

Parshas Vayikra

Presented By Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky Shlita, Dean

1. How to does One Achieve Honor?

The Midrash *Tanchuma* cites a verse in *Mishlei* (Proverbs), **“The arrogance of man will lower him and the person who is humble will be supported with honor.”** The Midrash explains that when one pursues honor or a position of dominance, honor will flee from him. Conversely, one who flees from honor and exalted positions will be pursued by honor.

The Midrash gives the example of Shaul Ha’Melech (King Saul). When the first king of Israel was anointed by G-d, Shaul fled from this honor because he felt he was unworthy. It is stated, “Is there a person who is qualified to be king? G-d responded, “He (Shaul) is hiding among the vessels.” The Midrash tells us that Shaul insisted that they consult the *Urim V’tumim* (breastplate worn by the High Priest). [The breastplate of the High Priest contained twelve precious stones with the names of the tribes of Israel through which Hashem communicated to the Jewish people.] When the *Urim V’tumim* was being consulted, Shaul was not to be found. The Midrash tells us that “hiding among the vessels” is referring to the breastplate of the High Priest. Hashem chose Shaul because he fled from the honor that was offered to him.

The Midrash then gives the example of Moshe Rabbeinu who fled from honor. Hashem initially wanted to bestow upon him the honor of being the Redeemer of the Jewish people, but Moshe claimed that he was not qualified. After Moshe had taken the Jews out of Egypt, split the sea for them, provided for their needs in the desert (Manna, the wellspring, and the quail), and erected the Mishkan, Moshe wished to resign his position as the leader of the Jewish people. He believed that he had completed his mission and his services were no longer required. Hashem said to him, “I have a great task which is more important than all that you have done. You shall teach the Jewish people the laws of spiritual contamination and purity and teach my children how they should bring the offerings before Me.” We see once again, “The one who flees from honor will be bestowed with honor.”

By observing the world around us, it is difficult to see how this principle is manifested. We find that those who seek honor and glory achieve fame and very often become wealthy individuals, while those who are humble remain unknown to the public. The “honor” that is being addressed by Chazal is true honor. True honor is defined by one’s level of accomplishment vis-à-vis his spirituality. It is stated in *Pirkei Avos* (Ethics of our Fathers), “There is no honor other than Torah.”

The Gemara in Tractate *Sotah* tells us that if one is arrogant he is rejected by G-d. One must possess the quality of humility in order to acquire Torah and merit that special relationship with Hashem. The more one negates himself the more one “makes room” for G-d. Contrarily, the more one is self-absorbed, the “less room” there is for G-d in his life. Moshe, being the most humble person ever to live, merited having the most special relationship with Hashem. Since Shaul fled from the honor of being the king of Israel, which is a demonstration of his self-negation, Hashem selected him to be the king. The one who believes himself to be the most deserving is actually the least deserving.

The Gemara in Tractate *Sanhedrin* tells us that had the Torah not been given to the Jewish people through Moshe Rabbeinu, Hillel the Elder would have been qualified to receive the Torah. The basis for this is Hillel’s exceptional level of humility.

The only way one can advance himself in the spiritual realm and achieve success is by being humble and not seeking acknowledgement. Of course, one should understand who he is; however,

despite his capability and accomplishments, he should not feel that he is deserving of acknowledgement. This individual will be the one to merit honor. True Torah leaders do not campaign for the position of leadership - only Hashem causes that they should be appreciated and acknowledged for what they are.

2. The Value of Self-Negation

The Portion of Vayikra outlines the offerings and sacrifices that were brought by the Jewish people in the Mishkan and ultimately in the Bais Ha'Mikdash (Temple). The Portion discusses a "*korban nedavah* – voluntary offering." The Torah states, "**the man who brings an offering from himself..**" What is the meaning of the term "from himself"? It is evident that the offering that one brings is from himself.

Sforno explains the term "from himself" to mean that one gives of himself through verbal confession and total submission. As the verse in Prophets states, "We will pay the oxen with our lips" and as Dovid HaMelech states in Psalms, "The offerings of *Elokeem* (G-d) is a broken spirit." The Gemara in Tractate *Menochos* says that when one verbalizes the portion of the sin offering in the Torah, or any other offering it is valued as if he had brought that particular offering. However there is a prerequisite that the person must state it with submission and remorse for the wrong that he had done.

