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פרשת משפטים

WITH

R' AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"l

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## Doing and Listening

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## Part I. Doing and Listening

### Doing More

There's a statement in Pirkei Avos (3:9) that I would like to speak to you about tonight and it's as follows: כָּל שֶׁמַּעֲשֵׂיו מְרַבֵּין מִחֻבָּתוֹ, חֻבָּתוֹ מְתַקֶּיֶמֶת – If a person's deeds are more than his knowledge, then his knowledge has a permanence; it will endure.

I'll say it again because I want you to hear the problem with these words. "If your mitzvos outpace your knowledge, that's considered a special success."

Now let's understand what that means, "if your deeds are more than your knowledge". He's telling us that if a man learned, let's say, fifty halachos; he learned fifty laws of the Torah but he performs more than fifty, so because he performed more than he knows, then these fifty laws are going to be permanent. Exactly what it means "permanent" we won't

worry about right now but we see there's such a thing as doing more than you know.

So Rabbeinu Yonah in Shaarei Teshuva (2:10) asks a question. How is it possible for a person to do more deeds than he has knowledge about? If a man knows only fifty laws, can he fulfill sixty laws? *Halevai* that his deeds should be as much as his learning; but that his deeds should be *more* than his learning? If you didn't learn those deeds, if you didn't learn the laws that command you to do certain things, then you can't do those deeds. That's a *kashe* from Rabbeinu Yonah in Shaarei Teshuva. How can it be that a person's *מעשיו* are *מחכמתו*?

### **Understanding Naaseh V'Nishma**

And therefore, Rabbeinu Yonah turns to the Avos D'Rabbi Nosson. The Avos D'Rabbi Nosson is a *beraisa* that explains Mesichta Avos, and on that *mishnah* the Avos D'Rabbi Nosson says like this: *כָּל שְׁמַעְתָּו מְרַבִּין* – *מְרַבִּין מְרַבִּין* – *שְׁנֵי מֵרֵאשִׁיטָה וְנִשְׁמָעָה* – What does it mean that your deeds are more than your wisdom? It means the same thing that the Bnei Yisroel said in this week's *sedrah*, “*נִשְׁמָעָה וְנִשְׁמָעָה*” – *Everything that Hashem says, we will do and we will listen*” (Mishpatim 24:7).

Now, that's not yet an answer for us. It's too brief of a comment. We know all about *naaseh v'nishma*. At Har Sinai when they accepted the Torah they said, “*Naaseh*, we will do, *v'nishma*, and then we are going to listen to what You're telling us to do.” And so, right away we see that something is doing here because the order is inverted. *נִשְׁמָעָה* means “We're going to do” and *נִשְׁמָעָה* means “We're going to hear,” and that can't be; first you have to hear what you're commanded to do and only then you'll do it. It's similar to our *mishnah*, but it doesn't explain anything.

So Rabbeinu Yonah in Sha'arei Teshuva explains it to us. Our forefathers didn't just say *נִשְׁמָעָה וְנִשְׁמָעָה* willy-nilly. When they were told that they were about to receive the Torah, they got busy preparing themselves. *וְהָיוּ נִכְנָיִם לְשִׁלֻשֵׁת יָמִים* – *Be prepared in three days* (Shemos 19:15). It doesn't mean that for three days they took off from everything and they loafed. It doesn't mean they were shopping on the avenue for cheesecakes for three days. *נִכְנָיִם* means that they prepared their hearts with a great *hachanah*; for three days they were preparing for the function of Kabolas Hatorah, readying themselves in *ahavas Hashem* and *zerizus* to do everything that Hashem was going to request of them.

It took a tremendous preparation of love and eagerness; a sincere willingness to do everything that Hashem would request of them because



they understood that it was going to be something big. They expected big demands and so they were preparing for everything. It takes work to have a frame of mind like that, a mind that is ready to accept the Torah.

### **They Meant Business!**

And finally when Moshe Rabbeinu came and proposed the Torah, they were ready. They were prepared for the proposal and they said “נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע”. They didn’t say it because they knew it was going to be recorded in the Torah and they wanted to make a good impression on us. They meant business.

