

Chazal tell us that we do not apply exegesis to the juxtaposition of topics in the first four Books of the Torah. However we do apply it to Deuteronomy, ספר דברים. What can we derive from the juxtaposition of the commandment to maintain accurate weights and measures, along with the corresponding prohibitions, and the commandment to recall Amalek's attack on the nascent Jewish Nation and the obligation to eradicate them? What does the Torah mean when indicting the Jewish People at the time for not fearing Gd, ולא ירא אלקים?

The appellation of ירא אלקים was used by the angel that spoke to Abraham at the Akeida. After observing Abraham following Gd's commands to the letter and demonstrating his willingness to fulfill His command, Abraham is recognized with this description. What does it mean to be a ירא אלקים? Earlier (דברים י:יב), Moses told the people 'מה ד' אלקיך שואך מעמך כי אם ליראה את ד'. Gd desires the people to fear Him. The Talmud (ברכות לג:ב) asks is fear of Gd such a simple thing? Clearly it is not! If so what is requirement and how did the people fall short of it at the time of their initial engagement with Amalek?

There are two different types of יראה. The first is יראת העונש, fear of the repercussions of an action or inaction. For example, I take my medicine even though I dislike its taste because I fear the ramifications of not following the doctor's advice. Or I adhere to government regulations because I fear the penalties I would face for lack of compliance. We find such a mindset not only by human beings but in the animal kingdom as well. For example, animal behavior modification can teach an animal to associate fear and unpleasantness with an action and refrain from that action. This is referred to as יראת הפחד, or יראת העונש, fear of the retribution and the fear itself associated with an action.

When it comes to love of Gd, Rambam notes another type of יראה. Besides the obligation to fear Gd at the base level, we are commanded to demonstrate fear of Gd based on awe, reverence, love for Gd and what He has done for us collectively and individually (see הלכות יסודי התורה). When we observe the wonders of creation, we are moved by awe of Gd's greatness. 'מה רבו מעשיך ד'. When man compares his meager accomplishments with those of Gd, he admits that there is no comparison to be made. The more educated a person is, the more he realizes how much he does

not know. We are in awe of our teachers and parents, those who climbed and reached a little higher than we did towards the summit of closeness to Gd. We show *יראת הרוממות*, an awe and trepidation inspired by recognizing how great Gd is and simultaneously how small in comparison we are.

Indeed, this dialectic is described by Psalmist. On the one hand we ask *מה אנוש כי תזכרנו*, what is man that he may merit Your remembering him and charging him with Your mission? On the other hand, he says of man *ותחסרהו מעט מאלקים*, You raised man to the highest level possible. The contrast in roles depends on man himself. If he is worthy, he is at or even above the angels on high. If he is not worthy, then he is reminded to check his arrogance, for even the mosquito preceded him in the order of creation.

Rambam describes Abraham as an intellectual giant for all times. He was constantly exploring and seeking. He finally met Gd after many years of searching for Him. Gd tested him in ways that could lead a keen intellectual to immediately question the rationale and intent of the tests. He was told to go to Canaan. Immediately he is forced to make a detour to Egypt. Suddenly, after finally receiving the gift he waited his whole life for, the birth of his son Isaac to his beloved wife Sarah, Gd told Abraham to offer him as a sacrifice. Besides his love for and emotions regarding his beloved son, the child he waited for so long, Abraham could well have questioned Gd for asking him to offer a human sacrifice. After all, Abraham spent the better part of his life preaching against idolatry and human sacrifice and now Gd asked him to commit the very act he thought Gd found so detestable! Abraham instead suppressed his great intellect and realized that there are things hidden from even the greatest intellectuals. Who was he to question Gd? At the Akeida when he was stopped at the last moment from sacrificing Isaac on the altar, the angel confirmed Abraham's title and virtue. He referred to him as a *ירא אלקים* not for his fear and trepidation of punishment, *יראת הרוממות*, but because of his *הפחד*, he acknowledged that ultimately Gd knows best. He suspended his own intellect or logos in deference to Gd. That is the definition of *ירא אלקים*.

