



KI TETZE

One Person. Seriously?

Annoying News for Anyone Hoping to Stay Spiritually Off the Grid

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

KI TETZE

Seventy-four of the Torah's 613 commandments (*mitzvot*) are in the *parshah* of *Ki Tetze*. These include the laws of the beautiful captive, the inheritance rights of the firstborn, the wayward and rebellious son, burial and dignity of the dead, returning a lost object, sending away a mother bird before taking her young, the duty to erect a safety fence around the roof of one's home, and the various forms of *kilayim* (forbidden plant and animal hybrids).

Also recounted are the judicial procedures and penalties for adultery, for the rape or seduction of an unmarried girl,

and for a husband who falsely accuses his wife of infidelity. The following cannot marry a person of Jewish lineage: a *mamzer* (someone born from an adulterous or incestuous relationship); a male of Moabite or Ammonite descent; or a first- or second-generation Edomite or Egyptian.

Our *parshah* also includes laws governing the purity of the military camp; the prohibition against turning in an escaped slave; the duty to pay a worker on time and to allow anyone working for you—human or animal—to “eat on the job”; the proper treatment of a debtor

and the prohibition against charging interest on a loan; the laws of divorce (from which are also derived many of the laws of marriage); the penalty of thirty-nine lashes for transgression of a Torah prohibition; and the procedures for *yibum* (“levirate marriage”) of the wife of a deceased man to his childless brother, or *chalitzah* (“removing of the shoe”) in the case that this brother-in-law does not wish to marry her.

Ki Tetze concludes with the obligation to remember “what Amalek did to you on the road on your way out of Egypt.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

When do you feel that you “matter” as a person?
Is it when you’re needed, when you’re successful,
when you’re impactful, when you’re seen, or when
you’re simply being good and faithful?

TEXT 1

Deuteronomy 24:14–15

יד. לֹא תַעֲשֶׂק שֹׁכִיר עֲנִי וְאֲבִיוֹן, מֵאֶחָיֶךָ אוֹ מִגֵּרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּאַרְצְךָ
בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ.

טו. בְּיוֹמוֹ תִּתֶּן שְׁכָרוֹ וְלֹא תָבוֹא עָלָיו הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, כִּי עֲנִי הוּא וְאֵלָיו הוּא
נִשְׂא אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ, וְלֹא יִקְרָא עָלֶיךָ אֶל ה' וְהָיָה בְּךָ חַטָּא.

14. Do not withhold the wages of a poor or destitute hired worker, of your brothers, or of your strangers who are in your land within your cities.

15. Give him his wage on his day and let not the sun set over it, for he is poor, and he risks his life for it. This way, he will not cry out to G-d against you, and you will [not] be sinful.

This *parshah* talks
about the
commandment of
making payroll on time.



TEXT 2

Liturgical Formulation
of Maimonides's
Eleventh Principle of
Jewish Faith

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרֵךְ
שְׁמוֹ גּוֹמֵל טוֹב לְשׁוֹמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו, וּמַעֲנִישׁ
לְעֹבְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו.

I believe with perfect faith that the blessed Creator bestows goodness on those who observe His commandments and punishes those who transgress His commandments.



We believe that G-d rewards
our good deeds and punishes
for the bad ones.

