

THROUGH JUSTICE... THE WORLD IS SECURE

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Mishpatim

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

What Yisro Did for the Sake of Emes

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The Moment One Justifies Anything, It's a Slippery Slope

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The Value of Life: Amenities Needed to do the Right Thing

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The Applications & Ramifications of the Words of the Torah

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Acquiring a Slave is Like Acquiring a Master

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Mediation Is Not Surrender

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1. The 10 Commandments: "You should not have designs on all that is your fellow's."
2. Sforno: The portion of the Court adjudicating between two defendants determines ownership and claim rights.
3. To maintain harmony in a community one must respect one another's ownership rights.
4. Midrash: A Torah Sage establishes justice in the land, and the one who removes himself from communal responsibility causes destruction.
5. Gemara: It is a mitzvah for the court to encourage mediation between two defendants.
6. If the context of the adjudication is justice, meaning innocent or guilty, the one who is found guilty believes he was wronged.
7. If mediation was agreed upon, each defendant leaves satisfied at some level.
8. This process addresses the issue to not have designs on what one's fellow possesses.
9. Ethics of Our Fathers: "Who is the rich man? The one who is satisfied with his lot."
10. Chofetz Chaim: If one is satisfied with what is "truly his," he is truly rich.

The Corollary Between the High Court And Its Location

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1. The High Court of Israel: 71 judges convened in the Chamber of Cut Stone adjacent to the sanctuary.
2. Each community had a Lower court of 23 judges.
3. Both could render judgments regarding the death penalty and monetary penalties.
4. The laws pertaining to the court are near the portion of the altar: the High Court must convene adjacent to the sanctuary.
5. If the High Court vacates its location the Lower Courts can't render capital crimes.
6. Ramchal: Every living species is endowed with a Nefesh, a life source, that is totally physical.
7. The Human's intellect is also rooted in his Nefesh.
8. One's ability to process spiritual information, i.e. the Torah, is based on Divine assistance.
9. To come upon the truth of Torah is a spiritual endowment.
10. We supplicate G-d three times a day "It should.... to rebuild the Temple.... and give us our share in your Torah."
11. There is a direct corollary between the rebuilding of the Temple and receiving one's share in Torah.
12. The High Court convened alongside the sanctuary to receive the Divine assistance that is necessary to render a truthful verdict.

Supreme Intelligence & Renown Kept in Check

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1. The High Court must convene on the Temple Mount alongside the sanctuary.
2. Testimony of witnesses to be admissible in court must be heard directly from the witnesses.
3. Members of the High Court were proficient in seventy languages.
4. They were fully versed in the entire Torah.
5. Gemara: "The Torah cannot be acquired or retained only by a person who is humble."
6. How could the Members of the Sanhedrin, with their superior intelligence and renown, remain humble?
7. Rabbinic fences are not applicable on the Temple Mount.
8. A fence is promulgated by the Rabbis to protect the Torah from being violated.
9. The transgression only comes about due to a lack of cognizance.
10. On the Temple Mount one always felt the presence of G-d, and reverence & fear; so no need for fences.
11. The Temple Mount was the location for the Sanhedrin to convene to maintain their humility.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Mishpatim



**THROUGH JUSTICE...
THE WORLD IS SECURE**

The Profundity of the Jewish Slave

Parshas Mishpatim: “And these are the judgments that you shall place before them... (*V’ele Ha’mishpatim...*)”

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The *parsha* begins with a connecting “vav (and)” to indicate that just as the laws stated in the previous portion were given at Sinai, so too the laws that are stated in *Parshas Mishpatim* were also given at Sinai. The *Torah* is dealing with a person who was found guilty of stealing and was not able to reimburse the person that he had victimized. The *Torah* tells us that he is sold into slavery for the value of the theft. The period of servitude is for six years. If he is married, the master is permitted to give him a Canaanite maidservant for the purpose of bearing children. The children that he fathers from the Canaanite maidservant belong to the master and are not considered his. The Jewish slave is reduced to a level of being a breeder of children as a consequence of his behavior as a thief. Why did the *Torah* choose this

to be the first law to be communicated to the Jewish people post Sinai?

At the time the *Torah* was given at Sinai, G-d communicated openly with the Jewish people. They had prophesized in a wake-state/face to face. At this time, they had reached their pinnacle of spirituality. One would think that immediately after the Sinai event the laws that were communicated to the Jewish people would have relevance to their advanced level of spirituality, rather than something as lowly as being sold into slavery to repay a theft.

