

Parshas Nitzavim

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1. Going Beyond Realization

The Torah states, **“It will be that when all these things come upon you - the blessing and the curse that I have presented before you – then you will take it to heart among all the nations where Hashem, your G-d, has dispersed you; and you will return unto Hashem...”** The dispersion of the Jewish people into exile is unparalleled by any other people. In this state of exile, Hashem brings blessing and curse upon them so that they should reflect upon their situation and fully comprehend their predicament and thus take it to heart. It is only after the Jewish people have reflected and introspected that they will do *teshuvah* (repent).

Sforno explains the term “take it to heart” to mean that one must introspect in a serious manner in order to discern between truth and falseness. It is only when one assesses and evaluates himself to that degree that he will realize that he is not as righteous as he believed himself to be. There are many areas that one does fall short. In addition to the obvious transgressions such as *lashon hara* (evil speech), there are many failings, which we do not sense – such as performing mitzvos (by rote) without the proper intent, or not sufficiently engaging in Torah study.

The Gemara in Tractate Shabbos tells us that after one passes away, he stands before the heavenly court to be judged. He is first asked, “Did you deal honestly in business? And did you set fixed times for the study of Torah?” And then he is asked other questions about his entire life – what he did or did not do properly. Thus, one must take his behavior to heart (introspection) and repent before passing away.

In the Portion of Ki Savo, the *Tochacha* relates what Hashem will bring upon one who does not adhere to the Torah. **“Hashem will strike you with madness and with blindness, and with a confounding of heart.”** Rashi explains the term “confounding of heart” to mean that Hashem will seal one’s heart. This means that he will have no sensitivity or receptivity to spirituality. Therefore, one must introspect (“take to heart”) so that the curse of “confounding of the heart” does not come about.

The heart unfortunately desires many things; some are in accordance with the Torah while others are not. We ask Hashem in the blessings of the Shema to “Designate our hearts exclusively to love/fear Him (Hashem).” The Chofetz Chaim uses an allegory to explain the meaning of the heart “exclusively” loving/fearing Hashem. A diamond dealer who specialized in large and precious stones approaches a third party to safeguard a

chest of diamonds for him while he is away. The diamond dealer explains to this individual that his stones are wrapped in a silk cloth within the chest. After hearing how special these stones are, the perspective custodian asked if he could admire them while they are in his possession. The diamond dealer agrees. The custodian, unable to contain his curiosity, opens the box and unwraps the silk cloth, which contains the rare, precious diamonds. As he is unwrapping the stones he notices that they are intermingled with pieces of putrid and decaying food. He is taken aback at the lunacy of the diamond dealer keeping such precious stones intermixed with such putrid matter.

One may have Torah and spirituality in his heart and a willingness to do the Will of Hashem. However, simultaneously, he may also possess other desires and interests, which are contrary to the Torah. This is the equivalent of containing something of infinite value with something that is abominable in the same location. Thus we pray to Hashem to “Designate our hearts” to exclusively love and fear Him and to be devoid of anything that is contrary to that.

The Torah states that one must “take it to heart” and repent. However if one’s heart has no sense of spirituality it would be virtually impossible to introspect on one’s behavior and do proper teshuvah. Therefore we pray to Hashem to open our hearts (to spirituality) and to designate them exclusively to do His Will. It is only when G-d gives us a sense of spirituality that we can truly reflect on our past behavior and do teshuvah.

2. Silence – The Ultimate Indicator

The Torah states, **“The hidden (sins) are for Hashem, our G-d, but the revealed (sins) are for us and our children forever, to carry out all the words of this Torah.”**

Although the Jewish people had entered into the covenant of communal responsibility for one another, there was no culpability to others if one individual had sinned in private. However, if an individual had sinned when others were aware, then there is communal culpability.

There are dots that appear in the sefer Torah over the words **“lanu u l’vaneinu - for us and our children.”** Rashi explains that the significance of these dots is to teach us that, “Even regarding the sins that are known to others, the Jewish people were not culpable for them until after they had crossed the Jordan.”

One of the most serious failings of the Jewish people was the Sin of the Golden Calf, which occurred shortly after they had left Egypt. The Jewish people were held culpable for this serious breach and transgression. It is important to note that although the vast majority of the Jewish people did not actually participate in the idolatrous behavior,

there was communal accountability, which caused them to forfeit the special level of spirituality attained at Sinai. The actual idol worshippers were either killed by the sword or perished after drinking water that contained the dust of the Golden Calf.

