

ALWAYS A BENEFACTOR NEVER A DEBTOR

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: V'eschanan Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weekly Video: Mercy Allows Our Supplication

CLICK TO VIEW!



Ostensibly Rational Yet Unfathomable

CLICK TO VIEW!



Cease Supplication

CLICK TO VIEW!



Overcoming The Exactness Of Justice

CLICK TO VIEW!



Revealing The WHY Behind the Quintessential Disappointment

CLICK TO VIEW!



1. The Jews merited 3 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 40 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.

ALWAYS A BENEFACTOR NEVER A DEBTOR

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: V'eschanan Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Successor As Extender

CLICK TO VIEW!



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.
14. The camp of Yehuda – tribes representing Torah – were first in formation.

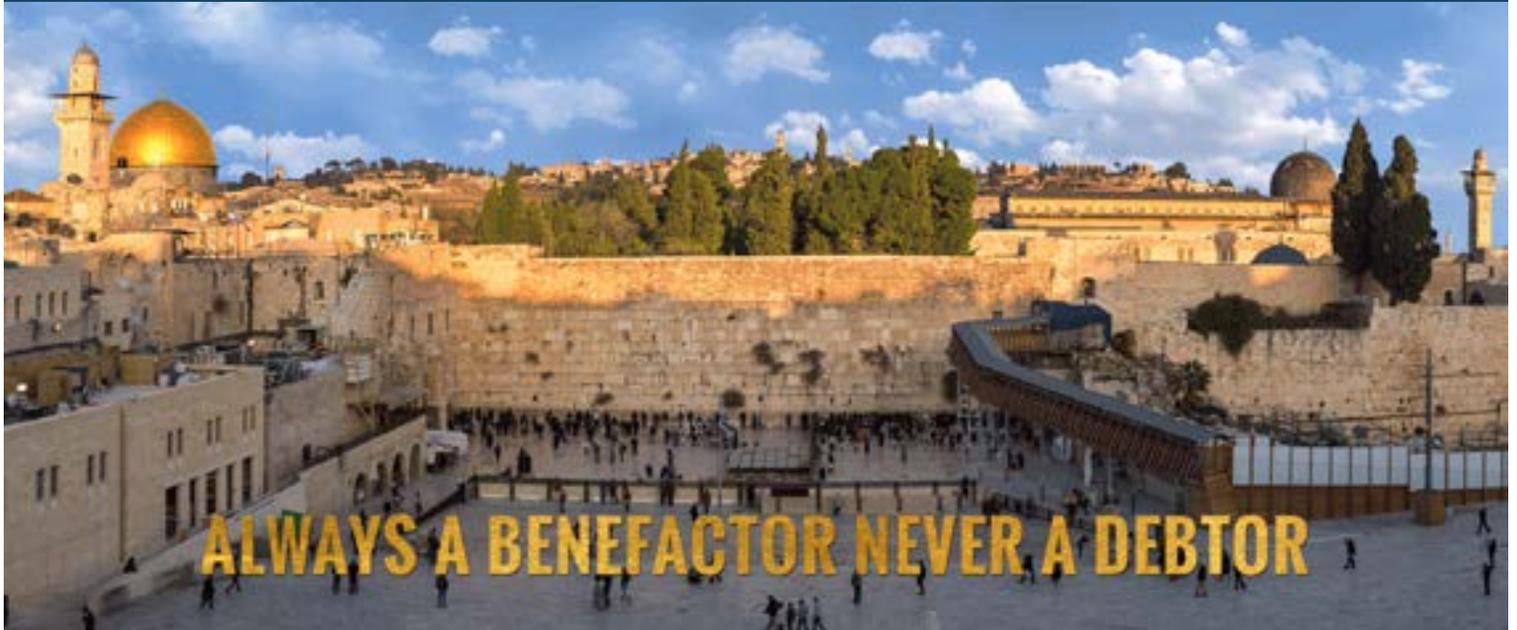
Cognizant Of The Medium Enables The Connection

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.

