

Explaining Rabbi Chiya's Exalted Deed

Rabbi Chiya Taught Torah to Five Children and Six Children Respectively to Create a Model of the Two Keruvim in the Beis HaMikdash

In this week's parsha, parshas Terumah, we read (Shemos 25, 1): "וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל בני ישראל ויקחו לי תרומה מאת: (1, 25) **Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to Bnei Yisrael and they shall take to Me a portion, from every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion.** We must endeavor to explain why HKB"H repeated Himself. At the beginning of the passuk, He says: **"They shall take to Me a portion."** Later on in the passuk, He repeats this very same directive: **"You shall take My portion."** Furthermore, initially He merely refers to **"a portion"** --"תרומה" --in general terms, but then He specifies **"My portion"** --"תרומתי".

Additionally, it is worthwhile examining Rashi's comment: **"for Me" means dedicated to My name.** Simply understood, Yisrael are being commanded to bring a portion l'shem shamayim—for the sake of Heaven. If that is indeed the case, then why did HKB"H allude to this matter specifically with regards to the donations given for the construction of the Mishkan? After all, all of the mitzvos should be performed l'shem shamayim, with Hashem in mind. In fact, we have learned in the Gemara (Nedarim 62a): **"עשה דברים לשם בעלם, ודבר בהם לשמם, אל תעשם עטרה להתגדל בהם, ואל תעשם קורדום -- fulfill the words of the Torah for the sake of their Maker, and speak these words for their own sake. Do not make them into a crown in order to be glorified through them, and do not make them a spade to dig with.** We encounter the same difficulty with another passuk in this week's parsha (ibid. 8): **"ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם" -- they shall make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.** Here Rashi makes a similar comment: **"They will make a house of sanctity dedicated to My name."**

How Great Are the Deeds of Chiya

We shall begin to shed some light on the matter by examining the exalted deed performed by Rabbi Chiya, in order to preclude the forgetting of the Torah by Yisrael. The Gemara records the following esoteric, heavenly dialogue between Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Chiya (B.M. 85b):

"כי הוּוּ מִינְצוּ רַבִּי חֲנִינָא וְרַבִּי חִיָּיא, אָמַר לִיה רַבִּי חֲנִינָא לְרַבִּי חִיָּיא, בְּהַדִּי דִּידִי קָא מִינְצִית, חֶס וְחִלְלִיָּה אִי מִשְׁתַּכַּח תּוֹרָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מִהֲדַרְנָא לָהּ מִפִּילְפּוּלִי. אָמַר לִיה רַבִּי חִיָּיא לְרַבִּי חֲנִינָא, בְּהַדִּי דִּידִי קָא מִינְצִית, דְּעַבְדִּי לְתוֹרָה דְּלָא תִּשְׁתַּכַּח מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל. מָאִי עֲבִידְנָא, אֲזִלְנָא וְשִׁדְיָנָא כִּתְנָא, וְגַדִּילְנָא נִישְׁבִּי, וְצִיִּדְנָא טְבִי וּמֵאֲכִילְנָא בִּשְׂרִייהוּ לִיתְמֵי וְאֲרִיכְנָא מְגִילְתָּא וְכַתְּבָנָא חֻמְשֵׁי. וְסִלְקְנָא לְמַתָּא וּמְקִרְיָנָא חֻמְשֵׁי יְנוּקֵי בַּחֻמְשָׁה חֻמְשֵׁי וּמַתְּנִינָא שִׁיתָא יְנוּקֵי שִׁיתָא סְדְרִי. וְאִמְרָנָא לְהוּ עַד דְּהֲדַרְנָא וְאִתְּנִינָא אַקְרוּ אֶהְדְּדִי וְאִתְּנִינָא אֶהְדְּדִי וְעַבְדִּי לָהּ לְתוֹרָה דְּלָא תִּשְׁתַּכַּח מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל. הֵינְנוּ דְּאָמַר רַבִּי כִּמְהָ גְדוּלִים מְעֵשִׂי חִיָּיא."

