

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vaeschanan

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Their Self Interest in the New Judgement System	CLICK TO VIEW!
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Revealing The WHY Behind the Quintessential Disappointment

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- 1. The Jews merited three gifts in the desert due to Avraham's hospitality.
- 2. He hosted the angels and he offered the shade of his tree, water to wash their feet, and bread.
- 3. Gemara: We merited the wellspring of Miriam that provided water for forty years in the desert.
- 4. As the water was offered to the angels through an intermediary, it now came through Moshe unlike the Manna and Clouds of Glory.
- 5. Had Avraham offered the water himself Moshe wouldn't have had to hit the rock.
- 6. Why didn't G-d give Moshe clarity not to hit the rock?
- 7. It was in the Jews' best interest Moshe should not

- enter into the land.
- 8. A most serious sin of the desert was the Baal Peor.
- 9. If not for Pinchas' zealotry the Jewish people would have been destroyed.
- 10. Moshe's burial location was opposite Baal Peor.
- 11. Midrash: The deity of Baal Peor emerges yearly to prosecute the Jews for idolatry; when it sees the burial location of Moshe it sinks back into the ground.
- 12. The prosecution is quelled.
- 13. Initially Moshe was not aware of the importance of not crossing the Jordan.
- 14. For the sake of the survival of the Jewish people Moshe could not enter into the land.

Successor As Extender





- 1. G-d said to Moshe, "The conquest of the land will only come through Yehoshua.
- 2. Mishnah: Moshe received the Torah and transmitted it to Yehoshua.
- 3. Rashi: Yehoshua was most qualified to be the bearer of responsibility for the Torah; he was the youth who never separated from his Rebbe's tent.
- 4. Gemara: Moshe is the equivalent of the sun, and Yehoshua, the moon.
- 5. Yehoshua's total being was a reflection of his teacher.
- 6. Moshe tells the Jews they will worship idols after he dies.

- 7. Midrash: Although they did not become idolaters until after the death of Yehoshua as long as Yehoshua was alive Moshe considered it as if he was alive.
- 8. Moshe was told to pass his spirit on to Yehoshua.
- 9. Moshe caused the sun to stand still; so did Yehoshua.
- 10. Midrash: The King, through Justice, establishes the land.
- 11. The King is Moshe king of Torah.
- 12. The power to rule lies in one's dimension of Torah.
- 13. Yehoshua, a reflection of Moshe, also had this power.
- The camp of Yehuda tribes representing Torah were first in formation.

Cognizant Of The Medium Enables The Connection

CLICK TO VIEW!



- 1. Moshe says to the Jews "You who cleave to G-d are all alive today."
- 2. Maharal of Prague: G-d who is the source of all that exists, if one attaches himself to that source, is fully alive and functional.
- 3. Rambam: All blessings are Rabbinical except for grace after the meal.
- 4. Gemara: One has an obligation to recite 100 blessings daily.
- 5. A blessing that does not contain the name of G-d and that He is King of the universe is not a blessing.

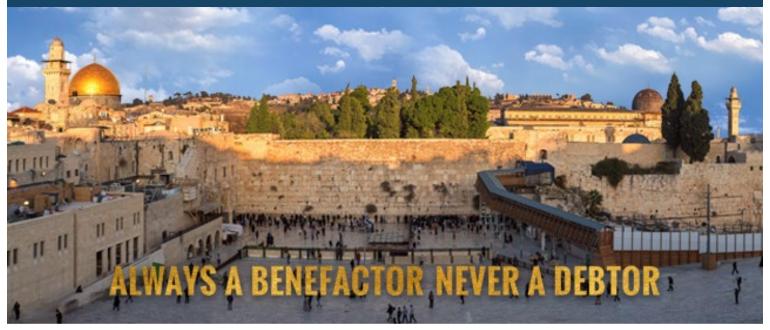
- 6. Baal Haturim: The word in Hebrew to cleave is "deveikim."
- 7. The numerical value of the letter Kuf is 100.
- 8. Many letters in the Torah have a small crown-they are called Tagim.
- 9. The Crown on the letter Kuf: One who wants to cleave to G-d must say 100 blessings a day.
- 10. The recitation of the blessings creates a cognizance of G-d's presence in one's life.
- 11. Perceiving G-d as Master, Almighty, and King creates the setting to be worthy to cleave.



