

G-d's Relevance TO EXISTENCE

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YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Emor Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Video: Drawing Upon the Attribute of Mercy Through Our Patriarchs

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A Restoration of Adam to the Original Intent of Creation

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When The Regal Garment Is Rendered Compromised

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The Three Species Fundamental To Our Existence

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Qualified For The Domain Renders It Special

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The High Priest as Model of Original Man

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1. A Kohen is not permitted to contaminate to the dead unless it is one of the 7 closest relatives: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, wife.
2. The High Priest (Kohen Gadol) is not permitted to contaminate – even to the 7 closest relatives.
3. Seforno: The function of the Priest in addition to officiating is to be the disseminator of Torah.
4. Prophet Malachi: The lips of the Kohen are the keepers of the faith. Torah should be sought from his mouth.
5. If the Kohen would contaminate to others besides his family, his reverence & esteem would be diminished.
6. G-d's Presence in the Mishkan was the original intent of creation that G-d should be on the terrestrial with man.
7. Before the sin of Adam there was no death – a derivative of the evil contained within the fruit.
8. The sin of the fruit putrefied existence, causing the terrestrial to no longer be the location for G-d's Presence.
9. The Mishkan was the location for G-d's presence to dwell.
10. The High Priest was a reinstatement of Adam before the sin – he had no context of spiritual impurity.

Why Choose The Domesticated Species For Sacrifice?

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1. The only species that qualify for sacrifices are the ox, sheep, and goat.
2. Although there are ten kosher species only the domesticated qualify.
3. Midrash: G-d said, "I don't want to burden you to scale mountains and search out fields to seek out these species."
4. Only the species raised on your feed bag and under your jurisdiction qualify.
5. Chazal: One's pain for a mitzvah (sacrifice) determines the degree of one's reward.
6. Psalms: Mitzvos were given to sanctify & purify the Jew.
7. The positive & negative Commandments correspond and parallel the spiritual component of the Jew.
8. Pain, as determinant of reward, is only true within the context of the prescribed Mitzvos.
9. Applied elsewhere it is only an exercise in futility.

The Significance Of The Juxtaposition Of The Festivals To Shabbos

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1. The Festivals & holidays are juxtaposed to the Shabbos.
2. Rashi: One who desecrates the holiday is considered as he desecrated the Shabbos.
3. One who observes the holiday is valued as though he observed the Shabbos.
4. Observing the Shabbos is a testament that G-d created the world.
5. Gemara: The Sanctity of the Shabbos has been in place since the beginning of creation.
6. The Festivals & holidays are sanctified by the Sanhedrin.
7. The blessing of the Festivals and holidays: G-d sanctifies the Jewish people who sanctify time.
8. The sanctity of time is derived from the sanctity of the Jew.
9. The basis for all sanctity is G-d's association with the location or people.
10. The sanctity of Shabbos: G-d's entering into existence every 7th day.
11. The Jew's sanctity: G-d taking them as His holy people.
12. The basis for all sanctity: G-d's level of association in each context.
13. The sanctity of the Festivals and Shabbos are same sourced; one who desecrates the holiday is considered as desecrating the Shabbos.

The Proprietary Imprint of One's Life

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1. Midrash: A heavenly voice will sprout from the mountain top saying "Who has done for G-d should come and take his rightful reward."
2. "Who has praised G-d before he was endowed with a soul, who has circumcised his child before he was given a son."
3. "Who has brought to me a sacrifice before I gave him an animal, the ox, sheep and goat."
4. A Positive Commandment: Install a court comprised of ordained judges & law enforcers in every community.
5. Man was endowed with the power of choice to be deserving or culpable for his choices.
6. Exercising one's full choice takes place in concealment – understanding the consequence of transgression.
7. The Torah does not want the range of choice for the Jew to be either devoutly righteous or to be a predator animal.
8. The extent of one's choice is to infuse one's action with a special intent for the sake of the mitzvah.
9. When we serve G-d at whatever level, one must be cognizant that it is all G-d given to be utilized for a specific purpose.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Emor



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G-d's Relevance TO EXISTENCE

A Perversion of Justice within the Context of Weights and Measures

Parshas Kedoshim: Regarding honest weights and measures, “You shall not commit a perversion in justice, in measures of length, weight, or volume. You shall have correct scales, correct weights.... I am *Hashem* your G-d, Who brought you forth from the land of Egypt.” *Rashi* explains, “Is the verse ‘You shall not commit a perversion in justice’ referring to a judge rendering a corrupt judgment? This cannot be, because the *Torah* already stated this prohibition earlier in the same Portion. To what is the verse referring?”