The Jewish people at this moment were no less spiritually advanced than the High Priest coming out of the Holy of Holies on *Yom Kippur*. If one would have said to the High Priest after the *Yom Kippur* service that he had to be vigilant and act responsibly not to become a thief, it would be viewed as something that is insulting and offensive, given what he had just been

experienced. Yet the *Torah* chooses to communicate the law of the Jew who is sold into slavery for stealing. What is the *Torah* communicating to us? When the Jewish people accepted the *Torah* at Sinai they unequivocally declared “*Naaseh V’nishma* – we will do and we will listen.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: When G-d heard their declaration He exclaimed, “Who revealed this secret to My children?” They had spoken in the same manner as angels conduct themselves. The angels do the Will of G-d without first hearing His Command. Thus, the Jewish people at Sinai were the equivalent of angels. Despite their advanced spiritual level, they needed to understand that they as human beings possess an evil inclination. Although at that moment, the Jewish people had reached their spiritual zenith, forty days later they were culpable for the sin of the Golden Calf. This behavior seems to be incongruous.

By juxtaposing the portion of the Jewish slave to the Sinai event, the *Torah* is teaching us that one should not become confident and complacent regarding his spiritual level. If one were not continuously aware of his inborn handicap, the evil inclination, one ultimately will fall victim to its machinations – even to become a thief. Therefore the first law that the *Torah* chooses to follow the Sinai event is the law pertaining to the Jew who is sold into slavery for stealing.

Ramban: “The reason the laws of the Jewish slave is the first law transmitted after the Sinai event is because it alludes to something basic and fundamental to Judaism. Firstly it alludes to the exodus from Egypt, as the verse states, ‘And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and G-d redeemed you...’ In addition, the *mitzvah* of the Jewish slave is a remembrance for Creation as the day of *Shabbos* is. The seventh year of the slave is a respite from working for his master just as the seventh day of Creation (when G-d had refrained from creative activity).

“There is another allusion to the number seven among the seven Sabbatical cycles, which conclude with the Jubilee Year (*Yoveil*). ‘Seven’ was chosen to be represented in days, years, and in Sabbatical cycles. All of this is to communicate the same concept which is the profound understanding of existence from the beginning of creation until its completion. Therefore this *mitzvah* is appropriate to be the first to be introduced (after Sinai) because its representation

is very profound. This *mitzvah* alludes to great things regarding the creation of existence.”

Ramban: “Therefore, the Prophet speaks so strongly regarding the release of the Jewish slave and maidservant in the seventh year. The liability for withholding his release is exile – similar to the liability for not observing the Sabbatical years.” From the time of the entry of the Jewish people into the Land of Israel until the destruction of the First Temple, they had violated 70 Sabbatical years. They therefore were exiled to Babylon for seventy years.

Commemorating the act of Creation by refraining from work on the seventh day of the week or leaving the land fallow during the seventh year (refraining from all agricultural activity) and observing the Jubilee year, one is commemorating and declaring that G-d is the Creator and Master of the universe. If the individual should violate these periods of time, he is demonstrating his own mastership over his own existence, rather than acknowledging and submitting to G-d as the Creator and Master. G-d said, “Because you were not willing to accept Me as the Master, I will impose upon you a mortal master outside of the Land of Israel.”

Everything has a beginning and an end. Initially we must establish G-d as the Omnipotent Being, Creator and Master of the universe. The process of Creation is continuous and ongoing. Once this has been established, and internalized one is able to advance to a level of appreciating the unity of G-d on the most obvious level. This will only come about at the end of time when G-d will vanquish all evil and He will be the King over all existence.

The Cost Factor that is Necessary to Acquire Spirituality

Torah: “And these are the ordinances that you shall place before them: If you acquire a Jewish slave (*eved ivri*), he shall work for six years; and in the seventh he shall go free, for no charge (*chinam*).”

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains this verse on an implied level. “The human being is a composite of the physical and the spiritual. Just as the slave is acquired and subjugated by his master, so too must the physicality of man be controlled and subjugated by his spirituality.

Parshas Mishpatim: “And these are the ordinances that you shall place before them...” This indicates that one must be continuously cognizant of the struggle to subordinate the physical to the spiritual. This is the objective of life.”

