



YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Re'eh

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

The Blessing & The Curse

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Ask Only for Matnas Chinam

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It is a Violation to Erase Hashem's Name

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Do Not Add or Detract from the Torah

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Modifying Physicality To Address The Intellectual Component

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1. Moshe ascended to Heaven for 40 days and nights to receive the first set of tablets.
2. After the Tablets were smashed due to the sin of the golden calf, the Jews needed to be forgiven.
3. Moshe ascended for another 40 days and nights to supplicate G-d for forgiveness.
4. They were forgiven.
5. Moshe ascended for another 40 days and nights to receive the second set of Tablets.
6. When Moshe recounts to the Jews at the end of 40 years, he said, "Bread I did not eat and water I did not drink."
7. Why was it important to inform the Jews that he did eat when he was in heaven to receive the Torah?
8. Midrash: Moshe said to the Jewish people: Just as I gave my blood and fat for the acquisition of Torah, you must do the same to minimize your physicality for its acquisition.
9. Pirkei Avos: This is the way of Torah: Bread in salt you shall eat, water in small measure you shall drink, on the ground you shall sleep, a life of deprivation you shall live.
10. The source of the Mishnah is Moshe's communication with the Jewish people regarding the acquisition of Torah.
11. Midrash: Moshe in Heaven was taught the Torah in its entirety every day for 40 days.
12. Every day he would forget what he was taught.
13. This would repeat itself for 40 days.
14. What was G-d teaching Moshe causing him to forget what he was taught?
15. As he retained it after 40 days he could have retained after the first day.
16. To understand Torah and retain Torah one needs special Divine assistance.
17. By minimizing one's physicality one has a greater capacity for the spiritual.

Impenetrable to the Phenom that is the False Prophet

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. A true prophet is established by performing a supernatural act and foretelling the future.
2. Should he say in the name of G-d that they engage in idolatry he is a false prophet.
3. Torah: "You should not heed the words of the prophet. G-d is testing you to see whether you love him with all your hearts and souls."
4. How is listening to the prophet a test of one's love of G-d if one believes he speaks in the name of G-d?
5. There is a mitzvah to love G-d with all your heart, soul & possessions.
6. Sifri: The Shma continues, you should put these words on your heart and teach them to your students.
7. One comes to love G-d through the study of Torah and its dissemination to students.
8. One is only imbued with love for G-d if one is spiritualized through Torah.
9. A physical being is affected by physical phenomena.
10. The false prophet is imposing due to his credentials as a prophet.
11. Rejecting the prophet is not simple due to his concern for his own wellbeing
12. Spiritualized through Torah, one internalizes his love for G-d and isn't intimidated.
13. Whether one succumbs to the false prophet is thus a test of one's love for G-d.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Re'eh



How does One Create a Consciousness of Hashem's Presence?

Torah: "And you shall eat it before Hashem, your G-d, in the place that He will choose to rest His Name – the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, and the firstborn of your cattle and your flocks, so that you will learn to fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days." The *Torah* tells us in this verse that the reason why one must eat his tithes and offerings in Jerusalem is to learn to fear Him. Why does the *Torah* use the terminology "so that you will learn to fear Hashem? If the purpose of the eating in Jerusalem is so one fears Hashem, the *Torah* should have stated, "so that you will fear Hashem". What is the meaning of "learning" to fear Hashem? How does one "learn" to fear Hashem?

Sforno: Jerusalem is the location of the *Sanhedrin HaGadola* (The Great High Court of Israel) which is comprised of seventy one ordained judges with the greatest proficiency on *Torah*. Any *halachic* question

that was presented to the *Sanhedrin* was resolved with absolute clarity. If one had the opportunity to experience this through the teachings of the *Sanhedrin*, he would then fear Hashem as a result.

