

#### תפארת ישראל The Splendor of Israel Chapter 5

#### Introduction

This profound discourse by the Maharal of Prague explores the apparent contradiction in the statement of Rabbi Chanania ben Akashya: "Hashem desired to bring merit to Yisrael, therefore He increased for them Torah and mitzvos." On the surface, giving so *many* commandments seems to burden rather than benefit—would not fewer obligations make merit more attainable? With striking clarity, the Maharal resolves this paradox by revealing the deeper nature of Yisrael's relationship to Torah and mitzvos: that the Jewish soul is intrinsically prepared for divine service. Through this lens, the abundance of mitzvos becomes not a difficulty but the ultimate expression of merit. The Maharal delves into the nature of preparation, the unique stature of Yisrael, and why mitzvos are the divine method of refining the material soul—until one becomes elevated beyond even the angels. This maamar is both a philosophical defense and a spiritual roadmap, affirming that the path of mitzvos is not only possible but the deepest kindness of Hashem.

ה' יִתְבָּרַף שְׁמוֹ, הִרְבָּה מִצְּוֹת כְּדֵי לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל Hashem, blessed is His Name, increased mitzvos in order to bring merit to Yisrael.		
Concerning the mitzvos that Hashem, may He be blessed, gave to Yisrael, one can ask:	הַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁנָתַן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, יֵשׁ לְשְׁאֹל יָעַלֵיהָם;	
If the multitude of mitzvos is for their good, as the plain meaning of the verse suggests—	אָם רִבּוּי הַמִּצְוֹת לְטוֹב לָהֶם כְּמֵשְׁמָעוּת פְּשָׁט הַכָּתוּב,	
As it is stated (Devarim 6:24–25): "And Hashem our G-d commanded us to do all these statutes for our good all the days and it will be a merit"	שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (דְּבָרִים ו, כ״ד–כ״ה): "וַיְצַוַּנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ לַצְשׁוֹת הַחָּקִים הָאֵלֶּה לְטוֹב לָנוּ כָּל הַיָּמִים וּצְדָקָה "'וְגוֹ	
And although one could say the verse does not speak of the multitude of mitzvos,	וְעָם כִּי יֵשׁ לוֹמֵר שֶׁאֵין הַכָּתוּב מְדַבֵּר בְּרָבּוּי הַמְּצְוֹת,	
Only that the mitzvos are for the good of the person, that through fulfillment he merits eternal life—	רַק שֶׁהַמִּצְוֹת הֵם לְטוֹב אֶל הָאָדָם, שֶׁבְּקִיּוּם הַמִּצְוָה זוֹכֶה לַחַיִּים הַנִּצְחָיִּים.	
Nevertheless, this is clearly implied by the plain meaning of the well-known saying (Makkos 23b):	מָבֶּל מָקוֹם כָּדְּ מוּכָח פְּשֶׁט הַמַּאֲמֶר הַמְכַּרְסָם (מַכּוֹת :(כג, ב	
Rabbi Chanania ben Akashya said: "The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to bring merit to Yisrael—	אָמַר רַבִּי חָנַנְיָה כֶּן עֲקַשְׁיָא: רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּךְ־הוּא לַזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל—	
Therefore He increased for them Torah and mitzvos," as it is stated (Yeshayahu 42:21):	לְפִיכָךְ הָרְבָּה לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת', שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (יִשַׁעְיָה מב, כא:	
"Hashem desired, for the sake of His righteousness, to make the Torah great and glorious."	"ה' חָפֵץ לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיַאֲדִיר.".	