Once, when Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Chiya were disputing some point of Torah, Rabbi Chanina said to Rabbi Chiya, **"How dare you argue with me? Heaven forbid, if Torah were forgotten from Yisrael, I could restore it through my deliberations (powers of 'pilpul')!"** Rabbi Chiya responded to Rabbi Chanina, **"How do you dare argue with me? For I make sure the Torah is not forgotten from Yisrael to begin with. What do I do? I go and sow flax; then I weave nets from the flax. I trap deer with them, and I feed their meat to orphans. Then I prepare scrolls of parchment (with their skins), and I write the five chumashim (of the Torah on them). I go to the village (where there is no one to teach the children), I teach five children the five chumashim (each one a different chumash), and I teach another six children the six orders of the Mishnah (by heart—each child a different order). Then I say to them, 'Until I come back, teach each other Torah and teach each other Mishnah.' Thus, I ensure that the Torah**

will never be forgotten from Yisrael.” This is what Rebbe meant when he said, “How great are the deeds of Chiya!”

Obviously, Rabbi Chiya’s assertion is enigmatic. Clearly, the fact that he taught young children Torah was admirable. Yet, in every generation there are those who teach young children Torah. So, why was Rebbe so impressed with what Rabbi Chiya did, prompting him to declare: **“How great are the deeds of Chiya!”?** Furthermore, how did teaching children in respective groups of five and six ensure that Torah would not be forgotten from Yisrael?

The Four Letters of the Holy Name Havaya Are an Abbreviation for: י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ

I was struck by a wonderful idea that I would like to present to our esteemed audience, regarding Rabbi Chiya’s admirable deed. First, however, let us discuss Chazal’s revelation that the Beis HaMikdash down on earth is aligned opposite the Beis HaMikdash up above in the heavens. In parshas Vayeitzei, upon realizing that he slept on the site of the Mikdash, Yaakov Avinu remarks (Bereishis 28, 17): **“ויירא ויאמר מה נורא המקום הזה אין זה כי -- and he became frightened and he proclaimed, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of G-d and this is the gate to the heavens!”** Rashi comments in the name of the Midrash: **“The Beis HaMikdash on high is aligned opposite the Beis HaMikdash below.”**

We can explain the matter based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Eiruvim 18b): **“מיום שחרב בית המקדש דיו לעולם -- שישתמש בשתי אותיות, שנאמר (תהלים קנ-ו) כל הנשמה תהלל י-ה -- from the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, it is enough for the world to use the two-letter name of G-d, as it states (Tehillim 150, 6): “Let all souls praise י-ה (“Yud-kei”), Halleluyah!”** Rashi provides the following clarification: **“From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and the kohanim stopped reciting the berachos with the ineffable Name (of four letters) . . . it has sufficed the world to use the two-letter Name, whether to offer Him praise, or to greet one another—as it is written: “Let all souls praise י-ה (“Yud-kei”), Halleluyah!”**

It appears that we can explain this phenomenon, based on the passuk that appears in relation to the war with Amalek (Shemos 17, 16): **“ויאמר כי יד על כס י"ה מלחמה לה' בעמלק מדור דור -- and he said, “For there is a hand on the throne of G-d: Hashem maintains a war against Amalek, from generation to generation.”** Rashi comments: **“נשבע הקב"ה שאין שמו שלם ואין**

“כסאו שלם עד שימחה שמו של עמלק” HKB”H swears that His name is not whole and His throne is not whole until the name of Amalek is completely eradicated. So long as Amalek exists, the two letters “vav-kei” remain absent from the holy, four-letter Name Havaya; only the two letters “yud-kei” remain.

We find a wonderful explanation regarding this matter in the sacred writings of the Yismach Moshe (ibid.), based on the teaching in the Tikunei Zohar (Introduction 9b) that the name Havaya is alluded to by the first letters of the phrase (Tehillim 96, 11): **“י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ” -- the heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice.** In the heavens, the greatness of HKB”H is always apparent to the various forms of heavenly angels—even during times of galut and when HKB”H’s presence is obscured down on earth. Therefore, even during times of galut, when the name of Amalek exists and remains in force, the first half of the holy, ineffable Name--י-ה, which stands for י'שמחו ה'שמים —continues to shine brightly in the heavens. Down on earth, however, the glory of His sovereignty is only apparent during periods of geulah. During times of galut and when HKB”H’s presence is concealed, however, the joy is absent down on earth. Therefore, as long as Amalek exists, causing the presence of Hashem to be concealed down on earth, the letters ה"ו, which stand for ו'תגל ה'ארץ, remain absent. Only le’atid la’vo, when Hashem’s glory will be apparent even on earth, will the sacred Name be complete with all four of its letters. For, only then will both halves of: **“י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ” -- the heavens will be glad and the earth will rejoice**—be a reality. This concludes his incredible explanation.

