

To emphasize this difficulty, let us refer to the introduction to the sefer Teshuos Chen citing the esteemed author Rabbi Gedalyahu of Linitz, zy”a. He points out that Rav Yehudah’s statement in the name of Rav is formulated as an imperative and command. He does not say that it is permissible for a person to study Torah without proper intent—“lo l’shma”; on the contrary, he says emphatically that **a person should always study Torah and perform mitzvos even if it’s not l’shma.**

He explains in his own inimitable way that when a person initially begins to serve Hashem, it is unlikely or even impossible to study Torah and perform mitzvos l’shma. So, for all practical purposes, he must do so initially even without proper intent—“lo l’shma.” As he continues to grow spiritually and climb the ladder to heaven, he will eventually be able to learn Torah l’shma. This being the case, how can Rava expound on the passuk: **”וצפית אותו—זהב טהור מבית ומחוץ תצפנו”**—that this teaches us that **any talmid-chacham whose inside is not consistent with his outside is not a true talmid-chacham?** After all, we have just seen that it is worthwhile learning Torah even if it is not l’shma—i.e., even if his inner motives are not in line with external appearances.

We can reconcile Rava’s statement simply with the understanding that it is necessary to initially learn Torah even not l’shma—“tocho” not “k’varo”—in order to ultimately learn l’shma. Yet, at that stage of one’s learning, one does not deserve to be called a **“talmid-chacham.”** This is consistent with the teaching in the Gemara (Berachos 64a): **”תלמידי חכמים—מרביתם שולם בעולם”**—**Torah-scholars increase shalom in the world.** For, when they are worthy and deserving of the title **“talmidei-chachamim”**—implying that they study Torah l’shma, without any ulterior motives such as prestige—they promote peace and harmony, because they do not argue for the sake of their own personal honor but only for the honor of Heaven—“kvod shamayim.”

Let us embellish the notion that only someone who studies Torah l’shma—“tocho k’varo”—deserves to be called a **“talmid-chacham.”** The brilliant author of the Chavat Da’as writes something amazing in his introduction:

”מרגלא בפומייהו דרבנן לקרות החכם בשם תלמיד חכם, כיון שאין ראוי להיקרא חכם אלא הבורא לבדו, שהוא עצם החכמה ואינו מקבל ואינו מושפע מזולתו, אבל חוץ ממנו הכל מקבלים ומושפעים מזולתם... כי החכמה היא בלתי תכליתית, ולא יכולה כי אם הבלתי בעל תכלית והוא הבורא יתברך ויתעלה, מה שאין כן האדם שהוא בעל תכלית צריך תמיד להשלמת זולתו, כמאמרם ז”ל (תמיד לב.) איזהו חכם הלומד מכל אדם, ולכן קראוהו בשם תלמיד חכם.”

He says that in truth **it is not appropriate to call anyone a “chacham” except for the Creator alone . . . For, He is the essence of chochmah—wisdom—and does not receive and is not influenced by others. Everyone else besides Him does receive and is influenced by others . . . For, chochmah is infinite and can only be contained by someone who is infinite, namely the blessed, exalted Creator. This is not true of man, who is finite, and requires constant improvement. In the words of our blessed sages (Tamid 32a): “Who is wise? He who learns from every person.”**

This then is the meaning of Rava’s statement: **“Any talmid-chacham whose ‘tocho’ is not ‘k’varo”**—because he is not yet learning Torah l’shma—**“is not a true talmid-chacham.”** Because the title **“talmid-chacham”** is only appropriate for someone who studies Torah l’shma—solely for the sake of Hashem and not for the sake of prestige. For, then he is aware of how much he still has to learn. On the other hand, if he studies Torah not l’shma—for imaginary, false prestige—then he becomes easy prey for the yetzer hara—who misleads him into believing that he is a prominent Torah-scholar and does not need to learn from others. In that case, he certainly does not deserve to be called a **“talmid-chacham.”**