It is referring to the one who is measuring and weighing things for another. He is referred to as a ‘judge.’ If the seller were to falsify the measurement, it is as if he had corrupted the judgment. He is considered repulsive, despicable, disgusting, and abominable. He will bring about the same five negative consequences that come about due to a false judgment that is rendered

by a court. His false measurement will contaminate the world, desecrate G-d’s Name, cause the Divine Presence to be removed, destroy the Jewish people with the sword, and cause expulsion from the Land.” Why are the consequences of making false weights and measures considered to be the equivalent of a judge rendering a corrupt judgment?

Parshas Ki Seitzei: Regarding honest weights and measures, “A perfect and honest weight shall you have...so that your days shall be lengthened on the Land that *Hashem*, your G-d gives you. For an abomination of *Hashem*... who do this.” The *Torah* juxtaposes to this portion, the portion of remembering the attack of *Amalek*.

Rashi: Citing *Chazal*, “If you falsified your weights and measures you should be concerned that the enemy will become enraged and come upon you. As it states, ‘The scales of deceit are considered an abomination to G-d...the deliberate ones will come and bring disgrace.’”

Thus, we learn from the juxtaposition of the portion of *Amalek*, that if one falsifies his weights and measures, he becomes vulnerable to the ultimate enemy of the Jewish people, *Amalek*.

Torah: Regarding the initial attack of *Amalek*, which took place after the Jewish people had witnessed a number of revealed miracles that had proven that G-d had taken them out of Egypt (such as the miracle of the *Manna*) they began to thirst for water they complained, "Is *Hashem* among us or not?" After they complained in this manner, *Moshe* said to them, "Why are you testing G-d." Consequently, *Amalek* attacked them. As the *Torah* states, "Because of the contention of the Children of Israel and because their test of *Hashem*, saying, 'Is *Hashem* among us or not?' *Amalek* came and battled Israel in *Rephidim*..."

Rashi: Citing the *Midrash* that asks, "Why is the attack of *Amalek* juxtaposed to the portion of the *Torah* regarding the complaint of the water? G-d says to the Jewish people, 'Although I am always amongst you and I am ready to attend to all your needs, you ask the question, 'Is G-d in our midst?' I swear on your lives that a dog will come to bite you, and you will call out to Me. Then you will know where I am.'"

Midrash: "To what is this analogous? A child was riding on the shoulders of his father. Every time the child saw something that he desired, he said to his father, 'take it for me.' His father fulfilled his request once, twice, and three times. The child, while sitting on his father's shoulders was approached by another who asked him, 'Where is your father?' The child answered, 'I do not know where he is.' When his father heard this, he said to his son, 'You are sitting on my shoulders and I have given you everything that you requested- and you say I do not know where my father is?' The father threw his child to the ground and was subsequently bitten by a dog."

Since the child was no longer protected by the father, he became vulnerable to be bitten by the dog. Because the Jewish people asked, "Is G-d among us or not," despite the fact that G-d had taken them out of Egypt with revealed miracles and continuously provided them with all of their needs in a miraculous manner, the Jewish people behaved as if G-d was not in their midst. Subsequently, they were attacked by *Amalek* who do not believe in G-d. How is the punishment of *Amalek* relevant to the one who uses false weights and measures?

Seemingly, the one who falsifies weights and measures is behaving as if G-d does not exist. He thus chooses to cheat the purchaser. Since he denies G-d's existence through his action, he is deserving of being attacked. Why is this particular to false weights and measures? Whenever one sins deliberately, he is behaving as if G-d does not exist. If so, then every sinner should also be liable to the same punishment as the one who falsifies his weights and measures. Nevertheless, we see from *Chazal* that this degree of punishment is particular to false weights and measures. Why is this considered to be a more extreme transgression?

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: Citing the verse from Psalms regarding a court of judges that convene to render judgment, "*Elokim neetzav ba'adas keil* – G-d stands (associates Himself) with the congregation of G-d." Meaning, when the judges of the rabbinic court convene to render a judgment, G-d is present in their gathering. If the judge should render a corrupt judgment, G-d will take his soul. In contrast, when a judge renders an absolute truthful verdict (*emmes la'ameto*), he is considered to be G-d's partner in Creation.

