

What is the reward for obedience?

By Yochanan Zaqantov

What is the reward for keeping Yehovah's mitzvot (commandments), chuqqim (statues) mish'patim (judgements) and his torah? Is it something promised for the future or is it now? Can we know what it is from his Tanakh? We are going to look at the words used in the Tanakh for obey, reward, and blessing. These will give us an understanding of what is promised, what will be rewarded and when it will happen.

Because this is a study of several Hebrew words dealing with this topic we will start with obey, then blessing and then reward. We will examine a lot of verses in context to understand what is being said.

First lets look at the Hebrew word translated as obey. This is shamar, which is also used for similar words as guard, observe and keep. The reference number for this word is 8104 (shin-mem-resh). It is a verb and found on pages 1300-1302 in the NEHC and starting on page 1036 in the BDB.

Shemot/Exodus 15:26

26 He said: **If you will hearken, yes, hearken to the voice (im-shamo'a tish'ma leqol**

אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמַע לְקוֹל) of Yehovah Eloheykha, and what is right in his eyes

will do (ta'oseh תַּעֲשֶׂה), giving-ear to **his commandments (mitz'votayv מִצְוֹתָיו)**

and keeping (veshamar'ta וְשָׁמַרְתָּ) all his laws (kol-chuqqayv כָּל-חֻקָּיו): all the sicknesses which I have imposed upon Egypt, I will not impose upon you; for I am Yehovah, your healer.

Here is we obey (keep) he will not bring the diseases of Egypt on us.

Shemot/Exodus 19:5 (4-7)

4 You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to me. 5 So now, **if you will hearken, yes, hearken to my voice (im-**

shamo'a tish'me'u beqoli אִם-שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ בְקוֹלִי) and keep (ushemar'tam

וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם) my covenant (et-beriytiy אֶת-בְּרִיתִי), you shall be to me a special-treasure from among all peoples. Indeed, all the earth is mine, 6 but you, you shall be to me a **kingdom of priests, a holy nation (mam'lekheth kohanim vegoly qadosh**

(מִמְלַכֶּת כְּהֹנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ). These are the words that you are to speak to the Children of Israel.

7 Moshe came, and had the elders of the people called, and set before them these words, with which Yehovah had commanded him.

If they were to obey Yehovah, he would make them a set-apart nation and a kingdom of priests.

Shemot/Exodus 31:14,16 (12-17)

12 Now YHWH said to Moshe:

13 And you, speak to the Children of Israel, saying: However: my Sabbaths you are to keep! For it is a sign between me and you, throughout your generations, to know that I,

Yehovah, hallow you. 14 **You are to keep (ushemar'tem וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם)** the Sabbath, for it is holiness for you, whoever profanes it is to be put-to-death, yes, death! For whoever makes work on it- that person is to be cut off from among his kinspeople. 15 For six days is work to be made, but on the seventh day (is) Sabbath, Sabbath-ceasing, holiness for YHWH, whoever makes work on the Sabbath day is to be put-to-death, yes, death! 16

The Children of Israel are **to keep (vesham'ru וְשָׁמְרוּ)** the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath-observance throughout their generations as a covenant for the ages; 17 between me and the Children of Israel a sign it is, for the ages, for in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he ceased and paused-for-breath. 18 Now he gave to Moshe when he had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai the two tablets of Testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.

Here we see that not keeping the Shabbat meant death. Thus, keeping it meant life.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 18:5, 26, 30 (1-5, 26-30)

1 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying:

2 Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: I am Yehovah Eloheykhem!

3 What is done in the land of Egypt, wherein you were settled, you are not to do; what is done in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you, you are not to do; **by their laws**

you are not to walk (ubachuqqoteyhem lo telekhu וּבַחֻקֹּתֵיהֶם לֹא תֵלְכוּ).

Lev. 18:4 **My regulations you are to do (et-mish'patay ta'oseh אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי**

וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ ve'et-chuqqtav tish'meru), my laws are to keep

walking by them, I am Yehovah Eloheykhem! 5 **You are to keep my laws (ushemartem**

et-chuqqotay וְשִׁמְרֵתֶם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי) and my regulations (ve'et-mish'patay וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי), which when a human does them, he lives by (means of) them, I am Yehovah!

26 **But you are to keep** (ushemar'tem וְשִׁמְרֵתֶם), yourselves, my laws and my regulations, not doing any of these abominations, the native and the sojourner that sojourns in your midst, 27 for all these abominations did the men of the land do that were before you, and the land became-tamei- 28 that the land not vomit you out for your making it tamei as it vomited out the nation that was before you. 29 For whoever does any of these abominable-things- cut off shall be those persons that do (them) from amid their kinspeople! 30 **You are to keep my charge** (ushemar'tem et-mish'mar'tiy וְשִׁמְרֵתֶם אֶת־מִשְׁמָרְתִּי) by not doing (any of) the abominable practices that were done before you, that you not become-tamei through them, I am Yehovah Eloheykhem!

If you don't keep his statues and judgments then you are cut off from his people. Doing these things makes the land tamei. Doing the chuqqotayv of the Canaanites or Egyptians was not to be done. Thus, nothing that Yisrael were taught were carryovers from their previous stays. If one keeps Yehovah's chuqqotay and mish'patay meant one would live through them. Thus, not being destroyed prematurely.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 4:6,40 (1-8, 37-40)

1 And now, O Israel, give heed to the laws (hachuqim) and rules (hamish'patim) that I am instructing you to observe, so that **you may live** (tichayu וְתַחְיֶוּ) to enter and occupy the land that Yehovah, the Elohim of your fathers, is giving you. 2 You shall not add anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, but keep the commandments (mitzvot) of Yehovah Eloheykha that I enjoin upon you. 3 You saw with your own eyes what Yehovah did in the matter of Baal-peor, that Yehovah Eloheykha **wiped out** (hish'miydo הִשְׁמִידוּ) from among you every person who followed Baal-peor; 4 while you, who held fast to Yehovah Eloheykha, are all **alive** (chayim חַיִּים) today.