What business did they mean? The Bnei Yisroel didn’t hear yet what was being demanded of them. After all, they didn’t receive the whole Torah at once. It was only over the course of many years; Moshe Rabbeinu would go into the Ohel Moed, וַיִּשְׁמָע אֶת הַקּוֹל מִדָּבָר אֵלָיו, *and he heard Hashem speaking to him from between the two keruvim* (Bamidbar 7:89) and only then, gradually, did they begin to discover what they had accepted.

And so, they didn’t know what they were getting but still, they accepted; they accepted the *ol Torah*, the yoke of Torah. “Whatever it is, *naaseh*, we’ll do it! Not “*Nishma v’naaseh* – we’ll learn, and when we’ll know what to do, we’ll do.” No! Right away, נַעֲשֶׂה – “We’ll do; no matter what You tell us to do. We’re so full of love and willingness and devotion to Hashem that ‘we’ll do’ no matter what.”

Of course we’ll be נִשְׁמָע too; of course we’ll listen and we’ll learn. But first things first, “We’re ready to do. We’ll run into fire and water for You, Hakadosh Baruch Hu. If the Torah would say, ‘Stand on your head every morning for ten minutes,’ we’ll do it.” It’s lucky we don’t have to do that, but they were ready to do that too! And more!

And they were serious about it. They meant it! They were so full of gratitude to Hashem for taking them out of Mitzrayim, so full of pride that they were being chosen now to receive the Torah, that they said, “We accept! Even the things we don’t know yet, we accept!”

### **Secret Reward**

And because they accepted it with such a sincere heart – Hakadosh Baruch Hu looked into their hearts and He saw that they really intended to do whatever He would ask of them no matter what – so it was considered for them as if they had already learned everything and they had done everything. That’s the key, the secret to Kabbalas Hatorah! Because

they accepted with such sincere devotion of their minds, it's like they had already done it. After all, they want to do it! Only that they don't know yet.

And so we come back now to our Avos D'Rabbi Nossan, to the explanation of what it means "to do more than you know." How could you do more than you know? It means that you've created the same attitude that our forefathers created for Kabolas Hatorah; that you've accepted to do even the things you don't know about.

That's what Rabbeinu Yonah explains. When a person reaches such a stage of devotion to Hashem, his heart is full of fire, love for Hashem and he declares to himself that "whatever the teachers of the Torah are going to admonish and tell me to do, no matter what, I'll do it!", then he receives full reward as if he actually did everything.

Now that's a remarkable statement but Rabbeinu Yonah says it. He's an important personality, Rabbeinu Yonah. He's not merely giving a pep talk, exhortations, promising us empty things. It's a *sefer* that's considered very authoritative and he says there, black on white, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu looks into a person's heart and if sees that it's true, that this man is sincere, then that man receives reward immediately as if he had learned *and as if he had done*. Isn't that a bargain?

### **Your True Desires**

Of course it's not such a bargain because you have to generate such a fire of devotion within you so that it should really be a true resolve. It's easier said than done. Right now, everyone will say, "Oh, I desire everything that's good in the Eyes of Hashem," but in his heart, if we could pry it open and take a look, he's desiring, let's say, travel. He's thinking about how nice it would be to go on vacation in Florida. Or maybe he'd like to go eat in a restaurant; he's desiring other things.

But when our forefathers said "*naaseh v'nishma*", they meant it. We know they meant it because Hakadosh Baruch Hu cannot be deceived and He put His stamp of approval on their acceptance. He said, **מִי יָתֵן** – *Would it be so always*, **וְהָיָה לְבַבְכֶּם זֶה לְהֹם לִירְאָה אֶתִּי כָּל הַיָּמִים** – *they should have the same mind as now to fear Me all the days* (Devarim 5:25).