We see that when a court convenes to render judgment, it causes G-d to be present. It is the equivalent of the Divine Presence resting upon the judges at the time of their gathering. The reason the liability is so great to the one who renders a corrupt judgment is because the judge chose to be have in G-d's Presence as if He does not exist. This is similar to the one who falsifies weights and measures. Since the seller is the equivalent of a judge, G-d is present at the moment of his weighing and measuring. If he should choose to act dishonestly at the time of the sale, his liability is greater because he is in the presence of G-d. He is behaving as if G-d does not exist. Thus, the punishment for this individual is the attack of *Amalek*.

Humility, the Characteristic that Allows One to Serve

Torah: The ox, the sheep, and the goat are the only species that qualify to be brought as offerings. The *Midrash* explains the reason G-d chose these particular species is based on a verse from Ecclesiastes, "King Solomon writes, 'G-d favors the pursued.' *Reb Hunah* says in the name of *Reb Yosef*, 'In the future G-d will demand the blood of the pursued from their pursuers. Even if a *tzaddik* (righteous) who pursued another

tzaddik, G-d will favor the pursued. Even if a *rasha* (evil person) pursued another *rasha*... G-d will favor the pursued... Where do we find this in the Torah? ...*Avraham* was pursued by *Nimrod* (The King who decreed that *Avraham* should be cast into the fiery kiln)."

Midrash: "*Avraham* was favored by G-d as it states, 'You are *Hashem*, G-d who has chosen *Avraham* and has taken him out of the fiery kiln (of *Kasdin*)...' ... *Moshe* was pursued by Pharaoh (he needed to flee from Egypt after killing the Egyptian)... Because *Moshe* was pursued by Pharaoh, he was able to defuse G-d's Wrath against the Jewish people after they had sinned, because he was considered to be G-d's chosen. As it states, 'Had it not been for *Moshe* His chosen one...' The Jewish people are pursued by the nations of the world. As it states, 'G-d chose them to be His treasured nation...'"

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: *Avraham* was the first individual to refer to G-d as "*Adni*- Master." *Avraham* was born into a pagan world. When *Avraham* was born into existence, G-d had been regarded as "the G-d of the heavens (*Elokei haShamayim*)." However, after *Avraham* began to espouse monotheism by introducing G-d into existence, G-d became known as "the G-d of heaven and the G-d of earth (*Elokei haShamayim v'Elokei Haaretz*)." What was unique about *Avraham* that he was able to come upon the belief that there is One Universal Omnipotent Being when all humanity throughout the generations prior to him were not able to come upon this truth?

Torah: *Dasan* and *Aviram* informed on *Moshe* after he had killed the Egyptian, which caused him to flee Egypt to the land of *Midian*. After he returned many years later to redeem the Jewish people as G-d's agent and take them out of Egypt, *Dasan* and *Aviram* continuously attempted to undermine his authority and provoke discontent among the Jewish people. Why did *Moshe*, as the leader (king) of the Jewish people tolerate their contentious and disruptive behavior until they were ultimately destroyed along with *Korach* and his congregation when they were swallowed-up by the earth?

The concept of appreciation, being appreciative to one's benefactor (*hakaras hatov*) is based upon one's humility. The degree of one's humility will determine the extent of one's appreciation. In contrast, one who is lacking in humility, because he has a sense of entitlement, does not feel any degree of appreciation and thankfulness for what he receives.

Torah: Revealing *Avraham's* degree of humility as he expressed himself in a dialogue with G-d regarding the destruction of *Sodom*. He said, "I am like dust and ash." Regardless of the fact that *Avraham* had affected and impacted upon all humanity by introducing the belief in G-d through his espousal of monotheism (through selfless acts of loving kindness) he did not feel entitled or deserving of anything. Because of *Avraham's* dimension of humility, he had a capacity to be appreciative for every aspect of his existence to a degree that is difficult to fathom.

Parshas Lech Lecha: When *Avraham* was told "Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house" It is considered to be one of the ten tests that G-d had brought upon *Avraham* that he needed to leave his family. Although *Avraham* was treated as a pariah and pursued as a fugitive by his family and members of his community because of his espousal of monotheism; nevertheless, he was appreciative to all of them.