TEXT 3

Talmud, Eruvin 22a

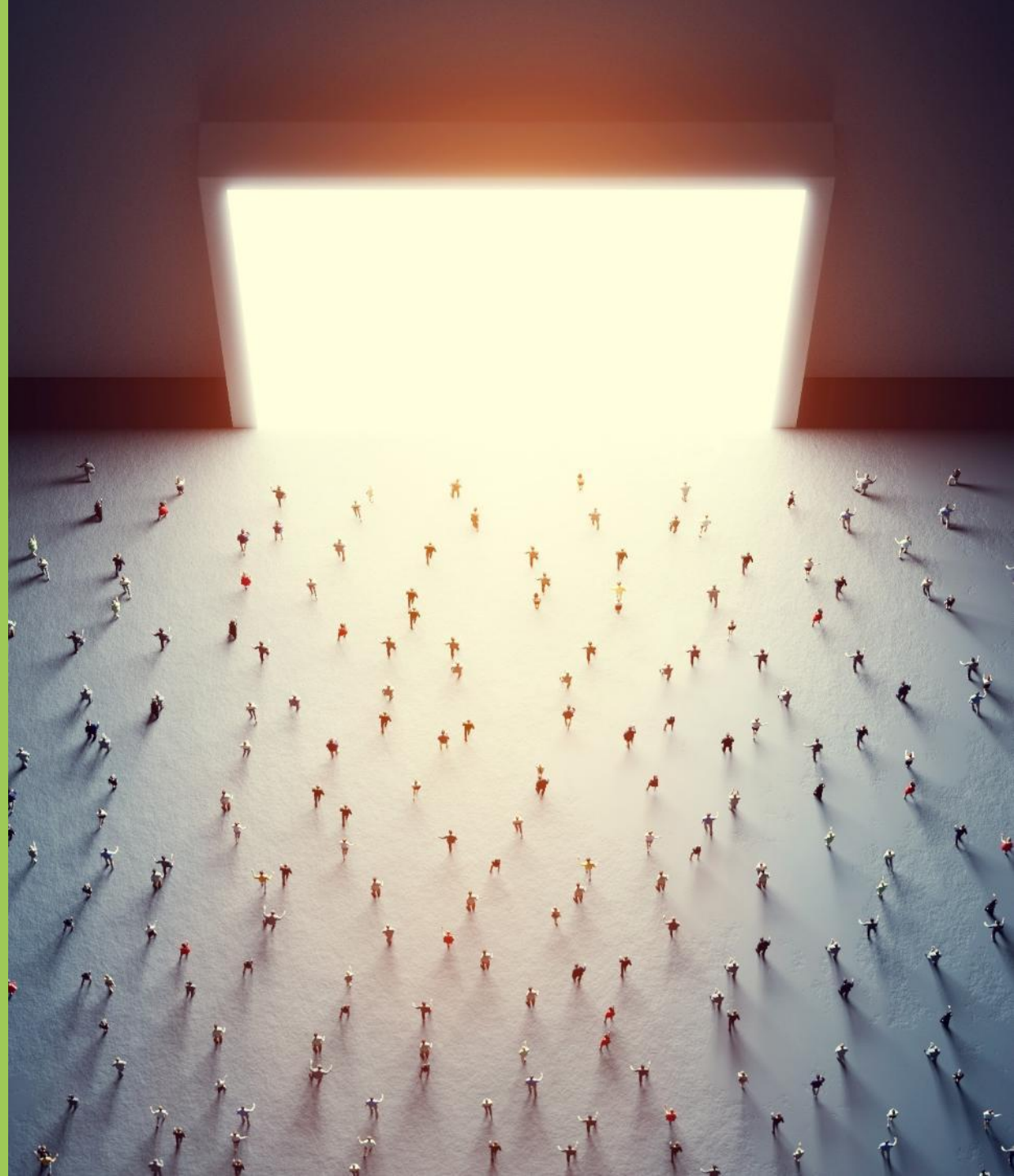
דָּאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי: מַאי דְּכָתִיב, "אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִוֶּה
הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם" (דְּבָרִים ז, יא)?

הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם, וְלֹא לְמָחָר לַעֲשׂוֹתָם. הַיּוֹם לַעֲשׂוֹתָם, לְמָחָר
לְקַבֵּל שְׂכָרָם.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asked, "What is the meaning of the [word 'today' in the] passage, 'That I command you to observe today' (Deuteronomy 7:11)?"

"The commandments must be observed in the present, not in a future lifetime. The present is for observing the commandments; the future is for receiving reward."

G-d rewards us for our *mitzvot* in different ways and at different times, but our true reward is in the World to Come.



QUESTION

How can G-d defer (our primary) payment until after our passing?

