

בס"ד

THE RASHI OF THE WEEK

Week of

Parshas Eikev

18 Menachem Av, 5780 – August 8, 2020

Compiled from the works of
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**An Outline of the Rebbe's Explanation of Rashi
Parshas Eikev**

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Rashi in His Own Words

דברים י"א, י"ד: וְנָתַתִּי מָטָר אֲרֻצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאֶסְפֹּת דְגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ:
רש"י ד"ה ונתתי מטר ארצכם: עשיתם מה שעליכם, אף אני אעשה מה שעלי: בעתו: בלילות שלא יטריחו אתכם. דבר אחר בעתו,
בלילי שבתות שהכל מצויין בבתיהם:

Devorim 11:14: I will give the rain of your land at its time, the early rain and the latter rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil.

Rashi Heading - I will give the rain of your land: You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me. **at its time:** At night, so it will not disturb you. Another explanation of "at its time" is, on Shabbos (Friday) nights, when everyone is at home.

Synopsis

In this week's Torah portion, Eikev, Hashem tells us that if we obey his commandments, that He "will give the rain of your land at its time, the early rain and the latter rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil." Rashi explains, "I will give you the rain of your land" as meaning that "you have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me." Additionally, Rashi comments on the words "at its time," that it means "at night, so it will not disturb you." He then offers a second explanation of "at its time." The rain will fall "on Shabbos (Friday) nights when everyone is at home."

We need to understand what was bothering Rashi. The fact that the Torah's words "I will give you the rain of the land at its time" are meant as a reward for obeying His commandments seems quite clear. Additionally, Rashi's explanation does not seem to add anything to our understanding of the verse.

There is a very similar verse earlier in the Torah¹, "I will give your rains in their time." There, Rashi explains it to mean that Hashem will give us the rain "at a time when people do not usually go out, for example, on Shabbos evenings."

Despite the similarity between Rashi's explanation of "at its (the lands) time" and "in their (the Jews') time," there are significant differences. The reason is as follows. The earlier verse (in Bechukosai) follows the Torah's words "if you follow My statutes." Rashi defines that as meaning that you toiled in Torah. In other words, the Torah is discussing a reward for going above and beyond what one is required to do. Therefore, Hashem's compensation is "in their time," meaning in the time that best suits the Jew. Hashem repays all of

1. Parshas Bechukosai, Vayikroh 26:4.

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our actions measure for measure. Since we are talking about one who went beyond the letter of the law, Hashem rewards him by causing it to only rain on Friday nights. Based on the laws of nature, supporting Israel requires much more rain than what can fall solely on Friday nights. When the rain falls exclusively on Friday nights, it cannot cause the crops to grow and thrive. Nevertheless, as a reward for going above one's limitations, Hashem likewise transcends the boundaries of nature.

Our Torah portion, however, is discussing one who fulfilled the letter of the law but did not toil. Hence, his reward is the rain coming "in its (the lands) time." Under these circumstances, the Divine blessing does not transcend nature.

Rashi's Explanation

In this week's Torah portion, Eikev, the Torah tells us that if we listen to G-d's commandments, He tells us that² "I will give the rain of your land at its time, the early rain and the latter rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil." Rashi cites the words "I will give the rain of your land," and explains that "You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me."

We know that Rashi only comments on words that present a difficulty to the beginning student. Based on this, we need to understand what the challenge is with the terms "I will give the rain of your land." One verse earlier, the Torah says that "It will be if you listen to My commandments." The Torah follows that by telling us that the reward for following the commandments is that "I will give the rain of your land." Furthermore, Rashi's explanation does not appear to add anything to our simple understanding of the verse.

The Mizrachi³ explains that Rashi is explaining why the Torah finds it necessary to list so many details of our reward for following the commandments. The Torah states that Hashem will give⁴ "... the early rain and the latter rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil ... and you will eat and be satisfied." The Mizrachi goes on to point out the contrast between here and that which is stated in the Torah portion of Bechukosai⁵. There Hashem also promises rain as a reward for fulfilling the Torah and Mitzvos. However, it only says, "I will give your rains in their time," without listing any details.

Rashi is explaining this by teaching us that, "You have done (all of the many details which are) incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me." I will give you all the right things, excluding nothing.

2. Our Parshah, Devorim 11:14.

3. Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi (1455 – 1525 or 26) wrote one of the great supercommentaries to Rashi.

4. Our Parshah, Devorim 11:14–15.

5. See Footnote 1.

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Difficulties in Understanding Rashi

It is challenging to explain that Rashi is explaining the reason for the detailed list of rewards. Rashi uses the heading "I will give the rain of your land" for his explanation. We know that Rashi is particular about the words which he cites as the heading of his comments. Those are the only words that he is explaining. If he were also explaining a difficulty stemming from other terms and a later verse, he would have included those words in the heading. At the very least, he would have written, "etc."

According to Mizrahi's explanation, Rashi is contrasting this with the verse,⁶ "I will give your rains in their time." However, Rashi's heading here, "I will give the rain of your land," is ostensibly saying the same thing that is written in the Torah portion of Bechukosai.

According to Rashi, the reward which the Torah promises in the portion of Bechukosai is far greater than the reward delineated here. There Rashi comments on the verse,⁷ "and the tree of the field will give forth fruit," that in the future, even non-fruit bearing trees will bear fruit. In other words, the blessings will be supernatural, unlike here.

