



THE LONG SHORT WAY .ORG

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This edition of The Long Short Way covers the second installment of the Rebbe's ma'amer, V'Avraham Zokein 5738 (1977). This ma'amer was said in the Rebbe's room and was published on motzoey Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah. It is available with sources on thelongshortway.org.

The previous installment left us with questions: Why do we need to do mitzvot? Why do we need to do mitzvot everyday? Why don't they just accumulate?

PRIVATE SCREENING

(ג) ויובן זה בהקדים ביאור הידוע בזה שהנשמה צריכה להלבושים דתורה ומצוות בכדי שתוכל ליהנות מזיו השכינה

To understand all this, let's first ask the question: Why does the soul need the protective garments of Torah and mitzvot?

כי להיות שהנשמה היא נברא [וכמבואר בכמה מקומות שהנשמה היא כמו שאלקות נעשה בבחינת נברא 81, ועד שהדביקות שלה באלקות היא דביקות בלתי ניכרת] ואי אפשר לנברא להשיג שום השגה באור אין סוף ברוך הוא, לכן בכדי שתוכל הנשמה ליהנות מזיו השכינה שהוא הארה מאור אין סוף ברוך הוא [ובפרט לחזות בנעם הנוה], צריכה היא ללבושים.

Being that the soul is a creation, it is limited. It is impossible for anything limited to—on its own—contain or experience infinity. Therefore, the soul—a finite being—needs something to bridge the gap between it and the light of the *Sh'chinah*—which is infinite. For the soul to enjoy itself in G-dly pleasures it needs the protective garments of Torah and mitzvot.

The soul in essence is really infinite. Light remains light even when it shines through colored glass, even though less light is

shining through—light is light. When the soul is placed in a body, it remains G-dliness. (Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah, 5666). In fact, everything in Atzilus—keilim (vessels), heichalos (chambers), and the G-dly souls—is one with G-d. In Atzilus, existence doesn't have its own identity—they are an extension of G-d. It's the maximum amount of revelation within creation without creation ceasing to exist.

וכמשל אור גדול [ביותר, וכמו אור השמש, בחינת שמש הנוה] שאין יכולים להביט בו, ועל ידי המסך (שהוא כמו לבוש) יכולים לקבל [ולקלוט] את האור.

For example: A bright light, like the sun, cannot be gazed at directly. Only when protected by special lenses—a protective layer or garment—can we handle its brightness. Similarly, the verse in *Tehillim* (84:11) says, "The L-rd G-d is a sun and its sheath." Implied is that G-d is likened to the sun. Just as the sun cannot be fully experienced or fully beneficial without its sheath, we cannot fully benefit and experience G-d without doing mitzvot.

If the sun wasn't mitigated by its sheath, distance, and our atmosphere, we would be obliterated. Likewise, G-dliness is too bright for the soul (as a limited being) to remain in existence.

THE BRIDGE

והנה ידוע שכל ממוצע המתבר ב' דברים, צריך להיות כלול משניהם.

The protective garment we gain from doing Torah and mitzvot bridges the gap between the finite soul and the light of the *Sh'chinah*. There is a general principle in Chassidus: Whatever bridges the gap between two things a) is made up of both and b) of a higher quality than both.

Being able to reach the highest heights and relate to the lowest lows is a sign of greatness. True greatness is to extend beyond our element. Someone who is intelligent but cannot relate to the average person is limited—his disconnectedness is his limitation. G-d, who is the highest of highs can be found in the lowest of lows. "Tzaddikim are compared to their creator," (Kedushas Levi, Shemos, Shekalim 5). The Rebbe, for example, displayed mastery of the deepest and most complex areas of Torah, yet could relate to a toddler on her terms.

ומזה מובן גם בענין הלבושים דתורה ומצוות [שהם כמו ממוצע המחבר בחינת זיו השכינה (שהוא הארה מאור אין סוף ברוך הוא הבלי גבול) עם הנשמה (שהיא נברא ובעלת גבול)], שיש בהם מב' הענינים.

Applying this principle we can understand just how great the protective garments of Torah

continued from other side

and mitzvos are. They bridge the gap between the light of the *Sh'chinah* in *Gan Eden*—a glimmer of the light of the infinite One blessed be He—and the soul—a finite creation.

How so? In what way are Torah and mitzvos made up of both the infinite and finite?

