

ארבעה צריכים חיזוק (ברכות לב:) – שיתחזק אדם בהם תמיד בכל כחו (רש"י)

From the *Sichos* of Maran Rosh HaYeshivah Rav Gershon Edelstein ztvl • *Shavuos/Naso* 5786

660

## Penini Chizuk on the Beraisa B'Reish Perek Shanu Chachomim

### "כל העוסק בתורה לשמה זוכה לדברים הרבה"

### "Anyone Who Engages in Torah for Its Sake Merits Many Things"

In honor of Maran Rabbeinu ztvl's third *yahrtzeit* — 10 Sivan 5786/2026

We are approaching the end of the third year since the lights were darkened and the cloud rose with the passing of Rabbeinu HaGadol ztvl, and our heart still mourns when we remember the days when we had been *zocheh* to hear his *divrei Torah* and *mussar* on a regular basis. And on Yomim Tovim especially, he would speak wondrously about the relevant *inyanim* and how to fulfill them according to halachah, while engaged in *esek haTorah* and mitzvah fulfillment.

In honor of Shavuos, Zman Matan Toraseinu, we compiled some of his *divrei Torah* on the Beraisa in *Avos* (chap. 6), "רבי מאיר אומר כל העוסק בתורה לשמה זוכה לדברים הרבה, Rabbi Meir says, 'Whoever engages in Torah for its own sake merits many things.'" He spoke at length about this in his *sichos* often. He would explain and elucidate these words piece by piece: נקרא רע, אהוב, אוהב את המקום, אוהב את הבריות... ונותנת לו מלכות וממשלה... ומגדלתו ומרומתו על כל המעשים, "He is called 'friend, beloved,' he loves Hashem, he loves His creatures... and it gives him kingship and sovereignty... and it makes him great and exalts him above all things." And we clearly saw all this in Rabbeinu, fulfilled in exceptional, great *sheleimus*.

In Sivan 5768 (2008), he said the following in his daily *shiur* before Shavuos:

Many people look for *segulahs* for success in Torah. But why do we need *segulahs*? After all, "whoever engages in Torah for its own sake merits many things," which is greater than *segulahs*. And while *segulahs* aren't always effective, and if you don't have *zechuyos* the *segulah* will not help, because a *segulah* does not help 100 percent, there are other things that are 100 percent. And "whoever engages in Torah for its own sake" it is guaranteed 100 percent that he will have *siyatta d'Shemaya*, as the Tanna promised, "he merits many things."

We hope and pray that these *divrei Torah* will be beneficial to the *rabbim*, *l'hagdil Torah u'lehaadirah*. *Zechuso yagein aleinu v'al kol Yisrael*.

### כל העוסק בתורה לשמה

**Anyone who engages in Torah for its own sake merits many things.** This is talking about someone who engages in Torah for Torah's sake, and it does not say that he has to be a *baal kishron* or an *illui*. This relates to every single person, even someone who is less talented in learning, or even if he's not talented at all.

It's well known that there are people who were not such great *baalei kishron* when they were young, and they grew up and became very successful in learning. I knew people who were considered weak students in cheder, but they had good *middos* and learned with *hasmadah*. Their parents felt so bad for them — they thought: they're such good children, but they aren't *baalei kishron*, and they worried about their future. But in the end, they became top *avreichim*! Because one only has to engage in *Torah lishmah*, which means "without *cheshbonos*," and with *middos tovos*. This is the way one merits tremendous *hatzlachah*.

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**"Anyone who engages"** This applies to learning any *divrei Torah*, even Gemara with Rashi or Chumash with Rashi. Whenever a person learns any *divrei Torah* with *deveikus haTorah*, it sanctifies him and affords him very great *madreigos*.

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**"Anyone who engages"** It does not say that it has to be after acquiring the 48 acquisitions of Torah. It seems that even before a person achieves *sheleimus* in the 48

## Why Don't We See "Merits Many Things"?

During the last weeks of his life, Rabbeinu and his *chavrusa* learned *Maseches Nedarim*. When they reached *daf* 62, "עשה דברים לשם" he mentioned the Rosh that's quoted in the *Nefesh HaChaim* (4:3), that *Torah lishmah* is, for example, to know and understand and to increase knowledge and *pilpul*." Rabbeinu said, "We see that if a person learns because it's interesting, that is called *Torah lishmah*."