But now one may ask: how can it be said that Hashem wished to bring merit to Yisrael by increasing the mitzvos?	וּמֵעַתָּה יֵשׁ לִשְׁאֹל, כִּי אֵיךְ יֹאמַר שֶׁה' חָפַץ לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְכָדְ הִרְבָּה לָהֶם מִצְוֹת.
This appears contrary to reason: it would seem better to minimize the mitzvos,	וְדָבָר זָה נָגֶד הַשֵּׂכֶל, שֶׁהָיָה לוֹ לְמַעֵט בְּמִצְוֹת,
So that a person would not be obligated to observe so many, and could merit the World to Come through fewer.	כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה צָרִיךְּ לְשְׁמֹר הַרְבֵּה מִצְוֹת, וְאָז הָיָה זוֹכֶה לָעוֹלֶם הַבָּא עַל־יְדֵי מִעוּט מִצְוֹת,
More than by increasing mitzvos, through which it is harder to merit the World to Come.	מִמָּה שֶׁהוּא מוֹסִיף לָהֶם מִצְוֹת, שֶׁאָז אִי אֶפְשָׁר לִזְכּוֹת בָּל־כָּךְ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.
And the Rambam, of blessed memory, explains in his commentary to the Mishnayos there:	וְהָרַמְבַּ"ם זְכְרוֹנוֹ לִבְרָכָה פֵּירֵשׁ בְּמַסֶּכֶת מַכּוֹת :(בְּפִירוּשׁ הַמִּשְׁנָיוֹת שָׁם), וְזֶה לְשׁוֹנוֹ
It is a fundamental principle of faith in the Torah, that if a person fulfills one mitzvah from the 613 properly and correctly,	מַעָּקְרֵי הָאֱמוּנָה בַּתּוֹרָה: כִּי כְּשֶׁיְקַיֵּם אָדָם מִצְוָה מִן הַתַּרְיַ"ג מִצְוֹת כָּרָאוּי וְכַהֹגֶן,
And does not mix into it worldly intentions, but performs it out of love—as I have explained—	וְלֹא שָׁתַּף עִם כַּוּנָתָה מִכַּוָנוֹת הָעוֹלָם, אֶלָּא שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָה מֵאַהַבָּה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁבֵּאַרְתִּי לְדָּ—אוֹתָה מֵאַהַבָּה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁבַּאַרְתִּי לְדָּ
Then he merits eternal life.	הָנֵה זְכָה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם.
And this is what Rabbi Chanania meant: since the mitzvos are so numerous, it is impossible that a person will not, in his life, perform at least one with complete intent and perfection.	וְעַל זֶה אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָה: כִּי הַמִּצְוֹת בִּהְיוֹתָן הַרְבֵּה, אִי אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁלֹּא יַעֲשֶׂה הָאָדָם בְּחַיָּיו אַחַת מֵהֵן עַל מַתְכַּנְתָּה וְעַל שְׁלֵמוּתָה.
And through performing that mitzvah, his soul will live through that one act.	וּבַצֲשָׂיָת אוֹתָה הַמָּצְוָה תִּחְיֶה נַפְשׁוֹ בְּאוֹתוֹ מֵּצְשֶׂה.
And this principle is illustrated by what Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon asked (Avodah Zarah 18a): "What is my portion in the World to Come?"	וּמִמַּה שֶׁיוֹרֶה עַל עֵקֶר זֶה, מַה שֶׁשָּׁאַל רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶּן תְּרַדְיוֹן (עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה יח, א): מָה אֲנִי לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם ?הַבָּא
And the answerer responded: "Did any mitzvah come into your hands?"—meaning, did you perform one properly?	ְוָהַשִּׁיב הַמֵשִׁיב: כְּלוּם מַעֲשֶׂה בָּא לְיָדְדְּ? כְּלוֹמַר: עָשִׂיתָ מִצְוָה כַּהֹגֶן?
And he replied that a mitzvah of tzedakah had come his way, which he fulfilled perfectly, and through that he merited the World to Come.	ְוָהַשִּׁיבוֹ: כִּי נִזְדַּמְנָה לוֹ מִצְוַת צְדָקָה עַל הַשְּׁלֵמוּת, וָזָכָה בָּה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא.
Until here are his words.	עַד כָּאן דְּבָרָיו

