

The following is a our *Ma'avir Ahl Hamidos* Review Notes, as culled from the Sefer *Ketzais Hashemesh Bigvuraso*, by Rabbi Avraham Tovalsky, Shlita.

Introductory Note: Over the Yomim Noraim, we were taught and perhaps re-taught that *HaMa'avir Ahl Midosav Ma'avirin Lo Ahl Kol Pasha'av* (Rosh Hashana 17A)--if one overlooks and overcomes his own Midos, then Hashem will act on a *Middah K'negged Middah* basis and overlook and cause the sins and punishments that the person would otherwise have been deserving of to be overlooked and overcome. In order to effectively accomplish this, one must avoid judging others and their deeds by his initial perception, reacting quickly to criticism, being exacting with others, and acting stubbornly. **Instead, one must judge others favorably, react patiently, be lenient and tolerant, and be accommodating.** The great importance of being *Ma'avir Ahl Hamidos* should by no means be limited to the Rosh Hashana/Yom Kippur period, but should truly be a part of our everyday life--something which we take with us in a practical way from the Yomim Noraim. After all, how many other traits or actions do you know of which Chazal can say that if you practice them--Hashem will forgive you for all of your sins--including your rebellious ones (*Pasha'av*)?!

We now begin Rabbi Tovalsky's practical lessons to assist us in our great goal:

1. Practicing being a *Ma'avir Ahl Hamidos* means that one is going to take emotional pain and bear it--and it is not easy (at least at the outset). When doing so, we follow in Hashem's path--as He is a *Rav Chesed*--acting with abundant chesed. The Midrash teaches that one must take a lesson from Hashem—even after the Bnei Yisrael committed the heinous sin of worshipping the *eigel hazahav*—Hashem did not stop the *mon* or the *be'er* from continuing to feed the people!
2. Chazal (93A) teach that one should always be from those who are chased and not those who chase--for there is no bird more pursued than the turtle dove and pigeon--and they are the only birds that are brought on the *mizbeiach*. Likewise, even with respect to the animal Karbanos--the ox is pursued by the lion, the goat by the leopard and the sheep by the wolf. One would think that in order to 'beautify' the Mitzvah, one would bring the more heroic lion, leopard or wolf on the *mizbeiach*--but that is not the case at all--we bring the ox, the goat and the sheep--because the ones that are pursued are the ones who are beautiful, chosen and praised by Hashem.
3. Further, if one looks for a moment at the great personages in the Torah, he will find that **Hevel** was chased by Kayin, **Noach** by the people of his generation, **Avraham** by Nimrod, **Yitzchak** by the Plishtim, **Yaakov** by Eisav, **Yosef** by his brothers, **Moshe** by Paroh, **Dovid** by Shaul, and **K'lal Yisrael** by the nations of the world--and in each and every one of these examples, Hashem chose the one who was chased!
4. Just as an example—let us see how Yitzchak treated Avimelech the king of the Plishtim after Avimelech jealously banished him from his land--he greeted Avimelech and his entourage *B'sever Panim Yafos* and actually made them a *mishteh*-- party. This is to further teach us that rather than repay bad with evil, one can demonstrate how he can overcome his Midos by repaying bad—with good!

5. Chazal teach that one who is degraded and insulted and even cursed at and remains silent is called a *chosid*—and that is the reason that Dovid could refer to himself as a *chosid*--and actually davened to Hashem to protect him with the words *Shomra Nafshi Ki Chosid Ani* (Tehillim 86:2).

6. Indeed, Shlomo HaMelech, the wisest of all men, teaches in Mishlei (25:22): “*Im Ra'eiv Sonacha Ha'achileihu Lachem Ve'im Tzamei Hashkeihu Mayim.*” The best way to treat one who is acting towards you in an antagonistic fashion—even to the point where he can be called your *Sonei* [Hakhel Note:...and certainly to a family member], is to give him bread—to do good to him or for him. If one can train himself to do react in this fashion--one situation at a time, the Rabbeinu Yonah says that it is a *Pesach Tikvah Nichbad Me'od*—a great source for future success in all of life.

7. Based upon the Pasuk of *VeOhavav Ketzeis Hashemesh Bigvuraso* (Shoftim 5: 31), Chazal compare the person who is insulted and does not insult, who hears disparagement and does not disparage, to the sun as it goes out to shine for the day. What is the comparison? Chazal teach that the moon complained to Hashem that it could not serve together with the sun as a co-equal. The result was that Hashem told the moon to become smaller—and the sun which was complained against, but did not complain... remained in its original strength!

8. The Arizal would instruct that the choicest method to eradicate sins is accomplished by one patiently accepting insults and disgrace—and that it is more effective even than lashes and physical pain and suffering. The Shelah HaKadosh actually writes that one should feel happier when disparaged than when eating the greatest delicacy, because of its great and far reaching benefits..