Weekly Torah Commentary Series: V'eschanan



The Tzaddik's Understanding of his Obligation to G-d

Torah: G-d decreed that *Moshe* would not enter into the Land of *Canaan*, rather he would pass away on the trans-Jordan side. The Portion of *Va'eschanan* begins, "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; however, G-d did not heed his request.

Torah: *Moshe* reprimanded the Jewish people for the sin of the spies. After the sin they bemoaned their predicament and cried. Despite their expression of remorse, G-d did not accept their repentance.

Sforno: The reason G-d did not heed their cries was because they had caused a desecration of His Name by believing the slanderous reports of the spies, rather than having faith in G-d. The weeping of the Jewish people was a result of being informed by G-d that they

would all perish in the desert. Thus, their crying was not out of love for G-d but rather they were repenting because of their own situation. Had their repentance been based upon the desecration of G-d's Name that they had brought about, rather than upon themselves, G-d would have forgiven them.

Although *Moshe* supplicated G-d for forgiveness to allow him to enter into the Land, his prayers were not heeded. Why was this so?

Sforno: *Moshe's* supplications were not accepted because he did not pray immediately upon being told of the decree. Rather he waited until this very moment. As a result of the success of his past supplications on behalf of the Jewish people, *Moshe* believed that it was not necessary to beseech G-d immediately. He could do that at another time. However, he was mistaken. Since he did not pray immediately, G-d was not receptive to his plea.

When Moshe supplicated G-d he used the expression of “imploring (*va’eschanan*).”

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 should respond despite his lack of being deserving. 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*).”

We say in the *Amidah* (Silent Prayer) that is recited on *Shabbos* morning, “*Moshe* rejoiced in the gift of his portion...” What was his portion? *Moshe* received a portion in *Torah* that will never be equaled by any person. He also was given a unique level of responsibility for the spiritual future of the Jewish people that was commensurate with his portion.

Moshe rejoiced being privileged and honored for being able to serve G-d, the Omnipotent One and Master of existence. He was only able to appreciate this responsibility as the ultimate privilege because he was G-d’s faithful servant. As it states, “You (G-d) called him a faithful servant.” Because *Moshe* was the most humble person to ever walk the face of the earth, he was able to see G-d on a level that was unequaled by any other human being. He therefore rejoiced, despite his level of obligation.

Moshe did not for one moment feel that he was deserving of reward for his unparalleled service of G-d, but rather, the honor of being able to serve His Maker itself was the reward. This is the reason he did not feel that he was deserving of anything. It is only the *tzaddik*, who sees G-d as his benefactor and the ultimate master, who can experience serving G-d as a privilege. It is only the Jew who lives for himself, that cannot understand and appreciate who G-d is. He sees his obligation as a semi-burden and thus does not internalize it as a privilege. The blessing which one recites before the study of *Torah* states, “You have chosen us from all the nations to give us Your *Torah*.”

The Jew must understand that he was chosen to be given something that has a dimension of value which is one of a kind.

King Solomon in Proverbs: “G-d said to the Jewish people, ‘I have given you a special/good commodity, do not abandon it.’” If one truly understands this, one is able to comprehend what is stated in the *Mishna* in Ethics of Our Fathers, “If you had learned an enormous amount of *Torah*, do not pride yourself in it because it is for that you were created.”

We find that the First and Second Temple are alluded to by the *Torah* as “the collateral” of the Jewish people. Meaning, that G-d destroyed the First and Second Temple rather than destroying the Jewish people. He had taken both Temples as collateral, rather than bringing total destruction upon His people. *Moshe*, not being allowed to enter into the Land guaranteed the survival of the Jewish people. This is because had he crossed into the Land and built the Temple, it could have never been destroyed.

Anything with which *Moshe* had been associated assumed a dimension of eternity and permanence because of his own level of holiness. Although we are pained and we mourn and grieve the destruction of the Temple, we must appreciate G-d’s Kindness for taking it from us rather than His expending his Wrath upon His beloved people. In actuality, we are not mourning the destruction of the edifice, but rather the distance between G-d and ourselves that is caused by our sins.

