Chabad.ORG

Teshuvah - Chapter Nine

Translated by Eliyahu Touger

SHOW CONTENT IN:

Both English Hebrew

Next »
Teshuvah - Chapter Ten

« Previous Teshuvah - Chapter Eight

1 [A question arises:] As explained, the reward for the mitzvot and the good which we will merit if we observe the path of God as prescribed by the Torah is the world to come as [Deuteronomy 2:7] states: "So that good will be granted you and you will live long."

[Also,] the retribution which is exacted from the wicked who abandon the paths of righteous prescribed by the Torah is *karet* as [Numbers 15:31] states: "This soul shall surely be cut off. His sin shall remain upon him."

[If so,] what is the meaning of the [statements] made throughout the entire Torah: "If you observe [the Torah's laws], you will acquire such and such;" "If you do not observe [the Torah's laws], such and such will happen to you?" All [of the benefits and difficulties that are promised] are matters of this [material] world, for example, plenty and famine, war and peace, sovereignty [over other nations] or a humble [national standing], the settlement of the land or exile, success in one's deeds or loss and all the other points mentioned in the covenant.

[In resolution, it must be stated that] all those statements are true. They have been realized in the past and will be realized in the future. When we fulfill all the mitzvot in the Torah, we will acquire all the benefits of this world. [Conversely,] when we transgress them, the evils written [in the Torah] will occur.

Nevertheless, those benefits are not the ultimate reward for the mitzvot, nor are those evils the ultimate retribution to be exacted from someone who https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/911913/jewish/Teshuvah-Chapter-Nine.htm

מַאַתר שַׁנּוֹדַע שַׁמַּתַן שָׂכָרָן שֵׁל מִצְוֹת וָהַטוֹבָה שַׁנִּזְכֵּה לָהּ אָם שַׁמַרְנוּ דֵּרֶךְ ה' הַכַּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה הִיא חַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבַּא שַנָאַמַר (דברים כב ז) "לְמַעַן יִיטַב לַדְ וְהַאָּרֵכְתַּ יַמִים". וְהַנָּקַמָה שַׁנּוֹקְמִים מְן הַרְשָׁעִים שֵׁעַזְבוּ אָרְחוֹת הַצֵּדֵק הַכָּתוּבוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה הִיא הַכַּרָת שַׁנָּאָמַר (במדבר טו לא) "הָכָּרֵת תִּכַּרֵת הַנָּפֵשׁ הַהִיא עֵוֹנַה בַּה". מהוּ זָה שַּׁכַּתוּב בָּכַל הַתּוֹרֵה כַּלַה אָם תִּשָּׁמְעוּ "יַגִּיעַ לַבֶם כַּךְ (ויקרא כו יד) "וָאָם לֹאַ תִּשִּׁמְעוּ" יַקָרָה אָתָכֶם כַּדָּ. וְכַל אוֹתָן הַדְּבַרִים בַּעוֹלָם הַזֵּה. כָּגוֹן שֹבַע וְרָעַב וּמִלְחַמָה וְשָׁלוֹם וּמַלְכוּת וִשִּׁפָּלוּת וִישִׁיבַת הַאַרֵץ וְגַלוּת וָהַצְלַחַת מַעשה וָהָפָּסֵדוֹ וּשָׁאַר כַּל דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית. כַּל אוֹתָן הַדְּבַרִים אֱמֶת הַיוּ וְיִהִיוּ וּבְזָמַן שָׁאַנוּ עוֹשִׂים כַּל מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה יַגִּיעוּ אַלֵינוּ טובות הַעוֹלַם הַזֶּה כִּלַן. וּבְזְמַן שָאַנוּ עוברין עַלֵיהֶן תִּקְרֵאנָה אוֹתַנוּ הַרַעוֹת הַכָּתוּבוֹת. וָאַף עַל פִּי כֵן אֵין אוֹתַן הַטוֹבוֹת הֶם סוֹף מַתַּן שָּׁכַרָן שֵׁל מִצְוֹת וִלֹא אוֹתַן הַרַעוֹת הֶם סוֹף הַנָּקַמָה שָׁנּוֹקַמִין מֵעוֹבֵר עַל כל המצות. אלא כד הוא הכרע כל הַדְבַרִים. הַקַּדוֹשׁ בַּרוּךְ הוּא נַתַן לַנוּ תּוֹרַה זוֹ עץ חַיִּים הִיא. וְכַל הַעוֹשֶה כַּל הַכַּתוּב בַּה וִיוֹדְעוֹ דֵּעַה גָּמוּרָה נָכוֹנָה זוֹכֵה בַּהּ לְחַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבַּא. וּלְפִי גֹדֵל מַעֲשֵׂיו וִרֹב חַכְמַתוֹ הוּא זוֹכֶה. וְהִבְטִיחָנוּ בַּתּוֹרָה שֵׁאָם נַעֲשֵׂה ובטובת נפש ונהגה אותה בשמחה בחכמתה תמיד שיסיר ממנו כל הדברים מַלַּעֲשׂוֹתַהּ כָּגוֹן חלִי אותנו וּמִלְחָמָה וְרָעָב וְכַיּוֹצֵא בָּהֵן. וְיַשִּׁפִּיעַ לְנוּ כָּל