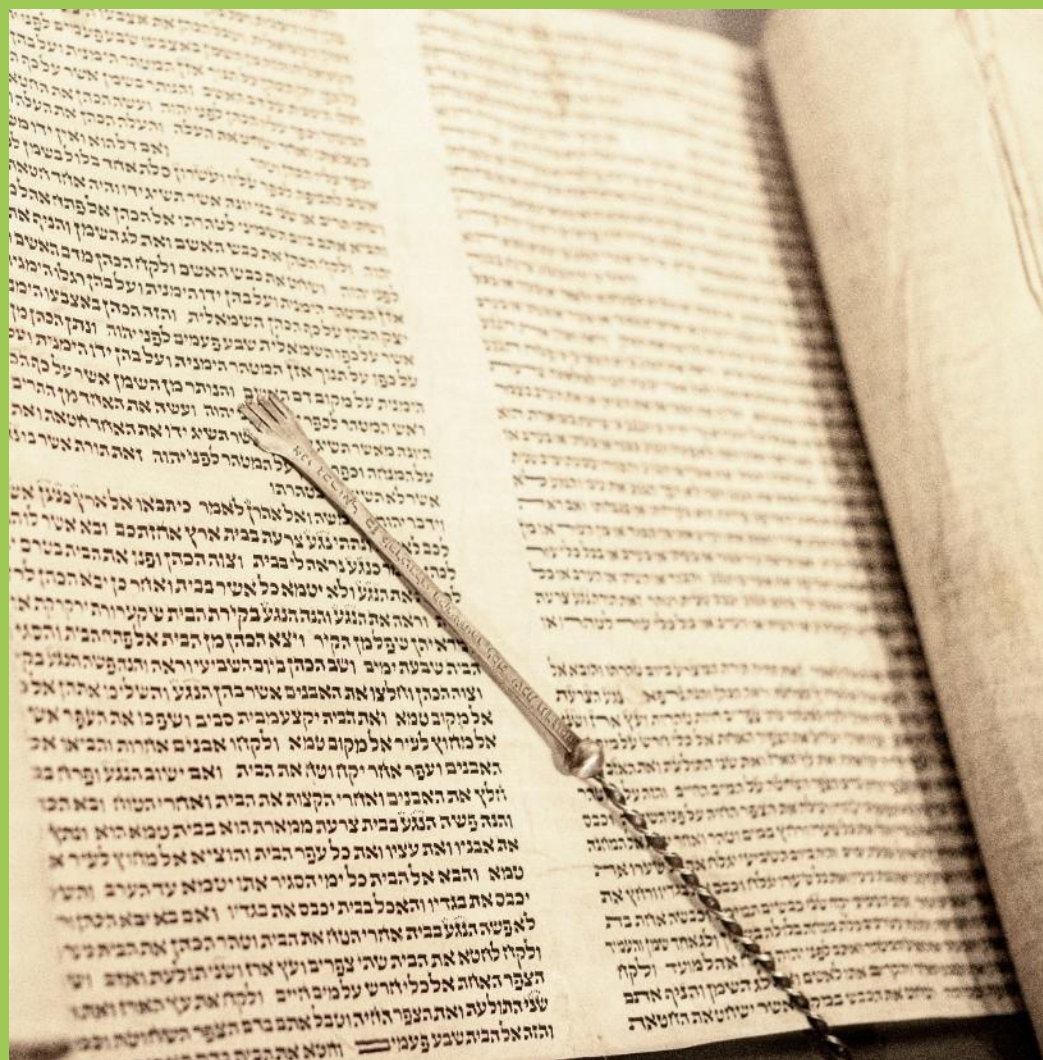


TEXT 4

Midrash, *Shemot*
Rabah 30:9

נִשְׂאִין מִדּוֹתָיו שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא כְּמִדַּת בֶּשָׂר וְדָם,
מִדַּת בֶּשָׂר וְדָם מוֹרָה לְאַחֵרִים לַעֲשׂוֹת וְהוּא אֵינוֹ
עוֹשֶׂה כָּלֹם, וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא אֵינוֹ כֵּן אֶלָּא מֵה
נֶשֶׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה, הוּא אוֹמֵר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת וְלִשְׁמֹר.

G-d behaves differently than humans. Humans might tell others to do something that they don't do. But G-d is different: what He does, He tells the Jews to do and observe.



The Torah's rules aren't just for us. They reflect G-d and how He runs the world.



A possible answer is that this law applies only to employers: G-d is our Father, so His reward is an allowance, not a salary.

TEXT 5

Mishnah, Avot 2:14

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר . . . וְדַע לִפְנֵי מִי אַתָּה
עֹמֵל, וּמִי הוּא בֹעֵל מְלֶאכְתְּךָ שִׁישְׁלֶם לְךָ
שֶׁכָּר פְּעֻלָּתְךָ.

Rabbi Elazar says, . . . “Know before Whom
you labor and Who is your employer, for
He will reward you for your labors.”

Just because He's our
Father doesn't mean G-d
can skip payroll rules: He
is still our employer.



TEXT 6

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, *Shulchan*
Aruch HaRav, Choshen
Mishpat, Laws of
Borrowing and Hiring,
ch. 12

הַכֹּל הוּלֵךְ אַחֵר גִּמַּר מְלָאכָה. וְכֵן שְׂכִיר שָׁבוּעַ, שְׂכִיר
חֹדֶשׁ, שְׂכִיר שָׁנָה. יֵצֵא מִמְּלָאכָתוֹ בַּיּוֹם, יֵשׁ לוֹ זְמַן כָּל
הַיּוֹם בְּלִבָּד. יֵצֵא בַּלַּיְלָה, יֵשׁ לוֹ זְמַן כָּל הַלַּיְלָה בְּלִבָּד.

