

Shoftim 2015

1.

Going beyond the letter of the law

Nachlas Tzvi page 488

“Righteousness, righteousness (tzedek) shall you pursue, so that you will live and possess the Land that Hashem your God gives you” (16, 20)

"צדק צדק תרדף למען תחיה וירשת את הארץ אשר יקוק אלהיך נתן לך."

Why does this pasuk use the word ‘righteousness’ twice? Why does this pasuk use the words ‘to pursue’ while the pasuk doesn’t say regarding other mitzvos ‘to pursue’? How does the statement of Rebbe Yaakov (Kiddushin (39b)) who says that ‘reward for performing mitzvos is not given in this world (שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא)’ coincide with this pasuk that states ‘you will live and possess the land etc.’? Furthermore, the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (perik one) says ‘don’t be like servants who are serving their master to receive reward, rather serve without the intent of receiving reward (אל תהיו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב על מנת לקבל פרס אלא הוו כעבדים המשמשין את הרב שלא על (מנת לקבל פרס).’ The Nachlas Tzvi explains that **if one does a mitzvah when he is not obligated, it is permissible for him to receive reward in this world.** A proof to this concept is a Gemara in Berachos (28a). The Gemara relates that when Rebbe Zara was weak and unable to learn, he would go to the Beis Medrash of Rebbe Noson bar Tuvia and sit outside. Rebbe Zera said ‘when the talmiday chachamim enter and leave the Beis Medrash, I will stand up to honor them and receive reward.’ רבי זירא כי הוה חליש מגירסיה הוה אזיל וייתיב אפתחא דבי רבי נתן בר טובי, אמר כי חלפי רבנן (אז איקום מקמייהו ואקבל אגרא). Rebbe Zara was exempt from learning and performing other mitzvos due to his sickness. He nevertheless demonstrated and bestowed honor towards talmiday chachamim. He went out of his way, and above and beyond the Halacha, in order to perform a mitzvah. We should give additional tzedakah, even though we have already given the obligatory amount, ten percent. With this we are able to answer all of the aforementioned questions. The redundancy of ‘righteousness’ alludes to this mitzvah being performed in a manner that is beyond the letter of the law. Similarly, the pasuk uses the word “to pursue” in order to indicate that the mitzvah being performed is being done more than the obligation. In this manner it is permissible to perform mitzvos in order to receive reward.

2.

A groom is similar to a king

Beyeshurin Melech pages 398-401

“You shall surely set over yourself a king whom Hashem, Your God, shall choose etc.” (17, 15)

"שום תשים עליך מלך אשר יבחר יקוק אלהיך בו מקרב אחיך תשים עליך מלך לא תוכל לתת עליך איש נכרי אשר לא אחיך הוא."

The Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer (perek 16) states that a groom is similar to a king (חתן דומה למלך). What is the explanation of this Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer? The Gemara (Yevamos (63b) and

Yerushalmi, mesechas Bekurim (perek gimal Halacha gimal)) **relates that one who gets married is forgiven for all of his sins.** (הנושא אשה מוחלין לו על כל עונותיו.) (As a side point, it is interesting to point out that this is one of the reasons grooms fast on the day of their wedding. The Beis Shmuel (even haezer siman 61 sif katan vav) explains that since grooms are forgiven for their sins, it is considered a day of forgiveness for them similar to Yom Kippur, they therefore must fast.) This is only true regarding one who gets married for the sake of heaven, in order to have children who will serve Hashem properly. Since eventually all people die, we must have children in order to perpetuate humanity. When one contemplates this concept he will repent. This idea is typically thought of prior to one getting married. This is precisely why all of a grooms sins, are forgiven.

This answer can perhaps be refuted though. The Mishna in Avos (perek daled) relates that **every time we perform a mitzvah an angel is created.** The Gemara in Berachos (57a) relates that every Jew is filled with mitzvos like the seeds in a pomegranate. This being so, **every single Jew has created an army of angels. The groom is like a king because the groom has an army similar to a king.** However, the opposite is also true as well. Whenever one sins he creates a bad angel. This sinner therefore loses the state of being called a king. These bad angels battle against him and cause him to lose his status as a king. However, when one gets married for the sake of heaven as mentioned above, then all of the bad angels will depart from him. He will just be left with the good angels. This will result in his sins being forgiven. He will therefore be called a king.

The simple reason why one who gets married is forgiven for all of his sins, explains Reb Yosi Webberman is a chason becomes a new person. Newborns are sinless. A proof to this concept that the chason and kala are like newborns can be deduced from the nusach (text) of the sheva berachos itself. The last beracha of the sheva berachos is 'Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, Who created joy and gladness, groom and bride etc.'

Let's relate another important message based on the aforementioned Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer. **Grooms need to act like kings. Just as the pasuk instructs a king to be humble, so too grooms must be humble.**

We say at brisim 'כשם שנכנס לברית כן יכנס לתורה, ולחופה, ולמעשים טובים.' / 'just as he has entered into the covenant, so may he enter into the study of Torah, the marriage canopy, and the performance of deeds that are good.' Why is this a good beracha? Children aren't smart. We are essentially saying to get married and don't be smart. Is this really the state we should be in when we get married? Children have no haughtiness. We are requesting that when this child becomes older and gets married, he will be humble, just as he was humble when he was circumcised.

Let's relate another way how grooms are similar to kings. The Otzros HaTorah (marriage pages 317-320) relates eighteen ways how grooms are similar to kings. Additionally, brides are similar to queens. This concept is derived from the Gemara in Kesubos (17a). The Gemara relates that king Agrefus allowed a bride to pass in front of him when they met at a split in the road. **A married couple must build their house in a kingly manner. Kings are involved only with the most important and major issues that arise. This is precisely how brides and grooms should act. They should focus on the most significant matters. When one focuses on crucial matters they don't have time to quarrel with one another. When they do this then they will surely live happy lives.**