Egypt, the Iron Crucible

Torah: “(*Moshe* recounted to the Jewish people) *Hashem* has taken you and had withdrawn you from the iron crucible, from Egypt, to be a nation of heritage for Him, as this very day.” The *Torah* refers to Egypt as “the iron crucible” in order to convey that just as a smelter extracts the impurities from iron, so too did the bondage of Egypt remove the spiritual impurities from the Jewish people. Although the bondage in Egypt was severe, it had a purging effect on the Jewish people.

Torah regarding the splitting of the Sea: “*Moshe* stretched out his hand over the Sea... The Children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the Sea; the water was a wall (*choma*) for them, on their right and on their left.”

Chazal: The word “*choma* (wall)” which refers to the wall of water surrounding the Jewish people in the Sea, is written with the letter “*vav*” deleted. Thus, the word can be read as “*cheima*,” which means “wrath.”

Midrash: As the Jewish people walked between the walls of water through the Sea, the angels began prosecuting them before G-d. They had said, "Why are you sparing the Jewish people and destroying the Egyptians? These are idolaters and these are idolaters." Since the Jewish people had fallen to the level of paganism to no less a degree than the Egyptians, why are the Egyptians more culpable than the Jewish people?

The Jewish people should have perished as the Egyptians had in the Sea. Despite the fact that the original seventy members of *Yaakov's* family who had come to Egypt were the equivalent of living angels, their descendants had become completely acculturated into the pagan society of Egypt. The Jewish people only retained three aspects of their identity: their names, attire, and the Hebrew language (The holy tongue). In all other respects, the Egyptian experience had transformed a nation of devout people into idolaters.

Chazal: Although the Jewish people had witnessed the Ten Plagues and the Splitting of the Sea, which were revealed miracles, and G-d had spoken to them "face to face" at Sinai when they received the *Torah* at Sinai, they failed with the sin of the Golden Calf because there was a trace of impurity from their idolatrous past in Egypt. When they found themselves in a precarious state, believing that *Moshe* had passed away and were left stranded alone in the desert, they gravitated to their past, which was idolatry. If this is so, it would seem that Egypt was the antithesis of the "iron crucible" that had removed impurities of the Jewish people. To the contrary, Egypt was the setting that caused them to absorb the most extreme level of spiritual impurity that could not be extracted. In what context was Egypt the equivalent of the "iron crucible?"

Torah: At the Covenant between the Parts, after G-d had promised *Avraham*, our Patriarch, that the Jewish people would inherit the Land of *Canaan*, *Avraham* asked G-d, "How will I know that my children will inherit it?" This was considered an inappropriate question for *Avraham*, since G-d's Promise was not contingent on any issue. Rather, it was an unconditional gift.

Therefore, there was no basis for *Avraham's* question. He should have had trust in G-d. Because he had asked this inappropriate question a spiritual impurity had entered into his own spiritual make up and thus needed to be purged. The Jewish people, being his

descendants, possessed this impurity. They needed to be purged through the difficult bondage in Egypt. As the verse states, "You shall know that your offspring will be strangers in a land that is not their own. There, they will be enslaved and afflicted for 400 years."

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: Although the Jewish people did succumb to idolatry in Egypt, they experienced overwhelming suffering through backbreaking enslavement. The suffering that they had experienced through the bondage was part of an atonement process which resulted in a spiritual purification. The setting and situation of the Jewish people in Egypt caused them to become vulnerable to their masters' pagan beliefs.

Although the Jewish people had become idolaters, their essence remained unaffected. Assuming a pagan belief was based on each individual's own choice. Factually, the spiritual impediment that was caused because of *Avraham's* sin was removed. They thus had the capacity and potential to rise to unlimited spiritual heights.