They asked: If so, it's not to learn *Torah lishmah*. Rabbeinu answered: **That's right.**

They asked again: But in *Pirkei Avos*, it says "One who learns *Torah lishmah* merits many things." Where do we see these things?

Rabbeinu answered: **It depends on how long he learns, and how engrossed he is in his learning.**

What follows is a lengthier explanation of this concept from one of his *sichos*:

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*Baruch Hashem*, many people learn *Torah lishmah*, as the Rosh writes that *Torah lishmah* is when one learns out of a sense of pleasure and curiosity for *divrei Torah*. So why don't we see all these *maalos* that the Tanna mentioned about one who learns *Torah lishmah*? Apparently, it's because we are lacking in the "*esek*, business" or lacking in the "*lishmah*, for its own sake." After all, the *mishnah* says "*kol*, anyone" who is *osek* in *Torah lishmah* — anyone can merit this! And if we don't see it, it must be due to one of two reasons: Either the "*lishmah*" is not *b'sheleimus*, or the "*esek*" is not *b'sheleimus*.

There are many *madreigos* to *esek*. What does *esek* mean? A *talmid* told me the following: He came from a wealthy family. He learned in our yeshivah, but after a while, he became a busy businessman. He told me that now he realizes that he did not learn as he should have learned while he was in yeshivah. Now that he's a businessman, he wakes up right away and goes to sleep on time. It's not hard for him to get up in the morning, and he uses his time wisely throughout the entire day, because he doesn't want to lose a minute. But he didn't conduct himself this way when he learned in yeshivah, because Torah was not like an "*esek*," a business, for him. A person must feel that Torah is my *esek*! My *parnasah*! That is a very high *madreigah*; it's not a natural feeling and it's not easy to reach it.

Therefore, in every generation we find unique individuals, *yechidei segulah*, who are *gedolim*. We see their tremendous sense of *hatzlachah*, and a true level of *gadlus* with kingship and dominion, as the Tanna says about those who are *osek baTorah lishmah*: "the Torah gives him kingship and dominion." Everyone asks them questions and accepts whatever they say; everyone agrees with and submits to what they say, and the entire world relies on them. This comes from the power of *esek haTorah lishmah*, learning Torah for its own sake. But only individuals, *yechidei segulah*, have achieved this. And why hasn't everyone merited this? Apparently, something is lacking in their learning — either in their "*esek*" or in their "*lishmah*."

acquisitions, if he engages in *Torah lishmah*, he will already merit many things!

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What is "*Torah lishmah*, for its own sake"? The Gemara tells us (*Nedarim* 62a), "עשה דברים לשם" "פעלים ודבר בהם לשם" The Rosh explains: 'Do things for the sake of He Who causes them to be done' — for the sake of HaKadosh Baruch Hu Who does everything for him, and 'speak in them for their own sake' — your speech and give and take in *divrei Torah* should be for the sake of Torah. For example, to know and understand and to increase knowledge and *pilpul*, but not to tease others or to glorify yourself."

That is, *mitzvos* must be performed "*l'shem pa'alam*," for Hashem's sake, Who does everything and commanded us regarding all the *mitzvos*, but "*v'dabeir bahem*," *divrei Torah* must be learned for their own sake, for the sake of Torah itself, in order to understand and to increase knowledge and *pilpul*.

The reason we don't learn Torah "*l'shem pa'alam*" as we do in all other *mitzvos*, is because when a person is learning, he must direct all his thoughts and focus on what he is learning. Of course, before he starts learning, he should know that there is a *mitzvah* and an obligation to learn and he may not waste time from learning. He has to know that if he has *bittul Torah*, he will suffer Gehinnom, but while he's learning, he should not be thinking about Gehinnom. Because if he thinks about it, he won't be able to concentrate on his learning.

This is the meaning of engaging in Torah "for its own sake," he loves to learn because learning is interesting and enticing, he wants to know the *yedios* in the Torah and understand them. There are simple *yedios* and there are deeper ways to understand them. There is also "to increase knowledge and *pilpul*" — *chiddushim* of further *divrei Torah*, more explanations, more *kashas* and *teirutzim*, and it is a pleasure and one is naturally attracted to it. When a person learns in this manner, for the pleasure in Torah, that is called learning *lishmah*, for its own sake.