Payroll obligation begins when the term of employment ends.
The same rule applies to week laborers, month laborers, or
annual laborers. If the fixed term expires during the day, the
employer must pay by the end of the day. If the fixed term
expires during the night, the employer must pay by the end of
the night.



In Jewish law, workers hired for longer assignments are generally paid only upon the completion of the assignment.

TEXT 7

Rabbi Yaakov ben
Yosef Reischer, *Iyun
Yaakov* to *Ein Yaakov*,
Eruvin 22a

דאין הבעל הבית עובר על הלאווין הנזכרים לעיל אלא נוקא ביום
שנשלם שכירתו ופועולתו . . .

ואנו כל ימינו אנו משועבדים להקדוש ברוך הוא לעבודתו, כדכתיב,
"והגית בו יומם ולילה" (יהושע א, ח), "ואי אמה בן חורין ליבטל
ממנו" (אבות ב, טז) עד נשימות.

Employers do not violate these labor laws until the fixed term of
labor is complete. . . .

Our commitment to G-d extends throughout our lifetime, as it is
written, "Study it day and night" (Joshua 1:8), and "You are not free
to desist from it" (Mishnah, Avot 2:16) until your passing.

ANSWER

This applies to our work for G-d: we're lifetime employees. He provides for us in this life to help us do our duties, but He only pays us when our contract ends which is in the World to Come.

TEXT 8A

Maimonides, *Mishneh
Torah*, Laws of
Repentance 9:2

וְסוֹף כָּל הַשָּׂכָר כֵּלּוֹ וְהַטּוֹבָה הָאַחֲרוֹנָה שְׂאִין לָהּ הַפֶּסֶק
וְגִרְעוֹן, הוּא חַיִּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

אַבֵּל יָמוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ הוּא הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְעוֹלָם כְּמִנְהֲגוֹ
הוֹלֵךְ, אֲלָא שְׁהַמְלָכוֹת תִּחְזֹר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

The ultimate reward and the final good, which will have no end or lapse, is life in the World to Come.

In contrast, the messianic age will unfold in this world, with the world following its natural course, except that sovereignty will return to Israel.

TEXT 8B

Nachmanides, *Gate of Reward*

שֶׁכֶּר הַנֶּפְשׁוֹת וְקִיּוּמָם בְּעוֹלָם הַנִּשְׁמוֹת,
נִקְרָא לְרַבּוּתֵינוּ זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה גֵן עֵדֶן
...

וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יָבֹא הַמָּשִׁיחַ. וְהוּא מְכַלֵּל חַיֵּי
הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. וּבְסוּפָהּ יִהְיֶה יוֹם הַדִּין
וּתְחִיַּית הַמֵּתִים. וְשֶׁהוּא הַשֶּׁכֶּר הַכּוֹלֵל
הַגּוֹף וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ. וְהוּא הָעֵיִקָּר הַגָּדוֹל
שֶׁהוּא תִקְוַת כָּל מְקוֹה לְהַקְדוּשׁ בָּרוּךְ
הוּא.

וְהוּא הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא שָׁבוּ יָשׁוּב הַגּוֹף כְּמוֹ
נֶפֶשׁ, וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ תִּדְבֹּק בְּדַעַת עֲלִיוֹן
כְּהַדְבָּקָה בְּגֵן עֵדֶן — עוֹלָם הַנִּשְׁמוֹת.
וּתְתַעֲלֶה בְּהַשְׁגָּה גְדוֹלָה מְמִנָּה. וְיִהְיֶה
קִיּוּם הַכֹּל, לְעַדִּי עַד וּלְנֶצַח נְצָחִים.

Our sages of blessed memory describe the place where souls reside and receive their reward as the Garden of Eden. . . .

After this stage, the Mashiach will come. This messianic era is also part of this world. At the end of this era, there will be a day of judgment, and then the Resurrection of the Dead will occur. This will be a reward for the body and the soul. This is the great principle of faith and the hope of every believer.

This is what our sages called the World to Come, in which body and soul will both return, and the soul will be fixed to the knowledge of G-d as it was in the Garden of Eden—the world of souls. It will then ascend to an even higher sphere of comprehension. This state will remain for eternity.

RAMBAM

- The **World to Come** refers to the afterlife when one passes away.
- First comes this world; then the messianic Era where souls are resurrected; and finally the World to Come, eternal life in G-d's presence.

