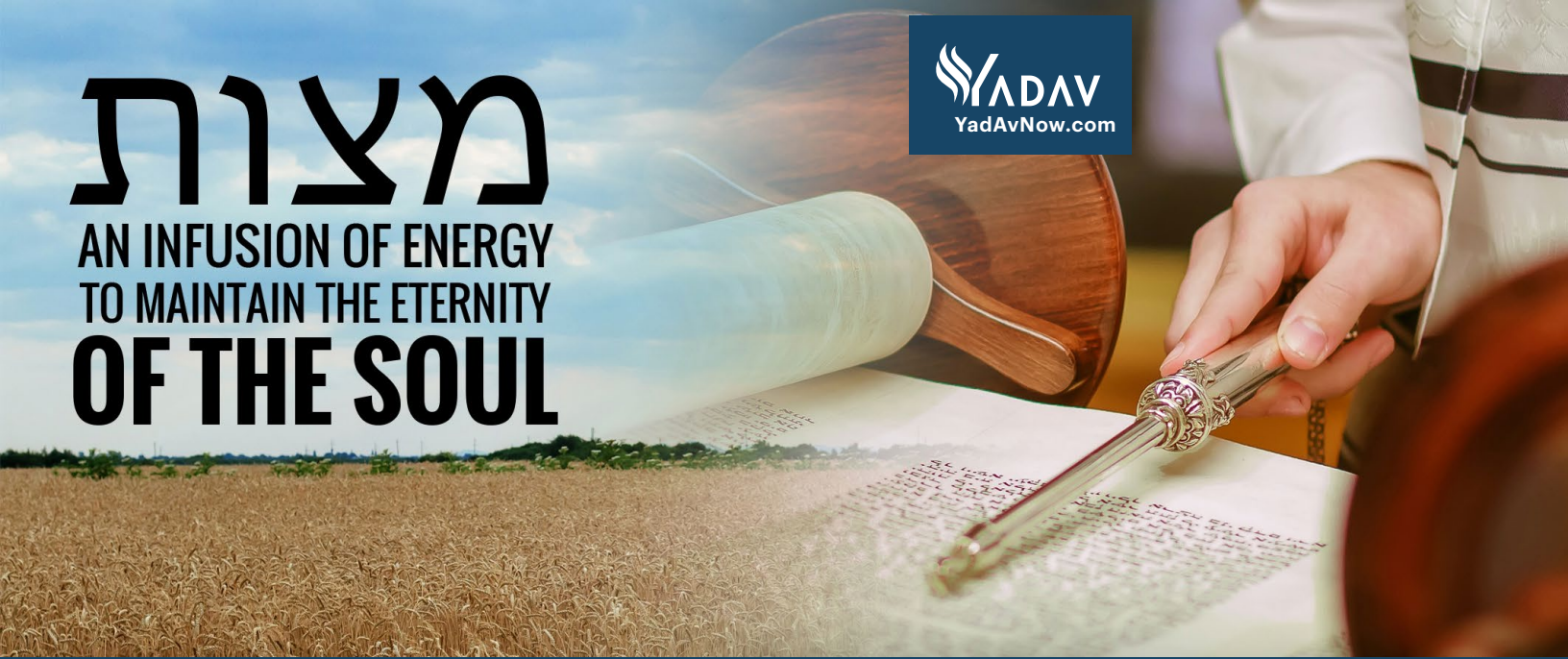


מצות

AN INFUSION OF ENERGY
TO MAINTAIN THE ETERNITY
OF THE SOUL

YADAV
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Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Tzaddikim Never Ask from Hashem Due to their Levels of Accomplishment

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If Torah is Primary then You Merit Bracha

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The Most Blessed of All Nations

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One Always Has a Choice

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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.

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 the base one must say in Grace after eating: 3 blessings on a Torah level & 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 that 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.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Eikev



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The Commonality of the Events that had Transpired on the 15th Av

Mishna in Tractate *Taanis*: “Reb Shimon Ben Gamliel says, “There are no two greater holidays for the Jewish people other than the 15th of Av and *Yom Kippur*...”

Gemara: “It is understandable that *Yom Kippur* is considered a special holiday for the Jewish people because it is a day of forgiveness and atonement. In addition, on that day, G-d gave the second set of tablets/Ten Commandments (indicating that they were reinstated after the Sin of the Golden Calf). However, why is the 15th day of Av considered so special?”