There are significant differences between Rashi's comments here and in Bechukosai. There, when the Torah says, "I will give your rains in their time," Rashi comments on the words "in their time," and explains that the rain will come "at a time when people do not usually go out, for example, on Shabbos evenings." Here, on the other hand, Rashi cites the words "at its time," and explains, "At night, so it will not disturb you. Another explanation of 'at its time' is on Shabbos (Friday) nights when everyone is at home." Why does Rashi find the explanation that the rain will fall on Friday nights sufficient in the Torah portion of Bechukosai, yet here finds it necessary to give two explanations? Here, on the other hand, Rashi first explains that the rain will fall "at night so that it will not disturb you." Here the explanation that the rain will fall on Friday nights is the second explanation, rather than the first, primary explanation. However, in Bechukosai, the explanation that the rain will fall on Friday nights is the only explanation which Rashi offers.

In Bechukosai, Rashi first states that the rain will fall "at a time that people do not usually do not go out." In other words, the content of the blessing is listed first. Only then does Rashi cite a specific example, "for example, on Shabbos and festival evenings." Here, however, Rashi first mentions the example, "On Shabbos (Friday) nights." Only then does he tell us the content of the blessing that it is "when everyone is at home." In the Torah portion of Bechukosai, Rashi states the content of the reward in the negative, "at a time that people do not usually do not go out." However, in our Torah portion, Rashi changes to the positive, "when everyone is at home." In Bechukosai, Rashi uses the phrase "people," however, here he says "everyone." In

6. See Footnote 1.

7. Ibid.

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our portion, before giving his second explanation, Rashi repeats the words "at its time." He writes, "Another explanation of 'at its time' is: On Shabbos (Friday) nights when everyone is at home."

The Explanation

Despite their similarities, there is the significant difference between the blessings in the Torah portion of Bechukosai and the blessings here. In the Torah portion of Bechukosai, it says, "I will give *your* rains in their time." In other words, it is a blessing that G-d gives directly to the *Jews*. However, in our portion, the Torah says, "I will give the rain of *your land* at its time." It is the land that is being blessed. Hence the Jews receive the blessing indirectly.

This helps to explain the differences in each type of blessing. The *Jewish People* are not limited by the boundaries and limitations of the laws of nature. Therefore, the blessings are not limited by nature. That is why, as Rashi says in Bechukosai, the blessings include that barren trees will bear fruit. However, the blessings in our Torah portion, where it is the *land* that is being blessed (at least directly), are bound by the *laws of nature*.

We now understand the reason for the difference between the two blessings. However, why is this the case? Why is only the land being blessed? Why are the blessings of the unlimited G-d subject to natural laws? Rashi explains that at the beginning of his commentary. "You have done what is incumbent upon you, so I will do what is incumbent upon Me." Rashi is saying that the Jews only kept that which was incumbent upon them. They fulfilled all of their obligations without going *beyond* the letter of the law. Since Hashem deals with us "measure for measure," His reward was likewise not beyond the letter of the law. He will bless us, but only by doing "what is incumbent upon Him (as so to speak)." The blessings will not extend beyond the laws of nature.

In the Torah portion of Bechukosai, however, Rashi explains the very first verse⁸, "If you follow My statutes," as meaning "if you toil in Torah study." In other words, the blessing of "I will give your rains in their time" is a blessing for *toiling* in Torah. It is a reward for going above and beyond the obligation to study Torah. Therefore, the reward is "measure for measure," above and beyond the boundaries of nature.

The general difference which distinguishes Bechukosai ("in their – the Jews' - times") from Eikev, our Torah portion ("at its – the land's - time"), is the reason for the other differences we find in Rashi's explanation of each. In Bechukosai, where the blessing is to Jews, the rain falls in the best possible time for the Jews. The best time for Jews is when they are not going out on the street at all. Therefore, Rashi writes, "at a time when people do not usually go out, for example, on Shabbos evenings." It would seem that naturally, that would not supply enough rain for the crops to grow. However, this blessing transcends nature, allowing a lesser amount

8. Parshas Bechukosai, Vayikroh 26:3.

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of rain to suffice. This is not the case in our Torah portion, where the blessing is meted out according to the laws of nature. Therefore, Rashi, in his first and primary explanation, says that "at its time," means "at night, so it will not disturb you." Naturally, it must rain many nights during the week to cause the crops to grow properly.

Additionally, there are other differences between the blessings which are given to Jews and those which are given to the land. In the blessings given to the Jews, when it is considered "in their (the Jews') time," is dependent upon what is best for the Jews. Therefore, the time is "at a time when people do not usually go out, for example, on Shabbos evenings." The definition of "in their time" is when people, i.e., Jews, do not usually go out. Therefore, in Bechukosai, Rashi writes this first. He then cites an example of this, i.e., Friday nights.

However, "at its time" in our Torah portion is different. The blessing is given to the land. The Jews are blessed indirectly through the land. Therefore, the time for the rain to fall is when no one is working the field, meaning at night. This blessing, however, is not purely for the benefit of the land. Rather it is, as Rashi says, that the time for the rain to fall is "at night so that it will not disturb you."

However, this explanation leaves Rashi with several questions. Firstly, if the meaning of "in its time" is at night, the Torah could just say at night! Secondly, the expression "in its (the land's) time" does not seem to be perfectly appropriate. There is absolutely no benefit to the land whatsoever, whether it rains during the day or at night. The only benefit is to those that work the land, meaning the Jews. Therefore, Rashi also offers a second explanation (not his primary explanation) that "Another explanation of 'at its time' is on Shabbos (Friday) nights when everyone is at home."

A Deeper Lesson from Rashi

All of the above teaches us the importance of going beyond (what we perceive to be) our limitations. Even though we can honestly say that we have done everything which is incumbent upon us to fulfill G-d's commandments and study His Torah, that is not enough. We must toil above and beyond what we feel are our capabilities. This applies both to the Torah study and the performance of Mitzvos. Then Hashem will bless us in a supernatural manner.

(Adapted from talks given on Shabbos Parshas Eikev and Re' eh 5734)

I hope that you gained as much by reading this as I did by translating and adapting it.

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