

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl
Me'or Einayim
Parshas Bechukosai

If in My statutes you will walk and My commandments you will guard and you will perform them—then I will give your rains in their proper time.	אם בחקתי תלכו ואת מצותי תשמרו ועשיתם אתם ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם
Behold, "statutes" are commandments that have no [revealed] reason, and "commandments" are those that do have a reason.	הנה חקים הם מצות שאין להם טעם, ומצות הם שיש להם טעם
And why is it said here "you will walk" and there "you will guard"?	ולמה אמר כאן תלכו וכאן תשמרו
Also, what is [meant by] "and you will perform"—since if they guard [the commandments], surely they will perform them?	גם מהו ועשיתם, כיון שישמרו, בודאי יעשו
And furthermore, the commentators question: why is only material reward written [in this passage]?	ועוד קשית המפרשים: למה אינו כתוב רק שכר הגשמיות?
But the truth is, that in the Torah there is a spiritual stature, of 248 spiritual limbs—these are the 248 positive commandments—and 365 spiritual sinews, which are the 365 prohibitions.	אבל אמת הוא, שבתורה יש קומה רוחניות של רמ"ח איברים רוחניים, הינו רמ"ח מצות עשה, ושס"ה גידין רוחניים שהם שס"ה לא תעשה
And in a person there are also 248 limbs and 365 sinews.	ובאדם יש גם כן רמ"ח איברים ושס"ה גידים
And behold, man was created in the "image of Elokim."	והנה האדם נברא בצלם אלהים
And to understand this matter—can one really say of the Blessed One any form or image, Heaven forbid?	ולהבין הענין: וכי שייך לומר בו יתברך שום תמונה? חס ושלום
But the meaning is: in the image of the Torah.	אלא הפרוש הוא: בצלם של התורה
For the Torah is called "Elokim," for it is a contraction—meaning that the Blessed Name contracted Himself into the Torah,	שהתורה נקראת "אלהים", שהוא צמצום, שהשם יתברך צמצם את עצמו לתוך התורה
in order that man, who is finite and limited, be able to bind himself to the Blessed Name, Who is infinite and without end.	כדי שיוכל האדם, שהוא בעל גבול ותכלית, לדבק עצמו בשם יתברך, שהוא כלי גבול וכלי תכלית
And it would not have been possible to cleave to the Blessed One directly.	ולא היה באפשר להדבק בו יתברך
Therefore, the Blessed Name contracted Himself into the Torah.	לכן צמצם השם יתברך עצמו לתוך התורה
And man was created in the image of Elokim of the Torah, which is the spiritual stature—248 positive commandments and 365 prohibitions.	והאדם נברא בצלם אלהים של התורה, שהוא הקומה רוחניות רמ"ח מצות עשה ושס"ה לא תעשה

