

# OHR YISROEL, RABBI SALANTER'S LETTERS - PART 31:2

*by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman*

R' Salanter once again underscores the point that we're to always remember to at least observe those mitzvahs that are easy enough to keep at the moment and to avoid the sins that are easy enough to shun at that point, if nothing else.

This is especially true when it comes to those mitzvahs and sins touching upon our character traits and the things required of us to be law-abiding, moral citizens. While its more difficult to be successful in that realm -- because of all of our hidden motivations and the befuddling number and strength of conflicting commitments -- nonetheless the best way to overcome those sorts of sins is to always keep our "natural love of righteousness and our hate for (moral) distortions" in mind.

For who among us doesn't indeed admire goodness and honesty, even if we ourselves don't always live up to our own visions of it? The gist of the matter is that we're to always keep our inner sense of right and wrong well-tuned and at the forefront, and to strive to live up to them. The other point is to always strive to know our own hearts and to own up to our failings and successes.

For at bottom, R' Salanter asserts, mitzvahs touching on our character traits are in fact *chukim* (i.e., essentially inexplicable and mysterious, as cited earlier in this letter). And they should be taken as seriously as other such mitzvahs.

This completes our series. May the many merits of R' Salanter stand in our favor for having studied his work, and may we witness the arrival of the Moshiach in our time as a consequence.

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