Yad Avraham Institute

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vaeschanan



The Tzaddik's Perception of His Own Level of Accomplishment

Torah: "I implored (va'eschanan) – Hashem at that time..." Moshe supplicated G-d to allow him to enter into the Land of Israel despite the prior decree that he would not be allowed to do so.

Rashi citing Sifri: "'Va'eschanan (I implore)' is a term of supplication that implies that the basis for the request is rooted in G-d's graciousness. In essence, the supplicant is asking that G-d's response should be gratis. When a tzaddik prays to G-d, although he has sufficient merit upon which he could base his request, nevertheless, because he sees himself as unworthy, his request from G-d is to grant him a gift (matnas chinum)."

One's spiritual potential is unlimited. It is not possible for one to know if he has fully addressed his potential until after his passing. Therefore, if one should come before G-d and base his request on his personal merit, it would imply that the individual believes that he had sufficiently addressed his potential, which would be arrogant if he did not. This individual's perception of himself is analogous to an employee who has been hired to work for an employer for a period of time in order to achieve an objective. Rather than meeting his obligation, the employee chose to work only a fraction of the time that was allotted to him.

At the end of the day, when it was time to collect his wage, understanding that he did not work the requisite amount of time, he requested from the employer to be compensated for the minimal amount of time that he had worked. If this employee would understand and appreciate his level of failure, he would not have the audacity to ask his employer for the wage for the time that he had invested. In fact, he deserves no compensation because his investment of time had barely addressed the objective of his employment. Because of his negligence the objective failed.

Similarly, the *tzaddik*, understanding the extent of his obligation/mission and believing that he may have fallen short of addressing it, can only ask G-d to respond his prayers due to His graciousness (gift). It is evident from the works of *Chofetz Chaim* that he was one of the leading *Torah* Sages of his generation. Nevertheless, he is not recognized and revered for his greatness in *Torah*; rather, he is renowned for his piety and devoutness. *Rav Aaron Kotler z'tl* (Lakewood *Rosh HaYeshivah*) once asked the Brisker *Rav z'tl*, "Why is the *Chofetz Chaim* only known as the *chasid hador*-the most devoutly pious person of the generation, and not as the *gadol hador* – one of the leading *Torah* Sage of the generation?"

The Brisker Rav answered, "The Chofetz Chaim understood his own proficiency and erudition of Torah. One's degree of knowledge is based on fact. Because of his exceptional level of piety and humility he prayed to G-d that he should not be recognized or acknowledged for his level of accomplishment. Based on the principle, the tzaddik decrees and G-d fulfills that decree, Chofetz Chaim is not acknowledged as a leading Torah Sage. However, regarding his classification as "chasid (devoutly scrupulously pious)" he did not request that he should not be recognized as such because since he was in fact a chasid, an individual who possesses an unusual level of humility, he truly did not believe that he had addressed his spiritual potential sufficiently.

Sifri: "Why did Moshe ask G-d to respond to him, although he felt that he was undeserving? It is because G-d had said to Moshe regarding His Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, 'I shall be Gracious to the one to whom I will be Gracious.'" Based on this Sifri it seems that had it not been for the fact that G-d had said to Moshe that He would demonstrate his Graciousness, Moshe would have not implored G-d to allow him to enter into the Land based on his own merit.

Gemara in Tractate Berachos: "Do not open your mouth to satan." The understanding of this principle is, one should not say something that is self-incriminating because this will allow satan to begin prosecuting that individual. The Gemara tells a story of an individual who was grieving over the loss of a loved one. The mourner bemoaning his loss faulted himself by saying that was deserving of this punishment because his own sins had brought this tragedy upon him. A Torah scholar who was present

at the time of this remark explained to him that one is not permitted to speak in this manner because he is "opening his mouth to satan."

When one incriminates himself by verbalizing that one's suffering is due to one's spiritual failing, this allows satan to bring prosecution upon that individual. If a tzaddik supplicates G-d based on His Graciousness and not on his own self worth, seemingly there a degree of self-incrimination. The tzaddik in essence is saying that he is in fact unworthy to be answered on his own merit. If this is so, how do we understand the words of the Sifri that states that the devoutly righteous only pray to G-d to respond to them based on His Attribute of Graciousness?