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And behold, the complete person is when he is one with the image—that is, his physical structure is one with the spiritual structure of Torah, the Supernal Man.	וְהִנֵּה הָאָדָם הַשָּׁלֵם הוּא כְּשֶׁהוּא אֶחָד עִם הַצֶּלֶם, דְּהֵינּוּ, הַקּוֹמָה גְּשָׁמִיּוֹת שְׁלֹו הִיא אֶחָד עִם הַקּוֹמָה רוּחָנִיּוֹת שֶׁל הַתּוֹרָה, אָדָם הָעֲלִיּוֹן
And when he moves a physical limb, he stirs and arouses a Supernal limb.	וְכִשְׁהוּא מְנַעֲנֵעַ אֵיבָר גְּשָׁמִי, מְנַעֲנֵעַ וּמַעֲוִיר אֵיבָר עֲלִיּוֹן
And this is called a "complete man," as the verse says (Tehillim 39:7), "But in the image walks man," meaning: one who walks with the image, who is one with the image—he is called a man.	וְזֶה נִקְרָא אָדָם שָׁלֵם, כְּמֵאמָר (תְּהִלִּים ל"ט, ז'): "אִךְ בְּצֶלֶם יִתְהַלֵּךְ אִישׁ", רְצוֹן לוֹמַר: מִי שֶׁמְהַלֵּךְ עִם הַצֶּלֶם, שֶׁהוּא אֶחָד עִם הַצֶּלֶם, אִזּוֹ נִקְרָא אִישׁ
But when he fails to fulfill some commandment or transgresses a prohibition—he is missing one limb or one sinew, and is not complete.	אֲבָל כְּשֶׁלֹּא עֹשֶׂה אִיזָה מִצְוָה אוֹ עֹבֵר אִיזָה עֲבֵרָה, הוּא חֶסֶר אֵיבָר אֶחָד אוֹ גִיד אֶחָד, וְאִינּוֹ שָׁלֵם
And behold, why were we commanded to perform the <i>chukim</i> —those statutes that have no [discernible] reason?	וְהִנֵּה מִפְּנֵי מָה נִצְטְוִינוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת הַחֻקִּים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם טַעַם?
It is because with commandments that have a reason, one does not need faith in order to fulfill them—he understands on his own that such things should be done.	הוּא כִּי בַּמִּצְוֹת שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהֶם טַעַם, אֵין צָרִיךְ שׁוּם אֲמוּנָה בַּעֲשִׂיתָן, שֶׁמִּבֵּין שֶׁצָּרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת כָּךְ
But in performing the <i>chukim</i> , he will only do them when he believes that there is a Creator, blessed is He, who commanded this, and that one must fulfill His will.	אֲבָל בַּעֲשִׂיַת הַחֻקִּים לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם רַק כְּשֶׁמֵּאֲמִין שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹרֵא בְּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁאָמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן וְצָרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנוֹ
And behold, <i>emunah</i> (faith) is called "legs," as they are the legs that uphold the entire Torah.	וְהִנֵּה הָאֲמוּנָה נִקְרָאת רַגְלִין, שֶׁהֵם הַרְגְּלִין הַמַּעֲמִיד אֶת הַתּוֹרָה
For before anything else, one must believe that there is a Creator, blessed is He—"He spoke and it came to be, He commanded and it stood."	שֶׁקֹּדֶם כָּל צָרִיךְ לְהֵאֲמִין שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹרֵא בְּרוּךְ הוּא, הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי, הוּא צִוָּה וַיַּעֲמֹד
As it is said: "Chavakuk came and established it upon one [principle]—‘And the righteous shall live by his faith.’"	כְּמֵאמָר: בָּא חֲבֻקֹק וַהֲעִמִּידוֹ עַל אֶחָד: "וְצַדִּיק בְּאֲמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה"
That is, he established the entire Torah upon faith.	שֶׁהֲעִמִּיד כָּל הַתּוֹרָה עַל הָאֲמוּנָה
And this is [the meaning of the verse]: "And if in My statutes you will walk."	"וְיָהִי: "וְאִם בְּחֻקֵּי תֵלְכוּ
For <i>chukim</i> are commandments that have no reason, and they depend on faith.	שֶׁחֻקִּים הֵם מִצְוֹת שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם טַעַם, וְהֵם תְּלוּיִין בְּאֲמוּנָה
Therefore it says "you will walk" (<i>telechu</i>)—because <i>emunah</i> is called "legs," as explained above.	לָכֵן אָמַר "תֵּלְכוּ", שֶׁהָאֲמוּנָה נִקְרָאת רַגְלִין כְּנ"ל

