

# Ashrei Secrets, Pasuk 8

## The Reality of G-d's Grace

by HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

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In loving memory of Moshe Ben Chaim Alter (z"l), dedicated by his son Mr. Michael Alter.

**Hanoon W'rahoom Adonai Erekh Apayim Ug'dal Hased**  
*Compassionate and gracious G-d is,*  
*long suffering and of great mercy. Psalm 145:8*

Het (8), Vav (6), Yod (10), Alef (1), Alef (1), Vav (6), Het (8) = 40  
Gematria= Goel (redeemer), Yad HaShem (Hand of G-d), Em (Mother)

G-d is called merciful, but both G-d and His mercy are not things that can be understood within a human context. G-d is not merciful as is man. His mercy is of another sort, one that is unmeasurable by human standards.

Our greatest difficulty in being religious is coming to terms with a proper understanding of religion. Fundamentalists and other very narrow minded peoples do their best to narrow the definitions of G-d, G-d's Will and the meanings of G-d's Word. These small minds are incapable of seeing anything big therefore they make every effort to make G-d and His Ways to be small, small enough for them to understand and control.



The small minded then insist that everyone narrow their scope of vision to comply with their limitations. Those who fail to be so controlled are condemned as challengers of G-d and enemies of religion. While true, there are those who do challenge G-d and are honestly the enemies of religion, still, such definitions cannot be attached to all those who disagree with the fundamentalists. Some who can see beyond the limited scope of the fundamentalists are the true lovers and servants of G-d. Yet, their love and service are things the fundamentalist cannot see. Therefore, the fundamentalist condemns all, the true enemies of religion and those perceived to be such, but in truth are not.

Short-sightedness be it physical or spiritual is equally limiting. Unfortunately we cannot prescribe glasses to the spiritually short-sighted. For they consider themselves to see everything exactly right. They cannot bare to "see" the truth, that their scope of spiritual vision, their understanding of G-d and religion is blurred and that their beliefs are almost comprehensively false.

So, how does Heaven view those who have stolen its name and do their utmost to keep sincere people from actual spiritual communion? G-d is patient and long-suffering. G-d is tolerant. G-d tolerates that which would drive almost any sane man to radical action. G-d waits and watches, for a very long time (as judged by our standards).

One of the pillars of religious faith is to believe that there is both Judge and justice in the universe. Somehow, in some way, mostly unknown and unseen by us, all accounts and ledgers between good and evil eventually get balanced. How this happens in the universe we cannot say or know, yet how this happens here on Earth, we can say, we do know, we can and do see.

Recompense for wrongs are not always quick and vengeful. Payback might very well “be a bitch,” but Heaven does not always dispense recompense how we want and when we want. Payback is always in the Hands of Heaven, and very rarely acted out through the hands of man. Yet, regardless of how it comes or when it comes, recompense is the natural order of things on Earth as it is in Heaven. What goes around, truly comes around. Throw out the “crap” at others in front of you and eventually you will get hit in the head with the same “crap” coming right back at you.

What goes around, comes around. You get what you deserve. You reap what you sow. We all know these and many other such similar statements of warning, not that anymore pays attention to wise words of warning anymore. Yet, regardless of who does or does not pay attention, nature takes its course and natural compensation eventually occurs. This is G-d's great mercy, compassion and grace. Divine mercy, compassion and grace is first for those wronged, who seek recompense and only then towards those who have committed such wrongs, and then seek to repent, expressing full remorse and themselves offering compensation in whatever form that Heaven demands.

Punishment is never the focus of Heaven. Education, training and maturation are the purpose of life and why souls come to Earth in the first place. G-d is patient with His creation and gives us the time to make mistakes so that we will eventually learn from them, not to make them. Spiritually speaking, we all grow up, just as children grow up physically. Just as a child might be self-centered, so too is the religious fundamentalist. Both are immature, self-centered and unable to see beyond the parameters of their own narrow self interests.

Children are supposed to grow up and mature. They are supposed to become adults. Fundamentalists can only have this opportunity to grow and mature beyond their fundamentalism as they are exposed to more knowledge, wisdom and experience. G-d guides them through life like a teacher guide a child through school. As we know some children pay attention and receive “A's” and some children refuse to pay attention and receive “F's.” As it is with physical children in physical schools, so too is it with spiritual children who are required to learn from life, for life is the school of the universe.

We see life from our limited mortal vantage point, G-d sees all life from the vantage point of eternity. G-d's mercy over humanity extends to generation after generation. Yet, when natural balance is so destabilized, G-d's natural laws go into play to restore natural balance. To finite humanity, such a movement towards balance may seem sudden and be experienced as Divine judgment. Well, indeed, it is. Yet, judgment is not for the sake of punishment, it is for the sake of education and to restore that which needs restoration.

Everything in life, that happens to an individual is a lesson from Heaven. All we need to do is cultivate the awareness to recognize what it is that Heaven is trying to teach us. Human beings can perceive, even in the slightest inconvenience, a lesson in patience or about many other moral

imperatives. Life is our school, experience is our teacher, change is our growth, fulfilling of personal destinies is our mission.

From the vantage point of Heaven all human beings are merely souls. Whether we are in a mortal body on Earth or in a spiritual body in Heaven, makes no difference in the eyes of G-d. Therefore, life and death, in the eyes of Heaven, really does not exist. We consider such a separation of body and soul as a major deal, Heaven views it as a matter of course, natural, the normal progression of souls coming to Earth for their education.

The reshei tevot of this pasuk are Het, Vav, Yod, Alef, Alef, Vav, Het, in Hebrew, numerically equaling 40, the same numerical value for the words Goel (redeemer), Em (mother) and Yad HaShem (Hand of G-d). This pasuk signifies that G-d's grace is our actual redeemer, it is ingrained in natural law and operates as an under current beneath everything in creation.

We must come to realize that what in G-d's Eyes may be grace, compassion and mercy is something completely different in human eyes. G-d's compassion and grace is indeed our redeemer, but the redeemer is like a disciplining, spiritual parent (mother) who watches over us with a firm Hand, that Hand being the Hand of G-d. For those of you "in the know" this is the secret of the unity of the two Names of G-d, YKVK (mercy) and ELOHIM (judgment) and the two sefirot Tiferet (Heaven) and Malkhut (earth).

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