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: “Why does the *Torah* refer to the slave as ‘*eved ivri* (Hebrew slave)’? It is because the word ‘*ivri*’ is derived from the word ‘*oveir* (passing)’, which means transient. The physicality of man is only temporary...As the verse states in *Psalms*, ‘Life is similar, to a passing shadow’...One may live for sixty years and when he enters into the seventh (ten year period), he will pass on. The slave works for six years for his master and in the seventh year he goes free. As it states in *Psalms*, ‘The dead are free.’

“The verse continues, ‘he (the slave) shall go free, for no charge (*chinam*)’ This alludes to the fact that when one passes away he leaves this world through ‘*chinam*.’ What is the meaning of ‘*chinam*’? It is referring to the angel of death and his entourage, as they are referred to by the *Zohar*. They have no intrinsic value whatsoever. (The angel of death, *satan*, and the evil inclination are of the same power which has no eternal value, ‘*chinam*’). And therefore they have no dominance over a *mitzvah* which one performs through expending great amounts of money. As you also find, anything that represents spiritual impurity is available without effort or payment (*chinam*). This is not the case with the performance of a *mitzvah* that requires a great level of effort and financial outlay.”

Yisod v’Shoresh ha’Avodah regarding *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*: It is important for one to purchase the honors, which the days afford the individual, although it may entail great expenditures. He cites the *Zohar* that when one demonstrates his esteeming/valuing a *mitzvah* through purchasing it despite the financial cost, it brings about great merit. Simply, one could say, that one’s merit is a reflection to what degree he esteems and values the *mitzvah*. However, based on the *Zohar* cited by *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* we can understand this on a more profound level. The forces of evil such as the angel of death, *satan*, and evil inclination are false and have no substance. They are all of the same power. They are ‘*chinam*’ because they have no eternal value.

Torah: During the Covenant between the parts, G-d had instructed Avraham to take several species of

animals to be severed into two parts, each of which had a specific representation. One of the species that he had taken was ‘*gozal*’ (young dove).

Midrash: ‘*Gozal*’ is referring to *Esav*/Edomites because they “deceive (*gozal*) mankind.” *Esav* (Edomites), which represents the evil inclination/*satan*/physicality, continuously deceives mankind into believing what is not real. When one demonstrates his level of esteem and value for a *mitzvah*, it is not subject to *satan* and his entourage, who are classified as “*chinam*.” The forces of evil cannot have any effect on a *mitzvah* that one performs with great expense (physical/financial/sacrifice).

Gemara in Tractate *Menachos*: The physical world was created with the spirituality of the Hebrew letter “*hey*”. The letter “*hey*” is comprised of a horizontal line, which rests on a vertical line on its right side and vertical line on the left, which does not quite reach the horizontal line (its roof). There is a small opening on the left side of the letter between the left leg and the roof of the letter.

Gemara: The shape of the letter signifies the reality of physical existence. The wide-open space between the right and left leg alludes to the fact, that if one chooses the material and impurity, he can go into spiritual free fall without any hindrance. However, when one wants to repent and rehabilitate his spirituality he cannot return on the same path, but must return with difficulty through the small opening on the left of the letter “*hey*.”

Evil is abundant and available without any difficulty—‘*chinam*’/free of charge/easy to acquire; however, spirituality and attaining purity is something for which one must sacrifice greatly in order to achieve it. There is nothing in existence more precious than the *Torah* itself because it is the wisdom of G-d. In fact, G-d Himself refers to the *Torah* as “*Lekach Tov* (Good Commodity)”. Its study is equivalent to all of the *mitzvos* combined.

Gemara in Tractate *Megillah*: “One who says ‘I have toiled (in *Torah*) and have come upon it’ –should be believed. One who says, ‘I have not toiled and I did come upon it’ –is not to be believed.” One can only come upon the truth of *Torah*, which is the ultimate, only through sacrifice, which is the toil and dedication to comprehend it. The only time one has relevance to the acquisition of *Torah*, which is the ultimate of value, is if one sacrifices sufficiently. This is because

sacrifice is the antithesis of 'chinam (no value)' which represents spiritual impurity and nothingness.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: One cannot acquire the *Torah* unless he is willing to die for it (sacrifice). It is only when one is willing to compromise his own comforts for the sake of the acquisition of *Torah*, will he be able to acquire it.

Sheloh HaKadosh: One has a conjugal obligation to his wife on the night of her immersion in the *mikvah*. Why is this? At the time of conception, the evil forces try to negatively impact upon the potential of the child that is meant to be conceived. This is because every Jewish child has the potential to bring about unfathomable levels of spirituality and holiness into existence. Therefore the evil forces attempt to impact negatively upon the future of the child at the moment of conception.

