



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs David Bondt on the birth of a son. The Sholom Zochor takes place at 2 Links Crescent (off Brooklands Road, Prestwich) and the Bris takes place on Sunday morning in Shul at 9.30am.

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Yisroel Meir Cope on the Bris of their son, Doniel Alexander.

Kiddushim This Shabbos

There will be an anonymously sponsored Kiddush after Davenning in Shul to mark an anonymous event.

Mr & Mrs Dov Brysh invite the Kehilla to a Kiddush this Shabbos which takes place at the home of the Rov and Rebbetzen, 48 Waterpark Road, to celebrate the recent birth and healthy homecoming of their daughter, Ayala Yedida.

Shul Lag B'Omer BBQ

The Shul family Lag B'Omer bbq takes place on Sunday night at 8 New Hall Road (entrance is only via Legh Street opposite Broughton Jewish). Looking forward to seeing everyone there. See back page for details.

Bank Holiday Yom Iyun

The Shul in conjunction with Manchester Mesivta will be holding a Yom Iyun on the coming bank holiday, Monday May 26th. Further details to follow.

T NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Needless Love Rabbi

Yaakov Menken (Torah.org)

"If you will follow My decrees and observe My Commandments and perform them..." [26:3]

The Torah reading this week begins with a blessing, in which G-d promises us that the land of Israel will be fruitful and peaceful. But as Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki) notes, the first sentence appears to have a redundancy. Once we are told to observe the Commandments - which covers all types of Mitzvos, why is it necessary to also specify following the decrees?

His answer is that "following" indicates pursuit [see the Sifsei Chachamim]. He explains that "following the decrees" means becoming deeply involved in Torah studies - pursuing knowledge. Rashi then goes on to explain that the juxtaposition of the two indicates that we should learn in order to properly fulfill our obligations. But I would like to explore an alternative explanation for why these two appear together.

Later in the parsha, we read one of two troubling passages of curses, which G-d promises will befall the people of Israel should they abandon Him. Our Sages tell us that the two passages were realized with the destruction of the two Temples, each of which stood for over 400 years - and they analyzed the behavior of the Jewish nation, and explained in what ways they had abandoned G-d in each case. Concerning the First Temple, they said that Israel had violated the three "cardinal sins," for which one should sooner give up his or her life than betray: idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and murder. Concerning the Second, they explained that Israel was observing the Commandments, but needless hatred brought down the Temple.

Clearly, the promises of blessing given at the beginning of the parsha are the opposite of the curses which follow. The opposite of violating the three cardinal sins is also obvious: observing them! And if one is careful to observe all the Commandments, then he or she will certainly observe these three as well. So thus we understand why G-d promises His blessings if we observe the Commandments - for we see that it was the complete abandonment of them which caused the destruction of the First Temple.

I would argue that each of the two phrases in the first verse is intended to oppose destruction: just as observance of all the Commandments is intended to ensure behavior which is the opposite of violating the three cardinal sins, deep involvement in Torah study is intended to produce the opposite of needless hatred. What is the opposite of needless hatred? Needless love.

In the second chapter of the Sayings of the Fathers, we learn that Rabban Yochanon ben Zakkai, the leading teacher of his time, had five students - and he told them, go out and see what path a person should follow. Rebbe Elazar said that a person should have "a good heart" - and Rebbe Yochanon said that this was the best answer, for it included all the goals expressed by the others.

So Rebbe Yochanon, the leading scholar of his day, indicated that a good heart was the greatest attribute for a person to have. And Hillel also said there, in Chapter 1, "love all creatures, and bring them closer to Torah." The study of Torah is supposed to bring us to a warm heart, overflowing with love. As we study, let us work to bring this to fruition - and the blessings will follow.

Coming Ever Closer

Rabbi Pinchas Avruch (Torah.org)

G-d gave us the mitzvos as a means of emulating His ways and, thereby, becoming closer to Him. When we choose to follow His path, He facilitates the accomplishment of our goal by blessing us with bounty and protecting us from enemy threats. "If you will go in My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them..." (Vayikra 26:3) There is a maxim that the Torah contains no extra words; there are no poetic repetitions for stylistic purposes. Why, then, if observance and performance of commandments are clearly stated, does the Torah need to state, "go in My statutes"? What does it add that the others did

The Week Ahead

פרשת בחקתי

Early Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.00pm / not before 7.25pm
2nd Mincha / Candle Lighting	7.45pm / 8.04 - 8.10pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.05am
Mincha	2.00pm / 6.00pm / 9.07pm
Rov's Mishnayos Shiur	following
Motzei Shabbos	10.12pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv all week	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.15pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	7.20pm

Inviting the Kehilla to join us for our annual family



לג בעומר
BBQ



18th May / 8.00pm

Suggested Donation: £5/head £20/family
8 New Hall Road - Entrance only via Legh Street

not?
Rashi explains that the "going" connotes toiling in Torah study. The exercise of delving into the depths of insight and progressing to more sophisticated levels of understanding is akin to a journey.