A Talmid Chacham Must Have Humility

With this in mind, let us add a wonderful idea. Concerning the construction of the Aron, it says: **”וצפית אותו זהב טהור מבית ומחוץ תצפנו”**—it should be covered with pure gold inside and outside. Rava learned from this that if a Torah-scholar is a true **“talmid-chacham,”** then **“tocho k’varo”**—his inner intent and external actions mirror each other. Let us refer to what the Noam Elimelech writes concerning the special garments of the Kohen Gadol. He writes that HKB”H instructed us to make those four special garments with gold threads in them, because the three letters of the Hebrew word for gold—**זהב**—allude to humility. How so? Note that each letter decreases in value: **“zayin”** equals seven, **“hei”** equals five, and **“vet”** equals two. This alludes to the fact that to enter the realm of kedushah, which is tantamount to gold, requires shattering one’s arrogance and acquiring the trait of submission, as reflected by the letters **זהב**.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to add a spicy tidbit to his sacred words. Why did the Torah allude to the trait of humility specifically with the word **זהב**? There are many other words in the Torah, whose letters have sequentially decreasing numerical values. Now, we have learned in the Gemara (B.K. 81a) that the prophets instituted that we read

from the Torah on Shabbas, Monday, and Thursday, so that Jews never go three days without Torah. We find a beautiful allusion to this practice in the teachings of the Chasam Sofer in Toras Moshe (Terumah). He points out that the three days on which we read the Torah are alluded to by the letters **זה**—the letter **“zayin”** alludes to the seventh day, Shabbas Kodesh, the letter **“hei”** alludes to the fifth day of the week, Thursday, and the letter **“vet”** alludes to the second day of the week, Monday.

In keeping with the words of the Noam Elimelech, we can suggest that the prophets intentionally chose the three days alluded to by the word **זה** to teach us that it is impossible to acquire Torah without the characteristic of humility, which is alluded to by the decreasing values of the three letters **“zayin,” “hei,”** and **“vav.”** As we have learned in the Gemara (Ta’anis 7a): **“למה נמשלו דברי תורה למים, דכתיב (ישעיה נה-א) הוי כל צמא לכו למים, לומר לך מה מים מניחין מקום גבוה והולכין למקום נמוך, אף דברי תורה אין מתקיימין אלא במי שדעתו שפלה.”** **Why are words of Torah compared to water? . . . To teach us that just as water flows from higher ground to lower ground, so, too, words of Torah are only retained by someone who possesses a lowly self-image (humility).**

This explains very nicely the allusion inherent in the passuk related to the making of the Aron: **“וצפית אותו זהב טהור מבית ומחוץ”** and Rava’s elucidation: **“כל תלמיד חכם שאין תוכו ככרו אינו תלמיד חכם.”** Rava wished to teach us that a talmid-chacham must be like **זה** both inside and outside. In other words, he should not behave outwardly like a humble, lowly individual while, in reality, he is full of despicable **“ga’avah”**—conceit and arrogance—chas v’shalom, internally.

Let us add one more precious point. We find the following passage in the Gemara concerning Rava (Mo’ed Katan 28a): **“אמר רבא הני תלת מיילי בעאי קמי שמי תרתי יהבו לי, חדא לא יהבו לי חוכמתיה דרב הונא ועותריה דרב חסדא ויהבו לי ענותנותיה דרבה בר רב הונא לא יהבו לי.”** **Rava said: I requested these three things from HKB”H; two were given to me, one was not given to me. The chochmah of Rav Huna and the wealth of Rav Chisda were given to me; the humility of Rabbah bar Rav Huna was not given to me.** Therefore, to compensate for his deficient humility, Rava expounded with regards to himself that a true talmid-chacham must contain **זה**—the midah of humility—both inside and outside—**“tocho k’varo.”**

A Fantastic Principle from the Great Rabbi Moshe of Sambur

Since it is the nature of Torah to be elucidated in seventy ways, we will proceed to explain Rava’s statement in greater depth such

that it applies equally to someone who has not yet reached the exalted level of learning **l’shma**. In other words, even if someone has not yet attained the status of **“tocho k’varo,”** he should learn **not l’shma** in order to attain the level of learning **l’shma**.