Since this infraction occurred nearly 40 years before the Jewish people crossed the Jordan, why were they all culpable and deserving of extinction for the Sin of the Golden Calf? There are a number of sins, which occurred throughout the desert-wandering period in which the entire Jewish people were reprimanded and criticized for the failings of the few. How do we understand this? According to Rashi the Jewish people were not communally responsible for one another until after the covenant at *Har Greezim*. In addition, the Torah relates several incidents in the desert in which the entire Jewish people were held culpable for sins which were committed in public. How do we understand this?

The Gemara in Tractate Shabbos tells us that at the time of the destruction of the Temple, G-d had instructed the Angel of Death to paint the letter “tuf” in red on the foreheads of all of the *rashaim* (evil people) so that they should be marked for death. However, regarding the tzaddikim (righteous people) Hashem instructed the Angel of Death to paint the letter “tuf” in black to indicate that they should be spared. Satan complained to Hashem that the tzaddikim should also be marked with the letter “tuf” in red for death because they did not intercede and protest to prevent the *rashaim* from sinning. They remained silent. Thus they also deserved to die. Hashem responded to satan that even if the tzaddikim had protested, their admonishments would not have been heeded. Satan responded, “Although it is true what You say, the tzaddikim did not know that their rebuke would have been ignored and fallen on deaf ears. Since they did not protest, the tzaddikim also deserve to die.” Hashem concurred with satan. Is this culpability a consequence of Jews being responsible for one another or is it due to some other failing?

The Prophet Yechezkel states, “The reason the communities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed was because they did not extend their hand to the poor.” They did not give charity nor did they have compassion for the needy. Reb Elchonon Wasserman z’tl asks, “Since giving charity is not one of the Seven Noachide Laws, why ‘should the communities of Sodom and Gomorrah be held accountable and destroyed for not providing for the needy?’” Reb Elchonon explains that there are certain mitzvot that one does not need to be commanded to perform. For example, if one witnesses the suffering of his fellow, he does not need to be instructed to assist him. Since the human being was created with the innate ability to have compassion, to act indifferently is considered cruelty. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah witnessed their fellows being deprived at an extreme level and did nothing to assist them. Thus, they deserved to be destroyed.

When the sin of the Golden Calf was being perpetrated, even if one was not actively involved in its worship, nevertheless, there was culpability. After Hashem communicated with every Jew face to face at Sinai, how was it possible that the same people could witness His Name being disgraced to such a degree and remain silent? How

could they allow this abomination to be brought into their midst and not intervene? Therefore, remaining silent is considered *their own failing* and unrelated to the concept of Jews being responsible for one another (communal responsibility).

The concept of “*Yisroel areivim zeh l’zeh- Jews are responsible for one another*” is that the failing of one Jew is considered the failing of another. If one could have prevented his fellow from transgressing and he did not – it is considered his failing. Unlike the Sin of the Golden Calf, the sin of the idolaters is not transposed to those who remained silent.

Bilaam, Yisro, and Iyov (Job) were the three advisors to Pharaoh. Bilaam had recommended the enslavement of the Jewish people as the solution to controlling their proliferation in Egypt. Pharaoh agreed that this suggestion should be implemented immediately. When Yisro became aware of this, he fled Egypt to go to Midian as a sign of protest. Iyov, the third advisor, remained silent. We read about the overwhelming suffering of Iyov. It was because of his silence when the bondage began that he suffered to the degree that he did. Iyov’s rationale to remain silent was – even if he had protested, Pharaoh would not have listened to him. He believed that enslavement would have gone forward regardless of his displeasure.

Iyov had lost his children, his wife, his wealth and he suffered physically. The Brisker Rav z’tl explains how to correlate the “measure for measure” of Iyov’s silence with his suffering. Hashem initially had asked him after “After seeing such an evil being perpetrated, how could you have remained silent?” Iyov’s response to Hashem was, “Even if I would have protested it would have accomplished nothing. Therefore I remained silent.” Hashem said, “I understand your position.”

Subsequently, Iyov experienced many serious setbacks and personal tragedies. He was at a point when he was writhing in pain and crying out when Hashem said to him, “Why are you crying and screaming?” Iyov responded, “I cry because I am in pain.” Hashem then asked him, “When you cry does it alleviate your pain?” Then Hashem said, “It is clear that when one is in pain one cries. Therefore it is only an indication that you were not pained in Egypt when you remained silent and did not protest against the unconscionable measures that were taken against the Jews,

When the Jewish people were violating the Torah in its entirety during the Temple period, the tzaddikim remained silent and did not attempt to intercede. Although it would not have made a difference even if they had (as G-d said to satan); nevertheless, their silence is an indication that they were not affected and pained by the desecration of Hashem’s Name that was being brought about by their fellows. Thus, because of their own failing they did deserve to die with the *rashaim*.

