

Lunchtime Torah Express: Eikev

Deuteronomy 11:13-21

(13) If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving your God יהוה and serving [God] 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. (16) Take care not to be lured away to serve other gods and bow to them. (17) For יהוה's anger will flare up against you, shutting up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce; and you will soon perish from the good land that יהוה is assigning to you. (18) Therefore impress these My words upon your very heart: bind them as a sign on your hand and let them serve as a symbol on your forehead, (19) and teach them to your children—reciting them when you stay at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you get up; (20) and inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates— (21) to the end that you and your children may endure, in the land that יהוה swore to your fathers to assign to them, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

דברים י"א:י"ג-כ"א

(יג) וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַתְּ שְׁמִיעוּ
אֶל־מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם
הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁכֶם:
(יד) וְנָתַתִּי מְטֶר־אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה
וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאֶסְפַּת דְּגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ
וַיִּצְהָרְךָ: (טו) וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשֹׁדְךָ
לְבֶהֱמֹתְךָ וְאָכְלָתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ: (טז)
הִשְׁמַרְוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתָּה לִבְבְּכֶם
וְסִרְתֶּם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: (יז) וְחָרָה
אֶף־יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן
אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבַדְתֶּם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל
הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:
(יח) וּשְׁמַתֶּם אֶת־דִּבְרֵי אֵלֶּה
עַל־לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַל־נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׁרֹתֶם
אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת
בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: (יט) וְלִמַּדְתֶּם אֹתָם
אֶת־בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ
וּבְלִכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: (כ)
וְכָתַבְתֶּם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:
(כא) לְמַעַן יִרְבוּ יְמֵיכֶם וַיְמֵי בְנֵיכֶם
עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה
לְאֲבֹתֵיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם כִּיְמֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם

Rabbi David Ellenson - *My People's Prayer Book*

My own approach combines two doctrines of the Rabbis. I too admit that in the end, we cannot fathom God's justice: whether we are talking about individuals or communities, it is simply not true that the righteous always prosper and the wicked suffer and I do not know why that is. I also believe that "the reward of performing a commandment is [the propensity and opportunity to perform another] commandment, and the result of doing a wicked thing is [the propensity and opportunity to do another] wicked thing" (M. Avot 4:2). That is, we should do the right thing because it is the right thing and not out of hope for reward, and we should avoid evil acts because they are evil and not out of fear of punishment.

This approach is a far cry from the direct, reward-and-punishment thinking of the second paragraph of the *Sh'ma*, and yet I recite the *Sh'ma* each day because it proclaims God's justice, and justice must be a critical element in the God I affirm. The calculus of reward and punishment articulated in this paragraph may be too simple and ultimately inaccurate, and, for that matter, it may be immoral in the first place to do the right thing and avoid the wrong out of concern for consequences...The Rabbis too had problems with the doctrine of justice announced in this paragraph, but they included it anyway because they too had a deep faith in the ultimate justice of God as the metaphysical backdrop and support for human acts of justice.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear O Israel:

Adonai our God, *Adonai* is One! So
you are to love *Adonai* your God with

דברים ו':ד-ט'

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
יְהוָה | אֶחָד: וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה

all your heart, with all your being, with all your substance! And these words, which I myself command you today, are to be upon your heart. You are to repeat them with your children and are to speak of them in your sitting in your house and in your walking in the way, in your lying down and in your rising up. You are to tie them as a sign upon your hand, and they are to be for bands between your eyes. And you are to write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְּךָ, וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ
וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם
עַל-לִבְּךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ
בָּם בְּשֹׁבְתְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִלְכֹתְךָ
בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:
וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ
לְטַטְפֹּת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וְכָתַבְתָּם
עַל-מְזוֹזֹת בֵּיתְךָ
וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: {ס}

Jerusalem Talmud Berakhot 2:1:4

What is the difference between the first and second paragraphs? Rabbi Ḥanina said: Everything mentioned in the first paragraph is mentioned in the second. In that case, should one have to recite only one of them? Rabbi Illa said: The first one is directed to the individual, the second one to the community; the first one concentrates on learning, the second one on doing.

Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:13:2

וְשָׁמַע תִּשְׁמָעוּ lit: AND IT WILL COME TO PASS IF YOU SURELY HEARKEN — If you hearken to the old (if you hear again what you have already learnt, i.e. if you repeatedly study the old lessons), you will hearken to the new (you will the more easily gain new knowledge) (Sukkah 46b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 19:5). Similar is the meaning of אִם שָׁכַח תִּשְׁכַּח (Deuteronomy 8:19): If you have begun to forget, your end will be that you will forget all of it. So, too, is written in a certain Scroll: If thou forgettest Me one day, I will forget thee two days (cf. Sifrei Devarim 48:8; Jerusalem Talmud end of Berakhot).

Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:13:4

לְאַהֲבָה אֶת ה' TO LOVE THE LORD — This means that you should not say: Well, I will learn, but in order that I may become rich, in order that I may obtain the title Rabbi, in order that I may receive a prize, — but whatever you do, do it out of love for God (Sifrei Devarim 41:23), and ultimately the honor which you desire will certainly come (Nedarim 62a).

Rabbeinu Bahya, Devarim 11:14:1

וְנָתַתִּי מָטָר אֶרְצְכֶם בְּעִתּוֹ, “I will give the rain for your land at its appropriate time.” At the hours when it is most beneficial for newly seeded fields. You will be pleased with the timing of the rain, which, according to our sages in Taanit 22 and 23 will descend at night when it does not interfere with any of your activities. In Leviticus 26,3 the Torah words this blessing somewhat differently, writing “וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמֵיכֶם בְּעִתָּם”, “I will give your rains at their respective seasons.” Our sages interpret the wording there to mean that the rain will neither be sparse nor excessive. Too much rain soaks the earth so that it does not produce fruit. Another meaning of these words is that the word בְּעִתָּם, refers to the nights from Tuesday to Wednesday and on Friday nights, periods when everyone is at home. We have a tradition that during the period of Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach this blessing was fulfilled and the rains in Israel descended only on these two nights of the week. As a result, the wheat kernels were as big as kidneys and the barley as big as the pits of the olives, and lentils grew to the size of golden dinars. Our sages used this period to illustrate to what extent sins by the people can reduce the fertility of the Holy Land. They used Jeremiah 5,25 to illustrate their point. The prophet wrote: “it is your iniquities that have diverted these things, your sins have withheld the bounty from you.” We also find that during the reign of Herod when the people were busy with major renovations of the Temple, rain descended only at night so as not to interfere with the work of restoring and enlarging the Temple. On the morning following such rain, the clouds would disperse quickly, the sun would shine and work could proceed without impediment. The people would rise at an early hour and go to work at the Temple site.

Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:18:1

וּשְׂמַתֶּם אֶת דְּבָרֵי AND YE SHALL PLACE MY WORDS [UPON YOUR HEART] —
Even after you have been banished make yourselves distinctive by means of
My commands: lay Tephillin, attach Mezuzoth to your doorposts, so that these
shall not be novelties to you when you return. Similarly does it state,
(Jeremiah 31:21) “Set thee up distinguishing marks” (Sifrei Devarim 43:34).

Ramban on Deuteronomy 11:13:1

[AND TO SERVE HIM] WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL.
“Has he not already mentioned *with all thy heart and with all thy soul*? But that
warning was addressed to the individual, and this is a warning to the
community.” This is Rashi’s language quoting the Sifre. The explanation of the
matter is as follows: G-d does not always perform miracles — every time
giving the rain of the Land [in its proper season], the former rain and the latter
rain, increasing the corn, wine, and oil, and providing also abundant grass in
the fields for the cattle, or, on the contrary, shutting up the heaven and drying
up the Land — except according to the deeds of the majority of the people. The
individual, however, lives by his own merits, *and he dies in his iniquity*. Thus he
is saying that upon their performance of all the commandments out of perfect
love, He will do all these miracles with them for the good. And he further says
that when they worship idols He will perform with them a sign for bad [to
indicate to them the need to repent]. Know further that miracles for good or
bad are performed only for perfectly righteous or utterly wicked people. For
average people, however, He visits good or bad upon them in a natural manner
according to *their way and by their doings*.