And there is a wonder on this: how can his words be reconciled with what is stated explicitly in the Gemara Rosh Hashanah (16b),	וְתֵמַה עַל זֶה, כִּי אֵיךְ יִסְבְּלוּ דְּבָרָיו הָא דְאָמְרִינַן בָּגְמָרָא דְרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה (טז, כ) בְּהָדָיָא,
That according to all opinions, one who has a majority of sins is judged to Gehinnom on the Day of Judgment.	דְאַלִיבָּא דְכוּלֵי עָלְמָא בְּרֹב עֲבֵרוֹת לְיוֹם הַדִּין נִדּוֹן בְּגֵיהִנִּם.
And there it is referring to the World to Come, for it says: "The completely righteous are written for life in the World to Come," etc.	וְהָתָם אָיְירֵי לָעוֹלֶם הַבָּא, דְהָא קָאָמֵר: צַדִּיקִים גְמוּרִים נִכְתָּבִים לְחַיֵּי עוֹלֶם הַבָּא וְכוּ'.
So how can an established Gemara be contradicted?	ָוְאֵיךְ יִסְתִּר גְמֶרָא עֶרוּדְ.
And if one says that what we said—that even with one mitzvah a person merits the World to Come—refers to someone who does one mitzvah and no sin,	וְאָם יֹאמֵר דְּהָא דְאָמְרִינַן שֶׁאֲפִלוּ בְּמִצְוָה אַחַת זוֹכֶה לָעוֹלֶם הַבָּא, הַיְנוּ שֶׁעוֹשֶׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת, אֲבָל לֹא עָשָׂה שום עֲבַרָה.
If so, then there is no increase in merit at all, for in the end, since one has many mitzvos, he may also do many sins, and the sins may outweigh.	אָם־בֵּן אֵין כָּאן לְהַגְּדִּיל שֶׁכֶר כְּלָל, דְּסוֹף סוֹף כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לָהָם הַרְבֵּה מִצְוֹת אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁיַּצְשֶׂה הַרְבֵּה חֲטָאִים, וְיִהִיוּ הַחֲטָאִים מַכְרִיעִים.
And if the Rambam, of blessed memory, meant that when one does a mitzvah and has no sin against it, certainly it is as he said.	וְאָם רָצָה הָרַמְבַּ"ם זִכְרוֹנוֹ לִבְרָכָה [לוֹמַר] כַּאֲשֶׁר עוֹשֶׂה מִצְוָה וְלֹא עָשֶׂה שׁוּם חֵטָא כְּנֶגֶד זֶה, בְּוַדַּאי כִּדְבָרָיו כֵּן הוּא.
And this matter is a straightforward Mishnah in the first chapter of Kiddushin (39b): "Whoever performs one mitzvah—it is good for him, they prolong his days, and he inherits the Land."	וְדָבָר זֶה מִשְׁנָה פְּשׁוּטָה בְּכֶּרֶק קַמָּא דְקדּוּשִׁין (לט, ב): כָּל הָעוֹשֶׁה מִצְּוָה אַחַת מְטִיבִין לוֹ, וּמַאֲרִיכִין לוֹ 'יָמֶיו, וְנוֹחֵל הָאָרֶץ.
And even though there it is interpreted as when he has done one mitzvah more than half his sins, certainly we can learn from this that if he did one mitzvah and no sin, he will merit the World to Come.	וְאַף עַל גָּב דְמוֹקֵי לֵיהּ שָׁם כְּשֶׁעָשָׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת יְתֵרָה עַל מֶחָצָה עֲוֹנוֹת, כָּל שֶׁכֵּן שֶׁיֵשׁ לְלְמֹד מִזֶּה שָׁאִם עָשָׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת וְלֹא עָשָׂה שׁוּם חַטְא שֶׁיוֹכֶה לָעוֹלֶם הַבָּא.
But if so, we no longer need the condition that he performed the mitzvah without attaching to it any ulterior intention.	אַך אָם־כֵּן אֵין צָרִיךּ לְיָבֶר זֶה מֵה שֶׁכָּתַב שֶׁעָשָׂה מָצְוָה אַחַת וְלֹא שְׁתַּף עִמָּה כַּוּנָה אַחֶרֶת.
In the end, we have learned that the matter is not as the Rambam, of blessed memory, explained—that through one mitzvah one merits eternal life.	סוֹף סוֹף לָמַדְנוּ כִּי אֵין הַדָּבָר כְּמוֹ שֶׁפַּרֵשׁ הָרִמְבַּ"ם זָכְרוֹנוֹ לִבְרָכָה דִּבְמִצְוָה אַחַת זוֹכָה לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא.
And that which happened with Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon, it says there (Avodah Zarah 18a): When Rabbi Yose ben Kisma fell ill, Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon asked him: "What is my portion in the World to Come?"	ְוָהָא דְרַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶּן תְּרַדְיוֹן הָכִי אִיתָא הָתָם (עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה יח, א): כְּשֶׁחָלָה רַבִּי יוֹסִי בֶּן קִסְמָא, אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי חַנִינָא בֶּן תְּרַדְיוֹן: מָה אֲנִי לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

