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**As Moshe Diminished His Physicality One must Toil to Merit
Special Divine Assistance**

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Closing the Book of Vayikra: If You Follow/Walk in My Statutes

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A Conduit of Blessing to the World

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1. All the world's blessings are due to the merit of the Jew who observes Torah and Mitzvos.
2. G-d told Avraham that the nations will be blessed through his progeny.
3. The world is denied material when the Jews fail spiritually.
4. Midrash: The nation should appoint two sentries for every Jew to assure he is observing Torah & Mitzvos.
5. They assure and secure the observance of the Jew, and nullify them with their decrees.
6. Yaakov and Esav battled in the womb of their mother over the physical and spiritual worlds.
7. They agreed the physical would be Esav's and the spiritual- Yaakov's.
8. Yaakov, in the home of Lavan, amassed great wealth.
9. Though material, it was only a means to facilitate the spiritual.
10. The world is for the sake of Torah and for the Jewish People to observe it.
11. The underpinning of all physical existence and blessings is the spirituality of the Torah.



The Power of **PRAYER**

A New Series by
Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Bechukosai



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The Mechanism Which Allows for the Internalization of the Mitzvos

Torah: “If you follow in My Statutes and observe My commandments and perform them; then I will provide you rains in their time...”

Rashi citing Toras Kohanim: “If you follow My Statutes” is referring to toiling in *Torah* study. Meaning, if the Jewish people will be dedicated to the study of *Torah*, as a primary focus, they will merit the rains in their time and all the blessings from G-d.

Torah: In the fourth year of the Sabbatical Cycle, before the Passover Festival, one must make the confession of the Tithes. “You shall say before *Hashem*, your G-d, ‘I have removed the holy things from the house, and I have also given to the Levite, to the proselyte, to the orphan, and to the widow, according to whatever commandment You commanded me ...Gaze down from your holy abode, from heaven, and bless Your people

Israel, and the ground that You gave us, as You swore to our forefathers, a Land flowing with milk and honey.”

Rashi citing Chazal: “I have rejoiced in the distribution of all the tithes and I have made others rejoice. I have rejoiced in performing what You have decreed upon us. Now gaze down from your Holy abode and give us blessing’ What did G-d decree upon the Jewish people for them to merit His blessing? It is the giving of tithes.” The *Torah* is seemingly saying that it is the giving of the tithes to all the appropriate parties that will evoke G-d’s blessing and bounty. It seems contradictory to the *Toras Kohanim* cited by *Rashi* which states that one is worthy of G-d’s blessing if he toils in the study of *Torah*. How do we reconcile these two statements?

How is it possible that one could give significant percentages of one’s produce as tithes and declare, “I have rejoiced and caused others to rejoice?” It is only when one understands and internalizes the innate value of the performance of a *mitzvah* that one could

rejoice. When one feels that he is a beneficiary of his actions, despite the cost that he will incur, it brings joy to him.

The only way that one is able to come to this level of internalization of the value of distributing the tithes is through one's toiling in *Torah* study. It is only when one has become sufficiently spiritualized through the study of *Torah*, that he could truly rejoice, although he is parting with something of significant value. Thus, when one says to G-d, "I have rejoiced and caused others to rejoice" it is only a confirmation that the one who is giving the tithes had sufficiently internalized the value of the *mitzvos* through toil of *Torah*.

Mishna in Pirkei Avos: "Ein am haaretz chasid – An unlearned person cannot be scrupulously pious."

Rabbeinu Yonah: "It is inferred from the *Mishna* that in order to achieve the classification of "*chasid*" one must be learned. However even the unlearned person can be the *tzaddik* (devoutly righteous). One can only be a *tzaddik* if he does everything correctly – in conformance with what the *Torah* prescribes. One can be a *tzaddik* despite his lack of *Torah* knowledge if he is instructed how to conduct his life as a proper Jew. However, in order for one to become inspired and devoutly righteous, one must have a sense and special level of feeling, which motivates him to go beyond his obligation. This can only come about through the intense study of *Torah*.

Submission, the Cause of Mercy

Torah: "If you will follow My Statutes and observe My Commandments and perform them..."