Pirkei Avos (Ethics of Our Fathers): "Choose a *Rav* (Teacher) for yourself so that you may be removed from questionable circumstances." The key in life is to remove oneself from questionable or "gray" areas because it is in these situations that one can justify any action based on one's self interest. In reality life is not ambiguous, but rather "black" or "white". Regardless of how it is perceived, one either does the right thing or the wrong thing. However, the way one comes to see life in this context and is able to make these distinctions is only from having the proper *Rav*.

The reason why Hashem chose Jerusalem as the location to eat one's tithes and offerings is to give people the opportunity to benefit from the rulings and direction of the *Sanhedrin*. By being exposed to

this level of clarity afforded by the *Sanhedrin*, one was removed from ambiguity. Thus going to Jerusalem was an experience of “learning” to fear *Hashem* through a new level of comprehension.

The word for “fear” in Hebrew is *yirah* which is from the word *ro’eh* which means “to see”; this means that if one sees clearly then one fears. For example, if one is walking along the bank of a river and is about to fall to his death, but believes that he is actually in a secure location, he is oblivious to the impending danger. At that moment he feels confident and free of any fear because he lacks understanding of the tragedy that is about to befall him. Identically we feel deserving and confident in our lives and do not have a fear of *Hashem* only because we lack that clarity which is necessary to appreciate the consequences of our actions.

Rabbeinu Yona in his commentary in Tractate *Berachos*: If a person had eaten fat that has a questionable status regarding whether it comes from the part of the animal that would classify it as Kosher or the part that would classify it as un-Kosher, (and carries the liability of spiritual excision), one must bring a questionable guilt offering until it can be determined. If it is ultimately decided that he had eaten the non-Kosher fat (*Cheilev*), then he must bring a guilt offering. On a *Torah* level, there is no minimum requirement of how much must be expended for the purpose of this offering. However, the *Rabbis* did establish a minimum cost.

Rabbeinu Yona: The reason for this rabbinic requirement is that if one is not certain if he is in violation, the tendency of a person is to rationalize that he probably is not. Consequently, by not feeling the gravity of the situation, he would not do proper *teshuvah*. Therefore the *Rabbis* established a minimum requirement for the cost of the offering to give one an understanding of the seriousness of the predicament and that perhaps having eaten the *Cheilev* carries a severe liability. When one perceives the world through his own understanding, he sees life as “gray”. However, if one sees the world through the eyes of the *Torah* then he sees the world in the context of “black” and “white,” right and wrong, permissible and non-permissible.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: One should not live in the same community as his *rebbe* (teacher) if he is not going to abide by his rulings. *Shlomo HaMelech* (King Solomon), the wisest man who ever lived, waited until the passing of his *rebbe* to marry the daughter

of Pharaoh (*Bas Pharaoh*) because he would not have approved of the marriage. If King Solomon felt that the marriage to *Bas Pharaoh* was permitted and appropriate, then why did he not marry her during his *rebbe*’s lifetime? Couldn’t he have justified this union on the same basis during his *rebbe*’s lifetime as he did after his passing? Why did he wait?

The answer is – one may have all the answers and convincing arguments to justify what one chooses to do, however, inwardly one has a sense of what is right and wrong. King Solomon could have presented an irrefutable position and in terms to which his *rebbe* could not respond. Nevertheless he knew that his *rebbe* would not approve. Therefore he waited until he passed away and only then did he marry *Bas Pharaoh*.

The pathway to fearing *Hashem* is to reduce the ambiguity in one’s Judaism. The only way that this can be accomplished, as prescribed in *Pirkei Avos*, is by choosing the proper *Rav* who will teach him *Torah*. It is only through *Torah* study that one can gain clarity which ultimately results in fearing *Hashem*. This is why the *Torah* tells us that one must go to Jerusalem to eat his tithes and his offerings in order to “learn” to fear *Hashem*.

How to Grow Spiritually

Torah: In order for the Jews to inherit the Land of Israel and dwell in it in safety, they must first obliterate all of the idolatry and its locations from the Land. Only then would the Jews be able to bring their own offerings to *Hashem* and rejoice with their families in the Land.

