

# Matthew

## Chapter Twenty-Five

# כה

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### Matthew 25:1

אֶזְתִּדְמָה מַלְכוּת הַשָּׁמַיִם לְעֶשֶׂר עֲלָמוֹת אֲשֶׁר לָקְחוּ  
אֶת־נֵרוֹתֵיהֶן וַתִּצָּאנָה לִקְרֹאת הַחֲתָן:

**“Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom.”**

#### **The Kingdom of Heaven.**

From a Jewish scholarly lens, Matthew 25:1 sets the stage for a parable that calls Israel (and by extension, all disciples) to readiness for the ultimate redemption.

#### **Ten virgins.**

First Fruits of Zion notes an Arab custom in the commentary of R’ Shimshon ben Avraham of Sens, that seems to echo the event in the parable:

“There is a custom in the land of the Ishmaelites that they lead the bride from her father’s house to her husband’s house on the night prior to her entering the bridal chamber. And they carry before her about ten wooden staves and at the top of each staff is a copper dish in which there is a piece of cloth with oil and pitch. And they light it, and illuminate it before her.” (**Rash on m. Kelim 2:8, cited in Torah Club: Chronicles of the Messiah, Volume IV, First Fruits of Zion, pg. 1397**)

### **Their lamps.**

Proverbs likens the soul to a lamp,

נֵר ה' נְשִׁמַּת אָדָם חֵפֵשׁ כָּל-חֲדָרֵי-בֶטֶן:

“The lamp of the L-rd is a man's soul; it seeks out all [his] hidden recesses.” (**Proverbs 20:27, Sefaria.org**)

R' Steinsaltz comments,

**“The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, who searches all the chambers of the belly.** God examines the inner life of a person by means of his own soul, which serves as a lamp. Thus, everything is revealed before Him, including matters that are concealed from the person himself.” (**Steinsaltz on Proverbs 20:27, Sefaria.org**)

### **Went out to meet the bridegroom.**

In rabbinic literature, Israel awaiting redemption is likened to a bride awaiting her groom.

### **{And the bride.}**

Some manuscripts (notably family 13 [f<sup>13</sup>], a group of minuscules often called the *Ferrara group*) read:

τοῦ νυμφίου καὶ τῆς νύμφης — “the bridegroom **and the bride.**”

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## **Matthew 25:2**

חֲמִשָּׁה מֵהֶן חֲכָמוֹת וְחֲמִשָּׁה כְּסִילוֹת:

**“Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.”**

### **Foolish/Wise.**

Proverbs often speaks of the contrasts between the wise and the foolish. Ecclesiastes says,

“I found that wisdom is superior to folly as light is superior to darkness; A wise man has his eyes in his head, whereas a fool walks in darkness.” (**Ecclesiastes 2:14, Sefaria.org**)

The Rabbis say,

“Ben Zoma said, ‘Who is wise? He that learns from every man, for it is said, ‘From all my teachers I have acquired understanding.’ (Ps. 119: 99).” (**Pirkei Avot 4:1, Sefaria.org**)

The Talmud says,

אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: אֵיזָהוּ חָכָם - הָרוֹאֶה אֶת הַנוֹלָד  
“They said to him: Who is wise? The one who foresees what is being born (what will come).” (**Tamid 32a, Sefaria.org**)

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## Matthew 25:3

וַתִּשְׁחַתְּחָה הַכֶּסֶּילוֹת אֶת-הַנֵּרוֹת וְלֹא-לָקְחוּ עִמָּהֶן שֶׁמֶן:

“Those who were foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them,”

**Took no oil.**

What is the meaning of the oil? The Midrash says,

שֶׁאִין שֶׁמֶן אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה, וְאִין שֶׁמֶן אֶלָּא מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים  
“...oil is nothing other than Torah, and oil is nothing other than good deeds.” (**Vayikra Rabbah 3, Sefaria.org**)

Oil (*shemen*) represents the deeds and merit that sustain the flame. Without oil, a lamp cannot shine—just as a soul without Torah and mitzvot lacks endurance. The folly here is not ignorance but negligence. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah warns:

“If there is no Torah, there is no proper conduct; if there is no proper conduct, there is no Torah.” (**Pirkei Avot 3:17**)

The foolish virgins had the outward vessel (the lamp) but lacked the inward substance (the oil). Sanhedrin 97a describes the coming of the Messiah as sudden, like a test of readiness. Just as one who waits for a king must keep their lamp burning, Israel is expected to prepare spiritually for redemption. The foolish virgins reflect those who complacently await salvation without active preparation.

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### Matthew 25:4

וְהַחֲכָמוֹת לָקְחוּ שֶׁמֶן בְּכֵלֵיהֶן וְאֵת גֵּרוֹתֵיהֶן:

“but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

#### Vessels.

Rebbe Nachman says,

“The lamp symbolizes the soul, as it is written, “The soul of man is the lamp of God” (Proverbs 20:27). When you wish to light up the soul, you must do so toward the “face” or countenance of the Menorah - this is the tzaddik, whose countenance shines for all Israel. This countenance will light up even the darkest nights and the darkest places.” (**Rebbe Nachman’s Torah, Beha’alotkha, Volume III, Breslov Research Institute, pg. 40**)

The Didache says,

“Watch” over your life: “let your lamps” be not quenched “and your loins” not be ungirded, but be “ready,” for ye know not “the hour in which our Lord comes.” 2 But be frequently gathered together seeking the things which are profitable for your souls, for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you except ye be found perfect at the last time; 3 for in the last days the false prophets and the corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall change to hate; 4 for as lawlessness increases they shall hate one another and persecute and betray, and

then shall appear the deceiver of the world as a Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders and the earth shall be given over into his hands and he shall commit iniquities which have never been since the world began.” **(Didache 16, EarlyChristianWritings.com)**

The Midrash says,

“...After this it is written, ‘oil for the light’ – this is King Messiah, as it says, “I will make the horn of David grow, I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.” (Psalm 132:17) **(Midrash Tanchuma, Parashat T’rumah 7, Cited in Concealed Light, Dr. Tsvi Sadan, Vine of David, pg. 232)**