He had a sense of gratitude for everything that he had gained from them throughout his lifetime due to his association with them. Because *Avraham* had this debt of gratitude to his countrymen and family, when he was told by G-d, "Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house" it was the equivalent of G-d telling him to abandon all of them and not try any longer to convince them of the truth of G-d. For a man of *Avraham's* capacity regarding appreciation, this was considered to be a test.

It was because of *Avraham's* unique sense of indebtedness as a beneficiary that he dedicated himself to find the source of all the goodness that came upon him in order to serve and dedicate his life to that Being. *Avraham* was not driven by an intellectual need to discover truth, but rather he was motivated by his need to reciprocate through service, which stemmed from his advanced level of humility. Because of this yearning to identify his benefactor, to know his benefactor, G-d came upon *Avraham*.

Torah: *Moshe* was only able to defuse the Wrath of G-d that came upon the Jewish people after they had sinned, because he was "G-d's chosen." He only became the chosen of G-d because he was pursued as a result of *Dasan* and *Aviram* informing on him. Although the behavior of *Dasan* and *Aviram* was unconscionable, the consequence of their action caused that *Moshe* to be the chosen of G-d.

Because of *Moshe's* unique level of humility, he was able to be appreciative of what they had caused, regardless of the hardships that he experienced. Because *Moshe* was pursued, he was able to ascend to spiritual dimensions and come upon levels of humility that he would not have been able to reach on his own without those circumstances. *Moshe* therefore, did not punish *Dasan* and *Aviram* for their contentious behavior, due to his appreciation.

When *Avraham* expressed his humility by saying, "I am like dust and ash" *Rashi* explains that "I am like dust" means "I should have been dust if I would have been killed in the battle with the four mighty kings. Had G-d not miraculously saved me I would have been killed and decomposed into dust." When he said, "I am like ash" it means, "When I was thrown into the fiery kiln I should have been incinerated to become ash, but G-d saved me."

It was through the experiences in which *Avraham* was willing to give his life that he expressed his humility. One would think that after willing to give up his own life, he would have a sense of entitlement. However, *Avraham* did not have a sense of entitlement and was appreciative for whatever G-d provided for him. This is an example of G-d favoring the pursued because the circumstance that he had experienced brought him to a greater realization of G-d's beneficence.

Midrash: "Reb Chanina Bar Papa says, 'G-d said, 'There was never a nation that I have smitten that I needed to smite again. However, you, who are the children of *Yaakov* were not consumed. As it states, 'My arrows will be expended but they will not be expended.'... Why are the nations of the world destroyed when G-d begins punishing them, yet the Jewish people are able to remain intact? It is because when difficulties comes upon the nations, they bolt and rebel against G-d... However, in contrast, when tragedy befalls the Jewish people they become humbled and subordinate themselves and pray." This is because the Jewish people possess the characteristic of humility of their forefather *Avraham*. They thus have no sense of entitlement and feel they are not being mistreated.

The Holy Patriarchs, Fully Encompassing the Jewish People

Torah: "When an ox or sheep or a goat is born..." These are the only three species that qualify to be brought

as an offering. The *Midrash* states, "The species that qualify to be brought as offerings were chosen in the merit of the Patriarchs. The ox was chosen in the merit of *Avraham*, our Patriarch. As it states regarding *Avraham's* hosting of the angels, "*Avraham* ran to the cattle, took a calf tender and good, and gave it to the youth who hurried to do it..."

Avraham was unique in his performance of acts of kindness. His objective of hospitality was to espouse monotheism and convince his guests that there is only One G-d who continuously wills existence. Although *Avraham* was ninety-nine years old and recuperating from his circumcision that had recently been performed, when he saw three wayfarers on the road, he immediately ran towards them to offer his hospitality.

The concept of sacrifices exists only within the context of the Attribute of Mercy. When the *Torah* mentions sacrifices they are referred to as "*Korban L'shem* (Sacrifice to G-d)." Since the *Torah* uses the appellation for G-d (YKVK '*Hashem*') that connotes the Attribute of Mercy, it indicates that without G-d's Mercy, one would not be able to be atoned through the bringing of sacrifices. The Jewish people are able to merit and evoke G-d's Mercy due to *Avraham*, our Patriarch utilizing the ox as a vehicle to espouse His Omnipotence and Unity.