The *Gemara* then proceeds to enumerate several reasons why the 15th of Av is considered such a special day. On the 15th of Av the tribes of Israel were permitted to intermarry with one another. The first generation of Tribes who had entered into the Land were only permitted to intermarry within themselves. However, regarding the second generation of Tribes

after the 15th of Av, were permitted to integrate and coalesce with one another.

Until the 15th of Av, the Tribe of Benjamin had been ostracized from the Jewish people because of what they had done regarding the concubine in *Giva (pilegesh)*, however after that generation had passed on, they were reunited with the Jewish people on the 15th of Av. On the 15th of Av, the last of the generation of the desert (who had been condemned as a result of the sin of the spies) had finished dying. Until this entire generation had passed away, *Moshe* did not prophesize on an ongoing basis because the Jewish people were in a state of depression. There was not sufficient joy (*simcha*) among them to allow that special level of communication to exist between G-d and *Moshe* – His prophet.

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Basra*: A prophet is only able to prophesize (when he is) in a state of *simcha*. After it had been indicated on the 15th of Av that the

generation had finished passing away, *Moshe's* level of prophecy was restored. On the 15th of *Av*, the martyrs of *Beitar* (who were massacred by the Romans) were permitted to be buried. The Romans had piled the bodies of the Jews they had killed for miles encircling the countryside. They had remained in this state for seven years. Their bodies did not decompose or fall prey to the scavengers of the field. Thus, when the decree was annulled and they were allowed to be buried it was a great holiday for the Jewish people. On the 15th of *Av*, when the intensity of the sun began to wane, the Levites completed cutting and de-worming the wood that was needed for the altar. That day was referred to as "the day the sickle was broken."

Rabbeinu Gershom, in his commentary on Tractate *Bava Basra*: The basis for the festivities on "the day the sickle was broken" was that the Tribe of *Levy* was able to return to their *Torah* study. The primary involvement of the Tribe of *Levy* was the study and dissemination of *Torah* (as the *Kohanim* who had no portion in the Land). On 15th of *Av* the entire Jewish people rejoiced when the Tribe of *Levy* was able to return to their uninterrupted *Torah* study. What is the common thread between all of the opinions cited by the *Gemara* regarding the basis for the festivities on the 15th of *Av*?

Prior to receiving the *Torah* at Sinai: "...And Israel encamped (*vayichan*) there, opposite the mountain."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The *Torah* uses the term "*vayichan*-encamped" in the singular form rather than the plural to indicate that the Jewish people gathered opposite the mountain like a single individual with a "single heart." In order for the Jewish people to receive the *Torah* at Sinai they needed to be united. Since G-d is One, the Jewish people needed to have that level of commonality with Him in order to have relevance to His *Torah*. Whenever there is dissention and baseless hatred among Jews, the Divine Presence withdraws from their midst because of the dissimilarity that exists between Him and them. As it is clearly seen regarding the destruction of the Second Temple, which was brought about through baseless hatred.

Maharal of Prague: The number thirteen is the numerical value of the word *echad* (one) in the Hebrew language. The Jewish people are comprised of thirteen tribes—twelve who were given a share in the Land of Israel and one (*Levy*), which was not. Thus, the infrastructure of the Jewish people reflects the Unity of G-d, which

is *echad* (one). In addition, this concept is confirmed through the positive commandment that one must "walk in His ways." Meaning, it is incumbent upon the Jew to emulate G-d's characteristics in every aspect of his life. It is through this emulation/commonality that the Jewish people will gain relevance to G-d and thus are able to cleave to Him.

All of the events that are enumerated by the *Gemara* that had occurred on the 15th of *Av* are relevant to the unity of the Jewish people. When the Tribes were permitted to intermarry with one another it fostered and established unity among the Jewish people. When the Tribe of Benjamin was allowed to be reinstated among the Jewish people it also brought them to a level of completion. The return of *Moshe's* advanced level of prophecy was essential for the Jewish people to bond with G-d. When *Moshe's* prophecy returned it was as if the Jewish people had been reinstated to the time prior to the sin of the spies. Just as *Yom Kippur* is a time of atonement and reinstatement with G-d so too were all the events that had occurred on the 15th of *Av*.