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## Matthew 25:5

וְכַאֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵי הַחֲתָן לָבֹא וַתִּנָּמְנָה כָּלָן וַתִּרְדְּמֶנָּה:

**“Now while the bridegroom delayed, they all slumbered and slept.”**

### **Bridegroom delayed.**

Yeshua himself says here that the Redemption will be delayed. As cited in Matthew 24, this echoes Exodus,

“When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” **(Exodus 32:1, ESV)**

Habakkuk says,

“For the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” **(Habakkuk 2:3, NKJV)**

In the famous 13 Principles of faith, as elucidated by the Rambam,

“The twelfth principle [is] the Messianic era and that is to believe and to confirm that he will come and not to think that he is late. ‘If the tarries, wait for him’ and do not give him a [set] time and do not create analyses from the verses to extrapolate the time of his coming. And the sages said (Sanhedrin 97b), “The spirit of those that calculate the end should blow up.” And [from this principle is] that he believes that [the Messiah] will have great advantage and stature and honor above all of the kings that ever were; according to that which all of the prophets prophesied about him; from Moshe, our teacher - peace be upon him - to Malachi, peace be upon him. And one who doubts him or for whom his stature is diminished denies the Torah, as the Torah testifies about him in *Parshat Bilaam* and in *Parshat Atem Netsavim*. And included in this principle is that there should not be a king in Israel except from the House of David alone. And anyone who disputes [the status] of this family, denies the name of God, may He be blessed, and the words of His prophets.” **(Rambam on Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1:29)**

### **They all slumbered.**

Various opinions as to the meaning of slumbered exist here, some of which is both the wise and the foolish passed away, or conversely both were caught unaware of the moment of Redemption, however the wise prepared while the foolish did not.

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### **Matthew 25:6**

וַיְהִי בַּחֲצוֹת הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹל תְּרוּעָה  
הִנֵּה הַחַתָּן צָאִינָה לִקְרֹאתוֹ:

**“But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold! The bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him!’”**

### **Midnight.**

In Jewish tradition, *hatzot layla* (midnight) is a powerful spiritual moment. The Exodus itself took place at midnight (Exodus 12:29), when God struck down the firstborn of Egypt and redeemed Israel. The Talmud (Berakhot 3a) notes that King David would rise at midnight to

sing praises, linking the hour with messianic anticipation. The Zohar (I:20a) emphasizes that at midnight divine mercy awakens, and redemption is stirred. Thus, the timing of the cry echoes Jewish associations of midnight with deliverance and sudden divine intervention. The Book of Ruth says,

“It happened at **midnight**, that the man was startled and turned himself, and behold, a woman lay at his feet.” **(Ruth 3:8)**

R' Bogomilsky comments, revealing a secret,

“Instead of “bachatzi halaylah” why doesn’t it simply say “bachatzot” — “at midnight”? The words “bachatzi halaylah” (בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה) — “middle of the night” — have the numerical value of 190, which is also the numerical value of “keitz” (קֵץ) — “the end.” This refers to the ultimate conclusion of all the exiles of the Jewish people which will occur through Mashiach...” **(Questions and Answers on Megillat Ruth: Chapter 3, R' Moshe Bogomilsky, Chabad.org)**

He continues,

“In the middle of the night,” the darkest moment of exile vayecharad ha’ish— the Man — Hashem — was startled, to see, behold “a woman” (Klal Yisrael) lying margelotav — at His feet.” This word can also be read as mar— bitter — gelotav — exiles. Suddenly, Hashem asks “who are you?” She responds [emotionally] “I am Ruth Your handmaid.” This means “I am Klal Yisrael who have accepted Ruth (רוּת) — additional 606 mitzvot at Sinai over the seven the entire world has.” The dialogue continues, “Spread Your wings over Your handmaid” — “Take us out of galut and reunite with us” — “Ki go’el atah” — “for You are a redeemer.” **(Questions and Answers on Megillat Ruth: Chapter 1, R' Moshe Bogomilsky, Chabad.org)**

In rabbinic thought, redemption often comes in the darkest hour—when hope seems most hidden.

**There was a cry.**

There was a cry, a teruah. This links to Rosh HaShanah, also known as ‘Yom Teruah’, as 1 Thessalonians 4 says,

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of G-d. And the dead in Messiah will rise first.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16, NKJV modified)

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#### Matthew 25:7

אֵז הַתְּעוֹרְרוּ כָּל-הַעֲלָמוֹת הָהֵן וַתִּטְבְּנָה אֶת-נֵרוֹתֵיהֶן:

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.”

#### Trimmed their lamps.

To “trim” (*kosmosin* in Greek) the lamps means to clear away the charred wick and adjust the flame. In Jewish imagery, this resonates with the concept of *heshbon hanefesh* (soul-accounting)—the process of examining and purifying one’s deeds. Just as priests tended the menorah in the Temple daily (Exodus 27:20–21; *Tamid* 3:9), so too the virgins prepare their lamps when the crucial hour arrives.

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#### Matthew 25:8

וַתֹּאמְרָה הַכְּסִילוֹת אֶל-הַחֲכָמוֹת תֵּנָה  
לָנוּ מִשְׁמֶנֶךְ כִּי יֵכָבוּ נֵרוֹתֵינוּ:

“The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’”

#### Give us oil.

Rabbinic literature stresses that when the Messiah arrives, there will be no time to prepare anew. Pirkei Avot teaches:

“And repent one day before your death.” (Pirkei Avot 2:10, R’ Joshua Kulp, Sefaria.org)

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#### Matthew 25:9



וַתַּעֲנִינָה הַחֲכָמוֹת לֵאמֹר לֹא כֹן פֶּן-לֹא יִסְפִּיק לָנוּ וּלְכֹן  
כִּי אִם-לִכְנָה אֶל-הַמוֹכְרִים וּקְנִינָה לָכֹן:

**“But the wise answered, saying, ‘What if there isn’t enough for us and you? You go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’”**

**Buy for yourselves.**

In rabbinic literature, merit (*zechut*) is often seen as personal and non-transferable. Pirkei Avot says,

“Rabbi Jacob said: this world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare yourself in the vestibule, so that you may enter the banqueting-hall.” (**Pirkei Avot 4:16, Dr. Joshua Kulp, Sefaria.org**)

Preparation must be done by the individual; one cannot rely on another’s readiness at the critical moment. The foolish virgins’ request reflects the mistaken hope that another’s merit could be shared in the final hour. The foolish virgins, having neglected to store up Torah and mitzvot, now face the darkness.

