

מצות

AN INFUSION OF ENERGY
TO MAINTAIN THE ETERNITY
OF THE SOUL



YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Eikev

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

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Is Acknowledgement of the Source Integral to the Sated or the Hungry?

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1. "And you have eaten, and you are sated, and you will bless G-d."
2. This is basis one must say Grace after eating: 3 blessings on a Torah level and a 4th which is rabbinical.
3. Gemara: What is the basis for the pre-blessing?
4. If one acknowledges G-d when sated- definitely when one is hungry?
5. Gemara: One is not permitted to benefit from the world without a blessing.
6. If one did, it is as if he had benefited from something that was consecrated.
7. Psalms: The world in its entirety belongs to G-d.
8. Psalms: The Heaven is G-d's and the Earth was to mankind.
9. Gemara: Before acknowledging G-d with a blessing the world is all G-d's; after the blessing the terrestrial is released to mankind.
10. 13 methods of interpretation were given at Sinai.
11. Kal V'chomer is one.
12. The logic that was employed by the Gemara to establish a basis for the pre blessing is the Kal V'chomer.
13. Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk: If the Kal V'chomer is the basis for the pre-blessing; one's obligation should be biblical, which it is not.
14. He explains there is a fallacy in the logical Kal V'chomer.
15. When sated and complacent, one is vulnerable to attribute his successes to himself.
16. He must therefore immediately trace the source of satiation to G-d with the Grace after the meal, which is not a concern when one is hungry.

The Proverbial Yardstick Confirms Delusion

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1. If one observes the "neglected" mitzvos (those "trampled" upon by one's heel), G-d will uphold the covenant, etc.
2. He will merit unlimited blessings, an exceptional reward. Why?
3. Jews are bound by 613 dictates - both positive and negative.
4. Some only pertain to a certain segment of the Jewish people.
5. Some have relevance to the Kohen, or to the ordinary Jew, but not to a woman.
6. All Jewish Souls are interconnected.
7. When one does a mitzvah all Jews are beneficiaries; if one sins, all Jews are diminished.
8. He who observes the neglected mitzvos infuses the entire Jewish People with the spirituality they were lacking.
9. Therefore he's the beneficiary of unlimited blessing.
10. Also: Since he/she does not discern between the more and less severe mitzvah, it confirms his interest is solely to fulfill the will of G-d.
11. His intent is not self-serving, so he merits the ultimate- as he is fully attached to the ultimate.
12. One who uses the proverbial mitzvah yardstick will not address the "less important" mitzvos.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Eikev



G-d's Scale of Evaluation

Torah: "The entire commandment (*mitzvah*) that I command you today you shall observe to perform..."
What is the meaning of "the entire *mitzvah*?"

Rashi citing Chazal: "When one begins a *mitzvah* one should complete it. This is because a *mitzvah* only identifies itself with the one who completes it. We find that the *mitzvah* regarding the remains of Yosef that were brought up from Egypt by Moshe and remained with him until his passing, identifies with the Jewish people. As the verse states, 'The Children of Israel had brought up the remains of Yosef and buried them in Shechem.' Because the *mitzvah* was not completed by Moshe, it identifies with the one who completed it."

Mishna in Ethics of Our Fathers: "Reb Chanina Ben Dosa says, 'If one's actions are greater than his knowledge,

he will be able to retain his wisdom. However, if one's wisdom is greater than his actions, he will not retain his wisdom."

Rabbeinu Yonah: "If one's knowledge of *mitzvos* is less than his accomplishments, how is it possible that one's actualization of *mitzvos* is greater than what he had studied? The *Mishna* is teaching us that although one had not yet performed the *mitzvos*, because he had not yet studied them; he is nevertheless fully accredited for the *mitzvos* that have not yet been performed. This is because when one accepts upon himself to fulfill the *mitzvos* to their fullest, G-d values that commitment as if the *mitzvos* were actualized."