Midrash: "The sheep was chosen to qualify as an offering in the merit of *Yitzchak*. As the verse states regarding the *Akeidah* (binding of *Yitzchak*), 'And *Avraham* looked up and saw- behold a ram - after it had been caught in the thicket..." The species of the ram reminds G-d of the special act of the *Akeidah*. *Yitzchak*, being the object of the *Akeidah* had a ram brought in his stead. *Chazal* tell us that on *Rosh Hashanah*, the day of judgment, G-d's Mercy is evoked when "The ashes of *Yitzchak* are piled before Him." Had it not been for the merit of the *Akeidah*, the Jewish people would not have been able to continue to exist, due to the intense prosecution of *satan*. It is only through the merit of the *Akeidah* that the prosecution is silenced on the day of judgment, *Rosh Hashanah*.

Midrash: "The goat was chosen to be an offering in the merit of *Yaakov*. As the *Torah* states (regarding *Rivka*, our Matriarch, telling her son *Yaakov* to receive the blessing of the birthright from his father *Yitzchak*), 'So now, my son, heed my voice to that which I command you. Go now to the flock and fetch from there two good goats...' What is the meaning of 'two good goats?'

Reb Brechya in the name of *Reb Chelbo*: 'It will be good for you (*Yaakov*) and good for your children (the Jewish people).' It will be good for you on a personal level, because through them you will receive the blessing from your father *Yitzchak*. It will be good for your children, because through the goats they will be atoned on *Yom Kippur*. As it states, 'It is on this day that they will atone for you.' (One goat was for G-d and the other was for *Azazel*)."

Rivka Imeinu had instructed her son *Yaakov* to take the blessing which were rightfully his, from his father *Yitzchak*. In order to facilitate the ability of *Yaakov* to receive the blessings, *Yaakov* needed the hides of the two goats to cover his arms and his chest to resemble his brother *Esav*. *Chazal* tell us that *Yaakov* was the most special of the Patriarchs. He is the Patriarch that personifies Torah.

Mishna in Ethics of our Fathers: '*Im ein kemach, ein Torah* – if there is no flour there is no *Torah*.' Since *Yitzchak's* blessings were pertinent to material sustenance and bounty, *Yaakov* needed to receive this blessing in order to guarantee the existence of the Jewish people through the material support of *Torah*. Had *Esav* received the blessings, he would have withheld the material support of the Jewish people. Consequently, he would have destroyed the Jewish people.

Just as the Jewish people would not have been able to survive without the material blessings that *Yaakov* received through the use of the goat, so too the Jewish people would not be able to survive if there were no atonement on *Yom Kippur*. As we see, it was only through the two goats that *Yaakov* had used, that there was destined to be the service on *Yom Kippur* in which one goat was for G-d and the other for *Azazel*. In addition, the second set of tablets were given on *Yom Kippur*, indicating that the Jewish people were forgiven for the sin of the golden calf. Thus, establishing that day as the day of atonement until the end of time. This is all in the merit of *Yaakov*, the father of the twelve tribes of G-d.

Torah: After *Yaakov* wrestled with the archangel of *Esav* and was victorious, the angel changed his name from *Yaakov* to "Israel" because, "You gave lorded over G-d (angel) and men (*Esav* and *Lavan*)..." *Yaakov* had ascended to the unique level of "Israel" through his service of G-d. Since the beginning of existence the angels praise G-d by referring to Him as "the G-d of Israel." It is the Jewish people are identified as the Children of Israel. We recite

in the first blessing of the *Amidah*, "... (G-d) Who recalls the kindness of the Patriarchs..." It is in the merit of the Patriarchs that the Jewish people are able to bring sacrifices and be atoned for their sins to be reinstated. Had it not been for the merit of the Patriarchs, the Jewish people would not have been able to continue to exist. To this day, we still rely on the merit of the Patriarchs in every aspect of our existence.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin in his work *Ruach Chaim*: A human being is comprised of three parts: the life source (*Nefesh*), spirit (*Ruach*), and the soul (*Neshama*). All physical movement emanates from the *Nefesh*. This life source is shared by man and animal alike. *Ruach* (spirit) is the spirit that gives man the power of speech/ability of expression. *Neshama* is the spiritual essence that man possesses, which is the basis for his intellect. Just as each individual person is comprised of these three elements, so too do the Jewish people, as a nation, possess these three components.