RAMBAN

- The **World to Come** refers to the messianic era.
- First comes this world, then the Garden of Eden, then the messianic era, and finally the World to Come with resurrected life on earth.

Chasidut agrees with
the mystical approach.



PHILOSOPHERS

- Reward is only for the soul, not the body
- Spiritual joy is higher than physical

MYSTICS

- Reward comes from body and soul together
- Resurrection of the dead shows the best of both worlds

TEXT 8C

Rabbi Menachem
Mendel of Lubavitch,
Derech Mitzvotcha,
p. 14b

וְכֵן הוּא הָאֱמֶת עַל פִּי הַקַּבָּלָה.

According to kabbalah, this
opinion is correct.

Ramban's view questions the idea that G-d rewards in the World to Come, since that would create a long and unfair wait.

QUESTION

How does G-d violate his own laws?

TEXT 9

Rabbi Shneur
Zalman of Liadi,
*Tanya, Likutei
Amarim*, ch. 37

הִנֵּה תְּכַלִּית הַשְּׁלִימוֹת הַזֶּה שֶׁל יָמוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וְתַחֲיִית הַמֵּתִים,
שֶׁהוּא גִילּוֹי אֹר אֵין סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הַגָּשְׁמִי, תְּלוֹי
בְּמַעֲשֵׂינוּ וְעִבּוּדֵינוּ כָּל זְמַן מִשְׁךְ הַגָּלוּת. . . . כִּי בַעֲשֵׂיֶיהָ
מִמֶּשֶׁיךְ הָאָדָם גִּילּוֹי אֹר אֵין סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְלַמֵּעָה לְמַטָּה
לְהַתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת עוֹלָם הַזֶּה.

The world's perfected state will be reached in the messianic era, when the dead will be resurrected. This state, in which G-d's infinite light will radiate in the physical world, will be achieved by our work and labor throughout the term of our Exile. . . . When we perform G-d's commandments, we reveal His endless light and draw it down from above to below until it is integrated into this material world.



We don't each have a personal contract with G-d. At Mount Sinai, He chose us as one nation to bring about the messianic era. The task is not complete until that is accomplished.

TEXT 10

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson,
Likutei Sichot 29, p. 140

קומט לפי זה אויס, אז די עבודת פון אלע אידן צוזאמען
במשך כל הדורות יחד איז גדר פון איין שכירות,
ונאם ענינה ותכליתה איז צו אויפטאן א דירה לו יתברך
בתחונים.

ויש לומר נאך מֶעַר, אין דעם תפקיד זיינען אידן (ניט אין
גדר פון שכיר, נאר) אין גדר פון קבלן: דער
אויבערשטער האט איבערגעגעבן עולם בידי ישראל אז
זיי זאלן מאכן פון דעם עולם א דירה לו יתברך.