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The *Nefesh HaChaim* (4:3) quotes the Rosh that *Torah lishmah* means to learn with curiosity, as Rashi writes in the section of Krias Shema, where the word "*hayom*, today" is written twice: "that I command you (sing.) today" and, "that I command you (pl.) today." Rashi explains in both places that *divrei Torah* have to be like a "new decree," and "like new." That is, like a new decree issued by the king, and everyone wants to know what the

new law is, and they are interested in it. And even if the decree does not apply to some people, it's still interesting even to them, because humans have innate curiosity.

So too, one must learn Torah out of a sense of curiosity to know what the *dinei Torah* are, what the Gemara says, what Tosfos says, this is the halachah, this is the *chiyuv* — and this is called “*Torah lishmah*,” to learn with curiosity, because it's interesting. And when something is interesting, it is not hard.

Of course, it's clear that a person should not only be learning because he's curious about what the Torah says. Someone who learns solely because he's curious, the same way he's curious about other wisdoms or about reading an interesting book, this is not the *maalah* and *chashivus* of Torah. Torah learning must be performed out of a sense that he is learning Hashem's Torah and fulfilling the mitzvah of *talmud Torah*. At the same time, however, one must learn in a manner that captures his heart.

Many people come ask how to learn and what to learn, and the answer is explained in the Rashi we just mentioned. Learn in the way that most interesting and most engaging for you. The more your learning comes from a place of interest, the more fascinating it will be, and then, your mind will be more engrossed in and focused on Torah. The more a person learns with *deveikus* and intense concentration, the more this sanctifies and purifies his *neshamah*. Indeed, the Rambam writes at the end of *Hilchos Mikvaos* that Torah is called “*mei da'as*, waters of knowledge,” and Torah study purifies man because he is surrounded completely by the kedushah of Torah, and he is engrossed in it without *hesich hadaas*.

There is another *inyan* in Torah. *Divrei Torah* are sweeter than honey (*Tehillim* 19:11), more than honey, because if you eat too much honey, you'll get sick of it. However, Torah has never-ending sweetness. *Adaraba*, the more you learn, the greater the sweetness. And we ask for this daily in Birkas HaTorah, “And please, Hashem Elokeinu, make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths.” We ask to merit feeling the sweetness of Torah. Due to the sweetness, the learning is not hard, and we are able to engage in Torah study.

These are two motives that give us the natural possibility to engage in Torah: curiosity, and sweetness in Torah. And when a person learns in this manner, with a sense of curiosity and a feeling of sweetness of Torah, and when he remembers that he's learning Hashem's Torah and fulfilling the mitzvah of *talmud Torah*, this is *Torah lishmah*. And through this, one can merit all the *maalos* of “one who engages in Torah for its own sake.”

### זוכה לדברים הרבה

**Merits many things.** Some explain that this is referring to the next phrase: that “he is called ‘friend, beloved,’ he loves Hashem etc.” However, others explain that this refers to other things, which cannot be detailed or

explained because they are such great, lofty matters. They are beyond our comprehension.

The *Ruach Chaim* writes: Merits many things aside from what is delineated afterward in the *mishnah*... Another explanation of “he merits many things” is based on Chazal's comment (*Brachos* 34b) on the *pasuk* (*Yeshayah* 64:3), “No eye has seen, Hashem, aside from You, what will be done to one who hopes for Him” — None of the heavenly angels, *nevi'im*, or seers ever could fathom the great reward that is hidden for those who engage in *Torah lishmah*. The fact that Chazal merely said “merits many things” is because these things are unfathomable, so we cannot write about them.

### כל העולם כולו כדאי הוא לו

**The entire world is worthwhile for his sake alone.** Rashi explains: the world was created for such a person. Similarly, it states, “For this is the whole man” (*Koheles* 12:13). That is, since the world was created with a purpose, and everything created in this world has a purpose, and the purpose of the entire creation is worthwhile for one person who engages in Torah, as the entire world is required for him. The entire world, the whole world, with all the various world included in it, was worth creating just for him.

The Rambam writes at length in his Introduction to his commentary on *Mishnayos*, that the purpose of Creation, and Hashem's intention in creating the entire world was for man, as he is the choicest of all creations, and the entire creation is needed for him. We know how some things are necessary for man, such as the sun, and air, and food and drink. And regarding others, we do not understand why they were created, and this is called secrets of Creation. A person actually needs everything in Creation to reach his *sheleimus*. This is the reality. We do not understand everything, but over time, many things are revealed, and we also find and discover things in the wisdom of nature that man needs.