We will begin by introducing Rashi’s comment (Shemos 25, 11), which is based on the Gemara (Yoma 72b): **Betzalel made three arks, two of gold and one of wood, four walls and a bottom for each, and they were open on top. He put the wooden one inside the (larger) golden one, and the (smaller) golden one inside the wooden one; and he overlaid its upper rim with gold. Thus, it was covered (with gold) from the inside and from the outside.**

The commentaries find this puzzling. If this is indeed how Betzalel fashioned the Aron, how did Rava conclude from this that: **“Any talmid-chacham whose inside does not mirror his outside is not a true talmid-chacham”?** For, according to Rashi’s comment, the inside of the Aron was not entirely like the outside of the Aron, seeing as the middle ark was made of wood and not gold. Furthermore, if HKB”H wanted us to learn from the structure of the Aron that a talmid-chacham should be **“tocho k’varo,”** then why didn’t He simply instruct us to make only two arks, both of gold, and to place one inside the other? In that case, the Aron would have been golden inside and out.

To explain the matter, I had a wonderful idea. I would like to introduce a fantastic principle gleaned from the incredible teachings of the great Rabbi Moshe of Sambur (the brother of the esteemed Rabbi of Ziditchov), zy”a, in the sefer Tefilah L’Moshe (Pekudei, HaChodesh). In his own, sacred way, he interprets the passuk (Shemos 12, 2): **“החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא”**—**this month shall be for you the beginning of the months; it shall be for you the first of the months of the year.** Rashi provides the following clarification: **“החודש הזה... נתקשה משה על מולד הלבנה... והראה לו באצבע את הלבנה ברקיע, ואמר רבי: לך זה ראש חודש—Moshe was perplexed by the matter of the reappearance of the moon . . . so, HKB”H showed him with a finger, so to speak, the moon in the sky, and said to him, “See it like this and sanctify it.”**

He explains the practical significance of this comment based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Berachos 17a): **“רבי אלכסנדר בטר דמצלי אמר הכי, רבון העולמים גלוי וידוע לפניך שרצוננו לעשות רצונך, ומי מעכב, שאור שבעיסה ושעבוד מלכויות, יהי רצון לפניך שתצילנו מידם.”** **After Rabbi Alexandri would finish davening, he would utter the following: “Master of the**

universe! It is apparent and known to you that it is our will to perform Your will. Who prevents us from doing so? The yeast in the dough (the yetzer hara) and the oppression of foreign regimes. May it be Your will to rescue us from their hands, so that we may once again obey the laws You desire with a full heart. This teaches us that a Jew's inner desire is to act in accordance with the Almighty's will; however, when he proceeds to actually make that desire a reality, the yetzer—"the yeast in the dough"—intervenes with all of its might. It interjects misleading, inappropriate thoughts, preventing a Jew from fulfilling his inner desire to perform the mitzvah l'shma—rather than for the sake of some anticipated personal reward or honor or the like.

Accordingly, the Tefilah L'Moshe asserts that this is the meaning of the Gemara's statement (Kiddushin 40a): **מחשבה מוצרפה למעשה—He associates a good thought with an actual deed.** Man's initial thought and desire is to fulfill Hashem's will as completely as humanly possible. Yet, when he begins to do so, he is waylaid and foiled by the yetzer, who introduces misleading and insincere thoughts and motives into his psyche. Therefore, in His infinite mercy and kindness, HKB"H combines a person's initial, well-intended thought to perform the mitzvah ideally with the actual performance of the mitzvah. It is considered as if he actually performed the mitzvah ideally, because everything follows the actual beginning—the first thought and intent.