Rabbeinu Yonah in his work *Shaarei Teshuvah* (the Gates of Repentance) explains the words of Dovid, "The offering of *Elokeem* (G-d) is a broken spirit." The appellation of "*Elokeem*" is a reference to G-d when He is relating to the individual in the context of Justice. Within the context of the Attribute of Justice, there is no room for *teshuvah* (repentance). *Teshuvah* emanates from the Attribute of Mercy. However, Dovid reveals to us that if one's level of remorse is to the point that it causes him to have "a broken spirit," even the Attribute of Justice is willing to accept that offering. One is only able to achieve this level of repentance if one truly recognizes the dimension of his failing. This only comes about through humility.

The Gemara in Tractate *Zevachim* tells us that if one brings an offering without confession, his offering is considered as an "abomination" - "*zevach resha'im to'ivah*- the offering of a *rasha* (evil person) is considered an abomination." An offering without proper confession is considered an abomination because if the person did not confess his sin, it is only an indication that he does not truly recognize the wrong that he has done. The person however believes that he has discharged his obligation properly because he brought the offering (albeit in a perfunctory manner). This false sense of resolution emanates from his lack of humility.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (The Code of Jewish Law) rules that since we no longer have a Bais Ha'Mikdash (Temple) to bring our offerings, *tefillah* (prayer) compensates for the offering. As one must have proper intent when bringing the offering in the Temple, one must be focused on what he is saying (in prayer) without any distraction or improper thought. Just as an improper thought invalidated the offering, so too does it render the *tefillah* (prayer) ineffective. The *Mechaber* (the author of the Code of Jewish Law – Rav Yosef Karo) states, "One must pray to Hashem in a beseeching manner." He explains that one must come before Hashem as a poor man comes to seek out alms for his support. Unless one assumes this posture, his *tefillah* is ineffective. The same failing (lack of humility) which causes one to refrain from confession, renders the offering invalid and prevents one from beseeching Hashem as a needy person. Therefore, the *tefillah* is rendered invalid. If one prays to Hashem in an arrogant or demanding manner, it is considered unacceptable.

The most important characteristic, which one must possess in order to serve G-d, is humility. It is only when one assumes this posture that he will recognize who he is not. Only then, will he realize that without Hashem there is nothing. This is when G-d will accept his prayers.

3. Why Can Man Recover from Spiritual Setbacks?

The Torah states, **“The man (*adam*) who brings from himself an offering for Hashem...”** The Midrash *Tanchuma* asks, “Why does the Torah use the term *adam* to refer to man rather than *ishe* which is the usual reference to man? It is especially difficult because we usually see the term “*ishe*” when referring to an individual of advanced spiritual level. So, why does the Torah use the term “*adam*”? The Midrash answers, “If one sins like Adam did, who was the father of mankind, he will be able to bring an offering (*korban*) to be atoned.”

The Torah tells us that Adam sinned when he ate of the Tree of Knowledge. When he was confronted by G-d on this matter, he responded by saying, “It was the woman which You gave me.” This indicates that there was a certain degree of inadvertency regarding his failing. If this was the case, then why was Adam not able to atone for his sin with an offering? Why was death decreed upon him and all existence until the end of time? Adam should have been able to bring a sin offering to atone as prescribed by the Torah for inadvertent sins.

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that since Adam was the first one to sin, we are able to bring the sin offering. Adam, the handiwork of G-d was created in total purity. There was no trace of evil within his spiritual make-up. He was not inclined to sin to any degree. As a result of eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam introduced evil within himself and all humanity. Since Adam was not inclined to sin, although his sin was considered inadvertent, there was no offering available to him to provide atonement. However, man whose essence is tainted with evil because of the sin of Adam, is naturally inclined to sin. Therefore, the inadvertency of man is truly considered inadvertent and thus can be atoned for through an offering. It is only because Adam was the first to sin and mankind inherited that spiritual deficiency that we are able to bring an offering. Thus, the Torah in this case refers to the human being as “*adam*” rather than as “*ishe*.”

The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh tells us that before Adam sinned, there was no “*orlah* – foreskin.” *Orlah* is only an expression of the impurity, which exists within man. Therefore, the *orlah* must be removed in order to be disassociated from the sin of Adam and thus bring about purity within ourselves.

With this explanation, we can understand why the act of circumcision (*milah*) supercedes the Shabbos. There is a principle, “Saving a human life supercedes the Shabbos.” Usually it is only in situations that are life threatening that the Torah allows one to violate the Shabbos. In the case of circumcision, it is the preservation of one’s spiritual existence, which is on the line. The only chance a child has to be able to address his spiritual potential is by the removal of the *orlah*.