Here we see that those who went after Baal-peor died yet those who clinged to Yehovah lived. This is a good example of life and death in his commands. They were to live to go and possess the land, which Yehovah promised.

5 See, I have imparted to you laws and rules, as Yehovah my Elohim has commanded me, for you to abide by in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. 6 **Observe**

(**ushemar'tem וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם**) them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, “Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people.” 7 For what great nation is there that has a elohim so close at hand as is Yehovah Eloheynu whenever we call upon Him? 8 Or what great nation has laws (chuqim) and rules (mish'patim) as perfect (tzadiqim) as all this Teaching (hatorah) that I set before you this day?

37 And because He loved your fathers, He chose their heirs after them; He Himself, in His great might, led you out of Egypt, 38 to drive from your path nations greater and more populous than you, to take you into their land and assign it to you as a heritage, as is still the case. 39 Know therefore this day and keep in mind that Yehovah alone is Elohim in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. 40 **Observe (veshamar'ta**

וְשָׁמַרְתָּ) His laws (chuqayv) and commandments (mitzvotayv), which I enjoin upon you this day, that it may go well with you and your children after you, and that **you may**

long remain (ta'ariykh yamim – prolong days תִּאָרִיךְ יָמֶיךָ) in the land that

Yehovah Eloheykha is assigning to you **for all time (kal-hayamim כָּל-הַיָּמִים)**.

Here we see that the keeping of his commandments was to have the effect of prolonging their days on the land. It was also to make them an example to the nations around them. In the future, we will be that example yet.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 5:29-30 (others 32-33)

29 **You are to take-care (ushamar'tem וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם)** to observe as Yehovah Eloheykhem has commanded you; you are not to turn-aside to the right or to the left.

30 In all the way that Yehovah your God has commanded you, you are to walk, in order that **you may remain-alive (tich'yun תִּחְיֶינָהּ)**, and it may be-well with you, **and you**

may prolong (your) days (veha'orakh'tem yamim וְהֵאָרַכְתֶּם יָמֵיכֶם) in the land that you are possessing.

Again the idea of then keeping the commandments was to prolong their time upon the land. Not to give life eternal later.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 6:1-3

1 Now this is the commandment, the laws and the regulations that Yehovah Eloheykhem has commanded (me) to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing into to possess, 2 in order that you may hold Yehovah Eloheykha in awe, by keeping all his laws and his commandments that I command you, **you, and your child, and your child's child, all the days of your life** (atah ubinekha uben-binekha kol yamey chayeykha

וְכָל יְמֵי חַיֵּיךָ וְבָנֶיךָ וּבְנֵי-בָנֶיךָ כָּל יְמֵי חַיֵּיךָ); and in order that your days may be prolonged (ul'ma'an ya'orikhun yamekha וְלִמְעַן יֵאָרְכּוּ יְמֵיךָ). 3 You are to

hearken, O Israel, **and are to take-care** (veshamar'ta וְשָׁמַרְתָּ) to observe (them), that it may go-well with you, that you may become exceedingly many, as Yehovah, Elohey of your fathers promised to you- (in) a land flowing with milk and honey.

Keep the commandments meant prolonged days of living on the land not life forever. Long endure or prolonging of days is much different that life forever.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 7:11-12 (11-15)

11 **Therefore, observe** (veshamar'ta וְשָׁמַרְתָּ) faithfully the Instruction (hamitzvah)—the laws (vaet hachuqqim) and the rules (ve'et hamish'patim)—with which I charge you today. 12 And if you do obey these rules (hamish'patim) and **observe** (ushemar'tem וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם) them carefully, Yehovah Eloheykha **will maintain**

(veshamar וְשָׁמַר) faithfully for you the covenant (habariyt vaet hachesed – covenant and mercy) that He made on oath with your fathers: 13 **He will favor you** (va'ohev'kha – love 157 וְאָהַבְךָ) and **bless you** (uverakh'kha וְיִבְרַכְךָ) and **multiply you**

(vehir'bekha וְהִרְבֶּכָה); **He will bless** (uberakh וְיִבְרַךְ) the issue of your womb and the produce of your soil, your new grain and wine and oil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock, in the land that He swore to your fathers to assign to you. 14

You shall be blessed (barukh בָּרוּךְ) above all other peoples: there shall be no sterile male or female among you or among your livestock. 15 Yehovah will ward off from you all sickness; He will not bring upon you any of the dreadful diseases of Egypt, about which you know, but will inflict them upon all your enemies.

Here are some of the blessings that we would as a people would experience if we kept our part of the covenant. It also says that Yehovah will obey/keep the covenant and mercy given to our fathers. If we do these things we gain his love, his blessing, his

multiplying of us. He will also bless all that we put our hands to produce. He will also turn away those diseases of the Egyptians.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 8:6 (6-9)

6 **Therefore keep** (vashamar'ta וְשָׁמַרְתָּ) the commandments (mitzvot) of Yehovah Eloheykha: walk (lalekhet לָלַכְתָּ) in His ways (bid'rakhayv בְּדַרְכָיו) and revere Him (ul'yir'ah oto וְלִירְאָה אֹתוֹ).

7 For Yehovah Eloheykha is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; 9 a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper.