The principle of “One Jew is responsible for his fellow Jew” only has relevance when one could prevent his fellow from transgressing and he does not make the effort. In this case, the one who did not intercede is culpable for the sin of his fellow. However, the other situations cited above do not fall under this category. They are examples in which silence indicated insensitivity to the *chillul Hashem* (desecration of G-d’s Name) that was taking place.

There are many situations in which we need to be anguished - whether it is the problem of assimilation, which is tragic and catastrophic, or other problems affecting the Jewish people as a whole. Many Jews are being alienated continuously from their heritage. Are we truly pained by this or is its value simply table talk?

3. *Choosing Life*

The Torah states, **“I have placed life and death before you, blessing and curse – choose life so that you will live, you and your offspring...”** Moshe presented the Jewish people with the choice “to live” or “die” and to be “blessed” or “cursed.” He then encouraged them to choose life. Why did Moshe need to encourage the Jewish people to choose life? Is it not obvious that when one is presented with a choice that he will choose life? Evidently, one may have a different understanding of “life” and “death.” Since the correct perception is not clear, Moshe needs to encourage the Jewish people to choose life as the Torah defines it.

Rashi cites Chazal who explain **“choose life...”** to mean, “I (Hashem) am directing you to choose the path of life as a father tells his son – when you choose a portion from my estate, choose for yourself the best portion.” Chazal depict Hashem’s encouragement and urging as a father advising His son to do what is in the best interest of His child (the Jewish people). One must be cognizant of the father/child relationship between G-d and the Jewish people- just as a parent is selflessly dedicated to the welfare of the child so too is Hashem dedicated to the well being and spiritual advancement of the Jewish people. A Jew must feel that Hashem’s encouragement and mandate is in his best interest, even though he may not realize it.

The Torah perspective of life is that existence is only a means to an end – which is to develop oneself spiritually. As the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (Ethics of our Fathers) states, “Make your Torah study primary and your work secondary.” Physical existence is only the precursor to the spiritual existence, which is the world to come. One tenet of Judaism is that there is a world to come. Therefore, a person must utilize the physical for the performance of mitzvos in order to be spiritually developed.

The essence of the Jew is his spirituality; however, we are in constant conflict between that and our inclination, which is for the physical. Because of this continuous conflict we are not able to perceive our spiritual perfection as the ultimate goal. We naturally only see what we are giving up to achieve the spiritual rather than seeing this as an investment in our eternal existence. Therefore, Moshe must urge and encourage us to “choose life” which is not fully appreciated as such. As physical beings we do not have the natural sensitivity to spirituality. How does one achieve sensitivity to spirituality thereby enabled to choose “life”?

We say in the closing blessing of requests in the Amidah (Silent Prayer), “Hear our voice, Hashem our G-d, pity and be compassionate to us, and accept- with compassion and favor- our prayer, for G-d Who hears prayers and supplications are You.” It is in this blessing that one usually takes the opportunity to beseech Hashem for all his material needs. However in the blessing that precedes the Shema (*ahava raba*) we beseech Hashem by saying, “Our Father, the merciful Father, Who acts mercifully, have mercy upon us, instill in our hearts to understand and elucidate, to listen, learn, teach, safeguard, perform, and fulfill all the words of Your Torah’s teaching with love.” We identify Hashem as the “merciful Father” and then we beseech Him to open our hearts and eyes to His Torah (which is the source of our spirituality) as if we are in a life threatening situation. Why do we beseech Him in such a fervent and intense manner?

It is because only Hashem can assist us to open our hearts and eyes to appreciate what life truly is. Just as we beseech Him for our personal needs in the Amidah, we must also sense that same urgency of need regarding our spirituality. We need His Assistance to give us clarity despite our natural conflicts of interest towards the physical.

The Gemara in Tractate Makkos states, “On the path that one chooses to walk, he will be led.” If one (G-d forbid) chooses to lead a life of crime G-d will provide him with many opportunities to do so. On the other hand, if one truly wishes to lead a spiritual life then Hashem will assist him because it is his aspiration. Hashem will give him all that is necessary to be able to recognize “life” to make the proper choice.

