

Summer Series: The Fruit of the Spirit
#5 Goodness

B'ha'alot'cha in your making go up

Torah: Num. 8:1-12:16
Haftarah: Zech. 2:10(14)-4:7
Brit Chadashah: I Cor. 10:6-13 (L); Rev. 11:1-19 (F)

From the overheads you will get a clearer idea of what this series is all about. We are sort of like spiritual generators with two kinds of output: works of the flesh or fruit of the spirit. The three categories illustrate three aspects of this energy production and how it is applied into our lives.

First the power pack, which fills our hearts and lives in one of two ways: with the (5) or the (3). Then our connection which fills our lives one of two ways: with the (7) or the (5). All of this is also managed in one of two ways: with the (4) or with the (1).

We are limited creatures whose bodies absorb nutrients and whose energy output is a limited quantity. What kind of spiritual energy is your life generating – works or fruit? The works consume our true inner spirit and can turn us into spiritual zombies, incapable of any true or real spirituality. The fruit cause our inner lives to flourish and our outer lives to shine, whether we are on the mountain top, or through the deepest valley.

Today I want to talk to you about goodness, the second of the (5) connections of our power pack to our lives. Goodness is what we do, kindness is what we wish. The difference between the two words is arbitrary and it is my distinction to help us to see what kind of participation we need to have as vessels and as conduits for the L-rd.

As the L-rd turned towards Jerusalem at the end of His earthly ministry, He and His disciples were passing through a Samaritan village which refused them lodging. James and John wanted to call down fire on the village and Yeshua rebuked them, because we are not of that spirit (Luke 9:51-56).

In Matthew's Gospel, the L-rd tells us to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us and who persecute us (Matt. 5:43-48).

Why? Because this is our calling. Whatever we do as a voluntary, intentional expression of our faith, needs to be to do good. What does good mean. John the cousin of our L-rd gave some examples in Luke's Gospel (3:7-14). Don't cheat, don't steal, share, meet practical needs to the best of our ability. Sometimes that means to give, sometimes that also means to receive.

Whatever you do, do as unto the L-rd. Let me move onto my conclusion with one extreme, simple example from the judgment of the nations in Matthew's Gospel (25:31-46).

So what does that mean for each of us and for all of us at B'nai Chayim? I have shared with you in the past that there are five witnesses to the existence of G-d: the cosmos, conscience, culture, circumstance and the canon. As much as our resources from the cosmos allows us, according to our conscience and in ways which are meaningful for our culture, and as circumstances allow and the canon permits, let us to good unto all, and especially to the household of faith (Gal. 6:9,10).

Amen. Let's pray.