



דרכים בפרשה

ויחי



ויאסר יוסף מרכבתו ויתחזק ישראל וישב על המטה

And Yisroel exerted himself and sat up on the bed.

Parshas Veyechi is a tremendous shabbos of *chizzuk*. Rav Meilech Bidderman shlita said over in the name of The Boyaner Rebbe (Rav Mordche Shloime) z"l that our parsha is completely full of it. In the parsha we find the incident of Yaakov Avinu lying down in bed and then Yosef entering the room. In describing this, the Torah tells us, *And Yisroel exerted himself and sat up on the bed*. As we conclude the *kriyas hatorah* the entire *tzibbur* rises and we call out together, *חזק חזק ונתחזק*! Finally, in the *haftora*, Dovid Hamelech gives his son Shlomo his last will and testament, proclaiming, *you shall strengthen yourself and you shall be a man... To walk in his ways*.

The rebbe explained that there may be times in a person's life where there is a feeling of being so far removed that *chizzuk* just won't help. Or perhaps one may feel beyond being able to help another. To this person we say, "*Chizzuk* works when you go step by step." If you are lying down, the next step is sit up. From there you can progress to standing,

and ultimately walking. Yaakov Avinu was lying down and made the move to sit upward; we are all sitting and together we stand up and are *mechazeik* each other (ונתחזק); Shlomo is already standing firmly but now Dovid Hamelech tells him to get moving- that he must be a הולך.

When we picture in our minds a path of recovery, the first thought is always a grandiose plan. But the Rebbe is teaching us that this is not really how *chizzuk* works. To be effective, it needs to be one step at a time.

In a similar manner we can offer that these three references of *chizzuk* can refer to different stages. The person might be completely down and out, lying flat on his face with seemingly no more hope, and there in his lowly *matzav*, the Torah says, "you can do this. Be *mechazek*, sit up!"

Then there is the stage of sitting there, feeling very settled and maybe even basking in the light of previous life accomplishments, a.k.a. resting on your laurels. This can be a dangerous thing for a person when

there is so much more left to do. Don't just sit there, get up!

Finally, even a “Shlomo”, firmly entrenched in the ways of the Torah, can benefit from *chizzuk*, being motivated and asked, are you continuously moving forward, reaching new strides or are you at a standstill?

We mentioned that a practical piece of advice in *chizzuk* is to go step by step. The step by step approach affords another advantage as well. In between each step, there is a moment of pause. The purpose of this moment is to serve as a “revach l'hisbonein”, giving one's self the space required to contemplate that which they are about to do, allowing it to sink in and accomplish that which is set out.

This lesson is found throughout the Torah and is an invaluable tool for life. Pharaoh refused to let up on the workload of the Jews for this reason; so that they would never stop and think. The *meraglim* didn't stop and think about what they saw in Eretz Yisroel either, which would have led them to a different outcome. The meforshim note that in the middle of the story of Pinchas killing Zimri,

Parshas Balak ends and Parshas Pinchas begins. They explain as well that the Torah is telling us that as hastily as his actions seemingly were, he actually gave pause before committing them.

There are many more examples that can be given throughout the Torah, but the greatest example is our own daily lives. While running on the proverbial hamster wheel called life, we must pause from time to time to ask ourselves if we are hitting our goals. Do we even have goals? The Yeitzer Hara tries to keep us busy so that we should not ever think about why we came to this world and to Whom we must eventually answer to. We should not be that hamster that just keeps going around and around until eventually tiring and falling off.

חזק חזק ונתחזק

Good Shabbos, מרדכי אפפעל



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