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

פרשת תרומה

דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיָקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תִקְחוּ אֶת תְּרוּמַתִּי. וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֵתֶם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנְחֹשֶׁת וְכוּ'. (שמות כה, ב-ג)

Speak to the Children of Yisroel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion. This is the portion that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and copper ... (Shemos 25:2-3)

This week's *parshah* talks of Hashem's command to build the Mishkan, with the *pessukim* listing the various materials that were needed for its construction. Rashi notes that the term *תְּרוּמָה*, *portion* or *offering*, appears three times in the first two *pessukim*. The first *terumah* refers to the half-shekels used to make the silver *אֲדָנִים*, *sockets* that supported the *קֶרְשִׁים*. The second refers to the half-shekels used to purchase public *korbanos*. Both of these contributions were mandatory and everyone, rich and poor alike, was required to give a half-shekel. The third *terumah* refers to the unlimited voluntary contributions used to build the Mishkan.

Out of all the contributions made for the construction of the Mishkan, only one - the silver used for the sockets - was mandatory. Why were the *אֲדָנִים* unique in that they could not be made from the generous donations of Klal Yisroel, unlike the other items? And why was it necessary to make it a requirement for everyone to contribute to this specific cause?

Based on a famous Chazal explained by R' Elyah Lopian *zatzal*, the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that the *אֲדָנִים* represent a unique lesson. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 88a) famously relates how Hashem held Har Sinai over the Yidden and demanded their acceptance of the Torah, warning that otherwise it would be their burial place. Tosfos asks why this was necessary, as they had already agreed willingly by saying *נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע*, promising to keep the Torah?

In addition, there is a question posed by the R' Elyah, who quotes the Maharal. He questions how the account of Matan Torah contains a much greater difficulty. To illustrate this, imagine a world-renowned professor who is scheduled to speak at a global conference with an important message about the very existence of the world. Everyone would be eagerly awaiting to hear his pearls of wisdom and gain novel insights that would enlighten humanity. On the day of the lecture, the crowds gather to hear him speak, but to their surprise and dismay, the professor talks about the basics of life which everyone is already aware of. It is an understatement to say that the audience would be disappointed, with the listeners feeling let down and frustrated.

How was Matan Torah different? Klal Yisrael was preparing for the climax of their existence, the most momentous moment in history. Hashem's presence descended upon Har Sinai, heralded by an awesome display of thunder, smoke, shofar blasts, and fire. The whole vast universe was silent and mute; not a sound was made by any animal, bird, or creature. All were waiting to hear the great message from Hashem Himself. And what did He reveal? *לֹא תִרְצַח, לֹא תִנְאֹף, לֹא תִגְנוֹב, לֹא תַעֲבֹד בְּרֵעֲךָ עֵד, שָׁקֵר*, *You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false*

witness against your fellow. How could Hashem have accused people on such a great spiritual level, commanding them concerning such lowly behaviour? Some of these commandments seem obvious and prohibited to all mankind long before the Torah was given. They were even present in the code of the most primitive societies. So, what was the great revelation with these laws?

R' Elyah explains a fundamental concept. Hashem, our Creator, knows the heights our *heilige neshamos* can reach as being a *חֵלֶק אֶלֹהִים מִמַּעַל* and also the depths to which humans can fall. He recognizes how man's base desires and cravings can cause him to descend to the lowest level, resulting in murder, kidnapping and adultery. Hashem created humans with extreme capabilities; the same *neshamah* can either achieve great spiritual gains coming close to the Shechinah or in contrast, stoop and commit the most loathsome sins.

At Har Sinai, Klal Yisroel reached an unprecedented *madreigah*, comparable to that of *malochim*. However, this elevated state was not sustainable. Humans are prone to falling from great heights and are at risk of committing terrible sins. The only way to control human desires is by instilling a fear of punishment, similar to how the fear of imprisonment prevents a thief from stealing.

When it comes to Torah and *mitzvos*, the same principle applies. Although a person may know how to behave in an elevated state, and punishment may not be necessary to guide them, there are times when a person can be overpowered by their base desires and impulses. Even the most righteous person can have weak moments and be influenced by their negative *middos*. Therefore, everyone needed to be reminded of the severity of these sins and their consequences.

Hashem wishes us to serve Him both from a position of love and fear. Whilst ideally serving Hashem should stem from recognizing His greatness and obeying His will, sometimes only fear of retribution prevents one from committing sins. For this reason, Hashem suspended Har Sinai above us to demonstrate the possible consequences of wrongdoing.

With this, the Rosh Yeshiva explains the symbolism behind the *אֲדָנִים* and the unique way they were donated. Although the Mishkan was primarily built from materials contributed as an outpouring of *לֵב נְדִיבוֹת לֵב*, it required a firm foundation with its sockets. Having each person obligated to donate towards this foundation of the Mishkan symbolized the need for a rock-solid foundation that was non-negotiable. They demonstrated the need for developing a sense of duty and obligation. If our behaviour is not rooted in fear of Hashem, even the greatest *tzaddik* may fall just like how the greatest buildings run the risk of collapsing when their foundations are not solid.

May we learn from the message of the *אֲדָנִים* and cultivate a sense of duty and obligation to serve Hashem, in addition to serving Him out of love. This will create a strong foundation for us to always fulfill Hashem's will in any situation we find ourselves in.

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