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"And you shall perform them"—meaning: you shall perform the mitzvos <i>above</i> , that you may complete the Supernal Stature.	וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אוֹתָם" — רָצוֹן לוֹמַר: תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת לְמַעַל, שְׁתַּגְמְרוּ אֶת הַקּוּמָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה
"And I will give your rains in their time"—meaning: all that you do, even your material matters, will all be bound to the Supernal Stature.	וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעֵתָם" — רָצוֹן לוֹמַר: כָּל מֵה" שְׁתַּעֲשׂוּ, אֶפְלוּ הַגִּשְׁמִיּוֹת שְׁלָכֶם, יִהְיֶה הַכֹּל מְקוּשָׁר בַּקּוּמָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה
Even eating, drinking, and other physical things—everything shall be bound to the Supernal Stature.	אֶפְלוּ אֲכִילָה וְשִׁתִּיָּה וְשָׂאֵר דְּבָרִים גִּשְׁמִיִּים — הַכֹּל יִהְיֶה מְקוּשָׁר בַּקּוּמָה הָעֲלִיּוֹנָה
Blessed is He forever and ever, amen and amen.	כְּרוּךְ הוּא לְעוֹלָם אָמֵן וְאָמֵן
End of the Book of Vayikra, with the help of the One who teaches Torah to His precious nation.	סָלִיק סֵפֶר וַיִּקְרָא בְּעֶזְרַת הַמְּלִמֵּד תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוּ הַיְקָרָה

[NOTE: Summary

Rebbe Nachum of Chernobyl explores why the Torah emphasizes **walking in chukim**—commandments without revealed rationale—rather than just guarding or performing them. He teaches that **chukim** embody the essence of **emunah (faith)**. When one performs logical mitzvos, no faith is necessarily required—they appeal to reason. But when one performs statutes without comprehension, it is an act of *pure faith in the Divine will*. This, says the Chernobyler, is the foundation of the entire Torah.

Drawing from Chavakuk's dictum "וְצַדִּיק בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יִהְיֶה," he equates **faith to the "legs"** that carry the body of Torah. "If in My chukim you walk" implies that **emunah gives you the ability to walk—to move forward in divine service even when the reasons are hidden.**

He then introduces the concept of **spiritual anatomy**: just as the human body has 248 limbs and 365 sinews, the Torah and mitzvos correspond to a **spiritual supernal form**—the *Adam HaElyon*, the Higher Man. A complete Jew, then, is one who aligns his physical being with this supernal form by performing all the mitzvos. Every mitzvah done with emunah builds the "upper structure," and even our most physical acts (eating, drinking, mundane tasks) become **channels for divine flow** when rooted in this alignment.

Practical Takeaway

Not all mitzvos make rational sense—but it is precisely those commandments that **train the soul in emunah.**

Every time we perform a mitzvah without understanding, we are **walking in the footsteps of faith.** That is not a lesser service—it is the **deepest.**

Even mundane actions—eating, drinking, working—can be elevated **if we remember they are expressions of a higher structure.** Before engaging in physical life, pause and say: *I am doing this to serve Hashem with strength, with joy, with clarity.* That **intention links the body to the soul of Torah.**

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And so, **living a life of emunah transforms even gashmiyus (materiality) into ruchniyus (spirituality)**—until your rains fall “in their proper time,” and every physical blessing is in sync with divine flow.


Chassidic Story

The Ragged Shoemaker and the Voice from Heaven

Once, a poor and unlearned shoemaker came to the Chernobyler Maggid, crying bitterly: “Rebbe, I know no Torah. I cannot explain even one commandment. But I put on tefillin every morning, I keep Shabbos the best I can. Do my mitzvos matter if I don’t understand them?”

Reb Nachum closed his eyes and began to tremble. “You say you understand nothing,” he whispered, “but in Heaven, your tefillin are brighter than that of many Torah scholars. Why? Because yours come from the deepest place—**faith without understanding**. That is a crown no mind can forge.”

The Rebbe later told his chassidim: “When this shoemaker binds tefillin without knowing why, he binds himself to the essence of Torah—to the *Adam HaElyon*. Every stitch in his shoe, every crust of bread he eats with awareness of the Creator, rises to Heaven as a jewel in the Crown of the King.”

 *Source: oral traditions recorded in the Chernobyler circle, as cited in “Or HaMeir” introductions and biographical collections.*

Closing Note:

This is the end of Sefer Vayikra—and like the Chernobyler teaches, it ends with emunah. Even when we don’t understand, we **walk**. That is our greatness.

Chazak, chazak, ve’nischazek. END NOTE]