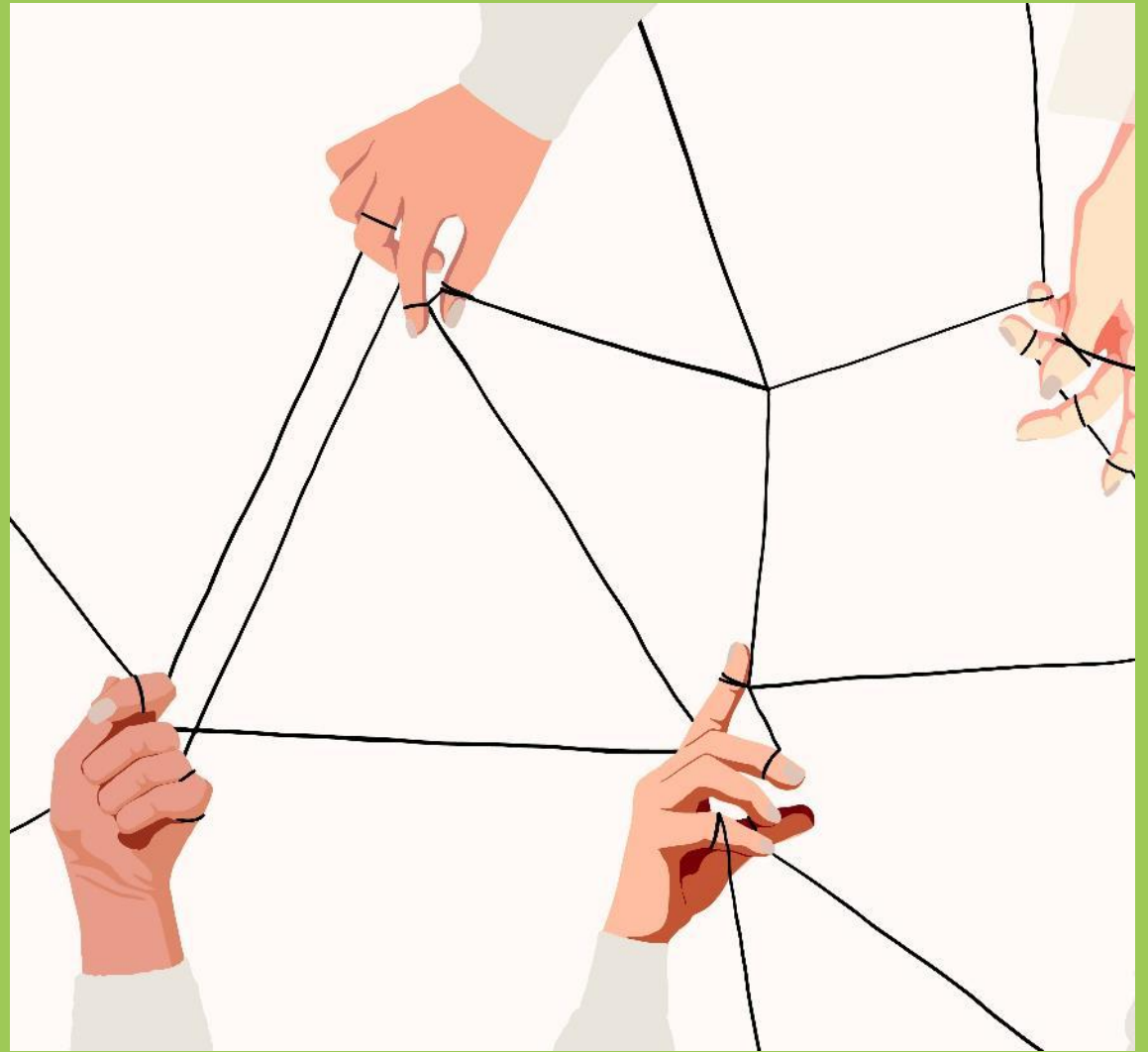
און דערמיט איז פארענטפערט פארוואס עיקר ענין
השכר ווערט באצאלט ערשט לעתיד לבא (בימות
המשית, ובעיקר — בעולם התחייה). ווייל דער שכר פון
עולם הבא איז דער תשלום כללי צו אלע אידן כאחד
פאר זייער עבודה צו מאכן פון וועלט א דירה לו יתברך.
און דעם שכר באקומען אידן תיכף נאך זייער פארענדיקן
די עבודה פון לעשות לו יתברך דירה בתחונים.

According to this, our job as Jews
throughout the generations is bound by a
single contract to transform this world into
a sacred habitat for G-d.

We might broaden this out and say that
we are (not employees but) contractors.
G-d gave us His world so we can repair it
and make it into a home for Him.

This explains why our primary reward
awaits us in the messianic era, especially
after the Resurrection of the Dead. The
reward in that future era will be a
collective payment to all Jews for their
work to make a home for G-d in this
world. We will receive this payment
immediately after completing our task.

G-d gave us a collective task to make a dwelling place for Him, and we will collectively be rewarded as soon as the overall task is done.



TEXT 11

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of
Liadi, *Tanya, Likutei
Amarim*, ch. 37

כִּי כָלֵלוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁהֵם שְׂנֵשִׁים רַבּוּא
נִשְׁמוֹת פְּרִטִיּוֹת הֵם כָּלֵלוֹת הַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל
כָּלֵלוֹת הָעוֹלָם, כִּי בְּשִׁבְיָלָם נִבְרָא. וְכָל
פְּרִט מֵהֶם הוּא כּוֹלֵל וְשִׁיֵּיךְ לוֹ הַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל
חֶלֶק אֶחָד מִשְׂנֵשִׁים רַבּוּא מְכַלְלוֹת הָעוֹלָם
הַתְּלוּי בְּנִפְשׁוֹ הַחַיּוֹנִית לְהַעֲלוֹתוֹ לַה'
בְּעֶלְיָתָהּ.

דְּהֵינּוּ בְּמָה שֶׁמִּשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ מֵעוֹלָם הַזֶּה לְצוּרָה
גּוּפוֹ וְנִפְשׁוֹ הַחַיּוֹנִית לְעִבּוּדַת ה'. כְּגוֹן
אֲכִילָה וְשִׁתְיָה וְדוּמִיָּה וְדִירָה וְכָל כְּלִי
תַּשְׁמִישׁוֹ.