The principle that is stated in the *Gemara* in *Berachos* only applies to the one who articulates that his plight is due to his own shortcomings. It is at that time that he invites prosecution upon himself. However, the *tzaddik*, who does not supplicate G-d based on his own merit has no relevance to this principle. Since the basis for asking G-d to respond gratis is only attributed to the *tzaddik*'s humility and piety, it is seen as something that is special. It would be considered arrogant for one to feel confident that he had fulfilled his potential.

Creating a Spiritual Mindset

Torah: Moshe said to the Jewish people, "Your eyes have seen what Hashem did with Baal-peor, for every man that followed Baal-peor- Hashem your G-d destroyed him from your midst. But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d, you are alive today (Vatem hadveikim ba'Shem Elokeichem chayim kulchem hayom)." Moshe contrasted those who attached themselves to Baal-peor with those who cleave to G-d. The ones who engaged in idolatry were destroyed while those who cling to G-d are alive today because they attached themselves to the source of life, who is G-d Himself.

Baal HaTurim: On the word "hadveikim (those who cling)" there is a crown on the letter "kuf" in the Torah scroll. The crown on the letter "kuf," which has the numerical value of 100, alludes to the fact that one has the obligation to recite 100 blessings each day.

Torah: Moshe said to the Jewish people, "Now... What (ma) does Hashem, your G-d, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem..."

Gemara in Tractate Menachos: The word "ma (what)" can be read as "meiah (100)." Chazal are teaching us that in order for one to fear G-d and ascend in one's spirituality one should recite a minimum of 100 blessings in a day. If one properly recites 100 blessings each day, one will have the capacity to revere G-d and address his obligation as a Jew. Through the articulation of a 100 blessings, which touch upon many aspects of one's existence, one acknowledges G-d as the Omnipotent Being and King of the Universe. When one is continuously cognizant of this fact, one will be sensitized to the fact that G-d Wills every aspect of his existence. Thus, causing him to revere G-d and follow His ways and dictates.

Rambam in the Laws of Blessings: There are three classifications of blessings. The classification of blessings known as "birchas ha nehenin" are those that are recited before one partakes of food or drink. The classification of blessings referred to as "birchas ha mitzvah" are those that are recited prior to the performance of a mitzvah. The third classification of blessings are referred to as "birchas shevach v'hodaah," which are blessings of thanks and praise. The third classification of blessing allows one to be continuously be cognizant of the Creator so that one should revere Him. (Although all blessings cause one to have a continuous cognizance of G-d, the third classification especially causes one to have a greater focus on this fact).

Gemara in Tractate Berachos: If one recites a blessing without mentioning the Name of G-d and identifying Him as "the King," although the individual had G-d in mind, the blessing has no value. Why is this so? Since the objective of a blessing is to make one cognizant of G-d so that he should revere Him, the blessing needs to acknowledge and identify G-d for Who and What He is. It is important to acknowledge G-d as "King" because it implies that the one reciting the blessing is His subject. This will cause the individual to be subservient to his Master. If one articulates a 100 blessings each day but does not focus on the content of the statement while reciting, it will not impact upon the individual.

The recitation of a blessing is more than uttering a specific phraseology. One must understand and appreciate firstly the dimension of one's Master and His ability. If one wants to cleave to G-d and have relevance to Him, as the Master/King of the Universe, he must recite 100 blessings. This is confirmed through the crown that is placed on the letter "kuf" that is found in the Torah Scroll.

Seeing A Torah Sage in His True Light

Torah: Moshe supplicated G-d to allow him to cross the Jordan and enter into the Land of Israel; however, G-d rejected Moshe's request. Moshe rebuked the Jewish people saying, "But Hashem became angry with me because of you, and He did not listen to me; Hashem said to me, 'It is too much for you! (Rav lach) Do not continue to speak to Me further about this matter."

