

The Rabbi's Corner



PAYING IN FULL

The Talmud tells us that the traditional obligation to study the Torah is not like a debt which a man can discharge by paying a fixed amount and be done with it; it is an abiding duty from which no one has authority to release himself.

That is why, every year, we repeat the cycle of Torah reading at the Sabbath and festival services; that is why in every country of the world where Jews live they study — or at least read — two chapters of Bible every day, keeping intellectual step by observing a special cycle. And for much the same reason, there are many Jews who study, in addition, two chapters of Mishnah and a page of the Gemara, daily.

They are fulfilling the commandment to study, thereby heeding the rabbinic warning that "the ignorant man does not abhor evil, nor can the unlearned be truly pious." They understand that one cannot "postpone" study to the days when he has unlimited leisure, because by then the ability to learn may be lost, and the inclination may be, at the very least, somewhat weak.

Study of Judaism is its own reward. With an increasing understanding of who we were in history comes an increased appreciation for who we are; with a growing understanding of what Judaism has been comes a deeper insight into what it is today, and what it will be like tomorrow. And this combination of "who" and "what" makes for a fuller and more meaningful life, both as Jews and as Americans.

On another page in this issue of the Bulletin you will find an announcement of this year's Adult Education Committee lecture series, as well as the announcement of a new study course. In addition to these, last year's seminar in "Basic Judaism" will be resumed (dates to be announced soon), the Sunday morning Brotherhood Series will carry forward its course in Bible, (beginning Sunday, October 10th) and the Couples Club will resume its informal discussion meetings at members' homes.

There is something here for each and every member of the Temple Beth El family — and for any member of the community at large who may be interested. Remember — "the obligation to study is not like a debt which a man can discharge by paying a fixed amount and be done with it." One must keep "paying." May we help you pay your next installments?

Rabbi Mordecai S. Chertoff

From Hassidic Lore

Gold and silver become purified through fire. If you feel no sense of improvement after your prayer, you are either made of base metal or your prayer was cold.

(Koretzer Rabbi)

If one feels hunger while he is praying, it is a certain sign that he has not prayed properly. The true supplicant cannot feel any material needs when he communes with his Creator.

(Medzbozer Rabbi)

We read in the Neilah Service of Yom Kippur the following phrase: "Many are the wants of Thy people and their knowledge is short." This means: "Because their knowledge is short, their wants are therefore many."

(Gerer Rabbi)

The sins which man commits — those are not his great crime. Temptation is powerful and his strength is slight. The great crime of man is that he can turn at every moment, and does not do so. (Rabbi Bunam)

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