

"And you shall keep My statutes and My judicial ordinances, which, if a man will fulfill them he will gain life through them (18:5)." - "And you shall keep My charge so that you do not do any of the abominable customs."(18:30)

The second half of the first *pasuk* contains the motivation for the command in the first half. One must fulfill Hashem's imperatives in order to gain life. These *chukim* (statutes) and *mishpatim* (judicial ordinances) are the very essence of the *Torah*. In order to continually translate them into practical reality, we must indeed guard them. We fulfill our duty for guarding the *Torah* only by living up to the following two demands: to study *Torah* and not to transgress.

One must always be aware of *Chazal's* statement: *o,rnau vban uz - If one desires to be the guardian of Hashem's Torah, he must study it!* For *Torah* is a spiritual treasure that must first permeate our minds before it can truly dominate our lives. We must become thoroughly familiar with the *Torah* in order to achieve its practical realization in our daily endeavors. *Chazal* admonish us stating, "*That which is not learned is not practiced.*" This is specifically why they view the ceaseless research of *Torah* as our foremost duty. In our time, when the Divine *Torah* message is met by such strong opposition, the relevance of this challenge is even more pronounced. If one desires to protect his children from the temptations of the outside world, he must avail them of the opportunity to study *Torah* diligently and steadily. Only through study which is loving and joyful will our children develop a sense of pride in their most sacred inheritance. Guard *Torah* - Study it!

Horav Shlomo Breuer Zt"l points out that we may derive the second demand from the admonition "never to transgress". *Chazal* have gleaned from these words the charge to "create lawful ordinances that are designed to eliminate any situation that could lead to a violation of Hashem's will." If we are determined to achieve inner freedom, we must exert self control beyond the letter of *halacha*. This spirit of self-restraint has resulted in the creation of the "fences and preventions" which *Chazal* have given us. Their regulations have preserved our *Shabbos* for us, have protected our physical and marital lives from the frivolous degradation which plagues society, and have strengthened our determination to serve Hashem with even greater devotion.