

Chovos Ha'levavos

Posted by Kollel Guy - 14 Jan 2010 14:35

This Beis Medrash is too quiet. I feel I have to make some noise, so I'm going to do it by posting little bits and snippets of one of the most powerful seforim in our possession.

Even though the personality and logic of this sefer is pretty outdated... I mean you would not give anyone the type of advice he does, and the examples he gives to demonstrate his points - are often regarding things which we cannot relate to, and they often speak in terms of concepts that don't really concern us, nevertheless, all the kedusha which he put into every word he wrote - is still there, and it's presence is just as noticeable in the effect it has on you.

Agav, it has a haskama from H-shem himself, because in maggid mesharim, the malach instructs the Beis Yosef to learn it every day to subdue the Y"H.

The Arizal required of all his talmidim to learn it every day in order to awaken their hearts to their great and mighty G-d.

The Gra was very very into Chovos Halevovos.

R' Pinchas Koritzer learned Chovos Halevovos a thousand times and only then attained his level.

R' Meilich writes that a person should learn Chovos Halevovos "baima ubyirah".

The Chasam Sofer used to give a shiur in Chovos Halevovos before every shiur.

The Chida writes that whoever learns Chovos Halevovos and its hakdama will notice the mechaber's force and kedusha and his words serve as great lights.

R' Yeruchem Perlman writes that there is no better way to be mekayem the Gemara which says "yifashfesh bemaasov" (Brachos:5a) then to learn Chovos Halevovos.

I am not going to write it in order, just whenever I see a piece which is relevant I'll post it with the mekor.

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Re: Chovos Ha'levavos

Posted by Kollel Guy - 14 Jan 2010 14:37

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Shaar Yichud Ha'maaseh, Perek Hey.

Ben adam, you should know that the greatest enemy you have in the world is your own evil impulse, which is interwoven with the powers of your soul and intertwined with the character of your spirit, associated with you in governing your senses and your spiritual faculties, aware of the secrets of your soul and to what is hidden deep inside of you, he's your advisor in all of your lawful movements, whether observable or concealed.

It lies in wait to entice you at every step. You are unaware of it but it is aware of you. You are unmindful of it, but it is not unmindful of you.

It clothes itself in the garb of friendship for you, adorns itself in the adornment of love for you, it joins the circle of your confidants, counselors and choicest friends, and seems eager to do your will, as indicated in its outward movements and gestures. But in fact, it is shooting deadly arrows at you, to uproot you from the land of the living, as the Possuk says, "Like a madman who shoots firebrands and deadly arrows, so is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, 'I did it only in sport'. (Mishlei, 26:18, 19)

The most powerful of its weapons which it hurls at you, and with which it assaults you in your innermost being, is its attempt to plant doubt in your mind about true notions, confuse you in what had been clear to you, and confuse your soul with mistaken notions and false arguments. It thereby distracts you from your true interests and causes you to doubt confirmed doctrines and beliefs.

If you will be wary of it, and have ready the weapons of your understanding with which to fight it, and turn its arrows away from you, you will be delivered from it and will escape it with G-d's help. But if you abandon all your interests to it and follow its lead, it will not let you alone until it has destroyed you in both worlds and uprooted you from both abodes as it is written of one of its branches of one of its soldiers, "For she has cast down many dead, a great many are those she has killed. Her house is the way to the netherworld, leading down to the chambers of death. (Mishlei, 7:26, 27)"

Therefore, let no other struggle divert you from your struggle with it, let no other battle divert you from your battle with it. Do not let conflict with one who is far from you keep you from combating that which is inseparable from you. Do not let the repulsion of one who can reach you only with permission keep you from repelling that which need not ask you permission in order to be with you.

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Re: Chovos Ha'levavos

Posted by the.guard - 15 Jan 2010 11:49

Thank you KG!

“And you should know, my brother, that the merit of the believer, even should he reach the utmost completion in fixing his soul for blessed G-d, and even should he be close to the angels in their good traits and praiseworthy actions, and in the efforts they expend in their service of their creator, and in their pure love for Him, still do not reach the merits of someone who guides people onto the good path and steers the wicked to divine service. For his merits are doubled in relation to their merits, for all days and all times”.

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Here is GYE's favorite piece of Chovos Halevavos (Shar Ahavas Hashem, Perek 6):

Re: Chovos Ha'levavos

Posted by lamed vavnik - 18 Jan 2010 20:24

thanks for the piece . CH'HL is my favorite sefer mussar . keep posting!

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Re: Chovos Ha'levavos

Posted by Kollel Guy - 19 Jan 2010 12:18

Shaar Cheshbon Ha'nefesh perek gimel, shtickle 13

A person should make a personal accounting of how his knowledge exceeds his actions and how his understanding exceeds his efforts in avodas Hashem and how his potential exceeds his performance of what he owes to Hashem for everything He gives him.

Let us give the following mashal: Let's say a master gave his servant land to plant and supplied him with all of the seeds needed, and then the servant went and planted part of it, but used the rest for his own private purposes. When the master came to inspect the land, he found part of it unworked and when he questioned the servant about it, the servant admitted what he did

wrong. The master then made a calculation with him [...] ultimately demanding payment for all the potential produce which was not brought into fruition.

(The mechaber now speaks to us, the readers-) You, too, my brother, should make a reckoning with yourself of how Hashem has given you knowledge of His existence, and of His Torah, and gave you the power and ability to meet your obligations to Him. Then go and reckon what you have actually put into practice, and produced, for you will be held responsible and held to an accounting for all that you should have done, and all the more so, as you continue to enjoy Hashem's favors to you.

You should therefore strive with all your might and exert yourself to the utmost to pay this debt of yours, and to make your actions correspond with your wisdom, and your endeavor equal to your understanding. Save all of your energy to act according to your wisdom. Do not waste it on worldly superfluities, lest you then be too weary to meet your obligation to Hashem, for the Almighty BH gives a person strength in direct proportion to his spiritual and material needs. He who expends any of this limited strength on superfluous luxuries will end up lacking the strength necessary for the essentials.

Do not fool yourself with excuses of "if" and "what if", do not say, "If I had this and this amount of resources and wisdom, I would have been able to fulfill my obligation to the Creator." Engage in no such talk, for these are words of self-deception, and one who deludes himself with them will err, and whoever relies on them will end up falling [...] Beware lest you adopt this mistake as your excuse, for then you will be like any other grave sinner who uses such an argument [to defend himself], and as is obvious, it does not save him from punishment.

Therefore take advantage of your time while you still have the opportunity to meet your obligations to the Creator each day. Do not put off until tomorrow the work you must do today, for then it may be too difficult for you, even if you should ever see tomorrow and remain among the living. It will be still worse if your end comes and your excuses are not accepted, and your plea cut short.

For the world is like a fair, where people gather for some time – and then separate. Whoever does and makes profit – rejoices, but one who loses regrets. As the wise one said: "U'zechor es borecha b'yemei b'churosecha ad asher lo yavo y'mei hara'ah" "Remember your creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come"

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