



## פרשת עקב / Parshas Eikev

“וזה” עקב תשמעון את המשפטים האלה ושמרתם ועשיתם אתם ושמר ד’ אלוקך את הברית ואת החסד...” דברים ז:יב

“If you will listen to these laws and you will watch and perform them, then Hashem your G-d will keep His covenant and His kindness that He has sworn to your forefathers” Devarim 7:12

Rashi brings the Medrash Tanchuma to explain the first pasuk of the Parsha as follows. If the “light” mitzvos that a person tramples with his heel, he will observe, then Hashem will keep His promise that He has made to his forefathers. The Imrei Shefer points out that this pasuk seems to be in contradiction of a famous Ma’amer Chazal, which states “שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא”. There is no reward for performing mitzvos in this world; rather our reward is saved for the World to Come. The Rambam explains that the goodness from Hashem spoken about in this pasuk is not a reward for keeping the mitzvos, rather a promise from Hashem that He will provide us with all of our physical needs in order to allow us to uphold the Torah, for poverty and tribulations may cause a person to lose his mind and stray from his Creator. The Imrei Shefer continues to bring a pasuk in Vayikra, “ושמרתם את משמרתי”, from which we learn that one must build fences and barriers within himself to help prevent from sin. If one works hard to protect himself from violating the mitzvos, Hashem will repay him *מדה כנגד מדה* and remove the hardships from his life which may have been detracting from his learning. This is what the pasuk means “וזה” עקב תשמעון. If we will keep the “light” mitzvos, meaning the fences and barriers against sin which are considered an easy preliminary “step” in the right direction for a person, and we will “watch and perform them” by creating our *משמרת*, our protective measures against sin, which show Hashem that we are serious about our want to grow, then Hashem will repay us tit for tat, with all of the Tov and Chesed so that we will have no worry for our physical needs as we set out to fulfill the Torah.

Here’s the catch. The Parsha begins with the details of the bracha that Hashem will bestow upon us if we protect ourselves properly against sin. However we must be aware of the continuation of the Parsha, “השמר פן תשכח את ד’ אלוקך... פן תאכל ושבעת ובתים טובים תבנה וישבת...”. The pasukim warn us against getting too comfortable with all of the wealth that we will attain. We may have had good intentions, to guard ourselves from sin. This will have led Hashem to bless us with the means to maintain ourselves physically in a comfortable fashion. Here is where we must be exceedingly cautious to continue to use what we have been granted with proper decorum.

This is our balance. If we follow the proper protocol to defend ourselves from the onslaught of the evil inclination, Hashem will ensure that all of our physical needs are met, thereby allowing us to serve Him in a pure, uninterrupted manner. We must remember though, that there is no *כחי ועצמי* here. Every physical blessing that Hashem provides us with is for the sole purpose of bettering our avodah.