This then is the message HKB"H was conveying to Moshe: **"This month shall be for you the beginning of the months."** Based on the elucidation of this passuk, HKB"H showed Moshe the renewal of the moon and said to him: **"See it like this and sanctify it."** HKB"H was informing Moshe that just as the determination of every month is based on the initial appearance of a tiny speck at the beginning of the month; so, too, should every individual strive with all his might to sanctify for Hashem the first inkling of a thought, free of any ulterior motives. By doing so, he ensures that the performance of the mitzvah will follow his initial impulse, which was pure. This concludes his idea.

In this manner, we can provide a very nice interpretation of the Gemara's statement (Pesachim 50b): **לעולם יעסוק אדם בתורה—ומצוות אף על פי שלא לשמה, שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה**—one should always strive to engage in Torah-study and the performance of mitzvos even if one's intent and purpose are initially insincere or misguided—"lo l'shma." For, by performing mitzvos in this less-than-ideal manner, one will eventually come to perform mitzvos in the desired, ideal manner—"l'shma." Let us explain. If a

person intends to study Torah or perform a particular mitzvah, and he sees that the yetzer is harassing him and confusing him with thoughts that are not l'shma; he should persist, nevertheless. Why? **"שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה"**—because HKB"H will associate his act that was performed albeit not "l'shma" and combine it with his initial intent, which was l'shma. Thus, it will be viewed as if he fulfilled everything l'shma!

"בראשית ברא אלקים" Implies that the Purpose of Creation Is the Beginning

It is with great pleasure that we now present the words of the Arugos HaBosem (Sazria). Based on the remarks of the Tefilah L'Moshe, he explains why HKB"H began the Torah with the passuk (Bereishis 1, 1): **"בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ"**. Rashi points out that the passuk states that **Elokim** created the heavens and the earth, not **Havaya**. We know that the name Elokim is associated with "din"; whereas the name Havaya is associated with "rachamim." Thus, the passuk indicates that the Creator initially intended to create the world based solely on the midah of "din." He foresaw, however, that the world could not survive based on this strict standard. Therefore, he preferentially partnered the midah of "rachamim" with the midah of "din." This partnership and preference for "midas harachamim" are evident in the passuk (ibid. 2, 4): **"ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים"**. In this passuk both divine names are mentioned, but the name of "rachamim" precedes the name of "din."

The commentaries find this perplexing. After all, HKB"H is always able to foresee the future; as it is written (Yeshayah 46, 10): **מגיד מראשית אחרית ומקדם אשר לא נעשו אמר, עצתי תקום וכל—מגיד מראשית אחרית ומקדם אשר לא נעשו אמר, עצתי תקום וכל**—**from the beginning, I foretell the outcome; and from earlier times, what has not yet been; but I say and My plan will stand, and I will carry out My every desire.** So, how is it possible to suggest that He initially thought to create the world based on "midas hadin" and then reconsidered when he saw that the world could not survive?

Yet, based on our current discussion, we can suggest an explanation. While it is true that the yetzer introduces thoughts of self-pride in a person when he performs a mitzvah; nevertheless, a person must strive to initiate the performance of the mitzvah with the purest of intentions—solely for the sake of Hashem. For, as we have learned, that initial thought emanates from a place that is beyond the reach of the yetzer. This then is the message of the passuk: **"בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ"**. It teaches us that the purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth was

for the sake of the **“ראשית”**—a person’s initial impulse to fulfill the will of Hashem in the purest, most ideal way.