Avraham, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*, our Patriarchs, the founding fathers of the Jewish people, respectively represent and perfected each one of these components within the Jewish people. *Avraham* is the equivalent of the *Nefesh* (life source) of the Jewish people. This was manifested through his pronounced characteristic of *chesed* (kindness). *Chesed* expresses itself through physical movement. As the *Torah* tells us that *Avraham* "ran" to attend to the needs of the wayfarers.

Yitzchak represents the *Neshama* of the Jewish people. He was considered to be the "unblemished offering." Just as the *Kohen* (Priest), when he officiates, if he were to have an improper thought the sacrifice would be invalidated (*pigul*), so too was *Yitzchak* pure in thought. *Yaakov*, our Patriarch, who was continuously engaged in Torah study, corresponds to the *Ruach* (power of speech) of the Jewish people because Torah study manifests itself through verbal articulation.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin: When one sins all the three aspects of his being are affected. His thought, speech, and action are diminished do to the diminishment of his spiritual make up – *Nefesh*, *Ruach*, *Neshama*. When one brings a sacrifice in conjunction with repentance and verbal confession, he corrects the diminishment that came about through the sin in all the three aspects of his being. This atonement and correction is able to come about in each of these areas, due to the merit of our Holy Patriarchs, *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*.

The Uniqueness of the Thanks Offering

The *Torah* states, "...When you bring the Thanks Offering (*Korban Todah*)..." The *Midrash* states, "...At the end of time all sacrifices will cease to be, except for the Thanks Offering, which will remain in effect forever. All other thanks will come to an end but the Thanks Offering will never come to an end...It is because the giving of thanks to G-d will not come to an end. As the Prophet *Yirmiyah* states, '...All will exclaim, 'G-d is good in His Kindness forever' and bring offerings of thanks in the House of G-d ...' King David writes in *Psalms*, '...I will pay Thanks (in plural): Meaning one will bring the Thanks Offering as well as expressing one's thanks to G-d.'"

Maharal of Prague explains that the reason all offerings will be nullified at the end of time except for the thanks offering is because at that time, sin will cease to be. Because truth will be unobscured and evil will be vanquished, mankind will no longer be influenced by an evil inclination and thus, there will no longer be sin in the world. Consequently, there will be no need for sacrifices that pertain to atonement and forgiveness. Due to the level of clarity that will exist at the end of time, man will be able to clearly see G-d's Kindness and influence in every aspect of the world. The *Mishna* in Tractate *Berachos* states, "Just as one blesses G-d for the good, so too must one bless Him for the bad (*Dayan Ha'emes*) with joy." Even when one experiences tragedy one must understand that it is for his ultimate good. This must be acknowledged through a blessing as when one experiences good fortune.

Although the text of the blessing for good fortune is not the same as that for tragedy, nevertheless in their essence there is no difference. They are both an acknowledgment that all is for the good. However, at the end of time, when all humanity will be endowed with a unique level of clarity, man will internalize the goodness of every event and thus not cease giving thanks to G-d and actualizing it through the Thanks Offering. When one gives thanks to G-d it is to acknowledge that one is a beneficiary of receiving some material blessing of value such as financial success or honor. Although one may receive material blessing, the true value of that bounty is only to use the material to serve G-d.

Although this may be true, when one thanks G-d he does not feel a sense of gratitude that he was able to

serve Him with abundance, but rather he is thankful for receiving the material bounty. Similarly, when one wants to be atoned in order to be relieved from the pain and suffering that he is experiencing, rather than seeking atonement in order to have a more intimate relationship with G-d. When truth is obscured, it is difficult for one to pay his indebtedness to G-d for the right reason, namely to be closer to Him. It is only at the end of time when man will reach a special level of clarity that he will be able to understand that the only thing of value is to have a relationship with G-d.

Everything in the world is only to facilitate such a relationship with the Omnipotent One. With such a level of clarity, one will be able to see that even the most tragic moments of his life were only to facilitate a closer relationship with G-d. Thus, the greatest tragedies will be seen as the ultimate opportunities. *Chofetz Chaim* writes in his work *Ahavas Chesed* that it is not difficult for the wealthy individual to praise G-d because he feels that he is not lacking anything. However, if one is destitute and barely able to survive, it is difficult for that individual to thank G-d for his circumstances and praise Him for his impoverished state. However if one is able to have the clarity to truly understand and appreciate his circumstance, after he passes away he will not be able to cease thanking G-d for the endless opportunities for spiritual advancement that he was given. He will be able to realize that all of his suffering was only to give him the ultimate opportunity to serve G-d.