Which man was the world created for? For the *adam hashaleim*, the complete person, who fulfills the purpose of man and is engaged in *Torah lishmah*. The purpose of Creation is *kevod Shamayim*, as Chazal say at the end of *Pirkei Avos* that whatever Hashem created in this world, He only created it for His glory. *Kevod Shamayim* is the purpose of Creation, and the objective of revealing *kevod Shamayim* with *sheleimus* occurs through Torah, by engaging in *Torah lishmah*. This upholds the purpose of Creation and *kevod Shamayim* is revealed through it.

### נקרא רע אהוב

**He is called Friend, Beloved.** First “Friend” is mentioned, and only then “Beloved,” because it is possible to be a friend, but not beloved; this is someone who everyone feels comfortable speaking to.

The Gemara (*Brachos* 12a) tells us that there are four levels: “*Ahavah* (love), *achvah* (brotherhood), *shalom*

(peace), *v'rei'us* (friendship).” *Ahavah* is *ahavas habriyos*, *achvah* is familial love, which is a stronger love, *shalom* is a higher *madreigah*, because sometimes there can be friction between family members, and *rei'us* is the fourth level. Sometimes, *ahavah* and *achvah* are present between people, and they even say “*shalom*” to each other, but there is no *rei'us*, friendship. Each person does not take interest in the other, each one lives for himself. He is busy with his own matters and does not think about the other person. This can occur in a family setting too. I know men who lacked “*rei'us*.” He claimed that he learns with *hasmadah*, and if he speaks to his family, it’s “*bittul Torah*...” But *rei'us* means that each person cares about, and takes an interest in, the other person’s needs and state.

This is what they were saying about one who engages in *Torah lishmah* is called “*rei'a*, a friend.” He acts with *rei'us* with every single individual. He exhibits visible friendship. For example, if he’s traveling on a bus, and someone sits down next to him, he strikes up a conversation with him, and that makes the other person feel good. Sometimes, a person looks strange and others are scared to speak to him, but when a normal person sits next to you, it’s “*rei'us*” to start talking to him. Sometimes, when non-Torah observant people sit next to you, this is a way to have an influence them.

This is what Chazal meant when they said: “he is called a ‘Friend, Beloved.’” These are two consecutive parts. After a person is called a Friend, he will also be beloved by everyone. But first, he has to be a Friend — he should not be waiting for people to come to him, but he himself is the “friend, the yedid,” and afterward, he is also Beloved.

This is similar to what Chazal say (*Avos* 3:10), “If the spirit of one’s fellows is pleased with him, Hashem’s spirit is pleased with him.” The *Chovos HaLevavos* explains (*Shaar Yichud HaMaaseh* chap. 5) that this is Heavenly *hashgachah*: since Hashem is pleased with him, Hashem arranges matters that people will be pleased with him. And since he is a Friend to people, he is rewarded by being Beloved as well!

While it’s true that this concept is also a natural occurrence — when someone is friendly, he becomes beloved — this is also a Heavenly reward: *Shamayim* makes him beloved.

### אוהב את המקום אוהב את הבריות

First, the *mishnah* mentions “**he loves Hashem**,” and then it says “**he loves His creations**.” These two characteristics appear in the same order in the 48 acquisitions of Torah. The Tanna’s order proves that it’s harder to love people than to love Hashem. It’s possible that he is already a Friend, and Beloved, and he loves Hashem, but still, loving His creations is another *madreigah*.

This is because loving Hashem is a natural love, which comes from *hakaras hatov*, from *emunah*, from the fact

that a person knows that everything is in Heaven’s hands, and that the One Who loves him the most in the entire world is HaKadosh Baruch Hu. He knows that Hashem cares for him for an entire lifetime, and whatever he has — all his *kochos* and his entire life, and all the good things he has — is divinely orchestrated. And since HaKadosh Baruch Hu cares so much about him, he naturally loves Him due to his *hakaras hatov*. Loving Hashem is very natural.

But *ahavas habriyos* is a greater *madreigah*. There is no natural reason to *stam* love a person who never did you a favor, for whom you have no *hakaras hatov*. Why should you love him? Now, there is a *teva* of *ahavas habriyos* that you care for and feel bad when someone else suffers, but a sense of love that would cause you to perform *chesed* and benefit him is a higher level. You might think: why should I benefit him if he has whatever he needs — but the obligation of *ahavas habriyos* is binding even if there’s no specific reason to love him. That’s why it’s harder.