Keeping his commands means to walk in his ways and fear/be in awe of him. He was and will in the future give us a good land.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 11: 8 (8-15)

8 Keep, therefore (ushemar'tem וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם), all the Instruction (et-kal-hamitz'vah אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה) that I enjoin upon you today, so that you may have the strength to enter and take possession of the land that you are about to cross into and possess, 9 **and that you may long endure** (ul'ma'an ta'arikhu yamim וְלִמְעַן תִּאָרִיכוּ יָמִים) upon the soil that Yehovah swore to your fathers to assign to them and to their heirs, a land flowing with milk and honey.

10 For the land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come. There the grain you sowed had to be watered by your own labors, like a vegetable garden; 11 but the land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. 12 It is a land which Yehovah Eloheykha looks after, on which Yehovah Eloheykha always keeps His eye, from year's beginning to year's end.

13 **If, then, you obey the commandments** (im-shamo'a tish'meu el-mitz'votay im-shamo'a תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי) that I enjoin upon you this day, **loving**

Yehovah Eloheykha and serving Him with all your heart and soul, 14 I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. You shall gather in your new grain and wine and oil—15 I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle—and thus you shall eat your fill.

Though blessings are not identified here by the Hebrew word the acts will be blessings to us as a people. The Land is the focus of the blessings, which are the rewards for obedience.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:16 (16-19)

16 Yehovah Eloheykha commands you this day to observe these laws (hachuqqim) and rules (hamish'patim); **observe (veshamar'ta וְשָׁמַרְתָּ)** them faithfully with all your heart and soul. 17 You have affirmed this day that Yehovah is Eloheykha, that you will walk (valalekhet) in His ways (bid'rakhayv), **that you will observe (velish'mar**

וְלִשְׁמַר) His laws (chuqqayv) and commandments (umitz'votayv) and rules (umish'patayv), and that you will obey Him (velish'ma baqolu – to listen to his voice). 18 And Yehovah has affirmed this day that you are, as He promised you, His treasured people who shall observe (valish'mar) all His commandments (kal-mitz'vot), 19 and that He will set you, in fame and renown and glory, high above all the nations that He has made; and that you shall be, as He promised, a holy people to Yehovah Eloheykha.

If we keep/obey his commandments, statues, and judgments we will walk in his ways and love his with our whole being and listen to his voice. He in return his precious set apart people and we will have fame and glory above all nations of the earth. There is nothing here about living eternally. Promises for now and the immediate life.

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 2:3-4

3 **Keep (veshamar'ta וְשָׁמַרְתָּ) the charge (et-mish'meret אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת)** of Yehovah Eloheykha, walking (lalekhet) in His ways (bid'rakhayv) **and following (lish'mor)** His laws (chuqqatayv), His commandments (mitz'votayv), His rules (umish;patayv), and His admonitions (va'edutayv - testimony) as recorded (bakatuv – in writing) in the Teaching (batorat in teachings) of Moses, in order that you may succeed in whatever you undertake and wherever you turn. 4 Then Yehovah will fulfill the promise that He made concerning me: 'If your descendants are **scrupulous in their conduct**

(yish'maru וְיִשְׁמְרוּ), and walk before Me faithfully, with all their heart and soul, your line on the throne of Israel shall never end!" [not shall be cut off from to you man from the throne Yisrael.]

So Here Melekh David is instructing his son Shlomo (Solomon) what he must do to be successful in all he does. That is to keep/obey his teachings, commandments, statutes, and judgments. He has to walk in them and follow them which is the way of Yehovah. The man (descendant of David) being on the throne of Yisrael is conditional just like the land and all other agreements based upon continued obedience.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 11:22 (22-28)

22 **If, then, you faithfully keep (im-shamor תִּשְׁמְרוּן אִם-שָׁמַר)** all this Instruction (hamitz' vah) that I command you, loving Yehovah Eloheykha, walking in all His ways, and holding fast to Him, 23 Yehovah will **dislodge before you all these nations:** you will dispossess nations greater and more numerous than you. 24 **Every spot on which your foot treads shall be yours; your territory shall extend from the wilderness to the Lebanon and from the River—the Euphrates—to the Western Sea.** 25 No man shall stand up to you: Yehovah Eloheykha will put the dread and the fear of you over the whole land in which you set foot, as He promised you.

26 See, this day I set before you **blessing (barakhah בְּרָכָה)** and curse (uqalalah

וּקְלָלָה): 27 blessing (habarakhah), if you obey (tish'ma'u - listen) the commandments of Yehovah Eloheykha that I enjoin upon you this day; 28 and curse, if you do not obey (lo tish'ma'u – not listen) the commandments of Yehovah Eloheykha, but turn away from the path (haderekh) that I enjoin upon you this day and follow other elohims, whom you have not experienced.

In 22 we see that tish'marun is a form of shamar. We are to keep/obey his mitzvah. For doing this we will possess the land. The setting of the blessing and cursing is based upon listening to them the word here is shema. But we are told this is his path or way and turning from it causes the curse. This blessing and cursing is also contingent and what we keep of his commanded words or not.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 28:1-14

1 Now, if you obey (tish'ma listen) Yehovah Eloheykha, to observe (lishamar keep/obey) faithfully all His commandments (mitz'otayv) which I enjoin upon you this day, Yehovah Eloheykha will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 All these **blessings (habarakhoh)** shall come upon you and take effect, if you will but heed (tish'ma listen) the word of Yehovah Eloheykha:

3 **Blessed (barukh)** shall you be in the city **and blessed (ubarukh)** shall you be in the country.

4 **Blessed (barukh)** shall be the issue of your womb, the produce of your soil, and the offspring of your cattle, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.

5 **Blessed (barukh)** shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

6 **Blessed (barukh)** shall you be in your comings **and blessed (ubarukh)** shall you be in your goings.

