



CREATING THE SETTING TO ADDRESS THE OBJECTIVE

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Ki Seitzei

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The World Rises & Falls Based on the Behavior of the Jew

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Going to War: You Will Be Victorious

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The Camp Should Be Holy In Pedigree

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The Rebelious Son

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The Delinquent Debtor is Basis for Disqualification

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1. An Amonite or Moabite who convert to Judaism are considered illegitimate Jews.
2. They didn't extend bread & water when you left Egypt.
3. And they commissioned Bilaam to curse you.
4. Ramban: The claim against them is they are indebted to the descendants of Avraham, who saved the life of Lot, their antecedent.
5. Avraham rescued Lot from the 4 mightiest kings and from Sodom.
6. Had they the capacity to be appreciative, they would have offered their hospitality.
7. Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh: Although Moav sold bread and water to the Jewish people, they had given to them gratis without payment.
8. It was a ploy to draw the Jews into the clutches of The Moabite women.
9. Midrash: An example of liability is when one does not do an act of kindness with someone who is not in need of kindness.
10. Amon & Moav became illegitimate when they did not offer their bread and water to the Jews in the desert.
11. The Jewish People were fully self sufficient at that time; they had Manna and wellspring.
12. If Amon and Moav had felt indebted to the Jews for their existence they would have not used the sale of the water and bread as a ploy to ensnare them.

Initiative As Catalyst

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1. Midrash: One mitzvah engenders another.
2. Rav Chaim of Volozhon: Performing a mitzvah in the spirit of Purity engenders one to do another.
3. Multiple positive and negative commandments are juxtaposed in the portion of Ki Seitzei.
4. Example: Seeing a mother bird nesting on her chicks or eggs, one must send off the mother before taking the chicks or eggs.
5. This is followed with a mitzvah of putting a parapet on one's roof when building a house.
6. Next: The negative commandment not to plant wheat near a vineyard.
7. Next: The negative commandment not to plow with an ox and donkey together.
8. Next: The positive commandment of putting fringes on a four-cornered garment.
9. Midrash: When one mitzvah engenders another, G-d provides the financial to create the context for the mitzvah.
10. Gemara: All is predestined except for fear of Heaven.
11. Free choice is the area for which man is allotted to dictate.
12. One's choice will determine the degree of capital that G-d will provide.
13. Gemara: One's material allocation is set from Rosh Hashana to the next Rosh Hashana.
14. G-d includes in that allocation the material means to be able to execute the mitzvah.