Rabbeinu Yonah in Gates of Repentance: that if one commits himself to studying the entire *Torah* but because of circumstances that are beyond his control (such as passing away) he is not able to actualize his spiritual aspirations, he is nevertheless fully credited

with completing his goal. Had it not been for this individual's circumstance, he would have met his spiritual commitment. This is the meaning of the *Mishna* which tells us that if he has this special mind-set he will retain his Torah knowledge. If this is so, then why was the *mitzvah* of taking the remains of *Yosef* and burying them in Israel attributed to the Jewish people and not to *Moshe*? He was unable to complete this *mitzvah*, to which he was fully dedicated, only because G-d had decreed that he should not be able to enter into the Land.

Based on the interpretation of *Rabbeinu Yonah*, we are able to conclude that on a spiritual level, *Moshe* was in fact fully credited for completing the *mitzvah* regarding the remains of *Yosef* as he initially intended. However, regarding identification with the *mitzvah*, it is determined by the one who completes it, which was the Jewish people.

Rambam in Laws of Repentance: "Every Jew has the potential to be as great as *Moshe*, our Teacher." *Moshe* was the only Jew to merit a direct communication with G-d that was considered to be face to face. He ascended to heaven to receive the *Torah* on behalf of the Jewish people. He was chosen by G-d to be His spokesman. If this is so, how could every Jew be able to achieve the same level as *Moshe*?

Moshe's achievement is attributed to the fact that he actualized his spiritual potential. Although *Moshe's* potential was unique; nevertheless, if one addresses his own spiritual potential, his accomplishment is no less than that of *Moshe*. One cannot be more than what he is meant to be. Identically, if one is committed to perform a *mitzvah*, as G-d had commanded him; however, something that is beyond his control interferes and does not allow it to come to fruition, he will merit full credit for that *mitzvah* as if he did in fact bring it to fruition.

Understanding Where One Stands

Torah: "V'haya eikev tishmeun eis ha'mishpatim... This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances, and you observe and perform them; *Hashem*, your G-d, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers... And you will merit all the bounty and reward."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The reason the *Torah* uses the term "eikev" , which in this context means "when," rather than the word "im" is because the word "eikev" which literally means "heel of one's foot" is alluding to the *mitzvos* that are not valued sufficiently and are thus trampled under one's heel. The *Torah* states that if one keeps these *mitzvos* that are perceived as being not important and vital, one will merit unlimited blessing and reward. Why is the one who is sensitive to the *mitzvos* that are disregarded, worthy of exceptional blessing? Why is he so endeared to G-d?

The term "*mitzvah*" which means commandment is derived from the word "tzeevuy," which means "command." One must fulfill a *mitzvah* because it is G-d's Command. This is the essence of every *mitzvah*, regardless of its consequences – positive or negative (reward/punishment). If the impetus and motivation to perform *mitzvos* is because it is the Word of G-d, then there is no basis to classify the Commandments as "more important" and "less important." If G-d commanded them, then they are all of equal importance.

Mishna in Ethics of Our Fathers: "Do not be like servants who serve the Master for the sake of receiving a reward, but rather be like servants who serve the Master without the intent of receiving reward..." The only basis to differentiate between *mitzvos* is if one's impetus to perform them is for the sake of one's interest (reward).

When one chooses to neglect a particular *mitzvah*, it is an indication that his motivation for heeding the Word of G-d is only out of self interest. He chose to pass on the *mitzvah* because it was not worth his while or effort. Regarding the more stringent *mitzvah*, whose liability is great, one tends not to transgress it because of the gravity of its liability. The moment one applies his own proverbial "yardstick" to the *mitzvos* of the *Torah*, it is a confirmation that he is not performing for the sake of the Master, but rather for self interest.

The one who fulfills and addresses even the *mitzvos* that are cast aside and neglected, is the one who truly serves the Master without seeking personal gain. He therefore merits unlimited blessing in every aspect of his life. This is because the objective and purpose of physical existence is only for G-d's Glory.

Prophet: "For My glory I Created it." G-d therefore provides the unlimited blessing to facilitate His objective.

Midrash citing a verse from Psalms: King David states, "'Why should I be fearful in the days of evil? The sins of my heel surround me.' G-d has given the Jewish people the *Torah* which contains 613 *mitzvos*. Among them, there are those, which seem to be more severe and those which are less severe. Because there are *mitzvos* that are less severe, people tend to not observe them properly and throw them under their heels as if they are to be taken lightly.