Now that's a tremendous seal of approval. A man, he can be fooled. **הָאָדָם יִרְאָה לְעֵינָיו** – *A man looks only what the eyes can see* (Shmuel I 16:7). Let's say you see a *frum* young man who is accepting everything. He comes into the yeshivah and his heart is sincere. The *rosh yeshivah* sees that he means business. He's a sponge. He soaks up everything. But who

knows? Maybe there are some spaces left in the *pnimiyus halev*, certain reservations he has. Could be he's not accepting everything. Right now, so far, he's accepting but who says he's *mekabel b'lev shaleim* everything he'll ever become aware of? Maybe when you tell him this or that it won't fit with his aspirations, his attitudes, and he won't be so enthusiastic anymore. So we don't really know.

But **הַשֵּׁם יִרְאֶה לְלִבּוֹ** – Hashem sees all the way down into the depths of the heart (*ibid.*). There's no fooling Him; and so if Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, **מִי יִתֵּן וְהָיָה לְבָבָם זֶה** – “Halevai that this should be their attitude forever and ever,” then you can be sure that He saw that it was without reservations.

### **A Hasty Nation**

It's a remarkable thing. It was everyone, like it states **וַיִּחַן**; they encamped like one man around the mountain. Like one man, they said *naaseh v'nishma*! It's a remarkable episode in history that the nation rose to such heights that they were able to accept a *kabbalah* unreservedly.

And at that moment, they fulfilled this great attitude of **מַעֲשֵׂי מִרְבֵּין מִחֻקֵּימֶתוֹ**. Now to sign a contract without reading the contract, I don't advise it. You should never do it. A goy once criticized us for that (Shabbos 88b). He said, “You're an *ama peziza*, a hasty nation, you put your mouth before your ears. You said *naaseh* before you heard *nishma*.” He ridiculed us for that. Who signs his life away without knowing what's in the fine print?

But when it comes to *Kabolas Hatorah*, that's our greatness. No matter what He's going to tell us, beforehand, we're accepting all the obligations even if we don't know about them. We are so much in love with Hashem for all that He had done to us that we were so ready and so willing and so happy to receive the Torah.

## *Part II. Listening*

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### **Always More To Learn**

Now this idea, *Kabolas Hatorah*, is an important principle which it pays to study because if we understand it and follow it, we can acquire merits, *zechusim*, beyond our abilities. We're learning now, not about *Matan Torah*, the tremendous gift that Hashem gave us at Har Sinai.

We're learning now about the subject of Kabolas Hatorah, Accepting the Torah.

It's a very important principle and it pays for people to think about that because you'll never know everything. As much as you study there's so much, so much to learn and do, and therefore the best *eitzah* is to be *mekabel*, to actually inspire yourself with an enthusiasm and a dedication to Kabolas Hatorah.

Now that's not a shortcut to avoid learning because such a person, if he's sincere, will certainly be eager to learn. All your life you should have an ambition to continue learning. No matter how old you are, you'll always discover new things to do that you never knew about.

### **Vacuums Of The Greats**

Even Rabbi Yochanan, the great teacher Rabbi Yochanan, when he was told about a certain statement that Reish Lakish had made, he was surprised. He had never heard it.

So he said (Yevamos 72b), "Where do you get it from?"

Reish Lakish said, "From the Sifra."

"Sifra?" Rabbi Yochanan hadn't learned the Sifra. So he got busy for three days memorizing the Sifra.

So you see even great men have certain vacuums, certain spaces that are not yet filled with information.

And therefore it's not possible for a man to actually fulfill every detail that Hakodosh Boruch Hu desires of him. And so even though there's no question everybody should spend a great deal of time in studying the details of *mitzvos*, *halachos*, and so on, but it's also of the greatest importance to engender a love for the Torah, a love for *mitzvos*. Because the heart matters! **רַחֲמָנָא לֵבָא בָּעֵי** – *Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants a man's heart*. And if he's sincerely interested in knowing, he wants to know it and do it all, that is counted for him as if he did it.

### **Become A Thinker**

That's why it's so important for people to acquire the right attitudes. It's not enough merely to do *mitzvos*. Attitudes are supremely important because the attitude gives you credit for things you will never hear about. You have to become a thinking person by learning *mussar* or those subjects that inflame the heart with enthusiasm. You have to spend time in contemplation, thinking. You have to create that desire for Kabolas



Hatorah. You get inspiration to be a doer; you wish you could do everything.