7 Yehovah will put to rout before you the enemies who attack you; they will march out against you by a single road, but flee from you by many roads. 8 Yehovah will ordain **blessings (barakhah)** for you upon your barns and upon all your undertakings: He will **bless you (uverukh'kha)** in the land that Yehovah Eloheykha is giving you. 9 Yehovah will establish you as His holy people, as He swore to you, if **you keep (tish'mar)** the commandments of Yehovah Eloheykha and walk in His ways. 10 And all the peoples of the earth shall see that Yehovah's name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you. 11 **Yehovah will give you abounding prosperity in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil** in the land that Yehovah swore to your fathers to assign to you. 12 Yehovah will open for you His bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in season **and to bless (ulavarekh)** all your undertakings. You will be creditor to many nations, but debtor to none.

13 Yehovah will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom—**if only you obey (tish/ma listen)** and faithfully **observe (lishamor)** the commandments of Yehovah Eloheykha that I enjoin upon you this day, 14 and do not deviate to the right or to the left from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day and turn to the worship of other elohims.

Here are the blessings he will give to us when we listen and obey what he says to do. Notice that not once was life eternal was mentioned here. First listen, then keep/obey.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 30:9-20

9 And Yehovah Eloheykha will grant you abounding prosperity in all your undertakings, in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil. For Yehovah will again delight in your well-being, as He did in that of your fathers, 10 since **you will be heeding (tish'ma)** Yehovah Eloheykha and **keeping (lishamor)** His commandments and laws that are recorded in this book of the Teaching (hatorah)—once you return to Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul.

11 Surely, this Instruction (mitz'vah) which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. 12 It is not in the heavens, that you should say, "Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?" 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?" 14 No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.

15 See, I set before you this day **life (hachayim)** and prosperity (vatuv), death (hama'et) and adversity (hara). 16 For I command you this day, to love Yehovah Eloheykha, to

walk (lalekhet) in His ways (bid'rakhayv), **and to keep (valish'mar)** His commandments (mitz'votayv), His laws (vachuqqotayv), and His rules (umish'patayv), that you may **thrive (vachayim)** and increase (vravim), and that Yehovah Eloheykha may bless you in the land that you are about to enter and possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you give no heed, and are lured into the worship and service of other elohims, 18 I declare to you this day that you shall certainly perish; you shall not long endure (lo ta'arikhun Yamim – not prolong your days) on the soil that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day: I have put before you **life (hachayim)** and death (vahama'et), **blessing (habarakhah)** and curse. Choose life (bachayim – to live)—if you and your offspring would **live (tich'yah – you live)**—20 by loving Yehovah Eloheykha, heeding His commands, and holding fast to Him. For thereby you shall have life (chayeykha) and shall long endure (vaolekh yameykha lashevet – and the length of your days to dwell) upon the soil that Yehovah swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.

The life here is not eternal life but life prolonged to dwell upon the land and life to live without the punishment of curses and death in not keeping the mitzvot. By keeping these things we are allowed to continue conditionally upon the land and to thrive (live) and prosper (be blessed) there.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 32:45-47

45 And when Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them: Take to heart all the words with which I have warned you this day. Enjoin them upon your children, that they may **observe (lish'mor)** faithfully all the terms of this Teaching (hatorah). 47 For this is not a trifling thing for you: it is your very life (chayikhem); through it **you shall long endure (ta'arikhun Yamim)** on the land that you are to possess upon crossing the Jordan.

Here we see again we are to keep/obey torah as spoken by Moshe for it is our very life and that we may prolong long upon the land he gives us. Life here again is in the living on the land and not eternal life.

Vayiqra/Leviticus 26:3-13

3 If you follow My laws (im bachuqqotayv telekhu – if in my statutes you walk) and faithfully **observe (tish'maru)** My commandments, 4 I will grant your rains in their season, so that the earth shall yield its produce and the trees of the field their fruit. 5 Your threshing shall overtake the vintage, and your vintage shall overtake the sowing; you shall eat your fill of bread and dwell securely in your land.

6 I will grant peace in the land, and you shall lie down untroubled by anyone; I will give the land respite from vicious beasts, and **no sword shall cross your land.** 7 You shall give chase to your enemies, and **they shall fall before you** by the sword. 8 Five of you shall give chase to a hundred, and a hundred of you shall give chase to ten thousand; your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

9 I will look with favor upon you, and **make you fertile and multiply you**; and **I will maintain My covenant with you**. 10 You shall eat old grain long stored, and you shall have to clear out the old to make room for the new.

11 I will establish My abode (mish'kaniy) in your midst, and I will not spurn you. 12 I will be ever present in your midst: I will be Eloheykha, and you shall be My people. 13 I Yehovah Eloheykha who brought you out from the land of the Egyptians to be their slaves no more, who broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

Here we see again if we keep/obey his commands more blessings that he will do for us. Not only will we have crops but overflowing crops. Not only will we defeat our enemies we will rout our enemies. He will turn to us and make us fertile and multiply us. Even his mish'kan (dwelling place) will reside with us.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 6:17-25

17 **Be sure to keep (tish'marun)** the commandments, decrees, and laws that Yehovah Eloheykha has enjoined upon you. 18 Do what is right and good in the sight of Yehovah, that it may go well with you and that you may be able to possess the good land that Yehovah Eloheykha promised on oath to your fathers, 19 and that all your enemies may be driven out before you, as Yehovah has spoken.

20 When, in time to come, your children ask you, "What mean the decrees, laws, and rules that Yehovah Eloheynu has enjoined upon you?" 21 you shall say to your children, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and Yehovah freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 Yehovah wrought before our eyes marvelous and destructive signs and portents in Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household; 23 and us He freed from there, that He might take us and give us the land that He had promised on oath to our fathers. 24 Then Yehovah commanded us to observe all these laws, to revere Yehovah Eloheynu, **for our lasting good and for our survival (latuv lanu kal-hayamim lachayotenu bahayom hayah – to good for us all the days to our life in the day as here)**, as is now the case. 25 It will be therefore to our merit before Yehovah Eloheynu **to observe (nishamor)** faithfully this whole Instruction (kal-mitz'vah), as He has commanded us."