Torah: "Moshe and Aaron went and gathered all the elders of the Children of Israel. Aaron spoke all the words that *Hashem* had spoken to *Moshe*...and the people believed." After *Moshe* had presented his credentials as G-d's agent to be the Redeemer of Israel, which was through the performance of specific miracles, the Jewish people believed in G-d. Despite the fact that until that moment, they were fully immersed in their idolatrous beliefs, when they witnessed the Hand of G-d through *Moshe* performing the various miracles, they had the ability to recognize the truth. Consequently, they chose to bring about a work stoppage, believing that their redemption was imminent. The spiritual obstruction that they had inherited as a result of *Avraham's* failing, had been purged. If in fact the bondage and suffering did not impact upon them by removing the spiritual obstruction, they would have been as impervious to the miracles as the Egyptians were. They would have thus remained unaffected.

Every morning we recite among the many blessings, "Blessed are You, *Hashem* our G-d...Who releases the imprisoned (bound)." Although one may not be confined to an actual prison, each individual has his own spiritual impediments and blockages, which are the equivalent of a prison. One is not able to advance and succeed because of this level of interference. We therefore acknowledge G-d as the One who provides

the Divine Assistance to extricate one from this spiritual confinement and allow us to see and internalize His truth that exists. It was the “iron crucible” that removed the impediments that were created by the failing of *Avraham*, from the Jewish people to allow them to be redeemed from Egypt and ascend to Sinai to receive G-d’s *Torah*.

Looking Back to Go Forward

Mishna in Tractate *Taanis*: Five tragedies occurred on the Ninth of *Av* (*Tisha B’Av*). The decree that the generation of the spies needed to perish in the desert over a forty-year period, the destruction of the First and Second Temple, and the destruction of the community of *Beitar* (*Bar Kochva* led a rebellion against the Romans and consequently the entire community of *Beitar* was destroyed. *Rambam* writes that this tragedy was the equivalent of the destruction of the Temple.). The fifth tragedy that occurred on *Tisha B’Av* was the city of Jerusalem was plowed under. After the Jewish people were driven from the Land, the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem so that there should be no remnant of the Jewish past.

How are *Chazal* able to equate the fifth tragedy with the first four mentioned in the *Mishna*? Seemingly, the plowing under of Jerusalem, which was only the destruction of the material and physical, is not in the same realm of tragedy as the first four, which was the destruction and exile of the people themselves. However because *Chazal* did list it together with the others, evidently there is an aspect of the plowing under of the city that is as tragic as the others that are mentioned.

The Romans understood that if they destroyed the past, the history of the Jewish people, they would effectively destroy their future. If there was no remnant of the holy city of Jerusalem, which was the location of the Temple and all of its influences, then the Jewish people would have no frame of reference regarding their spiritual identity. If one is aware of his past, he can have a future if he chooses to pursue it. By plowing under the city, the Romans believed that the Jew would cease to have relevance to his spiritual origins. Without a connection to the past, the Jewish people would become extinct. Thus, the plowing of the city was as tragic if not more so than the others enumerated in the *Mishna*.

Gemara in Tractate *Berachos*: *Reb Yochanon* went to visit *Rebbe Elazar*, a colleague who was ill. When *Reb Yochanon* entered the room, he saw that it was in completely darkness. *Reb Yochanon* exposed his arm, that had been covered and caused the room to become illuminated. He radiated holiness, beauty, and a light that was one of a kind. He noticed that *Rebbe Elazar* was crying.

He asked him, “Why are you crying? Is it because you feel that you did not study a sufficient amount of *Torah*? We had learned that as long as one had studied with the proper intent, for the sake of G-d, it is not relevant how much one actually learned. As it is stated in the *Gemara* in Tractate *Menachos*, ‘One who does more or one who does less, as long as he intends for the sake of heaven (spiritual standing)’. Are you crying that you did not merit the two tables (the table of *Torah* and the Table of wealth)? Not everyone merits these two tables...” *Rebbe Elazar* answered, ‘I am crying because of that beauty (referring to the beauty of *Reb Yochanon*) that will decompose in the earth.’ Upon hearing this, *Reb Yochanon* began to cry also. *Reb Yochanon* said to *Reb Elazar*, “This is something worthwhile to cry for.”