9. HaRav Yitzchak Blazer, Z'tl, teaches that the language of *Hama'avir Ahl Midosav*, which is in the plural, indicates that when one is successful in being a *Ma'avir Ahl Midosav*, he will also along with it be repairing his other Midos as well.

10. The Chofetz Chaim reminds us that just as Dovid HaMelech realized that Shimi Ben Geira's curse was from Hashem, and was not Shimi's personal doing, we must realize that when we feel personal affront or hurt, it is BeHashgacha Pratis—and if it was not from this person, it would have been from another. The dog thinks that it is the stick that is hurting him, and not the man holding the stick—we should not think in this fashion.

11. In order to appreciate how especially important the concept of *Hama'avir Ahl Midosav* is, HaRav Yitzchak Wallstein, Z'tl, of Novordik told others that one of his Kabalos was to learn for **ten minutes a day** the Ma'amar Chazal of...*Hama'avir Ahl Midosav Ma'avrin Lo Ahl Kol Peshav*. Even if we cannot review the *ma'amar* for **ten** minutes a day—perhaps we can practice it **three** times a day!

12. The rule of being *Ma'avir Ahl HaMidos* applies not only when one overcomes his anger--but even when one has a rightful complaint against another party--and instead withholds his claim and forgives. With this, we can understand why Hashem--Who likewise may have a rightful complaint against us, will also look-away from that complaint.

13. One can advance in being *Ma'avir Ahl HaMidos* in the following three stages: First, being especially humble in the presence of others, and giving others the respect due to them. Second, taking disparagement, insult, or other form of degradation or humiliation and not responding--even though one feels hurt or even angry inside. Third, forgiving the affront and uprooting any feeling of resentment or even hurt--as if it did not occur! How can one ever reach the third level? He can recognize that whatever the debasement may be--it is truly a message from Hashem, and not from the individual 'stick' that delivered it. Alternatively, one can view it as if one is cut his own finger while cutting a piece of meat. Would the cut hand hit the hand that cut it--after all, it is the same body?! We too, are all the singular *Nishmas Yisrael*.

14. By the following link <http://tinyurl.com/k4zqby8> we provide the Tefillah from the Sefer *Orech Apayim* to be recited (or at least thought about), when one is disparaged or feels hurt.

15. "It is the principle of the matter"-- should not exist in our vocabulary!

16. Chazal relate how Rabbi Eliezer walked by someone's home, as the woman of the house was throwing her garbage out the window, and he received a direct hit on his head. Rabbi Eliezer's response was...elation, as he recited the Pasuk: "*Mei'ashpos Yarim Evyon*--from the trash heaps He lifts the destitute!"

17. The Chofetz Chaim would teach his students to remember the Pasuk: "*Hamakom Asher Attah Omed Alav Kodesh Hu*--wherever one might be, whatever the situation, one must remember that he is in a place where he can perform a Mitzvah--and that one should not wait to put it off to a more comfortable or easier circumstance. The place, the situation, the event, in which one's patience is being tested is most certainly *holy ground*!

18. Rabbeinu Shmuel HaNagid was once walking with the Caliph of Spain. A non-Jew suddenly appeared and began to hurl curses at Rabbeinu Shmuel. The Caliph, shocked and angered, commanded Rabbeinu Shmuel to cut the offender's tongue out. After the incident, Rabbeinu Shmuel proceeded to send the offender gifts--until he became friendly and even grew to love Rabbeinu Shmuel. A while later, the Caliph was once again walking with Rabbeinu Shmuel and the prior offender appeared and began to bless Rabbeinu Shmuel. The Caliph turned to Rabbeinu Shmuel: "Did I not order you to cut out his tongue?!" Rabbeinu Shmuel responded: "Caliph, I followed your orders and more--I cut out his evil tongue, and replaced it with a tongue of goodness!" Hakhel Note: As noted in the past, this story is also brought by HaRav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, in the Sefer *Orchos Yosher*. HaRav Chaim concludes his relating of the story with the words of *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson* (Chapter 23): "*Aizehu Gibor HaOseh Sono Ohavo*--who is the true hero--one who turns his enemy--into his friend". Upon reflection, each and every one of us probably has the same opportunity as Rabbeinu Shmuel HaNagid--at least from time-to-time (perhaps some more than others)--let us do our utmost to follow the advice of Rabbeinu Shmuel HaNagid...of *Avos D'Rebbi Nosson*...as brought up to date by HaRav Chaim Kanievsky!

19. HaRav Elimelech M'Lizhinsk, Z'tl, was once slapped on his cheek by an enemy, and immediately responded: "That *potch* did not take in any way, shape or form take away or reduce the love that I have for you!"

