

explicit statement about this in the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, there are a number of places where there are hints to it. One of these references is in this week's Sedra². Let us try to understand this in context.

The Sedra contains the second paragraph of the Shema³ which is said several times daily, in the Morning and Evening prayers and before going to sleep. Here we read the words of Moses to the Jewish people just prior to their entry into the Land of Israel after 40 years in the desert. Moses tells them that they should keep G-d's commands "...In order that your days, and the days of your children, shall be lengthened upon the Land which G-d swore to your Forefathers to give to them, like the days of the heavens on the earth" (v.21).

Rashi, the famous commentator on the Torah, quotes the Talmud⁴ which points out that this is a hint to the concept of the Revival of the Dead. For the text states that G-d swore to give the Land to the Forefathers themselves. It emphasises this by adding the words "to give to them", an extra two words in Hebrew.

How could the Forefathers, meaning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, inherit the Land *themselves* if they have already passed away? In their lifetime, the Land belonged to the Canaanites. Surely G-d will keep His promise! The Talmud explains that this promise will be fulfilled in the time of the Revival of the Dead. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob themselves, together with Moses who never entered the Land, will all be there, together with other great leaders and eventually the rest of the Jewish people: everyone, including the millions who tragically died in the 20th century.

When on Shabbat afternoon in the Summer months we study Ethics of the Fathers, it is customary to preface each chapter with a short introduction: "All of Israel will have a share in the World to Come..."⁵ The commentaries explain that this refers to the time of the Revival of the Dead, which all of us, without exception, shall share.

Then we will all be together, and the Glory of G-d will be revealed in this finite world.

1. See Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2, Ezek. Ch.37, also II Kings 13:21. 2. Deuteronomy 7:12 - 11:25. 3. Deut. 11:13-21. 4. Sanhedrin 90b. 5. Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1.

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SEDRA EKEV

WITH G-D'S HELP

Benjy was feeling on top of the world. Life was really good. He was having a fantastic time that summer. He was now at an overnight summer camp, where he was having a really good time swimming and playing all kinds of sports, doing arts and crafts, and going on outings to various exciting places. They also spent some time every day, praying the morning, afternoon and evening services, and studying Torah, which Benjy loved because their leader let him ask as many questions as he wanted.

Now it was coming to the end of the week, and Benjy was secretly looking forward to the weekly awards ceremony, when campers who had distinguished themselves that week would get prizes. He was confident he would win something. After all, he was the best at sports in his group, although he had not *actually* come first in many of the races, and he was also the one who always sang the loudest - and he always knew the answers to questions at learning time. Yes, David, his leader, must have recommended him.

But, when the long awaited night came, Benjy got a shock. When the list of prize-winners was read out, he wasn't among them. Instead, a boy who barely knew how to throw a ball was the winner.

It wasn't fair. He wandered away from everybody else, and sat disconsolately with his head in his hands. Wallowing in his misery, he hardly heard the footsteps, but when he looked up, there was David, his camp leader.

“Hello Benjy,” he said “Where have you been? We all miss you.”

Benjy scowled. David looked at him in surprise. What was up with Benjy? He was usually so cheerful. Slowly, he got the whole story out of him.

“You know, Benjy,” he said when the little boy had finished, “remember when we were learning Sedra today, we read how Moses warned the Jewish people that they shouldn't think that everything they achieve was all from themselves?”

Benjy nodded. David continued: “In reality, we depend upon G-d for everything. All the things we have - our brains, skills, looks, money, talents – are all given to us by G-d. The Manna which miraculously appeared on the ground for the Jews to eat was obviously straight from G-d, and so too is everything else we have. Even when somebody makes a great effort to do well at something, they still need G-d's help in order to succeed.”

David paused. This was going to be the difficult part...

“Now you, Benjy, have a lot of talent - but I think you have to remember that G-d is really in charge. You did very well in many of the activities - but when all the leaders added up all the scores, and then worked out who should get prizes, other boys did better than you. That's how Hashem wanted it to be!”

Benjy thought about this. At first, he felt angry. Then he began thinking to himself, ‘So I shouldn't really be thinking I'm so great - I should remember where it all comes from, I suppose?’

He looked up at David and said, with a sigh, “I hear what you say. Don't worry about me, I'm okay. Of course, with G-d's help!”

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