much he in fact has done [Hakhel Note: The story is told of a man who came to HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, explaining that he suffered from the Middah of Ga'avah--and he could not seem to rid himself of it. HaRav Kanievsky then proceeded to ask the person (this may not be exact--but is the essence of the give and take) if he knew a Mesechta very well, and he responded in the negative. HaRav Kanievsky then went on to inquire about whether he knew a Perek very well, proceeded to ten Blatt and then even one Blatt--asking him if

he knew it well, and the man could not say that he did. HaRav Kanievsky then told him--you see, you have nothing to be a Ba'al Ga'avah about!

19. If one possesses nothing on his own--but has successfully borrowed many expensive possessions on a long term basis--can he claim that they are his? One with the true awareness that all of his possessions in this world are on very long term loan cannot take pride in himself. If one does, HaRav Yitzchak Blazer, Z'tl, teaches he is leading a life of *sheker*. After all, is he not but flesh and blood, who must take care of his bodily requirements and functions, making him in some ways closer to an animal than to a heavenly being?! A person can likewise contemplate how people who would otherwise honor him would not do so if they saw how human, and how lacking in ability, he really was.

Hakhel Note: The Chofetz Chaim asked why it is that a human must take care of his bodily needs not once a week or once a month--but several times a day. He answered that it is because Hashem wants to assist and guide us in our quest not to become a Ba'al Ga'avah--and instead to follow in the path of Avraham Avinu, Moshe Rabbeinu, Dovid HaMelech and our great leaders in all generations who personified the Middah of Anavah!

20. A person must daven to Hashem to overcome the Middah of Ga'avah. The Sefer *Kav HaYashar* (Chapter 7) writes that a person should daven: "*Zakeini LeMiddas Ha'anavah U'Le'middas HaHachna'ah*--Hashem, may I please merit humility." Indeed, in the private Tefillos at the end of Shemone Esrei we plead early on: "*V'limkalelai Nafshi Sidom V'Nafshi KeAfar Lakol Tiheyeh*".

21. To appreciate one's finite mind and capabilities he need merely look to the heavens and to the wonders around him, and will very quickly understand his limited abilities compared to Hashem's limitless capabilities. One can likewise think of how his abilities are affected by not eating or drinking for a day or two--compared to the heavenly creations which have no physical limitations whatsoever.

22. Dovid HaMelech teaches (Tehillim 34:19): "*Karov Hashem Lenishbirei Lev*--Hashem is close to those who are contrite."

23. It is important for a person to have the phrases "I don't know" or "I made a mistake" as part of his vocabulary.

24. One who realizes that he is enjoying words of praise being heaped upon him should view himself as if he is sleeping--upon waking up, he will realize that it was really nothing.

25. The Ba'al Shem Tov would advise people that whenever they had a feeling of haughtiness or arrogance to have Hirhurei Teshuvah and use the opportunity to look into their deeds.

26. The Ramban in the *Igeres HaRamban* spends much of it instructing his son on the Middah of Anavah, for it is so essential to life's goal and purpose. One who needs Chizuk in the Middah of Anavah should review the teachings of the Ramban.

Hakel Note: One of the Kabbalos of a great Rav of the previous generation was to read the *Igeres HaRamban* every day....