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The *Nefesh HaChaim* (in *Gate IV*) explains that we must know our obligation in learning Torah, how great and precious it is, and that one who learns Torah must learn it as a “Torah of kindness” and to give a *nachas ruach* (satisfaction) to the Creator.

Thus, there are two matters: there is the Torah, and there is the person who learns it. Therefore, when we clarify how deeply we feel connected to the Torah (as we began to explain the previous chapter), it is a two-part process: we must clarify to ourselves what the power of *Torah* is, as well as how we are connecting to it.

If one does not make either of these introspections, it is not possible for him to really have true exertion in Torah study. Unless he learns Torah with absolute *mesirus nefesh* (dedication), it will be impossible for him to reach the desired goal of Torah learning, if he does not make this inner clarification process.

Practically speaking, the first step one needs to do is to clarify to himself what the depth of Torah is, and how he is trying to connect to it. In order for one to form an inward connection to Torah, one must have this two-step clarification.

The details of these two parts will be further explained, with the help of Hashem, in the coming chapters, but these are the two root basic points: to know what Torah is, and to know what specifically is connecting us with the Torah; and to combine these two factors together.

Anyone who sits and learns Torah must clarify to himself why exactly he learns Torah. If someone learns Torah simply because he was accustomed to learning Torah ever since he was a child, this is certainly better than nothing, but it is not enough for one to feel deeply connected to Torah. There are more levels that need to be traversed.

In general, there are three valid reasons to learn Torah that are all forms of *lishmah* (for non-ulterior motivations). One valid reason to learn Torah is to learn it for the sake of Torah itself. Another reason is to learn it for the sake of giving a *nachas ruach* (satisfaction) to Hashem. A third reason why a person would learn Torah, not as lofty as the above two reasons, is to learn it in order to teach it to others; this is called a “*Torah of kindness on his lips.*”

These are three of the root motivations to learn Torah. If a person never reflects, it is possible that he learns Torah not for any of the above reasons. He doesn't learn Torah for the sake of Torah, he doesn't learn it to give a *nachas ruach* to Hashem, and he doesn't learn it to teach it to others.

The fact that one is teaching Torah to others doesn't always mean that he is learning Torah for that reason. He might be teaching it for the sake of being able to explain his understanding to others, but this is not so that others should know the Torah; thus it does not qualify for *lishmah*. He simply likes to tell others his opinions and thoughts. After all, it is human nature that people like to give their own opinions on a subject.

Our *Chazal* state that there "Three crowns are intertwined with each other – *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* (The Holy and Blessed One), the Torah, and Yisrael." In Torah, there are these three factors. There is ***HaKadosh Baruch Hu*** in the Torah, and this is expressed personally when one learns Torah in order to give a *nachas ruach* to Hashem. There is also the ***Torah*** itself within the Torah, and this is expressed personally when one desires to learn Torah for the sake of Torah. There is also '***Yisrael***' in the Torah, and this is expressed personally when one desires to learn Torah in order to teach it to other members of *Klal Yisrael*.

Each person must become aware of these three aspects of Torah and then see which part of Torah he is currently connecting himself to: what personally motivates him to learn Torah?

When one learns Torah purely for the sake of giving a *nachas ruach* to Hashem, maybe there is some *nachas ruach* to Hashem here, but there is no Torah here. A person in this way does not actually connect to the Torah. If one learns Torah in order to teach others, he is trying to give over to others a body of knowledge which he himself doesn't have yet. If one learns Torah for the sake of Torah, though, and upon that, he desires to give a *nachas ruach* to Hashem, and from that he desires to teach Torah to others, such Torah will be coming from a place of *lishmah* in himself; this is the true kind of life.

It's possible that a person is learning Torah for many years, finishing tractate after tractate, section after section in *Shulchan Aruch*, learning it *bekiyus* (in a cursory manner) and with *iyun* (in-depth analysis), but he has never clarified the root of why one must learn Torah. It is not possible for one to reach true understanding in Torah unless he has worked hard at understanding of why he must learn Torah.

To summarize thus far, there are three motivations in learning Torah: learning Torah for the sake of Torah, learning Torah to give a *nachas ruach* to Hashem, and learning Torah in order to teach it. After clarifying this, one should then clarify what personally motivates him to learn Torah, from the above three reasons. This will require much more than 10 minutes of thinking about it; it is a deep clarification process.

It is wonderful when a person learns Torah all day, *Baruch Hashem*; but he must know what personally motivates him to learn Torah. What causes him to learn Torah? Does he really want the Torah? Does he learn it so that he can give a *nachas ruach* to Hashem? Is he learning it so that he can teach it to others, so that *Klal Yisrael* should know of the Torah?

From the above three reasons, one must make an honest clarification of what *actually* motivates him to learn Torah.

One who makes this clarification, with a clear mind, with a search for truth, with a pure heart, along with exertion in Torah study, he will slowly begin to see that his connection to Torah is getting stronger. But when one doesn't try to make this inner clarification, he will usually find that his

exertion in Torah study is slackening off, as time goes on.

One of the reasons that the previous generations slackened off from Torah study was because they did not understand what Torah is, thus they did not clarify to themselves what it means to have a personal connection with Torah.