Man's natural inclination is to be physically drawn and attracted to his wife. However, the *Torah* prohibits one to have physical contact with her during the time of her impurity (menstrual cycle). Thus, one must go against his natural inclination by refraining. This is considered a sacrifice. In the merit of this restraint, G-d responds measure for measure by rewarding the individual by intervening and not allowing the evil forces to tamper with the conception of the child on the night of immersion. Similarly, the conjugal obligation of a *Torah* scholar is on *Shabbos* since the essence of *Shabbos* has a semblance of the spirituality of the World to Come, the negative forces cannot detract from the purity of the child that is meant to be conceived.

The Pervasive Truth of G-d

Torah: "Distance yourself from a false word..." One would think that the *Torah* should have stated, "do not speak a false word." What is the significance of distancing oneself from falsehood? One could say that since a person is inclined and susceptible to speaking falsehood, one must take every precaution to distance himself from it.

Sforno: "One must remove himself from anything that will ultimately bring about falsehood. "

Mishna in *Pirkei Avos (Ethics of our Fathers)*: A judge should interrogate a witness in a manner that obscures the true intent of his questions. This is because if the

witness were to understand the intent of the questioner, he would consequently tell him what he wants to hear. This is what is communicated through the law, 'Distance yourself from a false word...' Thus, the *Torah* is teaching us that even if an individual does not speak falsehood, but engenders falsehood, he is in violation of this law.

Torah: "Do not execute the innocent or the righteous, for I shall not exonerate the wicked."

Rashi citing a *Gemara* in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: There are two scenarios. The first situation is when the court finds an individual guilty and subsequently new evidence arises that confirms his innocence. The *Gemara* tells us that the court must admit the new evidence and overturn the guilty verdict. An innocent man/tzaddik cannot be punished. The second situation is when the court rules that the individual is innocent and subsequently new evidence is presented that demonstrates his guilt. The *Gemara* tells us that the court is not permitted to retract its innocent verdict and he is not punished.

Chazal: "How is it possible that the *Torah* allows a guilty party to go free without punishment?" They answer, "G-d has many agents." Meaning, that although he will not be subject to the punishment of the court, ultimately Divine retribution will come upon him.

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: "The signet of G-d is Truth." If the signet of G-d is Truth, then the court which has been charged to mete out G-d's justice must therefore reflect His Signet, Truth. How is this possible? G-d's judgment is perfect without inequity because He is the Omnipotent One. However, a human being, regardless of his dimension of person and proficiency in the subject matter, is nevertheless subject to error. If so, how does the *Torah* rely on man's judgment to render justice?

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin* citing *Psalms*: "*Elokim netzav ba'adas keil* – G-d stands (associates Himself) with the congregation of G-d." Meaning, if the judges of the rabbinic court meet the criteria of the *Torah*, establishing them as a credible court, then G-d will associate Himself in judgment to give them the necessary clarity so that they should not err. They come upon their verdict through Divine Assistance. It is through G-d's eyes that their decision is formulated. Thus, there is no concern that their decision is anything but truth.

Midrash: “If there is justice below, there is no need for justice from above. However if there is no justice below, then there will be justice from above.” Meaning, if justice is issued by the earthly court, then there is no need for Divine Justice. However, if the court is corrupt and does not render proper decisions, then there will be Divine Justice, which is catastrophic and devastating.

Justice is a necessity for existence. If the earthly court functions as the implementers of justice, they are acting as G-d’s agents. Therefore Divine Justice is not necessary. However if they are corrupt, they do not represent G-d and therefore G-d must implement His own Justice. If new evidence comes to light that will exonerate the person that was found guilty by a proper court, then their verdict must be overturned. This is because G-d, allowing new evidence to surface before the execution, is an indication that He is involved with the process of the court and does not want this individual to be put to death.

Based on the Attribute of Justice, there is no perfect person. If the Attribute of Justice would be in effect, this individual (as well as any other individual) would surely deserve to die. Therefore if G-d allowed the court to overturn their verdict, it is an indication that He wants the Attribute of Mercy to be implemented. This itself is an expression of G-d’s Signet of Truth.

