

Parashat Eikev / פרשת עקב

Shabbat Av 20, 5767, August 4, 2007
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This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25

Haftarah: Isaiah 49:14-51:3

B'rit HaChadashah: Heb 11:8-13 Rom 8:31-39

In rabbinical Judaism, there are four kinds of Scripture interpretation:

1. P'shat (פשוט "simple") – The plain and simple sense of the text what modern scholars call grammatical-historical exegesis.
2. Remez (רמז, "hint") – Peculiar features of the text are regarded as hinting at a deeper truth than what is conveyed by its plain sense.
3. Drash (דרש) or Midrash (מדרש, "search") – This is referred too as "creativity" which is used to search the text in question in relation to (i) the rest of the bible, (ii) other literature, or (iii) life; in order to develop an allegorical or homiletical application of the scripture. This involves two processes (a) eisegesis where one reads their own thoughts into the text, and (b) exegesis which is extracting from the scripture its actual meaning.
4. Sod (סוד, "secret") – where one operates upon the numerical values of the Hebrew text; for example, two words whose letters add up to the same amount would be a good candidate for revealing a secret through "bisociation of ideas." This means one takes a creative putting together of two ideas into a way previously not thought of or exploited.

When examining the weekly Torah portion, I like to employ three of the four kinds of scripture interpretation. First looking at and reading the P'shat (simple sense) of the text and then moving on to look at the peculiar features of the text. By doing so it is possible to develop a Midrash which can lead to how the scriptures relate to our lives for its practical application. Taking a closer look at scripture rather than only a P'shat (surface/simple) reading of the scriptures is a fundamental principle for facilitating spiritual growth. One example for the necessity of developing a Midrash can be found while examining the B'rit HaChadashah. A lot of the B'rit HaChadashah if it is read using only P'shat reading of the text will produce misconceptions/misunderstandings. This occurs from presuppositions we all bring with us while we read the Bible and everyone has them. Deeper study, especially examining the Jewishness of the gospels, will help to break down the presuppositions and help to elucidate the true meaning of

scripture. One example of this relates to the messianic prophecies of Yeshua. In Matthew 2:15 we find Matthew is making a Midrash on Hosea 11:1 where he reads the Messiah Yeshua into a verse which deals with Israel coming out of Egypt. Here Matthew is giving us a Remez hinting at a deeper truth. Israel has been called God's son as far back as Exodus 4:22. In the text, The Messiah Yeshua is presented as God's son a few verses earlier in Matthew 1:18-25 which reflects passages found in the Tanach such as Isaiah 9:6-7, Psalms 2:7, and Proverbs 30:4. The Messiah is equated with the nation of Israel, and Matthew is hinting at calling Yeshua's flight to Egypt a "fulfillment" of Hosea 11:1.

This weeks Parshat Eikev speaks about self righteousness. God is reminding Israel to be careful of self righteousness, that God is giving Israel the Promised Land because of his faithfulness to their ancestors Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov and His covenant, not because of Israel's own righteousness. While God reminds them, He tells Israel what He requires of them, to fear Adonai and to follow all His ways, to love and serve Adonai with all your heart and being.

Deuteronomy 10:12-21

10:12 "So now, Isra'el, all that ADONAI your God asks from you is to fear ADONAI your God, follow all his ways, love him and serve ADONAI your God with all your heart and all your being; 10:13 to obey, for your own good, the mitzvot and regulations of ADONAI which I am giving you today. 10:14 See, the sky, the heaven beyond the sky, the earth and everything on it all belong to ADONAI your God. 10:15 Only ADONAI took enough pleasure in your ancestors to love them and choose their descendants after them - yourselves -above all peoples, as he still does today. 10:16 Therefore, circumcise the foreskin of your heart; and don't be stiffnecked any longer! 10:17 For ADONAI your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty and awesome God, who has no favorites and accepts no bribes. 10:18 He secures justice for the orphan and the widow; he loves the foreigner, giving him food and clothing. 10:19 Therefore you are to love the foreigner, since you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. 10:20 You are to fear ADONAI your God, serve him, cling to him and swear by his name. 10:21 He is your praise, and he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things, which you have seen with your own eyes. (CJB)

These few verses are packed with information. Simply outlining these short few verses reveals a lot of things. A P'shat reading reveals (i) our relationship with God, (ii) God's ownership of all creation; (iii) God loves Israel and the Jewish people, (iv) our duty of charity, and (v) God deserving Praise.

Outline

- Obey the Lord God and his commands with all your heart and all your being (10:12)
- Everything belongs to the Lord, all that we see in the earth and the heavens. What we have is a gift to us from God, all the way down to each breath we take. (10:14)

- God has chosen the Jewish people and continues to do so today. (10:15)
- God was first in offering charity to the poor, and we should do likewise. (10:18)
- God is to be praised for all he has done for us. (10:20-21)

I feel these verses give us a Remez (hint) about ourselves. How easy it is for us to turn and fall into sin. It is so easy for us to fall into sin God warns us plainly by writing in a P'shat (simple) way. Within the Torah we find many of the same situations that we encounter in life. We find the revelation of God's plan for our lives, how we are to relate to Him, His creation, and our duty as believers to honor God, obey his commands, and to love and take care of others.

In conclusion, these four kinds of scripture interpretation (which are very rabbinic) can help us not only to understand the scriptures but help to deepen our understanding and relationship with God and his Messiah. The idea that one can stand for all of Israel is a Remez found throughout all of scripture. For example, in the story of Achan's sin (Joshua 7), in the relationship between Israel and the king (when the king would sin all of the people would feel the consequences, this is found throughout the Tanach i.e. 1Kings 9:3-9), sin entered into the entire world by one man explained in Romans 5:12-21, in 1st Corinthians 15:45-49. And also in the controversial passages found in Isaiah (42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-11, and 52:11-53:12). The Remez of the Messiah and his relation to the nation of Israel is an important concept to understanding God's plan upon the first coming of the Messiah. God's plan was to provide perfect atonement; the Messiah would lay down his life on our behalf, just as the one standing in the place for all, to make atonement on our behalf in his blood. Consider Isaiah 49:1-6,

Isaiah 49:1-6

49:1 Coastlands, listen to me; listen, you peoples far away: ADONAI called me from the womb; before I was born, he had spoken my name. 49:2 He has made my mouth like a sharp sword while hiding me in the shadow of his hand; he has made me like a sharpened arrow while concealing me in his quiver. 49:3 He said to me, "You are my servant, Isra'el, through whom I will show my glory." 49:4 But I said, "I have toiled in vain, spent my strength for nothing, futility." Yet my cause is with ADONAI, my reward is with my God. 49:5 So now ADONAI says - he formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Ya'akov back to him, to have Isra'el gathered to him, so that I will be honored in the sight of ADONAI, my God having become my strength 49:6 he has said, "It is not enough that you are merely my servant to raise up the tribes of Ya'akov and restore the offspring of Isra'el. I will also make you a light to the nations, so my salvation can spread to the ends of the earth." (CJB)

Does Israel restore and preserve Israel? Who is the "light unto the nations?" The concept of one standing for all is familiar from a Jewish perspective. This is exactly how we have our salvation by faith in the Messiah Yeshua. Furthermore, this is the fulfillment of the one standing for all in the Torah. Yeshua, laid down his life on our

behalf, and by faith that his blood was shed for our sins we have atonement before God for the forgiveness of sins. Praise God for such a wonderful salvation.

Believe in Yeshua today and have life according to God's Torah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah for ever and ever