

# ROYALTY IN TRAINING

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

*And now Israel what does HASHEM your G-d request from you except to fear HASHEM your G-d, to walk in all His ways and to love Him and to serve HASHEM your G-d with all your heart and all your soul. (Devarim 10:12)*

It seems more than hard to figure out just what HASHEM wants from us. The verse at first indicates some small and manageable request and then a long list of the greatest of expectations is piled on. Is that all that is requested of us, to reach the heights of human achievement? It's like if someone asked you to give him a ride to the corner and then he gives you directions to take him cross country.

One of the more famous stories told by Rebbe Nachman of Breslov may help to illustrate the intention of the verse. There was a prince that was so thoroughly convinced that he was a turkey that he behaved just like a turkey. Naked he clucked around on the floor all day picking up minute kernels of grain with his mouth and making turkey-like noises all the while. The poor king was beside himself with grief and frustration. All the king's advisors could not convince the prince that he was something other than a turkey.

One day one of the king's wisest men appeared on the floor next to the prince and he too had shed his clothing. The prince looked at him with skepticism as both of them hunted and pecked for grain on the floor. Then the wise man put on his socks and the prince told him, "Aha so you're not really a turkey!" The wise man told him, "Of course I am a turkey but a turkey can still wear socks." Soon the prince was also wearing socks. The next day the wise man put on a shirt and the prince accused him once more of only pretending to be a turkey to which the wise man replied, "A turkey can wear a shirt and still be a turkey." The prince too put on a shirt.

The next day it happened again with pants. Then the wise man sat at the table and reminded the prince that a turkey can sit at a table. In the end the prince was eating and drinking and conversing with princely manners because a turkey can also behave like a prince. We can only assume that eventually the prince began to feel more aristocratic than fowl- like and all was due to his improving conduct.

The Ohr HaChaim explains that our verse is speaking about a progression of steps. One level is called "fear of HASHEM your G-d" and the other is "love of HASHEM. He explains that first a person does actions animated by fear, compelled by duty or principle, and then he is a candidate to walk in

the ways of HASHEM. Eventually one can come to love HASHEM and to serve Him with heart and soul. Fear- respect is an entree to the possibility of love. One starts out doing things only because he must and ultimately it metamorphoses into more. The Ohr HaChaim points out that that is why the verse starts, "And now what does HASHEM ask from you except to fear HASHEM your G-d...." From the moment the prince put on those socks he was already no longer a turkey, but rather royalty in training. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).