The Gemara in Tractate *Yomah* cites several opinions as to why life-threatening situations supercede the Shabbos. One opinion is that if the Torah permits the Shabbos to be violated for the sake of one organ (the act of circumcision), then it is certain that the Torah permits one to violate the Shabbos to save the entire person. This opinion has a semblance of the one stated in the Gemara that the Torah permits the violation of one Shabbos in order to fulfill many other Shabbosos. Thus, by circumcising the child, one is allowing the child to be spiritually connected so that he is able to fulfill many other Shabbosos.

The Mishna in Tractate *Sanhedrin* states, “Why was man (*adam*) created as a single unit without a counterpart? So that he should say, ‘The world was created for me.’” This expression can be understood in one of two ways. Either for man to realize that the world was created in order to convey the extent of his spiritual potential and that an entire universe was needed to accommodate his potential. Alternatively, it can also be understood that the world was created just for man to do as he pleases. This was the challenge of free choice, which Adam faced. Was Adam not to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and actualize his spiritual potential or was he to follow his wishes and eat from the tree because the world was created only for his own desire?

Offerings have relevance to mankind because man is inherently self-centered and struggles between the two ways of approaching life. One must bring an offering in a state of humility and subordination to Hashem. When one is in that state it is a clear indication that he has chosen the correct way to understand why the world was created for him. It is only through overcoming the

negative aspect of the human being, which allows the offering to have value. Thus, the Torah states, “*Adam who brings from himself an offering for Hashem...*”

4. The Significance of the Jewish People Vis-à-vis G-d

The Gemara in Tractate *Megillah* tells us that term “*Vayihi* – and it came to pass” can have either a positive or a negative connotation. However, the expression “*Vayihi b’may* - and it came to pass in the days” is one, which connotes suffering and difficult situations for the Jewish people. *Megillas Esther*, which is read on Purim, begins with the words “*Vayihi b’may Achashverosh* - And it came to pass the days of Achashverosh (the Emperor of Persia).” This is to indicate that the days of Achashverosh, as the emperor of Persia, was a time of suffering and great difficulty for the Jewish people because of Haman.

The Gemara tells us that the expression “*Vayihi b’may* - and it came to pass in the days” is mentioned five times throughout *Tanach (Books of Scripture)*. The Maharal of Prague in his commentaries on Purim explains the significance of the number five. He cites the Gemara in Tractate *Menachos*, which refers to the verse in *Tehillim (Psalms)*, “*B’Ka (Name of Hashem, formed the worlds.*” The Gemara explains this to mean that G-d created the physical world with the letter “*hay*” from His Name and the world to come with the letter “*yud*” from his Name. This existence manifested itself with the spirituality contained within the letter “*hay*.” The Maharal explains that the letter “*hay*,” which has the numerical value of five, represents manifestation and revelation. Thus, the Maharal concludes that since the Gemara makes a point of telling us that “*Vayihi b’may*” is mentioned five times, it is meant to communicate that these moments of history are true manifestations of suffering and difficulty.

The Maharal also states in his other writings that the letter “*daled*,” whose numerical value is four connotes nothingness and a lack of substance. This is because if one places four items at four corners there is no cohesiveness or connection between any of them. Each item exists alone and is unrelated to the other. However if there is a fifth item in the center it will bring the four unrelated corners together. Thus, it creates substance and becomes a reality.

It is interesting to note that in the desert the Jews were comprised of four camps. However, if four represents nothingness, then what was the cohesive factor, which bound the Jews together as a *Klal Yisroel* (Jewish People)? The center camp, in the midst of the four, was the *Machneh Shechina* (the Camp of the Divine Presence) in which the Mishkan and the Divine Presence were located. The fifth element was the *Machneh Shechina*, which drew the four camps into one entity – the Jewish people. Without the focal point (the fifth element) of the Divine Presence, the Jews have no value unto themselves.

It is also interesting to note that Yaakov had four wives (two matriarchs and two maidservants) who mothered the twelve tribes of Israel. What gave these four individuals special value? It was the fifth element, Yaakov our Patriarch, as the binding force, which created that special value which brought forth the Jewish people.