transgresses all the mitzvot.

Rather, the resolution of the matter is as follows: God gave us this Torah which is a tree of life. Whoever fulfills what is written within it and comprehends it with complete and proper knowledge will merit the life of the world to come. A person merits [a portion of the world to come] according to the magnitude of his deeds and the extent of his knowledge.

[In addition,] we are promised by the Torah that if we fulfill it with joy and good spirit and meditate on its wisdom at all times, [God] will remove all the obstacles which prevent us from fulfilling it, for example, sickness, war, famine, and the like.

Similarly, He will grant us all the good which will reinforce our performance of the Torah, such as plenty, peace, an abundance of silver and gold in order that we not be involved throughout all our days in matters required by the body, but rather, will sit unburdened and [thus, have the opportunity to] study wisdom and perform mitzvot in order that we will merit the life of the world to come.

This [principle is expressed] by the Torah. After [Deuteronomy 6:11-12] promises us all the benefits of this world, it concludes [*ibid*.:25]: "And charity will remain for us if we take care to perform [all these commandments]."

Similarly, the Torah has informed us that if we consciously abandon the Torah and involve ourselves in the vanities of the time in a manner similar to that stated [by <u>Deuteronomy 32:15</u>]: "Jeshurun became fat and rebelled," then, the True Judge will remove from all the benefits of this world which reinforce their rebellion those who abandoned [the Torah].

He will bring upon them all the evils which prevent them from acquiring [a portion in] the world to come so that they will be destroyed in their wickedness. This was implied by the Torah's statement [Deuteronomy 28:47-48]: "Recause you did not some God from Lord with