Dovid HaMelech (King David) in *Psalms*: “Remove yourself from evil and then do good.” Meaning, that succeeding in a spiritual endeavor is predicated on the removal of the wrong which is contradictory to spirituality. One cannot grow spiritually when he is straddling both sides of the fence of good and evil. One must first remove himself from evil and only then can he move forward and do good.

Moshe in the Name of *Hashem*: In order for the Jews to inherit the Land, they must first eliminate all traces of idolatry and then establish themselves in the service of *Hashem*. At the time of the completion of studying a Tractate (*Siyum*), a *Kaddish* is recited (which is similar a mourner’s *Kaddish*). It concludes, “We will reestablish

the city of Jerusalem and establish His (*Hashem's*) Sanctuary in it and we will uproot any false (idolatrous) worship from the Land and return the service of heaven to its location..."

One cannot build a structure on a weak foundation. If the foundation is defective then ultimately the structure will fall. In order to establish a solid foundation, the *Torah* tells us that we must first eliminate the evil before we can build the good. One may enjoy and feel benefit from studying *Torah* and praying to *Hashem*. However, if he simultaneously behaves in a manner that is not consistent with the *Torah*, it will actually undermine the effect of his learning and prayer. Consequently the study and prayer has a reduced level of value.

In order to be positively impacted by one's *Torah* study, one must abide its dictates and continuously try to advance his spirituality by doing more good and less wrong. Therefore, for us to maximize on the good that we do, we must try to eliminate the wrong. To whatever degree we eliminate the wrong; the right will have that much greater value.

A Jew Should Never Despair Because He is Never Alone

Torah: "You are children to *Hashem*, your G-d – you shall not cut yourself and you shall not make a bald spot between your eyes for a dead person. For you are a holy people to *Hashem*, your G-d, and *Hashem* has chosen you for Himself to be a treasured people, from among all the peoples on the face of the earth." In certain societies, they lacerate themselves and pull the hair out of their heads when grieving for their dead. The *Torah* prohibits this type of behavior for a Jew. The reason why a Jew is not permitted to express his grief in this manner is because the Jews are a "holy people to *Hashem*..."

Sforno in his commentary: "It is not appropriate to show extreme worry and pain for any relative who passes away because there is a relative who is of greater importance and value to that person and who is the basis of all good (that being *Hashem*)". Therefore *Moshe* says to the Jewish people, "You are G-d's Children" to indicate that He is our eternal Father and there is no basis to worry and grieve at an extreme level for the deceased.

Regardless of who passes away, a Jew is never abandoned by *Hashem*. Just as a parent loves his child more than the child could ever love his parent, the *Torah* is teaching us that *Hashem* values us as His Children. If a Jew was to lacerate himself or pull the hair out of his head as a result of a person passing away, this behavior would indicate that he believes that he has nowhere to turn and he is in a hopeless state. This is a denial of *Hashem's* special relationship with him.

It is a rejection of a basic tenet of Jewish belief that when a person passes away, his spirituality, which is his essence, is eternal. Therefore a person who grieves in this manner not only denies *Hashem's* special relationship with him, but also denies the existence of an eternal soul. Thus, it is a Negative Commandment to express grief in this manner.

Torah: *Sarah*, our Matriarch, gave her maidservant *Hagar* (the daughter of Pharaoh) to *Avraham* (her husband) to beget him children. Many years after *Hagar* had given birth to *Ishmael*, *Sarah* asked *Avraham* to drive *Hagar* and her son from their home. *Hashem* said to *Avraham*, "You must heed the word of *Sarah*." After they were driven into the desert, the *Torah* tells us that *Hagar* "went and she strayed in the desert."

Rashi citing the *Midrash*: "Straying" means that *Hagar* had returned to the idolatry of her father's house. A great *Torah* Sage once asked: "How is it indicated from the words "straying on the way" that *Hagar* returned to the idolatry of her father's house?" Seemingly the *Torah* is telling us that *Hagar* was wandering in the desert after she had lost her way. This *Torah* Sage answered that *Chazal* understand that "straying" must mean returning to idolatry because a Jew who is connected to *Hashem* is never lost.