Keep/obey the commandments because why? For our lasting good and survival. That does not sound like eternal life but regular prolonged life that we have today.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 8:1-5

You shall faithfully observe (tish'marum) all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you today, that you may thrive (tich'yun - live) and increase and be able to possess the land that Yehovah promised on oath to your fathers.

2 Remember the long way that Yehovah Eloheykha has made you travel in the wilderness these past forty years, that He might test you by hardships to learn what was in your hearts: **whether you would keep (hatish'mor)** His commandments or not. 3 He

subjected you to the hardship of hunger and then gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your fathers had ever known, in order to teach you that man does not **live (yich'yeh – he live)** on bread alone, but that man may **live (yich'yeh – he live)** on anything that Yehovah decrees. 4 The clothes upon you did not wear out, nor did your feet swell these forty years. 5 Bear in mind that Yehovah Eloheykha disciplines you just as a man disciplines his son.

The time in the wilderness was a test of the children to see if they would obey/keep his mitzvah. Man lives by keeping them not just by eating bread (food). The Manna was what he decreed and thus an example of life being given by Yehovah but it was not eternal life. He caused them to live for now and if obeyed a long time on the land.

As you have seen in these references on obeying Yehovah is by doing his commandments. By doing those, he blesses us and we find favor in his eyes. Notice that the blessing predominately concern living long on the land he gave us. Also, by increasing us as a people and our holdings in the land. The living was to live long in the land for us and our children. The opposite of doing his commandments meant death (by those sent against us) and removal from that land.

The next Hebrew word for blessing is Barakh (Bet-Resh-Kaf Sofit) which is reference number 1288 and found on pages 274-276 in the NEHC and starting on page 138 in the BDB. It is a verb. We will look specifically at the verses dealing with obedience of his commandments or mitzvot.

We have actually seen some of these in the above verses too.

Bereshit/Genesis 22:16-18

16 and said, “By Myself I swear, Yehovah declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one, 17 **I will bestow My blessing (avarekh'kha – I will bless you) upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore**; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. 18 All the nations of the earth **shall bless (vahit'barakhu)** themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command (sham'ta baqoliy – listen to my voice).”

For the right action Yehovah blesses the person. This is the case of Avraham. Increasing his descendants was to be a blessing to Avraham

Bereshit/Genesis 26:24-25

24 That night Yehovah appeared to him and said, “I am the Elohim of your father Abraham. Fear not, for I am with you, **and I will bless you (uverikh'tiykha)** and increase your offspring for the sake of My servant Abraham.” 25 So he built an altar there and invoked Yehovah by name. Isaac pitched his tent there and his servants started digging a well.

We see that Yehovah continues his blessing of Yitzchak because of Avraham. The increasing of their descendants was the blessing here.

Bereshit/Genesis 26:1-6

1 There was a famine in the land—aside from the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham—and Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 Yehovah had appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land which I point out to you. 3 Reside in this land, and I will be with you **and bless you (va’avar’khekha)**; I will assign all these lands to you and to your heirs, fulfilling the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your heirs as numerous as the stars of heaven, and assign to your heirs all these lands, so that all the nations of the earth **shall bless (vahatabar’khu) themselves** by your heirs—5 inasmuch as Abraham obeyed (shama - listen) Me and kept (vayish’mor) My charge: My commandments (mitzvotiy), My laws (chaqotiy), and My teachings (vatorotiy).”

6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.

Yehovah blessed Yitz’chaq. Told him what his blessing would be. Avramham listened and kept/obeyed his mitz’vah, chuqat, and torah.

Shemot/Exodus 23:25-26

25 You shall serve Yehovah Eloheykha, **and He will bless (uberakh) your bread and your water.** And I will remove sickness from your midst. 26 No woman in your land shall miscarry or be barren. I will let you enjoy the full count of your days.

Notice the blessings here. Our food and water, removing sickness, pregnancy brought to full term. And living out your days. Not eternal life here either.

Serving Yehovah grants us blessing from him.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 2:7

7 Indeed, Yehovah Eloheykha **has blessed you (berakh’kha)** in all your undertakings (works of your hands). He has watched over your wanderings through this great wilderness; Yehovah Eloheykha has been with you these past forty years: you have lacked nothing.

Here we see even while the children wandered in the wilderness and in all things they did they were blessed by him. He made sure they had all they needed.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 7:12-15

12 And if you do obey (tish'mo'un) these rules (judgements) and observe (ushamar'tev) them carefully, Yehovah Eloheykha will maintain faithfully (vashamar) for you the covenant that He made on oath with your fathers: 13 He will favor you and bless you (uberakh'kha) and multiply you; He will bless the issue of your womb and the produce of your soil, your new grain and wine and oil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock, in the land that He swore to your fathers to assign to you. 14 **You shall be blessed (barukh)** above all other peoples: there shall be no sterile male or female among you or among your livestock. 15 Yehovah will ward off from you all sickness; He will not bring upon you any of the dreadful diseases of Egypt, about which you know, but will inflict them upon all your enemies.

Yehovah blesses us when we keep his rules and obeys them.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 12:5-7

5 but look only to the site that Yehovah Eloheykha will choose amidst all your tribes as His habitation, to establish His name there. There you are to go, 6 and there you are to bring your burnt offerings and other sacrifices, your tithes and contributions, your votive and freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and flocks. 7 Together with your households, you shall feast there before Yehovah Eloheykha, happy in all the undertakings in which Yehovah Eloheykha has **blessed you (berakh'kha).**

What does he bless us with? In all our undertakings (works of our hands) in regards to the land, how else would we be able to offer up offerings, tenths and vows at the place he has chosen?