Gemara in Tractate *Bava Metzia*: *Reb Yochanon* had said about himself that his beauty and radiance was a remnant of those who lived in Jerusalem at the time of the Temple. Although *Reb Yochanon* had lived hundreds of years after the destruction of the Second Temple, he nevertheless retained that level of holiness. If one wanted to have an inkling of the dimension of holiness that had existed during the Second Temple period, he needed only to gaze upon *Reb Yochanon*. If one would want to aspire to greatness in spirituality, *Reb Yochanon* was that special model. However, when *Reb Yochanon* would pass away that representation of holiness would no longer exist. Thus it would be an end of a spiritual era.

This is the reason *Reb Yochanon* and *Rebbe Elazar* cried over that beauty that will decompose in the earth. Similarly, when the Romans plowed under the city of Jerusalem they attempted to obliterate the spiritual past of the Jewish people, and thus sealing their fate forever.

Abuse of Rights

Mishna in Tractate *Taanis*: Five tragedies occurred on the ninth of *Av* (*Tisha B’Av*). The first tragedy that took place on *Tisha B’Av* was that G-d had decreed that the

generation of the spies needed to perish in the desert over a forty-year period. The spies had returned with slanderous and evil reports about the Land that G-d had promised the Jewish people. Rather than having faith and trust in Him they said, "...It is a land that devours its inhabitants!" The Jewish people believed the reports of the spies and became distraught.

Torah: "The entire assembly raised up and issued its voice; the people wept that night."

Gemara in Tractate *Taanis*: In response to their weeping G-d said, "Because you cried for naught (without basis), this day (*Tisha B'Av*) shall be a day of crying for all generations." Consequently, the First and Second Temple, the destruction of the community of *Beitar*, and the city of Jerusalem was plowed under on the Ninth of *Av*. All of these tragedies came about because the Jewish people chose to believe the spies and cry about their predicament, rather than having faith in G-d.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: The First Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people had violated the three cardinal sins - murder, idolatry, and forbidden sexual relations. The Second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred between Jews (*sinaas chinam*). If the First and Second Temple were destroyed for the reasons mentioned in the *Gemara*, unrelated to what had preceded this period of time, why does the *Gemara* say that their destruction came about because of the baseless crying of the Jewish people on *Tisha B'Av*?

At the time of the sin of the spies, the level of clarity that the Jewish people possessed was unique. They had witnessed the revealed miracles of Egypt. They had experienced the splitting of the Sea. They stood at Sinai and G-d had communicated to them face to face as they heard the Ten Commandments. They survived in the desert with the *Manna*, the living wellspring, and the Clouds of Glory. Despite, their understanding of G-d and His dedication to them, they did not have sufficient trust in Him. They believed the reports of the spies rather than trusting G-d's Word. After the Jewish people wept, G-d said, "How long will this people provoke Me, and how long will they not have faith in Me, despite all of the signs that I performed in their midst?"

When the Jewish people were enslaved in Egypt they were idolaters. Through the revealed miracles that G-d performed on their behalf, He endowed them with a

unique level of clarity of which they were not worthy at that time. Their perception of truth was a gift from G-d. Despite this exceptional gift, they chose to see their situation incorrectly. They bemoaned their fate and cried upon hearing the reports of the spies, which was incongruous with what they had witnessed previously. Since at that time they had the ability, because of the clarity with which they were endowed, to make the proper choice and they did not, G-d withdrew the His gift of clarity from them.

The Jewish people sinned during the First Temple period through violating the three cardinal sins because of a lack of clarity. Their behavior was considered irrational. Despite the fact that G-d's Presence dwelt in their midst in the Temple, they nevertheless succumbed to the three cardinal sins. G-d's punishment for failing with the spies was measure for measure. Just as they had chosen to ignore truth despite their clarity, G-d chose to withdraw their clarity because it was ignored.