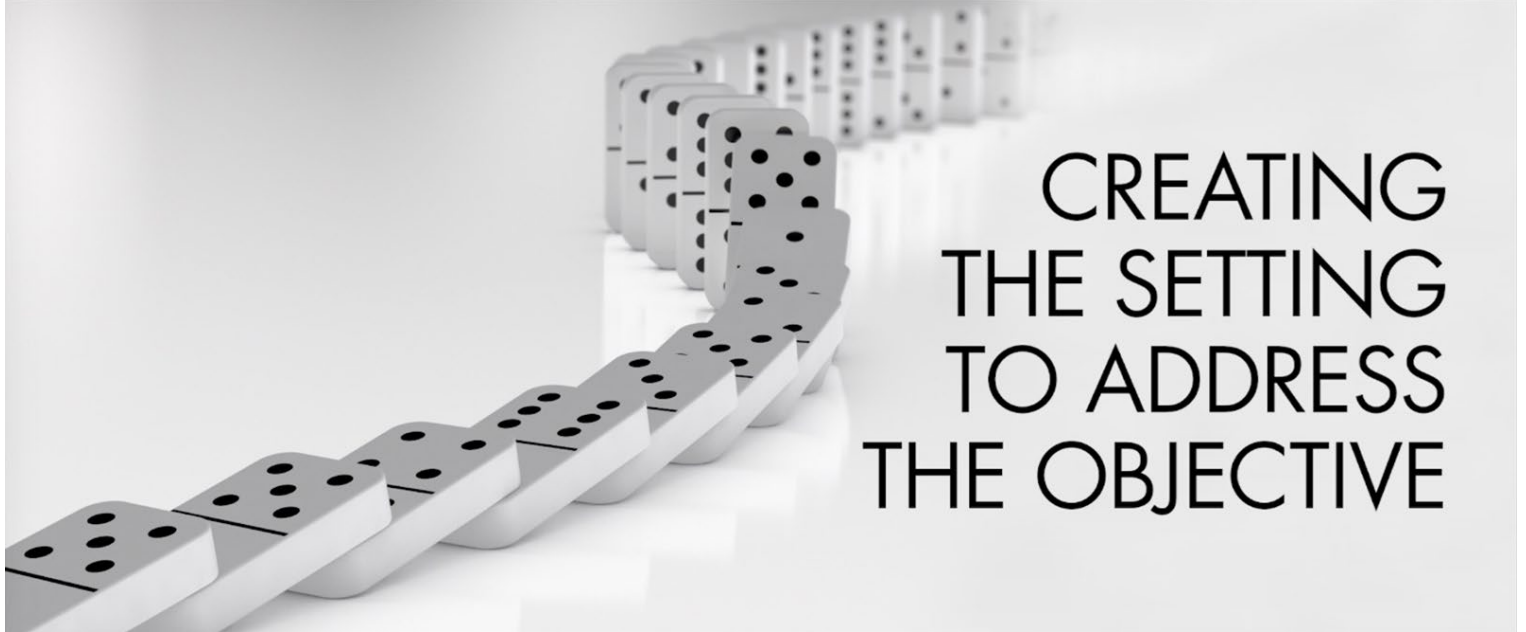
Is Liability Attributed to G-d's Agent

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1. There is a *mitzvah* to make a parapet on one's rooftop.
2. If one falls to his death due to a lack of an enclosure, there is liability to the homeowner.
3. The text of the verse: the one who falls that will fall.
4. Sifri: The one who was destined to fall (die) will fall.
5. There is a negative reflection on the homeowner because he was used as the medium to implement the death of this individual.
6. There is a dictum in Chazal, G-d brings detriment through those who are culpable.
7. Why is the homeowner any less than the executioner of the Court who has no liability for being the agent to take one's life?
8. Ramban: If the Bondage in Egypt was preordained by G-d at the covenant between the parts, why were the Egyptians held accountable?
9. He explains if the Egyptians had instituted the Bondage, as G-d's agent there would be no liability.
10. The bondage was precipitated by the Egyptians due to their insecurity and hate for the Jews.
11. The executioner as the agent of the Court is functioning as G-d's agent, there is no negative side.
12. There is a degree of culpability to the homeowner despite the fate of the one who falls because it is due to his irresponsibility for not providing the parapet.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Ki Seitzei



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Negative Causality

Mishna in Ethics of our Fathers: “aveira goreres aveira— one transgression (even of a minor nature) will lead to another transgressions (of more severe nature).” When one sins, it gives rise to a negative force that encourages the individual to sin again.

Torah: “But if there will be a man who hates his fellow, and ambushes him and rises up against him, and strikes him mortally and he dies...”

Rashi citing Chazal: “As a result of the initial hate for his fellow, this individual waited in ambush for him. From here we learn that if one transgresses a less severe mitzvah, it will cause him to transgress a mitzvah of greater severity. Since he was in violation of the negative commandment which forbids one to hate one’s fellow Jew, it ultimately caused him to transgress the commandment, ‘Thou shall not commit murder.’ This is the reason the verse predicates the act of murder with the mention of ‘a man who hates his

fellow.’ One would think that if one hated his fellow and allowed that hate to fester and intensify, it would naturally lead to a severe and tragic conclusion. If murder would be a natural consequence of hating one’s fellow, the *Torah* would not need to predicate the act of murder upon what preceded it to teach us this lesson. The *Torah* only mentions the precursor to the premeditated murder, the man waiting in ambush, in order to teach us the principle of “*aveira goreres aveira.*” For example, since there is no prohibition for a Jew to hate a non-Jew, the natural consequence which would lead to murder may not necessarily take place since there is no chain of transgression from less severe to more severe.

Torah: If a man is attracted to a non-Jewish woman in battle (aishis yefas tohar), he is permitted to take her with the intent of converting her and taking her as his wife. However, based on the juxtaposition to the law that pertains to the “rebellious son,” the Torah is

teaching us that the likelihood of this union will bring about the “rebellious son.”

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: A child assumes the status of a “rebellious son” when he steals from his parents to buy meat and wine to accommodate his desire. When his parents become aware of his behavior, they take him to the Court (*bais din*) and he is given lashes for his transgression. If he should become a repeated offender, and the parents should take him again to the Court and declare, “our son has become a glutton and a drunkard” and the Court condemns him to die by stoning. The rebellious son is the negative consequence of the man being attracted to a non-Jewish woman in battle, despite the fact that his intent was to convert her.

