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Rabbi Shmuel Brazil



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תשפ"ו PARSHAS VAYEEGASH RAV BRAZIL

CHANUKAH – EVERYONE MUST BE A MECHANAICH

Chanukah has just ended or at least we think so. *Shlomo Hamelech* writes (Mishlei 22,6) חנוך לנער educate a lad according to his ways (nature) so even when he will age he will not turn away from it. One interpretation among many on this *passuk* is when he will age he will not turn away from being מחנך himself, for he will always possess the tools to grow and actualize more of his potential. This explanation might be derived from the letters of חנך which also spell נכח which means present. *Chinuch* of oneself must always be **present** in one's life.

According to this interpretation חנוכה symbolizes *chinch* dedication and rejuvenation but with a continuity. This theme is part and parcel of the mitzvah of *Hadlakas Haneiros* of the Menorah. The terminology that *Chazal* use when describing the routine of kindling an increasing number of lights each night is מוסיף והולך. Why did *Chazal* use the term מוסיפים when נר would have been sufficient? To answer this we must first relate the difference between man and a *malach*. A person is called a הולך for his spiritual growth brings him from one place to a higher standard, climbing from rung to rung, level to level, position to position. This is in contrast to an angel who is fixed at his status without any mobility to upgrade his position and closeness with Hashem.

Yet one can easily deceive himself when thinking that he is upgrading his relationship with Hashem by adding quantity to *mitzvos* versus quality. Why does an individual become motivated to increase his *avodas* Hashem even though he performs the *mitzvos* of the Torah and *Rabbanan*? We can explain this that unfortunately nature takes its toll and by fulfilling the same mitzvah over and over again, callousness and mechanical conduct set in and take over. Instead of feeling נחי a fresh surge of life energy, one feels nothing which results from rote repetitious behavior. Even worse, one might begin to sense an emptiness and resentment that makes the mitzvah a chore which he wants to get over with as soon as possible. One might erroneously think that the solution to this "dead" religious sensation is to add quantity to some of his *mitzvos*. Why not start growing *peiyos*, add *techeilis* to your *tzitzis*, say two *perakim* of Tehillim every day, start wearing a black velvet **kippah**, covering one's head with a *tallis* during *Shemoneh Esrai* etc.

All these improvements are expressions in the quantitative realm. You are adding but that alone does not make you a הולך which only comes from internal qualitative upgrades based on overcoming inner challenges. For growing *peiyos* you do nothing, it grows by itself. The *techeilis* is a onetime decision as long as your *begeed* and *tzitzis* last. All choices mentioned above are examples of a one time commitment after which it falls into habit and amnesia unconsciousness almost immediately after one's decision to do so.

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Let us examine the two words איכות quality and כמות quantity. The word כמות can be read as **kamaves** like death. One who is seeking a surge of spiritual and *neshama* encounters to inspire him in his almost dead robotic daily life, will not be satisfied by increasing mitzvos by quantity. Your efforts and following struggle to preserve what you have accepted upon yourself are minimum to say the least. For only additions in quality of mitzvos whose dedication are continuously being tested from the onset, can give one the spiritual high contentment and satisfaction of being infused with life energy. The *gematria* of איכות 438 (kollel) is equal to the full spelling of חי which are the letters of חית יוד 438. Only with a resolve for even small challenging upgrades will bring about to an individual feelings of spirituality, serenity, and union with Hashem that one is so deeply yearning for.

Another example of מוסיף והולך is to change and upgrade with a לא תעשה which is challenging. The *gematria* of אסור 267 is equal to במוסיף והולך including the two words. To break a habit is difficult. It is much easier and comfortable to add on without the הולך segment. However, to refrain from an *aveirah* warrants a much deeper commitment which and the investment of toil and discipline. Chazal specifically used the term מוסיף והולך to convey that the ideal of adding *madraigos* in mitzvah performance is only when **you** the **fulfiller** is a הולך coupled with the מוסיף.

This concept of challenges and life is hinted in the *passuk* Mishlei 8,34

אשרי אדם שומע לי לשקוד על דלתותי יום יום לשמר מזוזת ביתי

Happy is the individual who listens to Me to be diligent on my door daily to preserve the *mezuzos* of My house.

This can be referring to the מחנך role that one lives every day. There are many doors and entrances to bring oneself closer to Hashem. However, הדלת the primary door is through deeds that are upgrades by overcoming hurdles in the realm of איכות. Happy is the person who listens to Hashem. This is based on the *passuk* והיה אם שמוע תשמעו אל מצותי אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את ה' אלקיכם *passuk* ולעבדו. What is he listening to that will make him happy? The answer is ולעבדו which is *gematria* מחנך. These are the doors of Hashem that one goes through by living diligently with to raising of his bar even a micrometer. It is through these experiences that he feels the rush of וחי בהם an infusion of life energy from the source of all life, Hashem. For with every איכות improvement that he has in his relationship with Hashem he opens another דלת that leads him closer to Hashem and *shelaimus*. The *gematria* of הדלת equals איכות עה"כ.

By doing so one is preserving the מזוזת of Hashem's house. The *sefarim* tell us that the word מזוזת are the same letters of מזוזת death is removed. That is why the *mezuzah* is a protection policy for the welfare of its inhabitants. With our *mamar* we have another insight is these letters of מזוזת. When one lives the role of the מחנך his challenges transform his rote *mitzvos* that up until now have become

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mere quantity performers into quality inner connections to Hashem, a product by raising the bar to the next hurdle increment of that particular *mitzvah*.

This takes us back to the *passuk* גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנו. When we lose freshness and *chiddush* in our lives we are a זקן old prematurely. *Dovid Hamelech* writes אל תשליכי לעת זקנה. Don't **throw** me to old age prematurely. If we choose to be מחנך ourselves by continuously raising the bar to higher rungs then we will receive and feel Hashem's intervention. This is alluded to in the *passuk*

(דברים כג, טו) כי ה' אלהיך מתהלך בקרב מחנך להצילך ולתת אויבך לפניך והיה מחנך קדוש

The word מחנך (camp) can be interpreted and read **mechanaich**. If one continues to educate and grow in Torah and Mitzvos and *tikkun hamidos*, Hashem will be מתהלך walk within you. Since you are a הולך with Hashem He will reciprocate by being מתהלך with you. He will give you the *siyata dishmaya* to overcome your spiritual enemies who try to stunt your growth. Through Hashem's relationship with you and your איכות upgrade you will experience *kedusha*.

We see from above that *avodas* Hashem is found primarily in the qualitative realm and not the quantitative arena. This is hinted in the *passuk* (Devarim 11,13).

לאהבה את ה' אלקיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם

The word ולעבדו is *gematria* מחנך which describes the role of every Yid at any age who fulfills the requirement to continuously see himself as one who is always learning to better himself and upgrade his relationship with Hashem by embracing new **challenges**.

Don't think one is excused from living the life of a *Mechaneich*. In the *beracha* of *Ahava Rabba* we say וכול"ל וללמד ולהשכיל ללבנו ולהבין ולהשכיל ללבנו. We are asking Hashem to place in our hearts to learn and to **teach**. But not everyone is a *Mechaneich* or Rebbe? According to the *mamar* we can interpret it to mean to be a מחנך on **yourself** in order to foster one's *ruchniyus* growth in order that our hearts will be חנוכה the entire year. The word לבנו with the (kollel) equals חנוכה.

May the lights of Chanukah and *Chinuch* accompany us throughout the year ky"r.

Rav Brazil
Gut Shabbos