

G-d of faith without iniquity. (32:4)

Rashi explains that Hashem's judgment is exact and fair. Everyone receives his due reward – the righteous might wait a bit, but it will arrive in due time; the wicked who have acted meritoriously will also be rewarded in kind. Life is a harmonious whole, which we, as mere mortals with limited perception, are unable to perceive. Nonetheless, we believe that it all comes together: good fortune with failure; joy in contrast to sadness, celebrating milestones, both joyous and tragic. A human being cannot fathom how the pieces of the human puzzle of life fit together, but they do. Shortly before his taking leave of this world, the saintly *Horav Tzvi Hirsch, zl, m'Rimanov*, lay on his deathbed and remarked that the *ikar*, primary principle, of the Torah is the acute awareness and penetrating knowledge that *Keil emunah v'ein avel*, Hashem is the G-d of faith without iniquity. He makes no mistakes. He controls everything – even that which we do not understand and question. This is what Torah is all about. If this is so, why then do we need the Torah? It would have sufficed to have Hashem declare on *Har Sinai*, *Keil emunah v'ein avel*. Why do we need the *mitzvos* and the learning? Let us focus on this one maxim, and we will have fulfilled our purpose.

The *Rebbe* explains that, unless one studies Torah and observes its *mitzvos*, the concept of faith that everything Hashem does is perfect, true and without iniquity, eludes him. He is unable to fathom its meaning, its depth, because he lacks the inner dimensions of Torah and of himself. Without the Torah consciousness that he acquires through total immersion in Torah, he will not have a cogent appreciation of Hashem's actions. In order to better appreciate this idea, I cite various remarks from *Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl*, quoted in his *Alei Shur*.

In the *mavo*, preface, the *Mashgiach* asserts that it is insufficient to simply learn Torah, becoming erudite, purely on a book-knowledge level, without penetrating its inner dimensions and thus allowing it to penetrate his inner self to the point that he develops a sense of Torah consciousness. In other words, one may be a brilliant scholar, a Torah observant Jew, an activist of the highest order, a zealous Jew who is meticulous in his *mitzvah* performance, but if he does not seek perfection (which is the result of an association with true *gedolim*, refined Torah giants), he will have succeeded only in emulating, parroting, what he has seen and learned, but he will not have ingested Torah into his entire being.

For example, *Rav Wolbe* points out, "One must learn: to approach a statement of *Chazal*; to study its profundities and to experience it until the hidden light of *Chazal's* statement illuminates you." He means that, after mulling *Chazal's* statement over and over, we suddenly realize a deeper and truer meaning to the words that we had until now simply read and translated. At this point, *Chazal's* statement illuminates us as we begin to absorb it. *Chazal's* statements and Torah should not be treated as an isolated and abstract body of knowledge.

Indeed, *Rav Wolbe* (thus) defines a *yeshivah*, not simply as a place where one learns (to amass knowledge), but where one learns how to live. One who learns Torah, but does not expunge his negative character traits, is not considered having had learned Torah. *Rav Wolbe* observed that,

while many people observe *mitzvos*, they do so purely out of habit. They grow up as *frum*, observant, Jews, having attended the right schools, having received a good education, and they continue to live as they were raised and educated. If they were to be asked, “Why do you observe *mitzvos*?” the answer will probably be, “Because this is how I was raised.” Sadly, such a response does not do much or speak well of this person’s affinity to Jewish observance. It is like saying, “I eat, because that is how I was educated.” One eats three times a day. What one should say is, “I eat because I am hungry.” Likewise, one should be hungry for Torah and *mitzvos*. He should want to observe – not do so because this is the role he must “play” on the stage of life. It has very little meaning to him, because it has not become part of his consciousness.

Returning to what the *Rebbe* posited: One must learn the Torah in order to understand (and believe) *Keil emunah v’ein avei*; this means that, only one whose life is imbued with Torah – his consciousness defined by Torah, his *daas*, comprehension, guided by the Torah – is able to understand that what Hashem does is perfect, true and (certainly) without iniquity.