

Kedoshim 2016

1.

You shall love your fellow as yourself is a commandment

Tiferes Shimshon page 198

“You shall love your fellow as yourself – I am Hashem.” (19, 18)

"ואהבת לרעך כמוך."

There are many people who strive to perform the mitzvos with the best of their abilities. They even prepare for the mitzvos prior to performing the mitzvos. They are very scrupulous regarding performing mitzvos correctly with all of their intricate details. The question arises; why when it comes to acts of kindness is the same type of yearning, scrupulousness and care nonexistent? Why is the same type of drive lacking? Why is the mitzvah of loving ones fellow like oneself treated less importantly in comparison to the other mitzvos? **The mitzvah of bestowing kindness is unique in the following manner; it itself is a mitzvah and additionally it is logical. There is a nature that is within every human being to bestow kindness towards others. Sometimes these mitzvahs are performed solely because they are natural. They aren't doing these acts of kindness because they are commanded to. This is a problem. As a result of the various acts of kindness being performed out of nature, these acts of kindness are being performed without the form of a mitzvah. Meaning, they are many times lacking the Torah details that should have been attached to them.**

2.

Acquiring the Torah

“In the presence of an old person shall you rise and you shall honor the presence of a sage and you shall revere your God – I am Hashem.” (19, 32)

"מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלהיך אני ה'."

The Gemara in Kiddushin (32b) quotes Rabbi Yosi Hageleli who says that when the pasuk says zakan/זקן (typically translated as old person), the pasuk means someone that acquired Torah knowledge. Rashi explains that the word זקן is an abbreviation for zhe she kana chachma, which means this person acquired knowledge (זה קנה חכמה). The question is; where is the letter ה in the word זקן? The source for Rabbi Yosi Hageleli is a pasuk in Mishlei “Hashem has made (acquired) me as the beginning of His way.” (8, 22) "ה' קנני ראשית דרכו." We see from this pasuk that a language of acquisition is used when referring to wisdom. Therefore the letter ה is unnecessary. When referring to an undetailed acquisition, the assumption is that the type of acquisition that is being dealt with is an acquisition pertaining to wisdom. The question is; why are we assuming that a vague and undetailed acquisition refers to an intellectual acquisition? Furthermore, we find other pesukim where the word acquisition is used and the pasuk isn't referring to an intellectual acquisition? For example Chava said regarding Kiyin “I have acquired a man with Hashem.” (Berashis (4, 1)) Also, the pasuk states “The field that Avraham had bought from the children of Ches, there Avraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.” (Berashis 25,

10) Lastly, “When you make a sale to your fellow or make a purchase from the hand of your fellow, do not aggrrieve one another.” (Vayikra 25, 14) Rather the Stiepler answers (Berchas Peretz page 48) based on the Gemara. The Gemara in Nedarim (41a) quotes Abayai who says a poor person is someone who lacks knowledge. If one has Torah knowledge, then he has everything. Conversely, if one doesn’t have Torah knowledge, then he doesn’t have anything. If one acquired Torah knowledge, then he isn’t lacking anything. Dissimilarly, if one didn’t acquire Torah knowledge, then what did he acquire? (אמר אביי, נקטינן: אין עני אלא בדעה. במערבא אמרי: דדא ביה) (כלולא ביה, דלא דא ביה מה ביה? דא קני מה חסר? דא לא קני מה קני) We see from this Gemara that acquiring other items isn’t as important as acquiring Torah knowledge. Therefore it is obvious that when the Torah said to stand up because of an acquisition, the Torah was referring to wisdom.

**Why is it that the Gemara views other acquisitions as an inadequate or deficient acquirement in comparison to the acquisition of wisdom? What is the distinct advantage that wisdom has over other items?** One answer is; other acquisition do not have the same importance as wisdom as stated in Koheles (1, 3) “What profit does man have for all of his labor which he toils beneath the sun?” (“מה יתרון לאדם בכל עמלו תחת השמש.”) An additional answer is; **other acquisitions do not elevate one’s body. These acquisitions are external; they will not internally affect and enhance one’s body. The body doesn’t internally blossom or prosper. Conversely, when a person learns properly and acquires Torah knowledge, the Torah becomes a part of his body, bones and blood. The Torah changes the essence of his body.** (Rav Shach (quoted in Rav Shach Speaks page 149) says **learning transcends the other mitzvos in one aspect; it can remold the basic character of those who learn it.**) An additional answer is; other acquisitions are not a definitive acquisition because perhaps the items will be destroyed, stolen, or lost. Conversely, wisdom cannot be destroyed, stolen, or lost. Education and knowledge cannot be taken away. (This shtims (coincides) with the Mishna (Avos perek beis) the more possessions the more worry. The reason for this explains the Bartenura is that these possessions might get stolen.) **An additional answer is; these acquisitions will not depart with a person when he dies as states in Avos (perek vav). He will have to leave everything that he has with others. The only thing that will go with him is Torah and mitzvos.** Lastly, the main reason and purpose we were created is to serve Hashem as stated in the beginning of the Meselas Yesharim. This is done via learning and performing mitzvos. Our soul did not descend to this world in order to acquire and accumulate many different types of extravagant possessions.

**As a side point, why is a chacham (wise person) nicknamed a zakan? The Ben Ish Chai (Ben Yehoyadah on Gemara in Kiddushin) explains based on a Mishna. The Mishna states (Avos perek daled Mishna alef) ‘who is wise? He who learns from every person.’ (בן זומא) (אומר איזהו חכם? הלומד מכל אדם.) One doesn’t need to be old to be a talmid chacham (Torah scholar). This young individual attentively listened and learned from many people he interacted with, whether they were young or old. He implemented their teachings in his life. He collected a tremendous amount of wisdom from these people over the years. He is therefore considered as if he lived for many years. Even though he is very young, it is as if he is old. Therefore he is nicknamed a zakan, because the knowledge he has is the same amount of knowledge that an older person has. (The simple explanation as to why he is nicknamed a zakan is; since he learned so much Torah, he has as much knowledge as an older person.)**