

# CHAPTER 1: MISHNA 3: PART 2

by Rabbi Shaya Karlinsky

***Antignos Ish Socho received (the Torah transmission) from Shimon HaTzadik. He would say: Don't be like slaves (servants) who serve the master in order to receive reward. Rather be like slaves without any intention to receive reward. And the fear of Heaven should be upon you.***

How come the Tanna didn't teach us more directly "Serve G-d from love"?!

Our love of G-d is supposed to be fundamental, emanating from our sense of being an attachment to the Divine reality. It is supposed to be independent of our feelings of appreciation for the good that G-d has done for us, or in order to receive good from G-d. Teaching us to "serve out of love" could be misinterpreted as being based on feelings of love one should have due to the wonderful things G-d has done for us. For that certainly could lead one to feelings of love for G-d, and one who serves G-d in response to good that has been received, or in anticipation of that good, is considered a completely righteous person. However, the Tanna is teaching us the fundamentally proper way to serve, motivated by an intrinsic desire to serve G-d and to fulfill His will, independent of any reward, leading to an inherent attachment to the Divine. Greater than simple appreciation, this drive is motivated by the recognition of the reality and the greatness of the Divine, leading to a fundamental desire to fulfill His will.

(In response to the following question: The second half of the Mishna presents a non-existent example as the desired behaviour! It would have sufficed to simply teach that one should not serve in order to get reward. The Maharal explains the following.)

Simply teaching "Do not serve G-d in order to get reward" would have implied a PROHIBITION on doing so, which is not correct. We have shown that a person serving in this way is in fact a righteous person. The Tanna wants, instead, to teach the fundamental way of service, which is independent of any reward. Therefore the conclusion of the Mishna is necessary "Rather be like a servant who serves with no intention of receiving reward."

On the other hand, the Tanna could not simply teach "Serve G-d as a servant who does so for no reward" as the paradigm for correct service, since such an example is virtually non-existent. Rather, the two contrasting statements are necessary to communicate the message fully: Don't be like a

servant who is motivated by the reward, which is not the essence of service and does not emanate from love of the master; rather serve as one who is not motivated by reward -- even though this is not common -- but by love, the inherent desire to serve and be close.

After counselling us on "ahava," service motivated by love, we are also taught about "yirah," fear. For the natural attitude of one who loves another is closeness and connection. This closeness has the potential to neutralize fear and awe. ("Familiarity breeds contempt...") So the Tanna teaches us that even though you are supposed to serve out of love, becoming closer to G-d, this should not lead you to relate to Him like you would to a friend or peer. Remain conscious of the enormous gap between G-d, who is "in the heavens," and you, who dwells on the physical earth. This will ensure that your love and closeness to G-d will not neutralize your awe of the Divine.

(If we love G-d, if we are close to him, if we are "buddy- buddy" with G-d, rationalizations for improper behaviour become much easier, we can easily "take Him for granted," become less careful about transgressions. "G-d understands." "He won't mind." Our awe of G-d and fear of potential punishment avoids this pitfall.)

The proper term for fear and awe is "yira'at shamayim," fear of heaven, for it emanates from a recognition of the contrast between Divine and Transcendent G-d (in heaven), and finite, physical man (on the earth). We never find the term "ahavath shamayim," love of heaven, for love emanates from an attachment and closeness ("...to love G-d...and attach yourself to Him." Devarim 30:20), and "shamayim" is far removed from us.

After Shimon HaTzaddik taught of the foundations of the world's existence, Antigonus taught how man, for whom this world was created, is supposed to serve his Creator, which is the fundamental purpose of his existence.

The teaching of Antigonus embraces the totality of service of G-d, embodying both love and fear. An individual action can be motivated by either love OR fear. But MAN is supposed to constantly embody both traits simultaneously, leading to an ideal relationship with his Creator. It is appropriate that this integration of love and fear be taught by Antigonus, as an individual, while the coming Mishnayoth are authored by "pairs" of Tanaim. Each pair will be split between one teaching a behaviour based on love and one based on fear. But in the essence of service of G-d, which is what Antigonus is teaching, there must be an integration and unification of love and fear.

(I would like to add a few paragraphs from an article I wrote on the subject of repentance motivated by love and fear, which raises issues that will give added insight to what the Maharal writes here.)

In Netivot Olam, Netiv Ahavath Hashem, at the end of Ch. 2, the Maharal brings the Gemara in Avoda Zara (19a) and our Mishna. He explains that one who serves in order to get reward is not committed to truly SERVING; rather he is actually working for someone else to get a payoff for himself. This is legitimate when serving a human master, says the Maharal, for no servant's CREATION can be said to be for the owner, and he has no inherent responsibility for service to

another. Man, however, was created for the purpose of serving G-d, and as such, his service should be performed for no other reason than that it is intrinsically man's purpose ("avodah b'etzem"). So the service should be with no intention of receiving any "payoff."

There is an intermediate level, one who serves G-d out of recognition of all the good G-d has bestowed upon him. This is more elevated than one who serves for the "payoff," but it is still not "avodah b'etzem." True "avodah m'ahava," service of G-d from pure love, is independent of anything G-d does for us, and even if we are subjected to difficulties and suffering (lo aleinu), since we exist to serve G-d as our inherent mission of our existence, we willingly do whatever we are asked to do. This is true service, "m'ahava."

In Netiv HaTshuva, Ch. 2, the Maharal discusses the distinction between Tshuva m'ahavah (repentance motivated by love) and Tshuva m'yirah (motivated by fear) discussed in the Gemara in Yoma (86). Tshuva m'ahava brings immediate rectification, while tshuva m'yirah requires a healing process that comes from G-d. Explains the Maharal: One who serves G-d from love has the love and attachment to G-d from within himself (m'tzad atzmo), while the one who serves G-d from fear is dependent on something outside of himself, the fear coming from G-d. Therefore the therapeutic nature of tshuva also requires input from G-d.

We operate on many different levels, with many different motivations. Much of our lives are devoted to fulfilling others' expectations of us, or trying to acquire things which are outside of us. This makes our mission as well as our success dependent on things which reside outside of us, rather than having our motivations and standards of accomplishment be dependent on our recognition of what our potential is, and driven by our sense of what our responsibilities are, what G-d created each one of us (individually) to accomplish.

This drive emanates completely from within us, and is independent of anything outside of us. It is up to us, and depends on our attitude, as well as our sense and recognition of responsibility. This is the secret to serving G-d with no intention of receiving reward.

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