“The light of the righteous is radiant; The lamp of the wicked is extinguished.”  
(**Proverbs 13:9, Sefaria.org**)

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**Matthew 25:10**

וַיְהִי הֵנָּה הַלְכוֹת לְקִנּוֹת וְהַחֲתָן בָּא וַתִּבְאֶנָּה  
הַנִּכְנּוֹת עִמּוֹ אֶל-הַחֲתָנָה וַתִּסְגֹּר הַדֶּלֶת:

**“While they went away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.”**

### **To the marriage feast.**

The Messianic Banquet.

### **The door was shut.**

The shutting of the door resonates with Jewish eschatological teachings about the “closing of the gates.” On *Yom Kippur*, the *Ne’ilah* (closing) prayer reflects this theme: once the heavenly gates close, the time for repentance ends.

“R. Hiya thereupon began with the verse: “I acknowledge my sin unto you, etc.” (Ps. 32, 5). He said: ‘From this we learn that a man who conceals his sins and does not confess them before the Holy King and beg for mercy is not allowed to enter the door of repentance.’ (Zohar, Vayikra 59, Soncino Press Edition, Sefaria.org)

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### **Matthew 25:11**

וְאַחֵר בָּאוּ גַם-יֵתֵר הָעֲלָמוֹת וַתֹּאמְרָה  
אֲדֹנָיִנוּ אֲדֹנָיִנוּ פָּתַח-לָנוּ:

**“Afterward the other virgins also came, saying, Master, Master, open to us.”**

### **Open to us.**

Micah warns,

“Someday they shall cry out to HaShem, But they will not be answered; At that time the Divine Face will be hidden, in accordance with the wrongs they have done.”  
(Micah 3:4, Sefaria.org)

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### **Matthew 25:12**

וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר אָמֵן אֶמַר אֲנִי לָכֵן לֹא יָדַעְתִּי אֶתְכֶן:

**“But he answered, ‘Amein, I tell you, I do not know you.’”**

### **I do not know you.**

In biblical Hebrew, *yada* (to know) is not mere intellectual recognition but covenantal intimacy (e.g., Genesis 18:19: “*For I have known him [Abraham] that he may command his children...*”). To be “known” by God means to be in relationship through covenant faithfulness. When the bridegroom says, “*I know you not*,” it echoes rabbinic teachings that those without Torah and mitzvot cannot claim covenantal intimacy, even if they outwardly belong to the community.

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### **Matthew 25:13**

לִּכֹּן שֶׁקִּדּוֹ כִּי אֵינְכֶם יוֹדְעִים אֶת־הַיּוֹם  
וְאֶת־הַשָּׁעָה (אֲשֶׁר יָבֹא בָּהּ בֶּן־הָאָדָם):

**“Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”**

### **Watch.**

This verse concludes the *Parable of the Ten Virgins* with an exhortation to remain alert. In Jewish tradition, vigilance (*zehirut*) is a key ethical trait. The idea is that one must live each day in readiness, not knowing when the ultimate reckoning or the redemption may arrive.

**This verse teaches that spiritual preparedness is not about calculating the end but living rightly in the present.**

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### **Matthew 25:14**

כִּי הִדָּבֵר דָּמָה לְאִישׁ נֹסֵעַ לְמִרְחוֹק אֲשֶׁר  
קָרָא אֶל־עֲבָדָיו וַיַּפְקֵד בְּיָדָם אֶת־רְכוּשׁוֹ:

**“For it is like a man, going into another country, who called his own servants, and entrusted his goods to them.”**

### **It is like a man.**

Here begins the Parable of the Talents.

### **Going into another country.**

Moshe in his first coming was rejected by his brothers, and went and lived in the land of Midian, amongst the Gentiles, awaiting the time to return to redeem his brothers.

### **Entrusted his goods to them.**

From a Jewish perspective, the *goods* entrusted could be seen as the Torah, mitzvot, or divine wisdom given to Israel. The rabbis describe Israel as those who are charged with carrying the treasures of the King:

“For a good lesson [*lekah*] I have given you: My Torah, do not forsake it” (Proverbs 4:2). Do not forsake the acquisition [*mikah*] that I gave to you. You have a person who acquires an acquisition, there is gold in it but there is no silver in it, there is silver in it but there is no gold in it. But the acquisition that I gave you, there is silver in it, as it is stated: “The sayings of the Lord are pure sayings, like silver purified” (Psalms 12:7), and there is gold in it, as it is stated: “They are more desirable than gold, than quantities of fine gold” (Psalms 19:11). There is a person who acquires fields but not orchards, orchards but not fields; but this acquisition, there are fields in it and there are orchards in it, as it is stated: “Your irrigated fields are an orchard of pomegranates” (Song of Songs 4:13).” (**Exodus Rabbah 33:1, Sefaria.org**)

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### **Matthew 25:15**

וַיֵּתֶן לְאֶחָד חֲמִשָּׁה כֶּכָּרִים וְלְאֶחָד שְׁתֵּי וְלְאֶחָד אֶחָד  
לְכָל-אִישׁ לְפִי יָכָלְתּוּ וַיִּמָּהֲר וַיִּסַּע מִשָּׁם:

**“To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his own ability. Then he went on his journey.”**

### **Five/two/one talents.**

The “talent” here is not a skill in the modern sense, but a very large sum of money (in Greek *τάλαντον*, about 6,000 denarii—many years of wages). In Jewish thought, wealth entrusted to a servant or steward is a metaphor for responsibility.

### **According to his ability.**

The master apportions differently: five, two, and one. Jewish tradition emphasizes that God gives people responsibilities “according to their strength.” Similarly, Pirkei Avot (5:23) says:

“According to the effort is the reward.” (**Pirkei Avot 5:23**)

Matthew’s verse reflects this principle—each servant is judged not against another, but by what he is capable of carrying.