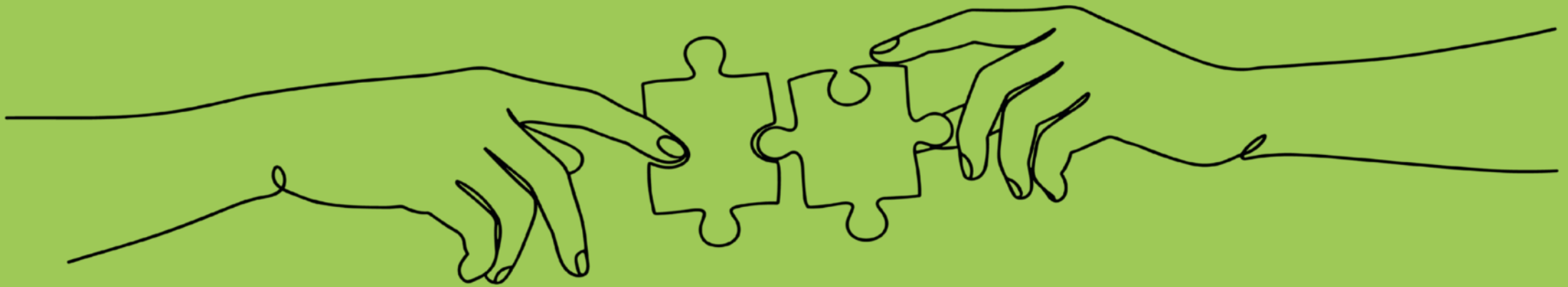
אֲלֹא שְׂנֵשִׁים רַבּוּא נִשְׁמוֹת פְּרִטִיּוֹת אֵלּוּ הֵן
שְׂרָשִׁים, וְכָל שְׂרֵשׁ מִתְחַלֵּק לְשֵׁשִׁים רַבּוּא
נִיצוּצוֹת, שֶׁכָּל נִיצוּץ הוּא נִשְׁמָה אַחַת.

The Jewish people comprise 600,000 souls, representing the collective life of this world, for the world was created for them [to elevate]. The vitality of the world also comprises 600,000 segments, each of which is assigned to one of the 600,000 souls. The task of each soul is to sublimate its respective segment through its own sublimation to G-d.

[This is achieved] when we use the material resources of this world to nourish body and soul for the purpose of serving G-d—for example, eating, drinking, and the like, or using one's home and utensils.

These 600,000 souls are “root souls.” Each root subdivides into 600,000 sparks, each of which comprises a single soul.

The mission is complete only when everyone does their part within the whole, every contribution helps transform the world:





At the annual *shluchim* photo, you can spot each individual but the real power is seeing the whole picture.

Each of us does our part, yet together we're one global mission changing the world.

If even **one** Chabad House stops what it's doing, the mission can't be completed. That's how much each of us matter: every part counts.



TEXT 12A

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 3:4

לְפִיכָף צָרִיךְ כָּל אָדָם שֶׁיִּרְאֶה עֲצָמוֹ
כָּל הַשָּׁנָה כִּלְה פָּאֵלוֹ חָצִיֹּו זָכָאי
וְחָצִיֹּו חַיִּיב, וְכֵן כָּל הָעוֹלָם חָצִיֹּו זָכָאי
וְחָצִיֹּו חַיִּיב.

חֲטָא חֲטָא אֶחָד, הֲרִי הִכְרִיעַ אֶת
עֲצָמוֹ וְאֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ לְכַף
חוּבָה, וְגֵרַם לוֹ הַשְׁחָתָה.

עָשָׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת, הֲרִי הִכְרִיעַ אֶת
עֲצָמוֹ וְאֶת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת,
וְגֵרַם לוֹ וְלָהֶם תְּשׁוּעָה וְהַצָּלָה.
שֶׁנֶּאֱמָר: "וְצַדִּיק יְסֻד עוֹלָם" (מִשְׁלִי
י, כה). זֶה שֶׁצִּדֵּק, הִכְרִיעַ אֶת כָּל
הָעוֹלָם לְזְכוּת וְהַצִּילוֹ.

A person should always see themselves as standing on a perfectly balanced scale—half worthy, half guilty. And they should see the whole world the same way: balanced right on the edge, half meritorious and half guilty.

If they commit even a single sin, they tip the scale—personally and for the entire world—toward guilt and bring destruction.

But if they do one good deed, they tip the scale—personally and for the entire world—toward merit and bring deliverance and salvation. As Scripture says, “The righteous are the foundation of the world” (Proverbs 10:25). One act of righteousness can tilt the entire world toward goodness and save it.