He said to him: "Did any mitzvah come to your hand?" He answered: "Money of Purim was mixed up with charity money, and I distributed it to the poor."	אָמַר לוֹ: כְּלוּם מַאֲשֶׂה בָּא לְיָדְךָּ. אָמַר לוֹ: מֵעוֹת שֶׁל פּוּרִים נִתְחַלְפּוּ לִי בְּמָעוֹת שֶׁל צְדָקָה, וְחָלֵקְתִּים לַעֲנִיִּים
He said to him: "If so—may my portion be as yours, and may	אָמַר לוֹ: אִם־כַּן מֵחֶלְקְךְּ יְהֵא חָלְקִי, וּמִגוֹנְרַלְדְּ יְהֵא
my lot be as your lot." Until here.	ָּטְבָּי יִי יִיִּר בָּאן. גוֹרַלִי, עַד בָּאן.
And it seems not that for this mitzvah alone he would merit the	יינר אָ אָ שֶׁבִּשְׁבִיל מִצְוָה זוֹת יִזְכֶּה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, רַקּ וְנְרְאֶה לֹא שֶׁבִּשְׁבִיל מִצְוָה זוֹת יִזְכֶּה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, רַק
World to Come, but rather that he saw in the performance of one mitzvah according to its full measure—	וְּנְן אֶה גֹּקיּוּם מִצְּוָה אַחַת כְּתִקְנָה מְאֹד שֶׁהָיָה מַחְמִיר שֶׁרָאָה בְּקִיּוּם מִצְוָה אַחַת כְּתִקְנָה מְאֹד שֶׁהָיָה מַחְמִיר בָּהִּ
Just as the Rambam, of blessed memory, himself wrote—that	ּוּכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הָרַמְבַּ"ם זִכְרוֹנוֹ לִבְרָכָה בְּעַצְמוֹ, שֶׁמְּזֶה
from this action it was apparent that he fulfilled one mitzvah	הַפַּעֲשֶׂה רָאָה שֶׁקִיֵּם מִצְּוָה אַחַת כְּתִקְנָה, וִמִּזָּה הָיָה הַפַּעֲשֶׂה רָאָה שֶׁקִיֵּם מִצְוָה אַחַת כְּתִקְנָה, וִמְזָּה הָיָה
properly, and from this he knew he was a completely righteous	יוֹדַעַ שֶׁהוּא צַדִּיק גָּמוּר בְּקִיּוֹם כָּל הַמִּצְוֹת, וְהוּא בֶּן
person in all mitzvos, and thus a person of the World to Come.	עוֹלָם הַבָּא. עוֹלָם הַבָּא.
And furthermore I say, that what he said: "Did any action come	יַכּוּיָבָּיּג. וְעוֹד אֲנִי אוֹמֵר, כִּי מַה שֶׁאָמַר: כְּלוּם מַעֲשֶׂה בָּא
to your hand?"—his intention was not to say that from one	לְיָדְךְ', לֹא שֶׁהָיָה רְצוֹנוֹ לוֹמֵר מִמַּעֲשֵׂה מִצְוָה אַחַת
mitzvah one merits the World to Come, for that is not so.	יָזְכֶּה לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שֶׁאֵין הַדָּבָר כָּדְ.