Let's say you didn't learn Zevachim and Menachos. Maybe someday you will but right now you didn't; or it could be you did but it was to you merely details and technicalities. But imagine now that you would put some effort into the Kabolas Hatorah of the *korbanos*, of the Beis Hamikdash.

You're walking let's say to the store or to the office and you're thinking, "Someday when the Beis Hamikdash will be built, I'd like to bring an offering" – maybe it won't be built in your day; let's hope it will but even if not, your attitude is going to reap for you dividends as if you did it.

### ***Inspiration Is Important***

And so you're walking on Ocean Parkway in Flatbush and you're thinking, "Included in my Kabolas Hatorah is that one day I want to be walking not in Flatbush but in Eretz Yisroel. And I'll walk from my home in let's say Dan or Be'er Sheva and I'll travel towards Yerushalayim and bring whatever offerings I'm commanded to bring. I don't know the details but whatever the *Chachmei Hatorah* say, that's what I'm going to do. It'll cost me good money – but I'll do it with a full heart." And because you have such a devotion to Hakadosh Baruch Hu that you surely will bring offerings, it counts as if you did it. You'll receive reward as if you brought offerings.

Now this seems farfetched. People say it's abstract. We have so much to worry about in practice, so why should we start longing for things that are not available to us now? And the answer is, you're making a big error. They are available! Because to Hakadosh Baruch Hu the heart is *just as important*. And if we learn the great ideals, if we acquire a *leiv* of Kabolas Torah, then that is a very big achievement in practice. That's what we're trying to emphasize now.

And those people who neglect the field of emotions in Torah, they think that inspiration is not important – all that is necessary is just to learn and to do – they're making a mistake. Certainly learning and doing is very important, but it's necessary to generate such a fire in your heart that even those things that you never will hear about are included in your accomplishments.

## Turn Up The Heat

Suppose you'll spend an hour this Sunday afternoon thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu, about what He's doing for you. I know you won't do it but let's imagine you did it for five minutes. And suppose you did it the next Sunday too. And maybe ten minutes on Wednesday and then Sunday again.

Nobody knows but you're sitting at the table and you're thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu. You think about what He did for you; you look back on your life and you see how He has guided your footsteps, how He has guarded your life. He has given you happiness that you're normal, that you're functioning and He supported you with food and clothing and shelter until today. You're thinking about all that until you don't know what to do. "How can I thank Hashem? **מָה אֶשִׁיב לַהֲשֵׁם כָּל תַּנְמוּלוֹתָי עָלַי** – What can I return to Hashem for all that He bestowed on me?"

Oh! Now you're ready. I don't imagine you'll come anywhere near where the Dor Hamidbar was, but every degree, no matter how weak it is, is an achievement in itself. Even if it's not the top heat, it's a little cooler than the *naaseh v'nishma* at Har Sinai, it's excellent – according to the *madreigah* it's an achievement. And so you're ready now and in your heart of hearts you make this declaration: "Naaseh v'nishma! I'm mekabel everything. That's what Kabolas Hatorah was. It was a lot of things but it was especially this – the eagerness and devotion to fulfill.

Now, this means that people have to work on themselves to acquire this *middah* of Kabolas Hatorah – it's a *middah* of character called Kabolas Hatorah. Did you ever hear anyone say, "I'm working now on the *middah* of Kabolas Hatorah"? No? So let this be the first time.

It's a quality of character, an attitude, that you have to work on achieving. It's not something that's done already, something that our forefathers did the job for us and now we can lean back and relax. No! We have to continue to perform Kabolas Hatorah; we have to be more and more willing, more and more ready every day.

## Naaseh V'nishma Every Morning

Now in order to complete the subject, it's worth noting an important passage in the daily *tefillos* that most people ignore; they're not aware that there's a Kabolas Hatorah every day. It's after you say *keriyas shema* and you start saying **אֱמֶת וְיִצְיִב וְנִכְוֶן וְקִים וְיִשָּׁר וְנֶאֱמָן וְאֶהוּב וְנִחְמָד וְנִעִים וְנוֹרָא**

וְאָדִיר. You're talking about how great is this subject that you just finished saying, that's the subject of reading the *shema*.