4. The Duality of Every Mitzvah

The Torah tells us that during the first day of Chol HaMoed Succos of the eighth year (the year after the first Shmitta cycle), the entire Jewish people (men, women, and children) must gather on the Temple Mount to hear the reading of *Mishna Torah* (The Book of Devarim) by the King of Israel. This Positive Commandment is referred to as *Hakhail*. The Torah states that the purpose of this reading is, “**So that they (the Jewish people) should listen and learn to fear Hashem.**” The mitzvah of *Hakhail* is to listen and understand the Torah, thus giving the Jewish people a sense of who Hashem is so that they should fear Him. It is evident that the only way one comes upon the fear of Hashem (*yiras shamayim*) is through Torah study. Without the proper Torah study it is not

possible to truly fear G-d.

Rabbeinu Yonah explains in his commentary on Pirkei Avos (Ethics of our Fathers) and in his work *Shaarei Teshuvah* (Gates of Repentance) that all mitzvos of the Torah are “*parperaos* (appetizers)” to *yiras shamayim* (fear of heaven). He explains that when a Jew performs mitzvos it is only because Hashem has commanded him to do so. Thus, every mitzvah action is a demonstration of one’s reverence and fear of Hashem. Without possessing the knowledge of mitzvos through Torah study one cannot demonstrate his *yiras shamayim* through observance. Whenever one performs a mitzvah he is simultaneously doing two things: the fulfillment of the mitzvah itself and the mitzvah to fear G-d.

The *Navi* (Prophet) addresses the issue of mitzvos that are performed by rote- out of habit without the sense of the mitzvah or its service. If one is conditioned in the performance of mitzvos and thus only does so out of habit, he does not have the sense that he is doing them to do the Will of G-d. The *Navi* therefore strongly admonishes the Jewish people for performing mitzvos in this manner. If the Jewish people are performing their mitzvah obligation, albeit not at an advanced level, why should the Prophet reprimand them for lack of quality performance? Obviously, it must be that performing mitzvos in a habitual manner is considered a serious failing. How do we understand this?

It is evident from the verse, “**So that they (the Jewish people) should listen and learn to fear Hashem**” that one must study Torah in order to perform mitzvos for their primary purpose, which is an expression of one’s *yiras shamayim*. The value of the mitzvah itself is secondary. If one performs a mitzvah by rote, it does not communicate one’s *yiras shamayim*.

Rambam writes in Hilchos Berachos (The Laws of Blessings) that all blessings are rabbinic enactments, except for the blessing after meals. The Jew is obliged to recite a blessing before he partakes of food as well as after he finishes eating. Additionally, there are many other categories of blessings that one must recite depending on circumstance. Rambam explains that the reason the Rabbis enacted the continuous opportunity to recite blessings is to enable the Jew to be cognizant of G-d’s Presence throughout his day and in all of his endeavors.

A Jew must always have a consciousness of Hashem’s Presence. As we find stated in the Gemara in Tractate Berachos, “Whoever benefits from this world without a blessing, it is considered as if he benefited from something that was consecrated.” If one benefits from a consecrated item it is considered a serious Torah transgression, which has many repercussions. The world in its entirety belongs to G-d. As King David states in Psalms, “The world in its entirety is G-d’s.” It is only after one acknowledges that the world is G-d’s that he is then permitted to partake of it.

The only way one can have a continuous sense of G-d’s Presence is through Torah

study. This leads to the performance of mitzvos, whose ultimate purpose is to express one's *yiras shamayim*.

The following two commentaries have been presented here together as they both relate to the same topic. #5 is from the previous week while #6 is new. Both are commentaries on the Portion of Ki Savo

5. Every Day A New Horizon (from Ki Savo)

The Torah states that when one brings the *bikkurim*, the new fruits and grains, to the Temple mount he must make a declaration of appreciation before Hashem. He must say, **“I declare (*hegaditee*) today to Hashem, your G-d, that I have come to the Land that Hashem swore to our forefathers...”** The declaration, “I declare today...that I have come to the Land...” was made not only during the first year that the *bikkurim* were brought (which was 15 years after entering the Land) but it was continuously declared for hundreds of years as part of the *bikkurim* ritual. Despite the fact this declaration was made for any years and was repeated whenever the *bikkurim* were brought, nevertheless it was stated, **“I declare (*hegaditee*) today to Hashem, your G-d, that I have come to the Land...”** How do we understand this? Secondly, why does the individual begin the declaration with “*hegaditee*” (I declare) rather than “*amartee*” (I say) or “*seepartee*” (I tell)?

