



KINDER TORAH

T"01



PARASHAS EIKEV

Dedicated in Loving Memory of Chaya Rochel (Karen) Portnoy o'h

ALL OF THE MITZVAH

“We have an interesting homework assignment today, Abba.”

“What is it, Chaim?”

“The Rebbe told us to make a list of mitzvot that we have never or rarely fulfilled.”

“Many mitzvot, such as those relating to the Beis HaMikdash and the King of Israel are impossible to perform nowadays, Chaim.”

“Right. He was referring only to mitzvot that we have the opportunity to fulfill.

Let’s see how many I can come up with. I have never lent money to a poor person. I have not been careful to pay a worker on time. Many times, I pass by a lost object and do not try to return it to the owner. I do not own a field or a vineyard, so I cannot fulfill the mitzvot of *peah*, *leket*, *shichicha*, *ollilos*, *shmitta*, or *kelayim*. I do not own livestock, so I cannot perform the mitzvot of giving the *zroah*, *lechayim*, *keiva*, *reisheis hagez*, and *petter chamor* to the Kohen. I have never participated in the writing of a Sefer Torah. I have never sent a mother bird away from her children. I have been lax in loving my fellow Jews, not embarrassing them, bearing grudges, taking revenge, speaking improperly, and loving converts.”

“How can you do those mitzvot which require livestock or a field?”

“Sometimes a group of people will pool their efforts to acquire these things from a farmer in order to fulfill the mitzvot. I could have joined this group. Also, there are enough Sifrei Torah being written. I can try to participate by making a contribution. I can surely be more enthusiastic about the mitzvot of treating my fellow Jews properly.”

“Okay, Chaim. You have come up with a very good list. Let’s see what your Rebbe has to say about it.”

The next day, Chaim returns home from school.

“Abba, the Rebbe told us the reason for the list of rare mitzvot. He directed us to the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh on chapter eight, verse one. The Torah states, ‘All the mitzvah that I command you today you shall observe to perform, so that you may live and increase.’ The word mitzvah is written in the singular form. Which mitzvah is the Torah referring to?”

“That is an interesting question.”

“The answer is even more interesting, Abba. The Ohr HaChaim explains that there is a strong tendency in all of us to relax in fulfilling all of the mitzvot. We may be very careful and motivated to fulfill a particular mitzvah or group of mitzvot. However, there is a danger that we may lose the focus on the other mitzvot and neglect them partially or totally. We may become satisfied with the mitzvot that we perform, not looking to broaden our horizons and fulfill more of them. Even Lomdei Torah, who learn about the mitzvot and fulfill most of

them, can be caught in the trap of being lax about the rest. This will ultimately cause them suffering and embarrassment. Therefore the Novi warns us, ‘The mitzvot are all like one! We are commanded to fulfill each and every one of them that is within our grasp! Do not be lax with any of them!’”

“You give me such *chizuk*, Chaim.”

“Thank you, Abba. The Rebbe then cited the well-known fact from our Sages that the 613 mitzvot correspond to the 613 limbs and sinews in the body. If 612 of a person’s limbs were perfectly healthy, and one of them was infected and pained him terribly, he would cry out ‘Oy va voy!’ Would anyone dare say to him, ‘Why are you complaining? You have 612 healthy limbs!’ Of course not. One sick limb affects the entire body. No matter how healthy the rest of the body is, it cannot make up for the sick part. So too, the mitzvot correspond to the limbs. One neglected mitzvah causes pain to the entire *neshama* (soul). No matter how many ‘healthy’ mitzvot a person has, they cannot replace the one that is missing or largely neglected. That is the meaning of the verse, ‘All the mitzvah’ – every one of them

without exception, ‘that I command you today’ – positive mitzvot, ‘you shall observe to perform’ – negative mitzvot, ‘so that you may live and increase’ – the life force that keeps that limb alive is supplied by the mitzvah.”

“Chaim; you and your Rebbe have inspired me to put a renewed effort into doing all of the mitzvot within my power.”

Kinderlach . . .

Do you remember the last time that you had an infected cut on your finger, an ingrown toenail, or a sore throat? You were so uncomfortable that you could hardly do anything. It is amazing how one little part of your body can affect everything. The same is true about mitzvot. Although many of them cannot be performed nowadays, the ones that we do fulfill give life to our *neshamos*. We need every one of them to live! Imagine the pain of having a sick one missing limb when you get to Olam Haba. Oy va voy! Therefore, *kinderlach*, do every mitzvah that comes your way. Look for more and more mitzvot. Search out even the ones that are difficult to fulfill. Do ‘all the mitzvot’. Why? ‘So that you may live.’

TRUST THE BOSS

“You look like you are working pretty hard, Sam.”

“I am. This is a good job, and I want to do well.”

“Are you getting paid well?”

“B’ezras Hashem.”

“Why do you say that? Have you gotten paid yet?”

“No, not yet.”

“Are you sure that you will get paid?”

“Sure. I received a contract that states that I will get paid at the end of the job.”

“You place your faith in that contract?”

“Of course.”

“And it will be ‘eikev’ your listening to these laws (of the Torah) and guarding them, and performing them; and Hashem will keep (His part) of the covenant which He made and swore to your forefathers” (Devarim 7:12). The word *eikev* has many interpretations. The Baal HaTurim translates it as “at the end”. The previous verse (at the end of Parashas Voeschanan) states that we must perform the mitzvot today. The Torah follows up by informing us that the reward will not come until the end of a person’s life.

Kinderlach . . .

We can be as happy and trusting as Sam. We will receive a big, big reward for all of the hard work that we have put into Hashem’s mitzvot. When? At the end of the job. Some people might ask, “Are you sure that you will get paid?” To this we answer, “We have nothing to worry about. We have the contract to prove it. The Torah.”

Parasha Questions:

- Why did Hashem test us in the Midbar for 40 years? (8:2)
- What will happen if we forget Hashem? (8:19,20)
- What did Moshe do on Har Sinai for forty days after he broke the luchot? (9:18,19)

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