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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת במדבר

וּבֹא אֶהְרֶן וּבָנָיו בְּנֹסַע הַמַּחֲנֶה וְהוֹרְדוּ אֶת פְּרֹכֶת הַמָּסָךְ וְכִסּוּ בָּהּ אֶת אֶרֶן הָעֵדוּת. וְנָתְנוּ עָלָיו כְּסוּי עוֹר תַּחַשׁ וּפְרָשׁוֹ
בְּגָד קָלִיל תְּכֵלֶת מִלְמַעְלָה וְכוּ'. (במדבר ד, ה-ו)

When the camp is to journey, Ahron and his sons shall come and take down the Partition-curtain and cover the Aron with it. They shall place upon it a tachash-hide covering, and spread a cloth entirely of techeiles wool over it ... (Bamidbar 4:5-6)

At the end of this week's *parshah*, the Torah describes how the *Klei HaMishkan* were transported when Klal Yisroel travelled in the *midbar*. Before being transported, all the items were covered several times. Most of them were first covered with wool and then with a *tachash*-hide. However, the *Aron* had a covering produced with תְּכֵלֶת, *turquoise wool*, on top of the *tachash*. What significance does this change in covering, especially for the *Aron*, symbolise?

The Ramban explains the difference between the *Aron* and the other items. The *Aron* was unique due to its exalted status and holiness. The *techeiles* colour, described by Chazal, as "the colour of the sea, similar to the colour of the sky" represented honour and holiness. Sky-blue wool symbolises the purity of Heaven. For this reason, while the other items had the *tachash*-hide as their outer covering, the *Aron*, being the most important, needed a distinct cover to reflect its holiness.

The Malbim elaborates on this concept: the outer covering, which was the colour of *techeiles*, symbolises the greatness of the *Aron*. Even when the *Aron* was covered during transit, its *kedushah*, represented by the majestic *techeiles* colour, still radiated, impacting its surroundings.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that as the *Aron* represents the Torah, this *possuk* is conveying a message about the *kedushah* and the impact of Torah. Just like the *Aron* radiated holiness even when it was covered, the influence of the Torah also shines forth and can be felt far beyond the place where it is being studied. Similarly, R' Yisroel Salanter famously said, "Even when an individual learns in a quiet corner of a Beis HaMedrash in Vilna, the impact of his Torah study is felt far away. A distant Jew in Paris may face great spiritual challenges, and this person's Torah study saves him from succumbing to the temptation of the *yetzer horah*." The outer sky-blue wool covering of the *Aron*, representing the purity of the Heavens, hints at the *kedushah* of the Torah emanating from within and causing a ripple effect worldwide.

With this understanding of how an individual's Torah learning greatly impacts and assists the entire Klal Yisroel, we can better appreciate a seemingly difficult Mishnah we recite every morning. The Mishnah (*Peah* 1:1)¹ states:

¹ The list is extended by those also mentioned in the Gemara (*Shabbos* 127a).

אלו דברים שאדם אוכל פירותיהם בעולם הזה והקרן קיימת לו לעולם הבא, ואלו הן, כבוד אב ואם, וגמילות חסדים, והשקמת בית המדרש שחרית וערבית, והכנסת אורחים, ובקור חולים, והכנסת כלה, ולנית המת, ועיון תפלה. והבאת שלום בין אדם לחברו ובין איש לאשתו. ותלמוד תורה כנגד כלם.
These are the precepts whose fruits a person enjoys in this world but whose principal remains intact for him in the World to Come. They are: the honour due to father and mother, acts of kindness etc... and the study of Torah is equivalent to them all.

The Meforshim explain the Mishnah, clarifying that while the main reward for keeping *mitzvos* is typically not granted in this world, the "fruit" of *mitzvos* – the reward for the benefit others derive from the *mitzvah* – is repaid even in this world. Accordingly, the Mishnah lists *mitzvos* which not only involve a relationship between man and Hashem but also have an element of helping and assisting others. Most of the list, such as honouring parents, performing kindness, arising early to *shul* (to make a *minyan*), inviting guests, visiting the sick, and accompanying the dead on their final journey, is clearly understood in the context of benefitting others. However, the ending of the Mishnah, "learning Torah is equivalent to them all", does not seem congruent with the rest. While Torah may be an exceptional *mitzvah*, it appears to be all about the individual's growth and acquisition of knowledge. The question arises: How does Talmud Torah benefit others in the highest manner?

Considering the abovementioned concept, we can now shed light on this Mishnah. Learning Torah benefits the entire Klal Yisroel most powerfully and effectively. Even with one Yid learning in a secluded spot, spiritual protection is granted to others in the most far-off places. This *mitzvah* bears "fruit", benefitting others, and indeed surpasses all other *mitzvos*.

Dovid HaMelech *davened* in Tehillim (27:4): *אחת שאלתי מאת ה' אותה אבקש, שבתני בבית ה' כל ימי חיי, לחזות בנעם ה' ולבקר בהיכלו של ה' כל ימי חיי, ולבקר בהיכלו של ה' כל ימי חיי, ולבקר בהיכלו של ה' כל ימי חיי.* *One thing I asked of Hashem, that shall I seek: That I dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life; to behold the sweetness of Hashem etc... What are the two expressions mentioned here, שאלתי and אבקש?*

The Vilna Gaon (*Esther* 7:2) explains that *שאלתי* means requesting for oneself, while *אבקש* is an expression used when petitioning for others. With this, the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains, we can now understand what Dovid HaMelech longed and yearned for. His request of being able to devote his life to toil in Torah was not only something personal. Dovid HaMelech appreciated the concept that his devotion to Torah was the greatest way possible to benefit and contribute to Klal Yisroel. His wish of being able to learn Torah was not just a *שאלתי*, a personal request, but also a *אבקש*, a petition for the benefit of others, as learning Torah benefits Klal Yisroel in the most impactful way.

Let us appreciate the greatness and significance of our Limmud Torah and realise the immense impact and benefits our learning offers both for ourselves and others. Learning Torah is the greatest contribution we can provide for all of Klal Yisroel and therefore deserves to be cherished and valued!

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