Accordingly, the elucidation of the passuk makes perfect sense: **“At first, He thought to create it with the midah of ‘din.’”** From the aspect of the beginning of the fulfillment of the mitzvah—namely, the initial thought and impulse—a person is, indeed, judged based on the midah of “din.” Since at the moment of the initial impulse, the yetzer hara is not yet in control; therefore, HKB”H judges a person at that moment with “din.” Did the person at least attempt with all of his power to arouse his inner will, which is yet untainted? However, when the person wishes to actually fulfill the mitzvah (to perform the deed), then HKB”H adds the midah of “chesed.” We learn this from the passuk: **“On the day Havaya Elokim made the earth and the heavens.”** For, at that point in time, the yetzer has already intervened—preventing the person from performing the mitzvah in the ideal way, without any ulterior motives.

This illuminates for us the words of Rava in the Gemara: **“מבית ומחוץ תצפנו, כל תלמיד חכם שאין תוכו ככרו אינו תלמיד חכם”**—a true talmid-chacham is one whose inner thoughts and intent mirror his external actions and behavior. Now, we questioned how Rava arrived at this conclusion from the structure of the Aron, since its inside and outside were not entirely the same. Recall that there was a wooden ark in between the two golden arks. Thus, we can suggest that the holy Torah is teaching us that even if a talmid-chacham resembles the Aron—i.e., he has within him some foreign thoughts, analogous to the wooden ark—nevertheless, he is still considered a talmid-chacham.

Let us explain. We are referring to a talmid-chacham who strives from the depths of his heart to study Torah and serve Hashem l’shma. Externally, he also strives to do so l’shma. However, the yetzer hara inserts itself between this person’s inner and outer selves, introducing improper, misguided thoughts that are not l’shma. In His infinite mercy and kindness—rachamim and chesed—HKB”H overlooks that intervening area that is analogous to the wooden ark of the Aron and only considers the pure gold surrounding it. Ultimately, that middle area of not l’shma vanishes and the person studies Torah exclusively l’shma without any ulterior motives.

Rava’s Neshamah Was Concealed within Lot

I would now like to present to our royal, esteemed audience a novel idea regarding Rava’s elucidation: **“Any talmid-**

chacham whose ‘tocho’ is not ‘k’varo’ is not a true talmid-chacham.” We will refer to a passuk related to Avraham Avinu when he went to rescue Lot (Bereishis 14, 2): **“ויקחו את לוט ואת רכושו בן אחי אברם וילכו והוא יושב בסדום—and they captured Lot and his possessions, Avram’s brother’s son, and they left; and he was dwelling in Sedom.** In Likutei Torah (Lech Lecha), the Arizal teaches us that the neshamah of Rava was concealed within Lot in Sedom. He writes that the neshamah of Rava, the Amora, came from Na’amah of Amon, who descended from Lot. This is alluded to in this passuk by the first letters of the words **ר’כושו בן אחי**, which spell **רב**. So, when the klipos took Lot captive, they also took the neshamah of Rava captive. His neshamah was ultimately set free through Na’amah.

With this in mind, I would like to propose an interpretation of the following Gemara (Chagigah 15b): **“דרש רבא, מאי דכתיב אל: גנת אגוז ירדתי לראות באבי הנחל וגו’, למה נמשלו תלמידי חכמים לאגוז, לומר לך, מה אגוז זה אף על פי שמלולכלך בטיט ובצואה אין מה שכתוכו נמאס, אף Rava expounded: What is the meaning of that which is written (Shir HaShirim 6, 11): “I went down to the garden of nut trees to see the green plants in the riverbeds . . .”? Why are talmidei-chachamim compared to a nut? To teach you that just like this nut, even though it is soiled with mud and dung, its inner contents are not distasteful; so, too, a talmid-chacham, even though he has gone astray, his Torah is not distasteful.**

In keeping with this discussion, we can suggest that Rava authored this elucidation, because he was intimately connected to the root of his neshamah that was concealed within Lot in Sedom. For, he himself can be described as a talmid-chacham, who was mired in the mud and filth due to Lot’s association with the populace of Sedom.

