

# THE MORE YOU DO, THE MORE YOU GET

*by Rabbi Aron Tendler*

In last week's Parsha we discussed the incident of the Second Pesach - Pesach Shaynie, and its symbolic importance. The individuals who petitioned Moshe for a second chance to bring the Korban Pesach [the Passover Sacrifice] were exempted from the Korban Pesach because they had been Tammei (impure by having had contact with a corpse). Nevertheless, they did not want the exemption; they wanted to bring their Korban. This incident was recorded as an example of what it means to serve G-d. The true servant desires to serve his master. The true servant finds self-actualization and fulfillment through serving his master. The true servant does not want to be exempt from serving.

In relation to G-d and Torah, this presentation of the meaning of true service is even more profound. For the religionist, G-d is the purpose of creation and the meaning of life. Service is its own reward and the inability to serve is a punishment. As the Mishnah in Avos states, "Be as servants who serve their master without the expectation of reward." Therefore, for the Tammei individuals to be exempt from bringing a Korban Pesach was a true loss, not a gain.

This example of true service to G-d was recorded after G-d had assigned individual jobs to the various groups within the nation (Kohanim, Leviyim, etc.). In doing so the Torah was making the following point: Everyone has a job and a mission. Everyone is capable of becoming a true servant of G-d. The simplest Jew and the holiest Torah scholar can equally be considered a true servant.

How does this week's Parsha, the story of the Miraglim - Spies, contrast with the ideals of true service? Can we find further support for understanding the nature of true service by contrasting Yehoshua and Kalev with the other ten spies?

The Talmud in Kedushin (31a) contrasts the merit of performing a Mitzvah when commanded to do so with the merit of performing a Mitzvah when not commanded to do so.

"Rav Yoseph said, I have learned in the name of Rav Chaninah that the reward for the performance of a Mitzvah by one who is commanded to do so is greater than the reward for a Mitzvah done by one who is not commanded to do so. Therefore, if someone can disprove the statement of Rav Yehudah that "a blind man is exempt from doing Mitzvos, "I will make a party in celebration!"

We are taught that Rav Yoseph was blind, and according to Rav Yehudah a blind person is exempt from doing Mitzvos. Therefore, according to Rav Yehudah, Rav Yoseph was exempt from doing

Mitzvos. At first, Rav Yoseph thought that his blindness had a silver lining to it. He thought that his doing Mitzvos, because he was exempt, was a greater sign of servitude than doing Mitzvos when commanded. However, Rav Chaninah ruling changed all that. According to Rav Chaninah, there was greater merit in doing a Mitzvah when commanded than when not commanded.

Therefore, Rav Yoseph's blindness was a total loss! No sight, no obligation to do Mitzvos, and less merit for any Mitzvah he does do! Therefore, Rav Yoseph advertised for anyone who might be able to disprove Rav Yehuda's statement that the blind are exempt from doing Mitzvos.

The reason for there being greater merit in doing that which is commanded than for doing that which is not commanded is psychologically sound. It is common to the free willed humans (especially males) to resist anything that they are commanded to do. They would more readily do it on their own than do it when told to do so. (A basic tennet for a healthy spousal relationship is: Model the behavioral change you want from your spouse - especially a husband, do not mandate it!) Simply put, the human does not like being told what to do.

On the other hand, self-motivated acts are done with greater enthusiasm and commitment. Therefore, there is greater merit in doing commanded Mitzvos where the natural reluctance to do so must be overcome than there is in doing voluntary Mitzvos that are driven by self-motivation and enthusiasm.

On the one hand, the voluntary performance of a Mitzvah, such as in the story of the Pesach Shaynie, is a sign of true servitude. On the other hand, one could argue that its performance reflects less servitude and more self-service.

The enthused servant might have a need to be a servant and therefore is fulfilling a "sefsh-need" through his enthusiastic service, albeit while at the same time serving his master. The true test of servitude is when the servant serves, regardless of personal benefit, or the lack thereof. As the Mishnah stated, "Be as servants who serve their master without the expectation of reward."

As a final note to the story of Pesach Shaynie, it is interesting that the reward for those Tammei individual's enthused and self-initiated petition was the "Mitzvah" of Pesach Shaynie! No longer would their petition be self-motivated. The true and just reward for their non-mandated desire was to make it into a mandated commandment! The reward for wanting to do the Mitzvah was to make it into a Mitzvah!

The story of the Miraglim is in stark contrast to the example of Pesach Shaynie. The Miraglim were great individuals devoted to G-d and the Jewish people; yet, something went terribly wrong. For some reason, they seemingly returned from their mission having lost faith in G-d and the destiny of the Chosen People.

I would like to suggest that the Miraglim saw the Promised Land as certain death and destruction for the Jews. The Spies predicted a difficult campaign to take the land. They had seen the great, fortified,

cities inhabited by legendary warriors and they feared that the Jews would have to fight for the land against its inhabitants.