Midrash Tanchuma citing *Eyov* (Job): "It is stated in *Eyov*, 'If His days are predetermined and the number of his months is with You and You have made his limits, which he cannot surpass.' What is the meaning of 'his days are predetermined?' When G-d created the world, He determined the days of every individual (extent of one's life)...The meaning of 'You have made his limits, which he cannot surpass' is – G-d said to the Jewish people, 'If you will follow My Statutes (My *Torah*), then *satan* cannot touch you. As it is stated, 'He cannot cross over.'

"However if you do not fulfill My statutes, *satan* will be able to touch you.' As the verse in *Isaiah* states, 'When

he crosses over he will take you.' As G-d said to King Solomon (the wisest man who ever lived), 'If you fulfill the *Torah* and its statutes, the angel of death cannot touch you.' As it is stated, 'If you walk in My way to keep My statutes and My *mitzvos* as your father *David* (King *David*), then I will lengthen your days.' If *Adam* had followed the *Torah* with its statutes and *mitzvos* that I had given him, he would not have died." Meaning, in order for one to merit G-d's unlimited blessing and merit the years that had been allotted to him, one must adhere meticulously to the *Torah*.

The meaning of "*satan* being able to touch" an individual is when he can bring prosecution upon the individual or nation. One who observes the statutes will merit G-d's unlimited blessing and bounty because he will be the beneficiary of the Attribute of Mercy, thus not allowing *satan* to prosecute. His prosecution would prevent G-d's blessing from coming about. Regarding meriting G-d's bounty, why is the *Torah* specifically referring to the adherence of "statutes" and not *mitzvos*?

When one performs a *mitzvah*, one has a sense of its value when performing it. For example, if one provides charity to the needy, one will sense its value because he has satisfied the material need of his fellow. One does not steal because one understands and appreciates the value of being ethical and moral. The amount of faith and trust in G-d to perform a *mitzvah* is not as great as that which is needed to adhere to a statute that cannot be fathomed on a rational basis. The adherence to statute is a demonstration of one's submission and subservience to G-d. In order for one to observe a statute, one must negate himself to G-d's Will. Thus, when one adheres to the statutes of the *Torah* G-d will not allow *satan* to prosecute.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: The numerical value of "*Ha satan – The Satan*" is 364. *Satan* can prosecute throughout the year with the exception of one day, which is *Yom Kippur*. *Yom Kippur* is the day of the ultimate Mercy of G-d, which does not allow *satan* to prosecute the spiritual record of the Jewish people.

Maharal of Prague: *Satan* prosecutes the one who presents himself as an individual of special value – one who has a sense of entitlement. This is because the sense of entitlement is the equivalent of a claim to G-d. If this is so, it evokes *satan*'s prosecution to determine if the person's claim is valid or not.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: If one believes that he is deserving of G-d's response because the quality or intensity of his prayer, it will cause his record to be audited. This will arouse the notice of *satan*. The more one feels that he is worthy and deserving, the more he will be subject to prosecution. It is when one negates himself and submits to G-d, which is an expression of a lack of deservingness, he will merit to go unnoticed. He will thus not be subject to the prosecution of *satan*. When one merits G-d's Attribute of Mercy, it opens the gates of unlimited bounty.

The Jewish Nation, a Global People

Midrash: "If you follow in My Statutes I will provide you rains in their time; however if you do not follow My Statutes, the heavens shall be iron.' It is because of you that the heavens withheld their dew and the earth withheld its yield. Even the nations of the world shall be smitten because of the sins of the Jewish people.

"*Reb Yehoshua Ben Levy*: 'If the nations of the world would understand that they are being smitten as a result of the sins of the Jewish people, they would appoint two sentries to guard every Jew so that he should observe the *Torah* and not sin. However, not only do they not do this, the nations of the world actually deny the Jew the ability to perform the *mitzvos*. Because of this the world is smitten.'

"*Torah*: 'G-d said to *Yaakov*, 'through your progeny the nations shall be blessed...' G-d said to *Moshe*, 'You see that from heaven I have spoken to you. Do not make with Me gods of silver and gold and if you will...If you will sin I will not answer you.' As it states, 'When He called they did not listen therefore when they will call He will not listen...' Why should the nations of the world be smitten and denied blessing because of the sins of the Jewish people?

Torah: "*Bereishis bara Elokim*– In the beginning G-d created ..."