With this insight, we can begin to comprehend why the kohanim blessed Yisrael with the ineffable, four-letter Name while the Beis HaMikdash stood. After all, in the Beis HaMikdash, Yisrael were privileged to have the presence of the Shechinah, as it states (Shemos 25, 8): **“-- ויעשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם -- they shall make Me a Sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.** Due to the presence of the Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash, there was rejoicing even down on earth. In fact, regarding the day that the Mishkan was erected, we learn in the Gemara (Megillah 10b): **“תניא אותו היום היתה שמחה לפני הקב"ה כיום שנבראו בו -- “י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ” -- we learned in a Baraita: On that very day, HKB”H rejoiced as on the day that the heavens and the earth were created.** Accordingly, when the Beis HaMikdash was built, the holy Name was complete, with all four of its letters. For, the joy was complete, both in the heavens and on earth, in fulfillment of the words: **“י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ”.** This is the implication of the passuk depicting the scene on the day that the Mishkan

was erected (Vayikra 9, 23): **“וירא כבוד הוי”ה אל כל העם—and the glory of Hashem appeared to the entire nation!**

This then is the meaning of the Gemara: **“מייום שחרב בית המקדש”** דיו לעולם שישתמש בשתי אותיות, שנאמר כל הנשמה תהלל יה”ה. After the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the Shechinah vacated its earthly abode; as a consequence, the joy was absent down on earth. This resulted in the disappearance of the two letters ו”ה, which stand for ו”תגל ה’ארץ. Therefore, the world has to suffice with the two letters י”ה, which stand for י’שמחו ה’שמים, until the future geulah. Then, HKB”H will rest His Shechinah on earth, fully revealed to all. As a result, the two letters ו”ה will be restored to their proper place. We can suggest that this allusion is inherent in the term גאול”ה, whose letters can be rearranged to spell גאל ו”ה—indicating that at the time of the geulah, HKB”H will redeem the letters ו”ה that vanished during the periods of galut.

The Earthly Beis HaMikdash Represents the Two Letters ו”ה

Taking into account all that we have discussed, we learn a fundamental principle. The Beis HaMikdash above in the heavens represents the letters י”ה, which stand for י’שמחו ה’שמים; whereas the Beis HaMikdash down below on earth represents the letters ו”ה, which stand for ו”תגל ה’ארץ. Support for this notion can be found in the writings of the author of the Tanya in Likutei Torah (Pekudei). There he explains that Yerushalayim in the heavens represents the letters י”ה; whereas Yerushalayim on earth represents the letters ו”ה.

This provides us with a very nice explanation regarding the curtains of the Mishkan, which are described in this week’s parsha. The first layer of curtains which covered the Mishkan was comprised of five plus five, as it is written (Shemos 26, 3): **“חמש היריעות תהיין חוברות אשה אל אחותה, וחמש יריעות חוברות אשה אל אחותה—five curtains shall be attached one to the other, and five curtains attached one to the other.** On the other hand, the curtains of goat’s hair, which formed the layer above them, were aligned five opposite six, as it is written (ibid. 9): **“והכרת: את חמש היריעות לבד ואת שש היריעות לבד... וחברת את האהל והיה אחד—you shall attach five of the curtains separately and six of the curtains separately . . . and you shall attach the tent-covering, so that it shall become one.**

The Shela hakadosh (Terumah) explains the matter as follows: The first set of curtains, which were arranged five opposite five, corresponded to the two “luchos,” where the “dibros” were

arranged five opposite five. The curtains of goat’s hair which lay on top of them, on the other hand, were arranged five opposite six. They corresponded to the five chumashim comprising the Torah she’b’chtav and the six orders of Torah she’b’al peh. Amazingly, this allusion pertaining to the curtains of goat’s hair already appears in the Targum Yonatan on this week’s parsha (Shemos 26, 9): **“ותלפיה ית חמש יריעון לחוד, כל קביל חמשה ספרי אורייתא.”** He provides this same explanation again in parshat Vayakheil (ibid. 36, 16).