Midrash: The child that came from this initiative manifests itself as an offspring who is inclined to become the “rebellious son.”

Chazal: This is based on the principle of “*aveira goreres aveira*.”

Midrash: “King David desired *Maacha* when saw her in battle. (She was a non-Jewish princess). He had taken her captive in battle and married her. Ultimately, she bore for him *Avshalom* who rebelled against his father King David and wanted to kill him. He also had raped ten of his father’s concubines.” This is a manifestation of “*aveira goreres aveira*.” Although the *Torah* permits one to convert and marry the non-Jewish woman that one desires in battle, it is discouraged because the initial interest is of an inappropriate nature. Thus, the result is the “rebellious son.”

There is a positive commandment for every Jew to love his fellow as himself. Why is this so?

Reb Moshe Cordaviro in *Tomar Dvorah*: Every Jewish soul is intertwined with the soul of his fellow. Therefore, one must be concerned for the welfare of his fellow because his fellow possesses part of his own spirituality. In essence, all Jews are united as one in the spiritual realm. This is the reason one must be concerned for the spirituality of his fellow as himself.

There is a positive commandment to rebuke one’s fellow so that he should follow the proper path and not transgress. If that person were to transgress he would not only damage his own spirituality, but he will also damage his fellow’s. This is because he possesses part of his fellow’s spiritual essence, which is the soul. Just

as there is a chain of negative consequence for doing the wrong, which is the principle of *aveira goreres aveira*,” the same is true regarding the positive which is the principle, “*mitzvah goreres mitzvah*.” When one performs a *mitzvah*, a positive energy engulfs the individual and motivates and draws that person to do more of the same, which is another *mitzvah* at an even more advanced level.

When one loves his fellow, he creates the beginning of a dynamic which continues to have a series of positive consequences that will ultimately cause G-d to bring that individual to a more advanced level of spirituality. This is because the one who is performing the *mitzvah* of rebuking his fellow is not only affecting the soul within himself, it is even affecting the portion of his own spirituality which is contained in the other individual. Consequently, the other individual will be a beneficiary of the rebuke.

Sensing Another’s Need

Torah: “An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of *Hashem*, to eternity...” One who descends from the Ammonite or Moabite nations, even if he should convert to Judaism is not permitted to marry into the Jewish people because his status is considered to be illegitimate until the end of time.

Torah: “This is because of the fact that they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were leaving Egypt...” The Jewish people had been wandering the desert for forty years. Rather than offering them hospitality, the Ammonites and Moabites had commissioned *Bilaam* to curse the Jewish people. Nations with such corrupted characteristics should not be allowed to marry into the Jewish people. This is the reason G-d denied them from ever intermarrying into His Holy people. Although they may convert to become Jews, they are always kept apart from the rest of the people.

Torah: After the third day of *Avraham*’s circumcision (at the age of 99) which was the most difficult day of his recovery, G-d had taken the sun out of its sheath (to cause it to be the hottest day in the history of existence) so that *Avraham* should have a respite from wayfarers and not be preoccupied with hosting them. When he saw three men approaching from a distance he ran towards them and offered his hospitality.

Midrash: G-d valued every aspect of *Avraham's* hospitality and rewarded the Jewish people in kind during their 40-year trek in the desert. In the merit of *Avraham* offering the shade of his tree, the Jewish people merited to be protected by the Clouds of Glory. In the merit of offering the water to the wayfarers, the Jewish people were provided with the wellspring of *Miriam* which traveled with them in the desert. In the merit of offering them bread, the Jewish people merited to have the Manna.

Midrash: "How great is the reward for one who does kindness (*chesed*) with the one who does not need kindness..." The wayfarers who had visited *Avraham* were actually angels. Since they were not physical beings, they were not beneficiaries of *Avraham's* hospitality because did they need it. Nevertheless, it was because of *Avraham's* act of loving kindness that the Jewish people merited great reward in the desert.

Midrash: "How much more is one deserving of reward for one who does *chesed* with one who is truly in need of *chesed*. What is the punishment for one who does not do *chesed* for the one who is not in need of *chesed*? Who were those who denied *chesed* to those who were not in need of it? It was the Ammonites and Moabites who did not offer their bread and water to the Jewish people. The Jewish people were not in need of the bread and water of the Ammonites and Moabites because G-d had provided them with the Manna and the wellspring of *Miriam*. How much more severe is the punishment for the one who denies *chesed* from the one who is truly in need of it."

