

SOLDIERS IN G-D'S ARMY

by Rabbi Dovid Green

Parshas Ki Savo is a parsha which deserves careful study, as it is relevant in so many ways to our generation. In reality, nothing needs to be written. The verses themselves are incredibly powerful. That having been said, we'll address an issue which we can all gain from in our own lives.

"On this day Hashem your G-d is commanding you to do these laws and judgments, and you shall guard and do them with all of your heart, and all of your soul" (Deuteronomy 26:17). Rashi, the medieval French Commentary on the Torah, quotes this verse, and remarks as follows. "On this day Hashem your G-d is commanding you." "Every day they (the commandments) should be in your eyes like new as if you were commanded regarding them today."

This can be understood by way of analogy. A soldier was called in to see his commanding officer. The officer sent him to see the General. The General sent him to see the King. All the while this plain soldier doesn't know what to expect. He is brought before the King, and he is charged with a special mission. He is told that it is a great distinction to be chosen for such a job, and he is the one person chosen from many thousands. Great honor and recognition will be in store for him upon successful completion of his appointment. He is thrilled with his good fortune, and he gets thoroughly involved in the process of doing his job. Each day he awakens with vigor, remembering the privilege bestowed to him.

This is what Rashi is conveying to us. We should keep in mind Who the King is Who is commanding us, and the great distinction we have in being chosen to fulfill His commandments. Every morning we awake thanking G-d for giving us another day, and thereby showing us His confidence in us that we will succeed. Each day is new, never experienced before in history, and never to be experienced again. Each day has its special purpose which we hope to live up to. A new day is a station in the unfolding historical process where we stop to accomplish our unique purpose in life, and bring ourselves closer to our goals.

In the Talmudic Tractate "Chapters of the Fathers", the great leader and teacher, Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai, recounts the praises of his students. (I always say that in itself shows greatness.) Rabbi Elazar Son of Arach is described as a flowing spring. The nature of a spring as opposed to a cistern holding water, is that the water in the spring is fresh, and constantly replenishing itself. Rabbi Elazar Son of Arach was a constant source of newness and freshness. He viewed his every moment as a privilege. He gave every day of his life his fullest efforts.

During the Biblical times of the sage Daniel, the scriptures tell us that Daniel was living through a period of mourning. He lived with the Jewish exile in Persia, and he heard of the terrible situation Jerusalem found itself in. He was distraught, and it showed on his face. The king, to whom he was an advisor, noticed this, and accused Daniel of being dissatisfied with the kingdom of Persia with its present king. Joy is a true barometer of a persons feelings. Performing commandments with joy is our way of showing G-d that we are happy to be in His employment; that we view the commandments as a privilege, not as a burden.

The student of Torah views himself as a soldier charged by G-d to faithfully perform his duties. He is honored to be given such important work to accomplish. He does not become bored, or overburdened with the work, as he maintains his freshness and perspective of who he is, and Who he is working for. He lives his days with joy in the knowledge that he was singled out and given this great opportunity. His sense of self-worth is highly enhanced, being that he is trusted with very important and responsible work. May we merit to be among such people.

Good Shabbos!

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