

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Yitro	15 Feb 2020	20 Shevat 5780	Exo. 18:1-20:23	Isa 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6(6-7)	Matt. 19:16-26

We continue with the fourth part of Reward and Punishment as they relate to Torah study. R' Yehoshua Ben Zeira says in Avos, "If you have learned a great deal of Torah, do not think that it entitles you to any special privileges. On contrary, this is why you were created." He is saying that man was not created so he could attain Heavenly pleasures. If that is the case, then Hashem could have given man Heavenly reward without making him spend time on earth.

The real purpose of us being created was so that we could study Torah here on earth. Because only here we can learn and obtain Torah knowledge as it is said, "It is not in heavens" (Deut. 30:12). Studying the Torah to obtain a portion in it is considered "greater than all the contentment of the World-To-Come."

By studying the Torah, we can attain a portion in the Torah. By keeping a mitzvah, we can only attain Heavenly pleasure. The sages say that we all possess a share in the World-To-Come. However, this share does not include a portion in the Torah automatically. The only way a person can obtain such portion is if we personally study Torah or support others to do so.

The Yerushalmi Talmud said in Tractate Peah, "The performance of all of Hashem's other mitzvot combined does not equal the study of a single word of Torah." It adds that Hashem looks forward to the day when the Redemption will come as we all do.

In our Torah portion, the Yisraelites were all gathered around Mount Sinai for *matan* Torah (receiving of Torah) as well as other nations. The nations refused to accept the Torah whereas the Yisraelites said, "We shall hear and do it" (Deut. 5:27). Of the Ten Commandments, the fifth one is "Respect [Honor] your father and your mother, so that your days are prolonged upon the soil which YHWH your Elohim is giving you" (Exod. 20:12).

Now, when Moshe came down the mountain with the two Tablets, he had the first Tablet on the *chesed* (mercy) side and the second Tablet on *gevurah* (severity) side. The first Tablet relates the relationship between Hashem and me. The second Tablet relates the relationship between me and the people around me. It is interesting to note that the Tablet on the right side has the name of Hashem, in Hebrew of course. And the second Tablet does not have the name of Hashem. Therefore, it shows that the first Tablet is more important or higher than the second Tablet. So, a question is why is honoring parents on the *chesed* side?

The halacha teaches that honoring parents is like honoring Hashem. All the laws that we apply between me and Hashem applies to me and my parents. Why? Ask yourself. Do you argue with Hashem? No. Are you allowed to argue with Hashem? No. So, don't argue with your parents. Are you allowed to contradict or question Hashem? No. So, don't contradict or question your parents. Ramban said that honoring parents is the beginning of fearing Hashem. It is especially important to acknowledge one close to the family for the things they have done for you. So, look around us. How much has good Hashem done to you? Then thank Hashem for everything even if Hashem puts you in a difficult situation, because He puts you in such situation, knowing that you will overcome the situation.

When Yisrael left Mitzrayim, they left armed, meaning they had weapons and trained in warfare as we read earlier when they fought with Amalek. So, why did they not fight against Mitzrayim? They were grateful for accepting Ya'akov and his family during the draught that happened some 210 years ago. This is why

Moshe did not strike the river nor sands. The Nile river protected him from drowning. The sands covered the body of Mitzrim that he killed. Just as the Yisraelites remembered the kindness of Mitzrim more than 210 years ago, should we not remember the kindness to the people around us even if they are spiteful?

There are three keys that Hashem have: rain, resurrection of the dead, and birth. The Hebrew for key is מפתח (*maf-te-ach*). This word is an acronym for 'rain' in Hebrew is מָטָר (*ma-tar*); 'pei' is (פְּרִנָּסָה) *panasa* (livelihood); 'tav' is תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים (*te-chi-yat ha-me-tim*); and 'hei' is הוֹלָדָה (*ho-la-dah*). Ramaban said that Hashem gave a key to give birth to parents. Thus, they are partners of Hashem. Therefore, if you do something against parents, you are going against Hashem.

Later, we read from the Torah that Pinchas killed Cosbi, and described him as "zealous." Pinchas could not stand that the power (key) of giving birth was desecrated. Instead of taking this power and bring a child to the world, it was used to mock Hashem.

When Yisrael left Mitzrayim, did the children have any reasons to appreciate their parents? No. Because they were born as slaves and became slaves. Therefore, Hashem is now commanding the Yisraelites to honor their parents. So, even if a child is abandoned by his/her father, and he calls you many years later and says he is about to die. Then the child is obligated by the Torah to be with him because he gave you, life.

Does this mean that the child has to suffer the mistreatment by his parents? For example, if you invite your mother for Shabbat meal, your mother constantly says derogatory words, curses to a point where Shabbat meal is impossible, do you have to invite your mother for next Shabbat? No. However, the child is not to mock, disgrace, or any negative words toward her mother. But don't say any words and not invite her back, or move away as the child is not to suffer for any reason that is against the Torah.