Chazal: The opening words of the *Torah* mean, that for the sake of *Torah*, which is referred to as "*reishis* (first/choicest)" G-d created heaven and earth. In addition, the Jewish people are referred to as "*reishis* (choicest)." Meaning, all existence was only created with the objective of the fulfillment of *Torah* by the Jewish people. They are the only nation who are qualified to do so. If the Jewish people should transgress the

dictates of the *Torah*, they are utilizing existence in a manner that is contrary to its purpose. Consequently, G-d withholds His blessing, thus the world suffers and is smitten. Existence was created to facilitate and assist the Jewish people in fulfilling their purpose regarding the *Torah*. Thus, the nations' value in Creation is that they should assist the Jewish people in their mission. The focus of the Jew must be on the spiritual while the nations tend to the physicality of existence.

Midrash: "G-d said to *Moshe*, 'You see that from heaven I have spoken to you. Do not make with Me gods of silver and gold... If you will sin I will not answer you.' As it states, 'When He called they did not listen therefore when they will call He will not listen...' Meaning, if the Jewish people face difficulties, their only solution is prayer to supplicate G-d to alleviate their plight. However, if G-d is not attentive to their supplications, then there is no solution. Therefore, the Jewish people must behave properly and repent if they should fail because it is only if they are in good spiritual standing will their prayers be heard by G-d.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: "Your sins are like an iron wall that do not allow your prayers to ascend." The *Gemara* tells us that there is something that is considered the most important in existence but people engage in it in a light-hearted manner. This is referring to prayer. It is only through prayer that G-d will respond to the request of the Jew. However, if the Jewish people do not address this with a serious manner and value it as something unique, G-d will not respond. In order for one's prayer to be received, one must be worthy and not be seen by G-d as a sinner.

The Potential of Every Jew

Torah: "If you will follow (walk in) My Statutes and observe My Commandments and perform them..." Why does the *Torah* not state, "If you will do My Statutes..."? What is the meaning of "If you will follow (walk in) My Statutes?"

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: "*Chazal* tell us that the moment that King *David* reflected upon performing a *mitzvah*, his legs would naturally draw him to do so. Why was this so? It is because of King *David*'s overwhelming desire, will, and conditioning to do the Will of G-d. (There was never a moment of inertia that caused King *David* to hesitate to perform a *mitzvah*).

“This is the meaning of ‘If you will follow (walk) My Statutes...’ If a one lives a life that is fully invested in spirituality through the adherence to the *Torah* and the performance of *mitzvos*, then he will be spiritualized to the degree where he will have an overwhelming inclination to continuously engage in acts of spirituality (*Torah/mitzvos*). Even his physicality will be drawn to perform the Will of G-d.” Every Jew has relevance to this level of performance of *Torah*. If one conditions himself to be totally dedicated to the Will of G-d through intense *Torah* study and the actualization of *mitzvos*, the service of His Will will become second nature to that individual.

Every day we say in the morning blessings, “G-d... accustom (*targileinu*) us to Your *Torah*...” We supplicate G-d to accustom us to His Will and allow us to be conditioned to the study of the *Torah*.

Rambam in *Hilchos Deos* (The Laws which pertain to Behavior): Even if one is born with deficient characteristics, he is able to create a “second nature” within himself through proper conditioning to overcome the deficiency that he possesses. Conditioning oneself regarding the correction of negative character traits is not identical to conditioning oneself in spiritual matters. In order for one to advance spiritually, specifically through the study of *Torah*, one must merit Divine Assistance to do so. This is the reason we supplicate G-d to grant us the Divine Assistance to become accustomed to His *Torah*. The draw to the performance of *mitzvos* should be natural.

We supplicate G-d to accustom us to His *Torah* because it is only through it that we can subdue the evil inclination.

Gemara in Tractate *Sukkah*: “I (G-d) created the evil inclination. I created *Torah* as its antidote.” Thus, in order to incapacitate *satan* and defeat the evil inclination, one needs to be at a level that engaging in *Torah* becomes “second nature.” If there is any hesitation from the moment that one considers studying *Torah* or performing a *mitzvah*, it is possible that *satan* will interfere and cause the individual not to succeed regarding his spiritual pursuit.