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## **Matthew 25:16**

וַיֵּלֶךְ הָאִישׁ הַלֵּקֶחַ חֲמִשָּׁה כֶּכָּרִים וַיִּסְחֹר  
בָּהֶן וַיַּעַשׂ חֲמִשָּׁה כֶּכָּרִים אֲחֵרוֹת:

**“Immediately he who received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.”**

### **Made another five talents.**

The servant entrusted with five talents immediately goes and invests them. In Jewish thought, the use of entrusted resources—whether wealth, wisdom, or Torah—is measured by productivity and fruitfulness.

“There was a king of flesh and blood who had two servants. He loved them with a complete love. He gave each of them a measure of wheat and a bundle of flax. The wise servant – what did he do? He took the flax and wove it into a tablecloth. He took the wheat and made it into the finest flour. He sifted it, ground it, kneaded it, and baked it [into bread]. Then he arranged it on the table and spread the tablecloth over it. He left it until the time the king should return. The foolish servant did nothing at all. In time,

the king came home and said, “My children, bring me what I gave to you.” One brought out the bread on the table covered with the tablecloth. The other brought out the pile of wheat with the bundle of flax on top. Oh how embarrassing for him! Oh how shameful for him! You must know that the one that brought the table and the bread upon it was preferred. When the Holy Blessed One gave the Torah to Israel, G-d gave it to them as wheat from which to produce fine bread, and as flax from which to produce cloth.” (Seder Eliyahu Zuta, Ch. 2 cited in **On The Table In Front of Us**, Laynie Solomon, Svara.org)

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#### Matthew 25:17

וְכֵן הִלָּךְ שְׁתֵּים גַּם־הוּא הִרְוִיחַ שְׁתֵּים אַחֲרוֹת:

**“In the same way, he also who got the two gained another two.”**

#### **Gained another two.**

This verse emphasizes that the servant with fewer resources (two talents instead of five) also invested and doubled what was given. In Jewish thought, the measure of righteousness is not the size of one's portion, but the faithfulness in handling it.

God does not measure people by the quantity of their gifts but by their faithfulness in using them. Just as the servant with two talents doubled his portion, so too the Torah praises the one who offers little with sincerity as equal to the one who offers much. In this, the parable reflects a deeply Jewish ethic: all are entrusted with different measures, but the standard of judgment is the same—did you use what you had to its fullest?

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#### Matthew 25:18

וְלָקַח הָאֶחָד הַלֵּךְ וַיַּחְפֹּר בְּאֶדְמָה וַיִּטְמֶן אֶת־כֶּסֶף אֲדֹנָיו:

**“But he who received the one went away and dug in the earth, and hid his master's money.”**

### **Hid his master's money.**

To “bury” something precious in the earth suggests neglect or failure to actualize potential. Why would the servant hide the money? Rabbinic thought recognizes that fear can paralyze spiritual growth. Proverbs

“A man’s fears become a trap for him, but he who trusts in HaShem shall be safeguarded.” (**Proverbs 29:25, JPS, Sefaria.org**)

Trust (*bitachon*) is the antidote to fear. This servant, given the least, perhaps feared loss and chose inaction. In Jewish ethics, however, failing to act can itself be sinful; omission is not neutral. As Rabbi Tarfon teaches:

“It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it” (**Avot 2:16**)

The Mishnah (Bava Metzia 3:12) discusses entrusted goods (*pikadon*) and the different levels of responsibility of guardians, distinguishing between one who watches without pay, one who is hired, and one who borrows. This legal background highlights that the parable draws on halakhic categories of *shomrim* (guardians) who are held accountable for what is entrusted to them.

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### **Matthew 25:19**

וְאַחֲרֵי יָמִים רַבִּים בָּא אֲדֹנָי הָעֲבָדִים  
הֵהֱם וַיַּעַשׂ חֶשְׁבֹּן עִמָּהֶם:

**“Now after a long time, the master of those servants came, and reconciled accounts with them.”**

### **After a long time.**

The phrase “after a long time” mirror the Parable above as we have stated. This is a familiar concept in Jewish eschatology—the long wait for divine judgment or redemption.

### **Reconciled accounts with them.**

The image of the master returning to settle accounts resonates with Jewish teachings about the *Yom HaDin* (Day of Judgment). The Mishnah (Avot 3:1) urges:

“Akavia ben Mahalalel said: Keep in mind three things, And you will not come into the hands of sin: Know: From where you came, And to where you are going, And before Whom you will have to give an account and a reckoning. From where did you come? From a putrid drop. And to where are you going? To a place of dust, worms, and maggots. And before Whom will you have to give an account and a reckoning? Before the King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He.” **(Pirkei Avot 3:1, Sefaria.org)**

In the Talmud, when a person dies, they are asked:

“Did you conduct business faithfully? Did you set aside time for Torah? Did you await redemption (yeshuah)?” **(Shabbat 31a)**

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### **Matthew 25:20**

וַיָּגֶשׁ הַלֵּקֶחַ חֲמִשׁ הַכֶּכָּרִים וַיָּבֵא חֲמִשׁ כֶּכָּרִים אֲחֵרוֹת  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי חֲמִשׁ כֶּכָּרִים הִפְקַדְתָּ בְּיָדִי הִנֵּה חֲמִשׁ כֶּכָּרִים  
אֲחֵרוֹת הִרְוַחְתִּי בָהֶן:

**“He who received the five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents. Behold, I have gained another five talents besides them.’”**

### **Brought another five talents.**

The doubling in Matthew suggests abundance as the hallmark of the faithful—an echo of the prophetic vision where the righteous flourish like a fruitful tree (Psalm 1:3).

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### **Matthew 25:21**



וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדֹנָיו הֵטִיבְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲבָד טוֹב וְנֶאֱמָן כִּי  
בְּמַעַט נֶאֱמָן הָיִיתָ וְעַל־הֶרְבֵּה אֶפְקִידְךָ בּוֹא לְשִׂמְחַת  
אֲדֹנֶיךָ:

**“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’”**

**Well done, good and faithful servant.**

The prophet Habakkuk summarized the Torah’s message: “

The righteous shall live by his faithfulness” (**Habakkuk 2:4**)

**Faithful over a few things/many things.**

The master’s words—*“You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much”*—parallel a key rabbinic principle: responsibility grows as one proves faithful. The Mishnah (Avot 4:2) teaches: *“One mitzvah leads to another mitzvah.”* One who fulfills a minor commandment will be enabled to fulfill a greater one.

