

# THE GATES OF REPENTANCE, GATE 3:7

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

We return now to the theme introduced last time: what one would have to be guilty of to be denied a place in The World to Come. Rabbeinu Yonah characterized the World to Come there as "the experience of 'true life everlasting'", which we likened to an "eternity's worth of nourishment from, and intimacy and closeness to G-d". And he likewise referred to it as the "great light that encompasses all delight".

At bottom the point is that procuring a place in the World to Come is the ultimate spiritual achievement; it is spiritual excellence par excellence.

And we determined that one would have to have turned his back from G-d quite stubbornly to have gotten to where he hasn't a place in the World to Come. We spent some of last class enunciating some of the deeds and attitudes that would bring a person to that point, and we'll cite some more now.

They include those who contend that since the Resurrection of the Dead isn't explicitly cited in the Torah, it must not be true. A couple of points of explanation here. The Resurrection of the Dead is a phenomenon that will occur after the Messiah arrives, after the Jewish Nation will have returned en masse to Israel, and after the Holy Temple will have been rebuilt (hopefully very soon, please G-d). Sometime after the "dust would have settled", so to speak, the world as we know it will become undone, and the great preponderance of the dead will come back to life in a body (though a far more ethereal body than we know of now). And \*that\* will be followed by the oncoming of the World to Come. Hence, anyone who denies the fact that we have a solid and trustworthy oral tradition telling of the Resurrection of the Dead would have to conclude that the World to Come can't be depended on either-- and he thus denies himself a place in it.

Others who don't have a place in the World to Come include "heretics", whom Rabbeinu Yonah defines as "people who don't act respectfully to Torah scholars", who question the need for them, and who demean Torah study itself. But, again, if the reality of the World to Come is known from the tradition which has been passed down from Torah scholar to Torah scholar throughout the generations, it's only logical that someone who impugns them and the tradition they maintain wouldn't enjoy the World to Come itself.

People said to be "G-d's enemies" haven't a place in The World to Come either. Clearly, people who demean the very notion of G-d Almighty, reject His omnipotence, or who'd brashly stand Him down

if forced to confront Him are His opponents and hence His "enemies". But sometimes those who seem to be His "friends" actually oppose Him. Like otherwise observant people who can't bear others learning Torah and serving G-d, who say things like, "She's *\*so\** religious!", "How much can he study?", etc.

And others who haven't a place in the World to Come are those who do things that threaten the lives of other Jews by their political machinations; those who cause the multitude to sin; Jewish communal leaders who assert their control over other Jews for other than G-dly reasons (because rather than be humble as we should all be they assert themselves, because rather than fear G-d they have others fear *\*them\**, because they often verbally abuse others, because they place many stumbling blocks before others, and because they belie the fact that we Jews should really only subjugate ourselves to G-d); those who "separate themselves from the Jewish community"; those who "abandon G-d" by not fearing Him and thus perform mitzvot by rote and are convinced they've done nothing wrong in their lives (unlike "those other people"). What that all comes to, all in all, is setting oneself apart from the Jewish Nation-- which is the diametric opposite of the situation in the World to Come, where all Jews will be united body and soul.

But once again, Rabbeinu Yonah's over-arching point is that they too can return to G-d-- and the Jewish Nation-- wholeheartedly and thus inherit a place in the World to Come.

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