

Grace

**God's unlimited, unconditional, unconditioned, and
all-inclusive love for all existence**

Rabbi Rami, author of *Amazing Grace: Living a Grace-Filled Judaism*

Grace is God's *unlimited, unconditional, unconditioned, and all-inclusive love for all creation.*

God is YHVH, is the Happening happening as all happening. There is nothing other than YHVH: *Ain od milvado* (Deuteronomy 4:35):

“There is really nothing in the world other than YHVH...While it may seem that there are other things, everything is really YHVH and the happening of YHVH” (Rabbi Meshullam Feibush Heller, 1742-1794).

To say that YHVH's grace is *unlimited* is to say that there is no one outside its reach. No one: not the sinner, the heretic, the unbeliever, or the differently believing believer. No one. While one faith group or another may claim to have a monopoly on God's grace, this is mere marketing and in no way reflects the truth of God's unlimited grace.

To say that YHWH's grace is *unconditional* is to say that there is nothing you can do to merit grace, earn grace, or even avoid grace. You cannot get closer or further away from grace; you cannot get more or less grace, you can only get all of grace.

To say that YHVH's grace is *unconditioned* is to say that it is not restricted by human notions of good and bad, just and unjust, the desirable and the undesirable. Grace is the fullness of YHVH's infinite love bestowed without filters upon all creation. Job understands this when he says to his wife, "Shall we not accept the good as well as the bad from God?" (Job 2:10). Everything is from God, and grace is this everything.

When we say *love* don't imagine a romantic love or even a contractual love. The love we are talking about isn't *quid pro quo*, "this for that." If we imagine YHVH's love in human terms and expect it to be tender and affectionate, we will be sorely troubled when bad things happen to good people. YHVH is the source of light and dark, good and evil (Isaiah 45:7), and God's love is simply the bestowing of all this upon each of us.

To live with grace is to live with a sense of radical acceptance, resisting nothing that is given, and working with it all to bring yourself closer and closer to the realization of YHVH in, with, and as all things.

YHVH doesn't want anything from us or for us. God doesn't want at all. God lacks nothing, and gives everything. "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity... I have set before you birthing and dying, blessing and cursing. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving YHVH, hearing YHVH, and achieving *devekut* with YHVH; for YHVH is your life and length of days... (Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

YHVH said to Elijah, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before YHVH.”
And behold, YHVH passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before YHVH, *but YHVH was not in the wind*; and after the wind an earthquake, *but YHVH was not in the earthquake*; and after the earthquake a fire, *but YHVH was not in the fire*; and after the fire the fragile voice of silence (*kol demamah dakah*). (I Kings 19:11-13).

YHVH's unlimited, unconditioned, and unconditional love is reality itself. Each instant is an expression of God's grace. You cannot earn it; you do not merit it; you simply receive it. What you do with what you receive is up to you. This is where Judaism as a spiritual practice comes in.

When grace is seen as life, Judaism becomes a way to live life graciously. Mitzvot become tools for working with grace to benefit life and the living.

Take Shabbat for example: living one day a week without grasping, earning, clinging, working, addiction...a day of divine play devoted to singing, love making, storytelling, adoration, and gratitude.

Or Hanukkah: devoting one week
out of the year daring to kindle the
light of truth when you know that
you lack the energy (oil) to do so.

Or Peach: living one week free from the *chumetz*, the sourness that enslaves us and our loved ones to *mitzrayim*, the narrow places of ignorance, arrogance, selfishness, and greed.

In sum, grace is the ten thousand joys and ten thousand sorrows of everyday living. Living gracefully is living as a blessing to all the families of the earth human and otherwise (Genesis 12:3). This is what Judaism can be all about. “If you will it is is no dream” (Theodor Herzl).