

"And the water was a wall for them, on their right and on their left." (14:29)

The *Midrash*, cited by the *Daas Zekeinim*, comments that when *Bnei Yisrael* approached the Red Sea, menacing waters confronted them. There seemed to be no hope. The Angel Gavriel came forth and declared, "Let the waters in front of *Bnei Yisrael* move aside in deference to the nation who perform the *Bris Milah*. The waters which are to the right of *Bnei Yisrael* should likewise defer to the nation that accepted the *Torah* from Hashem's 'right Hand.' The waters to the left should submit to the nation that puts *tefillin* on the left arm, and the waters behind them should move away before those who don the *tallis* and cast the *tzitzis* over their shoulders."

The *zechus*, merit, of these *mitzvos* rendered *Bnei Yisrael* worthy of *Krias Yam Suf*, the splitting of the Red Sea. These *mitzvos*, however, seem to have little in common with one another. Although *tefillin*, *bris milah* and *tzitzis/tallis* are all related to the body, *Kabbolas Ha'Torah* from Hashem's right Hand is not something which we do with our body. Our right hand did not receive the *Torah*; rather, it was Hashem's right Hand that gave it to us! What, then, is the parallel between *Torah* study and the other three *mitzvos*?

We suggest that a profound lesson can be inferred from here. The three *mitzvos* mentioned here, and, in fact, all *mitzvos*, are primarily active in nature. This means that one performs them on his own; the element of instruction is not an integral component in the framework of the *mitzvah*. *Torah* study, on the other hand, is unique in that it must be studied from a *rebbe*, *Torah* teacher.

Torah is transmitted from teacher to student in a chain of transmission from *Har Sinai* until this very day. Moshe received the *Torah* from Hashem *Yisborach* and "handed it over" to Yehoshua, who, in turn, handed it over to the next generation. Similarly, every *Torah* teacher transmits the *Torah* to his student. This method of *Torah* study is an integral part of the *mitzvah* of *limud Ha'Torah*. One does not study on his own; he receives it from his *rebbe* and reviews it until it becomes part of his consciousness. Only then is he able to transmit to others that which he has absorbed within himself. One cannot transmit something he has not absorbed. Moshe received the *Torah* and "handed it" over to Yehoshua. He did not "give it" over. To *give* something over implies a transfer of ownership. One gives over what one possesses. To hand or *turn over* means to transfer the message as is -- preserved in its entirety. This is the trust of every *rebbe* in *Klal Yisrael* from the time of Moshe *Rabbeinu* -- to see to it that the *Torah* in its immutable form is transmitted through the generations, as pristine as we received it at Sinai.

Consequently, it is the *receiving* of the *Torah* from Hashem's right Hand that characterizes the significance of the *mitzvah*. *Limud Ha'Torah* is an active *mitzvah* which is fulfilled through the submissive reception of a *talmid* from his *rebbe*.