Rather, he was asking him: "Did any action come to your	רַק הָיָה שׁוֹאֲלוֹ: כְּלוּם מַעֲשֶׂה בָּא לְיָדְדְּ', שֶׁמִּן הַמַּעֲשֶׂה
hand?"—meaning, that from the action one may discern a sign	יַשׁ לְהַבְּחִין סִימַן בֶּן עוֹלָם הַבָּא. יַשׁ לְהַבְחִין סִימַן בָּן עוֹלָם הַבָּא.
of being a person of the World to Come.	1.40 -4.2 14 15 4 1 W40 1 - 2.
And he said: "Purim money was mixed up with tzedakah money,	וְאָמַר: מָעוֹת פּוּרִים נִתְחַלְפוּ בְּמָעוֹת צְדָקָה, וְחָלַקְתִּי
and I distributed it to the poor."	אותו לְעֲנִיִּים'.
And this matter alludes to something wondrous: for Purim	וְהַדָּבָר רָמָז מַפְלָג, כִּי מָעוֹת שֶׁל פּוּרִים אֵינָם עוֹמְדִים
money exists only for increasing revelry and drinking.	רַק לְרַבּוּי אֲבִילָה וּשְׁתִיָּה.
And if that day had been one of sanctity, the feast would not	וְאָלוּ הָיָה יוֹם הַנָּה יוֹם שֶׁיֵשׁ בּוֹ קְדַשָּׁה, לֹא הָיָה
have been entirely a physical matter, but rather for the honor of	֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖֖
the day and its holiness.	ָּהְלָמַעֵּלָת קְדָשָׁתוּ הּלְמַעֵּלַת קְדָשָׁתוּ
But on this day there is no sanctity at all, and the eating and	가스를 되면 다스타드를 가
drinking is purely a physical matter of this world, which is	אֲבָל אֵין בְּיוֹם זֶה קְדֵשָׁה כְּלָל, וְהָאֲכִילָה וְהַשְּׁתִיָּה הוּא
entirely material.	דָּבָר בַּשְּׁמִי, מַעְנְיַן הָעוֹלָם הַזָּה, שֶׁהוּא כֻּלוֹ בַּשְׁמִי.
And this money was exchanged for money of the poor.	וָנִתְחַלֵּף מָעוֹת אֵלּוּ בְּמָעוֹת עֲנִיִּים.
For money of the poor is the opposite of this, since the poor	שֶׁמֶעוֹת עֲנִיִּים הַפֶּךְ זֶה, כִּי הֶעָנִי יָדוּעַ שֶׁאֵין לוֹ עוֹלָם
person is known to have no share in this world at all, and does	ָּיָּרָל, וְאֵין נֶהֶנֶה מְטוֹבַת עוֹלָם הַנֶּה. הַנָּה כְּלָל, וְאֵין נֶהֶנָה מְטוֹבַת עוֹלָם הַנָּה.
not benefit from its goodness.	
And Purim money—which is entirely of this world—was	– וְנִתְחַלְפוּ לוֹ מָעוֹת פּוּרִים – שֶׁהוּא הַכֹּל עוֹלָם הַזֶּה
exchanged for poor man's money, who have no share in this	בְּמֶעוֹת עֲנִיִּים, שָׁאֵין לָהֶם חֵלֶק בָּעוֹלֶם הַזֶּה, וְחָלֵּק
world, and he gave it all to the poor.	הַכּל לַעֲנִיִּים.

