

# KOLLEL AGUDATH ACHIM

Rosh Kollel

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## “Do You Feel Deprived?”

In this parasha we read, 22:31, “**וְשִׁמַּרְתֶּם מִצְוֹתַי וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם**” “You shall observe my Mitzvot and do them”. It seems very unclear, to define a difference between “observing” Mitzvot and “doing” Mitzvot? Rashi notes this difficulty and interprets the word “U’Shemartem” as referring to the studying of Mitzvot while VaAsitem refers to actually doing the Mitzvot.

I would like to suggest that what I heard from Rav Soloveitchik, namely, that the expression of U’Shemartem is reminiscent of an expression used by Yaakov Avinu, upon hearing about the dreams of his son Yosef, (B’reishit 37:11) “**V’Aviv Shamar Et HaDavar**”, “his father, guarded the dreams of Yosef in his mind”. Yaakov put these visions into the back of his mind—waiting to see how and when they might unfold. So the word U’shemartem can be interpreted as anticipation and longing-for. Therefore, our pasuk is teaching that it is not sufficient for a person to merely do the Mitzvot but the person must be anxiously awaiting the opportunity to do the Mitzvot enthusiastically.

This coming May 15, 2022, Sunday will be Pesach Sheni. The Torah relates (Bamidbar 9:1-14), The people who were T’Mayim, spiritually impure, who could not bring the required Korban Pesach on the fourteenth of Nisan, were therefore, officially exempt from this Mitzvah. They could have said, “thank you Moshe, so now we have one less Mitzvah to worry about”. But no, they complained and said “Why should we be deprived of doing this great Mitzvah (9:7)?” Imagine, they felt deprived because they were excused and exempt from doing a Mitzvah! A friend, whose father was an old time Chasid from Europe, told me that he once came to visit his father on the first night of Sukkot. It was pouring rain. His father was standing by the window looking at the sky, almost on the verge of tears: “When would it stop raining so I could fulfill the Mitzvah of Sukkah?” Other people take the approach, since it is raining and we are exempt from Sukkah, (on the first night) then we merely recite Kiddush, have minimum required measure of bread, and the rest of the S’Udah we enjoy in the comfort of our dining room..That is called “doing the Mitzvah”. But the Chasid was observing the “U’shematem” the anticipation and the joy of the Mitzvah, and from this he was now deprived.

Interestingly enough, we do not have to look further than our own wonderful Jewish women. The Torah exempts them from Mitzvot Aseh Sheh’hazman Grama, from those positive Mitzvot that are time limited, that includes Shofar, Sukkah, Lulav, S’firat Ha’Omer, and yet, women have a strong desire of performing these Mitzvot. Even if a woman is physically unable to come to the synagogue on Rosh HaShana, which certainly excuses her from the Mitzvah, she feels terribly deprived and disappointed if she cannot hear the sounds of the Shofar on that day; a Mitzvah from she is really exempt from performing. Many congregations, who are sensitive to the women’s needs and enthusiasm for the Mitzvah will provide a Ba’al Tokei’a, a man to blow the Shofar for such men or women confined to the home or in hospitals. I

cannot however, think of any Mitzvah that a man is exempt from performing and yet he does it because he feels deprived. Can you?

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim,

Rabbi Aharon Ziegler.

***\*NOTE: FROM NOW UNTIL TISHA B'AV-PEOPLE LIVING IN ISRAEL WILL BE ONE PARASHA AHEAD OF THOSE LIVING IN CHUTZ L'ARETZ. I WILL SEND BOTH PARSHI'OT EVERY WEEK.***