



## *Parshas Eikev 2019, how to handle success*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in honor of the yahrzeit of my grandfather Yehuda Ben Aaron, may his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is dedicated in honor of the Yahrzeit of the father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, may his soul be uplifted and his memory a blessing.*

Our Parsha continues with Moshe's final address to the Jewish people. He tells them that if they follow the Torah's path and keep the Mitzvahs diligently, they will be blessed above all people. He reminds them that they did not inherit the Land due to their own righteousness. But because of the promise G-d made to our forefathers.

He recounts how he broke the Luchos on his way down from Har Sinai when he saw them sinning with the Golden Calf. He also tells them the second paragraph of the Shema, where we are told the physical rewards that we will receive for observing the Torah or the consequences if we don't, heaven forbid.

A question comes to mind: Multiple times in the Parsha we are told of many rewards that we will receive for keeping the Mitzvahs. However, it says in Pirkei Avos (1:3) that we must serve G-d to connect with him. So why does the Torah reiterate the rewards if they are not the real reason that we serve him?

Furthermore, the reward itself might change your intention from doing the Mitzvahs just for the sake of G-d to the potential benefit that you can receive. So why does Moshe make the rewards one of the focal points of his last address to the Jewish nation?!

The Alter Rebbe in chapter 39 of Tanya gives a simple explanation. He explains that just like a child is rewarded for doing the most basic things, they can learn how to do them independently. We, too are rewarded to help jump-start our observance at the rudimentary level.

He quotes the Gemora in Pesachim (50:2) that a person should study Torah and do the Mitzvahs even if they are done for personal gain. Because the more you perform the Mitzvahs, the deeper your understanding of spirituality will be, and the more profound your relationship with G-d will become. Thus, your motives for serving G-d will change from personal benefit to the sake of G-d alone.

However, on a deeper level, the Alter Rebbe explains that we are not given the rewards because we do the Mitzvahs, but rather, as a result of doing the Mitzvahs. Meaning that the rewards of health, success, happiness, and children are given to enable us to serve G-d further, but the real reward will be in the world to come.

As it says in Pirkei Avos, (4:2), "that the reward for performing a Mitzvah is another Mitzvah." Because each Mitzvah that we do not only leads us closer to G-d but also gives us opportunities to perform others as well. For example, when we go to shul to pray, we get an excellent opportunity to study Torah. When we eat Kosher, we have the chance to make blessings before and after, each of them a Mitzvah in their own right.

Moshe is telling the Jewish people that it is perfectly understandable to start off doing the Mitzvahs for the sake of reward. However, once you understand the Mitzvahs, you should perform them for G-d alone.

In our daily lives, we must understand that every objective you complete and every goal you accomplish must be a stepping-stone to further success. You must not view your achievements as a means to an end. But rather as an instrument that you use to tackle greater ambitions bringing you closer to reaching your dreams and accomplishing your potential.

***"Smart people use today's victories as a rehearsal for tomorrow's adventure."***

*Have a meaningful Shabbos*

*Rabbi Sholom Yemini*