Devarim/Deuteronomy 15:6,14 (4-11, 14)

4 There shall be no needy among you—since Yehovah Eloheykha **will bless you (yavarekh'kha)** in the land that Yehovah Eloheykha is giving you as a hereditary portion—5 if only **you heed (shamo'a' listen)** Yehovah Eloheykha and take care **to keep (lishamor)** all this Instruction that I enjoin upon you this day. 6 For Yehovah Eloheykha **will bless you (berakh'kha)** as He has promised you: you will extend loans to many nations, but require none yourself; you will dominate many nations, but they will not dominate you.

7 If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kinsmen in any of your settlements in the land that Yehovah Eloheykha is giving you, do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy kinsman. 8 Rather, you must open your hand and lend him sufficient for whatever he needs. 9 Beware lest you harbor the base thought, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching,” so that you are mean to your needy kinsman and give him nothing. He will cry out to Yehovah against you, and you will incur guilt. 10 Give to him readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return Yehovah Eloheykha **will bless you (yavarekh'kha)** in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. 11 For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kinsman in your land.

14 Furnish him out of the flock, threshing floor, and vat, with which Yehovah Eloheykha **has blessed you (berakh'kha)**.

There should be no need among us because of his blessings yet if one becomes needy we should not disregard him but give of our own blessing and be blessed because of that too.

Tehillim/Psalms 5:13

13 For **You surely bless (tavarekh)** the righteous man, Yehovah, encompassing him with favor like a shield.

Tehillim/Psalms 67:2,7,8

2 May Elohim be gracious to us **and bless us (viy'var'khenu)**; may He show us favor, Selah.

7 May the earth yield its produce; may Elohim, Eloheynu, **bless us (yavar'khenu)**. 8 May Elohim **bless us (yavar'khenu)**, and be revered to the ends of the earth.

Tehillim/Psalms 115:12-18

12 Yehovah is mindful of us. **He will bless us (yavarekh)**; **He will bless (yavarekh)** the house of Israel; **He will bless (yavarekh)** the house of Aaron; 13 **He will bless (yavarekh)** those who fear Yehovah, small and great alike. 14 May Yehovah increase your numbers, yours and your children's also. 15 **May you be blessed (barukhim)** by Yehovah, Maker of heaven and earth. 16 The heavens belong to Yehovah, but the earth He gave over to man. 17 The dead cannot praise Yehovah, nor any who go down into silence. 18 **But we will bless (navarekh)** Yehovah now and forever. Hallelujah.

Yehovah blesses those who fear him by increasing their numbers. Also, the dead can't bless him because they know nothing. They lie in their graves.

Rewards

When you think of rewards there are a couple Hebrew words that come to mind. We will take the best of each to show how these apply to what we have been studying.

Lets look at sakhar 7936 and is a verb. It is spelled sin-khaf-resh. You can find this in the BDB on page 1007 and in the NEHC on page 1207. It is reward as in a payment for what a person does.

Bereshit/Genesis 30:16

16 When Jacob came home from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You are to sleep with me, for I have [**utterly**] **hired you (sakhar sakha'tiykha)** with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night.

Here we see that Leah hired/paid for the right to lie with Ya'qov. It was a payment.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 46:6

6 Those who squander gold from the purse And weigh out silver on the balance, **They hire (yisakaru)** a metal worker to make it into a elohim, To which they bow down and prostrate themselves.

Here we see that the verb form is indeed hire/payment.

So lets look at the masculine noun sekher. Again it is sin-khaf-resh and reference number 7938. It can be found in page 1007 of the BDB and 1208 in the NEHC.

Mishlei/Proverbs 11:18-19

18 The wicked man earns illusory wages, But he who sows righteousness has a true **reward (sekher)**. 19 Righteousness is a prop **of life (lachayim)**, But to pursue evil leads to death.

The reward of the righteous ones is the payment of living. The reward for the wrong ones is the payment of death.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 19:10

10 Her foundations shall be crushed, And all who **make dams (sekher 'agamey-nafesh – reward sad of souls)** shall be despondent.

Here we see that sekher as a reward or payment for actions.

So lets look at the masculine noun sakhar. Again it is sin-khaf-resh and reference number 7939. It can be found in page 1007 of the BDB and 1208 in the NEHC.

Bereshit/Genesis 30:18, 32-33

18 And Leah said, "Elohim has given me **my reward (sakhariy)** for having given my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar.

Just a couple of verse past when we saw she hired he husband she gets her reward.

32 let me pass through your whole flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted animal—every dark-colored sheep and every spotted and speckled goat. Such shall be **my wages (sakhariy)**.

33 In the future when you go over **my wages (sakhariy)**, let my honesty toward you testify for me: if there are among my goats any that are not speckled or spotted or any sheep that are not dark-colored, they got there by theft.”

Shemot/Exodus 2:9

9 And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will pay **your wages (sakhayikh)**.” So the woman took the child and nursed it.

Tehillim/Psalms 127:3

3 Sons are the provision of Yehovah; the fruit of the womb, His **reward (sakhar)**.

Koholet/Ecclesiastes 9:1-5

1 For all this I noted, and I ascertained all this: that the actions of even the righteous and the wise are determined by Elohim. Even love! Even hate! Man knows none of these in advance²—none! For the same fate is in store for all: for the righteous, and for the wicked; for the good and pure, and for the impure; for him who sacrifices, and for him who does not; for him who is pleasing, and for him who is displeasing; and for him who swears, and for him who shuns oaths. 3 That is the sad thing about all that goes on under the sun: that the same fate is in store for all. (Not only that, but men’s hearts are full of sadness, and their minds of madness, **while they live (bachayeyhem); and then—to the dead!**) 4 For he who is reckoned among **the living (hachayim)** has something to look forward to—even **a live (chay)** dog is better than a dead (hamet) lion—5 since **the living (hachayim)** know they will die. But the dead know nothing; they have no more recompense (sakhar), for even the memory of them has died. 6 Their loves, their hates, their jealousies have long since perished; and they have no more share till the end of time (la’olam) in all that goes on under the sun.