It this that King David feared on the Day of Judgment. King David said to G-d, 'Master of the Universe, I am not concerned about the more severe *mitzvos* (because I performed them properly); however, I am concerned about the less severe *mitzvos*. Perhaps I have violated one of them because I related to them as if they were of lesser importance. You G-d have said, 'One must be as careful in the observance of the lighter *mitzvah* as one must be careful with a more stringent *mitzvah*. Therefore I am concerned that the sins that I have thrown under my heel will come to condemn me on the Day of Judgment.'

Although one may perform all of the *mitzvos* meticulously one must understand his own motivation for doing them. Even King David, who was one of the most spiritual people who ever lived, was concerned that there may have been a trace of some level of self-interest in his *mitzvah* observance. If one fails regarding a lesser *mitzvah* (even once) it is a reflection of his entire being, regarding the impetus for his *mitzvah* performance.

This is the reason King David was concerned regarding the "sins of his heel" would come to prosecute him on the Day of Judgment. If he had failed even once, regarding the lesser *mitzvah* it would be a condemnation of his total being. It is true that the *Gemara* tells us that even when one performs a *mitzvah* with self-interest (*shelo l'shmah*) it has value because ultimately it could bring the person to a more advanced level of observance (*l'shmah*), which is what G-d desires. However, the statement of the *Gemara* is telling us that one whose motivation for *mitzvos* is one of self-interest, should not be discouraged because if one continues to perform, in this manner, it will come to a more advanced level.

The Profile of the Jew

Torah: "This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances...He will love you, bless you, and multiply you..."

Baal HaTurim: "When one observes the *mitzvos*, one will merit G-d's love. It is in the merit of *Avraham*, our Patriarch.

"*Yeshaya*: 'The offspring of *Avraham*, My beloved... One will merit blessing in the merit of *Yitzhak*, our Patriarch. As it states, 'G-d blessed *Yitzchak*...' One will merit to be fruitful to multiply in the merit of *Yaakov*, our Patriarch. As it states, 'Be fruitful and multiply...'" When one observes the *mitzvos* in a manner that emulates the behavior of the Holy Patriarchs, then one will merit G-d's love, blessing, and expansion through procreation. When a Jew reflects the behavior of the Patriarchs, he will be seen by G-d as a direct outgrowth of these special and holy people. Consequently, he will merit their blessings.

Torah in *Shemos*: "*Yosef* died, and all his brothers and that entire generation. The Children of Israel were fruitful, teemed (*vayisheritzu*), increased, and became strong - very, very much so; and the land became filled with them. A new king arose over Egypt, who did not know *Yosef*." It is difficult to understand how Pharaoh or the Egyptian people could enslave and persecute the family of *Yosef*, the Viceroy. Had it not been for *Yosef*'s ingenuity and initiative, Egypt would have perished during the years of famine. As a result of the wealth that came to Egypt, through *Yosef*'s initiative, Egypt gained prominence and became a world power. If this is so, how was Pharaoh and his people able to justify their enslavement of the Jewish people? How could they behave as if they had known *Yosef*?

Sforno: "The *Torah* uses the term '*vayisheritzu* (teemed)' regarding the proliferation of the Jewish people to indicate that their behavior had caused them to be perceived as rodents (*sheratzim*). The Jewish people at this time, as a result of their behavior which was devoid of any spirituality, could not be identified as the family of *Yaakov* and *Yosef*. *Yosef* was renowned in Egypt, even among the pagans as the "righteous one."

Comparatively speaking, the persona and behavior of the Jewish people was as detestable as rodents. Therefore, Pharaoh and the Egyptian people could enslave them. The Jew merits G-d's love and blessing only when He sees them as the children of the Patriarchs. This is only when they reflect the behavior of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*.

Torah in *Va'eschanan* (regarding the first portion of *Shema*): "You shall love (*V'haavtah*) *Hashem* your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your resources..."

Baal HaTurim: "The letters of the word '*V'haavtah* (you shall love) if they are rearranged spell the word '*avos* (Patriarchs).' The verse, 'With all one's heart' is referring to *Avraham*, our Patriarch. This is because *Avraham's* love for G-d was unique. 'With all your soul' is referring to *Yitzchak*, our Patriarch because he was willing to give his life for G-d at the *Akeidah*. 'With all your resources' is referring to *Yaakov*, our Patriarch. As it states before *Yaakov* had fled to go to the house of *Lavan*, 'Whatever You will give me I will tithe for You...'"