Rambam in the Laws of Repentance: When G-d hardened the heart of Pharaoh He withdrew his power of free choice. If one is only culpable for doing evil because he had the choice to refrain from it, then why was Pharaoh culpable for withholding the Jewish people and not heeding the Word of G-d to free them?

Rambam: Initially Pharaoh did have the ability to choose between right and wrong but because he chose to defy G-d, despite the fact that he had openly witnessed the hand of G-d through the first five plagues, G-d revoked his power of choice. Pharaoh had sufficient clarity as a result of the first five plagues to submit to the Will of G-d; however, he chose to ignore Him. Therefore, G-d withdrew His privilege of choice from Pharaoh so that he could no longer make a choice. This is the meaning of "I (G-d) have hardened his heart." Although Pharaoh's continued perpetration of evil was not within his control, he is held fully culpable for his behavior because it was his choice not to have choice.

G-d provides one with exceptional opportunities in life. However, if one chooses to ignore them or undervalue their significance, G-d will withdraw those opportunity.

Mishna in *Pirkei Avos*: If one accepts upon himself the yoke of *Torah*, G-d removes from him the yoke of material and government. However, if one does not accept upon himself the yoke of *Torah*, G-d will place

upon him the yoke of material and government. As it states, “whoever fulfills the *Torah* in a state of poverty, will be endowed with ability to fulfill it in a state of wealth. Whoever violates the *Torah* in a state of wealth, will be ultimately violate it in a state of poverty.” If one utilizes the gifts that G-d grants him, He will provide more of the same. However, if one abuses or ignores these gifts, then G-d will withdraw them.

The Root of Baseless Hatred

Prophet Isaiah: “If your sins are crimson (like a crimson thread) then they will be restored to the whiteness of snow. If they are like a (red) worm, then they will be restored to the whiteness of (washed) wool.” The whiteness of snow is the most pristine; however, the whiteness of washed wool is to a lesser degree.

Jerusalem *Talmud* in Tractate *Shabbos*: The words of the Prophet are referring to the First and Second Temple period. The sins that are compared to a crimson thread refer to the First Temple, while the sins that are compared to the (red) worm, refer to the Second Temple period.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah*: The First Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people had violated the three cardinal sins – forbidden sexual relations, murder, and idolatry. After they had repented, the Jewish people returned from exile to rebuild the Second Temple. This was the equivalent of the crimson thread being restored to the whiteness of snow. They were fully atoned after 70 years of exile in Babylon.

Gemara in Tractate *Yomah* The Second Temple was destroyed because of *sinaas chinam* (baseless hatred among Jews). Even after they had repented, their sins that were initially compared to the redness of a worm, were only restored to the whiteness of washed wool. Meaning, they were not fully rehabilitated.

Reb Meir Simcha of D’vinsk: A crimson thread is essentially white and it is only colored with crimson dye. It is only a superficial covering concealing the true character of the thread. If one were to wash the dye from the thread, it would be restored to its pristine whiteness (similar to snow). The sins of the First Temple, although they were considered serious/grave, were not indicative of the essence of the Jewish people. Rather, it was a result of their predicament.

On the other hand, a worm is red because that is its essence – blood flows within its system. The sin of baseless hatred, even after one repents, can only be restored to the whiteness of washed wool – similar to the worm, whose essence is red, cannot be converted to something other than what it is. *Sinaas chinam* became part of the essence of the Jew’s function and experience, rather than being something that one does. Therefore, for one to fully repent, it must be purged from his essence, which is something much more difficult than removing the dye, which is only of superficial nature.

Gemara: *Reb Yochanan* was asked, “Which generation was greater – that of the First Temple period or that of the Second? It would seem that violating the three cardinal sins would be considered more severe than baseless hatred, thus causing them to have greater culpability.” *Reb Yochanan* responded, “Look at the Citadel (Temple). After the Jews of the First Temple period repented, the *Bais HaMikdash* was restored after 70 years. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple, although the Jewish people had repented, it has not yet been restored. Evidently the sin of baseless hatred has not been fully expunged from the Jewish essence.”

