

The New Writings of Rav Ashlag: One Precept Part 1

Meir Yeshurun 11/9/2009

One Precept

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“He who performs one precept,
tips himself
and the whole world
to the side of merit...”

Rav Elazar son of Rav Shimon

Serving the creator and performing the precepts are not considered done unless it is ‘for its own sake’, which means: Giving pleasure to his Maker.

At the same time, our Sages have set that one should engage in the study of the Torah and fulfilling the precepts even ‘not for its own sake’, stating that out of doing it **not** for its own sake, one will eventually be doing it **for** its own sake.



The issue of the precepts [regarding the relationship] between a person and his friend

As far as this custom is concerned - one should not have second thought [question] about the words of the Sages. We should hold on to them as much as possible, with all of our might.

And yet, after the outbreak of the War, people's patience has become weak and especially the young lost the power to control themselves and have become completely rebellious.

It has become totally impossible to instill in them the habit of studying the Torah and following the precepts.

And moreover, [even] the whole issue of “**not** for its own sake”, which the [spiritual] work of the masses is based on, is completely not the custom in these days because respect for the Torah has completely fallen.

Therefore I have come out with this call to the young Israelites to return to the [spiritual] work [that was given] by God and to the faith in Him in a minimal fashion.

Because we do not require of them immediate total acceptance of the Torah and the precepts, but that each and every one would at any rate accept one precept.

As the Sages have said: "Chabbakuk came and summed them all in one: A righteous person lives by his faith."

And even though [it is said in Tractate sanhedrin, 98: "Anyone who says: 'I will fulfill all the precepts of the Torah except for one' is considered as if he burnt the whole torah to ashes...,"

it is referring to those who have become perfected and are now performing the precepts for its own sake.

But before reaching that perfection – when the whole issue of this work is nothing but an exercise to be trained by it to do so for its own sake – then the loss is not so great between him who fulfills it in whole or in part.