Gemara in Tractate *Kiddushin*: “Great is *Torah* study because it brings to actualization.” It is only through the study of *Torah* that one can come to actualize the Will of G-d. We say in the blessing of the *Torah*, “Please *Hashem*, our G-d sweeten the words of Your

Torah in our mouths...” Since the *Torah* is the only means by which to defeat the evil inclination and advance spiritually, we supplicate G-d to make the experience of *Torah* study palpable to the point that it is sweet in our mouths. Although the benefits of *Torah* study are profound, because of the physicality of the human being there is not a natural inclination to pursue spirituality. We supplicate G-d that we should experience *Torah* as sweet in our mouths so that even our “mouth” which is a part of our physicality should have a natural drive to pursue it.

The Bond Between the Material and the Spiritual

Torah: “When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall observe a Sabbath rest for *Hashem*. For six years you may sow your field and for six years you may prune your vineyard; and you may gather in its crop. But the seventh year shall be a complete rest for the land, a Sabbath for *Hashem*; your field you shall not sow...”

Sforno: “Sabbath for *Hashem*” means that rather than engaging in agricultural pursuits, the Sabbatical year should be dedicated to *Torah* study, meditation, and engaging in spiritual endeavors. The Commentators explain that it is known that for the land to retain its nutrients and not be depleted, the land must be rotated on an ongoing basis. However, the *Torah* states that one could plant a field for six consecutive years and only in the seventh year it must be left fallow. How is it possible to follow this prescription without depleting one’s field?

Torah: In addition, “If you will say: What will we eat in the seventh year? Behold! We will not sow and not gather in our crops! I will ordain My blessing for you in the sixth year and I will yield a crop sufficient for the three-year period.” Meaning, if one follows the edicts of the *Torah*, not only will one’s crop thrive for six consecutive years, the sixth year will yield a harvest that will be the equivalent of a three-year yield. It is only when one adheres and submits himself to do the Will of G-d will something which touches upon the miraculous.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: There is an argument between *R’ Yishmael* and *R’ Shimon Bar Yochai* regarding how a Jew must live his life in a physical world. *R’ Yishmael* is of the opinion that a Jew should

conduct his life according to the way of the world. He should plow in the plowing season, sow in the sowing season, etc... He should dedicate the remainder of his time for *Torah* study.

R' Shimon Bar Yochai argues and is of the opinion that the Jew must dedicate his life only to *Torah* study, without being concerned with the physical. *R' Shimon Bar Yochai* explains that if one is dedicated to this degree, then "His work shall be done by others. G-d will cause the non-Jew to appreciate and revere the Jew. He would thus be willing to do his chores."

However, *R' Yishmael* rejects this position and cites the verse contained within the second paragraph of the *Shema*, "I command you today to love *Hashem*, your G-d, and to serve Him, with all your heart and with all your soul - then I will provide rain for your land...that you may gather in your grain..." This last verse clearly indicates that even when one is fully dedicated to the Will of G-d and fulfills His *mitzvos* with all of his heart and soul, he will need to bring in his own harvest.

R' Shimon Bar Yochai responds that this verse is not a refutation of his position but rather it is referring to a context in which the Jewish people are not doing the Will of G-d. It is only then that the Jewish people will need to bring in his own harvest. Evidently, according to *R' Shimon Bar Yochai*, one could perform the *mitzvos* with total dedication and still be considered

as one who is not doing the Will of G-d. Evidently, it is because this individual's performance is lacking in the qualitative aspect of the *mitzvah*, which is "for its own sake (*l'shmah*) – with reverence."

Gemara: "Many (people) did as *R' Shimon Bar Yochai* (prescribed) but they did not succeed."

Reb Chaim of Volozhin: The *Gemara* states that although "many did as *R' Shimon Bar Yochai* and did not succeed" it is inferred that there was a minority of people who did succeed. This demonstrates that if the Jew is dedicated and negates himself to the Will of G-d, G-d will attend to all of his physical needs without any degree of distraction. Even the non-Jew will have a sense of the spirituality of this individual.

Torah: "When the people of the world will see the Name of G-d upon you, they will fear you."

Gemara: "The Name of G-d upon you" is referring to the *tefillin* that is worn on the head. When the nations of the world will see the Jew wearing his *tefillin*, they will revere and fear him. This is only true if the one wearing the *tefillin* is of a special spiritual dimension. He must be one who has totally negated himself to G-d in every aspect of his life and serves Him on a qualitative level. It is only then that he will assume a presence that will evoke awe from the nations of the world. If however this level of dedication is lacking, then the individual will need to attend to his own material needs.



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