

Rabbi's Article II

A Celestial Convergence

The Baal Shem Tov (-[Link](#)) teaches that every event that takes place, regardless of how mundane it may be, and of whether it is concerning a Jew, human, animal, plant, or inanimate object, all is under the Divine Providence, and hence, perfectly orchestrated. How much more so, concerning an that of Torah and Mitzvot! Hence, the fact that the Torah-reading of *Behar* (-[Link](#); ninth portion in the Book of Leviticus), the study of chapter four of *Ethics of Our Fathers*¹ (-[Link](#)) and that this is the week of *Lag B'Omer* (-[Link](#)) all converge, is definitely perfectly orchestrated within G-d's perfection. And being that on the week of *Lag B'Omer*, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's (-[Link](#)) "*Yom Hillula*" (*yahrtzeit*; -[Link](#)), --which is the day on which, "all of [the tzaddik's] actions, his Torah, and the Divine service in which he engaged all the days of his life," reach completion-- we study specifically the teaching of (-ibid, Mishna 13), "*Rabbi Shimon would say: There are three crowns—the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood and the crown of sovereignty—but the crown of good name surmounts them all,*" hence, we most say that this teaching embodies the completion of Rabbi Shimon's life's work.

In the portion of *Behar* we find two contradictory themes:

- (a) We speak of the descent of the Jewish people²: (i) The worry of (-Leviticus 25:20), "*And if you should say, 'What will we eat in the seventh year?'*" (ii) reaching a point of (-ibid, 25:47), "*sold to a resident non Jew among you or to an idol of the family of a non Jew,*" to the point of thinking (-Rashi, ibid 26:1), "*Since my master worships idols, I will also be like him.*"
- (b) We speak of the Jewish people at the absolute ascent of being at (-Ibid 25:1), "(And the L-rd spoke to Moses) *on Mount Sinai... Speak to the Children of Israel...*"

And the meaning behind this is, that the Jewish people's receiving the Torah at Mt. Sinai was specifically for the purpose of their *leaving* the spirituality and isolation of Mt. Sinai, and that even in the decent of, "*sold to an idol of the family of a non Jew,*" they should rise above the challenges of nature, and remain (-Ibid 25:55), "*For the children of Israel are servants to Me,*" and to no other!

So too, with the teaching of Rabbi Shimon: It is understood that by the *People of Good Deeds*, that the, "*crown of good name surmounts,*" the, "*crown of Torah.*" However, concerning Rabbi Shimon (-Talmud, Shabbat 11a), "*whose Torah is their vocation,*" to the point of, "*they do not stop for prayer,*" why does the *crown of good name* surmount the *crown of Torah*?! Even though, those whose "*Torah is their vocation*" need to also do *good deeds*, just as the *People of Good Deeds* need to study Torah, nevertheless, the *crown of Torah* should be highest?! More so, the Jerusalem Talmud (Link; -Berochos, Chapter 1, Halacha 2), --upon discussing Rabbi Shimon's not having to stop Torah-study in order to do mitzvot, questions-- "*Would not Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai agree that one interrupts to make a sukkah or a lulav? Does not Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai... because he who studies in order not to do would have been better off had he not been born?*" The deeper meaning is that the *doing* is the completion of Torah-study itself! Our sages teach (-Brochois 17a), "*The objective of Torah wisdom is to achieve repentance and good deeds.*" Hence, it isn't that good deeds are higher than *Torah-study*, but rather, that good deeds complete ("*objective of*") Torah-study, which is the highest of all! Hence the *crown of Torah* should surmount all!? Especially with Rabbi Shimon being the student of Rabbi Akiva (-Link), who ruled (-Kiddushin 40b), "*Greater is study!*"

The explanation is, the purpose of creation is (-Tanchumah, Naso 16; Tanya, Chapter 36) to make for G-d a dwelling place here below. This is not accomplished *just by doing* mitzvot, but rather, there needs to as well be Torah-study at the level of total worldly isolation of, "*whose Torah is their vocation.*" The reason to this is the rule (-Brochois 5b), "*A prisoner cannot free himself from prison,*" but rather, needs someone *outside* the prison to free him. So too, the only way to free oneself from the constraints of the physical coarseness is through one who is *outside* of it. Hence, for the *People of Good Deeds* to be able to accomplish elevating and transforming the *prison* of the physical coarseness into a dwelling place for G-d, they must have that those "*whose Torah is their vocation,*" free them from the coarseness of engaging, and imbue them with this power. And for those "*whose Torah is their vocation,*" in order to be able to connect and imbue the *People of Good Deeds*, they must have that from the very onset of their Torah-study, that it be solely, "*For the sake of doing!*" However, the question begs to be asked, how can someone whose entire life is Torah-study, which is about isolation, to be solely, "*For the sake of doing?!*" And the answer is, this can only be done when the entire focus is on abnegation of self to the will of G-d. within the *Infinite Will* of G-d, all is equal. Hence, the ultimate Torah-study spiritual abnegation, and the ultimate worldly engagement of doing good deeds, coexist. Henceforth, a man with the total humility and self-abnegation of Rabbi Shimon, can have his entire isolation of absolute Torah-study, be with the sole purpose of connecting, engaging and empowering of the people who do good deeds. Hence, we find (-Shabbat 33b) that after 13 years of Rabbi Shimon and his son Rabbi Eliezer *isolating* in a cave, studying Torah, and when Rabbi Eliezer saw that people were working, instead of studying Torah, "*Every place that... directed their eyes was immediately burned... Everywhere that Rabbi Elazar would strike, Rabbi Shimon would heal. Rabbi Shimon said to Rabbi Elazar: My son, you and I suffice for the (entire) world,* (as the two of us are engaged in the proper study of Torah)." For through *their* Torah-study of isolation, all the actions of *People of Good Deeds* were creating a dwelling place for G-d.

And this is the meaning of the teaching, "*crown of good name surmounts them all,*" for the entire *crown of Torah* must be saturated with, "*For the sake of doing,*" the *crown of good name*.

1. According to the custom of studying a chapter of Ethics of our Fathers every Shabbat from Passover until Shavout, and some study until Rosh Hashanah
2. The Rebbe is speaking of the spiritual descent. See Tractate Kiddushin (-20a), which defines the entire portion speaking of the physical descent due to a lack of repentance