And you say, first of all, that Hakadosh Baruch Hu, when He performed all these great things for us and He came to us and offered us the Torah and our forefathers accepted it, it's not only accepted by them, but right now we are accepting it all over again. עַל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ – It was on our forefathers; they accepted it at Har Sinai. But then we add a certain word; if you're in a rush you might not notice it: וְעָלֵינוּ – and it's upon us too!

Now think about that. It's an important item in the morning *tefillah* because it means you're accepting it the same way they did – you're committing to try at least. It means that Kabolas Hatorah is not a one-time thing. People think it happened at Har Sinai once, very good. Once in a while they think it might happen again to an individual.

### **Naaseh V'Nishma In New York**

Here's a girl, let's say, who marches into a synagogue, she takes a seat in the ladies' section, opens up a *siddur* and reads the English. For the first time in her life, she's in a synagogue. Something stirred an emotion in her, a little flame was kindled. She was walking on the street in Manhattan and she saw through the window of the synagogue an old Jew wearing *tallis* and *tefillin* and a tiny holy flame began burning in her heart. So she walks in now and she's *mekabel* the Torah. Whatever her Torah is, it's pretty small, but she's *mekabel* her Torah.

Or maybe a boy comes from Midwest to New York on a train. He brings with him his baggage, all his worldly possessions and he's in the railroad station. Why did he come to New York? He read a book, a book on Torah ideology, and he came here looking for the Torah. A true story. That's a Kabolas Hatorah. He accepted the Torah.

But that's not the only thing. We're making a Kabolas Hatorah every day. Just like our forefathers accepted the Torah, that's what we're doing every day; if only we would wake up from our daydreams and think about what we're saying. That's actually what we're saying; we're being *mekabel* the Torah – the whole thing.

### **Accepting The Shulchan Aruch**

What are you accepting? Choshen Mishpat. Ohohohoh! Choshen Mishpat – who knows if you'll ever learn that. And even if you'll learn some of it, but the entire Choshen Mishpat is not a small text to learn; it's

a very big *sefer*. It's quite heavy. Even just the *pnim*, just the Shulchan Aruch of Choshen Mishpat is quite a scholarship, but you have to learn also the *meforshim* on it. And in the *meforshim* there it tells us *halachos* in business and in damaging other people's property, obligations in money matters.

There's no end. Choshen Mishpat has more obligations than Yoreh Deah and that's saying a lot. Yoreh Deah talks about kosher and *treif* and *shechitah*, about *taharas hamishpacha* and *nedarim*; and many other things. There are very many *halachos* in Yoreh Deah, but Choshen Mishpat has even more; and more complicated ones. Money matters that are quite abstruse and complex.

Not that we should despair; we shouldn't give up. No. We won't give up, but still it pays to play safe because there are many things you might never know about. And so if you are *mekabel* now *b'lev shaleim*, you've already accomplished Choshen Mishpat; you haven't learned it yet but because you accepted *b'lev shaleim* so Hakodosh Boruch Hu accepts that.

You have to work on that though. You have to keep on convincing yourself every day more and more. "I am accepting the Torah on myself forever and ever. It's **אָמַת וְיִצְיִב וְכִבֹּן** and so on and so on. All the adjectives have to be understood. We can't do it now but every word there means something important to our Kabolas Hatorah. But anyhow, you do your best even if you don't understand them. You work on having a real acceptance of the Torah in your heart every day; and little by little you become a more sincere *mekabel haTorah* and that will give you reward for all the deeds that you may never hear about and therefore you may never do.

## Part III. Doing

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### My Sister, My Bride

Now, I'm not interested in being a spoilsport but actually there's a *kashe* on everything we said till now. But first, a little introduction: *Sefer Shir Hashirim*, you know, is a conversation between two people. It is in the form of a drama and the two main personalities are a young woman and her beloved, a *dod* and a *dodah* or a *raayah* and a *dod*. And they speak to each other throughout the whole *sefer* with a few exceptions where they speak to other persons too.