If in fact the Jewish people were not in need of the bread and water of the Ammonites and Moabites, why were these nations condemned forever for withholding their hospitality from the Jewish people? Kindness is not necessarily providing one with food, drink, or any kind of material amenity. Rather it is understanding the needs of another. The Jewish people had been wandering in the desert for forty years. The offer of bread and water by the Ammonites and Moabites was not an end unto itself but rather, it would have been a means to acknowledge and welcome the Jewish people.

By not making this gesture, it was a confirmation that the Ammonites and Moabites had no capacity to sense the higher and more advanced level of *chesed*, which is the internalization of what the other is lacking.

They were therefore disqualified from intermarrying with the Jewish people whose quality and standard of *chesed* is on an exemplary and advanced level because they descend from *Avraham* who was the personification of *chesed*. Every Jew, being a spiritual heir of *Avraham*, thus possesses the special level of kindness that goes beyond satisfying the material need of another. If the Ammonites and Moabites were allowed to marry into the Jewish people, they would have corrupted and diluted the standard and quality of *chesed*, which G-d did not want to happen.

The Importance of Being Perceived in a Proper Light

Torah: "Remember what *Amalek* did to you... you shall wipe out the memory of *Amalek* from under the heaven- you shall not forget!"

Midrash citing *Psalms*: "'May the iniquity of the forefathers be remembered by G-d, and may the sin to the mother not be blotted out.' To whom is King David referring? The holy Patriarchs, who were the forefathers of *Esav*, were devoutly righteous.... How then will the sins of the forefathers be remembered before G-d? King David is referring to the sin committed by *Esav* against his forbearers. What did *Esav* do?"

"Each of the Patriarchs was destined to live 180 years. *Yitzchak* had lived 180 years. Similarly, *Avraham* was meant to live 180 years; however, because of what *Esav* was destined to do and become, five years were taken from *Avraham's* life. G-d had promised *Avraham* that he would pass away in a 'good old age'. In order to keep this promise, *Avraham* could not witness his grandson pursuing an evil path. Therefore, G-d shortened his life by five years. On the day that *Avraham* passed away, *Esav*, the evil one, committed five cardinal sins. King David is referring to the sin of *Esav*, that he had caused the life of his grandfather to be shortened. This is the iniquity that will be remembered by G-d."

Avraham, our Patriarch, had introduced G-d as the Supreme and Omnipotent Being to the world and thus gave meaning to existence. Every moment of his life was fully dedicated to espousing monotheism to dispel paganism. If *Avraham* had lived an additional five years, all of existence would have been impacted in a profound manner. The fact that *Esav's* evil behavior, had denied *Avraham* an additional five years, had

limited the spiritual advancement of the world until the end of time.

Midrash: “Had *Avraham* lived to witness *Esav*’s going out to pursue a career of perpetrating evil, he would have been anguished. G-d said, ‘I have promised *Avraham* that he would come to his forefathers in peace and he would be buried in a good old age. However if he were to go out and see his grandchild choosing to follow the path of evil and hear what people would say about his grandchild, *Avraham* would be anguished. Thus, My promise to him would not be fulfilled.”

Why should hearing what others have to say about *Esav*’s evil behavior of *Esav*, have a greater devastating effect on *Avraham*? It was certainly not concerned for his personal honor. *Avraham*’s objective and mission in life was to espouse G-d’s Mastership of the world. Through his teachings and interactions with the masses, *Avraham* succeeded to a degree to purge the world of paganism. G-d was an known entity in existence. *Avraham* had achieved renown and acclaim by the nations of the world to be designated as “the father of all nations.” Through this glory, his effect as a disseminator of truth became more profound.

However, if it were to become known that *Avraham*, the devoutly righteous prophet of G-d, had an evil grandson such as *Esav*, the impact and effect of *Avraham*’s own standing would have been diminished. His image would have been tainted by *Esav*. *Hagar* had perceived *Sarah*, our Matriarch in a negative light because she did not bear a child to *Avraham* after all the years she had been married to him. *Hagar* thought that if in fact *Sarah* was a holy woman, why did she not conceive? *Hagar* concluded that it must be that *Sarah* was not actually as devout and holy as it appeared to be.

Similarly, it could be perceived that *Avraham*, having a grandchild such as *Esav*, indicated that he was not as holy and pure as initially believed to be. Understanding that his spiritual accomplishments would be so drastically undermined because of this perception would have anguished *Avraham* to no end. Therefore, G-d shortened his life by five years so he should not witness this reality.