**Joy of your master.**

The promise of entering the master’s joy is deeply resonant with Jewish eschatological hope. The imagery parallels the rabbinic concept of the *se’udah shel livyatan* (the eschatological banquet of the righteous, Bava Batra 75a), where the faithful share in the divine joy. The Talmud (Ta’anit 31a) describes the world to come as *“a banquet where the righteous sit with crowns on their heads, enjoying the radiance of the Shekhinah.”*

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**Matthew 25:22**

וַיָּגֶשׁ גַּם־לִקְחַת הַכֶּכָּרִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי כֶּכָּרִים  
הַפְּסַדְתָּ בְּיָדִי הִנֵּה כֶּכָּרִים הָרוּחָתִי בָּהֶן:

**“He also who got the two talents came and said, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents. Behold, I have gained another two talents besides them.’”**

**I have gained another two.**

In God's eyes, devotion and faithfulness—not quantity—define merit.

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#### Matthew 25:23

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אֲדֹנָיו הֵטִיבָתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲבָד  
טוֹב וְנֶאֱמָן בְּמִזְעָר נֶאֱמָן הָיִיתָ וְעַל-הֶרְבֵּה אֶפְקִידָךְ  
בּוֹא לְשִׂמְחַת אֲדֹנֶיךָ:

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’”

**Good and Faithful Servant.**

The greatest title is not Apostle, Rabbi, Prophet, Teacher, but good and faithful servant.

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#### Matthew 25:24

וַיִּגַּשׁ גַּם-הַלֵּקֵחַ אֶת-הַכֶּכֶר הָאֶחָת וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי  
יְדַעְתִּידָּ כִּי-אִישׁ קָשָׁה אַתָּה קָצַר בְּאֶשֶׁר לֹא זָרַעְתָּ  
וְכֹנֵס מֵאֶשֶׁר לֹא פָזַרְתָּ:

“He also who had received the one talent came and said, ‘Master, I knew you that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter.’”

**I knew that you are a hard man.**

The servant's words portray his master as a *ish kashēh* (“a hard man”), someone demanding profit beyond what was given. In rabbinic thought, there are frequent debates about God's justice: Is He exacting like a strict judge (*dayan emet*), or compassionate beyond measure (*rachum v'chanun*)? The servant's view reflects a distorted theology, seeing his master only

through severity, similar to how some in Jewish tradition feared God as *midat ha-din* (attribute of strict justice) without balancing it with *midat ha-rachamim* (mercy).

***This is a common issue in the warped theology of the world today.***

**Reaping where you did not sow.**

This accusation echoes a rabbinic challenge: does God demand from man what He never enabled him to do? The Torah insists God is not unjust: “*It is not in heaven... the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it*” (Deut. 30:12–14). Thus, the servant’s complaint portrays a theology of despair: believing God demands the impossible.

**Gathering where you did not scatter.**

The servant views his master through *midat ha-din* alone, accusing him of demanding the impossible, rather than recognizing both justice and mercy.

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**Matthew 25:25**

וְאִירָא וְאֵלֶךְ וְאֶטְמֵן אֶת-כֶּכְרִךְ בְּאֲדָמָה  
וְעַתָּה הֵא-לִי אֲשֶׁר-לִי:

**“I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the earth. Behold, you have what is yours.”**

**I was afraid.**

This servant, unlike the others, approaches his master with fear and resentment. In Jewish tradition, fear of God (*yirat Shamayim*) is essential, but it must be joined with love. This servant exhibits a distorted fear—paralysis rather than reverence. Instead of action, his fear bred excuses and inaction. **He who is afraid of doing, will end up doing nothing.**

**Hid your talent in the earth.**

Rabbinic literature often describes Torah and mitzvot as a treasure entrusted to Israel. To bury that treasure in the ground is a powerful image of neglect. Avot says,

“He who forgets even one word of his learning... Scripture accounts it to him as if he were guilty against his own soul.” (**Pirkei Avot 3:8**)

The servant literally places the entrusted gift in the earth, symbolizing potential unrealized.

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#### Matthew 25:26

וַיַּעַן אֲדָנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָעֶבֶד הָרַע וְהָעֵצָל אֶתָּה יָדַעְתָּ  
כִּי־קָצַר אֲנִי בְּאֶשֶׁר לֹא זָרַעְתִּי וְכִנֹּס מֵאֶשֶׁר לֹא פָזַרְתִּי:

**“But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant. You knew that I reap where I didn’t sow, and gather where I didn’t scatter.’”**

#### **Wicked and slothful.**

The master’s rebuke combines two traits often paired in Jewish literature: wickedness (*rish’ah*) and laziness (*atzlut*).

#### **You knew that I reap/didn’t sow, gather/didn’t scatter.**

The master holds the servant accountable by his own confession. Since the servant claimed to “know” the master’s severity, his inaction is doubly inexcusable. One who admits knowledge but fails to act is considered more culpable than one who sinned in ignorance.

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#### Matthew 25:27

לָכֵן הָיָה עָלֶיךָ לָתֵת אֶת־כֶּסֶּפִּי לְשֹׁלְחָנִים וְאֲנִי בָּבוֹאִי  
הָיִיתִי לִקְחַת אֶת אֲשֶׁר־לִי וְתִרְבִּיתוֹ:

**“You should have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back my own with interest.”**

#### **You should have deposited/with interest.**

At least it would have accomplished *something*, no matter how small.

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Matthew 25:28

עַל-כֵּן שָׂאוּ מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת הַכֶּכֶר וְתִנוּ אֶל-הָאִישׁ  
אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ עָשָׂר הַכֶּכֶר:

“Take away therefore the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents.”

