

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Ki Teitzei, 5781
(Vol. 49)



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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shgalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
 ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shgalov

DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shgalov

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by
Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Teitzay

THE FINAL PAYMENT

A laborer must be paid on time for his work. Why has not G-d paid the Jewish people for their Divine service throughout the centuries? One gets paid only when the job is finished. The job of the Jewish people isn't done until we finish the Divinely ordained task of making the world a dwelling place for G-dliness. The task requires the combined effort of all the Jewish people. When the task is completed, all the Jewish people will be paid, at the time of the resurrection of the dead. The abundance of material benefits promised throughout the Torah is not payment for the mitzvos. It will only facilitate mitzvah observance and Torah study. There is a difference between a worker and a servant. The Jewish people have characteristics of both. The revelation of G-dliness is itself our compensation.

This week's Torah reading, *Teitzay*, contains the commandment to pay a worker on time. "You must give him his wage on the day it is due and not let the sun set with him waiting for it." Our Sages tell us that G-d Himself fulfills His commandments, doing, as it were, what He tells Israel to do. Frequently the Sages compare the Divine service of the Jewish people – their Torah learning and performance of mitzvos – to the service a worker performs for an employer. The reward for the mitzvos is the "payment." G-d – the Employer, so to speak – compensates His laborers – the Jewish people.

Therefore, as soon as a Jew performs a mitzvah – completes a job for his Employer – G-d should immediately pay him for his "labor." After all, G-d Himself decrees, "You must give him his wage on the day it is due" and not wait until the next morning. Why, then, does G-d delay payment, waiting until "tomorrow" – until the

World to Come – to reward the Jewish people? For, as the rabbis note, “Today is the time to perform the mitzvot, and tomorrow is the time to receive payment.” Even a complete *tzaddik* – a perfectly righteous individual – must wait.

Perhaps G-d is not obligated to pay an individual until after he has left this world, and the spiritual task has been completed – just as an employer does not have to pay someone until the work is done. All the days of our lives we are indentured to G-d’s service. We must serve G-d every moment, always fulfilling His commandments. And since G-d assigns each Jew his or her own particular spiritual task, how can we say we deserve a reward in this world? Every mitzvah is not an isolated act, but just part of the assignment. It takes a lifetime to achieve one’s spiritual purpose. That being the case, payment comes due only when the job is done. The reward comes when our life’s work is finished.

This answer works if the World to Come is a wholly spiritual existence. When a person leaves this world, completes his mission, he enters into Paradise immediately to receive his reward. But Judaism teaches us there will be a resurrection of the dead – a time of renewed physical existence. That will be the time of payment, when we will experience a **physical** reward for the mitzvot we have done. Jews have faithfully observed the commandments over the many centuries. All the Jews throughout history have been waiting for our generation, the time of Moshiach and the era of Redemption. Surely payment for our “accounts receivable” has been delayed an extraordinarily long time.

Again, we can ask: Since a laborer must be paid **on the same day** he earns his wages, why has G-d delayed paying the Jewish people the reward for their mitzvot? Where is Moshiach?

The answer lies in the very purpose of creation. G-d desired to have a dwelling place below, here in the physical world, the lowest

realm of existence. But the Divine Light can illuminate this world only through the actions and Divine service of the Jewish people during the time of exile. Every mitzvah done by a Jew purifies himself and his environment, drawing down Divine Light into the world. Thus, it is only the combined actions of **all** Jews throughout **all** the generations that purifies the **entire** world. The job isn't done until we finish the Divinely ordained task of making the world a dwelling place for G-d.

This state of perfection will occur during the days of Moshiach. More precisely, we will achieve the goal when the Resurrection of the Dead occurs, which follows Redemption. Therefore, the combined effort of **all** Jews throughout all the generations constitutes one task performed collectively. One payment is due to all the workers, that is, all the Jewish people, at the time the job is finished, namely, the Resurrection.

This explains why payment for our Torah and mitzvos will come in the future – the very near future – in the days of Moshiach and the Resurrection. Payment is due to the Jewish people collectively, as one entity. We are not rewarded immediately for our **individual** efforts to make the world a dwelling place for G-dliness. We are rewarded only together with all the Jewish people, when past, present and future unite.

Now, the Torah frequently assures us that we will receive an abundance of material benefits as a reward for observing the mitzvos. But such physical advantages are not the final payment for the mitzvos. Rather, G-d guarantees that if we observe His commandments **with joy**, then He will remove all hindrances and obstacles to our observance. That is the ultimate reward. To help facilitate observance of the mitzvos in the most beautiful manner possible, G-d will provide plenitude and prosperity. The abundance of wealth and creature comforts exists to strengthen our ability to learn Torah.

That being the case, the abundance of material benefits promised throughout the Torah is **not** payment for the mitzvos. It is a secondary matter, resulting from the kindness of G-d to the Jews because they fulfill His commands with joy. The goodness we receive on the physical level actually enables us to achieve more and work harder in our Divine service of learning Torah and doing mitzvos.

Of course, when the Sages compare payment for the mitzvos with an employer paying his workers, they are not limiting that “payment” to the World to Come. The material benefits – the manifold “creature comforts” – we are to receive in this world are also part of our compensation.

Perhaps a better analogy is to compare our Divine service to the laws concerning a Hebrew servant. A Jew becomes a slave for financial reasons: because of poverty he sells himself or because of theft the Jewish court assigns him to a master to pay off his debt. For whichever reason a Jew enters into servitude to another Jew, the master has certain obligations. He must feed, clothe and house his fellow Jew, who is working for him. Similarly, when the Jewish people are involved in the Divine service of transforming this world into a dwelling place for G-dliness, G-d Himself, our Master, must provide for our physical needs.

But this obligation of the master (or employer) is not payment for services rendered, so to speak, but part of the cost of “doing business.” Indeed, a servant doesn’t get paid altogether. So, is our Divine service that of workers or servants?

In truth, our Divine service is partially that of a worker, partially that of a servant, but mainly that of a **partner**. Thus the reward for a mitzvah is not separated or detached from mitzvah. It’s not that we do a mitzvah and get something else, like wealth, in return. Rather, the reward is part of the Divine service itself. G-d handed

over His world to the Jews so that, through our Divine service, our observance of the mitzvos, the inherent G-dliness within creation would be openly revealed. The revelation of G-dliness is itself our compensation.

The result is that G-d takes pleasure, as it were, from having a dwelling place in the physical world, and the Jewish people take pleasure from the revelation of G-dliness that occurs as a result of their efforts – their Divine service. Indeed, the Jewish people become a partner in the actual work of creation, for their actions – their mitzvos – cause a revelation of G-dliness in the world itself, making it a fit and proper dwelling place for the Divine Presence.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 29, pp. 138-144)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mrs. Chana (Carrie) bas Reb Meir ע"ה Greenberg
Passed away on 9 Sivan, 5781
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