



If you do it with joy, it will last

The Rambam opens Sefer Zmanim with the *possuk*: “נָחֵלְתִי עֲדֹתֶיךָ לְעוֹלָם, כִּי שִׂשׁוֹן לִבִּי הָיָה—I inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart.”

In the Rambam’s own words, Sefer Zmanim deals specifically with those mitzvos and *halachos* that are limited to certain times of the year, for example Shabbos which is once a week, Pesach in the month of Nissan, and so on.

It is therefore perplexing that the Rambam opens this *sefer* with a *possuk* that refers to mitzvos that are “forever”—nonstop. This term would better fit mitzvos such as believing in Hashem and loving Hashem which are constant *mitzvos* and are forever; not just

because they reoccur consistently, but that they are constant obligations with no interruptions.

The answer is:

Precisely because the laws in Sefer Mada and Sefer Ahava deal with mitzvos that one must perform continuously, the Rambam need not cite a *possuk* to show that these are eternal concepts: The *halachos* themselves indicate that.

In Sefer Zmanim, however, which deals with mitzvos that do not apply all the time but only at certain intervals, it is necessary to ensure that one not think that these mitzvos are in any way only periodical and not constant.

At the very least, it is necessary to ensure that even when learning these time-sensitive *halachos* at a different time of the year, one does not learn the laws with less enthusiasm and vitality, since they technically apply only at certain times.

The Rambam therefore begins specifically this *sefer* with the *possuk*, “I have inherited Your testimonies forever.” The mitzvos in this *sefer* are *eidus*—“testimonies”—testifying to certain events. Shabbos is a testimony that Hashem created the world; Pesach is a testimony (and remembrance) to the exodus from Mitzrayim; Sukkos is a testimony that Hashem had the Yidden dwell in



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נדפס ע"י
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
לפאלם ביטש גארדענס, פלארידא
הרה"ת ר' דוד צבי וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
ויגלר

Sukkos when they left Mitzrayim. Similarly, the other mitzvos in this book are testimonies to events that took place at certain times, and are therefore kept only at stated times.

Nevertheless, these mitzvos must be kept in the manner of, “I have inherited Your testimonies **forever.**” These mitzvos are part of the Torah, and the “Torah which Moshe commanded us is the inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov” throughout all generations—forever.

They are also “forever,” by means of their influence that affects the whole year. Shabbos is one example: The commandment, “Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it” is an obligation that

applies to all the days of the week. Pesach too: One must remember the *yetzias Mitzrayim* every day of the year.

The rest of the *possuk* then explains the reason for this: “For they are the rejoicing of my heart.” When the mitzvah of Shabbos, for example, is done with “the rejoicing of my heart,” then, although Shabbos is actually kept only one day a week, it nevertheless transcends time for the person. A person lives with the idea of Shabbos on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, until the next Shabbos, when one rises yet higher in his appreciation of Shabbos. The same goes for the meaning of

all the other festivals in the *sefer* of Zmanim—because they are the “rejoicing of my heart,” they permeate the rest of the year until the celebration of that festival next year.

The Rambam begins the *sefer* of Zmanim with this verse as an introduction to the study of the whole book. Although one will be learning about mitzvos that are fulfilled only at certain times, they are nevertheless, in the category of “I have inherited Your testimonies forever” — for “they are the rejoicing of my heart.”

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