And this matter hints that he will exchange this world for the World to Come, and he will have no portion at all in this world, and all his portion that was fitting for him in this world is reserved for him in the World to Come.	וְדָבָר זֶה רָמָז שֶׁהוּא יַחֲלִיף הָעוֹלֶם הַזֶּה בָּעוֹלֶם הַבָּא, וְלֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ חֵלֶק כְּלָל בָּעוֹלֶם הַזֶּה, וְכַל חֶלְקוֹ שֶׁהָיָה רָאוּי לוֹ בָּעוֹלֶם הַזֶּה – שָׁמוּר לוֹ לַעוֹלֶם הַבָּא.
And so it truly was with Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon, the holy tzaddik, who was burned with a Torah scroll with him (Avodah Zarah 18a), and he had no share in this world; everything was reserved for him in the World to Come.	וּכְמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה בָּאֱמֶת לְרַבִּי חַנִּינָא בֶּן חְּרַדְיוֹן הַצַּדִּיק הַקָּדוֹשׁ, שֶׁהָיָה נִשְּׁרָף וְסֵפֶּר תּוֹרָה עִמּוֹ (עַבוֹדָה זָרָה יח, א), וְלֹא הָיָה חָלְקוֹ בָּעוֹלֶם הַזֶּה, רַק הַכּּל שָׁמוּר לוֹ לָעוֹלֶם הַבָּא
And about this he said: "If so, may my portion be as yours," for he saw a sign that the portion that was fitting for him in this world is reserved for him in the World to Come.	ְעַל זֶה אָמַר: אָם־כֵּן מַחֶּלְקְּהְ יְהֵא חָלְקִּי', כִּי סִימָן יֵשׁ לוֹ שֶׁחָלְקוֹ שֶׁהָיָה רָאוּי לוֹ בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה – הוּא שָׁמוּר לוֹ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא
And now there is no proof at all. And the original question returns to its place regarding the well-known statement: "The Holy One, blessed be He, desired to bring merit to Yisrael, therefore He increased for them Torah and mitzvos."	וּמַעַתָּה אֵין רָאָיָה כְּלֶל. וְחָזְרָה קַשְׁיָן לִמְקוֹמָה בַּמַּאֲמֶר הַמְפַרְסָם: רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּדְ־הוּא לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְפִיכָךְ הַרְבָּה לָהֶם מִצְוֹת
And I say that there is no difficulty at all.	וַאֲנִי אוֹמֵר כִּי לֹא קַשְׁיָא כְּלָל.
For the fact that Yisrael are prepared for the Torah is a distinct level in itself.	כִּי מַה שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל הֵם מוּכָנִים אָל הַתּוֹרָה, הִיא מַדְרַגָּה בּּפְנֵי עַצְמָה
For since they are prepared for Torah, as explained above, and are not like the other nations of the world who are not prepared for Torah,	כִּי מִפְּנֵי שָׁהַם מוּכָנִים אֶל תּוֹרָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַתְבָּאֵר לְמַעְלָה, וְאֵינָם כְּמוֹ שְׁאָר אַמּוֹת עַכּוּ"ם שָׁאֵין מוּכָנִים לַתּוֹרָה
If He had given them only a few mitzvos, their merit would not be as great as it is now, when they have Torah which contains many mitzvos, and they are prepared for many mitzvos.	וְאָם נָתַן לָהֶם מְעַט מִצְוֹת, לֹא הָיָה הַזְכוּת שֶׁלָּהֶם כָּל־כָּךְ כְּמוֹ שֶׁיֵשׁ לָהֶם זְכוּת בַּמָּה שֶׁיֵשׁ לָהֶם תּוֹרָה שָׁיֵשׁ בָּה מִצְוֹת הַרְבֵּה, וּמוּכָנִים אֶל הַרְבֵּה מַצְוֹת.
And if Yisrael did not have the advantage of being built for Torah, in what way could we say that those who died as minors—who could not fulfill the mitzvos of Torah—would still merit the World to Come (Menachos 110b)?	וְאָם לֹא הָיָה מַעֲלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּמָּה שֶׁהֵם מוּבָנִים אֶל הַתּוֹרָה, בְּאֵיזֶה צַד נוּכַל לוֹמֵר שָׁאוֹתָם שֶׁלֹא הָיוּ יְכוֹלִים לְקַיָּם מִצְוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁמֵתוּ כְּשֶׁהֵם קְטַנִים, (שָׁיִהִיוּ בְּנֵי עוֹלָם הַבָּא (מְנָחוֹת קי, ב.
But the matter is that they are the nation who have Torah and are prepared for Torah and mitzvah, and because of their readiness for Torah they will merit life in the World to Come.	אֲבָל הָעִנְיֵן הוּא בַּמָּה שֶׁהֵם הָעָם שֶׁיֵשׁ לָהֶם תּוֹרָה, וּמוּכָנִים לְתוֹרָה וּמִצְוָה, בִּשְׁבִיל הֲכָנָתָם לַתּוֹרָה יִזְכּוּ לָחַיֵּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא.
And so, G-d forbid to say that we, the children of exile, who cannot fulfill many mitzvos, have no share in those mitzvos that we cannot fulfill.	ְרֵבֵן חַס וְשָׁלוֹם לוֹמֵר שֶׁאֲנַחָנוּ בְּנֵי גָּלוּת, וְאֵין אָנוּ יְכוֹלִים לְקַיֵּם הַרְבֵּה מִצְוֹת, שָׁלֹא יִהְיֶה לָנוּ חֵלֶק בָּאוֹתָן מִצְוֹת שֶׁלֹא נוּכַל לְקַיֵּם.