Based on the interpretation of the Maharal that four represents nothingness, how does one understand the four lettered Name of G-d “*Yud Kay Vav Kay*”? One can say that the Jewish people, being G-d’s people, whose purpose is to represent and reveal His Presence in existence, are the fifth element. Hashem’s existence is revealed and manifested through the Jewish people.

The Torah tells us that the copper that was used to make the *Kiyor* (the laver) came from the copper mirrors that were used by the Jewish women in Egypt. The Torah refers to these mirrors as the (*maaros ha’tzovos* – the mirrors of the women who congregated).

Rashi explains *maaros ha’tzovos*,”**The daughters of Israel had in their possession copper mirrors, which they would look into when they would beautify themselves. Even those mirrors (that were necessary for their beautification) they did not withhold from bringing for the contribution toward the Mishkan. Moshe rejected these mirrors because they were made**

for accomplishing the will of the Evil Inclination (namely vanity). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said," Accept them because these are the dearest to Me of all, for by means of them, the women established many legions of offspring in Egypt. When their husbands would be exhausted after the hard labor imposed upon them by the Egyptians, the women would go and bring their husbands food and drink, and feed them. Then they would take the copper mirrors and each would view herself with her husband in the mirror, and entice him with words, saying," I am handsomer than you." By these means, they would bring their husbands to desire, and would have relations with them and conceive and give birth there."

Rashi concludes that the *Kiyor* (made from the women's mirrors), was used to contain the water that was taken by the Kohen to establish peace/harmony between husband and wife (*shalom bayis*, in the case of the suspected adulteress. The Torah tells us that if a husband forewarned his wife not to sequester herself with another man (where she could commit adultery) and she defied his warning, she was established as a suspected adulteress until she was proven innocent. The verification of her innocence or guilt came about through the drinking of the *mai sotah* (*Sotah Water*). The writ of the Sotah contained the Name of Hashem and was obliterated in the water that was taken from the *Kiyor*. Under normal circumstances, it is forbidden to obliterate the Name of G-d; however, in this case, in order to bring about *shalom bayis* between husband and wife, it was permitted.

At a simple level, we can understand that because of the importance of *shalom bayis*, G-d allows His name to be obliterated. However, based on Rashi's explanation of Chazal and our understanding of the significance of the Jewish people (as the fifth element) vis-à-vis Hashem, we can understand the words of Chazal differently.

If the Jewish people did not exist, Hashem's Name would not be known to the world. There would be no fifth element to bring about the manifestation of "*Yud Kay Vav Kay*." The only reason there is a Klal Yisroel, who attest to the existence of G-d and make His Name known, is because the Jewish women in Egypt encouraged their husbands to procreate. Had it not been for the women there would be no Klal Yisroel. Hashem is beholden to them and has a debt of gratitude for what they did for Him. This is why Hashem says, "Let My Name be obliterated on their behalf" – to bring harmony between husband and wife (in the case of the suspected adulteress). Hashem's Name is obliterated not simply to restore *shalom bayis* on behalf of the couple but to restore harmony for the sake of the woman – as a debt of gratitude.

5. The Capacity to Perceive Life Correctly

Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon) writes in *Mishlei* (Proverbs), "The deprecator you shall smite. The fool will be wisened." The Midrash tells us that "the deprecator you shall smite" refers to Amalek and "the fool will be wisened" refers to Yisro. After Yisro heard the events of the splitting of the Sea and the war against the Amalekites, he immediately abandoned his glory in Midian and joined the Jewish people in the desert. Thus, Yisro was wisened through the events that he heard about. On the other hand, the Amalekites, rather than understanding the events at hand and submitting to the Will of G-d, attacked the Jewish people and tried to destroy them. Although the revelation of G-d's Presence at the splitting of the Sea was so evident that even the maidservant experienced a level of revelation that was greater than Yechezkel the prophet, the Amalekites remained unaffected. How could they not be affected by such an awesome event?

Rav Hutner z'tl writes in his work *Pachad Yitzchak* that a deprecator/scoffer does not have the capacity to be convinced, regardless of the dimension of evidence presented. The entire world trembled after the splitting of the Sea and the exodus from Egypt. Why were the Amalekites not awed by the most spectacular and supernatural event mankind had ever witnessed? Because the Amalekites were blocked, they did not have the capacity to appreciate and internalize the reality of G-d.