After the Jews departed Egypt, they were gripped by fear. They feared their Egyptian taskmasters who hotly pursued them. They feared the raging waters of the Reed Sea in front of them and the Egyptians who were rapidly approaching from behind. They cried out from fear and trepidation. They were motivated by **יראת הפחד**. When they were saved and were given heavenly bread, Manna, by Gd which was a clear miracle, they still equivocated. When they came to Refidim and complained about the lack of water, the Torah tells us that they tested Gd, to see if He was truly in their midst. Having just witnessed all these amazing miracles, they should have been impressed and acknowledged Gd's greatness. They did not. They showed a lack of **יראת הרוממות** which should have been forthcoming in recognition of the numerous times they were rescued from imminent disaster.

Their lack of **יראת הרוממות** was not ignored. Gd immediately dispatched Amalek to attack them. At that time, Amalek was the scourge of the region, a nomadic, violent people who existed essentially to attack, murder and plunder other nations. Being the offspring of Esau, they were naturally motivated to attack and seek revenge from their uncle who, according to what they were taught, stole their ancestor's birthright. The Jews were unprepared for battle, having just departed Egypt. Even though the people were armed, as the Torah records, the majority of them were not trained in the art of warfare. Moses commanded Joshua to select a viable fighting force from among a people whose mindset was more slave than soldier. Faced with overwhelming odds, the people were again reminded that their fate depended on Gd. The Gd who took them from Egypt, split the sea, provided them with Manna from heaven and water from a stone, was all capable. He would indeed save them from Amalek, but this time the people had to acknowledge Gd's greatness. They had to discover **יראת הרוממות**.

In **פרשת כי תצא**, the Torah commands us to remember the Amalek incident as well as the reason behind it. Despite all the wondrous and miraculous things Gd did for us, we still lacked **יראת הרוממות**. We were **לא ירא אלקים**. We must recall that and correct it going forward. The link between the lack of **יראת הרוממות** and Amalek is an eternal reminder of what happens when we lose sight of **יראת הרוממות**. We must show **יראת הפחד** to ensure that we do not violate any commandments. We must also display **יראת הרוממות** for all the great things we observe in this world.

Let us examine the commandments regarding weights and measures preceding the commandments related to Amalek. Commerce, **מקח וממכר**, is built on the foundation of trust and fairness. It is not difficult to cheat, often subtly, on transactions that involve weights and measures. One can easily under-provide and over-charge if the weights are deficient or used unscrupulously. One who is brazen enough to cheat in this way clearly is not concerned with being caught or punished by others. His disdain for proper business ethics shows that he lacks **יראת ה'פחד**. If and when he is confronted, he will rationalize his deception and theft.

However, at the same time he is showing a disregard for something else: Gd and the **יראת ה'רוממות** one must have for Him. The story is told of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter who took a ride with a wagon driver to a distant city. Along the way, the wagon driver noticed unguarded hay in a field. The wagon driver altered his route towards the hay and proceeded to feed it to his horses. Rabbi Salanter yelled “they are watching!!”. The wagon driver immediately departed out of fear that he would be caught by the owner of the hay and punished for his act. After a while he realized that no one was watching them and he complained to Rabbi Salanter regarding his apparent deception about being noticed. Rabbi Salanter answered, and what about the fact that Gd is always watching? Where is your fear of His ubiquitous presence and concern for disappointing Him?

One who cheats on weights and measures demonstrates a lack of **יראת ה'רוממות**. Even though his customers do not notice immediately, he should still consider that Gd is watching and knows what is happening. Self-perceptions of knowledge are inversely related to **יראת ה'רוממות**. Such an individual is confident in his knowledge and abilities to the point of clearly ignoring Gd’s presence. He is clearly not a **ירא אלקים**. The punishment for acting in this way can be very severe, even leading to an attack by Amalek, the exemplar nation that lacks **יראת ה'פחד** and **יראת ה'רוממות**. Why take a chance to attack a people that succeeded in leaving Egypt, waded through the Reed Sea, saw the drowning of their Egyptian enemies and was provided food from heaven and water from a stone. Only a nation that does not believe in **יראת ה'רוממות** could ignore all those indicators to stay away.

We are admonished to make sure that regarding weights and measures we don't act like Amalek. If we lack fear of human beings, we should never lose **יראת הרוממות**.

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