Rashi: The words "Rav lach" (It is too much for you) can mean, "G-d told Moshe to cease his supplications because if he persisted and G-d would not respond, it would reflect negatively on Him. People would say that the Master is harsh the student is obstinate and unrelenting. Another explanation of 'Rav lach' is that although Moshe would not be allowed to enter into the Land, he already had much. Moshe's reward was great without him needing to enter into the Land." Why was it important for Moshe to share his dialogue with G-d to the Jewish people?

Gemara in Tractate Yoma tells us what is considered to be a desecration of G-d's Name (Chilul Hashem). Reb Yochanan says that if he would walk four cubits without wearing tefillin or studying Torah it would be considered a Chilul Hashem. If one were to see him without tefillin or not studying Torah, although it could be justified because it is permitted for him to be disengaged for that moment; nevertheless, because it could be perceived by another in a negative light it is considered to be a Chilul Hashem.

If one were able to draw from Reb Yochanon's behavior that one does not necessarily need to wear *tefillin* or study *Torah*, although it is a misperception of truth and reality; nevertheless, Reb Yochanon is culpable for causing a *Chilul Hashem* because his behavior was the cause of the misperception. *Rav* says that if he did not pay his butcher on time it would be considered a *Chilul Hashem*.

Rashi: It is because the butcher would say, "If the rabbi is permitted to steal, then I am permitted to steal." Although Rav's delayed payment is not considered stealing because he is only late in his payment of a debt (stealing is when one takes something that is not rightfully his), nevertheless, it is considered a Chilul Hashem because Rav is the cause of this misperception.

If Moshe would have stopped supplicating G-d, without offering the Jewish people an explanation, his standing would have been diminished their eyes. If in the past at the time of the sin of the Golden Calf and the sin of the Spies when G-d wanted to destroy the Jewish people, Moshe did not cease to beseech Him on their behalf until he achieved his objective, why would he cease supplicating G-d regarding his own predicament?

As a result of this unanswered question, they would have perceived *Moshe* in a negative light, thus diminishing his value in their eyes. Therefore his response to the Jewish people was, "If I were to continue supplicating G-d and He would reject my supplications, it would be perceived that the Master is harsh and the student is unrelenting." It would have reflected negatively on G-d as well as *Moshe*. If *Moshe* were minimized in the eyes of the Jewish people it would consequently minimize the infinite value of the *Torah*, because he was the conduit for Its transmission. It was therefore an imperative for *Moshe* to maintain his revered status.

Gemara: There is a Positive Commandment, "You shall fear (revere) G-d (Es Hashem Elokecha tirah)." You shall fear (revere) G-d." The word "es," which in its own right has no interpretation but indicates an adjunct to the subject matter that is being discussed (which is the reverence of G-d), comes to include Torah Sages. The Torah requires one to revere the Torah Sage no less than one must revere G-d Himself.

Maharal of Prague: The reason for this is that since the *Torah* Sage is the conduit for the transmission of *Torah*, by revering and esteeming this classification of person to the degree that one reveres G-d, it will cause the *Torah* Sage to be influential and impress the dictates of the *Torah* upon the Jewish people.

Rambam in the Laws of the Study of Torah: One is not permitted to be in the bathhouse with his rebbe (teacher). He is not permitted to be present when his rebbe is taking a haircut. A rebbe should not joke with his students or interact with them in a jovial manner. The rebbe must maintain an elevated status regarding his students so that they will see him as special and thus esteem him. If they were to regard him as a peer, they would be less attentive to his teachings. If the rebbe is not revered sufficiently then the Torah that he imparts to his students will not have the proper effect.

Although the students understand that the *rebbe's* human needs are no less then their own, by seeing him

in a human context, it will detract from their perception of him and consequently minimize his *Torah* teachings. *Moshe* needed to maintain the proper perception of who he was so that his actions should not be misconstrued and seen in a negative light. He therefore needed to tell the Jewish people that G-d had said, "Do not continue to speak to Me further about this matter."

The Setting of Life

Torah: "I implored (va'eschanan) Hashem at that time..." Moshe supplicated G-d to allow him to enter into the Land of Israel despite the prior decree that he would not be allowed to do so.

Rashi citing Chazal explaining based on Sifri: "'Va'eschanan (I implore)' is a term of supplication that implies that the basis for the request is rooted in G-d's graciousness. As G-d had said, "I shall be Gracious to the one to whom I will be Gracious." In essence, the supplicant is asking that G-d's response should be gratis.