The *Gemara* concludes that the ultimate event that had occurred on that day was the joy of the Jewish people when the Levites were able to return to their uninterrupted *Torah* study. The fact that they had rejoiced was an expression of their understanding of the value and ramifications of *Torah* study. They had understood that it is only through the study of *Torah* that the Jewish people can be united and thus connected to G-d.

Zohar: "The Jewish people, the *Torah* and G-d are one."

The Invincibility of the Jew

Midrash: "When is it that the nations of the world issue decrees and they are successfully implemented against the Jewish people? It is when they take the *Torah* and throw it to the ground.

"*Daniel*: 'The *tzavaa* will be put upon the *tamid* (continuous) as a result of their defiant sin...' What is the meaning of this verse? The term *tzavaa* is referring to the nations of the world. The term *tamid* (continuous) is referring to the Jewish people. Why are the Jewish people identified as being *tamid* – continuous?

"*Yehoshua* (regarding the obligation of *Torah* study): 'You will engage in it continuously day and night...' What is the meaning of defiant sin? It is referring to when the

Jewish people choose to disregard the *Torah*. It is at that time that the decrees of the nations of the world will be successfully implemented against them..."

The *Midrash* is revealing to us that the essence of the Jew is "*tamid* (continuous)" because of his obligation to study *Torah* continuously. It is evident from the verse that every Jew has the capacity for continuous *Torah* study. He is therefore quantified as "*tamid*."

Midrash: "It states in the *Torah*, 'The voice is the voice of *Yaakov* and the hands are the hands of *Esav*...' There were no greater philosophers among the nations of the world than *Bilaam ben Beor* and *Avdenimus Ben Gardi*. They were asked by the nations of the world, 'Is it possible to compromise the Jewish people? How could we undermine them?' They were told to survey the synagogues and study halls. If the chirping of the children studying *Torah* can be heard, then you cannot defeat them. However, if there is no chirping of *Torah* in the study hall then they are vulnerable. As their Forefather (*Yitzchak*) had said, 'The voice is the voice of *Yaakov* and the hands are the hands of *Esav*...' As long as the Jewish people are engaged in *Torah*, the voice will be the voice of *Yaakov*. However, if they do not engage in *Torah* then the hands will be the hands of *Esav*."

Torah: Before *Moshe* passed away he rebuked the Jewish people for many failings of the past. He recounted that at the time that *Yisro* had suggested that *Moshe* establish a hierarchical system of judges, the Jewish people responded, "It is good that *Moshe* should appoint other judges."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "The Jewish people were interested in accommodating themselves. *Moshe* had said, 'From who is it better to study – from the teacher or his student? Is it not better to study from me, who suffered and sacrificed for the sake of *Torah*?...' There was no one who suffered more than *Moshe* for the sake of *Torah*. He was denied physical sustenance for 40 days and nights when he ascended to heaven to receive the *Torah*. As it states, "Bread I did not eat. Water I did not drink..." By being removed from the physical, *Moshe* had greater relevance to the spiritual – thus making him a unique conduit for *Torah*.

Torah tells us that Pharaoh was concerned that the Jewish people would multiply and overtake the country. He thus instituted physical bondage upon them in order to limit their number. He believed that if they were physically worn down, they would not

have the ability to procreate. However, the opposite occurred – the more they were worked, the greater their number became.

Maharal of Prague in *Gevuras Hashem*: Normally when the physicality of a human being is diminished, it puts a limit on his ability to procreate. That is true only if the essence of the individual is physical. However, the Jewish people, whose essence was spiritual, the more their physicality was diminished the more their spiritual essence became pronounced. They therefore increased in greater number under the harshest physical circumstances.

The nations of the world whose essence is physical can only dominate the physical. Therefore if the Jew maintains his profile of spirituality, which is his essence, he cannot be dominated by them. However, if he assumes a physical posture, by not studying *Torah* sufficiently/qualitatively, then he is vulnerable to the attack of *Esav*. As the *Midrash* explains, the decrees of the nations of the world succeed only when the Jewish people neglect their essence of "*tamid*."