When one acts in a manner that is similar to our Holy Patriarchs through love, sacrifice, and giving of one's material assets for His sake, the Jew will be seen by G-d as one of the progeny of *Avraham*, *Yitzchak*, and *Yaakov*. The worthiness for all blessing is rooted in the Patriarchs. The Jewish people are only beneficiaries of that blessing when they identify, through their behavior as their descendants.

Perceiving Truth Through the Eyes of G-d

Torah: "This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances (*mishpatim*)..."

Ramban: The verse is referring to the courts obligation to institute justice. The judges must implement and establish the law and its consequences as prescribed by the *Torah*. Regardless of one's sense of compassion, one must act within the context of justice, although it may be perceived as cruel.

Torah: When the Jewish people will conquer the nations of *Canaan* they should not demonstrate any mercy upon them. Regarding this, *Ramban* explains, "As a result of the mercy demonstrated by judges, justice will be undermined." Meaning, justice must be

implemented as G-d dictates and not based on the flawed and limited human perception, which is linked to one's emotion.

One may believe that the justice that is prescribed for a particular circumstance is cruel and unjust. However, it is in fact the correct prescription based on G-d's Justice. It is similar to how one perceives the removal of a dangerous growth from one who is seriously ill. If one witnesses the removal of this growth without understanding the nature of the disease, one may believe that the removal of the flesh is an act of cruelty that is being perpetrated upon the patient.

However, understanding the nature of the disease, the removal of the growth is an act of mercy. It is identically, in a similar context, that because of man's limitation of understanding he has a faulty perception of the veracity of justice. In this manner that man has a faulty perception of justice. What is seen as cruel and lacking in compassion is actually in the best interest of man and society.

Yitzchak supplicated G-d to allow *Rivka* to conceive because she was infertile. Regarding *Yitzchak's* supplication, the *Torah* uses the term "*vayetar*," which is a powerful and urgent expression of prayer. The *Gemara* in Tractate *Succah* tells us that this particular supplication is compared to a pitchfork, which is referred to as "*aatar*". "Just as the pitchfork is able to overturn what is below and brings it to the top, so too does the prayers of *tzaddikim* overturn G-d's Attribute of cruelty and establishes the Attribute of Mercy."

Factually, G-d does not have an "attribute of cruelty," (G-d forbid) rather, He has an "Attribute of Justice." If so, why does the *Gemara* refer to it as the "attribute of cruelty?" It is because of man's inability to process and understand the consequences of his own behavior within a spiritual context. He perceives G-d's Justice as cruelty. What is in fact justice is misconstrued to be cruelty. For example, was it necessary for G-d to destroy the world with the Great Flood? One may view this as excessive and cruel. However, the Attribute of Justice dictated that the Great Flood should come about in order to allow mankind to start again from *Noach*. This was a needed prescription to rehabilitate existence to allow mankind to continue.

The *Torah* establishes and sets the standard for justice and correct behavior. If a judge allows his emotion to in any way interfere with the law, there will be no justice. The human mind has no relevance to comprehend or fathom G-d's Justice. It is only the Divine Mind, understanding all, that can dictate true justice. As the verse states, "Through justice you will establish the Land."

Torah: When Yosef was the Viceroy, he sold the grain to the people on behalf of Pharaoh. Initially the grain was purchased with their currencies; however, when the currencies were depleted people purchased the grain with livestock. When the livestock was depleted, they could only purchase grain by selling themselves as slaves to the king of Egypt. When those who had sold themselves became the chattel of Pharaoh, rather than feeling that they were victimized, they said to Yosef, "Thank you for giving us our lives! You are a compassionate ruler." They understood that it was only because Yosef had exchanged the grain for their existence was compassionate. Yosef's behavior was correct and just.

If the Jew lives his life according to G-d's Will through the observance of *mitzvos*, he will be spiritualized and oriented to understand what may be seen by others as "cruel" is in fact proper and just.