Rav Hutner z'tl explains the words of Bilaam (the prophet of the Nations) – "Amalek being the first of the nations, at his end will go into oblivion (at the end of time)." The Amalekites who

could not appreciate the splitting of the Sea and had no capacity to relate to G-d's existence, at the end of time (when G-d will reveal Himself to all existence), will not be present. Mankind at the end of existence will accept G-d's Dominion and Majesty upon itself, which is something the Amalekites could not do. The proof is that they were the first nation to attack the Jewish people after the splitting of the Sea.

Chazal depict Amalek as the fool who jumped into a scolding hot bath. "Although the fool is burnt, he nevertheless cools the bath for all who follow him." The Amalekites who attacked the Jews dispelled the awesome aura surrounding the Jews that was projected to the world at large. The Amalekites perpetrated an act that still has far-reaching ramifications. Until the end of time, their attack on the Jewish people lies at the root of the desecration of G-d's Name. If the Jews had not been attacked, the world would have continued to see the Jew as G-d's people and would have reached a level of truth. However, because of the Amalekites' attack, they dissipated that specialness of the Jewish people. Thus, the world no longer stands in awe of G-d.

The Gemara tells that a Jew is not permitted to deprecate anything because this characteristic is extremely negative and is therefore detrimental to one's perception of existence. There is only one exception that is permitted – the deprecation of idolatry. Rav Hutner z'tl asks, "If this is such an innately negative and detrimental characteristic, then why is it permitted in the case of idolatry?" He explains that usually when one belittles something (whatever it may be), it emanates from a negativity that exists within the person (ego). However, when one opposes idolatry it is an acknowledgement of Hashem's Omnipotence. Deprecating idolatry emanates from one's belief in monotheism, which is a positive expression. Thus, it has no negative effect on the person.

The Gemara in Tractate *Megillah* tells us that on Purim one must reach a point where he cannot differentiate between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai." Does this mean that one should say, "Cursed is Mordechai" and "Blessed is Haman"? The reason Haman deserves to be "cursed" is that there is a "Mordechai" deserving of blessing. Evil is only evil because it is the antithesis of good. Haman is the antithesis of Mordechai and therefore deserves to be cursed. In essence, when one is cursing Haman, one is saying, "blessed is Mordechai" – it is one in the same. If one understands that Mordechai represents Hashem's position in this world, then one understands that Haman is "cursed." Each expression is an outgrowth of the other if there is a "Blessed Mordechai" there must be a "Cursed Haman."

On Purim, the Jewish people reaffirmed their commitment to Torah that was initially accepted at Sinai. On Purim, they accepted the Torah out of love and not under the coercion that took place at Sinai. (G-d held the mountain over the heads of the Jewish people.) They recognized the love of Hashem through the miracle that they had experienced. At one moment, there was a decree to annihilate every Jewish man, woman, and child, in another moment the decree was annulled, and their enemies destroyed. The acceptance of the Torah out of love brought the Jewish people to a higher level. The performance of Mitzvos is not a burden but rather a privilege and an opportunity to express our love for Hashem.

Purim is a time when one must put things into perspective and understand what is blessed (acceptance of mitzvos out of love) and what is cursed (anything that contradicts this.)

6. What Does it Take to See the Broader Picture?

The Torah tells us that after all of the parts of the Mishkan were completed the Jewish people brought them to Moshe. The Torah states, "**They brought the Tabernacle to Moshe, the Tent and all its utensils: its hooks, its planks, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets...**" Rashi cites Chazal who ask, "Why did the Jewish people bring all of these various components to Moshe?" Chazal answer, "Because they were not able to erect the Mishkan themselves. Since Moshe did not participate in the building of the Mishkan, Hashem did not allow the Jewish people to erect it; rather, He gave this task to Moshe."

The Midrash says that it was humanly impossible to erect the Mishkan because of the weight of the beams. When Moshe was told by G-d to erect the Mishkan he asked Him, "How is it possible for me to erect it?" Hashem answered, "You do what you need to do and it will erect itself." Thus, the verse states, "the Mishkan became erected." The Torah does not say, "Moshe erected the Mishkan."

It seems from Chazal that had Hashem allowed the Jewish people to erect the Mishkan, they would have done so without having Moshe's participation. One would have thought that because of Moshe's dimension of spirituality they would have wanted him to participate in its completion. The Jewish people understood who Moshe was. He took them out of Egypt, split the Sea, received the Torah on their behalf, G-d spoke to him face to face, and the Jew's received the daily portion of Manna in his merit, etc. Yet, despite this understanding, the only reason Moshe ultimately participated in the assembly and erection of the Mishkan was because G-d did not allow it to take place without him.