A Jew never "strays" aimlessly because he always has *Hashem* to whom he can turn, just as a son turns to a father. If the *Torah* uses this term it is a clear indication that *Hagar* returned to idolatry and severed her relationship with *Hashem*. If a Jew understands and internalizes that all that he has is given to him (including his own existence), regardless of how alone he may feel, he is not alone.

When *Hashem* took the Jewish people as His kingly, priestly and holy Nation, he communicated to us how special we truly are to Him. Therefore we must always understand and appreciate that we are the Children of

Hashem and as a parent loves a child, *Hashem* loves us. Regardless of what we experience in life, *Hashem* is always there providing us with all of our needs.

What is so Unique about the Prophecy of Moshe?

The *Yud-Gimel Ikrei Emunah* (Thirteen Tenets of Judaism) outlines the fundamental principles of Jewish belief. One of the Tenets is, "I believe with absolute faith that the words of the Prophets are true." One would think that believing in *Hashem* would be sufficient; however, we see from this Tenet that it is not enough to believe in G-d but one must also believe that the words of the Prophets are true.

The reason why one must believe that the words of the Prophets are synonymous with the word of *Hashem* is because it is not enough to believe that *Hashem* created the world and maintains existence. One must also believe that existence has a purpose and that is to fulfill the Will of *Hashem*. *Hashem's* Will is only known to us through the Prophets who communicate to us.

Another Tenet of Jewish belief is, "I believe with absolute faith that the prophecy of *Moshe Rabbeinu* is true and that he is the father of all of Prophets – all the Prophets that preceded him as well as those who come after him." The question is why is it not sufficient to believe that the Prophets communicate the word of *Hashem*? Why is it if one does not believe that *Moshe* was the greatest of all Prophets he is considered a heretic? Why would it not be sufficient to believe that the prophecy of *Moshe* is true – thus establishing the authenticity of *Torah*? The question is – how does one establish himself as a prophet, a person who communicates the Word of *Hashem*?

Rambam: The verification process to establish a prophet as *Hashem's* spokesman is as follows: Firstly, he must perform a supernatural act. Secondly, he must forecast the future and that event must come about. The source for this criteria itself, is the *Torah*. If one performs a

miracle and accurately predicts the future, then he has established himself as a prophet of *Hashem*.

Torah: "If there should stand up in your midst a prophet or a dreamer of a dream, and he will produce to you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes about, of which he spoke to you saying, "Let us follow gods of others that you did not know and we shall worship them!" – Do not hearken to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer of a dream, for *Hashem*, your G-d, is testing you to know whether you love *Hashem*, your G-d, with all your heart and with all your soul."

Despite the fact that this person performed a miracle and predicted the future, if he suggests to the Jews that they should serve idolatry, then he has established himself as a false prophet. He is definitely not speaking in the Name of G-d. The only reason why the false prophet had the ability to perform the miracle and predict the future was because *Hashem* endowed him with that ability in order to test the Jewish people.

The basis for classifying this prophet as false is because *Moshe Rabbeinu* communicated to us in the Name of *Hashem* that such a person is a false prophet. The question to ask is – if this prophet, who had already established himself as a true prophet (through performing the miracle and predicting the future) should counter *Moshe Rabbeinu* by saying that in fact G-d communicated to him that the Jews should worship idolatry and *Moshe's* communication is false – then how does one determine who is more correct – *Moshe Rabbeinu* or this prophet who established himself?

Rambam in *Hilchos Yisodei HaTorah* (The Laws of the Fundamentals of *Torah*) that the reason we know that *Moshe* is the true prophet of *Hashem* is because every Jew who was present at Sinai witnessed *Hashem* openly communicating to *Moshe* what he should transmit to the Jewish people. The basis for *Moshe* being established as the prophet of *Hashem* is factual whereas the validity and establishment of all other prophets is based on the criteria that is set forth by the *Torah*, which is synonymous with the word of *Moshe*.



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