Humility, the Magnifier of Truth

Torah: "When you hearken to these ordinances... (*V'haya eikev tishmeun eis ha'mishpatim*)."

Chazal: The word "eikev" is derived from the word "aakeiv," which means "heel." The heel of the foot symbolizes humility because it is the lowest part of the body. One is only able to actualize his spiritual potential by perfecting the characteristic of humility.

Moshe, who was G-d's spokesman and the conduit of *Torah* to the Jewish people, is not referred to as "devoutly righteous" but rather as "My faithful servant." *Moshe* was the most spiritually advanced Jew to ever live because he had negated himself completely to G-d. There was no trace of self in his being that could obscure or interfere with his perception of truth, which was absolute. He was not conflicted and thus hindered by self-interest. As the *Torah* tells us, *Moshe* was the most humble man who ever walked the face of the earth.

Midrash: "G-d desired you not because you were the most numerous of all the nations of the world. It is not because you perform more *mitzvos* than they do. In fact, there are times when the nations of the world glorify My Name to a greater degree than you. As it states, 'From the East to the West, My Name is made great by the nations...' but you, you desecrate My Name. Why then did I choose you? It is because you are few. In the merit of you minimizing and humbling yourselves before Me, I have chosen you. Because of this you are My beloved. As it states, 'I have loved you, but Esav I despise.' Despite the fact that the Jewish people are undeserving, G-d nevertheless desires them because they have minimized themselves."

Torah in *Haazinu*: "I have expended all of My arrows in them (Jewish People)."

Midrash: "G-d said. 'Although My arrows have been expended upon them, they have not been expended.' Meaning, despite all of the tragedies and travails that have befallen the Jewish people, they have remained intact – unlike the nations of the world who were destroyed through Divine Retribution that had come upon them. The *Midrash* compares the predicament of the Jewish people to a wooden beam that remains intact, although the archer had expended all of his arrows into it, emptying his quiver. The Jewish people remain intact despite all the difficulties they had befallen them throughout history.

Midrash: There is no nation that G-d had begun to punish that was not ultimately destroyed. The Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and the Romans, have long been destroyed and have gone into oblivion as a result of His Wrath. Why have the Jewish people survived, despite the extent of G-d's Retribution, while other nations perished?

When G-d's wrath had come upon the nations of the world, they chose to defy and rebel against Him, feeling that they were being unjustly punished. Rather than recognizing that their punishment was due to their own spiritual failings, they intensified their defiance against G-d. They were therefore ultimately destroyed as a result of their obstinacy. This is because the nations of the world are haughty and arrogant and do not possess the innate characteristic of humility.

Conversely, when the Jewish people experience tragedy and suffering, they become introspective and recognize that the cause of their punishment is due to their own failing, thus causing them to repent and return to G-d. The Jew has the capacity to do this only because he possesses the attribute of humility.

The Jewish people possess the attribute of humility because they are the spiritual heirs of the holy Patriarchs. *Avraham* had opposed the entire pagan world in his espousal of monotheism. As *Chazal* explain, he was equivalent of a person who took on the world singlehandedly, despite the overwhelming opposition. If *Avraham* was motivated by self-interest such as being acknowledged and perceived in a positive light by the world, one could not have not what *Avraham*, our Patriarch had done.

Because of his position of belief and dedication to G-d, *Avraham* was considered to be a pariah who was despised by his community and consequently became a fugitive. It was only because of his exceptional quality of humility that he had the capacity to ignore the

opposition of the world for the sake of G-d. *Avraham* was considered to be one of the most humble people to ever live. As it states, "*Avraham* said, 'I am but ash and dust.'" Meaning, *Avraham* believed that he was undeserving. The innate characteristic of humility is part of the spiritual gene pool of the Jewish people because of *Avraham*.

Gemara in Tractate *Kiddushin*: "I (G-d) created the evil inclination and the *Torah* as its antidote." It is because the Jew has the innate characteristic of humility that *Torah* is able to provide him with the clarity to perceive truth and not be ensnared by the evil inclination. However, the nations of the world, who do not possess this special innate characteristic of humility, have no relevance to *Torah* because it is only a mechanism to come upon truth to the one who is unhindered by ego.





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