Mishna in Ethics of our Fathers: “A person who has these three characteristics: a good eye, a humble spirit, and a minimal need for the material (*ayin tovah*, *ruach nemucha*, and *nefesh shefelah*) is considered to be a student of *Avraham*, our Patriarch. A person who has

these three characteristics of: an evil eye, an inflated spirit, and an insatiable desire for the material (*ayin raah*, *ruach gevoha*, and *nefesh rechava*) is considered to be a student of *Bilaam* the evil one.” Why does the *Mishna* discuss the “students” of *Avraham* and *Bilaam* regarding these characteristics and not *Avraham* and *Bilaam* themselves?

If one were to actually see *Bilaam*, despite the fact that he was a personification of evil, he would have appeared to be a person radiating holiness because he was in fact a prophet. However, if one would focus on his students, then one would understand the true nature of their mentor. The student’s development and values are only a reflection of the teacher/mentor. Thus, the characteristics of *Avraham*’s and *Bilaam*’s students, whom they had mentored, are a clear reflection on their teachers. Similarly, *Esav*’s evil behavior would reflect negatively upon *Avraham* and thus undermine the truth of his essence as the holy prophet of G-d. Consequently, his effect and impact upon all mankind would be minimized.

Chazal: *Yitzchak*, our Patriarch, became blind so that he should not see the evil of his son *Esav*. This was so that he would not go out and hear from others about the evil that *Esav* his son was perpetuating.

Psalms: “...and may the sin to the mother not be blotted out.” To what is this referring?

Midrash: When *Rivka*, our Matriarch, had *Esav* in her womb, and she would pass places of idolatry, he would bolt to escape the womb. Before *Esav* was born, he had destroyed the reproductive organs of his mother so that she should not be able to conceive and give birth to a child that may be holy. Thus, this sin will always be remembered by G-d.

Learning from History

Torah: “When you go out to the battle against your enemy, and you see horse and chariot – a people more numerous than you – you shall not fear them, for *Hashem*, your G-d, is with you, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: On an illusionary level, from the moment one enters into this world, one is engaged in an ongoing battle with his evil inclination. When one sees the “horse” it is the evil inclination

who is the equivalent of a man of war who has the capability of out-strategizing and overwhelming him. It is impossible for one not to be ensnared by the machinations of his evil inclination without Divine Assistance.

Gemara in Tractate *Eruvin* citing an argument between the House of *Shamai* and the House of *Hillel*: "Would it have been better if man had not been created or created?" After two and a half years of debate there was a consensus between them that it would have been better if man would not have been created. As we see the result of man, is that in most situations he does fail and becomes a victim of his own inclinations. Man coming into existence has only perpetuated failure and spiritual regression.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: "A people more numerous than you' is alluding to the overwhelming number of spiritual transgressions that one commits during the course of one's life."

Reb Chaim of Volozhin in *Nefesh HaChaim*: Whenever one sins, he creates a negative spiritual force that seduces him to continue to do more evil. As one continues on this evil path, the negative force intensifies to a point that it is impossible to control and subordinate.

Mishna in *Ethics of our Fathers*: "Aveira goreres aveira— one transgression (even of a minor nature) will lead to other transgressions (of more severe nature)." Regardless of how overwhelming the evil inclination may seem and how insurmountable one's sins may be, the verse states, "You shall not fear them, for Hashem, your G-d, is with you, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: One should not fear the evil inclination to the point of despair because G-d is with him. Despite the fact that the Jewish people had descended to the forty-ninth level of spiritual impurity in Egypt, G-d nevertheless rehabilitated their spirituality to become His people at Sinai. Therefore, if a Jew has a sincere interest to overcome and subdue his evil inclination to advance his spiritually, G-d will assist him to succeed.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: "One who attempts to purify himself will be assisted. However, the one who attempts to contaminate himself, the path is open before him (to do so)." Regarding one's ascent

in spirituality, G-d will assist the individual; however, regarding one's diminishment and regression, G-d will not participate.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh citing the *Gemara* in Tractate *Kiddushin* citing *Psalms*: The evil inclination is continuously lurking to destroy the devoutly righteous; however, G-d will not allow this. The month of *Elul*, is a time of special Divine Mercy. G-d's Mercy is more easily available to the one who sincerely calls out to him, to assist him in advancing himself spiritually and to defeat the evil inclination.