The Talmud (Tractate Berachos 28b) relates the concept that we toil and the nations of the world toil: we toil and receive remuneration while the nations of the world toil and go uncompensated. But is that so? Does not a gentile tailor receive payment for his garment or a shoemaker get paid for his shoes?

The Chofetz Chaim expounds that were a tailor to toil and labor but not produce a garment, there would be not compensation for his efforts; the shoemaker can sweat as he struggles with the leather, but without a pair of shoes, his efforts will go unrewarded. They are not paid for their toil and effort; they are paid for results.

Not so one who toils in the profundity of Torah. The command is to expend genuine effort, to toil and work and delve and try. Success in understanding is the desired goal, but not a requisite result. No matter the intensity of insight at the end of the exercise, the compensation is received for the effort spent.

But why is this so? Why does G-d need to be so free spending in doling out reward for the mitzvah of toiling in Torah?

Our Sages teach (Pirkei Avos 4:2) that the reward for a mitzvah is the opportunity to fulfill another mitzvah. We must understand that the fulfillment of mitzvos is not about accruing "brownie points" but rather rising another rung on the ladder in our journey to elevate ourselves in coming closer to G-d. Thus, we comprehend the maxim, "G-d wanted to benefit the Jewish nation, therefore, He increased for them Torah and mitzvos." Mitzvos and Torah learning are the opportunity for growth and connection with the Divine, a chance to further forge a loving relationship with G-d. When a seven-year-old draws a picture of pretty flowers "for Mommy", with little hearts dotting the background, the mother does not even see that the work is obviously that of a seven-year-old. The child put all of his heart and soul into that picture and that expression of love from the child fosters the endearment of the mother. When we toil to understand the Divine wisdom of Torah, no matter how complete or "pretty" the result, the relationship is built in the effort, for which we are rewarded with more opportunities to grow ever closer to our Father in heaven.

Intrinsic Rewards

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

What do we really gain after the struggles of a lifetime? Even under the best of circumstances, life is but a bubbling brew of joy and grief, of success and failure, of hope and despair. We accumulate wealth and possessions, and we leave them all behind. So where are life's rewards? Are the brief experiences of pride and pleasure, the occasional highs, sufficient compensation for all the effort we invest in life?

Judaism believes they do not even come close. According to our Sages, this world is a "vestibule to the next." It is a world of illusion in which we have the opportunity to prepare for "the world of truth," the eternal world of the spirit, to gather merit which will last us for all eternity. True reward and punishment cannot be measured by material standards.

If so, ask the commentators, why doesn't the Torah tell us specifically about the world to come? For example, in this week's portion, we read about the rewards for fulfilling the mitzvos of the Torah and the consequences of failing to do so. What are the rewards? Bountiful crops, secure borders, prosperity. What are the consequences? A litany of horrendous calamities, pestilence and mayhem. There is no mention of the rewards and consequences in the next world, no hint of the eternal bliss that waits those who fulfill the commandments of the Torah. Why not?

Most people think of reward in terms of receiving something external to ourselves. We win a major contest, and we receive a new car. We turn in a criminal to the police, and we receive a check. But these rewards are basically inferior. Since they derive from external sources, they remain external to us. They become our possessions but remain separate from us. They do not improve who and what we are, just what we have.

Spiritual reward is of a completely different nature. When we are rewarded in the next world we will not be given an object or some other transferable entity which we will take into our possession to use as an external stimulus to pleasure. Spiritual reward transforms us from

within. It makes us higher and more refined, more capable of coming close to the Almighty, and that in itself is the greatest reward.

"The reward for a mitzvah," the Sages say, "is the mitzvah." What does this mean? The sacred texts find a correlation between the word mitzvah and the word tzavsa, which means connection. The performance of a mitzvah, they explain, connects you directly to the Almighty. The more mitzvos you do the more closely connected you become. This connection itself is the highest form of reward to which we could possibly aspire, and its achievement is entirely within our power. Conversely, anything we do to weaken this connection is its own greatest punishment.

The Torah, therefore, does not have to tell us about the rewards and consequences awaiting us in the next world. They are not external things Hashem promises to do. They are implicit in the word mitzvah, and they come to us of their own accord. But here the Torah is telling us that, in addition to the spiritual implications to the mitzvos themselves, we will also receive material rewards or punishment, a minor external stimulus to steer us in the right direction.

A professor in a medical school offered a reward the student who would score the highest mark on a test in an exceedingly difficult subject. The students were motivated by the challenge, and they studied very hard. Two weeks later, the test was administered. One student got a perfect score, and he was awarded the prize.

The next day, the professor presented him with a gift-wrapped package. The student thanked the principal profusely.

"Why are you thanking me so much?" asked the professor. "You haven't even unwrapped the package. How do you know you'll like it?"

"Oh, the package is insignificant," said the student. "Your challenge led me to learn much I might not have otherwise known. It has given me priceless insight that will improve my ability to help others for the rest of my life. Thank you."

In our own lives, material goals and rewards can easily distract us, and we may find that we are expending inordinate amounts of physical and emotional energy in that direction. But life is ephemeral, and those rewards will not accompany us when we are done. Only the rewards of the spirit enrich us in a meaningful and lasting way.