The psalm of *Ashrei*, is an acrostic of the Hebrew Alphabet. In passage corresponding to the letter “*daled*” it reads, “Each generation will praise Your deeds and of Your mighty deeds they will declare (*yageedu*).” Malbim in his commentary on Tehillim explains, “The term “*yageedu*” is an expression of *haggadah* (*declaration*) that relates to something of value of which one is not aware.” The term “*haggadah*” is an expression of value and appreciation for something that was unknown – such as the “mighty deeds” of Hashem. One may witness and appreciate the “mighty deeds” of Hashem; however, since they are so great and unfathomable there is always an element of the unknown.

The Torah tells us that there is a Positive Commandment to communicate to your child about the bondage and redemption from Egypt. As it is stated, “*V’Hegadditah l’vinchah* – You must declare to your children...” The Torah could have used the term, “You must **tell** (*seeparta*) your children the events of the exodus.” Nevertheless, the Torah uses the term of “*haggadah*” (*declare*) to inform us that regardless of how many times one had related the story of bondage and redemption/ exodus, it must be communicated as if it were the first time it was told. We read in the Haggadah that Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues were so engrossed in relating the story of Egypt that they had to be reminded by his students that the time had come to recite the “Shema of the morning.” Because they were reliving and re-enacting what had transpired in Egypt, it was

communicated as if it were the first time they come upon those observations and understandings. This is the mitzvah of “V’*Hegadditah l’vinchah.*”

Regarding the “mighty deeds” of Hashem, we speak about the wonders of existence in a similar vein despite the fact that we have been continuously exposed and are aware of His ability. Every time we refer to the “mighty deeds” of Hashem we must speak of them as if they were a first-time observation because there is always an aspect to them that was not noticed before.

The declaration of *bikkurim* is an expression of to G-d for all that He has done for us. When one receives something of special value for the first time, one feels great appreciation. However after continuously receiving the same bounty from G-d one can lose that sense of appreciation because one no longer sees it as being special. Thus, it becomes something ordinary and even expected. Therefore, the text of the declaration of *bikkurim* is “**I declare (*hegaditee*) today...**” Meaning, one’s appreciation is declared every year at the time of the bringing of the new fruits to express one’s appreciation to Hashem as if it was something special that was received for the first time. The only way one can maintain a continuous sense of appreciation is to perceive what he receives as something that is unexpected. Thus, it retains its special status.

When we begin the Amidah (silent prayer) we predicate it on a verse from Tehillim (Psalms), “Hashem, open my lips and allow my mouth to declare (*yagid*) Your praises.” There are two difficulties regarding this request of Dovid HaMelech. Firstly, why does G-d need to give us the ability to speak if it is already a natural ability of every human being? Secondly, why did Dovid ask Hashem to give him the ability to “declare (*yagid*)” the praises of Hashem and not “tell” or “say” them? Dovid’s request to Hashem was not to give him the ability to speak; but rather, to give him the ability to recognize the Omnipotence of Hashem so that he could declare “*yagid*” His specialness – which are His praises.

We say in the Psalm of the Shabbos, “To declare (*l’hagid*) Your kindness in the morning and Your belief at night.” Dovid again uses the term “declare.” Every morning when Dovid looked at existence he was overwhelmed with the specialness of Hashem. Thus, “declaring” His *chesed* (kindness).

Maharal of Prague in the introduction to *Gevuras Hashem* explains why he chose to name his work relating to the exodus from Egypt – “*Gevuras Hashem.*” He says that it is based on a verse from Tehillim (Psalms), “Who could utter the power of Hashem, to be able to make tell over all of His praise...” Dovid could have simply stated “Who could utter the power of Hashem”? Why does he have to conclude -“to be able to tell over all of His praise”? The world is so vast and broad that it is not possible for any human being to be aware of all of the doings of Hashem. One cannot know every aspect of existence. Even regarding that of which we are aware, it is not possible to understand the depth of

what it is. Thus, Dovid concludes, “to be able to tell over all of His praise “ to indicate that even what we seem to understand – we truly do not fully grasp.

Life is a continuum of new horizons. Dovid HaMelech experienced every moment of life as if it were a new experience. Thus he wrote in Psalms, “Who could utter the power of Hashem, to be able to tell over all of His praise...” Similarly, the study of Torah is a continuum of new understanding and appreciation, which brings one to another level of perceiving Hashem in existence. Despite the fact that one may study the same Torah subject many times, he must approach it as if it were the first time because there are always new insights and ways to appreciate the same subject matter. A Jew can only maintain his enthusiasm and be motivated in his Judaism if his experience remains invigorating and new.

