

# THE PLEASURE OF THE TREASURE

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

And now if you will listen well to My voice and observe My covenant, ***you will be to Me the most beloved treasure of all the peoples, for Mine is the entire world. You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Shemos 19:5-6)***

What is the purpose of mentioning, "for Mine is the entire world"? Where does that fit into the discussion? A great commitment is being demanded of us and a cosmic carrot is dangled before our eyes to induce the first giant step. What is the relevance of stating in that context the to whom the world belongs? What could it possibly mean? There are likely multiple approaches to this verse. Let's try three that are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

1-It may be comparable to a rich future father-in law promising his would be son- in law a huge reward if he can make his daughter happy. The father- in law reminds the lad of how profoundly wealthy he is. "I own hundreds of hotels and buildings and banks. Just be good to my daughter!" This notion is supported by the Mechilta's explanation of the words "You will be to Me": "What is the meaning of "to Me"? You will be available to Me and busy with Torah and not busy with other things." If it's not already too obvious, the Torah may be likened to the daughter and HASHEM to the father-in law and we the Jewish People are the son-in law to be. If we are dutiful and loyal to the Torah, then huge rewards are promised because "Mine is the entire world", all goodness is at My disposal! This statement amplifies the size of the inducement package.

2-It could be that the father-in law in our little parable is quieting the nerves of his future son-law. He knows that in order remain properly focused on the task the son-in law needs to be assured that the material means are guaranteed to be there. Anticipating that the son-law might wonder and worry, "What happens if this industry crashes or that business goes under, how will I be able to remain loyal to the cause of learning and living Torah amidst shifting material conditions?" So the bride's father assures the boy not to concern himself overmuch because the whole world is his and even if one part of the economy falls other opportunities will become manifest. So confirms the prophet Chaggai, "Mine is the silver and mine is the gold, says HASHEM!" The Vilna Gaon states in his commentary on Mishlei, "The main point of giving the Torah to Israel is that they should place their trust in HASHEM... Because the main thing is to gain complete trust and that principle envelops all the Mitzvos!" Therefore HASHEM tells us, so to speak, "Trust me! You can afford to dedicate yourself to Torah! The entire universe is completely under My control!"

3-The verse might also be emphasizing a slightly different point. What does it mean to be "the most

beloved treasure", as promised in the verse? "You will be to Me the most beloved treasure of all the peoples": The Pesikta Rabba explains, "Just as a treasure is dear to a person more than everything else that he possesses, so is Israel beloved before the Holy One Blessed is He!" What is HASHEM telling the Jewish People? "Of all My possession you are My dearest and that's not an insignificant matter because the whole world is Mine!" This declaration helps us grasp with a profound sense of proportion the esteem boost buried in the word "treasure".

It was told about the Klausenberger Rebbe ztl. that during the 2nd World War the Nazi's were once beating him mercilessly and all the while they were taunting him with words, "Tell us Rabbi, do you still think you are the chosen people?" They would laugh with derision and continue the abuse. At one point the Rebbe told them, "If you'll stop beating me for a moment I'll give you the answer." They paused to hear what he had to say. "Yes!" he told them, "If our roles were reversed and I would be in a position of total control over you like you are over me now, would I be doing to you what you are doing to me!? We are still the chosen people"

To endure as he did one would have to surmise the size of the prize, and the must to trust, and **the pleasure of the treasure**. DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).