The Attribute of Mercy is dictating that the defendant must be given another chance. Therefore the *Torah* states, “Do not execute the innocent...” However, if new evidence were to be presented proving the guilt of the one who was found innocent by the court, they have no right to retract their decision of innocence. Although the individual is truly guilty, since the court had found him initially innocent, it would not reflect well on the court that acts as G-d’s agent to put to death one who was perceived to be innocent. However, if in fact he is truly guilty, justice will be meted out because G-d has many agents. Meaning, Divine Justice/retribution will ultimately come upon the individual.

Gemara in Tractate *Makkos* regarding two individuals: One of them had committed premeditated murder however it was not witnessed. Therefore, he could not be prosecuted by the court. The other individual killed inadvertently and his action was not witnessed. Therefore, he did not flee to a city of refuge as he was obligated to do.

Gemara: These two individuals met at an inn and shared a room for a night. The individual who had committed premeditated murder took the lower bunk and the inadvertent killer took the upper bunk. As the individual ascended the ladder to get to his bunk, he fell on the individual in the lower bunk and killed him. This was witnessed. Consequently, Divine Justice was meted out. The murderer in the lower bunk received the death sentence that he deserved and the inadvertent killer now must flee to the city of refuge as initially he was obligated to do. As it states, “G-d has many agents.”

Torah: Regarding the court, “Do not accept a bribe, for the bribe will blind those who see and corrupt words that are just.”

Chazal: The judge who accepts a bribe will ultimately forget his *Torah* study. This is because *Torah* is the ultimate in Truth and receiving a bribe is the antithesis of that. Thus, he is the equivalent of a tainted receptacle that does not have the capacity to contain G-d’s Wisdom, which is Truth.

An Important Aspect of Remembering Our Experience in Egypt

Torah: “You shall not aggrieve or oppress the stranger (convert), for you were strangers in the land of Egypt...”

Rashi: “The reason one is not permitted to aggrieve the convert (stranger) is just as you single him out because he is a stranger to be discriminated against, he too can say that you were also a stranger like himself in Egypt.”

Ramban: “G-d is saying, ‘Do not aggrieve the convert and victimize him because you believe that there is no one who can save him from your hand. Because you know that you were strangers in the land of Egypt and I saw how the Egyptians had victimized you and I avenged your plight. I see the tears of those who are victimized and do not have anyone to console them and have no power against their tormentors. I intercede and save all man from the hand that is stronger than he is.’

“Similarly there is a negative commandment not to oppress the widow and the orphan because they do not have anyone to defend them. G-d listens to their outcry because their faith is in Him. The spirit of the convert is low and he is pained and cries out. His eyes are always directed to G-d who will have mercy upon him as He had mercy upon the Jewish people when

they were in Egypt...” Why is G-d particularly sensitive to the pain of the convert, the widow, and the orphan?

Every day we declare the Unity and Kingship of G-d. We accept His dominion with the recitation of the *Shema*. However, we very often conduct ourselves in a manner that is incongruous to our stated belief that He is the Omnipotent One. We believe that our success is a result of our own initiative and not merely an endowment from G-d that has no relevance to our qualifications. One who chooses to victimize the weak does so because he feels and believes that there will be no reaction from society because it does not appreciate the plight of the weak.

By behaving in this manner, the oppressor/victimizer is in essence denying G-d's Dominion. If he truly believed in G-d as the Master of the Universe and consequently in Divine Retribution, he could not victimize another individual regardless of his helpless state. When one demonstrates, through his behavior of aggrieving the convert, widow, or orphan, that he does not believe in the dominion of G-d, the oppressor will be subject to Divine Retribution to demonstrate that He is the Master.

Gemara: One who lends money with interest (*ribis*) is the equivalent of denying the existence of the G-d of Israel. It is true that one who lends money with interest is violating a negative commandment; however, why do we classify him as a denier of G-d?

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: “One’s sustenance is set from *Rosh Hashanah* to *Rosh Hashanah*.” Meaning, G-d allocates one’s stipend for the entire year on *Rosh Hashanah*. One cannot earn more than what G-d has allotted for him, regardless of his efforts. If one chooses to increase his income through violating the *Torah*, he is in essence saying that he is the determiner of his own fate. In effect, in this person’s own eyes he believes that G-d has no relevance to his financial success. Thus, lending money with interest is a denial of the G-d of Israel.

Chofetz Chaim in *Ahavas Chesed*: Although it is permitted for one to lend money with interest using a special document (*heter iska*) that structures the “interest” as a dividend on an investment, one should refrain from doing so. “If one’s primary livelihood is not derived from these types of transactions, one should refrain from doing this to make a few extra slivers of silver. One should demonstrate chesed (kindness) to the individual who needs the loan.”

