



**את הברכה "11:27
אשר תשמעו אל מצות ד'
אלקיכם אשר אנכי מצוה
אתכם היום"**

"The blessing: that you listen to the commandments of Hashem, your G-d, that I command you today." Why does the Torah say that you should listen to the Mitzvos, instead of saying that you should perform the Mitzvos of the Torah? The following Divrei Torah will expound on this topic, and support the P'shat offered in the closing paragraph.

אמר הקדוש ברוך "4:5 – דברים רבה
– **"הוא: שמעו לי, שאין אדם שומע לי ומפסיד**
Hakodosh Boruch Hu was saying here: Listen to Me, for no person ever loses out as a result of listening to Me." However, this is not the case when one listens to other people, as Chazal say: You will find that there are some who listen to the advice of others and lose out because of it, and there are some who listen to the advice of others and benefit from it. How do we see this?

Odom listened to his wife and lost out, while Avrohom Avinu listened to his wife and benefited. The Torah tells us that Sarah said to Avrohom that he should take her maidservant – for perhaps by doing so it will build up Sarah – and Avrohom listened to his wife and took Hagar. Rebbe Shmuel Bar Nachman explained that when the Midrash says that Avrohom Avinu listened to another person, Sarah Imeinu, and benefited, is speaking about when Sarah advised Avrohom to send Hagar and Yishmael out of their home. This can be compared to a case where a man had a son born to him. A certain astrologer saw the son and said that this boy is destined to be a thief; and it is necessary for the father to send the son away. The father of the child said: I should cast out my own son?! The father of the astrologer heard the father of the son say this, and he said to him: Whatever my son told you to do you should listen to him.

Similarly, Sarah saw that Yishmael would stray from the path of good and would turn to evil behavior. So, she said to Avrohom, "גרש את האמה הזאת" – "Drive out this slave-woman with her son." Avrohom was distressed over this. Hakodosh Boruch Hu revealed Himself to Avrohom and told him: "אל ירע" – "Don't be distressed over the youth or your slave-woman: whatever

Sarah tells you, heed her voice." Avrohom Avinu heeded the advice of Sarah Imeinu, and he benefited as a result, as the Posuk says, "כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע," – "For through Yitzchok will your offspring be called."

ראה אנכי מות' 11:26 – שם משמאל
– "See, I present before you today, a blessing and a curse." It says in Devorim Rabbah 4:5 **אמר הקדוש** – "ברוך הוא: שמעו לי, שאין אדם שומע לי ומפסיד" – Hakodosh Boruch Hu was saying here: Listen to Me, for no person ever loses out as a result of listening to Me." However, this is not the case when one listens to other people, as Chazal say: You will find that there are some who listen to the advice of others and lose out because of it, and there are some who listen to the advice of others and benefit from it. How do we see this? Odom listened to his wife and lost out, while Avrohom Avinu listened to his wife and benefited. We need to understand this proof that at times when one listens to another human being, he benefits from it – that the Midrash learns it from the story with Sarah and Avrohom. It wasn't that Avrohom was listening to another human being, Sarah; rather in this case, Avrohom was listening to Hashem.

We know that Sarah had Nevuah, and perhaps that which she said that Hagar should be sent away was from Hashem. Even if that was not the case here, Hashem told Avrohom that he should listen to Sarah – so it wasn't that Avrohom was listening to Sarah, rather he was really listening to Hashem. How can we prove from this incident that at times one can listen to another human and he will benefit – when this is not a case of listening to a human, but of listening to Hashem? First let's analyze what happened. The Torah tells us that Avrohom Avinu was distressed over his son, while Hashem tells Avrohom Avinu not to be distressed over the youth and about his slave-woman, Hagar. Avrohom did not seem distressed about what would happen with Hagar, yet Hakodosh Boruch Hu told him not to worry about her. Why was Avrohom not worried about Hagar? Additionally, the Midrash first tells us that Avrohom took Hagar because he listened to his wife Sarah, and then tells us about his sending Hagar and Yishmael away from his home. Why does the Midrash need to tell us that Avrohom took Hagar, when the proof we are trying to bring is when Avrohom sent Hagar and Yishmael away? Why not just say that