The results from this were, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* continues: people were totally abandoning learning Torah, in the pursuit of making *parnassah* (livelihood).

The people who were working to make *parnassah* during those times did not have time to learn Torah, and that was one reason why study of Torah was being abandoned. But the *Nefesh HaChaim* writes that even those who desired to serve Hashem were slackening off from Torah study, for they desired instead to learn all day the *sefarim* that explain *yirah* (fear of Hashem) and *mussar* (self-discipline).

How did this happen, that people began to learn *mussar* all day, instead of Torah? It was because they did not understand what the Torah is! If a person would know what is really in the Torah, he would involve himself with learning it.

Of course, we surely need to learn *mussar*, but as the *Nefesh HaChaim* himself explains later on, *mussar* is the "*kav chumtin*", it is like an herbal treatment which is only good when prescribed in small amounts, which should not be overdosed. The main body of our study should be spent on learning Torah, day and night, with exertion.

When one does not search for truth, he doesn't see a need to learn Torah. When one is involved with making *parnassah* and thus he has no time to learn Torah, here there is an external reason that is causing him not to learn Torah. But even those who wanted to be close to Hashem were not learning Torah, the *Nefesh HaChaim* says. It was because they did not understand what is contained in the Torah.

Maybe you will think that this problem only existed with those who learned *mussar* all day. But in fact, the very same problematic attitude can exist even with those who learn Torah all day: when one is not aware of what Torah is and why one must learn Torah.

This is the meaning of the verse, "*Those who grasp Torah do not know Me.*" It is referring to people who learn Torah all day, but they do not know what the Torah even is! On a simple level it is referring to how people learn Torah but they don't become close to Hashem through it. But it can also mean that people are learning Torah yet they don't know what the Torah is all about. The *Ohr HaChaim* famously wrote that if a person would know that he would run after it as if he's pursuing treasure.

There are levels within levels to one's connection to Torah. But it all starts with knowing what Torah is in the first place. It must be clarified, first intellectually, and then personally in one's soul.

In the generation of the *Nefesh HaChaim*, many people were bogged down by having to engage in *parnassah*, and that was the reason why most people then weren't learning Torah. In our generation as well, this problem also exists, but we will focus here on a different problem: Even those who learn in the *beis midrash* are not always developing an ongoing connection to Torah, where their connection to Torah is getting stronger and stronger with time as it should be. Only when a person clarifies what Torah is and what his personal connection to Torah is, does his connection to Torah grow stronger each day.

We have explained that the root motivations in learning Torah are: To learn Torah for the sake of Torah, to learn Torah for the sake of nachas ruach to Hashem, and to learn Torah to teach it to others. Yet this is barely scratching the surface of our inner reflection that we must make. The more a person reflects into these concepts, and he purifies his heart and he focuses his mind on what it means to have a true connection to Torah, his connection to Torah will get stronger within him as he begins to connect it inwardly.

The *Nefesh HaChaim* continues, “Those who chose to mainly learn *sefarim* of *yirah* and *mussar* all day, without setting fixed times to learn Torah and *Halachah* – they did not reach the light of Torah. Hashem should forgive them, for their intentions were for the sake of Heaven. But this is not the way in which the light of Torah can reside.”

As it was explained above, the *Nefesh HaChaim's* words are not only referring to those who couldn't learn Torah due to making a *parnassah* or because they simply chose to learn *mussar* all day; it can also apply to someone who learns Torah all day, when he is not aware of why he learns Torah. He is also one who will never reach the light of the Torah.

Let's say a person spent his whole life learning Torah. 10 years ago he was learning the *halachos* of *kashrus* and *shechitah* (kosher slaughter), and now he is immersed in learning *Choshen Mishpat* (the monetary laws). His actual approach towards learning Torah though still hasn't necessarily changed from all of his learning, and he is at the same level of learning he was 10 years ago. He may have more Torah knowledge now since then (or he might have forgotten a lot since then), and he might even have increased his hours in the *beis midrash* since 10 years ago, but his actual level of Torah remains as it was since 10 years ago, unchanged, for he has not necessarily connected more to the Torah during this entire timespan. He doesn't reach the “light of the Torah” as the *Nefesh HaChaim* writes; he doesn't even touch upon it.

When one reaches the “light of Torah”, only then is he connected to the Torah day and night which he learns. We all have things that deter us from learning Torah, but if one has reached the “light of Torah”, through inwardly connecting to Torah, he is at least connected to the Torah even when he can't learn it. That is the basis which all people need.

This is not merely a matter of always utilizing our time for Torah study. It is not an issue of becoming more of a *masmid*. It is about inner connection to the Torah, where one attaches the depths of his soul to the reality that is the Torah.

May Hashem give us the strength to awaken our hearts to clarify the root '*sugya*' of all '*sugyos*': the *sugya* that is the Torah; that these words become clearer as each day goes on, and that we actualize these matters, each person on his own level as much as he can muster; that our connection to Torah should grow more and more, day by day and hour by hour. May we all merit that the light of Torah should be revealed onto the hearts of all *Klal Yisrael*.

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