By believing that one could earn extra income at another’s expense, by using a “*heter iska*,” he is circumventing doing the true Will of G-d. A Jew who performs the mitzvos with a proper perspective to serve the Master will have a sense of G-d’s Presence in every aspect of his life. Even by only mentioning the Name of G-d, he will have a sense of His Presence. Because this person actualizes G-d in his life, through doing His Will, he would not consider lording over his fellow to any degree. Victimizing his fellow is not even to be considered.

Putting One’s Predicament into Perspective

Torah in the Ten Commandments: “You shall not covet your fellow’s house. You shall not covet your fellow’s wife, his manservant, his maid servant, his ox, his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your fellow.”

Ibn Ezra: “Many people are taken aback by this negative commandment. How is one to control his own feelings and emotions? I will explain it with an allegory. There was a villager who was well-rooted in common sense. When he sees the beautiful daughter of the king does it even enter into his heart that he should desire her or cohabit with her? He understands that such thoughts are meaningless because it is an impossibility for him to even approach her. He thinks to himself, ‘Am I not sane? When I see the birds flying in the sky does my heart lust to have wings as they do?’ He understands that these things have no relevance to him. Similarly does one have sexual desire for one’s own mother? Although she may be beautiful, he through conditioning understands that she has no relevance to him. Therefore anyone with intelligence should understand that whatever one has in life, it is unrelated to his own capability.”

Ibn Ezra: “One has only what G-d provides for him. Even if one does not toil, G-d will give him his portion. Children, livelihood, and quality of life are not determined by one’s merit, rather it is dependent on his *mazal*. One who understands this, will not desire anything that is not his own. After one understands that his fellow’s wife is forbidden to him by the *Torah*, he will know that she is even more removed from him than the king’s daughter is to the villager.

“As a result of this understanding, one will rejoice in his portion. If one understands that the reason

he does not have something is because G-d Willed it to be so, then he will be content. Is it possible to consider to take something against His Will? The only reason one does not rejoice in his portion is because he incorrectly believes that he should have what he does not."

The *Torah* is not telling us that one should not take the initiative to achieve more than what he has, rather, if he does not succeed in his endeavor he should understand that if G-d meant for him to succeed it would have been so. It is only then that one will rejoice in his portion.

Ibn Ezra addressing the aspect of the negative commandment of controlling one's emotion and desire: One must understand why does he believe that he deserves to have something that is not his. This is rooted in one's ego. One cannot rejoice in his portion/lot if he believes that he deserves minimally what his fellow has. One's level of expectation is determined by one's own perception of self worth. Consequently, the haughty individual will continuously pursue more than what he has without being content. However, if one is truly humble he understands that there is no basis for expectation because G-d determines what one receives.

Gemara in Tractate *Yoma*: "*Hillel* obligates the poor (regarding *Torah* study). After 120 years when one will pass away *Hillel* will be the basis for the prosecution of the poor person who did not designate time to study *Torah*. G-d will ask him, 'Did you set a specific time for daily *Torah* study?' He will answer, 'With all of my financial difficulties did I have any time in the day to study *Torah*? I needed every moment to eke out a living.' G-d will respond, 'Were you more destitute than *Hillel* the elder?'"

Every day *Hillel* would go out and chop wood to earn two pennies. He would give one coin to his wife to support his family and the other coin to be used as an

entrance fee to be admitted into the study hall. If *Hillel* took time out of his *Torah* studies each day to earn two pennies, why did he not simply take enough time in one day to earn all that was needed for the entire week? He could then study without interruption for the remainder of the week.

Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: If the *Torah* had not been given to *Moshe*, it could have been transmitted through *Hillel* the elder. His level of humility was sufficient for him to be qualified to receive the *Torah*. He understood that he only needed two coins per day. If he were to

earn more than the minimum that was necessary for that day, he would have excess funds that were not needed for that particular day. Although he knew that the additional money would be needed for the rest of the week, presently he would see it as excess.

By having the additional money in his possession, *Hillel* understood that it was possible that it could take him to new horizons of necessity. Understanding that this would be a potential pitfall, he did not want to earn more than the minimum that was necessary for that day. One should take initiative; however, the result of that initiative and level of success is only determined by G-d. Therefore only the one who rejoices in his portion will be truly satisfied with whatever the outcome will be because it is all determined by G-d Himself.



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