Identifying the Quality Jew

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

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The *Torah* uses the term "*Eikev*", which literally means "heel", to communicate to us that if one adheres to the *mitzvos* that people tend to gloss over and neglect, which is the equivalent of trampling upon them with one's heel (*Eikev*), he will merit unlimited blessing. Why is this so? The *Torah* dictates that if one comes upon a corpse that has no one to attend to its burial needs, one is obligated to provide it with a proper burial. The classification of this situation is *meis mitzvah*, a neglected corpse.

Chofetz Chaim citing *Sefer Yireim*: The concept of "*meis mitzvah*" has relevance to any *mitzvah* that has been neglected. If one takes upon himself the responsibility to re-establish the observance of a particular *mitzvah* that has been neglected, it is similar to tending to the needs of a neglected corpse. This individual merits great reward because he reinstated a *mitzvah* that had gone unnoticed. Perhaps this is the reason the *Torah* tells us that the individual who observes even the *mitzvos* that had been neglected "trampled upon" is deserving of exceptional blessing.

A more cogent understanding for the uniqueness of this individual is that he does not differentiate between the seemingly more severe and the less severe *mitzvos*. We must first understand why do people choose to neglect the seemingly less important *mitzvah* vs. others. If the basis for one's initiative regarding the fulfillment of *mitzvos* is that it is the Word of G-d, then there is no basis for this differentiation.

However, if one's initiative indicates that he discerns between one *mitzvah* and another, it is clear that the motivation for his observance is not to fulfill the Will of G-d, but rather for his own self gain. When one performs a *mitzvah l'shmah* (for the sake of the *mitzvah* itself), its dimension of value is considered qualitative and exceptional.

However, if one should do the same *mitzvah shelo l'shmah* (with an ulterior motive), the *mitzvah* is considered deficient and flawed. Its only innate value, as stated in the *Gemara*, is that it has the potential to bring the individual to perform the *mitzvah* with the proper intent (*l'shmah*). Thus, the one who addresses the neglected and trampled upon *mitzvah*, indicates and confirms that he does the *mitzvah* for the sake of G-d – meriting unlimited blessing. However, the one who picks and chooses *mitzvos* is one who functions on a deficient level. Thus, his blessing is very limited.

Midrash: "G-d concealed the innate value/merit of *mitzvos* so that the Jewish people could perform them in a more perfect manner." The tendency of man is to be goal oriented. If one would be privy to the true value of a *mitzvah* he would be inclined to pursue those with the greatest value. His focus would be to fulfill it for its value. Thus, this would limit the *mitzvah* because it would not be done for its own sake as the Dictate of G-d.

Sforno: The value of performing a statute (*chok*), which cannot be perceived within a rational context, such as the observance of dietary laws and others, is an expression of one's love for G-d. When one adheres to something that he cannot appreciate its value to to himself, it is an expression of his love for G-d.

The Necessary Perspective to Succeed in Spirituality

Torah: (in the *Shema*): "Let these words that I command you today (*ha'yom*) be upon your heart..."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "The term '*ha'yom*' means 'today.' One must approach the *Torah* as if it were given today. It should not be regarded as an old declaration of the king, but rather a new written mandate that was proclaimed by the ruler. When the new proclamation of the king is posted, all the subjects run to read its contents. Similarly, the *Torah* and its *mitzvos* should always be esteemed and revered as if they were presently communicated to us."

When one completes a tractate at the time of the *siyum* (completion) one reads a declaration of values and perspective that was compiled by the *Talmud*: "We run, and they run. We run to receive our share in the world to come, while they run to the abyss of destruction (spiritual purgatory)..." When one runs and hurries to do something it is an indication that it of value and of importance to him. Although one's share in the world to come is only relevant after one has lived his life; nevertheless, a Jew pursues *Torah* study and *mitzvos* during his lifetime because he understands and appreciates their eternal value. Just as a subject hurries to read the new declaration of his master in order to become acquainted with his will, so too must a Jew esteem and revere the word of G-d, the *Torah*.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: One's stride on the *Shabbos* must be different than that of the weekday. On a weekday one hurries and takes large strides to perform his mundane tasks; however, on *Shabbos* one must walk with smaller paces. Although this is the case, the *Gemara* in Tractate *Berachos* states that when one goes to the synagogue on *Shabbos* it is a *mitzvah* to hurry and even to run to that location. The posture of a human being reveals the degree of one's dedication and commitment to whatever it may be.