**Take away the talent.**

The Mishnah (Sotah 1:7) teaches that divine justice responds to people in kind. Since the servant failed to use what was entrusted, that very trust is removed from him. By contrast, the diligent servant who invested faithfully is given more. The Talmud says,

// **“The soul that I have placed in you is called *ner*:** “The spirit of man is the lamp [*ner*] of the Lord” (Proverbs 20:27), and **I warned you about matters of the Shabbat lamp. If you fulfill these mitzvot, fine, and if not, then I will take your soul.”**  
(Shabbat 32a, Sefaria.org) //

This echoes Proverbs 9:9: “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser.” In rabbinic thought, knowledge and responsibility grow with faithful use, while neglect leads to loss

**Give it to him with ten.**

Pirkei Avot says,

“Whoever fulfills the Torah in poverty will ultimately fulfill it in wealth; whoever neglects it in wealth will ultimately neglect it in poverty” (**Avot 4:9**)

It continues,

“Faithful is your employer to pay you the reward of your labor; And know that the grant of reward unto the righteous is in the age to come.” (**Pirkei Avot 2:16, Sefaria.org**)

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Matthew 25:29

כִּי מִי אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ-לוֹ יִנָּתֵן לוֹ וַיַּעֲדִיף וּמִי אֲשֶׁר  
אֵין-לוֹ יִקַּח מִמֶּנּוּ גַם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ:

“For to everyone who has will be given, and he will have abundance, but from him who doesn’t have, even that which he has will be taken away.”

To everyone who has will be given.

Him who doesn’t have, it will be taken away.

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Matthew 25:30

וְאֶת-עֶבֶד הַבִּלְיָעַל הַשְּׁלִיכוּ אֶל-הַחֹשֶׁךְ הַחִיצוֹן  
שָׁם תִּהְיֶה הַיִּלְלָה וְחִרְק הַשָּׁנִים:

“Throw out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

**Unprofitable servant.**

The servant is not condemned for theft, nor for rebellion, but for *failure to produce*. In Jewish thought, neglect of divine gifts is itself a grave offense. By burying the entrusted gift, the servant rendered himself “unprofitable” (*beliyal* in Hebrew idiom — worthless), echoing biblical condemnations of those who squander or corrupt what God has given (Deut. 13:14).

**Outer darkness.**

Gehinnom.

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Matthew 25:31

וְהָיָה כִּי יָבֹוא בֶן-הָאָדָם בְּכָבוֹדוֹ וְכָל-הַמַּלְאָכִים  
הַקְּדוּשִׁים עִמּוֹ וְיָשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא כְבוֹדוֹ:

**“But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.”**

**He will sit on the throne of his glory.**

The enthronement of the Son of Man here parallels midrashic descriptions of the Messiah sitting beside God’s throne, a concept debated among the sages (Sanhedrin 38b). While some rabbis resisted any notion of dual thrones, others interpreted Daniel’s “thrones” as one for God and one for Davidic-Messiah.

Pesikta Rabbati says after the Messiah agrees to suffer for the sins of the world,

באותה שעה מונה לו הקב"ה ארבע חיות  
שנושאות את כסאו של הכבוד של משיח

“At that time, the Blessed One appointed four living creatures to bear the throne of the glory of the Messiah.” (Pesikta Rabbat 36, Sefaria.org)

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**Matthew 25:32**

וְנֶאֱסָפוּ לִפְנֵי כָל־הַגּוֹיִם וְהַפָּרִיד בֵּינֵיהֶם כְּאִשׁ  
יִפְרִיד הָרֹעֶה בֵּין הַכֹּבֵּשִׁים וּבֵין הָעֲתוּדִים:

**“Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”**

**All nations will be gathered.**

Jewish prophetic writings often envision a final judgment that encompasses not only Israel but all humanity, as Joel says,

// “I will gather all the nations And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.  
There I will contend with them Over My very own people, Israel, Which they scattered  
among the nations. For they divided My land among themselves...” (Joel 4:2,  
Sefaria.org) //

### Sheep from goats.

Ezekiel says,

“And *as for* you, O My flock, thus says the L-rd G-D: “Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats.” (Ezekiel 34:17, NKJV)

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### Matthew 25:33

וְהָצִיב אֶת-הַכֶּבֶּשִׂים לְיָמִינוֹ וְאֶת הָעֲתוּדִים לְשְׂמָאלוֹ:

“He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.”

### Right hand/Left.

The right side is associated with *chesed* (lovingkindness, mercy), while the left represents *din* (judgment, severity). In Torat HaSod, the sefirotic structure places *Chesed* on the right and *Gevurah* on the left (Zohar I, 16b). To be placed at the right hand, then, symbolizes favor and blessing; to be set on the left indicates strict judgment.

“And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Yeshua in the center.” (John 19:17-28, NKJV)

The Legends of the Jews summarizes the Midrash:

“In the beginning, two thousand years before the heaven and the earth, seven things were created: the Torah written with black fire on white fire, and lying in the lap of God; the Divine Throne, erected in the heaven which later was over the heads of the Hayyot; **Paradise on the right side of God, Hell on the left side**; the Celestial Sanctuary directly in front of God, having a jewel on its altar graven with the Name of the Messiah, and a Voice that cries aloud, “Return, ye children of men.” (Legends of the Jews 1:1, Sefaria.org)

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### Matthew 25:34



אָז יאָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־הַנָּצְבִים לְיָמִינוּ בָּאוּ בְּרוּכֵי אָבִי וְרָשׁוּ  
אֶת־הַמַּלְכוּת הַמוֹכֶנֶה לָכֶם לְמֶן־הַיּוֹסֵד הָעוֹלָם:

**“Then the King will tell those on his right hand, ‘Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’”**

**Prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

The shift in imagery from “Son of Man” (v.31) to “the King” underscores a well-known Jewish theme: the Messiah as God’s appointed ruler, exercising judgment as a king on behalf of Heaven. Rabbinic tradition emphasizes that the final redemption involves the revelation of God’s kingship before all nations:

“And HaShem shall be King over all the earth; in that day HaShem shall be One and His Name One” (**Zechariah 14:9**)

The enthroned “King” here echoes that messianic enthronement.

Israel is repeatedly promised an inheritance — the land (Deut. 4:38), the Torah (Deut. 33:4), and ultimately a share in the *Olam HaBa* (world to come). The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 10:1) begins: “*All Israel have a share [chelek] in the world to come.*”

Notice the phrase “prepared for you” as contrasted with “prepared for the devil and his angels below.”