דְּשִׁרְשָׁם (שֶׁל הַתּוֹרָה מִצְוֹת) הוּא מִרְצוֹן הָעֲלִיּוֹן וְחֻכְמָתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ שֶׁהֵם מִיּוֹחָדִים בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ (שֶׁהוּא וְחֻכְמָתוֹ וּרְצוֹנוֹ אֶחָד) – עֲנִין הַבְּלִי גָבֹל [וְעַד שֶׁרְצוֹן הָעֲלִיּוֹן וְחֻכְמָתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ (שֶׁרֶשׁ הַתּוֹרָה מִצְוֹת) הֵם לְמַעַלָּה גַם מִבְּחִינַת זֵי הַשְׂכִּינָה],

The way Torah and mitzvos are infinite.

Torah and mitzvos come from G-d's will and wisdom and are one entity with Him. That means that Torah and mitzvos come from an unlimited place--higher even than the light of the *Sh'chinah*.

וְעַל יְדֵי שִׁירְדוֹ לְמַטָּה בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הַגִּשְׁמִי צִיצִית בְּצִמְרֵי גִשְׁמִי וְתַפְלִין בְּקֶלֶךְ גִּשְׁמִי וְכֵן בְּכָל הַמִּצְוֹת [וְעַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה הוּא גַם בְּתוֹרָה שֶׁנִּתְלַבְּשָׁה בְּשִׁכָּל אֲנוּשִׁי, וְעַד בְּטַעֲנוֹת שֶׁל שָׂקָר, וְנִתְלַבְּשָׁה בְּדִיּוֹ עַל הַסֶּפֶר] הֵם בְּבָחִינַת מְדִידָה וְהִגְבָּלָה וְעַד לְהַמְדִּידָה וְהִגְבָּלָה דְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הַגִּשְׁמִי שְׂאִין תַּחְתּוֹן לְמַטָּה מִמֶּנּוּ,

The way Torah and mitzvos are also finite.

G-d's will and wisdom descends

into the mundane world: *tzitzis* are made with physical wool, *tefillin*—with physical leather and so forth for all mitzvos. Mitzvos take on the limited form of the physical world. Furthermore, the Torah becomes integrated into human logic and human problems—it even deals with cases of litigants making false claims. Torah descends so low that the physical status of the ink and parchment becomes the deciding factor between a kosher Torah and a non-kosher one. Torah and mitzvos descend to the mundane of this world--the lowest world in creation.

הֵנָּה עַל יְדֵי ב' עֲנִינִים אֵלּוּ שֶׁבְּתוֹרָה מִצְוֹת [עֲנִין הַבְּלִי גָבֹל שֶׁבָּהֶם מִצַּד שִׁרְשָׁם, וְעֲנִין הַגָּבֹל שֶׁבָּהֶם מִצַּד יְרִידָתוֹ לְמַטָּה] הֵם נִעְשִׂים לְבוֹשׁ וּמְמוּצָע הַמַּחְבֵּר אֶת הַנִּשְׁמָה שֶׁהִיא נִבְרָא וּבְעֵלֶת גָּבֹל (וְכֵמוֹ שֶׁהִיא מְלוּבָּשֶׁת בְּגוֹף גִּשְׁמִי) עִם בְּחִינַת זֵי הַשְׂכִּינָה וְעַד עִם בְּחִינַת נֹעֵם הַיּוֹהָ שֶׁלְמַעַלָּה מִכָּל מְדִידָה וְהִגְבָּלָה.

Being that Torah and mitzvos are infinite and finite, they are the bridge between the finite soul and infinite light of G-d. Torah and mitzvos garb the soul that it may experience pleasure in G-d—completely beyond limitation.

This finite/infinite dynamic of Torah and mitzvos is not a paradox. Instead, it's the expression of something much

greater. If Torah and mitzvos were only infinite, they would be confined to the high heavens. If they were only finite, they wouldn't have the power to connect us to G-d. Only because they are greater than both the soul and G-d's light (they're one with G-d) that Torah and mitzvos can take us there—from here.

SUMMARY

Torah and mitzvos form a garment for the soul to handle the light of the *Sh'chinah* in *Gan Eden*—a taste of infinity. How does this work? The answer is: Torah and mitzvos are greater than both and made up of both. The source of Torah and mitzvos is G-d's will and wisdom which are one with Him—that makes them infinite like Him. On the other hand, Torah and mitzvos descend into the mundane, earthly, and limited. Since Torah and mitzvos are both infinite and finite, they are the bridge between G-d and us. Although one step closer, we are still left with the questions from the previous installment: Why do we need to do mitzvos *everyday*? And why are these garments (garments of the soul) greater than G-d's garment (*atik yomin*)?

The goal is simple: to produce authentic translations of Chassidus into a clear, understandable English. Visit thelongshortway.org for this and other regular content. Written and formatted by Rabbi Moshe Delerb. Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Visit thelongshortway.org/Contact

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