



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת בראשית

וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹקִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם. (בראשית ג, כא)

And Hashem G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and He clothed them. (Bereishis 3:21)

This week's *Sidrah* begins by detailing the Creation of the world and then recounts the tragic episode of the expulsion of Adam and Chavah from Gan Eden. After they succumbed to the allure of the Tree of Knowledge, they realised they were naked and attempted to cover themselves. When they heard the sound of Hashem, they hid out of embarrassment. Hashem punished them and then made garments of skin to clothe them.

The Gemara (*Sotah* 14a) states:

דַּרְשׁ ר' שְׁמַלְאִי: תוֹרָה תַּחֲלִתָּהּ גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים וְסוֹפָהּ גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים. תַּחֲלִתָּהּ גַּמ"ח - דְּכָתִיב "וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹקִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם", וְסוֹפָהּ גַּמ"ח - דְּכָתִיב "וַיִּקְבֹּר אֹתוֹ בְּגִי".

R' Simlai expounded: Torah begins and ends with Gemilus Chasadim. It begins with Gemilus Chasadim, as it is written (*Bereishis* 3:21), "And Hashem G-d made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin, and clothed them," and ends with (*Devorim* 34:6), "And He buried him (Moshe) in the valley."

R' Yerucham *zatzal* explains the concept of identifying the beginning and end of something. By recognising these points, one can appreciate the common theme that runs throughout the entire work. Therefore, if the Torah begins and ends with גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים - acts of kindness, it is evident that this is a central aspect of the Torah.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* questions why the Gemara identifies the first instance of גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים as Hashem clothing Adam and Chavah after their sin. Are there not numerous greater instances of Hashem bestowing kindness that preceded this event?

- 1) The entire purpose of Creation was kindness, as the *possuk* states, *Tehillim* 89:3). *יְבֹנֶה עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יְבֹנֶה*.
- 2) Hashem placed Adam in Gan Eden, which is the best location that exists (*Bereishis* 2:8).
- 3) Hashem provided every beautiful tree and delicious food in Gan Eden (*ibid.* 2:9).
- 4) Furthermore, Hashem was concerned for Adam and provided him with a wife, as the *possuk* recounts, *Hashem G-d said, "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper corresponding to him"* (*ibid.* 2:18).

It seems that these instances may have had some shortcomings and thus were not cited as evidence of the Torah beginning with kindness. Why is that?

To resolve the question, the Rosh Yeshiva cites an insight from R' Elyah Lopian *zatzal*, highlighting the distinction between חֶסֶד and גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים. The basic meaning of חֶסֶד is *kindness*; however, there is a deeper and more beneficial form of kindness known as גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים – *repayment of kindness*. גְּמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים involves receiving kindness as a way of recompense for one's actions, which is considered the ultimate form of kindness, as the recipient feels deserving of what they are given. In this context, R' Elyah explains the phrase in *Shemoneh Esreh*: *וְגוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים*, *Who bestows beneficial kindnesses*. This refers to the immense kindness that Hashem provides as a reward for our deeds.

The Kadmonim have taught us that Hashem's purpose in creating the world was to do good for our *neshamos* by granting us the ultimate goodness of closeness with Him in Gan Eden. However, if a person were to receive this reward without earning it, their *neshamah* would feel embarrassed, and the goodness would be diminished due to feeling underserving and inadequate. Therefore, Hashem created a world filled with challenges so that we have the opportunity to "earn" our place in Olam HaBah, ultimately obtaining the fullest and most enjoyable benefit for our *neshamos*.

Consequently, the kindness shown by Hashem in creating the world, placing man in beautiful Gan Eden with all its luxuries, and providing Adam with Chavah as his companion can all be seen as basic acts of **תּוֹרָה** rather than **גְּמִילוּת חַסְדִּים**. The Gemara is looking for a deeper example of Hashem's kindness – one in which the recipient feels deserving. This search leads to the first reference of Hashem clothing Adam and Chavah.

The Rosh Yeshivah, drawing on an insight from the Brisker Rov *zatza*l, explains why Hashem providing garments for Adam and Chavah was considered **גְּמִילוּת חַסְדִּים** and a way of repaying them for a positive action. The Brisker Rov analyses the *parshah*, which recounts Adam and Chavah's realisation that they were unclothed, their attempt to hide from Hashem, and their dialogue with Him. He questions the nature of Adam's desire to hide from Hashem, considering that he surely knew that Hashem is everywhere. Adam himself stated: **אָנָּה אֵלֶּךָ מִרוּחֶךָ וְאָנָּה מִפְּנֵיךָ אֶבְרָחָה, אִם אֶסָּק שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אַתָּה וְכו'**, *Where can I go from Your spirit? And where from Your presence can I flee? If I ascend to heaven, there You are...* (*Tehillim* 139:7-8, attributed by the Yalkut Shimoni to Adam). What, then, was Adam's intention in trying to hide from Hashem in Gan Eden? He further explores the *pesukkim* that indicate that their act of hiding was indeed correct and appropriate; they were only questioned about how they became aware of their nakedness.

The Brisker Rov explains by citing the Gemara (*Berachos* 24), which states that, halachically, a person during *tefillah*, must present themselves as if standing before a king. While for reciting Shema, one only needs to cover the private areas of the body, during Shemoneh Esreh, one must cover their heart as well. Accordingly, even though Adam and Chavah initially made coverings for their private areas upon discovering their nakedness, they wished to hide from Hashem's presence when they heard Him, feeling insufficiently covered. This act of hiding was halachically justified and appropriate, deserving of reward.

Thus, when Hashem provided clothing for Adam and Chavah, it marked the first instance of **גְּמִילוּת חַסְדִּים** - Hashem rewarding positive actions with goodness. The Gemara does not enumerate other greater gifts of kindness from Hashem because it seeks to identify the initial example of profound and beneficial kindness - Hashem assisting in a manner that allows the recipient to feel deserving and free of embarrassment.

We learn from this insight about the immense greatness of Hashem's kindness. He doesn't simply provide us with goodness that might leave us feeling a sense of shame or unworthiness. Instead, Hashem, the ultimate **טוֹבִים חַסְדִּים**, gives us the Torah and *mitzvos* - opportunities to fulfil His will, allowing us to be deserving of reward.