The way to attain this is by engaging in Torah for its own sake. Of course, it depends on how, and in what manner one is *osek baTorah*. It has to be *esek haTorah* in *sheleimus*, true *esek*, he must be captivated by Torah! The level of *ahavas habriyos* a person will merit is commensurate with his level of *deveikus baTorah*.

### משמח את המקום משמח את הבריות

**He gladdens Hashem, he gladdens His creatures** Here too, gladdening Hashem is mentioned before gladdening people, because it’s harder to make people happy, and it’s a more lofty, greater *madreigah*, as we explained regarding *ahavas habriyos*.

Regarding the virtue of gladdening people, the Gemara relates (*Taanis* 22a) that Rabbi Beroka Choza’a met Eliyahu HaNavi in the market and asked him if there was anyone in the marketplace who was a ben Olam HaBa. Eliyahu showed him two brothers who were *bnei Olam HaBa*. Rabbi Beroka approached them and asked them, What is your occupation? They told him that they know how to **make people happy**. They look around for someone who looks unhappy, and they cheer him up. As a reward, they merited to be worthy of Olam HaBa.

This is not something that only happens in the marketplace; it can happen anywhere. Even in yeshivah there are people who need encouragement, but it’s harder to find them, because everyone hides their troubles. They don’t want others to know that they’re suffering; they’re embarrassed to feel different from everyone else. They don’t want to be the *nebach* case that everyone pities. But every single yeshivah has *bachurim* like this, *bachurim* with good *sheifos* who suffer from *chalishus hadaas* and the like. And they need the help and encouragement of hearing a good word.

There are well-known stories of *bachurim* who had already decided that to leave yeshivah, but they changed their mind after someone treated them kindly. I know a story about a broken, lonely *bachur* who already decided to leave yeshivah. When everyone stood on line to say “*gut Shabbos*” to the *roshei yeshivah*, the *bachur* who was standing on line behind him tapped him on the shoulder and asked him how he was doing. When he saw that someone cared about him and was being friendly to him, he decided to stay in yeshivah. Another story: a *talmid* decided to leave yeshivah, and at the last second, the *rosh yeshivah* noticed him and treated him kindly, and he decided to stay in yeshivah.

### ומלבשתו ענווה ויראה

**The Torah clothes him in humility and fear of Hashem.** It is explained that the Torah itself rectifies the person and leads him to humility and fear of Hashem. Similarly, Chazal say (Kiddushin 30b), “I created the yetzer hara, and I created the Torah as an antidote to it,” but on the other hand, in the 48 acquisitions of Torah, we learn the opposite: Torah is acquired through humility and fear of Hashem, which mean that humility and fear of Hashem lead a person to success in Torah, not the opposite.

The explanation is that both are actually right. When one learns a little Torah, he grows a little in humility and fear of Hashem, and as a result, more Torah is added, and as a result of that, he grows a little more in humility and fear of Hashem, and so forth. In this manner, a person progresses and increases more Torah, and more humility and fear of Hashem. It’s gradual; each one complements the other. Neither happen all at once; growth in Torah and fear of Hashem both increase slowly, from one *madreigah* to the next.

The word “**and it [the Torah] clothes him**” is used specifically to teach that by engaging in Torah lishmah, he merits the *madreigah* where humility and fear of Hashem are like a garment; he is dressed in them, they don’t fall off him. He does not have to strengthen himself with a “*maaseh levishah*,” because he is already “dressed” with humility and fear of Hashem! This is the *koach* of *Torah lishmah*, “it clothes him in humility and fear of Hashem,” the humility and fear of Hashem are attached to him, he is dressed in it. He does not have *hesich hadaas* from humility and *yiras Shamayim* — and his *yirah* and good *middos* do not depart from him!

### ומכשרתו להיות צדיק חסיד ישר ונאמן

**And it makes him fit to be righteous, devout, straight, and faithful.** *Drashos Beis HaLevi* (Shu”t vol. 2, 15) explains that the word מכשרתו (makes him fit) is similar to *hagalah* and *hachsharas keilim* (הכשרת כלים). If a person clings to *limud haTorah*, the *kedushah* of Torah has an influence on him to *kasher* and purify his *nefesh* completely, and to remove from his heart the inclination and desire to sin.