This perspective may only be reached if one has sufficient clarity, which will come after one's death because at that time he will be free of all conflicts of interest. Similarly, this level of clarity will come about at the end of time. Although there may be suffering in this world, one should experience joy and give thanks to G-d by understanding and internalizing that G-d is the True Judge and everything that He brings about is for our ultimate good.

Maintaining the Purity of One's Being (from *Kedoshim*)

Before the *Torah* enumerates all of the forbidden sexual relations it states, "I am *Hashem*, your G-d. Do not perform the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled; and do not perform the practice of the land of *Canaan* to which I bring you, and do not follow their traditions. Carry out My laws (*Mishpati*) and safeguard

My Statutes (*Chukosi*) to follow them, I am *Hashem*, your G-d." *Rashi* explains that "*Mishpatim* (laws)" are dictates in the *Torah* that even if G-d had not commanded the Jew to uphold, man would have come upon them through rational understanding and social necessity.

In contrast, "*Chukim* (Statutes)" are laws that are the equivalent of the decree of the king that have no basis in rational thinking. Although one may not have any understanding of the Statutes, one must adhere to them because they are G-d's dictate. *Rashi* explains regarding Statues, "The evil inclination focuses upon Statutes and causes one to question and contest them. Similarly, the nations of the world also focus upon the Statutes and attempt to cause the Jew to question their efficacy. What are examples of these Statutes? The prohibition of eating pork, the prohibition of wearing the combination of wool and linen (*shatneiz*), the purification process of the Red Heifer. Regarding these laws, G-d says, 'I am *Hashem*, your G-d and I have decreed these Statutes upon you and you are not permitted to extricate yourself from them.'

The *Torah* juxtaposes forbidden sexual relationships to the commandment to observe the *Mishpatim* (rational laws) of the *Torah* and uphold the *Chukim* (irrational laws). What is the significance of this juxtaposition? The *Torah* tells us that because the Canaanites did not adhere to the prohibitions of forbidden sexual relations, the Land could not tolerate them. The Land thus spit them out because they were abominable. Therefore, the Jewish people should not emulate their abominable ways.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: "By being careful in the area of forbidden sexual relations, one prepares his spirituality to be able to fulfill the rational laws (*Mishpatim*). Being removed from forbidden sexual relations will also prepare one to be able to adhere to the *Chukim*. If on the other hand, one abominates his soul with the illness of impurity, his eyes will become dulled (from

the truth) and the impurity will come upon all of his limbs and affect every aspect of his existence.

Since the individual becomes completely infected with sin, he will not uphold the negative commandments and will not observe the positive commandments. Even if he were to perform a positive commandment, it is considered to be an abominated *mitzvah*. As G-d says to the wicked, 'Why are you singing My praises? I only value what is performed with sanctity and purity.'

One who craves and is drawn to indulge in what is forbidden and destructive, will not have any sense of what is beneficial or destructive to his soul because he becomes blinded and consumed by his craving. When one is involved in forbidden sexual relations, it will diminish his spirituality to such a degree that what is usually considered to be evil and forbidden by the average person, will no longer be considered forbidden by this individual. The perversions in which he becomes involved will deteriorate his spirituality to such a degree that not only will he lose his sense of being Jewish, the natural sense of right and wrong that a rational being possess will become negatively affected.

In contrast, one who distances himself from forbidden sexual relations will become imbued with holiness and purity and will be able to uphold the Statues that have no rational basis because he will have a sense of appreciation for the dictates of G-d. This individual will become spiritualized and develop a spiritual sensitivity to value and appreciate the laws of purity and impurity. He will be drawn to distance himself from the anything that is contrary to the Will of G-d because he does not wish to abominate himself and be removed from his state of intimacy with G-d. He will thus adhere to the Statutes because they are G-d's Will, without the need to understand their efficacy. Similarly, this individual will uphold the rational laws because they are G-d's Will and not because he agrees with them from an intellectual level.