הַטּובות הַמַּחַזִיקות אֶת יַדֵינוּ כַעֲשות ַהַתּוֹרָה כָּגוֹן שֹבַע וְשַׁלוֹם וְרְבּוּי כֵּסֶף וְזַהַב. בָּדֵי שַׁלֹא נַעֲסֹק כַּל יַמֵינוּ בִּדְבַרִים שַׁהַגוּף צַרִיך לָהֵן אֵלָא נֵשֵׁב פָּנוּיִים לִלְמֹד בַּחַכִּמָה וַלַעֲשׂוֹת הַמִּצְוָה כָּדֵי שֵׁנִּזְכֵּה לְחַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבָּא. וָכָן הוּא אוֹמֶר בַּתּוֹרָה אֲחֵר שָׁהַבְּטִיחַ בּטוֹבוֹת הַעוֹלָם הַזֵּה (דברים ו כה) "וּצְדַקַה תָּהָיֶה לַנוּ" וְגוֹ'. וְכֵן הוֹדִיעַנוּ בַּתּוֹרַה שָׁאָם ַנְעַזֹב הַתּוֹרָה מִדְּעַת וְנַעֲסֹק בְּהַבְלֵי הַזְּמַן נַעניַן שׁנַּאֵמַר (דברים לב טו) "וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׁרוּן בַּרוּם לַב טו וַיִּבְעַט", שַׁדַּיַן הָאֵמֶת יָסִיר מָן הַעוֹזְבִים כַּל טובות הַעוֹלַם הַזֵּה שֶׁהֵן חִוְּקוּ יִדֵיהֵם לְבָעֹט וּמֶבִיא עַלֵיהֶם כַּל הַרַעוֹת הַמּוֹנְעִים אוֹתַן מִלְּקנוֹת הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא כָּדֵי שִׁיּאבִדוּ בִּרְשִׁעַם. הוא שַּכַתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה (דברים כח מז) "תַּחַת אַשֶּׁר לֹאַ עָבַדְתַּ אֵת ה'" וְגוֹ', (דברים כח מח) "וְעַבַדָתַ אָת אֹיָבֵידְ אֲשֶׁר יִשַׁלְחַנוּ ה' בַּדְ". נִמְצָא פֶּרוּשׁ כַּל אוֹתָן הַבְּרַכוֹת וְהַקְּלַלוֹת עַל דֶּרֶדְ זוֹ, כָּלוֹמֵר אָם עַבַּדְתֵּם אָת ה' בִּשְּׁמְחַה וּשָׁמַרַתֵּם דַּרָכּוֹ מַשָּׁפִּיעַ לָכֶם הַבַּרַכוֹת הָאֵלוּ וּמַרְחִיק הַקּלַלוֹת מַכֵּם עַד שַׁתְּהִיוּ פָּנוּיִים להתחַבֶּם בַּתוֹרַה וְלַעֵסֹק בָּה כָּדֵי שֶׁתּזְכּוּ לְחַיֵּי הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא וִיִיטַב לְדְּ לְעוֹלָם שֵׁכֵּלוֹ טוֹב וָתַאַרִיךְ יַמִים לְעוֹלָם שָׁכַּלוֹ אַרֹךְ ונמצַאתֵם זוֹכִין לִשָּׁנֵי הָעוֹלָמוֹת, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים בַּעוֹלַם הַזֵּה הַמָּבִיאִים לְחַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבַּא. שַׁאָם לֹא יִקְנֵה פֹּה חַכְמַה וּמַעַשִּים טוֹבִים אֵין לוֹ בִּמָה יִוֹכֵּה שַׁנַּאֵמַר (קהלת ט י) בָּי אֵין מַעַשָּה וְחֶשָׁבּוֹן וְדַעַת וְחַכְמַה" בשאול". ואם עובתם את ה' ושגיתם בְּמַאֶכַל וּבִמְשָׁתֵּה וּזְנוּת וְדוֹמֵה לַהֶם מֶבִיא עַלֵיכֶם כַּל הַקּלַלוֹת הַאֵּלוּ וּמֵסִיר כַּל הַבְּרַכוֹת עַד שַׁיָּכָלוּ יִמֵיכֵם בָּבַהַלָה וַפַּחַד וִלֹא יִהְיֵה לַכֶם לֶב פַּנוּי וָלֹא גוּף שַׁלֶם לַעֲשוֹת הַמִּצְוֹת כָּדֵי שַׁתֹּאַבְדוּ מֶחַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבַּא וְנִמְצֵא שַׁאָבַּדְתֵּם שָׁנֵי עוֹלַמוֹת. שַׁבִּוֹמַן שַאַדַם טַרוּד בַּעוֹלַם הַזֵּה בִּחלִי וּבִמָלְחַמַה וּרִעַבוֹן אֵינוֹ מָתַעַפֶּק לֹא בַּחָבָמָה וְלֹא בַּמְצִוֹת שַׁבַּהֵן זוֹכִין לָחַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבַּא:

happiness,]... you will serve your enemies whom God sends against you."

Thus, these blessings and curses can be interpreted as follows: If you serve God with happiness and observe His way, He will grant you these blessings and remove these curses from you in order that you may be free to gain wisdom from the Torah and involve yourselves in it so that you will merit the life of the world to come. "Good will be granted you" - in the world that is entirely good; "and you will live long" - in the world which is endlessly long, [the world to come].

Thus, you will merit two worlds, a good life in this world, which, in turn, will bring you to the life of the world to come. For if a person will not acquire wisdom in this world and he does not possess good deeds, with what will he merit [a portion in the world to come]? [Thus, Ecclesiastes 9:10] states: "There is no work, no accounting, no knowledge, and no wisdom in the grave."

[Conversely,] if you have abandoned God and become obsessed with food, drink, lewdness, and the like, He will bring all these curses upon you and remove all blessing until you will conclude all your days in confusion and fear. You will not have a free heart or a complete body to fulfill the mitzvot in order that you forfeit the life of the world to come.

Thus, you will forfeit two worlds for when a person is occupied in this world with sickness, war, and hunger, he cannot involve himself with either wisdom or mitzvot which allow him to merit the life of the world to come.

Prophets and their Sages, have yearned for the Messianic age so they can rest from the [oppression of] the gentile kingdoms who do not allow them to occupy themselves with Torah and mitzvot properly. They will find rest and increase their knowledge in order to merit the world to come.