G-d forbid to say such a thing, which would diminish the wholeness of the generations that died.	חַס וְשָׁלוֹם לוֹמַר דָּבָר כָּזֶה, לְמַעַט מִשְׁלֵמוּת הַדּוֹרוֹת שֶׁמָתוּ
But in that we are people of Torah, and we have readiness for Torah, we have reward in the entire Torah.	אֲבָל בַּמֶּה שֶׁאָנוּ בְּנֵי תּוֹרָה, וְיֵשׁ לָנוּ הָכָנָה אֶל הַתּוֹרָה, יֵשׁ לָנוּ שָׂכָר בְּכָל הַתּוֹרָה כֵּלָּה.
And this matter is clear, and it will be further clarified at length with G-d's help.	וְדָבָר זֶה בָּרוּר, וְיִתְבָּאֵר דָּבָר זֶה בַּאֲרִיכוּת בְּעֶזְרַת הַשֵּׁם.
And on this Rabbi Chananya said his words: "The Holy One, blessed be He, wanted to bring merit to Yisrael, therefore He increased for them many mitzvos,"	וְעַל זֶה אָמֵר רַבִּי חֲנַנְיָא דְּבָרִיו כִּי רָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּדְ־הוּא לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּלְכִּיכָךְ הַרְבָּה לָהֶם מִצְוֹת הַרְבֵּה,
And they are prepared for very many mitzvos.	וָהֵם מוּכָנִים אֶל מִצְוֹת הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד.
And this is the merit of Yisrael—that they have many mitzvos, and therefore their reward is greater.	וְזֶהוּ זְכוּת יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לָהֶם מִצְוֹת הַרְבֵּה בִּיוֹתֵר, וּלְכָךְ שְׂכָרָם גָּדוֹל יוֹתֵר.
And you might object: in the end, their reward could turn to their detriment, for if they do not fulfill most of the Torah, they will be deemed wicked.	וְאֵל יִקְשָׁה לְדָּ, סוֹף סוֹף יִהְיֶה שְׂכָרָם יוֹצֵא בְּהֶפְּסֵדָם, שָׁאָם לֹא יְקַיֵּם רֹב הַתּוֹרָה יִהְיֶה רָשָׁע.
This is not so, for in the end he gains by being prepared for Torah that contains many mitzvos.	זֶה אֵינוֹ, דְּסוֹף סוֹף מַרְוִיחַ בָּזֶה עַל־יְדֵי שֶׁיֵשׁ לוֹ הַכָנָה אֶל הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁיֵשׁ בָּה מִצְוֹת הַרְבֵּה.
For the matter of whether he will fulfill the mitzvos or not is balanced—it is possible that he will merit and fulfill them.	– כִּי הַדָּבָר הַזָּה שֶׁאֶפְשָׁר שֶׁיְקַיֵּם הַמִּצְוֹת אוֹ לֹא יְקַיֵּם דָּבָר זֶה הוא שָׁקוּל, כִּי אוּלַי יִזְכֶּה וִיקַיֵּם הַמִּצְוֹת.
And since the matter is balanced, this tips the scale—that he is prepared for Torah with many mitzvos, versus one with fewer.	וְכֵיוָן שֶׁהַדְּבָר הוּא שֶׁקוּל, דָּבָר זֶה מַכְרִיעַ מַה שֶׁהוּא מוּכָן אֶל תּוֹרָה שֶׁל רְבּוּי מִצְוֹת, וְדָבָר בְּמִעוּט הַמִּצְוֹת.
For this is the main reason the Torah and mitzvos were given: that a person have actions which refine his material soul and make it pure and separate.	כִּי זֶהוּ עָקָר מַה שֶׁנִּתְנָה תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, שֶׁיִהְיוּ לָאָדָם פָּעֵלוֹת וּמַצֲשִׂים אֲשֶׁר מְצָרְפִים נַפְשׁוֹ הַחָּמְרִית, .וְלַצֲשׂוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ זַךְ וְנִבְדָּל
And if not for this, "Man has no advantage over the animal" (Koheles 3:19), for man would be material and natural like a beast.	וְאִם לֹא כֵּן, "מוֹתַר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אָיִן" (קהֶלֶת ג, יט), כִּי הָיָה הָאָדָם חָמְרִי טִבְעִי כְּמוֹ הַבְּהֵמָה.
And if so, how can this matter not be clear—that the abundance of mitzvos is a merit for a person, to the point that it is absolutely self-evident.	וְאָם־כֵּן אֵיךְ לֹא יָהָיֶה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה בָּרוּר, כִּי רְבּוּי הַמִּצְוֹת הֵם זְכוּת לָאָדָם, עַד שֶׁהוּא דָּבָר פָּשׁוּט בְּתַכְלִית
And He, may He be blessed, wanted to bring them merit, like a father who chastises and reproves his son to bring him merit.	וְהוּא יִתְבָּרַדְּ רָצָה לְזַכּוֹת אוֹתָם, כְּמוֹ הָאָב שֶׁהוּא מְיַפֵּר וּמוֹכִיחַ אֶת בְּנוֹ לְזַכּוֹתוֹ,

