



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Mitzva Doubles

For Yom Kippur (and many other mitzva-topics) there are pairs of mitzvot that are basically two sides of the same coin.

We are forbidden by Torah Law to eat or drink on Yom Kippur. That is one of the 365 prohibitions of the Torah. A mitzvat LO TAASEH.

We are commanded by Torah Law to fast on Yom Kippur. Sounds the same. Sounds redundant. But it is one of the 248 positive commandments of the Torah. A mitzvat ASEI.

Additionally - and similarly, we are forbidden to do any MELACHA on Yom Kippur (same MELACHOT as are forbidden on Shabbat). LO TAASEH.

And, we are commanded to abstain from MELACHA on Yom Kippur. Sounds the same. Sounds redundant. Yet, it too is one of the Torah's 248 Mitzvot ASEI, a positive commandment.

What's the story?

The following is not the only explanation for the Double Mitzvot - but it is one that shows us the way to a very important idea.

Generally speaking, when we refrain from violating a LO TAASEH, it is usually motivated by YIR'AT HASHEM - YIR'AT SHAMAYIM, YIR'AT HACHEIT, YIR'AT HA-ONESH. Fear of G-d, fear of heaven, fear of sinning, fear of punishment.

YIR'A is important, but there is a higher level of motivation - AHAVA. AHAVAT HASHEM, AHAVAT TORAH Love of G-d, Love of Torah, Love of Mitzvot. AHAVA is the motive for doing a Mitzvat ASEI.

When I don't eat or drink on Yom Kippur, I'm fasting. And when I fast, I'm not eating or drinking. But my motives are different in each case.

Fasting on Yom Kippur is NOT just because G-d said not to. It is also a way of getting closer to G-d than we usually do. It is a way of expressing one's commitment to Torah and Mitzvot and to appreciate all that HaShem does for us - as individuals and as a Nation. Fasting on Yom Kippur is an expression of our AHAVA for HKBH and thanking Him for His desire that we do T'shuva, rather than be punished for misdeeds. And this is where the element of SIMCHA comes into our observance of YK. It is a joy mixed with many other feelings, but it's there. And right after YK we go full steam ahead into Zman Simchatinu and its precious mitzvot. **PTDT**

G'MAR VACHATIMA TOVA