Now, the Megaleh Amukot on Vaetchanan (82) explains that the five chumashim of the Torah correspond to the final “hei” of the name Havaya, which possesses a numerical value of five. The six orders of the Mishnah correspond to the letter “vav” of the name Havaya, which possesses a numerical value of six. We find the same explanation in the writings of the Shela hakadosh. We can now appreciate why HKB”H commanded Bnei Yisrael to cover the Mishkan with curtains of goat’s hair, arranged five opposite six. This arrangement alludes magnificently to the relationship between the five chumashim of the Torah and the six orders of the Mishnah. This coincides amazingly with what we learned above—that the Beis HaMikdash down on earth represents the letters ו”ה of the name Havaya. Therefore, it was fitting to cover the Mikdash in the midbar with curtains of goat’s hair that were arranged five opposite six, corresponding to the numerical values of the letters ו”ה.

The Beis HaMikdash Above and the Beis HaMikdash Below Unify the י”ה with the ו”ה

This enlightens us as to why HKB”H commanded to build Him a Beis HaMikdash below aligned opposite the Beis HaMikdash above. Seeing as the Beis HaMikdash above corresponds to the letters י”ה, it is fitting to align the Beis HaMikdash below, corresponding to the letters ו”ה, directly opposite it. For, by doing so, we complete the ineffable Name, unifying its four letters. Furthermore, HKB”H extends the kedushah of the heavenly Beis HaMikdash to the earthly Beis HaMikdash, in order to unify completely and absolutely the name י”ה with the letters ו”ה, in the name of all Yisrael. Thus, the fulfillment of י’שמחו ה’שמים ו”תגל ה’ארץ is realized without any interference; joy will reign both in the heavens and on earth.

At this point, we can understand very nicely why HKB”H repeated Himself in the passuk: **“ויקחו לי תרומה מאת כל איש אשר ידבנו לכו תקחו את תרומתי”** Initially, HKB”H says: **“They shall take to Me a ‘terumah.’”** Here HKB”H intended that Yisrael should

donate a portion to build the Beis HaMikdash down on earth, representing the letters ה"ו. This is alluded to by the word תרומה, whose letters are an anagram for ה"ו—indicating that each individual should donate his part toward the ה"ו, so that there should be rejoicing on earth--ו'תגלה הארץ.

Yisrael understood, however, that their efforts only accounted for one half of the holy name. Therefore, in order to reassure them, HKB"H immediately added: **"From every man whose heart will motivate him you shall take My portion.** In other words, if Yisrael do their part by contributing the ה"ו to the Mishkan down below, then I, too, will contribute My part on their behalf from above--"תקחו את תרומתי". On their behalf, I will extend the kedushah from the Beis HaMikdash above, representing the name ה"י. Thus, the absolute unification of the name ה"י with ה"ו will be accomplished.

This explains very nicely the message Rashi was conveying so eloquently and succinctly: "ויקחו לי תרומה - לי לשמי" — **"for Me," for the sake of My name.** HKB"H requested that Yisrael bring a תרומה, whose letters are an anagram for ה"ו, in order to complete His name. Until that time, only the heavenly Beis HaMikdash existed, corresponding to the letters ה"י. Now, with the construction of the Mishkan--the Beis HaMikdash down on earth, corresponding to the letters ה"ו--the ineffable Name would be complete with all of its four letters.