And whom do they represent? The young woman represents the Knesses Yisroel, the Jewish people; and her Beloved is none other than Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself. And the dialogue describes what Hakadosh Baruch Hu has to say about His beloved people and what the Am Yisroel have to say about the Heavenly Beloved One.

In *perek daled*, *possuk tes*, Hashem is talking to us and He says לְבַבְתִּי כָלָה – אַחוֹתִי – You have captured My heart, My sister, My bride. Sister is just a term of affection. It means, “Oh, My bride, you have captured My heart.” לְבַבְתִּי – בְּאַחַת מֵעֵינַיךָ – “You captured My heart, with one of your eyes.”

What does it mean “with one of your eyes”?

### **Beauty Through The Niqab**

Imagine a man is meeting his *kallah*, his intended, but she wears a veil as it was formerly the custom and only one eye is peeking out from behind the veil. So he says, “That one eye is so beautiful, you captured my heart.” He wants to see the other eye too now.

So the Gemara (Shabbos 88b) says that Hashem is talking to us and He says, “You took My heart with one of your eyes.” It’s a *mashal*. The *mashal* is when the Am Yisroel stood at Har Sinai and they were approached with a proposition to accept the Torah, a very unusual reaction took place. The people were so enthusiastic; they were so full of devotion and fire for Hakadosh Baruch Hu that they all shouted with one voice “Naaseh v’nishma! Everything that Hashem says, even what we don’t know yet, we will do and we will listen.”

So Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, “At that time, when you said these words, you showed Me one eye. That fiery commitment to do whatever will come your way took My heart and I fell in love with you.”

It was only one eye however. “When you accepted נִשְׁמָע וְנַשְׂמָע, it was a beautiful eye that you showed Me from behind your veil,” Hashem says, “But later, לְכַשְׁתַּעֲשֶׂי, when you’ll actually do it, then it’ll be two eyes. So I’m waiting for you to fulfill your promise in living a life according to the Torah; that will be your two eyes and then I’ll surely love you.”

### **The Question and The Answer**

So the question is, why do you need doing? What about everything we said here tonight about the great perfection of מְרַבֵּין מְחַבְּרֵתוֹ? If accepting is the same as doing, so why should Hakadosh Baruch Hu wait in order to fall fully in love with us? Why does it say, “When you’ll do, it’ll



be like two eyes”? As soon as we said **נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמַע**, it’s exactly as if they did it already.

And the answer is, it’s not exactly as if they did.

Now we come to a very important principle because a mitzvah has to be divided into two parts. There’s a *merit* of a good deed and there’s a *perfection* that a good deed achieves for you.

### Visiting The Hospital

Now pay attention to this. If a man wanted to do a good deed, **וְהָשִׁב אָדָם לַעֲשׂוֹת מִצְוָה** – *he intended to do a mitzvah*; let’s say you packed a lunch for somebody who is ill and you went to the hospital to bring him some delectable foods to nourish him, to encourage him. But when you came there, his bed was empty. They said, “We’re sorry Mister. He left the hospital already; he was discharged this morning.”

You don’t know where he lives so you’re stuck. You go back empty-handed; you bring the food basket back home and you unpack it. **וְהָשִׁב הָאָדָם וְלֹא עָשָׂאָהּ** – *but an accident happened and you couldn’t do the mitzvah*. So what’s the conclusion of that *maamar*, the punchline? **מִמַּעֲלָה עָלָיו הַכֶּתוּב בְּאֵלֵי עֲשָׂאָהּ** – *it’s considered as if he did it* (Brachos 6a). It’s considered as if he did it! You get reward for your good intentions as if you had done it, as if you nourished that man and encouraged him and helped him heal.

Now suppose however that you came to the hospital and you found that man still in his bed and you gave him the food and fed it to him – it’s much better. Do you know why it’s better? Because besides the reward for the mitzvah, there is the perfection that a mitzvah achieves when you do it. A mitzvah has a certain effect on the doer and that effect makes him different; it changes him. Like we say **אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו**, you become *kadosh* because of the mitzvah.