Avrohom listened to Sarah when he sent Hagar and Yishmael away? Avrohom Avinu knew that Sarah Imeinu was a prophetess, and that is the only reason that he agreed to take Hagar without first freeing her. The Gemara in Yuma 28b tells us that Avrohom Avinu kept the entire Torah, although it wasn't given at that time, and the Torah prohibits a Yid from marrying a slave. Sarah told Avrohom Avinu to take Hagar but did not say to free her first – and Avrohom should have protested that he is not allowed to do that. However, Avrohom knew of Sarah's great righteousness, and he relied on her that if she told him that, then she must know through a Nevuah or Ruach Hakodesh that it is the proper thing to do in this situation. Thus, the Posuk says, "וישמע אברהם לקול שרי," – that Avrohom listened to the sound of Sarai – and Rashi says that he listened to the Ruach Hakodesh that was in her. Avrohom was listening to Sarah – **אמונת**, knowing and believing that what she was telling was the Divine Will.

Sarah's advice to Avrohom parallels the advice of Chava to Odom to eat from the Eitz Hada'as, the forbidden tree. Both women advised their husbands to transgress a command of Hashem. Both men followed the advice of their wives. Odom was censured for his following his wife's advice, while Avrohom is applauded for doing so. They both listened to their wives, but they were very different. Avrohom recognized that his wife was a prophetess, and thus was obligated to listen her advice. Even if he would have been told that left is right and right is left, he would have, and should have listened to her. While Odom Harishon did not think that Chava was a prophetess, but nonetheless chose to listen to her directive which was against the command of Hashem. Although Odom assumed that the woman that Hashem created for him to be his helpmate is trustworthy – nonetheless he did not think she was a prophetess, and thus he should not have heeded her advice which was contrary to the direct command of Hashem. The Midrash tells us that Avrohom listened to his wife Sarah when she told him to take Hagar, to teach us that when the advice is coming from a recognized prophetess, then one must listen. However, Avrohom began to question his faith in Sarah's advice when she told him to banish Hagar and "her son." Sarah's words implied that Yishmael was Hagar's son,

and not Avrohom's – which implied that Avrohom's union with Hagar was not sanctioned by Hakodosh Boruch Hu.

While Avrohom Avinu was pained by the actions of and behavior of Yishmael, which was going to cause him to be banished – but much more than that, the Torah tells us that he was distressed, על אודות בנו – about the situation of his son. It doesn't say that he was distressed over his son, Yishmael, rather he was distressed about how his son came to be – that perhaps he should have never been with Hagar, which brought forth Yishmael. Perhaps that was not Divinely sanctioned, and he should not have listened to Sarah. Hashem tells Avrohom not to be distressed over the youth or the slave woman – Avrohom was being told two things. 1 – Avrohom did not need to be distressed that Yishmael was not from his lineage, which he assumed was the reason that he went astray. 2 – that he sinned by being with Hagar. Hashem told Avrohom that whatever Sarah tells him, he should listen – meaning that both the first time when Sarah told him to take Hagar, and now when she told him to banish her and her son, they were both sanctioned by Hashem.

Hashem tells Avrohom that it was because he listened to all the advice of Sarah, that he was Zoche to Yitzchok Avinu, who was his true progeny. Had Avrohom not listened to Sarah, and he would have freed Hagar and then married her, then Yishmael would have been his child, his oldest child, and Yitzchok would not have been the primary descendant of Avrohom. It was Avrohom not freeing her, which made it that Yishmael's lineage went only after his mother, and thus Yitzchok became the exclusive progeny of Avrohom. The Midrash was not comparing the advice of Hashem versus the advice of a human, for the two cannot be compared. Rather, the Midrash is comparing listening directly to Hashem, or to a Chochom or Navi, which is indirectly from Hashem. If one receives goodness for listening to an indirect message from Hashem, then certainly one receives reward for listening to the direct commandments of Hashem.

ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם 4:4 – דברים רבה
 “היום ברכה וקללה” – “See, I place before you today a blessing and a curse.” It says before this, “כי אם שמור תשמרון את כל המצוה, לאהבה את ד'” – “If you observe this entire commandment that I command you, to perform it, to love Hashem, your G-d, to walk in all of His ways and to cleave to Him.” When it says that if you will observe “this commandment” – which commandment is it referring to? Rebbe Levi said it referring to the Mitzvah of Krias Shema, reciting Shema. The Rabbonon says that it refers to Shabbos, which is significant to all the Mitzvos of the Torah combined.

