

# NO DISAPPOINTMENTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Menken

*"Then Moshe separated three cities, on the opposite side of the Jordan River, towards the east." [Dev. 1:12-13, 15]*

In the previous verses, *Moshe Rabbeinu* [our teacher Moses] described the unique connection created between G-d and the Jewish people when G-d took us out from Egypt with open miracles, and then spoke directly to us. As predicted so accurately in the Torah, no other community has ever claimed that an entire group of millions of people heard G-d directly and saw "signs and wonders". This, says Moshe, will inspire us to return to G-d and His Mitzvos even when we have wandered geographically and spiritually, and tells us that doing Mitzvos will be good for us and our future generations.

But what is the connection between this, and the selection of Cities of Refuge in the next verse? The Torah says *"then Moshe separated..."* as if there were some sort of logical connection -- and yet one is not immediately apparent.

The Ramban, Nachmanides, writes that immediately following the exhortation to do Mitzvos for the rewards they offer, Moshe says *"let us do the Mitzvah which has come to our hands"* even though the Cities of Refuge would only take effect after the Nation conquered the Land and separated three more cities within it. The Kli Yakar elaborates: even though one cannot bring the Mitzvah to its completion, one should do whatever is possible nonetheless. This is true even if the benefit is entirely "for future generations" -- like a man who plants an Esrog tree (Esrogim are used during the holiday of Sukkos) knowing that only his son will be able to use the fruit. Doing a Mitzvah is its own reward; one doesn't need to see the benefit, or even be able to complete the Mitzvah, in order to be rewarded for beginning the act.

By saying this, the Kli Yakar seems to extend a well-known concept concerning the study of Torah -- that the study is an end in itself, and its own reward.

I had lunch this week with two lawyers in New York, and one described how he had written a 50-page brief concerning a known ambiguity in the law, which was relevant to a recent case. The Court of Appeals, however, decided in his favor without discussing or making a ruling about the ambiguity --thus never evaluating his lengthy argument.

So he decided to at least put the matter up for discussion by presenting his discussion in a law journal. He spent many additional hours editing and digesting his article, and was finally prepared to

submit it for publication -- when Congress recognized the ambiguity and promptly changed the law.

With Torah study, there can be no such disappointment. All Torah study is valuable and rewarding! And the Kli Yakar tells us to approach all Mitzvos the same way: knowing that the practice of Mitzvos is rewarding, whether or not we can see the benefit or even complete the Mitzvah.

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Good Shabbos,