Gemara in Tractate *Shabbos*: A gentile approached *Hillel* to be converted to Judaism. However, he had set a precondition for the conversion. It was only if *Hillel* would be able to teach him one principle that encompassed the *Torah* in its entirety would he convert. *Hillel* responded by saying, “Whatever you despise for yourself, do not do to unto your fellow.” This is the all encompassing principle of the *Torah* and the rest is commentary/detail, which must be studied.

We can understand how this principle applies to the segment of the *Torah* that addresses the *mitzvos* that are between man and his fellow; however, how does it address the *mitzvos* that are between man and G-d? What significance does loving one’s fellow have to dietary laws or the observance of the *Shabbos*?

It can be explained on a simple level that since G-d is similar to a father and the Jewish people are His children, when the Jew sins it pains G-d. Therefore, a Jew should not sin even in the area of between man and G-d because as he does not want to be pained, G-d should not be pained.

We can explain the words of Hillel on a more profound level. The Second Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred. Baseless hatred emanates from one feeling that his fellow did not afford him his proper due. Baseless hatred is also caused by envy. If one feels that he deserves the degree of success of his fellow, then he will become envious of him and ultimately despise him.

There is a negative commandment “You shall not take revenge and you shall not harbor ill feeling in your heart...” Although one may have been denied something that he had wanted from his fellow, or even had been victimized by him, one may not take revenge or bear ill feeling toward that person. *Chinuch* explains that the reason for this is, if G-d did not want that individual to fall prey to victimization, it would not have happened.

It is similar to a woodchopper using an ax to chop wood. Just as the ax could not chop the wood without the power of the individual behind the ax, so too the victimizer could not infringe on another person’s existence, to any degree, unless it was the Will of G-d. This is the basis for the prohibition of not taking revenge or harboring ill feeling. To be able to adhere to these negative commandments one must have a deeply rooted belief that nothing takes place in existence unless it is Willed by G-d.

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).” If one truly believes this fact, there is no basis for envy.

Envy is rooted in a lack of belief in G-d’s involvement in one’s predicament. If one truly believes that whatever is meant to be his, is rightfully his (because G-d deemed it to be so), then he will not be envious of his fellow. In addition, he will understand that whatever degree of

success or glory was achieved by his fellow was only possible because G-d Willed it to be so. Each person’s predicament is unique to himself. One only exists to achieve perfection in his life through multiple choices.

Each individual’s setting is designed to accommodate his specific spectrum of choices relating to the perfection of his soul. The degree of perfection that is needed by the wealthy person is a different degree of perfection that is needed by one who is wanting. If a person truly believed this reality there would be no envy- thus, no basis for hatred because everything is preordained by G-d.

The sin of baseless hatred (*sinaas chinam*) is considered so grave because it is a result of the denial of G-d being the basis for all that exists. Thus, it pervades every aspect of his *mitzvah* involvement. If one has baseless hatred for his fellow, it is a reflection of his lack of belief in this fundamental principle. This in turn reflects on his perspective of performing *mitzvos*. The objective of *mitzvos*, regardless of their classification, is to perfect one’s spirituality- thus fulfilling his objective in existence.

It is interesting to note that because the Divine Presence dwelled in the First Temple, there was a level of clarity that was available to the Jewish people. This clarity gave them the perspective to understand that one’s predicament is preordained. Consequently, their failing was not in the area of baseless hatred. Although it is true that they became distracted and convoluted and therefore transgressed the three cardinal sins, it was not a reflection of their belief.

As a result of their severe spiritual regression during the First Temple period, they did not merit to have the Divine Presence in the Second Temple. Consequently, they lacked the clarity that was necessary to appreciate G-d’s involvement in each individual’s life. Thus, they failed in the area of baseless hatred. The only way G-d will restore His Presence in the world is when the Jewish people recognize that one’s predicament is not random, but rather is a result of Divine Providence- only then will baseless hatred no longer exist.