The Mishkan only reached its full potential because of Moshe Rabbeinu's blessing. Hashem's Presence entered into the Mishkan because Moshe prayed that it should. Without Moshe's involvement, the Mishkan was merely a physical edifice. How could the Jewish people have forgotten about Moshe Rabbeinu?

The Jewish people were performing the mitzvah of building the Mishkan *l'shmah* (for its own sake). When one performs a mitzvah *l'shmah*, it is done so because one desires to do the Will of G-d. Even though one performs a mitzvah at the most advanced level (*l'shmah*) demonstrating his reverence for G-d, nevertheless the scope of the mitzvah is limited. This is because when one performs a mitzvah, even at this advanced level, one sees it vis-à-vis his own personal service of G-d and not vis-à-vis the Jewish people as a whole. On the other hand, the Torah Sage sees the mitzvah from a global perspective and does not focus on bringing himself closer to Hashem and increasing his spiritual accomplishments. He is committed to doing the Will of G-d, which is in the best interest of the Jewish People. The Jewish people did not consider Moshe's participation as being vital for the ultimate effectiveness of the Mishkan because they were preoccupied with their own spiritual achievement.

The Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah* tells us that the reason the Book of *Bereishis* is referred to, as "*Sefer Ha'Yashar* (the Book of the Straight Ones)" [in the Book of Joshua] is because the Patriarchs were "*yesharim* (straight)." The Netziv explains the difference between a *tzaddik* (righteous person), *chassid* (devoutly pious person), and a *yashar* (straight person). He explains that the *yashar* is one who is able to rise above his personal conflict of interest to do the right thing.

For example, the Torah tells us that when Avraham was informed by G-d that He was about to destroy Sodom, Avraham immediately beseeched Hashem not to destroy them. One would think that Avraham, a man who sacrificed his life to introduce G-d into existence and to dispel paganism and evil from the world, would rejoice with the good tidings of the destruction of Sodom. However, we see the contrary. Avraham prayed that the people of Sodom should be spared. He was concerned that their destruction would be a desecration of G-d's Name because they may have had some redeeming qualities. A person who is a *tzaddik* or *chassid* (who lives his life only to increase G-d's glory in the world) would have reacted differently. He would have rejoiced with these wonderful tidings. Avraham beseeched Hashem to the point where he was concerned that he may have jeopardized his own share in the world to come. Since a *yashar* rises above his own conflict of interest, he is enabled to see the larger picture. Thus, at the time of the completion of the Mishkan, the Jewish people, who were not classified as *yesharim*, were limited by their conflict of interest to do the Will of G-d (at their own limited level).

At the time of the war of independence, the Jewish community in Israel faced many life-threatening situations. A group of religious leaders approached the Brisker Rav z'tl (the world renowned Torah Sage of that period) and claimed that their predicament was bleak because of the behavior of the secular (non-observant) Jew living in Israel. The Brisker Rav responded that they should look within themselves for the solution. "The problem lies within us and not within the

secular community. If we would correct our own shortcomings, the situation would resolve itself.” The Brisker Rav cited the example of Yonah who was on a ship listing in the midst of a storm. The passengers and crew, who were pagans, approached him and asked why he did not pray to his G-d to stop the storm? Yonah responded by saying, “The problem is I and not you. If you remove me from the ship the storm will pass.” One needs to be at a special level to see the broader picture. This is an indication of true greatness.

The Midrash tells us that after Hashem told Moshe to erect the Mishkan, Moshe asked Him, “It is humanly impossible because of the weight of the beams to erect the Mishkan, how am I to do it?” If Hashem was telling Moshe to erect the Mishkan, it is evident that he would have the ability. If so, what is the basis for Moshe’s question? Moshe understood that if G-d wanted him to erect the Mishkan, he would have the ability to do so. However Moshe’s question was, “how is it possible for a mere mortal (who is finite) to erect the Mishkan that has the capacity to accommodate the infinite Divine Presence of Hashem?” To this Hashem responded, “You do what you need to do and it will erect itself.” Meaning, that one must take the initiative, but the outcome is in the Hands of G-d.

We, as Jews, can only initiate an action. The Jew wears tefillin and performs other mitzvos, which are physical; however, it is Hashem who brings about the unlimited energy that causes the consequence. Our responsibility as Jews is to do what is incumbent upon us and not be concerned about the outcome.