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**Matthew 25:35**

כִּי רָעֵב הָיִיתִי וַתֵּאֲכִילֵנִי צָמָא הָיִיתִי  
וַתִּשְׁקֵנֵנִי אֶרְחָם הָיִיתִי וַתֵּאֱסָפוּנִי:

**“for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in.”**

### **I was hungry/thirsty/stranger.**

Gemilut chasadim (acts of lovingkindness) are among the highest mitzvot. The Mishnah teaches:

“The world stands upon three things: upon the Torah, upon the service of God, and upon acts of kindness.” (**Pirkei Avot 1:2**)

Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, and welcoming the stranger are paradigmatic expressions of such kindness.

Welcoming the stranger (*ger*) is a major Torah commandment, repeatedly tied to Israel’s own experience in Egypt:

“Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (**Deuteronomy 10:19**)

Rabbinic tradition extols Abraham for his eagerness to welcome guests (Gen. 18), seeing in this a model of righteousness. By including “I was a stranger and you took me in,” the verse underscores a mitzvah central to Jewish ethics: seeing the image of God in the outsider.

Providing food to the hungry is described in Isaiah 58:7 as the very essence of true service to God: *“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the poor who are cast out into your house?”*

Jewish tradition teaches that God identifies with the vulnerable. Proverbs says,

“He that has pity on the poor lends to the HaShem.” (**Proverbs 19:17**)

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**Matthew 25:36**

עָרוֹם וְתַכְסוּנִי חוֹלָה וְתַבְקְרוּנִי  
בְּמִשְׁמֶר הָיִיתִי וְתַבְאוּ אֵלַי:

**“I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.”**

### **Naked/sick/prison.**

The mitzvah of *bikkur cholim* (visiting the sick) is a cornerstone of Jewish ethics. The Talmud (Nedarim 39b) says: *“He who visits the sick takes away one-sixtieth of his illness.”*

// **“What is the meaning of that which is written: “After the Lord your God shall you walk, and Him shall you fear, and His commandments shall you keep, and unto His voice shall you hearken, and Him shall you serve, and unto Him shall you cleave” (Deuteronomy 13:5)? But is it actually possible for a person to follow the Divine Presence? But hasn’t it already been stated: “For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God” (Deuteronomy 4:24), and one cannot approach fire. He explains: Rather, the meaning is that one should follow the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He. He provides several examples. Just as He clothes the naked, as it is written: “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21), so too, should you clothe the naked. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, visits the sick, as it is written with regard to God’s appearing to Abraham following his circumcision: “And the Lord appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre” (Genesis 18:1), so too, should you visit the sick. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, consoles mourners, as it is written: “And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son” (Genesis 25:11), so too, should you console mourners. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, buried the dead, as it is written: “And he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab” (Deuteronomy 34:6), so too, should you bury the dead.” (Sotah 14a, The William Davidson Talmud (Koren-Steinsaltz), Sefaria.org) //**

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**Matthew 25:37**

**וְעָנוּ הַצַּדִּיקִים וַאֲמָרוּ אֲדֹנָינוּ מַתִּי רֵאיוֹנְךָ  
רַעֲב וְנִכְלָלְךָ אוֹ צָמָא וְנִשְׁקָה אוֹתְךָ:**

“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty, and give you a drink?’”

#### When did we see you?

The striking feature of this verse is that the righteous seem *surprised* at the King’s praise. They did not perform acts of kindness with the expectation of recognition or reward, but simply because it was right. This aligns closely with a foundational teaching of Jewish ethics:

“Do not be like servants who serve the master in order to receive a reward, but be like servants who serve the master not for the sake of a reward.” (**Pirkei Avot 1:3**)

The righteous here embody *lishmah* — service “for its own sake.” Their surprise reflects their purity of intention: they were not even aware they were serving the King when they served the needy.

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#### Matthew 25:38

וּמָתִי רָאִינוֹךָ אֶרְחָם וְנָאֲסַף אוֹ עָרֶם וְנָכַס׃

“When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in, or naked, and clothe you?”

#### When?

The rabbis emphasize that “*greater is hospitality to strangers than receiving the Shekhinah*” (Shabbat 127a). This reflects the idea that in serving the stranger, one is in fact serving God Himself — precisely the principle being highlighted in Matthew’s parable.

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#### Matthew 25:39

וּמָתִי רָאִינוֹךָ חוֹלָה אוֹ בַּמִּשְׁמֶר וְנָבֵא אֵלֶיךָ׃

“When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?”

## When?

The Midrash says,

"Open for me the gates of righteousness. In the World to Come, a person is asked 'what was your occupation?' and he replies 'I fed the hungry'. They say to him 'this is the gate of those who fed the hungry, enter into it'. Another person says 'I gave drink to the thirsty' and they say to him 'this is the gate of those who gave drink to the thirsty, enter into it'. Similarly, for clothing the naked, raising orphans, and performing acts of kindness, and for all the commandments. David said 'I have done all of these', therefore it is said 'Open for me the gates of righteousness, I will enter into them'." (**Midrash Tehillim 118:16, Sefaria.org**)

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## Matthew 25:40

וְהַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם אָמֵן אֲמַר אֲנִי לָכֶם  
מֵה־שָׁעַשְׂתֶּם לְאֶחָד מֵאֵלֵּי הַצָּעִירִים הָאֵלֶּה לִּי עֲשִׂיתֶם:

**“The King will answer them, ‘Amein, I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”**

### **Did for the least of these my brothers.**

At the heart of this verse is the teaching that service to others equals service to G-d. In Jewish thought, every human being is created *b'tzelem Elokim* (in the image of G-d, Gen. 1:27). To honor or degrade another person is, in effect, to honor or degrade the Divine image. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) emphasizes this point when it teaches that saving one life is as if one saved an entire world. Matthew 25:40 reflects this principle: care for “the least” is care for the King Himself.

Jewish tradition gives particular honor to the humble, the poor, and the marginalized. Isaiah 57:15 presents God as dwelling “with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” Similarly, the Midrash (Shemot Rabbah 2:5) says: “*Whenever Israel is in exile, the Shekhinah is with them.*” The King’s words affirm that divine presence is bound up with the lowly, and that acts of kindness to them are acts of devotion to God.