OPTIONAL

TEXT 12B

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Torat
Menachem* 5744:3,
pp. 1686–87

וּמוֹכּוֹן, שֶׁהַכּוֹנוֹנָה בְּזָה לְתַשׁוּעָה
וְהַצָּלָה מִיָּדִית, לֹא רַק לְמַחֲרָת אוֹ
מֵחֶרֶת־יָיִם, כְּפִשְׁטוֹת הַמָּשָׁל דְּכַף
מֵאֲזַנִּיִּם שְׁקוּלָה, שְׁכַאֲשֶׁר מוֹסִיפִים
פָּרֶט קָטָן עַל אַחַת מִכַּפּוֹת הַמֵּאֲזַנִּיִּם,
הֵרִי זֶה מְכַרִּיעַ תִּיכָף וּמִיָּד.

וְכֵן הוּא בְּנִמְשָׁל, שֶׁהֵרִי הַמָּשָׁל
דִּתּוֹרַת אֱמֶת מְכַוֵּן בְּכָל פְּרָטָיו. שְׁעַל
יְדֵי מַצְוֵה אַחַת הַכָּרִיעַ אֶת עַצְמוֹ
וְאֵת כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלּוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת וְגֵרֶם
לוֹ וְלָהֶם תַּשׁוּעָה וְהַצָּלָה תִּיכָף וּמִיָּד
מִמָּשׁ. וּבִלְשׁוֹן הַרָמַב"ם, "מִיָּד הֵן
נִגְאָלִין" (הַלְכוֹת תַּשׁוּבָה ז, ה).

Maimonides's formulation refers to immediate assistance and salvation, not one that will occur tomorrow or the next day. Think of the analogy of a weighing scale. When it is equally balanced, it tilts immediately to one side when you add even a tiny weight.

The same applies to the analog. The Torah is absolute truth, so its analogies are precise in every detail. A single good deed inclines us and the entire world [immediately] to the side of goodness and brings immediate assistance and salvation to us and the entire world. As Maimonides says elsewhere, "They are *immediately* redeemed" (*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 7:5).

OPTIONAL

The world is moving closer to complete Redemption, and you play a vital role. Your **one *mitzvah*** could be all it takes to bring it.



In 1967, the Rebbe launched the *Tefilin* campaign, reaching out to every Jew, even those distant from observance. Its bold approach raised concerns about performing *mitzvot* “on the run” and without preparation.



TEXT 12C

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Likutei
Sichot* 6, p. 272

א. אדרבה, ישמך עם רבים מבני
ישראל ורבות פעמים.

ב. פסק דין מפורש ברמב"ם, (הלכות
תשובה ג, ד) "צריך כל אדם שיראה
עצמו כל השנה כולה כאילו חזיו
זכאי וחזיו חייב. וכן כל העולם חזיו
זכאי וחזיו חייב . . . עשה מצוה
אחת הרי הכריע את עצמו ואת כל
העולם כולו לכף זכות, וגרם לו ולהם
תשועה והצלה."

ומי שמקבל עליו פסק דין הרמב"ם
הזה, בטח ישמך באופן המתאים
לפעולה המכריע את כל העולם כולו
לכף זכות וגורמת תשועה והצלה כו'.

A. On the contrary, recruit many Jews [to don
tefilin] many times.

B. Maimonides records a clear Halachic ruling: "A
person should always see themselves as standing on
a perfectly balanced scale—half worthy, half
guilty. And they should see the whole world the
same way: balanced right on the edge, half
meritorious and half guilty. . . . If they do one
good deed, they tip the scale—personally and for
the entire world—toward merit and bring
deliverance and salvation."

Anyone who accepts this ruling will undoubtedly
make every appropriate effort to [recruit many to]
perform this one deed that will incline ourselves
and the world as a whole to the side of goodness
and cause assistance and salvation, etc.



THE REBBE

One *mitzvah* can tip the world's balance, so don't wait. Reach out and help another Jew take their next step.

KEY POINTS

1. We are each born to achieve a specific set of tasks that only we can achieve.
2. We don't perform these tasks in isolation. Our tasks are in the context of the collective task of the Jewish people to refine the world until it becomes a sacred habitat for G-d.
3. When we achieve this goal collectively, the world will reach a state of perfection, and Mashiach will come.
4. This can only happen if we each make our contribution. We are each critical to the overall process.
5. Every good deed can be the deed that tips the scales to the good for us and for the world at large.