Along these lines, we can also explain Rava’s elucidation disparaging Lot (Nazir 23a): **“דרש רבא, מאי דכתיב (משלי יח-יט) אח נפשע; מקרית עוז ומדיינים כבריח ארמון, אח נפשע מקרית עוז, זה לוט שפירש מאברהם, ומדיינים כבריח ארמון, שהטיל מדיינים כבריח וארמון, לא יבוא עמוני ומואבי בקהל ה.”** **Rava expounded: What is the meaning of that which is written (Mishlei 18, 19): “A wayward brother from a fortified city, and contentions are like a castle bolt.” “A wayward brother from a fortified city (a source of strength)” refers to Lot who parted from Avraham. “And contentions are like a castle bolt” alludes to the fact that (Lot) caused discord (as strong) as a bolt and a castle between Yisrael and the nations of Amon and Moav, as it is written: “Neither a male of Amon nor a male of Moav shall enter (may join) the congregation of Hashem.”**

We can postulate that Rava wished to atone for Lot in a similar fashion to what the Midrash B'Chiddush writes on the Pesach Haggadah (from the divine kabbalist Rabbi Eliezer Nachman Puah, a disciple of the Rama of Pano, ztz"l). It explains the rationale for beginning the story of our forefathers with censure and disgrace: "מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו"—**initially, our forefathers were worshippers of avodah-zarah.** At first glance, this is startling. Terach performed teshuvah before dying. So, why criticize him by pointing out his negative background? He answers: **In truth, we can suggest that since Terach committed countless aveiros until the end of his life but performed teshuvah just prior to his death; that is the reason for recounting his shame. Because by that recounting, his punishment is lessened, and he will receive atonement.**

Lot Was Not Good Through and Through

In parshas Lech Lecha, we read (Bereishis 13, 5): "וגם ללוט: ההולך את אברם היה צאן ובקר ואהלים, ולא נשא אותם הארץ לשבת יחדו כי היה רכושם רב ולא יכלו לשבת יחדיו." **Lot, who went with Avram, also had flocks, and cattle and tents. And the land could not support them living together, for their possessions were abundant, and they were unable to dwell together.** According to the Chasam Sofer (Lech Lecha), Eretz Yisrael could not bear Lot and his possessions, because Lot's inner self and outer self were discordant—he was not "tocho k'varo." Lot and Avraham drew further apart due to their possessions--ל"ל versus ר"ב—**the former is associated with kedushah and harmony, whereas the latter is associated with discord.** Since Lot and his possessions did not reflect kedushah

as Avraham did, their quarrels continued upon their arrival in Canaan. Therefore, they could not remain together in the same land, and they could not unite.

In a similar vein, the Be'er Mayim Chaim (Noach) explains the name "לוט" means covered or clothed, as evident in the following passuk (Shmuel I 21, 10): "הנה היא לוטה בשמלה"—**behold, it is wrapped in a cloth.** In other words, Lot only appeared to be good on the outside; inside, however, he was tainted. That is implied by the passuk (ibid. 12, 4): "וילך אברם" **—Avram went as Hashem had told him, and Lot went with him.** In truth, all of his good deeds were superficial, as implied by the name "לוט". They enveloped him and covered his true inner self; his good deeds did not stem from the goodness of his heart.

We can now understand why it was important for Rava to expound: **"Any talmid-chacham who is not "tocho k'varo" is not a true talmid-chacham."** He sought atonement for his ancestor Lot, the root of his neshamah, in keeping with the adage (B.K. 92b): **"Do not throw a clod of dirt into a well from which you drank."** Rava owed his existence to Lot; hence, he was not trying to disparage him; on the contrary, he was trying to portray Lot in a positive light. He expounded that a talmid-chacham should be good inside and out to make amends for Lot who was not good through and through. In the process, Rava hinted to the fact that Lot was not "tocho k'varo," since his own neshamah did not participate in all of Lot's negative thoughts. For, as explained, Rava was like a nut sullied by mud and filth on the outside, while he himself remained holy.

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