

Translation

He used to say: Everyone in whom the spirit of mankind takes pleasure, the spirit of the Omnipresent takes pleasure. Whereas everyone in whom the spirit of mankind takes no pleasure, the spirit of the Omnipresent takes no pleasure. Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas said: Morning sleep, midday wine, children's talk, and sitting in the meeting-houses of ignorant men remove a man from the world.

Maimonides

With reference to Morning sleep: He said: these matters preclude [the attainment of virtue] and nullify a man's virtue until he departs from the world and he perishes.

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This week's *mishna* tells us a simple but often forgotten principle of Judaism. Our goal is not only to please G-d. It is equally to please man. And if we do not, we fail in one of the major objectives of Judaism. One cannot truly be a servant of G-d if he neglects his obligations towards man. When Israel at the time of the First Temple was hopelessly morally corrupt -- but the people were all the while meticulously performing the Temple service, G-d retorted: "Why do I need your many sacrifices, says the L-rd... For when you come to appear before My Presence [at the Temple], who asked this of your hands, who trample My courtyard?" (Is 1:11). The Temple service was commanded by G-d; it was obligatory. Yet people who saw that as

the sum-total of religious observance were unwanted trespassers in G-d's Temple. What are you doing here? Why waste your time? Is that all you think there is to religion -- incense, ritual and priestly garments? Sacrifices which are supposed to appease an angry G-d -- so you can behave any way you please the rest of the time? Is there no true meaning to Judaism? No self-improvement, character development, growing to become beings in the image of G-d? Ritual was all those people saw in Judaism, and G-d threw it back in their faces. The same sacrifices which G-d ordinarily refers to as a "sweet-smelling savor" became noxious fumes. And the destruction of

the First Temple -- together with all their cockamamie notions of religious devotion -- was not long in following. I believe, however, there is a much deeper message in the words of our *mishna*. R. Chanina stated that we must be pleasing not only to G-d, but to man as well. Our fates must be dependent, to some degree, on our fellow man. If not, we would never realize the

הוא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, כֹּל שְׂרוֹחַ
הַבְּרִיּוֹת נוֹחָה הַיְמָנוּ, רוּחַ
הַמְּקוֹם נוֹחָה הַיְמָנוּ. וְכֹל
שְׂאִין רוּחַ הַבְּרִיּוֹת נוֹחָה
הַיְמָנוּ, אֵין רוּחַ הַמְּקוֹם נוֹחָה
הַיְמָנוּ. רַבִּי דוֹסָא בֶן הֶרְפִּיָּס
אוֹמֵר, שְׁנֵה שֶׁל שְׁחָרִית, וַיֵּין
שֶׁל צְהָרִים, וְשִׁיחַת הַיְלָדִים,
וַיִּשְׁיבַת בֵּיתִי כְּנִסְיוֹת שֶׁל עַמִּי
הָאָרֶץ, מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן
הָעוֹלָם :

potential G-d intends for us. We cannot serve G-d through our own eyes alone. We know that G-d loves us for all our faults and just the way we are - and we might never become anything greater. But with that image in mind, we will never be forced to grow, and more importantly, we will never have to view ourselves from without. If another stubborn and shortsighted human being doesn't like me, I can either forever bear my grudge, or I can begin to introspect, to consider why others don't always see things the way I do. And this is the true challenge of man. We must be at the mercy of our fellows.