

Eikev 2013

1.

### Reward in this world

Nachlas Tzvi pages 460-461

“This shall be the reward when you hearken to these ordinances, and you observe and perform them; Hashem your God, will safeguard for you the covenant and the kindness that he swore to your forefathers.” (7, 12)

"והיה עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה ושמרתם ועשיתם אתם ושמר ה' אלהיך לך את הברית ואת החסד אשר נשבע לאבותיך."

This pasuk clearly states that Hashem rewards people for performing mitzvot in this world. This being so, what is the explanation of the statement of Rebbe Yaakov (mesechas Kidushin 39b) who says that we do not receive reward in this world for performing mitzvot in this world (רבי (יעקב היא דאמר שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא. Rebbe Levi obviously isn't allowed to argue on a pasuk. Furthermore, why are we not entitled to receive reward in this world for performing mitzvot? One answer is as follows; **since reward is physical and mitzvot are spiritual, it is illogical to be rewarded physically for a spiritual deed. The reason for this is that all the physical rewards in this world do not equal even one mitzvah.** In the next world we can be rewarded because it is all spiritual. Every mitzvah consists of a thought process and an action. The thought process is spiritual, whereas, the action is physical. There are three types of people who perform mitzvot. One who does a mitzvah in both a physical and spiritual manner will be rewarded in both worlds. One who performs mitzvot solely in a spiritual manner will be rewarded in the next world. One who performs mitzvot solely in a physical manner will be rewarded in this world only. This pasuk refers to one who does mitzvot in a physical way. He therefore, will be paid only in a physical manner in this world. Based on the aforementioned idea, we can explain the Gemara in Berachos (7a). The Gemara relates that Moshe asked Hashem 'why do the righteous people (sometimes) experience bad things while bad people experience good things?' (מפני מה יש צדיק וטוב לו ויש צדיק ורע לו, יש רשע וטוב לו ויש רשע ורע לו?) This is the classic question that has plagued the minds of many great philosophers. The Gemara answers that **one who isn't completely righteous will be punished and one who isn't completely wicked will be rewarded.** (צדיק וטוב לו צדיק גמור, צדיק ורע לו צדיק שאינו גמור, רשע וטוב לו רשע שאינו גמור, רשע ורע לו רשע גמור.)

Another answer, based on the aforementioned explanation, explains the Nachlas Tzvi, is as follows; **righteous people perform mitzvot in a complete spiritual manner, therefore they are rewarded in the next world, which is completely spiritual. Dissimilarly, wicked people perform mitzvot in a complete physical manner; they are therefore rewarded solely in this world.** (Rashi (Berachos 5a and Kiddushin 39b and in Avos 4, 15) and others suggest a different explanation. **Wicked people receive all of their reward in this world. They therefore get harshly punished in the next world. Dissimilarly, righteous people don't get rewarded in this world in order that they will receive great reward in the next world.**)

The Rambam explains that there is a difference between one who serves Hashem out of love and one who serves Hashem out of fear. **One who serves Hashem out of fear will not be rewarded**

**in this world. Conversely, one who serves Hashem out of love will be rewarded in this world.** One who serves Hashem out of fear isn't performing mitzvos because he is happy to perform them; rather he is afraid of the punishment that will result due to his lack of performance with joy of the mitzvah. Dissimilarly, one who performs mitzvos out of love wants to, and will therefore be joyous when performing the mitzvos. This pasuk is referring to one who performs mitzvos out of love. How do we know this? From the word וְהִיהָ, that connotes a language of happiness.

Another answer is as follows; **one who goes out of his way and beyond the letter of the law to perform a mitzvah will be rewarded in this world.** A proof of this concept is a Gemara in Berachos (28a). The Gemara relates that when Rebbe Zara was weak and unable to learn, he would go to the Beis Medrash of Rebbe Noson bar Tuvya and sit outside. Rebbe Zera said 'when the talmiday chachamim enter and leave the Beis Medrash, I will stand up to honor them and receive reward.' רבי זירא כי הוה חליש מגירסיה הוה אזיל וייתיב אפתחא דבי רבי נתן בר טובי, אמר כי חלפי רבנן (אז איקום מקמייהו ואקבל אגרא). Rebbe Zara was exempt from learning and performing other mitzvos due to his sickness. He nevertheless demonstrated and bestowed honor towards talmiday chachamim. He went out of his way, and above and beyond the Halacha, in order to perform a mitzvah.

Another answer based on the aforementioned Gemara in Berachos, explains the Sefas Emes ((Mesivta on Avos, perek alef, Yalkut Beorim page 29)), is as follows; **one will receive reward for fearing heaven.** This is explicitly stated in the Bamidbar Raba (16); one who respects Torah scholars will be rewarded.

2.

### Are small mitzvos less important than big mitzvos?

**Why is this parsha called Eikev? What does the word Eikev mean? What lesson can we learn and apply to our lives from parshas Eikev?** Onkelos renders the word Eikev as exchange. Meaning, in exchange for performing the mitzvos we will be rewarded. The Ibn Ezra explains that we will be rewarded after we perform the mitzvos (שכר באחרונה). The Ramban explains that the explanation of the Ibn Ezra grammatically makes sense. Many times the beginning is referred to as rosh (head); therefore it is logical to say that the end is Eikev, the heel. Rashi (quoting the Medrash Tanchuma) explains that **the mitzvos that are viewed lightly and 'stepped on' should be carefully guarded.** (אם המצות הקלות שאדם דשא בעקביו תשמעון). The Das Zekanim makes another point. Dovid Hamelech said "why should I be fearful in days of evil, when the injunctions that I trod upon will surround me?" (Tehilim (49, 6)) Dovid said, regarding the stringent mitzvos. I'm not afraid that I didn't fulfill them. However, when it comes to the light/small mitzvos that people typically step on, I am worried that I didn't fulfill them. This is analogous to a king who had an orchard. He instructed his workers to plant. He didn't reveal the reward that would be granted for each specific sapling. Reward would only be granted for specific plants, not all of them. If the king would have revealed the reward for the plants then everyone would only plant those specific plants. Many plants would be missing. The same applies to the reward granted for the performance of mitzvos; if Hashem would inform us of the reward for mitzvos, then people would only perform the mitzvos that reap the greatest reward. Rebbe Shimon ben Yochai says that there are two mitzvos for which the Torah reveals to us the reward; the lightest of the light, sheluach hakan (sending away the mother bird) and the most serious of the serious, kivud av v'eim (respecting parents). The reward for the performance of

these mitzvos is longevity. The lesson of this is that **sometimes there are mitzvos that appear insignificant, but their reward is in fact great.**

The Eiturai Torah (page 58) quotes the Sefas Emes who says that there are some mitzvos that are dependent upon the head and the heart. The Gemara in Makkos (23b) relates that there are 248 mitzvos that correspond to the number of human limbs. The more important mitzvos correspond to more important limbs. The less important mitzvos correspond to limbs. People are able to stand and walk because of their heels. The whole body is supported due to the heels. So too, regarding the lighter mitzvos that people step on with their heels. They are really of great significance.