Midrash: "Initially after the sin of the Golden Calf, when Moshe had asked G-d to reveal to him His Glory, Moshe asked, 'Master of the Universe, with which one of Your Attributes do you interact with this world?' G-d responded, 'I will show you. I will bring all of My good upon you. You should understand that I do not owe a thing to any living creature. When one performs a mitzvah, the reward he receives is gratis. As it states, 'I shall be Gracious to the one to whom I will be Gracious and I will be Merciful to the one to whom I will be Merciful.' Moshe asked, 'If this is so, then respond to my request (to enter into the Land) gratis.' Therefore, the Torah states, 'I implored (va'eschanan)." Moshe beseeched G-d to allow him to enter into the Land despite the fact that he was undeserving. It would only be by the Graciousness of G-d that Moshe's request would be fulfilled.

Chazal: G-d created the world to be a setting for man to fulfill the *Torah* and advance himself spiritually, through the context of free choice. If one is deserving, because he made the correct choice, then he will be rewarded. However, if one makes the incorrect choice and fails, then he is culpable for choosing what is unacceptable. Thus, man can only be rewarded or punished because his actions are attributed to himself because of his own choices. If this is so, how

do we understand the words of the *Midrash* – "G-d said to *Moshe*, 'When one performs a *mitzvah*, the reward he receives is gratis.'" This implies that G-d rewards the individual for performing a *mitzvah*, despite the fact that he is undeserving of that reward. Meaning, the reward that one receives is unrelated to one's *mitzvah* performance.

Eitz Yosef citing Eyov: "G-d said to Eyov, 'Who has done anything for Me that I should pay him?' G-d said, 'Has anyone performed the mitzvah of mezuzah without Me providing him with the house? (One is only obligated on a Torah level in the mitzvah of mezuzah if one owns a house). Has anyone circumcised a son without Me providing him with that son?' We find that man only performs a mitzvah after G-d has provided him with everything that he needs. Therefore, the reward that G-d bestows upon the individual is gratis."

Gemara in Tractate Nidah: Before a child is conceived an angel takes the droplet of semen before G-d, who pronounces upon it its destiny: "Strong or weak, wise or foolish, wealthy or poor..." This pronouncement is made before the conception of every human being. However the pronouncement of "tzaddik (righteous) or rasha (evil)" is not made because "All is predestined by heaven with the exception of the fear of G-d (heaven)."

Mishna in Ethics of Our Fathers: "Who is truly wealthy? He who is satisfied with his portion." One's material wealth is predetermined by G-d. It is not related to one's ability or intelligence. Thus, the one who is truly wealthy is the one who understands that his financial predicament is not dependent upon himself. He is satisfied with his portion because he understands that it is the one that G-d has deemed for him. The one who is satisfied with his portion appreciates the fact that the only initiative that can be attributed to himself is his fear of heaven.

Mishna: "Who is truly strong? He who is able to subdue his inclination." One's physical constitution is predetermined. Regardless of how much one may address his physical state, the result is only to the degree that G-d had predetermined. Thus, the one who is truly strong is the one who is able to subdue his evil inclination. Factually speaking, if one does not take the initiative to pursue wealthy, one would not become wealthy. If so, if it as pronounced at the time of conception that one will be wealthy, how is it actualized if one chooses not to take the initiative?

G-d compels the individual who is destined to become wealthy to pursue wealth. He motivates that individual

to take the initiative to attain wealth. The individual has no choice in the matter because it was predestined. However, regarding one's pursuit of spirituality, G-d does not compel him to do so. He does not put in one's mind the desire to become a *tzaddik* nor does G-d compel one to become evil. This is the only aspect of one's existence that is completely determined by one's own choice.

G-d provides one with the material context in which one should be able to make the choices that are necessary. It is true that one cannot perform a circumcision upon one's child unless G-d provides him with that child; however, the decision to perform the circumcision is one's own. Relatively speaking, one's initiative to perform a *mitzvah* is minute and inconsequential compared to all that G-d has given the individual to be able to perform that particular *mitzvah*.