The Presence of the Shechinah--the Name ה"י—Comes from the Beis HaMikdash Above

Based on what we have learned, we can begin to comprehend that which HKB"H said shortly afterwards: **"They shall make a Mikdash for Me, so that I may dwell among them."** First, let us present what we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 17a): "דריש רבי עקיבא, איש ואשה זכו שכינה ביניהן" -- **Rabbi Akiva expounds: If a man and his wife are meritorious, the Shechinah rests between them.** Rashi provides the following clarification: "שכינה ביניהן, שהרי חלק את שמו ושיכנו ביניהן, יו"ד באיש וה"י באשה" -- **the letters of G-d's name ה"י are split between the man and the woman; the letter "yud" appears in the word "אי", while the letter "hei" appears in the word "אש".**

Thus, we learn that the name ה"י alludes to the holy Shechinah. The Megaleh Amukos (Vayeira) provides us with a very nice allusion regarding this fact. The letters of the word שכינה can be rearranged to spell ה"י. In other words, the name ה"י rests in the midst of Yisrael. The Shela hakadosh

presents the same allusion in the name of the kabbalists: **"ואמרו המקובלים שכינה אותיות שכ"ן י"ה"**.

Now, I would like to present a novel idea. When we say that HKB"H rested His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash down below, we are implying that He extended His name ה"י from the Beis HaMikdash above, which corresponds to the letters ה"י, and rested it in the Beis HaMikdash below, which is aligned with it and corresponds to the letters ה"ו. Thus, the name ה"י and the letters ה"ו were joined together completely.

This then is what HKB"H requests of Yisrael: **"ועשו לי מקדש"**. They should build a Beis HaMikdash for Me down below, corresponding to the letters ה"ו, and they should not wonder how the four-letter name will be completed. Because I promise that if they build a Mikdash for Me: **"ושכנתי בתוכם"**—I will bring the Shechinah—the name ה"י—from the Beis HaMikdash above, corresponding to the name ה"י, to the Beis HaMikdash below. As a result, the holy name will be manifested in its complete four-letter form in the Beis HaMikdash below on earth. This is the message conveyed by Rashi's comment: **"ועשו לי מקדש, ועשו לשמי"**—the reason for building the Beis HaMikdash down below is to complete the holy name with all of its four letters.

The Shechinah Dwells between the Two Keruvim in the Form of Two Young Children

Following this line of reasoning, let us proceed to explain the unique methodology of Rabbi Chiya. He chose five children to whom he taught the five chumashim of the Torah; he chose another six children to whom he taught the six orders of the Mishnah. He did so to ensure that the Torah would never be forgotten from Yisrael. To explain his intent we shall refer to HKB"H's directive in this week's parsha to make two "keruvim" (Shemos 25, 18):

"ועשית שנים כרובים זהב, מקשה תעשה אותם משני קצות הכפורת, ועשה כרוב אחד מקצה מזה וכרוב אחד מקצה מזה... והיו הכרובים פורשי כנפים למעלה סוככים בכנפיהם על הכפורת ופניהם איש אל אחיו... ונתת את הכפורת על הארון מלמעלה, ואל הארון תתן את העדות אשר אתן אליך, ונועדתי לך שם ודברתי אתך מעל הכפורת מבין שני הכרובים אשר על ארון העדות את כל אשר אצוה אותך אל בני ישראל."

You shall make two "keruvim" of gold—beaten shall you make them—from both ends of the lid. You shall make one "keruv" from this end and one "keruv" from this end... The "keruvim" shall be with wings spread upward, sheltering the lid with their wings with their faces toward one another... You shall place the lid on the Aron from above, and into

the Aron you shall put the Testimony that I shall give you. It is there that I shall arrange audience with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the lid, from between the two “keruvim” that are on the Aron of the Testimony, and it is all that I shall command you pertaining to Bnei Yisrael. Regarding the “keruvim,” Rashi comments: “They each had the image of a child’s face. The source for this depiction is the Gemara (Succah 5b): “מאי כרוב, אמר רבי אבהו כרביא, שכן בכבל קורין—what is a “keruv”? Rabbi Abahu said: It is “like a child.” For indeed in Bavel, they call a child “ravva.”

Concerning these figures, the Admor Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz, zy”a, explains that HKB”H wished to allude to the education of our children, which is the foundation of our survival and continued existence throughout the generations. The Aron, which contained the two luchos of the covenant, was the foundation of the entire Torah. The continued existence and survival of the Torah, however, was dependent on the following condition: The two “keruvim,” which were formed in the image of young schoolchildren, had to be attached to the Aron of the covenant. In other words, we are required to educate them to engage in Torah-study. For this reason, HKB”H’s voice emerged specifically from in between the two “keruvim.” This phenomenon alluded to the fact that the Shechinah dwells among us essentially in the merit of the Torah-study of our young children.