20. The Chida writes that perhaps the reason that being *Ma'avir Ahl HaMiddos* is such a powerful zechus is that one prevents a sinful retort or response which would cause Tza'ar HaShechina. Hashem, Middah K'neged Middah, then ignores the individual sins of a person which were until now causing Tza'ar HaShechina. In this regard, the Chida relates that he had heard from the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh that there was a wealthy person who was close to the government who disgraced a Talmid Chochom. The Ohr HaChaim asked the Talmid Chochom to forgive the wealthy person and make peace. The Talmid Chochom responded not to worry--as he had *already done so--for any delay brings Tza'ar to the Shechinah*. The Chida concludes that the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh was *neheneh me'od* from the Talmid Chochom's response!

21. The Rambam (to Avos 4:4) brings the following from a Sefer that he had studied on Middos: A chossid was asked--"What was the happiest day of your life?" He responded that: "It was the day that I was traveling on a ship, and did not have a good place to lodge on the ship. [It is unclear whether this was due to a lack of money, or because there was not room on the ship.] In fact, I was near the cargo, and near other materials that belonged to the ship. There were prominent, wealthy businessmen on board, and one of them must have seen me sleeping next to the cargo. I must have appeared so low in his eyes, that he was *matil mayim* upon me. When I realized what had happened, I did not yell or heap scorn upon him, nor did I even feel anger or hurt over this act. Rather, I began to rejoice with a great inner joy--that I was able to bear this true insult and act of derision without pain. The Rambam writes that there is no doubt that this person experienced a zenith of humility by his reaction.

22. HaRav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, Z'tl, was walking to the Kosel accompanied by another Jew. An Arab storekeeper noticed them, and threw a rotten orange at them. HaRav Chaim exclaimed: "*Todah Rabba!*" The Arab did not understand what HaRav Chaim had shouted, and chased after them to find out. The person accompanying HaRav Chaim told him in Arabic that HaRav Chaim had said "Thank you!" The Arab was stunned and said "Thank you--for what?" HaRav Chaim responded: "Thank you for throwing an orange--and not a rock!" The Arab was embarrassed by what he had done, and from then onwards would extend a special honor to HaRav Chaim when he passed his store.

23. The Yerushalmi (Pei'ah 8:6) brings that Rebbi Akiva was asked to become a Gabbai Tzedakah. He responded that he would ask his wife. Rebbi Akiva did--and she advised him that he should accept the appointment--on the condition that when he was shamed, disgraced and even cursed--he would accept, overlook and overcome it all!

24. Rebbi Hillel Lichtenstein, Z'tl, known as R' Hillel Kilemayar, was once up late Leil Shabbos studying Parshas HaShavuah. He heard a noise near the window and stunningly found that a *ganav* had entered his home and had silver candlesticks and other items in his hand and was about to exit. R' Hillel said to him--how could you do this--you can't carry on Shabbos, and the candlesticks are Muktzah?! In any event, the Torah prohibits you from stealing...and what about the *agmas nefesh* you will cause to the Rebbetzin on Shabbos itself?! If you are hungry and need to eat, come and I will give you delicious Shabbos food. The *ganav* laughed and slipped out the window. A little while later, the Rav heard a commotion outside. A policeman had caught the thief and was taking him to the police station. The Rav approached the policeman and told him

not to take the thief away--as all the articles were formerly his and he had given them as a present to the thief. The policeman did not listen to the entreaties of the Rav, and took him to the police station--with the Rav accompanying them. At the police station, the Rav prevailed--and the *ganav* was released! The sinner then fell upon the Rav--asking him for forgiveness. The Rav invited him to his house for the remainder of Shabbos, where he became a new man--and a true Ba'al Teshuvah!

25. HaRav Dessler, Z'tl, in the *Michtav MeiEliyahu* (1:40) teaches how he once saw a pack of wolves roving for food. They came upon the carcass of a small animal. The wolves began to fight violently among themselves--hurting, injuring and killing each other over the carcass. Only a few of the more powerful wolves were left at the end--and they too began to fight each other to the end--until one grabbed the carcass and ran. HaRav Dessler observed that all along the 'victor's' path he saw a trail of blood from its wounds. Then, continues Rav Dessler, he looked back at those who were mortally wounded and those that looked like they were about to depart this world, and lamented: 'These are the bitter results of those who decide not to give-in, but to fight and fight until the bitter end.' There really is not even one winner!

26. There is a wonderful similarity between the word *teivah*--ark and the same word *teivah*--word. Just as the *teivah* protected those inside from the mabul, so too, does one who holds onto the *teivah*--to his word and does-not utter a response even though he very much wants to--will be protected from calamity and harm--and will save himself for a new and brighter future!