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The *Ruach Chaim* explains that these four terms are virtues, each one greater than the preceding one. First it says ***tzaddik, righteous***, meaning, he adheres to all the *halachos* in the *Shulchan Aruch* and does everything according to halachah, according to whatever’s written in the *Shulchan Aruch* — including the first se’if of “*Shevisi Hashem l’negdi tamid*, ‘Place Hashem before you at all times constantly’ is a great principle in the Torah and in the virtues of the righteous.” ***Chassid, devout*** means that he acts *lifnim mishuras hadin*, goes beyond the call of duty, more than the *Shulchan Aruch*’s requirements.

***Yashar, straight*** is another *madreigah*, as we find in the Rambam (end of *Hilchos Shemittah v’Yovel*), “And he walks with straightness, like Hashem created him.” The *pasuk* in *Koheles* states (7:29), “Hashem made man straight.” *Ruach Chaim* explains that *yashar, straight*, refers to someone who was able to completely uproot his *yetzer hara* so it can no longer control him. This person no longer has a *yetzer hara*, like Dovid HaMelech said (*Tehillim* 109:22), “And my heart is hollow within me.” While there can be external temptations, he himself does not have a *yetzer hara*.

A ***tzaddik***, on the other hand, is someone who still has a *yetzer hara* and battles it, and even though he wins his *yetzer hara*, his battle is still continuing. So too, a ***chassid*** is one who goes beyond the call of duty, but he still has a *yetzer hara*. However, a ***yashar*** is someone who remains just as Hashem created him. Just as before Adam HaRishon sinned, he did not have an inner *yetzer hara*, he only had a *yetzer* persuading him externally. When the *nachash* lured him into eating from the Eitz HaDaas, Adam felt that someone from the outside was persuading him, but it was not an inner *yetzer hara* — he did not feel that he personally wanted the sin, the desire was created through the temptation of the one who was tempting him. However, after he sinned with the Eitz HaDaas, the *yetzer hara* entered Adam personally, and he felt that he personally wanted to sin. The *Nefesh HaChaim* discusses this at length in Shaar 1.

### ונהנין ממנו עצה ותושייה

[From his *hesped* on Maran the Steipler *ztvk*”l] **From him people enjoy counsel and wisdom.** We see here a tangible expression of Chazal’s words, a living, real example. These descriptions were fulfilled with *sheleimus* in this Kesser Torah among us. Anyone who need advice, an *eitzah tova*, would come in to Rabbeinu and Rabbeinu would patiently give him advice, a good, trustworthy *eitzah*, a clever, proper *eitzah*, an *eitzah* that included wisdom, with an inner happiness shrouded with his trademark simplicity. Anyone who had *shailos* and *sefeikos* or needed clarification or explanation of any matter, would present it to him, and Rabbeinu would explain the matter clearly and pleasantly, with a cheerful expression on his face. *And they would enjoy his understanding.* Sometimes, there were things that

required *chizuk*, they needed someone to bolster and stand behind the matter with courage and strength, and lead with might. They'd bring these matters to Rabbeinu as well, and *they would enjoy his strength*. "*Eitzah v'tushia, binah v'gevurah*, Counsel and wisdom, understanding and strength" — we all benefited, and so did the entire world, and now we have lost this, they have left us.

### ונתנת לו מלכות וממשלה

**The Torah gives him kingship and dominion.** The Gra has a well-known explanation on the *pasuk* in *Tehillim* (22:29), "*Ki laHashem hameluchah u'mosheil ba-goyim*, For the kingship is Hashem's, and He has dominion over the nations." There is a *melech* and *mosheil*. A *melech* is someone who the nation desires his kingship, "And His kingship (*malchus*) they willingly accepted upon themselves." They accept his kingship out of the recognition that it is good and worthwhile for them; they are pleased with his leadership, and they trust him that whatever he does is the best that can be. A *moshel*, on the other hand, is someone who rules by force (a dictator); the people have no choice but to obey him.

The Gra explains: "For the kingship (*hameluchah*) is Hashem's and He has dominion (*moshel*) over the nations" — For the non-Jews, it is a *memshalah*, a dictatorship; Hashem rules over the nations by force. They do not do His will out of love; they obey Him out of fear. However, for Klal Yisrael, it is *meluchah*, a kingship, we accepted His kingship willingly. This is the meaning of the words: "*Hameluchah v'hamemshalah l'Chai Olamim*, Kingship and dominion are His Who lives eternally." There is kingship and dominion. For us it is kingship, and for the nations of the world, it is dominion.

