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

פרשת במדבר

וּבֹא אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו בְּנֹסַע הַמַּחֲנֶה וְהוֹרְדוּ אֶת פְּרֻכַת הַמָּסָךְ וְכִסּוּ בָהּ אֶת אֲרֹן הָעֵדוּת. וְנָתְנוּ עָלָיו כְּסוּי עוֹר תַּחַשׁ וּפְרָשׁוּ בְּגָד כְּלִיל תְּכֵלֶת מִלְמַעְלָה וְכוּ'. וְלָקְחוּ בְּגָד תְּכֵלֶת וְכִסּוּ אֶת מִנְרַת הַמָּאוֹר וְאֶת נִרְתִּיהָ וְאֶת מְלֻקְחֶיהָ וְאֶת מַחְתֵּיתֶיהָ וְכוּ'. וְנָתְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְאֶת כָּל כְּלֵיהָ אֶל מְכֻסָּה עוֹר תַּחַשׁ וְכוּ'. (במדבר ד, ה-י)

When the camp is to journey, Aharon 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 ... They shall take a cloth of techeiles wool and cover the Menorah of illumination, and its lamps, and its tongs, and its spoons ... They shall place it and all its utensils into a cover of tachash-hide ... (Bamidbar 4:5-10)

The conclusion of the *Sidrah* describes how the Klei HaMishkan were transported when Klal Yisroel travelled through the *midbar*. Before being moved, all the items were covered several times. Upon reading the *pessukim*, it is evident that the number and sequence of the coverings are not uniform. These differences have been discussed by the Meforshim and provide us with significant insights.

A notable difference is that most of the vessels were first covered with a woollen cover and then with a *tachash*-hide. However, the coverings of the Aron were applied in the opposite order: first, it was covered with the *tachash*-covering, and then the תְּכֵלֶת was placed on top. What significance does this change in coverage, particularly for the Aron, symbolise?

The Ramban explains the difference between the Aron and the other items in the Mishkan. 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," 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, required a distinct cover to reflect its holiness.

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

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that since the Aron represents the Torah, this *possuk* conveys a profound message about the *kedushah* and impact of the Torah. Just as the Aron radiated holiness even when it was covered, the influence of the Torah shines forth and can be felt far beyond where it is being studied. Similarly, R' Yisroel Salanter famously stated, "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 significant spiritual challenges, and this person's Torah study helps him resist the temptations of the *yetzer horah*." The outer sky-blue wool covering of the Aron, representing the purity of the Heavens, hints that the *kedushah* of the Torah emanates from within and creates a ripple effect worldwide. (See Issue #36)

We observe a further differentiation among the various *keilim*. By each of the *keilim*, its accompanying utensils were wrapped together with it, though the method of wrapping varied. In most cases, the utensils were not wrapped directly with the *keli*; they were first covered with an intermediary layer. For instance, the Shulchan was first covered with a *techeiles* covering, followed by its dishes, spoons, and other items, all of which were then covered with a *tachash* covering.

However, in the cases of the Aron and the Menorah, their utensils (the פְּרֻכֵּת הַמִּסְכָּה is considered a utensil of the Aron – see Ramban) were wrapped directly together with them and subsequently covered with two layers. What message does this distinction convey? Why were the utensils of the Aron and the Menorah treated as one unit with them, allowing them to be wrapped together without any separation?

The Rosh Yeshiva suggests that since the Aron and the Menorah symbolise different aspects of Torah, herein lies another message indicating the Torah's significant impact. He references an insight from the Vilna Gaon to explain the Mishnah (*Pirkei Avos* 1:4): יוֹסִי בֶן יוֹעֶזֶר אִישׁ צְרֹדָה אוֹמֵר, יְהִי בֵיתְךָ בֵּית וְעַד, יְהִי בֵיתְךָ בֵּית וְעַד יוֹסִי בֶן יוֹעֶזֶר, לֵחֲכָמִים, וְהָיוּ מִתְאַבְּקִים בְּעַפְרֵי רַגְלֵיהֶם, וְהָיוּ שׁוֹתֵהּ בְּצִמָּא אֶת דְּבָרֵיהֶם *Yose ben Yoezer, leader of Tzredah, says, "Let your house be a meeting place for sages; sit in the dust off their feet; and drink in their words thirstily.* The Gaon comments that a person should always be in the company of the Chachomim, as the *possuk* (*Mishlei* 13:20) teaches, הוֹלֵךְ אֶת הַחֲכָמִים יִחְכֵם, *One who walks with the wise will become wise.*

The Gaon also shares a parable about a seller of spices and fragrances, noting that the אֶבֶק, *dust*, from the shop remains on a person even after they leave. Similarly, Rabeinu Bachya (*Lech Lecha*) discusses someone who enters a fragrance shop. When they leave, regardless of whether they purchased anything, their clothes will carry the delightful scents from the shop. In the same way, those who study Torah leave an indelible imprint on those in their proximity. A Talmid Chacham elevates the individuals in his vicinity, and his Torah and wisdom naturally influence them, leaving them with the "dust of Torah."

The lesson conveyed by the Torah regarding the utensils of the Aron and the Menorah is that those close to the Torah are uplifted and become unified with it, to the point that they are considered one entity. This unity is emphasised in the way these items are transported together, without any separation, highlighting the transformative effect of the Torah on everyone associated with it.

The lessons above accentuate the greatness and importance of the Torah and its study. Each person's engagement in Limmud Torah has a profound impact, benefiting not only themselves but also others, extending far beyond the immediate surroundings where the study takes place. Moreover, both the Torah and its students offer a significant opportunity to uplift those around them, creating a joint entity that shares in holiness. The Torah is our greatest possession, and it deserves to be cherished and valued!

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