

May Hashem, G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the Assembly. (27:16)

The emphasis one places on studying Torah, which facilitates one's knowledge of its wisdom and allows him to understand the *mitzvos* and how to perform them, is deeply rooted in Torah principles. We are also enjoined, however, to translate the knowledge we garner into action through acts of kindness and by teaching others. The integration of learning and doing is essential for personal growth, as well as the positive contribution it makes to benefit the Jewish community. By combining Torah study with *gemillas chassadim*, one lives a meaningful life of spiritual learning coupled with practical application, which fosters a harmonious balance between personal growth and communal enrichment.

We derive this important principle from Moshe *Rabbeinu's* dialogue with Hashem concerning the selection of a successor for Moshe. Once it was unequivocally clear that Moshe was not going to enter *Eretz Yisrael*, he turned his attention to his concerns for the nation he had heretofore shepherded. He presented what he felt was the necessary criteria for leadership. *Chazal* (*Tanchuma* II) teach that Moshe had hoped that, just as Tzlapchad's share of the Land would go to his daughters, so would Moshe's sons succeed him as leader. While it is clear that Moshe's primary concerns were for the nation, he felt that his sons possessed the necessary qualifications for leadership. Hashem replied that it was His choice that Yehoshua, Moshe's able student, succeed his *Rebbe*. The reason for Yehoshua's selection speaks volumes concerning the responsibilities of a *ben Torah* to himself and to the community. Hashem said, "Yehoshua served you and gave you great honor. He would rise early in the morning to set up the benches in preparation for your *shiur*. Since he served you with all his strength, he is worthy of serving the nation as its leader. (A Jewish leader serves. Moshe's greatest appellation was to be called *eved Hashem*, servant of Hashem.)

We derive from here that Yehoshua's access to leadership was not due to his exemplary scholarship (which he certainly had). It was his devotion to making sure that when the nation arrived for their learning session, each of them would be able to go to his place immediately. Yehoshua never left Moshe's side – except when he took time off to set up the *bais hamedrash*. This is why he was Divinely selected to fill Moshe *Rabbeinu's* shoes.

The lesson derived from here is one that we should all remember and incorporate into our *avodas HaKodesh*. It is not sufficient merely to work on one's personal/spiritual growth – he must also reach out to others. Otherwise, he may become knowledgeable of Torah, but he will never achieve *shleimus*, perfection. A leader must be an *adam ha'shaleim*, man who has perfected himself in all areas. As *Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl*, was wont to teach, a *gadol* is one who is great in all areas of spiritual endeavor. One who achieves greatness in one aspect, but fails dismally in others, may be compared to a person whose body parts are not proportionate. He may have a large head with a small torso or limbs that are longer than the rest of his body. A *gadol* is *b'shleimus*, completely

proportionate in his greatness.

Horav Sholom Ben Tzion Felman, zl (Rav in Bnei Brak), was a very close student of the saintly Chazon Ish. The Rav (as a bachur, student, in Yeshivas Ponovezh) presented the following query to his Rebbe. His parents lived in Tel Aviv, where his father was the Rav of Heichal Meir (an observant neighborhood in the heart of the city). His paternal grandmother lived with them. Her many grandchildren saw to it that her days were filled with joy and nachas. At one point, she became ill and required a hospital stay. During this time, she was never left alone, various grandchildren taking turns to be with her. Rav Sholom Ben Tzion would visit often when he came from the yeshivah. Since his break was always short, his visit was equally so. This troubled his grandmother, because she immensely enjoyed his visits. The young yeshivah student was in a quandary. On the one hand, he was in the yeshivah to learn, to grow in his learning. This meant complete devotion and diligence. On the other hand, how could he forsake his elderly grandmother who derived so much nachas and joy from his visits? He presented the sheilah to the Chazon Ish to whose ruling he would defer.

The *Chazon Ish* carefully mulled over all the important points of the question, factoring in everything from a break in learning to the importance of according proper honor to one's grandmother. After a few minutes he said, "Go visit your grandmother and spend as much time with her as she wants. You should know that, not only are you fulfilling the *mitzvos* of *gemillas chesed* and *bikur cholim*, you are also fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *limud haTorah!*"

Rav Sholom looked a bit incredulous. He understood that he was carrying out the *mitzvos* pertaining to *chesed* and visiting the sick, but how was this *limud haTorah*? The *Chazon Ish* saw the look on his face and immediately said, "I know that you are a *masmid*, diligent, and that you toil in Torah. Indeed, why do you toil in Torah? It is so that you acquire the Torah, so that it becomes your Torah, so that the Torah becomes part of your being, your essence. Veritably, how is this practical, considering that the Torah is a spiritual entity and a person is physical? How does one establish a *chibur*, bond, between the physical and the spiritual? The answer is: The Torah clings only to a *nefesh adinah*, refined, delicate soul. In order to acquire *adinus ha'nefesh*, one must perform acts of *chesed* and defer his personal desires for the betterment of others. When one gives from himself for others, he becomes refined, thus enabling him to connect and bond with the Torah. This does not mean that you should close your *Gemorah* and look for opportunities to perform *chesed*. If an opportunity materializes, however, act accordingly. Therefore, it is not considered as if you are only fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *chesed* – you are also fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *limud haTorah!*"

We now have a degree of understanding concerning why Yehoshua was selected to be *Klal Yisrael's* next leader.