



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org
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Like Rain and Dew

הָאָזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֲדַבְּרָה; וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ, אִמְרֵי-פִי.
יַעֲרֵף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי, תִּזְלַל כַּטַּל אִמְרֹתַי, כְּשַׁעֲרֵם עָלַי-
דְּשָׂא, וְכִרְבִּיבִים עָלַי-עֲשׂוּב. (דברים לב:א-ב)

Listen, O heavens, and I will speak! And let the earth hear the words of my mouth! My lesson will drip like rain; my word will flow like dew; like storm winds on vegetation and like raindrops on grass. (*Devarim* 32:1-2)

Moshe Rabbeinu states that his lesson is like rain and his word like dew. What is represented by rain, and what by dew?

The Hafetz Hayim posits that the the second *pasuk* in the *parasha*, corresponds to the first *pasuk*. The Written Torah is heavenly. It was dictated by Hashem to Moshe. The Oral Torah is more connected

to earth. It is human clarification of the Written Torah.

The Written Torah is compared to rain. Both originate from the heavens. Like rain, the Written Torah is finite. There is a specific number of *pesukim* and a specific number of *mitzvos*. Similarly, rain is finite and discrete. One can place a bucket and catch all the rain that falls in a particular spot.

The Oral Torah is more like dew. Both originate from the earth. There is no way to count dew. It appears on the grass as a wet substance, not as drops. Similarly, the Oral Torah has no end. New commentaries are constantly being published.

We must prepare our hearts to internalize certain messages. It is like a field that must be prepared properly to enable produce to grow

We need to focus on both. The Written Torah is finite, yet how many of us can even name all 24 books of the Tanakh in the proper order, let alone have completed learning them all? The Hafetz Hayim said that it is somewhat ironic

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that the written Torah, which is finite many have forgotten, while primarily focusing on that which is infinite, the Oral Law. We need to commit ourselves to study both, the Written and Oral Torah.

Rav Yosef Nehemia Kornitzer looks at the surface on which the rain falls: grass. Moshe expresses the hope that his words to Bnei Yisrael fall like “raindrops on grass.” Couldn’t we use a more royal metaphor? Perhaps comparing the words of Torah to raindrops on a sweet smelling rose, or the fresh fruit blossoming on a tree? Why the reference specifically to raindrops on grass? Rav Kornitzer answers: Sometimes, our hearts are so closed up that nothing gets through. We must prepare our hearts to internalize certain messages. It is like a field that must be prepared properly to enable produce to grow. If one does not plow, plant seeds, and tend the field, nothing will grow, no matter how much it rains. There is only one thing that grows without preparation: grass. When it rains, grass sprouts on its own.

Moshe Rabbeinu knew that Klal Yisrael would not always be on a high level. There will be times when the bare minimum is all one can hope for. Even if Bnei Yisrael are not prepared or inspired, the Torah should positively affect them like raindrops cause grass to sprout.

This reminds us of a famous idea expressed by the Kotzker Rebbe. The Torah tells us

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Mitzvot from the Torah applicable in our times based on the Chofetz Chaim

Sukkot

Be happy on festivals
Desist for work on the first day of Sukkot
Dwell in a Sukkah (booths) for seven days of the festival
Take up the four species on Sukkot

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חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, אֶל-יַעֲזֹבֶנָּה: קִשְׂרָם עַל-גַּרְדְּוֹתֶיךָ; כְּתִיבָם.
עַל-לוּחַ לְבָבְךָ. (משלי ג:ג)

“Kindness and truth shall not leave you; bind them upon your neck, inscribe them **upon** the tablet of your heart.” (Mishle 3:3).

Why are we told to inscribe the words of Torah “**upon** the tablet of your heart” (al luach libecha) rather than “in your heart” (b’libecha)? The Kotzker Rebbe explains: Sometimes, we are not prepared to hear or accept something. In those instances, we need to place it **on** our heart, close to our heart, so that one day, when we are ready to open our heart, it will permeate. Similar language is found in Kriyas Shema והיו הדברים אשר אנכי מצוך היום על לבבך

Let the soul hear it, and eventually “the earth will hear”. It will break through. The Torah is compared to grass – so that at the very least it can have a slight impact without requiring abundant preparation from Am Yisrael.

As we usher in the new year, let us allow ourselves to open our hearts and minds and internalize the beautiful words of the Torah! ■