Similarly, one who learns *Torah lishmah* receives *malchus*, kingship. There is a *tzibbur* who want him to lead them, who willingly listen to what he says. And he also has *memshalah*, dominion. Even those who don't want his leadership are subjugated to him and must submit to his opinion.

### ומגליל לו רזי תורה

**The secrets of the Torah are revealed to him.** *Shamayim* reveals him the secrets of the Torah. Rav Chaim Volozhiner related (in the introduction to the Gra's commentary to *Sifra d'Tzeniusa*) that *maggidim* from *Shamayim* often came to his *rebbe* the Gra and asked to teach him the secrets of the Torah, but he did not want to listen, because he wanted to toil in Torah with his own effort. He also writes there that he saw, in the Gra's handwriting, that he wrote down secrets of the Torah that Yaakov Avinu revealed to him. He also had *chiddushim* in *sisrei Torah* that he was planning on saying in the Yeshivah shel Maalah after his passing.

It's well known that right before the Gra passed away, he held onto his *tzitzis*, cried, and said: Here in this world, one can perform the mitzvah of *tzitzis* with just a little effort, and with a small expense of a few coins, whereas in the Olam HaEmes, one will no longer have the opportunity to fulfill *mitzvos*. Every mitzvah gives a person the merit of more Olam HaBa, more *kirvas Elokim*, another *madreigah*, and more *sisrei Torah*. He had *chiddushim* in *sisrei Torah* that he wanted to say in the

Yeshivah shel Maalah, *chiddushim* that were unknown in the Yeshivah shel Maalah. There, they would engage in Torah with *havanah* of *neshamos*, and they were already learning Torah with the *sisrei Torah*, but there were still *sisrei Torah* that they did not yet know. And he knew them. What a *madreigah*!

### ונעשה כמעייין המתגבר

**He becomes like an ever-strengthening fountain and like an unceasing river.** The sequence of these terms teaches us that in order to merit knowing secrets of Torah, and to be an ever-strengthening fountain, one first must love Hashem's creatures and make them happy, because *middos tovos* are the merits for success in Torah. One who does not love others and does not make them happy does not deserve, nor does he have the privilege, to succeed in Torah.

### והוי צנוע וארך רוח

**He becomes modest and patient.** These good *middos* are mentioned almost at the end, after all the virtues of *tzaddik*, *chassid*, *yashar*, and *ne'eman*, along with all the kingship, dominion and secrets of the Torah and an ever-strengthening fountain. Only afterwards, does it say "he becomes modest and patient and forgiving of insult to himself," because these are lofty *madreigos* of *hisgabrus*, which goes against human nature. By learning *Torah lishmah*, one is *zocheh* to this as well.

It's true that Rabbi Akiva was *tzani v'ma'ali*, modest and refined, even before he learned Torah, and that's actually why he was *zocheh* to become "Rabbi Akiva." For us, however, it's the opposite: first learn Torah, and then you'll attain the virtues of "*tzani v'ma'ali*."

### ומגדלתו ומרוממתו על כל המעשים

The Torah makes him great and exalts him above all things. The *Ruach Chaim* explains, "Because Torah is even greater than *maasim tovim*." That is, *esek haTorah* makes a person great and exalts him more than all the other *mitzvos* and *maasim tovim* he will do.

Indeed, it is written explicitly in many *Gemaras* and *Midrashim*, in *sifrei Rishonim* and *Achronim*, that Torah is greater than all other *mitzvos*. The *Nefesh HaChaim* discusses this at length in *Shaar* 4. While the Torah obligates us to keep all 613 *mitzvos*, there is a measure of how much one is obligated; during the rest of our time, one is supposed to engage in Torah. When a person is *osek baTorah*, it sanctifies him more than all other good deeds!

This is because when a person is engaged in Torah, and his mind is connected to Torah, he is actually connected to the Shechinah, as Chazal say (*Zohar, Acharei* 73:1), "*Kudsha Brich Hu, v'Oraisa, v'Yisrael chad hu*, HaKadosh Baruch Hu, the Torah and Klal Yisrael are one." When one learns Torah, the Shechinah rests upon him — we don't find that Hashem rests His Shechinah on us when we perform other *mitzvos*. It's only when a



person sits and engages in Torah. Indeed, Chazal teach (*Avos* 3:6), “When ten people sit and engage in Torah, the Shechinah rests among them, as it states, ‘*Elokim* stands in the assembly of *Keil*.’.... How do we know this even of one?...”

