

"Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the field." (28:3)

The *Midrash* adds to this *pasuk*. "In the merit of the *mitzvos* that you perform in the city you will be blessed therein; and in the merit of the *mitzvos* which you perform in the field, you will be blessed in the field." What is this message and what are the *mitzvos* of the city and the field?

Horav Mordechai Rogov z.l. interprets this *Midrash* homiletically. The city is an analogy for rest and solitude, peace and tranquility. It alludes to life in a structured, secure environment. The field, on the other hand, represents a place fraught with danger and exposure to the elements, be they animals or people who lurk in strange places seeking someone to prey upon. The strength of *Am Yisrael* is their ability to serve Hashem under all conditions, in all circumstances -- regardless of their personal or collective situation. When they are in the city, living in peaceful and secure times, when life in general -- and personal circumstances in particular -- is propitious for *mitzvah* observance, they should not fall prey to complaisance and self-satisfaction. Even when they are in the field, constantly running from place to place, living in fear of their next oppressor, suffering the pains of countless beatings and torture -- even then they should still serve Hashem with all their heart and soul.

"Selective" Judaism is not the correct way to serve Hashem. Tuning in for certain *mitzvos* and turning off for those that make demands on our time, money, and personal agenda, is wrong. One must learn to integrate *mitzvah* observance and *Torah* study into all areas of his lifestyle, under all conditions, so that this observance will truly be a source of blessing.