Therefore, since one's contribution to a *mitzvah* is actually a pittance compared to the totality of the setting. Thus, the reward that one receives is truly based on G-d's Graciousness and not on his own initiative. It is analogous to one who has been given a boat in the sea upon which to navigate and a current to carry the boat. The only initiative that one needs to take is in which direction to turn the rudder.

Chazal: Moshe was endowed with extraordinary abilities and potential. When he was born the house radiated with holiness and he was able to speak and walk as a newborn infant. The Divine Presence was upon him. Thus, comparatively speaking to his own initiative, his dimension of being was unrelated to himself because it was based on G-d's endowment and thus predetermined. Therefore, when Moshe beseeched G-d he understood that his actual investment, his initiative, was minuscule compared to G-d's endowment. He thus asked G-d to answer his request gratis based on His Graciousness.

Dedication and Sacrifice Reflects Value (from Devarim)

Torah: Before Moshe passed away he rebuked the Jewish people for many of their 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, "The thing that you propose to do is good."

Rashi citing Chazal: "The response of the Jewish people was for their own self interest. They should have responded by saying, 'Our teacher Moshe, from whom is it better to learn from, you or your student? Is it not better to learn from you, who suffered and sacrificed for the sake of acquiring the Torah?' Since you did not respond in this manner I understand that you were acting out of self-interest..." Where do we see that Moshe had suffered for the sake of acquiring the Torah?

Midrash: "Moshe had suffered for the sake of the acquisition of Torah. He was denied physical sustenance for forty days and nights when he ascended to heaven to receive the Torah from G-d. As he told the Jewish people before his passing, 'Bread I did not eat. Water I did not drink...' Why is it relevant for Moshe to share this fact with the Jewish people? Moshe was teaching the Jewish people that the way to acquire Torah must be similar to his own. He had said, 'Just as I sacrificed my blood and fat for the sake of the acquisition of Torah, so too must you be willing to sacrifice your physicality/ material comforts in order to acquire Torah.' Only then will you merit to come upon its truths."

A rebbe (teacher) is a conduit to the student for the transmission of *Torah*. The spiritual dimension of the rebbe will determine the degree of transmission to the student, if he is worthy. If the rebbe and the student are both of a special level, the student will be a beneficiary of a unique level of *Torah*. This is not based on one's intellectual capacity. One's level of selfless dedication to the acquisition of *Torah*, will determine one's level of success. The more one is willing to sacrifice for Its acquisition will he merit Divine Assistance.

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, through sacrifice, which

is the toil and dedication to comprehend it. Why must one sacrifice to comprehend the *Torah*? The verse in Proverbs states that G-d said to the Jewish people, "I (G-d) have given you a *lekach tov* (a good commodity) My *Torah* do not abandon."

G-d Himself refers to the *Torah* as the most precious commodity in existence. He is only willing to impart it to one who values and esteems it as it should be. This is demonstrated through one's willingness to sacrifice for its acquisition. However, if one is not willing to sacrifice for it, this is an indication that he does not value it sufficiently. Therefore, G-d will not entrust His most precious gift with that individual.

Ramban in his introduction to the *Torah*: Every letter contained in the *Torah* is part of one of the many unpronounceable Names of G-d. The letters of the *Torah* are only set in this manner to communicate the narrative that G-d wants to transmit. Thus, when one engages in *Torah* study, one is in fact engaging in what is the ultimate in holiness, which are the Names of G-d. When studying *Torah* with the proper reverence, one attaches himself to G-d in the most intimate way. This is indicated by one's application of oneself for Its acquisition. If one is not willing to sacrifice for something of this dimension value, then it is disgraceful. This is because when one has the opportunity to cleave to G-d but is not willing to sacrifice for the result, he is demonstrating a lack of reverence.

The Torah Itself is the ultimate (talmid Torah kineged kulum) because it encompasses everything, as G-d Himself does. The study of the Torah is the attachment of oneself to G-d because it is Its essence. Thus, it is only the one who is willing to sacrifice for It that will be worthy of Its truth. This is the reason Moshe said to the Jewish people, "Just as I sacrificed my blood and fat for the sake of the acquisition of Torah, so too must you be willing to compromise on your physicality/material comforts in order to acquire Torah."



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