6. How Must One Stand Before G-d?(from Ki Savo) NEW

When we begin the Amidah (silent prayer) we predicate it on the words of Dovid HaMelech (Tehillim (Psalms)), “Hashem, open my lips and allow my mouth to declare (*yagid*) Your praises.” It is difficult to understand the request of Dovid. Firstly, why is he beseeching Hashem to give him the ability to speak if this is something that comes naturally to every human being? Secondly, why does Dovid use the term “declare (*yagid*)” regarding the praises of Hashem rather than “tell” or “say”?

The psalm of *Ashrei* is an acrostic of the Hebrew Alphabet. In the passage, which corresponds to the letter “*daled*” Dovid states, “Each generation will praise Your deeds and of Your mighty deeds they will declare (*yageedu*).” Malbim in his commentary on Tehillim explains, “The term “*yageedu*” is an expression of *haggadah* (*declaration*) that is used to communicate something of value of which one is not aware.” Dovid uses the term “*haggadah*” in this particular context to give one the understanding that the “mighty deeds” of Hashem are something which are unknown. One may witness and appreciate the “mighty deeds” of G-d; however, since they are so great and unfathomable there is always an element of the unknown. Thus, the term “*haddadah*” has relevance to this context.

The Gemara in Tractate Berachos tells us that when one stands to recite the Amidah it is as if he is standing before the King (G-d). However the Shema is a declaration of one’s belief in G-d. When one recites the Amidah the experience must be as if he were having an audience with G-d Himself. When we stand before Hashem what do we experience? We acknowledge His Omnipotence, greatness, and beneficence three times every day when we recite the Amidah. Although intellectually we understand that we are standing before Hashem, it is very difficult in order to experience and internalize this reality. How does one who prays regularly maintain a mindset and a sense of who G-d is when he stands in His presence?

Dovid was not simply requesting that Hashem give him the ability to speak. Rather, he was asking for the ability to express himself with a sense of His Omnipotence. Thus, he would be able to declare “*yagid*,” His specialness, which are His praises. When we say “Hashem, open my lips and allow my mouth to declare (*yagid*) Your praises” we are asking Hashem to assist us in being able to experience the Amidah as if we are standing before a King. Because the human being is physical in nature, he relates best to concepts that are tangible or even minimally visible. Since G-d is infinite, it is not possible to have such an experience with Him. Thus, it is difficult for one to sense being in His Presence. Dovid therefore beseeched Hashem to give him the ability to express himself in a way that was the equivalent of sensing Hashem’s Omnipotence,” *yagid*.”

In the Shabbos Psalm that we recite, “To declare (*l’hagid*) Your kindness in the morning and Your belief in the nights,” Dovid again uses the term “declare.” Every morning when Dovid looked at existence he was overwhelmed with the beneficence of G-d; thus, he “declared” His *chesed* (kindness).

The commentators explain that “night” refers to exile, which is dark and replete with confusion. One can only survive unanswered questions if he has *emunah* (*faith in G-d*). The stronger one’s faith is the more he will remain unshaken by the many trials and tribulations of exile. In the morning when the world is illuminated, things take on a semblance of clarity. We are taken aback by G-d’s creation. This is why Dovid said, “To declare (*l’hagid*) Your kindness in the **morning**.” The experience of clarity that the morning affords must remain vibrant and alive as if it were the first time.

Every morning upon rising we recite, “I gratefully thank you, O living and eternal King for You returned my soul within me with great compassion – abundant is Your faithfulness!” Since we offer our thankfulness to Hashem for allowing us to awaken in the morning “with great compassion” it is evident that this ability is significant. Although based on his past record one may not deserve to have his soul restored, nevertheless, one awakens because of Hashem’s great compassion. Do we truly appreciate the kindness of Hashem which is repeated every day of our lives? Or do we take it for granted that we will arise from our sleep? If one saves another from death, that individual would be beholden to his rescuer for the rest of his life. Identically we must be grateful to G-d for restoring our soul every morning. We need to experience this as a new opportunity with infinite value because it gives us the chance to perform mitzvos every moment of the day.

We must feel fortunate that we were chosen by Hashem to be bearers of His Torah. As we say every morning, “How fortunate are we because of our portion and because of our lot.” The only way one can continue feeling fortunate and blessed is to see existence as Dovid HaMelech had expressed it, “To declare (*l’hagid*) Your kindness in the morning...”

