

Your Special Mitzvah

The Alter Rebbe, the first Rebbe of Chabad, explains that although we are obligated to fulfill the commandments of the Torah, every Jew has one special mitzvah that he must fulfill with particular preference (זהיר טפי), care and alacrity. This personal mitzvah is his fate - above and beyond reason or knowledge (*da'at*). Although one's personal mitzvah is above *da'at*, the attribute of *da'at* is what makes it possible to distinguish between all the mitzvahs and one's special mitzvah.

Da'at is the root of the attributes of the heart. The main attributes of the heart are love (*chesed* – closeness) and might (*gevurah* - rejection). For this reason, *da'at* splits into a “crown of love (*chassadim*)” and a “crown of might (*gevurot*)”. These are two ways to discern one's personal mitzvah: There is a mitzvah that belongs to a person's soul root, according to the root of a specific organ of Adam. It is to this mitzvah that a person will be attracted with love, light and glowing (*zohar*, cognate to זהיר) when fulfilling it. He will discover this mitzvah by means of the *chassadim* of *da'at*.

There can also be a personal mitzvah with which a person must be very careful (the literal meaning of זהיר טפי) because in a previous incarnation he caused a blemish on that mitzvah and has now returned in his present incarnation to rectify that. An impression, called *reshimu*, has remained from that blemish, causing the person to experience great difficulty in fulfilling it in this present incarnation, as well. The *gevurot* in *da'at*, which are sensitive to what one must be careful with, apprehend this special mitzvah specifically because of all the obstacles and difficulty in fulfilling it.

The obligation of all mitzvot are dependent on the power of *da'at*. A child, even if he is precociously wise, is not obligated to fulfill mitzvot until he has officially become a person with *da'at* (age 13 for a boy and 12 for a girl). If so, we can understand the affinity between the obligation to fulfill all the mitzvot and the ability to identify one's personal mitzvah. There is no reason to obligate a person to fulfill the entire package of mitzvot if he does not have an affinity to one of them. Conversely, it is impossible to ‘connect’ to a particular mitzvah without being truly committed to them all.

A person is considered to have *da'at* and is thus obligated to fulfill the mitzvot when he is capable of marriage and producing offspring. “And Adam knew (*yada*, same root as *da'at*) Eve his wife.” It is *da'at* that makes it possible for us to choose a partner and to connect to him/her in a manner that is internal, essential and can give birth. The personal connection of *da'at* has the power to recruit the entire person – including the point of essence from which he gives birth. The mature power of *da'at* transforms the personal “falling in love” to full commitment in every aspect of life.

Likewise, the inner content of every mitzvah is the “unification of God and His *Shechinah*” - and the inner connection between God and man. This unification particularly illuminates a person's special mitzvah, which then illuminates all the other mitzvot. A person who does not have the *da'at* necessary to sense a personal attraction to Torah and its mitzvot – which is expressed by a special connection to a



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particular mitzvah – is not capable of connecting and truly committing to all the mitzvot. Conversely, a person who is not truly committed to all the mitzvot is incapable of making a true covenant, which is the framework in which the essence of his personality and his affinity to his special mitzvah will manifest. This double energy of *da'at* – complete general commitment from a place of unique personal affinity, is what makes it possible for us to fulfill all the mitzvot “for the sake of the unification of God and His *Shechinah*...in a complete unification.”