Devorim Rabbah 4:4 – עץ יוסף
 “קריאת שמע” – That which the Midrash says that Krias Shema is the one special Mitzvah which if one heeds Hakodosh Boruch Hu will protect him, it is because Krias Shema is Kabbolas Ol Malchus Shomayim, from which all of the other Mitzvos come. Accepting upon oneself the yoke of Shomayim, to perform all the Mitzvos is inclusive of all the Mitzvos. That is why the Posuk says, “כל המצוה” – “all” – for this Mitzvah includes “all” of the Mitzvos of the Torah.

Devorim Rabbah 4:4 – חידושי מהר"ו
 “קריאת שמע” – That which the Midrash says that Krias Shema is the one special Mitzvah which if one heeds Hakodosh Boruch Hu will protect him from all Mazikin, damagers, as the Gemara in Brochos 5a tells us.

אמר בר קפרא: הנפש 4:4 – דברים רבה
 “התורה נמשלו בנר” – On the words of “שמור תשמרון” – “For if observe you shall observe” – Bar Kapparah says that both the soul and the Torah are compared to a lamp. The soul as it says in Mishlei 20:27 “נר ד' נשמת אדם” – “A man's soul is the lamp of Hashem.” And the Torah, as it says in Mishlei 6:23 “כי נר מצוה ותורה אור” – “For a Mitzvah is a lamp, and the Torah is light.” Hakodosh Boruch Hu said to man: My lamp is in your hand, and your lamp is in My hand. “My lamp in your hand” is a reference to the Torah Hakdosha, which is Hashem's, but it is in the hand of Klal Yisroel to learn and observe it. “Your lamp is in My hand” refers to the soul of man, which is in the possession of Hakodosh Boruch Hu to sustain and keep alive. Hakodosh Boruch Hu says: If you safeguard My lamp, then I will safeguard your lamp, but if you extinguish My lamp, I will extinguish your lamp. From where do we know this? We know it from the Posuk “רק השמר לך ושמור נפשך מאוד” – “Only beware for yourself, and greatly beware for your soul.” This is what it means, “אם שמור תשמרון” – if you watch

over Hashem's lamp, He will watch over yours.

Devorim Rabbah – אשר הנחלים
 “נמשלה בנר...נר ביד” 4:4 – The Torah compares the Torah and the Nefesh of a person to a lamp. Just as a lamp illuminates the air around it, so too the soul illuminates the air around the Guf. The Torah as well illuminates the air around it – as it illuminates the entire world. The Nefesh receives its sustenance, its life source, from Hakodosh Boruch Hu. How does the Nefesh continue to exist? It is through the Torah Hakdosha that Hakodosh Boruch Hu gives it its sustenance. The Torah warns us that we can protect our Nefesh only if we don't forget what we saw and heard at Har Chorev (Har Sinai). The Nefesh has the same Divine origin as the Torah. Thus, it cannot survive without the study of Torah and the performance of its commandments, which infuse it with the Divine spirituality that it needs to exist.

את הברכה אשר 11:27 – אור החיים
 תשמעו אל מצות ד' אלקיכם אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם – “The blessing: that you listen to the commandments of Hashem, your G-d, that I command you today.” The term “את” is stated here to bring to our attention the idea that aside for the blessing of reward that is gained from adhering to the path of Hashem, there is another promise of goodness that comes along with it, and that is, “That you listen.” Listening to the Torah is a wondrous delight and gives life to the soul, as it says in Yeshaya 55:3 “שמעו ורחמי” – “Listen and your soul will be rejuvenated.” When one experiences the delightful taste of Torah, his soul tells him that he is obligated to generously repay the Giver of this wondrously fine gift, and it goes without saying that he should not claim reward for studying it.

Now we can understand why the Torah says that we should “listen” to the Mitzvos of the Torah. There is a constant battle that everyone is fighting. The Yetzer Hara is constantly trying to get one to veer from the path of Hashem and not perform Mitzvos. The Torah is telling us the secret how we can be Zoche to Brocha, blessing. We must learn the Torah Hakdosha, and thus connect to it. The more we learn the Torah, and seek to connect to the Torah, Hakodosh Boruch Hu will help us that we perform the Mitzvos of the Torah and have true Brocha. May we be Zoche to only have Brocha.