

וילך. The last מצוה in the תורה is (31:19) הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת. It's usually translated as "And now, write for yourselves this song." It's specifically referring to האזינו, but we learn from this הלכה of writing the entire תורה, which is called a song to Hashem. And therefore, the last מצוה in the תורה is to write a ספר תורה.

There are going to be two different aspects of this pasuk which have divergent purposes but come to the same conclusion. In פרקי אבות we learn a famous rule (4:5): הַלּוֹמֵד תּוֹרָה עַל מְנַת לְלַמֵּד, מְסַפֵּיקוֹן בְּיָדוֹ לְלַמֵּד וּלְלַמֵּד. One of the purposes of learning and teaching is to accomplish. We can accomplish things in many ways. We can accomplish by sitting and learning, and we can accomplish by doing מצות. Learning itself is also a מצוה. What is the point? Listen to this. The פסוק הרא"ש, no less than the רש"י, which the פוסקים come from, writes in פסוק הרא"ש that in his time there were so many ספרי תורה standing in the ארון קודש that they never got used, and he says a better way to fulfill this מצוה, believe it or not, as joyous as we are when we have a new ספר תורה, we make a parade and we're so proud and happy to see a ספר תורה joining the ranks of the ספרי תורה, he says that it's an even greater מצוה to write ספרים of תורה שבעל פה.

When a person sits down and writes ספרים, when a person sits down and writes ספרים and he's learning ספרים, he's being מקיים this מצוה on an even greater level. How does he know that? Because the pasuk says וְעַתָּה - and now. Why "and now" - only now? The רש"י explains that in משה רבינו's time, when there were very few ספרי תורה, each שבט having only one, then הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת meant the מצוה was to write תורה שבכתב. However, in future דורות when there will be many ספרי תורה, it's much better, he says, to write תורה שבעל פה. That is the עיקר of the מצוה - to write דברי תורה. And by doing so, a person can fulfill a מצוה דאורייתא, a חוב דאורייתא, according to the רש"י.

Now, a completely different take on some aspect of transmitting תורה. This is a fascinating story, the beginning of which all of you will know and recognize, but the end of which most have never heard, as I hadn't either - unless you've learned more than me, which is of course not that difficult. It says in the pasuk (31:28) הַקְהִילוּ אֵלַי אֶת כָּל זִקְנֵי שְׁבִטֵיכֶם וְשִׁטְרֵיכֶם וְאַדְבָּרָה בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה. You have to write the תורה, but I also have to transmit in תורה, in learning, פה, אל פה, from my mouth משה says; וְאַדְבָּרָה - and into their ears; אֶת הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה - all of these things. What are these things? We generally understand it to mean the תורה, that there are many ways of transmitting תורה: writing, speaking, learning, and doing. But listen to this.

We all know the מעשה with תלמי המלך brought down in עמוד א' 72, מסכת מגילה דף ט' עמוד א', how he gathered 72 זקנים. He wanted to prove or disprove the veracity of תורה. He put them all into separate compartments. We all know this story, and he went over to each one individually and said, "I want you to translate the תורה of your teacher משה". And we know that the מדרש says that הקדוש ברוך הוא put into the heart of each and every one of them the עצה and they all made the same changes, because they had to change some of the words so that there shouldn't be any misrepresentation, but they all changed it in exactly the same way, a tremendous נס. As an aside, we know that this is a black day in history when the תורה was translated because it was not meant to be translated, but leaving that aside for the moment; this was a tremendous נס, that they all made exactly the same changes.

The bring the התורה אוצר פלות התורה, [which is not the same ש"ך as the ש"ך in the שלחן ערוך], in our רוח הקודש here in a משכיל דברי משה רבינו, and he writes an amazing thing. משה רבינו knew through רוח הקודש that which was going to happen to תלמי המלך and the זקנים, that they would have to translate the תורה against their will and would need to make changes so there shouldn't be a לעז, there shouldn't be a rumor about the veracity of the תורה. So משה רבינו gathered together 72 זקנים, and he told them in their ears all of these changes, that these are the changes that would have to be made if the תורה is going to be translated. He instructed them to pass it down in every דור, each דור after that time, so that the זקנים would



transmit these שינויים to the next generation, until the time of תלמי המלך. That way there could not be any accusation against the תורה.

According to the ש"ך, these 72 זקנים did not make up these changes by themselves. We say הקדוש ברוך הוא put it into their mind, but according to the ש"ך, it was a מסורה from משה רבינו of how to transmit the תורה and how to perpetuate the truth of the תורה by וְיִדְבֹר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם. This goes back to our pasuk of כְּתַבּוּ לָכֶם אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת. We are keeping the תורה eternally that no matter what happens to it, no matter what happens in history, there will not be any לעז against it. They may not agree with us, they may burn the תורה, but no one has ever accused us of falsifying the תורה. That's what this pasuk is saying with בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם, they are not to change this or to transmit this secret to anyone else but only to the זקנים of each דור so that they would have the genuine changes that משה רבינו instructed them to make.

Bottom line, we all have to do our part to continue transmitting both תורה שבכתב and תורה שבעל פה. No matter what we do, in whatever modality we have, whether it's writing it on white stones or doing it through a podcast, we're being מקיים the מצוה of התורה. And in that זכות, all our children and אייניקלעך will continue that עד ביאת גואל צדק.