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Matthew 25:41

וְאֵז יֹאמַר גַּם אֶל־הַנֶּצְבִּים לְשִׁמְאֵלוֹ לָכוּ מֵעָלַי אֲרוּרִים  
אֶל־אֵשׁ עוֹלָם הַמוֹכֶנֶה לַשָּׁטָן וּלְמַלְאָכָיו:

“Then he will say also to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels’”

**Depart from me you cursed.**

Jewish texts often describe ultimate punishment not in terms of flames alone but as exclusion from the Presence of God. Psalm 51:13 pleads: “*Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your holy spirit from me.*” *Psalm says*

סִירוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָל־פְּעָלֵי אֲוֹן

“Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity...”

(Psalm 6:9, Sefaria.org)

**Eternal fire prepared for the devil/angels.**

Notice this was not prepared for humanity, but for the rebellious angels.

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Matthew 25:42

כִּי רָעֵב הָיִיתִי וְלֹא הָאָכַלְתָּם אוֹתִי צָמָא  
הָיִיתִי וְלֹא הִשְׁקִיתָם אוֹתִי:

“for I was hungry, and you didn’t give me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink,”

**You didn’t give me food/drink.**

The King declares that service to “my brethren” is service to Him. God identifies with His people in their suffering and their joy. The Psalmist says: “*I am with him in trouble*” (Ps. 91:15).

The Zohar expands on this by teaching that the Shekhinah accompanies Israel into exile, so that to serve the downtrodden of Israel is to serve God directly. Thus, this verse frames compassion not as symbolic but as covenantal: the King is mystically united with His people.

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#### Matthew 25:43

אַיִרְחָ הָיִיתִי וְלֹא אֶסְפַּתֶּם אוֹתִי עָרוֹם וְלֹא כִסִּיתֶם  
אוֹתִי חוֹלָה וּבִמְשָׁמֶר וְלֹא בִקְרָתֶם אוֹתִי:

**“I was a stranger, and you didn’t take me in, naked, and you didn’t clothe me, sick, and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.”**

**You didn’t take me in, clothe me, visit me.**

The rebuke here is not for active cruelty but for failure to act. In Jewish law and ethics, omission itself can be a grave transgression. Leviticus says:

“Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.” (**Leviticus 19:16**)

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 73a) interprets this as an obligation to save life when one has the ability to do so. To withhold food and drink from the hungry and thirsty is not neutral passivity but a violation of Torah’s call to responsibility.

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#### Matthew 25:44

וְעָנוּ גַם־הֵם וַאֲמָרוּ אֲדֹנָינוּ מָתִי רָאִינוֹךָ רָעֵב אוֹ צָמָא אוֹ  
אַיִרְחָ אוֹ עָרוֹם אוֹ חוֹלָה אוֹ בִמְשָׁמֶר וְלֹא שָׂרְתָנוּךָ:

**“Then they will also answer, saying, ‘Master, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn’t help you?’”**

**When did we see you?**

In Jewish perspective, withholding food and drink is not simply lack of kindness — it is

covenantal breach. Deuteronomy 15:7–8 commands Israel: “*You shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand against your poor brother; but you shall open your hand wide unto him.*” To ignore hunger is to break solidarity with one’s people and with God, who identifies with the afflicted (Ps. 91:15).

The failure to welcome the stranger directly opposes one of the greatest mitzvot in Jewish life: *hachnasat orchim* (welcoming guests). Abraham is praised in Genesis 18 for rushing to serve strangers, and the rabbis elevated that act above receiving the Divine Presence itself (Shabbat 127a). To deny hospitality is to betray the very ethic Israel is commanded to uphold: “*Love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt*” (Deut. 10:19). Refusal to welcome is a denial of historical memory and covenantal obligation.

**The common thread is not active cruelty but indifference.** In Jewish thought, such indifference is itself wickedness. The prophet Ezekiel condemned Sodom not only for immorality but for failing to care for the poor and needy (Ezek. 16:49). Likewise, the King’s condemnation in Matthew underscores that inaction in the face of suffering is a betrayal of God’s will.

The question reveals their inability to perceive the divine presence in the vulnerable. By contrast, Jewish tradition insists that every person is created *b’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God, Gen. 1:27). To ignore the hungry, the sick, or the imprisoned is to fail to recognize God’s image in them.

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## Matthew 25:45

אָז יַעֲנֶה אֹתָם לֵאמֹר אָמֵן אֶמַּר אֲנִי לָכֶם מֵה־שָּׁלָא  
עֲשִׂיתֶם לְאַחַד מִן־הַצָּעִירִים הָאֵלֶּה גַם־לִי לֹא עֲשִׂיתֶם:

“Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Amein, I tell you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’”

### You did not do.

The King condemns them not by external testimony, but by their own admission of neglect. This echoes a rabbinic principle: “*From your own mouth you are judged*” (*min dinach*



*dinunach*) (Sanhedrin 37a). Just as the servant with the single talent in verse 26 was judged by his own claim, so here the neglectful reveal their guilt by confessing they failed to act. In Jewish thought, speech often testifies to the heart's true condition (Avot 4:13). The verse emphasizes omission: “*you did it not.*” In Jewish ethics, neglecting mitzvot of kindness is not neutral but culpable.

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## Matthew 25:46

וְהָלְכוּ אֵלֶּה לְמַעְצָבַת עוֹלָם וְהַצְדִּיקִים לְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם:

**“These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”**

### **Eternal life.**

The reward of the righteous is described as “life eternal.” This reflects the Jewish concept of Olam Haba (the World to Come). Eternal life is thus not mere survival after death but full participation in God’s presence — “the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, feasting on the radiance of the Shekhinah” (Berakhot 17a).

This duality mirrors Deuteronomy’s blessings and curses, and rabbinic teachings that eternal life is communion with God, while judgment is exclusion from His presence. The verse affirms a core Jewish principle: ultimate destiny flows from one’s faithfulness or neglect of covenantal responsibilities, especially acts of justice and compassion. Daniel says,

“And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” **(Daniel 12:2, NKJV)**

Yeshua says,

“For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which has sent him. . . For as the Father has life in himself; so

hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. And has given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (**John 5:22-29**)