### Torah Transforms You

You understand the point now? There’s a reward for doing *mitzvos* and that reward is forever and ever. And it’s true, even if he couldn’t do the mitzvah but he sincerely wanted to do it, there’s also that same reward. If he was *mekabel* the Torah *b’lev shaleim*, with enthusiasm, then everything that he would have done, things that he doesn’t even know about yet, he’s rewarded for ‘doing’ them. When you intend to do a mitzvah sincerely, you receive reward. Reward is a big thing! We’re not

going to disdain and look down on reward! Oh no! Don't think it's nothing. Very important! *Na'aseh v'nishma* was very important!

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, “Do you know when I really fall in love with you? לְכַשְׁתַּעֲשֵׂי – When you'll have the perfection of doing it.” Because when you'll actually live according to the Torah, it'll transform you. Doing is what elevates you. You have a different personality! That's a special reward, in addition, over and above the reward for doing it or for desiring to do. The doing, the action itself, transforms you.

A Jew gains *kedushah* in this world by doing *mitzvos*. How lucky you are when you're able to do something. The fact that you put on *tefillin* is making you a different person. You're not aware of it? So what? Many times people are not aware of what's happening to them. You're subjected, let's say, to the sun's rays; as the sun hits your skin, it creates a certain vitamin. The sun creates vitamins. Do you know about it? You don't know about it, but it's there anyhow. Many benefits people acquire even when they're entirely unaware. Same thing, when you do a *mitzvah*, you are changing. You're changing your nature; you're changing your mind, you're changing your *neshamah* and you're gaining in perfection.

### Acquiring Divinity

Let's say they're about to nail a *mezuzah* on your doorpost. And you make a *brocha* beforehand, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. It means “This act that I'm going to do is going to change me; it's going to make me saturated with a certain quality that's similar to Elokus, to Divinity.”

You hear what that means? It means when you're doing a *mitzvah* you're making yourself *kadosh* by means of that *mitzvah*. It's not *drush* what I'm telling you; this is the plain translation of the word. It says (Bamidbar 15:40) וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֶת כָּל מִצְוֹתַי – when you do all My *mitzvos*; וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים – you will become *kadosh*.

Even if you don't have any mind at all! Let's say you're a *hedyot sh'bi'hedyots*, a boor, an empty fellow – but an orthodox one. So you take a hammer and two tacks and now you're ready to do the *mitzvah* of putting up a *mezuzah*. And even though you're not thinking of what's written in the *mezuzah* – that's the real purpose of the *mezuzah*; the real purpose of the *mezuzah* is to know what you're nailing up on the door post. It's not just a piece of parchment; you have to know what it says there.

But alright, we're talking about a *hedyot*, an empty fellow. He doesn't understand anything – he's just nailing in two tacks in the *mezuzah* and

that's all; and then he goes away and forgets all about it. No matter! When you take in your hand the hammer and the two nails and you bang it in, you're making a change in your soul. Your *neshamah* is becoming different.

### **Kabbalistic Auras**

The truth is that not only your *neshamah* is becoming different; your hands are becoming different. Your body becomes *kadosh*. If you look a little in *kabbalah seforim* you will see that we have no idea how holy a *frum* Jew is. There is no question that the *kedushah* transforms the quality of the body. When we do something in the service of Hashem we gain a certain aura, a certain nobility of status that transforms both our minds and our bodies.

That's the plain truth; Torah living transforms you! In so many ways. Jews who live by the Torah are a holy people. You can't help it. You do *mitzvos*. You walk to shul. You don't mingle with low people. You can't think even low thoughts. You have to watch your language. You have to be careful whatever you do. You're living a holy life – a life of good character, a life of thinking about Hashem always. It can't be helped – you change!

Now, good intentions to do that, it's excellent! Very good! You deserve reward for those intentions! But if you're able to *live* such a life, then it's more than reward – you're being transformed! You have a different personality! You're more *kadosh*, more perfect. That's an especial reward over and above the reward for desiring to do.

### **Full Love**

And therefore, as much as we're going to spend all the days of our lives being *mekabel* the Torah – every day a little more, a little better, a little stronger – and by means of that *avodah* we are rewarded as if we've done everything, but still we always want to do and do and do. We want that perfection of **לְבָשֶׁתָּעֵשִׂי בְּשֵׁתִי עֵינֶיךָ**.