They may have understood the battle for the land to be a necessary stage for reintegrating the nation into the norms of life. Two years of miraculous existence in the desert was not the intended reality for the Bnai Yisroel. Their intended reality was to model for the world how to weave belief and service into the daily fabric of life and living. To do so the Jews would have to stop eating Manna and stop depending on point-guards of clouds and fire. They would have to act out the norms of invasion and victory by sending Spies, gathering information, planning a strategy, executing a plan, while accepting that every victory along the way was solely G-d's doing.

The land of Israel was a "land that consumed its inhabitants." Only the strong in body and spirit could survive the demands and challenges of the Promised Land. Since the exodus from Egypt the Jews had gained a degree of trust in themselves and G-d "but only because of G-d's overt, miraculous, intervention. In order to inherit and keep the Promised Land the Jews would have to take the lessons of the Exodus (G-d's overt intervention) and find His ever-present benevolence behind the fade of nature. The process of transition from G-d's overt intervention to His hidden intervention would challenge the courage and faith of the Jewish people. The Spies feared that the nation was not ready to meet the challenge.

The Spies were afraid that the Jews would not be able to handle the inevitable difficulties of war and occupation. They feared that in the process they would lose faith in G-d and His chosen leaders. They feared that because of all that had happened during and after the Exodus G-d would not forgive the people for losing faith, and Eretz Yisroel would be taken away from them!

The greatest tragedy of all is that the Miraglim succeeded in creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Had they returned full of enthusiasm and optimism they would have strengthened the faith of the nation and guaranteed that the Jews would never again suffer exile and persecution. They would have guaranteed the beginning of the messianic era! Instead they demoralized the nation and caused them to lose faith in G-d and themselves. In the end, they delayed the messianic era and caused the demise of an entire generation!

What went wrong? How could great, G-d-fearing men make such a terrible mistake? How is it that Yehoshua and Kalev kept their faith and did not make the same mistake?

The story of Pesach Shaynie taught the value of accepting servitude and the reward of "being commanded." The story of the Miraglim teaches us the pitfalls of conditional servitude and the punishment for questioning G-d's promises and methods.

The end of last week's Parsha states, "Moshe was more humble than anyone else." Moshe's humility was a product of having accepted his personal fate and G-d's commandments without question or reservation. Therefore, regardless of the fact that Moshe was greater than anyone else was, he did not see himself as greater. Whoever accepted their personal fate and G-d's commandments without

question or reservation was equally as great as Moshe. His humility was greatest because he truly was the greatest. Moshe had the most justifiable reasons for being egotistical and self-congratulatory, but wasn't.

The bottom line is, are we true servants? Do we accept G-d on His conditions, or on our own? The petitioners of the Pesach Shaynie accepted G-d's primacy. Moshe accepted G-d's primacy. Kalev and Yehoshua accepted G-d's primacy. The Miraglim did not.

Following the incident of the Miraglim (15:2), G-d commanded the laws of the Nisachim "wine libations that accompany all self-motivated offerings" a "Nedavah." My Grandfather Zt"l, in his Sefer Darash Moshe explained the relationship between the story of the Miraglim and the laws of the libations. The Miraglim failed because they questioned the nation's faith and courage. Yehoshua and Kalev, on the other hand, kept their faith because they did not question the ability of the nation to have faith in G-d.

Kalev and Yehoshua's faith was further evidenced in their strength and courage to stand against the crowd and do the right thing, regardless of personal safety and concern. Because of their faith and courage G-d rewarded them with even greater positions of leadership and responsibility. Yehoshua would one day succeed Moshe as leader and Kalev would become prince of the tribe Yehudah. My Grandfather Zt"l explained that once a person expresses unconditional faith in G-d and His commandments G-d rewards him with greater opportunities for doing Mitzvos. "One Mitzvah leads to another."

The Nedavah was a free willed offering. The purpose of the free willed Korban was to express closeness to G-d and unconditional acceptance of His Torah. Often the Nedavah would be motivated by personal reasons of gratitude and thanksgiving; however, it was still a free willed offering. G-d's reward for this free willed expression of acquiescence and unconditional acceptance was to "obligate" the owner of the Nedavah to offer a libation. Just as the petitioners for the Korban Pesach were rewarded with the commandment of Pesach Shaynie, and Yehoshua and Kalev were given greater responsibilities, so too was the initiator of the Nedavah commanded to bring an accompanying libation.

As a final note on the Miraglim, it is ironic that the very thing the Miraglim hoped to avoid, the nation's loss of faith in G-d, they were responsible for causing. The most important thing is to do what's right because it is right, not for any other reason. However, that is predicated on having faith in G-d. To the degree that a person believes in G-d and has faith in His ever-present benevolence is the degree to which he or she is able to fully trust the absolute goodness of G-d's commandments, regardless of personal reservation or question.

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