Torah in the Portion of *Ki Savo*: The curses (*tochacha*), "But it will be that if you do not hearken to the voice of Hashem, your G-d, to observe all His commandments and all His decrees that I command you today, then all these curses will come upon you and overtake you...Because you did not serve Hashem, your G-d with joy (*simcha*) and wholeheartedness..." The *Torah* is informing us that although the Jewish people may perform all of the *mitzvos* meticulously; however, if they do not do so with a sense of privilege, then the curses will come upon them. One must regard performing the *mitzvos* as the ultimate opportunity that was given exclusively to the Jewish people.

We say every day in our daily prayer: “How good is our portion, how pleasant is our lot, and how beautiful is our inheritance!” When G-d chose the Jewish people as his holy nation, He gave them His most beloved and precious commodity.

King Solomon in *Proverbs*, “G-d said: Indeed I have given you a good commodity, do not forsake My *Torah*...” If one does not revere and esteem the *Torah* as the equivalent of something new, then he will not pursue it and ultimately will perform on a begrudging level. The *Torah* and *mitzvos* will be regarded as a burden.

The Precipitator of the Jew’s Spirituality (From Vaeschanan)

Torah: “Moshe said to the Jewish people... ‘Only beware for yourself greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld and lest you remove them from your heart all the days of your life...’”

Rashi citing *Chazal*: “If the Jewish people will not forget what they had heard at Sinai and perform all of the *mitzvos* correctly and meticulously, then the nations of the world will revere them as a wise people. However, if they corrupt the *mitzvos* as a result of forgetting what they had seen, then they will be regarded as fools by the nations of the world.” Although the nations of the world have no understanding of the *Torah*, if the Jewish people function and perform as a spiritual people by adhering properly to its words, they will be esteemed. This is because G-d will give the nations of the world the capacity to sense the spirituality of the Jew. However, if the Jew’s involvement in the performance of *mitzvos* is only perfunctory, similar to a “cultural Jew,” then he will be perceived as a fool whose people adhere to archaic and foolish rituals. Since the Jewish people in this case are not connected spiritually to G-d, they are sensed as physical beings who are involved in foolishness.

When *Reb Baruch Ber Leibowitz z’tl*, the *Rosh HaYeshiva* of Kaminetz, came to the United States

to raise funds for his *Yeshiva* in 1927, Jimmy Walker was the mayor of New York. He had given the *rabbi* the keys to the City and declared in public, “This man clearly refutes the Darwinian theory of evolution. It is obvious that this great sage is G-d’s creation because His Presence rests upon him.” *Rabbi Leibowitz* was a *tzaddik* of a unique dimension, whose spirituality was evident even to the non-Jew.

When the Nazis had entered into the city of Kaminetz on *Rosh Hashanah*, they did not disrupt the service. The Nazi commandant was so overly enthralled by the presence of the great *rabbi* that he had given the order that the *yeshiva* should be provided with potatoes and vegetables. This was a rare event since even the gentiles in Kaminetz did not have sufficient food. When the Bishop of Kaminetz had become aware of what had happened, he came with a complaint to the commandant. When the commandant had heard the Bishop’s displeasure regarding providing food to the *yeshiva* students, he was killed on the spot. How is this possible? Even the Nazi officer was given the capacity to sense the spirituality of the great *rabbi*.

Chazal: When the Jew meticulously adheres to the precepts of the *Torah*, he will be esteemed by the nations of the world.

Ramban: The verse, “...beware for yourself greatly beware for your soul, lest you forget the things that your eyes have beheld...” is referring to the positive commandment to remember what had occurred at Sinai. “By remembering the Sinai experience it will ensure the authenticity of *Torah* throughout the generations. It is a well-known fact that parents do not communicate falsehood to their children. Therefore when the parent will share/communicate the Sinai experience to their children it will be received as absolute truth/irrefutable... The value of remembering that the original experience at Sinai that was witnessed first-hand by every Jew will establish it as uncontestable.” It is through remembering the Sinai event that the Jew will remain committed to his heritage. Thus, he will retain his spiritual essence causing him to be esteemed by the nations of the world.



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