Chazal: In order to merit this special Divine Assistance from G-d, one must first take the initiative. As it states regarding the month of *Elul*, whose letters are an acronym which allude to the essence of the month 'I am to My beloved as My beloved is to Me (*Anee l'dodi v'dodi Li*)," one needs only to take the slightest degree of initiative, which is the equivalent of the point of a needle, and then G-d will open for him an opening the size of a large chamber.

The Lesson to be Learned From the Rebellious Son

Torah: "If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son, who does not hearken to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother, and they discipline him, but he does not hearken to them, then his father and mother shall grasp him and take him out to the elders of his city and the gate of his place. They shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not hearken to our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' All the men of his city shall pelt him with stones and he shall die."

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: This individual only assumes the status of the "rebellious" son when he steals from his parents to buy a small measure of meat and a half a pint of undiluted wine to satisfy his desire. When his parents become aware of his errant behavior, they take him to the *Bais din* (Court) and he is given lashes. If he should repeat the behavior, and his parents choose to take him again to the court, he is judged as a "rebellious" son and is put to death by stoning. Although this child had only stolen a small amount of money to satisfy his desire (If this errant behavior repeats itself), he is put to death.

Chazal: "It is better that he should die in an innocent state than in a more liable state." If this addictive behavior should continue he will ultimately consume the assets of his father and resort to murder to support his habit.

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: The case of the "rebellious son" never actually happened and will never come to being because it is not possible to meet all the criteria that are set forth by the *Torah*.

Mishna: "If the case of the 'rebellious son' is a law that is not relevant because it cannot be implemented, then why does the *Torah* discuss all the aspects pertaining to the rebellious son that lead to his death?" The *Mishna* answers, "It is for the purpose of study in depth and to receive reward for its study."

Rabbeinu Bachya: If the purpose of this portion is purely for the sake of being meritorious for its study, then why is this subject matter chosen regarding the *mitzvah* of studying *Torah*? One could have studied any portion of the *Torah* and have been worthy of reward.

Rabbeinu Bachya citing *Rashbah* (*Rabbeinu Shlomo Ben Aderes*): There is a special lesson to be learned from this portion. It is a lesson of to what degree one must demonstrate his love for G-d. The *Torah* describes a situation in which a mother and father take their son to the Rabbinic Court to be prosecuted and reprimanded for his glutinous and defiant behavior. They do this despite the fact that they understand he will ultimately be put to death because of their initiative. Although their child's errant behavior could have been dismissed and attributed to immaturity, they chose to heed the directive of the *Torah*, recognizing the state of his predicament, and bring him to justice. They as parents were able to suppress their natural love for their child because their love for G-d supersedes all.

Rashbah: The parents' initiative regarding the "rebellious" son is the equivalent of *Avraham's* demonstration of his love for G-d through the *Akeidah* (The Binding of *Yitzchak*). The Binding of *Yitzchak* (for the sake of being a burnt offering) was the most difficult

of the ten tests that were presented to *Avraham* our Patriarch. The test was meant to see if *Avraham's* love for G-d would surpass his love for his most beloved child *Yitzchak* who was born to him in his old age. As difficult as it was, *Avraham* was able to subordinate his love for *Yitzchak* because of his greater love for G-d.

Similarly, the lesson to be learned from the "rebellious son" is that every Jew's love for G-d must be primary. This is the meaning of the statement in the *Mishna* "to delve into it to receive reward." There is another lesson to be learned from the case of the "rebellious son." The time frame for one to be convicted as a "rebellious son" is only from the time when he becomes 13 years old (when he enters into adulthood) until the age of 13 and three months. If the parents do not bring their son before the Court within this time frame, he can no longer be prosecuted.

After the *Torah* discusses the case of the "rebellious son" it states, "If a man shall have committed a sin whose judgment is death, he shall be put to death...and you shall not leave his body overnight on the gallows..." The *Torah* juxtaposes the portion of the person who is put to death to the portion of "rebellious son" to teach us that even if the person was not put to death as the "rebellious son" his evil ways would intensify thus causing him to be liable for the death penalty – such as one who commits murder. This intensification of evil is rooted in the concept of "*aveira goreris aveira* – a sin encourages another sin." When one commits a sin (even a minor infraction), it causes a negative influence to come upon the individual which encourages him to commit further sins. Therefore, as *Chazal* tell us, one should be as careful to adhere to even the seemingly less severe *mitzvos* as to the more severe.



Yad Avraham Institute

📍 810 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019 📧 ravkalatsky@gmail.com 📞 (212) 259-0300 YadAvNow.com