The dead and we all die. Have no share or reward with the living until/to for all time. They will live again but not eternally but a long life.

Zakhar’yah/Zechariah 8:9-17

9 Thus said Yehovah of Hosts: Take courage, you who now hear these words which the prophets spoke when the foundations were laid for the rebuilding of the Temple, the House of Yehovah of Hosts.

10 For before that time, the **earnings (sakhar)** of men were nil, **and profits (usakhar)** from beasts were nothing. It was not safe to go about one’s business on account of enemies; and I set all men against one another. 11 But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as before—declares Yehovah of Hosts—12 but what it sows shall prosper: The vine shall produce its fruit, the ground shall produce its yield, and the skies shall provide their moisture. I will bestow all these things upon the remnant of this people. 13 And just as you were a curse among the nations, O House of Judah and House of Israel,

so, when I vindicate you, you shall become a blessing (barakhah). Have no fear; take courage!

14 For thus said Yehovah of Hosts: Just as I planned to afflict you and did not relent when your fathers provoked Me to anger—said Yehovah of Hosts—15 so, at this time, I have turned and planned to do good to Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. Have no fear! 16 These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to one another, render true and perfect justice in your gates. 17 And do not contrive evil against one another, and do not love perjury, because all those are things that I hate—declares Yehovah.

Here we see that once more being returned to the land we will receive our payment/reward for doing what is good in Yehovah's eyes.

What of Life

Devarim/Deuteronomy 13:1-6

1 Be careful to observe only that which I enjoin upon you: neither add to it nor take away from it.

2 If there appears among you a prophet or a dream-diviner and he gives you a sign or a portent, 3 saying, "Let us follow and worship another elohim"—whom you have not experienced—even if the sign or portent that he named to you comes true, 4 do not heed the words of that prophet or that dream-diviner. For Yehovah Eloheykha is testing you to see whether you really love Yehovah Eloheykha with all your heart and soul. 5 Follow none but Yehovah Eloheykha, and revere none but Him; observe His commandments alone, and heed only His orders; worship none but Him, and hold fast to Him. 6 As for that prophet or dream-diviner, he shall be put to death; for he urged disloyalty to Yehovah Eloheykha—who freed you from the land of Egypt and who redeemed you from the house of bondage—to make you stray from the path that Yehovah Eloheykha commanded you to follow. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst.

The Prophet must say what Yehovah said to say. This case is specific to following other elohim. Anything he says that leads from the path Yehovah has set before we are not to follow.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:15-22

15 Yehovah Eloheykha will raise up for you a prophet from among your own people, like myself; him you shall heed. 16 This is just what you asked of Yehovah Eloheykha at Horeb, on the day of the Assembly, saying, "Let me not hear the voice of Yehovah Elohey any longer or see this wondrous fire any more, lest I die." 17 Whereupon Yehovah said to me, "They have done well in speaking thus. 18 I will raise up a prophet for them from among their own people, like yourself: I will put My words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him; 19 and if anybody fails to heed the words he speaks in My name, I myself will call him to account. 20 But any prophet who

presumes to speak in My name an oracle (a word) that I did not command him to utter, or who speaks in the name of other elohims—that prophet shall die.” 21 And should you ask yourselves, “How can we know that the oracle (a word) was not spoken by Yehovah?”— 22 if the prophet speaks in the name of Yehovah and the oracle (word) does not come true, that oracle (word) was not spoken by Yehovah; the prophet has uttered it presumptuously: do not stand in dread of him.

So if something is spoken in the prophets that appears to be different that what is in the Torah or otherwise commanded by Yehovah it is not his word. Either that or it is not understood properly by us.

Yeshiyahu/Isaiah 25:8

8 He will destroy death forever. (bila hamaet olam – swallows the death for all time)

My Yehovah Elohim will wipe the tears away

From all faces

And will put an end to the reproach of His people

Over all the earth—

For it is Yehovah who has spoken.

Verse 9 explains 8

9 In that day they shall say:

This is our Elohim;

We trusted in Him, and He delivered us.

This is Yehovah, in whom we trusted;

Let us rejoice and exult in His deliverance!

The death is as one without hope. We see this also in Ezekiel 37. The tears are what are shed because we are not in the land. It is turned to rejoicing. The Death here in context was not all death but a certain death or in this case the exile..

Ezekiel 37:9-14

9 Then He said to me, “Prophesy to the breath (harucha - 7307), prophesy, O mortal! Say to the breath (harucha): Thus said Yehovah Elohim: Come, O breath (harucha), from the four winds, and breathe into these slain, **that they may live (vayich’yu)** again.” 10 I

prophesied as He commanded me. The breath (harucha) entered them, and they came to life and stood up on their feet, a vast multitude.

11 And He said to me, “O mortal, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, our hope is gone; we are doomed.’ 12 Prophecy, therefore, and say to them: Thus said Adoni Yehovah: I am going to open your graves and lift you out of the graves, O My people, and bring you to the land of Israel. 13 You shall know, O My people, that I am Yehovah, when I have opened your graves and lifted you out of your graves. 14 I will put **My breath (ruchiy)** into you **and you shall live again (vachayitem)**, and I will set you upon your own soil. Then you shall know that I Yehovah have spoken and have acted”—declares Yehovah.