As a loyal student in the presence of his master, I would like to add an interesting point to his sacred words. We have learned in the Mishnah (Shabbas 119b): “לא חרבה ירושלים אלא בשביל שביטלו—Yerushalayim was only destroyed because they were remiss in the Torah-education of the schoolchildren. The brilliant author of the Mishneh LaMelech commentary on the Rambam explains in his amazing sefer “Parashas Derachim”(Drush 24) the Gemara’s intent based on the Midrash (Eichah Rabbah 1, 13):

“בא וראה כמה חביבין תינוקות לפני הקב”ה, גלתה סנהדרין ולא גלתה שכינה עמהם, גלו משמרות ולא גלתה שכינה עמהם, וכיון שגלו תינוקות גלתה שכינה עמהם, הדא הוא דכתיב (איכה א-ה) עולליה הלכו שבי לפני צר, מיד (שם ו) ויצא מבת ציון כל הדרה.”

Come and see how dear young children are to HKB”H. The Sanhedrin were exiled and the Shechinah did not go into exile with them; the watches were exiled and the Shechinah did not go into exile with them; when the young children went into exile, the Shechinah went into exile with them, as it is written (Eichah 1, 5): “Her young children

have gone into captivity before the enemy.” Immediately afterwards, it states (ibid. 6): “Gone from the daughter of Tziyon is all her splendor.”

Elsewhere the Midrash explains (Pesichtah Eichah Rabbah 24): “בשעה שביקש הקב”ה להחריב את בית המקדש אמר, כל זמן שאני בתוכו אין אומות העולם נוגעין בו... מיד נשבע הקב”ה בימינו והחזירה אחריו, הדא הוא דכתיב (איכה ב-ג) השיב אחר ימינו מפני אויב, באותה שעה נכנסו אויבים When HKB”H wished to destroy the Beis HaMikdash, he said: As long as I am inside it, the nations of the world will not touch it . . . Immediately, HKB”H vowed by His right arm and placed it behind Him, as it is written (Eichah 2, 3): “He drew back His right hand in the presence of the enemy.” At that moment, enemies entered the Heichal and burned it.

Now, this is the reason why Yerushalayim was destroyed: “only because they were remiss in the Torah-education of the schoolchildren.” For, as long as the schoolchildren studied Torah in Yerushalayim, the Shechinah did not leave Yerushalayim. Therefore, the enemies could not destroy the Beis HaMikdash, in keeping with HKB”H’s promise: “As long as I am inside it, the nations of the world will not touch it.” However, as soon as they discontinued the schoolchildren’s Torah-study, the Shechinah vanished. This allowed the enemies to destroy the Beis HaMikdash.

Incredibly, we can add the following elucidation from the Zohar hakadosh (Introduction 1b) regarding the passuk (Shir HaShirim 2, 12): “עת הזמיר הגיע, וקול התור נשמע בארצנו”—the time of your song (“hazamir” can also be translated as “the trimming”) has arrived, and the voice of your guide is heard in the land. The Zohar interprets the passuk as follows: “עת הזמיר—when the time comes to trim away and to cut the wicked out of the world, HKB”H will save the world: וקול התור נשמע—בארצנו—in the merit of the sound of schoolchildren engaging in Torah-study. The Zohar concludes by stating that this then is the interpretation of the passuk (ibid. 1, 11): “תורי זהב נעשה לך”—circlets of gold will We make for you--this alludes to the two golden “keruvim” that represent the schoolchildren.

Rabbi Chiya’s Practice Constituted a Symbolic Gesture for the Kedushah of the Mishkan

We can now begin to comprehend to some small degree the enormity of Rabbi Chiya’s practice aimed at preventing the forgetting of the Torah from Yisrael. For, we have learned from

the Ramban (Bereishis 12, 6) that before any miracle can occur, it is necessary to perform a symbolic gesture down below in order to trigger the miracle from above.