When we do, when we actually fulfill, we achieve such a perfection of the body and soul that now Hashem loves us *ingantzen*.

Of course the Kabolas Hatorah helps; it helps tremendously because **וְתוֹתוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ שְׂאֵדָם רֹצֶה לְלַכֵּת מוֹלִיכִין אוֹתוֹ** – *in the way that a person sincerely wants to go, Hashem leads him*. If you want, if you desire, to fulfill the Torah then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will give you opportunities. He'll take you on the path that you want to go. He'll help you.

And so, both aspects of this *avodah* - the *Kabolas Hatorah* and the *Kiyum Hatorah*, the actual fulfillment of the Torah - are what make us the *Am Hashem*. We say **אָמֵת וְיָצִיב וְנִכּוֹן וְקִיָּם וְיִשָּׁר וְנָאֻמָּן וְאֶהוּב וְנִחְמָד וְנֶעֱמָד וְנִרְאָה** - the Torah we accepted is true and faithful and desirable ... everything, it is. We want it so much!

We accept it *b'lev shaleim*! **עַל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ** - It was on our forefathers; they accepted it at Har Sinai, **וְעָלֵינוּ** - and it's upon us, **עַל בְּנֵינוּ** - on our children, **עַל דּוֹרוֹתֵינוּ** - and all our generations, **וְעַל כָּל דּוֹרוֹת זְרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדְּךָ** - and all the generations of the *Am Yisroel*, Your servants. We want to fulfill everything! We want it! And at the same time as much as possible we are looking to fulfill *naaseh* in its most elementary form, by doing, because that gives us a perfection of character, of soul and body, that can't be achieved otherwise.

### Have A Wonderful Shabbos

## LET'S GET PRACTICAL

### Accepting The Torah Every Day

In our *parshah* we read about how our forefathers accepted the Torah with blind enthusiasm, ready to do whatever it takes to serve Hashem. Rabbeinu Yonah tells us that when one is fully prepared to serve Hashem in every possible way, he receives reward as if he has actually done it. Rabbi Miller explains that one has to actually study the Torah as well, while desiring to do all the *mitzvos*. This week I will *bli neder* spend half a minute each morning after *Keriyas Shema* thinking about my desire to emulate my ancestors and accept whatever Hashem commands me to do. Later in the day I will think for half a minute about how I can actually implement this in practice.

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# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך



**Dovid Hamelech said: ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב וזרעו מקבש לכם – that he never saw a righteous man who was forsaken by Hashem and had to beg for bread (Tehillim 37:25). How do you reconcile this statement with the fact that we see many poor families who have a difficulty making a living and they have to go out to beg?**



And the answer is – you'll have to forgive me; I mean that those people will have to forgive me – but not everybody whom you think is a *tzaddik*, actually is. The fact that a person seems to you to be a *tzaddik*, may just be a superficiality; a *tzaddik* is something that is usually an inner attitude of a person. And therefore, it's very hard for me to answer that question in general; but specifically each case that you think of, it could be that he's not.

Sometimes there are exceptions, but by and large we have to say that *tzaddikim* don't beg. When a person is **מבקש לחם** – he begs, it's a sign that something's wrong. Why doesn't he work? Real *tzaddikim* don't beg – they prefer to work, any kind of work.

Now, sometimes a person works hard, but it's not enough – he needs extra money to pay for *schar limud* for his children. So he's not *mevakesh lechem*; he's *mevakesh schar limud*. He seeks *schar limud*. But for *lechem*, he's working.

But when a person is a loafer and he's **מטיל עצמו על הציבור**, he throws himself on the community for support, I don't see what kind of *tzaddik* he is. I know one person like that, a *ba'al teshuva* who came from out of town. He's a big *ba'al teshuva* – or so he thinks – he grew a big beard and now he goes around among the *chassidische shtiblach* and he begs. Is that a way for a *ba'al teshuva* to be? A *ba'al teshuva* has to throw himself on *frum* Jews to support him? Why doesn't he work? That itself shows that he's not a genuine *ba'al teshuva* – that's not a *tzaddik*.

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