How do the dead speak? We’ve seen earlier that the dead know nothing. Could this be a metaphor for bringing the people back into the land? Could the breath be Yehovah taking them back as his people? He is speaking to living people here. They are also flesh here not eternal spirit beings.

Tehillim/Psalms 49:7-10

7 men who trust in their riches, who glory in their great wealth? 8 Ah, it cannot redeem a man (nef’sham), or pay his ransom to Elohim; 9 the price of life is too high; and so one ceases to be, forever (for all time). 10 Shall he live eternally (vaychay od laolam), and never see the grave (hashahat - corruption)? 11 For one sees that the wise die, that the foolish and ignorant both perish, leaving their wealth to others. 12 Their grave is their eternal home (bateymo laolam), the dwelling-place for all generations of those once famous on earth. 13 Man does not abide in honor; he is like the beasts that perish (nid’mu – be cut off). 14 Such is the fate of those who are self-confident, the end of those pleased with their own talk. Selah.

Here the nefesh is not able to be redeemed. If you look in the torah you see the concept of redeeming something is paying a fine or payment. Here Yehovah says that the price is too high to pay for a nefesh. The question is will he live forever? The answer is no. You can’t buy life eternal. All die leaving their wealth to others. We all perish and are cut off.

Tehillim/Psalms 30:3

3 Yehovah, my Elohim, I cried out to You, and You healed me. 4 Yehovah, You brought me up from Sheol, preserved me from going down into the Pit. 5 O you faithful of Yehovah, sing to Him, and praise His holy name.

He continues to the end with...

9 I called to You, Yehovah; to my YEHOVAH I made appeal, 10 “What is to be gained from my death, from my descent into the Pit? Can dust praise You? Can it declare Your faithfulness? 11 Hear, Yehovah, and have mercy on me; Yehovah, be my help!” 12 You

turned my lament into dancing, you undid my sackcloth and girded me with joy, 13 that [my] whole being might sing hymns to You endlessly; Yehovah my Elohim, I will praise You forever.

Here we see David expressing his worry of being left to die (in the pit) by not being healed. He asks what can he say from a grave. Can the dead praise Yehovah? No.

Tehillim/Psalm 118:10-21

10 All nations have beset me; by the name of Yehovah I will surely cut them down. 11 They beset me, they surround me; by the name of Yehovah I will surely cut them down. 12 They have beset me like bees; they shall be extinguished like burning thorns; by the name of Yehovah I will surely cut them down. 13 You pressed me hard, I nearly fell; but Yehovah helped me. 14 Yehovah is my strength and might; He has become my deliverance. 15 The tents of the victorious resound with joyous shouts of deliverance, “The right hand of Yehovah is triumphant! 16 The right hand of Yehovah is exalted! The right hand of Yehovah is triumphant!” 17 I shall not die but live and proclaim the works of Yehovah. 18 Yehovah punished me severely, but did not hand me over to death. 19 Open the gates of victory for me that I may enter them and praise Yehovah. 20 This is the gateway to Yehovah—the victorious shall enter through it. 21 I praise You, for You have answered me, and have become my deliverance.

Who came to destroy him? The Nations. Who caused him not to go down to the grave Yehovah. Did this express eternal life? No.

Iyov/job 14: (13-15)

1 Man born of woman is short-lived and sated with trouble. 2 He blossoms like a flower and withers; He vanishes like a shadow and does not endure. 3 Do You fix Your gaze on such a one? Will You go to law with me? 4 Who can produce a clean thing out of an unclean one? No one! 5 His days are determined; You know the number of his months; You have set him limits that he cannot pass. 6 Turn away from him, that he may be at ease Until, like a hireling, he finishes out his day. 7 There is hope for a tree; If it is cut down it will renew itself; Its shoots will not cease. 8 If its roots are old in the earth, And its stump dies in the ground, 9 At the scent of water it will bud And produce branches like a sapling. 10 But mortals languish and die; Man expires; where is he? 11 The waters of the sea fail, And the river dries up and is parched. 12 So man lies down never to rise; He will awake only when the heavens are no more, Only then be aroused from his sleep. 13 O that You would hide me in Sheol, Conceal me until Your anger passes, Set me a fixed time to attend to me. 14 If a man dies, can he live again? All the time of my service I wait Until my replacement comes. 15 You would call and I would answer You; You would set Your heart on Your handiwork. 16 Then You would not count my steps, Or keep watch over my sin. 17 My transgression would be sealed up in a pouch; You would coat over my iniquity.

Here we see Iyov lamenting his condition recognizing that men die and are not renewed like a tree or a stream. But it requires an action from one with that power. He asks Yehovah to place him in the grave until time is no more and then bring him back. This is no indication of eternal life. Just physical life restored.

Daniel 12:2 (1-4)

“At that time, the great prince, Michael, who stands beside the sons of your people, will appear. It will be a time of trouble, the like of which has never been since the nation came into being. At that time, your people will be rescued, all who are found inscribed in the book. 2 Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence. 3 And the knowledgeable will be radiant like the bright expanse of sky, and those who lead the many to righteousness will be like the stars forever and ever.

4 “But you, Daniel, keep the words secret, and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will range far and wide and knowledge will increase.”

Here we have a vision of Daniel. Verse 2 appears to validate the idea of an eternal life but also a everlasting repulsiveness. We know from verse four that this is part of the prophecy, which is sealed. Thus, written in way that not necessarily literal. Verse 1 tells that Daniels people will be rescued not all peoples. So even if you believe this is a resurrection to eternal life it is not everyone who will receive it.

Overall, you can see that the concept of Everlasting life is not the reward for obedience in a future which we must work for today. The reward for obedience is the blessings we receive today and through the life we live.