With this in mind, I would like to propose a tremendous chiddush with the utmost reverence. Rabbi Chiya wished to perform a symbolic gesture utilizing those children, whom he taught Torah. He wanted them to serve as a template for the two “keruvim” that were shaped like children and between whom HKB”H rested His Shechinah in the Beis HaMikdash, in the Kodesh HaKodashim. This symbolized the fact that HKB”H rests His Shechinah among the schoolchildren studying Torah. From amongst those children, the voice of HKB”H emerges to teach Torah to all of Yisrael—guaranteeing that they will not forget the Torah, as it is written: **וְנוֹעַדְתִּי לְךָ שָׁם וּדְבַרְתִּי אִתְּךָ “מֵעַל הַכַּפּוֹרֶת מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרוּבִים” it is there that I shall arrange audience with you, and I shall speak with you from atop the lid, from between the two “keruvim.”** Rashi explains: **“Moshe would enter the Mishkan; as soon as he came into the entrance, a voice would descend from the heavens to a point between the “keruvim”; from there it would emerge and be heard by Moshe in the Ohel Moed.”**

It was for this reason that Rabbi Chiya—due to his great wisdom and ruach hakodesh—designated five schoolchildren to learn the five chumashim of the Torah and designated six other schoolchildren to learn the six orders of the Mishnah. He wished to recreate the pattern of the curtains of goat’s hair that covered the Mishkan—five plus six. As explained above, those curtains corresponded to the five chumashim of the Torah and the six orders of the Mishnah, in order to bolster the effect of the two letters ה”י that prevailed in the Beis HaMikdash below on earth.

We have demonstrated quite clearly that HKB”H rests His Shechinah—through the letters ה”י—amongst the schoolchildren studying Torah. Thus, the Shechinah—in the form of ה”י—rested upon those children who were assigned to groups of five and six respectively, corresponding to the letters ה”י. This established a model of the two “keruvim” in the Beis HaMikdash that were shaped in the form of two schoolchildren. Between the two “keruvim” HKB”H rested His Shechinah; in

this manner, he completed the unification of the ה”י with the ה”י absolutely in the name of all Yisrael.

Now, we can appreciate why Rabbi Chiya instructed each child to teach the others the chumash or the order of the Mishnah that he had been taught. Rabbi Chiya deduced this methodology from HKB”H’s directive to construct the two “keruvim” in such a manner that they faced one another: **“וּפְנִיָהֵם אִישׁ אֶל אַחֵיו”**. He instructed each child to teach the other children the portion of Torah that he had been taught; thus, they were taught to understand that the continued existence of the Torah hinged on one Jew learning Torah and then teaching it to others.

Amazingly, we can now better appreciate what the Maharsha writes in his Chiddushei Aggados. He explains that Rabbi Chiya insisted that the chumashim be written on parchment, whose entire preparation—from start to finish—was performed with the utmost kedushah and taharah, solely for the sake of Hashem. This is why he sowed the seeds, in order to grow the flax necessary to make the nets to trap the deer; each step of the process was performed for the sake of Hashem. He trapped the deer in the forests, in their natural environment, under the Almighty’s supervision. For, he did not want to purchase the animals from a human being selling them for the sake of financial profit. He fed the deer-meat to orphans, and he used their hides to make scrolls of parchment. Upon the parchment, he wrote the five chumashim of the Torah, which he then taught to children who were untainted by sin. He instructed them to teach one another Torah, because learning and then teaching what one has learnt is the highest form of Torah-study. This process is responsible for the survival and persistence of Torah in Yisrael.

According to this explanation, Rabbi Chiya went to all of this trouble, because his intention was to make them a foundation and model of the two “keruvim” that were in the Beis HaMikdash below on earth—that corresponded to the letters ה”י—so that he would merit the presence of the Shechinah, which represents the letters ה”י. Therefore, he made every effort to perform every step of the process—from start to finish—with the utmost kedushah and taharah l’shem shamayim. This is why Rabeinu hakadosh was so impressed and moved by Rabbi Chiya’s holy deed, prompting him to proclaim: **“How great are the deeds of Chiya!**

Donated by Family Madeb for the Refuah Shelimah of Lea bat Virgini

To receive the mamarim by email: mamarim@shvileipinchas.com