Therefore, the *hashpaah* of Torah is greater than that of all the *mitzvos*, but it also depends on *retzifus*. There should not be a break or *hesich hadaas* from Torah, because if there is no *retzifus*, the *hashpaah* is lost. It’s true that a person has other *maasim tovim* to fulfill, but when he does not have any obligation to fulfill, he must be very careful not to break his *retzifus* in Torah.

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We must be aware of the *chashivus haTorah*, of every second of Torah, even if you only have one minute to learn, it’s worth learning! When a person is engaged in Torah, he becomes sanctified. Generally, the people who are *osek baTorah* are unaware of their *madreigah*. But you need to know about it; you must know that *esek haTorah* sanctifies a person. Of course, you also have to keep the *mitzvos* — you may not be a “*lomeid v’einu mekayem*, someone who learns and does not practice what he learned” — and *mitzvos* also sanctify a person. But the Torah sanctifies him even more. Every moment that a person learns, he is connected to *kedushah*.

Even if someone has to earn a living and is not a full-time learner, and it’s harder for him to learn, even so, if he utilizes his free moments for Torah, you cannot fathom what he will merit as a result. The more a person has to exert effort to learn, the more *zechus* he will receive! Similarly, even a person who is a full-time learner, can have pockets in the day where it’s possible to waste time — but if he puts in effort not to waste that time, every such moment gives him a tremendous *zechus*, *Zechus haTorah*. Through Torah, a person merits to cling to *Hashem Yisbarach*’s *kedushah*.

## Peace in This World Is in the Merit of Those Who Learn Torah *Lishmah*

Chazal say (*Sanhedrin* 99b), “Anyone who is engaged in Torah for its own sake introduces peace in the heavenly entourage above and the earthly entourage below.” When one person learns *Torah lishmah*, he makes peace in Heaven and in the earth below. In his merit, there are no wars, no fights between the ministers of heavenly nations, and then, on the Earth below, only peace will reign, there will no war.

*Lichorah*, in our days, we see that many people are *osek baTorah lishmah*, and there are still wars; there is no peace down in this world. And apparently there is no peace in the upper worlds either. Why is this so, if we are engaged in *Torah lishmah*?

It seems we can answer this based on Chazal (*Brachos* 64a), “Rabbi Elazar said on behalf of Rabbi Chanina, Torah scholars increase peace in this world, as it states, ‘And all *banayich* [your children] will be students of Hashem and your children will have much peace. Don’t read the word ‘*banayich*’ [your children], read it ‘*bonayich*’ [your builders].’ That is, *talmidei chachamim* increase peace in the entire world through learning Torah. The word “**all**” comes to teach us that when **all** of Klal Yisrael, **everyone**, is engaged in Hashem’s Torah, then it will have an influence of “**increased**” peace in the world, as the pasuk concludes, “and Your children will have **much** peace.” However, if only a part of Klal Yisrael, and not everyone, is engaged in Torah, then it only creates a little peace in the world, not “much” peace.

If so, peace in this world depends on the numbers and proportion of *lomdei Torah*. If there are many *talmidei chachamim* learning Torah, they will have an influence of much peace in the world. This is the explanation of “Anyone who is engaged in Torah for its own sake introduces peace in the heavenly entourage above...” — any single person who is engaged in Torah has an influence and increases peace in the world. However, the amount of peace depends on the amount of *oskei haTorah*. The more *lomdei Torah* there are, the more peace there will throughout the world.

Therefore, in our times, even though there are people who are engaged in *Torah lishmah*, since it’s not all of Klal Yisrael learning Torah, there is only a little bit of peace in the world, and we are not experiencing “much” peace. The “little” peace we have today, that we can sit and learn Torah without disturbance, is in the *zechus* of those *talmidei chachamim* who are engaged in Torah and are increasing peace in the word. Of course, we daven and ask for “שְׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְךָ תָּשִׁים לְעוֹלָם, Place much peace on your nation Yisrael forever,” we are davening that *oskei haTorah* should proliferate, and thus, we shall merit, “And your children will have much peace”!

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