Cheatography

10 Points to Remember in Life Cheat Sheet

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Introduction

The 7th Chapter of Gates of Worship written by Rabeinu Bachya ibn Paquda lists 10 points which people should constantly remember to help them “view” their life events in a proper perspective. Without these viewpoints, one is unable to appreciate God’s kindness and his love. Thus making it impossible for them to love God.

1. Avoid Complacency & Arrogance

People shouldn’t allow God’s gifts to cause them to rebel against Him. Many people, for whom life appears to be “working” out, often become complacent and, sometimes, arrogant. Instead of appreciating God they feel entitled, and believe that they deserve whatever they’ve received. When people become complacent, or arrogant, God may replace their successes with challenges. If that happens, they should realize that they’ve failed this point, and acknowledge that their recent problems are a direct result of their mistakes, and not a lack of God’s caring for them..

2. Constant Verbalization

People should constantly verbalize to themselves God’s kindness to them. People should make themselves comfortable in saying under their breath, when the small things work out for them, “What God did was nice”, and when big things work out for them, “What God did now was great”.

3. Never Belittle God's Kindness

3) People should never resort to belittling, or lessening, the significance of God’s kindness, in order to lessen their responsibility to reciprocate it. It isn’t enough to make sure that people don’t forget what God did for them through constant repetition. People don’t want to feel indebted because:

a. It makes them feel that they’re inferior to others; and

b. It requires them to acknowledge that they now “owe” whoever did them a favor.

Many people find that it’s easier to deny that they received favors, rather than feel beholden to the one who did the favors. If they can’t deny, or they feel guilty when they deny, they may choose to minimize the scale of the favor.

4. Not Crediting Middlemen Above God

People shouldn’t credit the middlemen for the kindness done to them. There are many forms of middlemen who may have helped them, such as employers, relatives, or friends. Other middlemen include the weather, or other “happenings”. Although they may seem random, they’re all God’s tools. People may have succeeded because of tools, such as wealth, humor, or intelligence that were given to them by God. However, they credit themselves for their successes, believing that they “own” their intelligence, sense of humor, etc. They don’t realize that all of those tools are gifts that are “on loan” from God. Focusing on those middlemen can divert them from appreciating that their success came from God..

5. Not Taking Pride in Success

People shouldn’t take pride in their successes. Many people like to believe that without their contributions, their successes wouldn’t have been possible. Peoples’ contributions are meaningless. All that matters is whether, or not, God wants the success to take place. Their Efforts, their responsibilities (due to the curse of "By the Sweat of your brow you shall eat bread") won’t affect the end product, and people should remember that at all times.

6. Don't Assume Effort Guarantees Success

People shouldn’t assume that continued Effort guarantees continued Blessing. God's Blessing, and not people’s Efforts, is what brings success. People should acknowledge that the only “constant” that matters is God’s willingness to give people Blessings. It isn’t their observance of successful business (or any other) practices. God may not “stay constant”, unless people’s positive relationships with Him stay constant. People must remember that even if the relationship stays constant, other factors may decrease their level of Blessings..

7. Do Not Think Less of Others

People shouldn’t think less of those who haven’t had similar successes. People have just acknowledged that success doesn’t depend on how smart they are. Success, or the lack of success, is the result of unknown factors and, therefore, people shouldn’t conclude that they may be be??er than others.

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8. Sincere Service to God

People should sincerely serve God, without the intention of receiving Blessing from Him. This may be a difficult concept to keep in mind. Blessing comes to those who serve God sincerely. Nevertheless, sincerity will require people to forget Blessing, and serve God without any concern for Blessing. This would then increase their Blessing. This may seem to be circular, or contradictory, reasoning, and will create a responsibility for people to “split” their thoughts. They’ll need to be aware that serving God brings Blessing, but they should also be unconcerned with whether the Blessing will be sent to them..

9. Reflect on Those with Less

People should compare themselves to those who have less Blessing, and more Good Deeds, than to those who have the reverse. The nature of people is to try to lessen their responsibilities. They do this by comparing themselves to people who do fewer Good Deeds. Another aspect of people’s nature is to always want more good things. However, they can only expect more without feeling like ingrates if they convince themselves that they have less than others.

10. Blessings May Not Continue

People shouldn’t believe that since they’ve received Blessings until now, God will continue to give it to them, God may have shown His patience with their nonperformance of Good Deeds but that can change. If their Blessing isn’t the result of their actions, it may end at any moment. People must remember that they really don’t know to why they’re receiving Blessings. This should keep people “on edge”, make sure they don’t become complacent, and be vigilant to continually grow.

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