In that era, knowledge, wisdom, and truth will become abundant. [Isaiah 11:9] states, "The earth will be full of the knowledge of God." [Jeremiah 31:33] states: "One man will no longer teach his brother, nor a man his colleague... [for all will know Me]." And [Ezekiel 36:26] states: "I will take away the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

[These changes will come about] because the king who will arise from David's descendants will be a greater master of knowledge than Solomon and a great prophet, close to the level of Moses, our teacher. Therefore, he will teach the entire nation and instruct them in the path of God.

All the gentile nations will come to hear him as [Isaiah 2:2] states: "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of God's house shall be established at the peak of the mountains... [and all the nations shall flow to it]."

[Nevertheless,] the ultimate of all reward and the final good which will have no end or decrease is the life of the world to come. In contrast, the Messianic age will be [life within the context of] this world, with the world following its natural pattern except that sovereignty will return to Israel.

The Sages of the previous generations have already declared: "There is no difference between the present age and the Messianic era except [the emancipation] from our subjugation to the [gentile] kingdoms."

וּמִפְּנֵי זֶה נִתְאַוּוּ כָּל יִשִּׂרָאֵל נִבִיאֵיהֵם וְחַכְמֵיהֶם לִימוֹת הַמַּשִּׁיחַ כָּדֵי שֵׁיַנוּחוּ מְמַלְכִיּוֹת שָׁאֵינֵן מִנִיחוֹת לָהֶן לַעֲסֹק בַּתּוֹרָה וּבַמְצִוֹת כַּהֹגֵן. וִיִּמְצָאוּ לָהֵם מַרְגוֹעַ וְיִרְבּוּ בָּחַכְמַה כָּדֵי שֵׁיָזְכּוּ לְחַיֵּי הַעוֹלַם הַבָּא. לְפִי שַׁבָּאוֹתָן הַיָּמִים תִּרְבֵּה הַדֵּעָה וְהַחָּכְמַה וָהָאֵמֶת שַׁנַּאֵמֶר (ישעיה יא ט) "כִּי מַלְאַה האַרץ דַעָה אָת ה'". וְנָאָמַר (ירמיה לא לג) "וָלֹא יַלַמָּדוּ אָישׁ אָת אַחִיו וָאִישׁ אָת רַעָהוּ". וְגַאֲמַר (יחזקאל לו כו) "וַהַסְרֹתִי אֵת לֵב הַאָבֵן מַבְּשַׂרָכָם". מַפָּנֵי שָאוֹתוֹ הַמֵּלֶךְ שַׁיַעַמֹד מַזַרע דַּוָד בַּעַל חַכָּמַה יָהָיָה יָתֵר מִשְּׁלֹמה. וְנָבִיא גָּדוֹל הוּא קָרוֹב לְמשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ. וּלְפִּיכָדְ יַלַמֵּד כַּל הָעָם וִיוֹרָה אוֹתַם דֵּרֶדְ ה'. וְיַבוֹאוּ בָּל הַגּוֹיִם לְשָׁמְעוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ישעיה ב ב) "וְהָיָה בַּאַחַרִית הַיַּמִים נַכוֹן יָהָיָה הַר בֵּית ה' בִּראשׁ הַהָרִים". וְסוֹף כָּל הַשַּׂכַר כָּלוֹ וְהַטוֹבָה הַאַחַרוֹנָה שָׁאֵין לָהּ הַפְּסֵק וְגַרַעוֹן הוּא חַיֵּי הַעוֹלָם הַבַּא. אָבַל יִמוֹת הַמַּשִּׁיחַ הוּא הַעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְעוֹלְם בְּמִנְהָגוֹ הוֹלֵךְ אֶלָא שֶׁהַמַּלְכוּת תַּחַזֹר לִישִּרָאֵל. וּכְבָר אָמְרוּ חֵכָמִים הַרָאשׁוֹנִים אֵין בֵּין הַעוֹלַם הַזָּה לִימוֹת הַמַשִּׁיחַ אֶלַא שָעַבּוּד מַלְכִיּוֹת בִּלְבַד:

Translated by Eliyahu Touger

Published and copyright by Moznaim Publications, all rights reserved. To purchase this book or the entire series, please click here.

The text on this page contains sacred literature. Please do not deface or discard.

Vowelized Hebrew text courtesy Torat Emet under CC 2.5 license.

© Copyright, all rights reserved. If you enjoyed this article, we encourage you to distribute it further, provided that you comply with Chabad.org's copyright policy.