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And even if the son says he does not want it, nevertheless the	וְאָם הַבֵּן אוֹמֵר שָׁאֵינוֹ חָפֵץ בָּזֶה, מִכָּל מָקוֹם הָאָב
father brings him merit against his will.	מְזַכֶּה אוֹתוֹ בְּעַל כָּרְחוֹ.
So too, Hashem wanted to bring merit to Yisrael; therefore, He	וְכָךְ ה' רָצָה לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, לָכֵן נָתַן לוֹ עַל מִצְוֹת
gave them many mitzvos so they would merit more.	בְּדֵי לְזְכּוֹת בְּיוֹתֵר.
And the question regarding the statement "Hashem desired to	וְהוּסְרָה הַשְּׁאֵלָה בַּמָּה שֶׁאָמְרוּ: רָצָה
bring merit to Yisrael, therefore He increased for them Torah and	הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּדְ־הוּא לְזַכּוֹת אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְפִיכָדְ הִרְבָּה
mitzvos" has been resolved.	ָלָהֶם תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת.

#### **[NOTE Summary**

The Maharal begins by citing the statement, "Hashem increased mitzvos to bring merit to Yisrael." This seems perplexing—shouldn't fewer obligations make it easier to merit reward? The Maharal answers that the Jewish soul is uniquely prepared for Torah and mitzvos, unlike the nations of the world. The very abundance of commandments reflects the soul's spiritual capacity. The more mitzvos one has the potential to fulfill, the more avenues one has for achieving eternal life—because even one mitzvah, if performed purely, can grant a person Olam Haba.

He explores the Talmudic account of Rabbi Chanina ben Teradyon and the question of whether a single mitzvah can secure the World to Come. Ultimately, the Maharal argues that this is not about technical fulfillment but spiritual readiness: a soul's essential alignment with Torah. That readiness alone grants merit, even to children or to those unable to fulfill many commandments due to exile.

Therefore, the multitude of mitzvos is not a burden, but a reflection of our elevated potential. The possibility that one *may* fulfill them tips the scales in our favor, even before actual fulfillment. Just as the Torah and mitzvos are meant to refine the physical soul and separate it from materiality, they transform a person into a vessel for holiness. Without them, man is no different than a beast.

Hashem, like a loving father, gives His child many opportunities to merit—even if the child doesn't understand or desire it. The abundance of mitzvos is thus the greatest gift and merit possible.

#### **Practical Takeaway**

Never feel overwhelmed by the volume of Torah and mitzvos. It is precisely because your soul is capable of greatness that Hashem entrusted you with so many pathways to connect. Even the smallest mitzvah—done with sincerity—can open the gates of eternity. Your *potential* itself is already part of the merit.

#### **Chassidic Story**

**Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**, known for finding merit in every Jew, once saw a wagon driver hurriedly praying while greasing his wagon wheels. A student scoffed, but the Berditchever Rebbe responded: "Do you

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see? Even amidst his work, he grasps onto a mitzvah! That is the greatness of our people—their connection to Hashem is so deep that even one imperfect mitzvah has immense power."

This aligns perfectly with the Maharal's teaching: the Jewish soul is so bound to Torah that even fleeting contact with a mitzvah shines with eternal merit.

**Source**: Kedushas Levi, Berditchev, Parshas Tzav END NOTE